



RESTORATION OF CRIPPLE CREEK

In 2009, the Interior Alaska Land Trust received the generous donation of a ninety-acre parcel, adjacent to Chena Pump and Chena Ridge Roads, which contains the old riverbed of Cripple Creek. The stream was bypassed in the 1930s by the old Fairbanks Exploration Company because the hydraulic “giants” used in the gold mining operations created more sediment laden runoff than Cripple Creek could handle. The company dug a new ditch called the “Drain” on the property that provided a direct route from Ester to the Chena River.

Decades later, IALT wondered whether the old river course might be reestablished as habitat for fish and other wildlife. After all, the Chena River is the second most productive stream for Chinook salmon in the interior of Alaska. Restoring and reconnecting the old Cripple Creek habitat for juvenile salmon would increase the productivity of the Chena and Yukon River systems.

With this goal in mind, IALT began to explore the idea of installing a culvert under Chena Ridge Road to restore flow into the old riverbed. At the same time, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities discovered that the culvert under Chena Ridge Road

adjacent to Chena Pump Road needed to be replaced. The two groups, working together, decided to try to install two culverts under Chena Ridge Road, thereby fixing the failing culvert, restoring connectivity in the historic channel, and allowing impounded water to drain from the north side of Chena Ridge Road.

Because of its conservation value, the US Fish and Wildlife service supported the restoration of Cripple Creek, as did the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly, the Chena Riverfront Commission and the Tanana Watershed Alliance. Everyone thought the idea was a good one.

Joining forces with the US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners Program, IALT broke ground on the project this summer. Together with DOWL Engineering and Exclusive Paving, we completed our portion of two phases of the larger four phase project. We removed a large blockage between Chena Ridge Road and the old channel of Cripple Creek. We also extended the river channel to connect with the new culvert to be placed under Chena Ridge Road next spring by AKDOT and PF.

In August, IALT improved fish passage through the old Chena Ridge Road culvert, by reconfiguring the channel and creating a new stilling pond with a series of rock weirs on the downstream end of the culvert. This work was funded by a \$60,000 grant from the USFWS Yukon River Salmon Research and Management Fund.

This summer, IALT made significant progress toward completing this exciting salmon habitat restoration project. We are very grateful to our partners at the Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District and their Youth for Habitat Program who assisted us with invaluable contributions. Their young fish-habitat workers monitored fish abundance in the historic Cripple Creek channel and the Cripple Creek Drain for the second year in a row. They also completed significant revegetation work along the banks of the restored section of historic channel.

The next tasks are to divert the Drain flow into the northern part of the historic Cripple Creek channel, replace the culvert under Chena Ridge Spur Road, and connect the flow from Happy Creek. Through this coming winter, we will be working with our partners to finalize plans for the completion of the project. Expect AKDOT’s massive construction project at the bottom of Chena Ridge Road to occur next spring as well.

This is an incredibly exciting project and we appreciate all of the support and assistance from our community as we continue to work with our local, state, and national partners to restore the lower reaches of this important historic Chinook salmon rearing stream.

- **Owen Guthrie**, *Board President*

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
Cripple Creek Restoration	1-2
Peat Ponds	2
Message from the President	3
Comings & Goings	4-5
Parcel Spotlight: Moody	5
Financial Report	6
Accreditation Update	6
Monitoring from the Air	7
Volunteers and Membership	8

PEAT PONDS: New Trails, Viewing Platforms & more!



In 2016, IALT was awarded \$10,000 from the Rasmuson Foundation for public use improvements of the Peat Ponds parcel (near the intersection of Goldstream and Murphy Dome Roads). This generous grant made the following possible: design and construction of a trail on the north side of the property; construction of a bird viewing platform, easing the approach from the parking area down to the ponds, installation of benches for visitors; and the design and installation of interpretive signs.

A few highlights:

- A multi-season trail established by Jon Underwood of Happy Trails, Inc. The trail is 6-feet wide and extends about 0.5 miles around the northwest section of the property and about 0.7 miles around the northeast. The south side of the ponds remains a winter-use only trail.
- Martha Raynolds and Sam Dashevsky designed plans for a bird-viewing platform that utilizes a natural clearing on the property overlooking the Ponds where bird spotting is highly active.

IALT would like to **thank** the following **volunteers** for their help with these improvement projects: Sam Dashevsky, Martha Raynolds, Owen Averett, Steve Levey, Mac Levey, Pam Seiser, Eleanor Guthrie, Will Port, Rachel LaSota, Lehman Rivard, Jen Schell, Seth Adams, Owen Guthrie, Alex Prichard, Frank Keim, and Christopher Baird.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Greetings!

The ponds begin to freeze and snow settles with finality among the fading cattails as we close the door on a particularly beautiful and busy Interior summer. Now is a good time to take a moment to reflect on the achievements of the past year.

With your wonderful support and the help of other invaluable local partners, our all-volunteer board pushed ahead with several major initiatives and worked with local landowners to establish and maintain our many and diverse conservation projects.

From late May through early August, our Cripple Creek Project dominated the scene at the corner of Chena Pump and Chena Ridge Roads. With our partner, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, we were fortunate to break ground on what will be a multi-year project to restore flow to the historic channel of Cripple Creek. Please take a moment to read the Cripple Creek Project Update for details, but we could not have done all this great work without our important partners: the local firm DOWL Engineering, local construction contractor Exclusive Paving, and our partners at the Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District with their Youth for Habitat program who made additional invaluable contributions to the success of this project. With their help and yours, IALT completed our portion of two phases of the larger four phase project. We could not have succeeded without all the warm support from the community. Thank you!



We continue to have great community support for our Lower Goldstream Initiative. This summer, with generous support from the Rasmuson Foundation, help from Friends of the Peat Ponds, and with help from Eagle Scout, Owen Averett, and other volunteers, we planned and implemented some great improvements for the Peat Ponds property. Work included modifications to the parking area, trail system expansion and grading, a bird viewing platform, new interpretive signs, and some fancy combination picnic table-benches. We are very happy that this parcel is valued and enjoyed as much as it is, and we continue to be open to additional ideas for increasing user enjoyment without adversely impacting its conservation value.

Make sure to read the article in this issue on our work with Jim Moody to conserve his large properties by Lost Lake. This important conservation easement is greatly valued by local neighbors and the Lost Lake – Birch Lake community for maintaining the existing character of the area.

Last year, we began a multi-year process requiring about two thousand hours of effort to obtain accreditation by the National Land Trust Alliance. We are now in the final stages of providing some additional supporting documents including a financial review, and I know I can speak for the whole Board when I say that we'll be happy and relieved at the end of this process. This is another very significant step forward for us. Becoming an accredited land trust will help IALT to better work with larger external funding agencies and partners, meaning we can do more for the Fairbanks community!

Thanks to you and to all our members, these achievements and many more are possible. We at the Interior Alaska Land Trust appreciate and make the most of every aspect of your support. 2018 is already looking to be a very busy year and we need your help more than ever.

If you're interested in getting involved in any of these projects, please let me know. As always, thank you for your contributions, and thank you for your invaluable support. Fairbanks is a wonderful community and we enjoy working with you, and all of our partners, toward making it even better. Best wishes for the winter ahead.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Owen Averett". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

COMINGS & GOINGS

New additions to the IALT Team

Jennifer Schell, *New Board Member*

Greetings! I started volunteering with the Land Trust last year, and I enjoyed the group and the organization so much that I decided to make my affiliation more official. I first moved to Fairbanks about nine winters ago, when I accepted a position in the English Department at UAF. Although I've lived in many different places (Rhode Island, Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Kansas), I absolutely love Alaska. Nothing beats the Alaska wilderness! I live in the beautiful Goldstream Valley (not far from the Peat Ponds!) with my husband and two dogs, Ben and Sam. In the winter, I spend most of my time drinking tea, teaching classes, writing essays, and reading books about the outdoors. And in the summer, I spend most of my time traveling around Alaska, hiking, backpacking, and canoeing with the doggies in tow (not literally!).



Carolyn Loeffler, *New Conservation Coordinator*

Hello all! I'm a second-year graduate student in Arctic and Northern Studies at UAF, and the new Conservation Coordinator for the IALT. Prior to moving to Fairbanks in early 2016, I worked as a curator for the Anchorage Museum for over six years. This practical application of history through research and public engagement sparked a tireless curiosity for the northern environment and a sense of personal responsibility to its residents. I'm very excited to transfer my professional experience in historic and cultural preservation to the IALT's mission of safeguarding the character of the land and the natural resources of the Interior. I look forward to finding new ways to build community through engaging outdoor programming. My husband and I regularly run, bike, ski, walk and camp along the trails in and around the Interior and feel passionately that green space has the power to improve overall well-being and quality of life in any community.

Letters from Outgoing Board Members

"After six years on the IALT board, this will be my last year, at least for a while. IALT instituted a six year term limit on board members and this year founding member Merritt Helfferich and I will be the first board members to term limit out. Although it might seem a bit counterproductive to kick people off of a small, all-volunteer board, on balance, I think it is a good idea. Term limits force us to reach out to new people in the community with new ideas and new energy. During my six years on the IALT board, I have been impressed by all the smart, enthusiastic people that step in to fill the holes left by outgoing board members. While we could potentially lose valuable institutional knowledge, ex-board members can still stay active in IALT through our new advisory council or attend meetings as non-voting members. After a year off, they will again be eligible to rejoin the board. My six years on the IALT board have been a positive, educational, and enjoyable experience, I encourage others to attend our board meetings and see if you are interested in becoming more involved in IALT."

- **Alex Prichard**, *Board Member for 6 Years*

“As an original board member of the Interior Alaska Land Trust I have reached the end of my authorized terms and leave the board this year. The organization was formed in 1995, with the encouragement of environmentalist Celia Hunter and help from the Nature Conservancy, and it has developed into an effective conservation organization. It does so with mostly volunteers and support from the Land Trust Alliance, an organization of over 1,000 land trusts.

IALT is on the verge of receiving accreditation from the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission, joining 389 accredited land trusts from 45 states (including three others from Alaska) that together conserve 78% of all land trust conservation holdings. IALT is also a member of “Terrafirma,” a risk pool owned by the land trusts insuring members against the costs of defending conservation lands. This insures that lands entrusted to us will be permanently protected as the owners desired. Terrafirma insures 7.7 million acres from 493 land trusts. Our Land Trust protects numerous parcels of land between Central, Alaska and Lost Lake on the Richardson Highway.

Living close to the wild lands is more difficult as Alaska grows, so safeguarding land to preserve its character and keep green space between urban housing and industrial development is imperative. I’m glad I could be involved with other dedicated people to make these contributions to the quality of life in Alaska.”

- **Merritt R. Helfferich**, *Founding Board Member*



PARCEL SPOTLIGHT: Between the River & the Lake

Jim Moody spent his summers with his grandmother in a cabin on Lost Lake, a small lake between Birch Lake and the Tanana River. His grandfather's land was divided among family members. Some left the State, others just did not have time to spend at Lost Lake. However, Jim's attachment to the land only grew with time, and he did his best to protect the land that he had so enjoyed as a boy, and now a grown man, by purchasing adjacent parcels from family members over time as they came up for sale.

When he considered the long-term future of this special place, Jim wanted to see it remain in its current condition, with a few small cabins around Lost Lake surrounded by wide tracts of undeveloped land. In order to fulfill that vision, he worked with the Interior Alaska Land Trust to put a Conservation Easement on his land. Jim Moody came to several IALT Board meetings, discussed various options for his land, told us about his goals, and helped craft a

Conservation Easement that met those goals. He also gave the Land Trust a generous gift to help IALT steward his property in perpetuity.

The land is a beautiful property, including about one-third of the shores of Lost Lake. It is valuable to the residents of Birch Lake and visitors who spend time at Birch Lake, as it includes two-thirds of a mile of Richardson Highway road frontage, right across from Birch Lake. It also provides a buffer of undeveloped land next to the Lost Lake Scout Camp, contributing to the wilderness setting enjoyed by many young Alaskans campers. We are very grateful to Jim Moody for his vision and forethought for future generations who will continue to enjoy the land of which he was so fond.

Tako (Martha) Raynolds, *Board Member & Treasurer*

2016 FINANCIAL REPORT

INCOME

Interest	1,355
Membership	3,161
Donations	32,576
Grants	85,500
Total Income	122,592

EXPENSES

Conferences & meetings	2,252
Special events	1,605
Operating expenses	6,684
Land acquisition	972
Land stewardship	14,136
Contract services	40,859
Accreditation	850
Total Expenses	67,358
Net Income*	55,233

*grant income received in 2016 for 2017 projects

IALT ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday, November 7 @ 6:30-8:00 pm
Noel Wien Library Auditorium
Speaker: Michael Downs

Michael Downs is a National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Project Leader for the Alaska Region, where he supports community-led outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation projects. From 2011 - 2016, he served as an outdoor recreation planner with the U.S. Forest Service, BLM. He holds a graduate certificate in wilderness management from University of Montana and a bachelor's degree in fisheries biology from Evergreen State College. Michael loves to get out on urban and backcountry trails to hike and bike with his family.

ACCREDITATION UPDATE

This year, IALT submitted an application for accreditation to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. As part of the application process, IALT underwent a self-evaluation to recognize organizational strengths and areas of improvement. We also submitted an extensive set of materials—meeting minutes, correspondence, maps, title searches, and easement and title deeds—documenting our current practices. Printed in triplicate and organized into binders, these materials made their way to upstate New York to be mulled over by LTA's Accreditation Commission. Just before Labor Day, IALT spoke with a staff member from the Commission and a volunteer reviewer from another land trust to answer questions and provide additional information. Most of our board members were able to participate in the call. Although the LTA asked us to update some of our policies, they were very positive about our application and thanked us for our efforts. We hope to receive our notice of acceptance this coming February.

- **Kayde Kaiser**, *Accreditation Coordinator*

DONATE APPRECIATED STOCK

IALT has set up a brokerage account so that we can accept gifts of stock. If you have **appreciated stock**, you can donate the stock to the Land Trust. You will get an income tax deduction for the full value of that stock without paying taxes on any appreciation. The Land Trust will get the full value of the stock that you donate, which we will very much appreciate!!

Land Conserved by IALT

6 parcels owned, 313 acres
16 parcels with easements, 1188 acres

1501 TOTAL ACRES CONSERVED



A NEW PERSPECTIVE: Monitoring from the Air

IALT is growing rapidly, and within the past year we acquired two very remote parcels in and around the Chena River State Recreation Area thanks to generous donations by Mick Killion and Robert Fox, and an ongoing partnership with the Army Corps of Engineers Wetland Mitigation program. We are thrilled to be able to protect these remote parcels from development and help to maintain the wild feel that so many Interior Alaskans enjoy while hiking in the Chena River Rec Area. However, they've presented us with unique monitoring challenges, seeing as one parcel is a twelve-hour hike from the road and the other is similarly situated. Part of the responsibility the Land Trust takes on when accepting donations such as these is to monitor each parcel annually to ensure that its conservation values are being preserved.

Considering the time required to monitor these parcels on foot, as well as our other remote (but still road accessible) parcel in Central, AK, we began looking around for other options last year. Some research led us to LightHawk, a nonprofit that works to pair conservation organizations with volunteer pilots who

can help achieve conservation goals. While LightHawk primarily works in the lower 48, luckily for us they have one volunteer pilot registered in the Fairbanks area. Arthur Hussey generously volunteered his time, plane, and fuel to take Seth Adams and me up last fall to aerially monitor these three remote parcels. Thanks to this excellent partnership, we were able to fulfill our monitoring duties in a few hours, rather than in three separate day trips!

When we fly over a parcel, we take lots of pictures and look for any obvious changes. If we see anything out of the ordinary, we follow up with a site visit. Of course, flying over is not the same as walking through the parcel, so we will still be monitoring these parcels on foot every few years.

We are planning another flight with Arthur now, and are very grateful for his time and LightHawk's work, which allow us to see our conserved properties from an entirely new perspective!

- **Sama Winder**, *Board Member*

MANY THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Board of Directors: Seth Adams, Owen Guthrie, Merritt Helfferich, Alex Prichard, Martha Raynolds, Sama Winder, Jennifer Schell

Community Volunteers: Owen Averett, Christopher Baird, Sam Dashevsky, Margi Dashevsky, Eleanor Guthrie, Arthur Hussey, Frank Keim, Rachel LaSota, Alex Lee, Cam Leonard, the Levey family, Tom Paragi, Will Port, Lehman Rivard, Pam Seiser, and all the neighbors who help us steward our conservation properties.

AND TO OUR MEMBERS

ABR, Inc., Seth Adams, Anne Armstrong, Alan Batten, Mary & Dick Bishop, Travis Booms, Pete & Peg Bowers, Scott Bredbenner, Larry and Karla Bright, Shauna Budge, Patty & Dave Burns, Bob & Linda Bursiel, Kathy & Robert Cannone, Karen Clautice, David & Jo Cowee, Gail Davidson, Linda Schandelmeier & John Davies, Jen & Peter Delamere, Muffie & Jim Durst, Christie & Rodney Everett, Louise Foster, Nora Foster, Jimmy & Joanna Fox, Joan Franz & Dave Mather, Tony Gasbarro, Anna Godduhn, Laura & Sven Grage, Joanne Groves, Owen Guthrie, Robyne & Andy Harrington, Melissa Head, Merritt Helfferich, Levi Hensel & family, Bob and Joann Henszey, Grier Hopkins, Tanya Ignacio, Janlee & Ken Irving, Barbie Jackson, Jean James,

Julie Kaufman & Len Kamerling, Frank & Jennifer Keim, Janet Kidd & Jon Lindstrom, Don Kiely, Heather Koponen, Steve & Becca Levey, Sherry Lewis, Mark Lockwood, Matt Macander & Katie Garrity, Jim Magdanz, Philip & Jackie Martin, Steve Masterman & Sarah Swift, Barbara Matthews, William McAmis, Brandon McGrath-Bernhard. & Sara Tabbert, Bruce McIntosh, Helen Anne Meyers, Mette Moeller, Phyllis Morrow & Chase Hensel, David & Barbara Murray, Chena Koponen & Gary Newman, Heather Koponen, Mary Ann Nickles, Daniel Osborne, Jessica. Panko, Tom Paragi, Carolyn Parker, Charlie Parr & Marilyn Biagi, Don & Tracie Pendergrast, June & Dennis Pinnell Stephens, Anna Plager & Chris Nye, Roger & Bonita Post, Barbara Powell, Alex Prichard & Angela Larson, Martha Raynolds & Sam Dashevsky, Paul & Terry Reichardt, Jane & Terry Reilly, Marjie Richards, Susan Royston, Anne Ruggles & Don Hampton, Tonya Schlentner, Erik Schoen, John Shook, Libby Silberling, Jace Smith, Mike Spindler & Pam Nelson, Gerald Springer, Nicole Stewart, Jan Stitt, Karen & Daryl Taber, Walt Tape, Steve Taylor, Susan Todd, Don & Julia Triplehorn, Eric Troyer & Corrine Leistikow. Skip Walker, Jeffery Walters, Joe Welch, Cindy & Andy Wentworth, Michael Whalen, Jennine Williamson & John Fitzgerald, Sama Winder & Matthew Whitley, Connie & Cort Zachel, Mary Zalar & Ken Whitten

Grantors: US Fish & Wildlife Service, Rasmuson Foundation, Land Trust Alliance



P.O. Box 84169
Fairbanks, AK 99708-4169

Annual Meeting

Nov. 7, 6:30-8:00 pm
Noel Wien Library
Auditorium