

INTERIOR ALASKA LAND TRUST



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FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

*Owen Guthrie
Board President*

As always, we thank you for your donations and all of your support!

Your all-volunteer board at the Interior Alaska Land Trust has been very busy this past spring and summer! Thus, instead of the usual spring newsletter, we're bringing you a fall issue. Here's a flash rundown of some of the projects you, our board members, and other volunteers have been working on.

With the help of Jack and Carol Wilbur, and members like you, we acquired 20 acres at the bottom of Miller Hill Road in Goldstream Valley. This lot has been a dumping ground for trash, construction debris, and old cars for decades. We have already removed two derelict cars, a 1960 Fairbanks school bus, and more than 220 cubic yards of garbage and debris! We hope to finish the majority of the cleanup work on this critical parcel before winter. Excitingly, we were able to clean and re-open the old Tanana Valley Railroad Trail for winter use! We are so delighted and grateful to have this parcel conserved.

In addition to the 20-acre parcel in Goldstream, we recently closed on the 90-acre 'Graceland' parcel near the Isberg Recreation Area on the north side of Chena Ridge, in the upper headwaters of the Cripple Creek drainage. This is a beautiful parcel and its conservation will add greatly to the trails and greenspace wealth of Fairbanks.

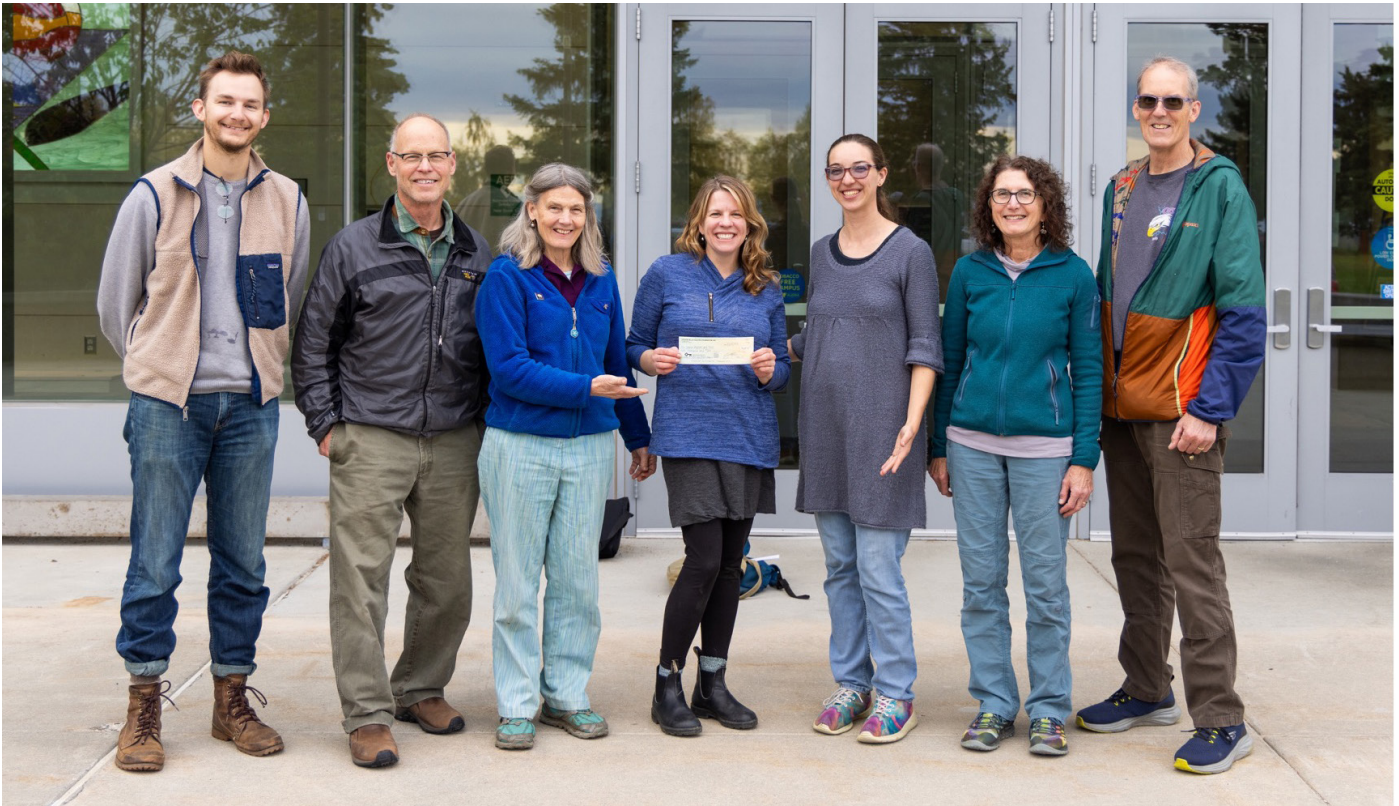
Back in April, we had two 75-foot all-aluminum bridge kits delivered at the Chinook Conservation Park (the 90-acre parcel between Chena Ridge Road and Old Chena Ridge Road). With the help of several volunteers, we finished construction of the two bridge frames and placed them across their respective spans in less than 7 days – just before Cripple Creek filled with snow melt!

Your donations make all of these projects possible. Each 30-cubic-yard dumpster load of trash from the Miller Hill parcel ran us about \$1,200. Renting the skid-steer to shuttle gravel for the construction of the Chinook Conservation Park bridge footings cost us about \$500. Each of these is made possible by your donations. We put 100% of your contributions to work to improve our fair city. Thank you!

Another exciting announcement we have to share is that Interior Alaska Land Trust was the recipient of a GVEA GoodCents Grant. IALT was awarded \$9,000 to put towards improving public access at Chinook Conservation Park. We used this funding to pay for the decking for the two bridges; each plank of the new bridges cost about \$30 and we needed 300 of them! Thank you GVEA! With the decking purchased and another round of volunteer labor, we accomplished our goal of completing the bridges before the snow flies.

As ever, the Fairbanks summer was fast and breathtakingly beautiful. We had many days of amazing, heavenly weather followed by a good, solid taste of smoke, but that made the soft cool rains blowing in from Siberia all the sweeter. I hope you have a wonderful fall. We are all looking forward to a beautiful Fairbanks winter with some great new trail opportunities! Again, thank you!



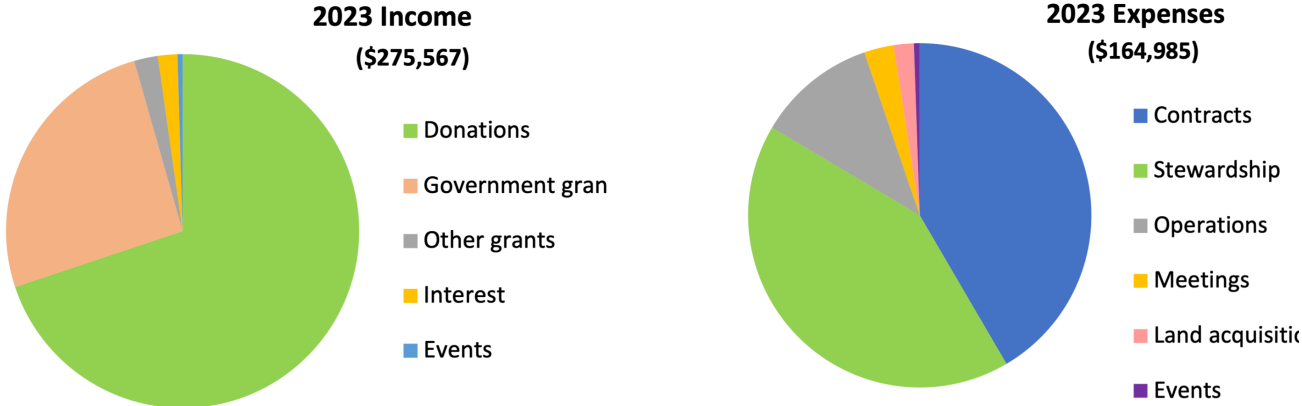


GVEA Public Relations Coordinator Grace Wilson hand-delivered IALT’s grant award check to our August board meeting. Enthusiastic acceptors are pictured L-R: Max Plichta, Cam Leonard, Martha Raynolds, Sally Kieper, Christin Swearingen, Sue Bishop, and Brendan Labelle-Hamer. Photo credit: Grace Wilson.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Martha Raynolds
Board Treasurer

Most of IALT income in 2023 came from individual donations (70%). The government grants were for work done on Cripple Creek. 2023 expenses were lower than income, as we saved money for the big projects we’re doing in 2024. Most of our 2023 expenses were on stewardship activities, including trails and signs. The contract expenses were mostly for Cripple Creek fish passage work.



CHINOOK CONSERVATION PARK UPDATE

Sally Kieper
Outreach Coordinator

When viewed from Chena Pump Road, beyond what looks like a forgettable patch of willows, lies a surprisingly beautiful and tranquil little patch of wilderness.

The Land Trust has been involved with this property since 2008. The story of Cripple Creek is a slice of the rich history of Fairbanks, and the engineering feats of the gold rush days. This salmon stream was rerouted back in 1935 for mining purposes, and though hydraulic mining ceased many years ago, the channelized ditch remained. This straightened ditch offered poor habitat for rearing Chinook Salmon. In 2021, the creek's flow was restored through a joint project between IALT, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and AK Department of Transportation. After over 85 years, salmon rearing habitat was reestablished for Cripple Creek, and just this summer, juvenile Chinook Salmon were found in the restored creek!

Chinook Conservation Park (CCP) is split down the middle by Cripple Creek. A historic road bed runs along the west side of the park. In 2023, we hired a local trail builder, Jon Underwood, to rebuild the old road bed on the west side of the creek; what was rutted, muddy, and basically unwalkable is now a beautiful multi-use path that is built to withstand ATV use. An additional trail was added to the park in 2019; a volunteer group cut a pedestrian trail along the eastern border of the creek. This trail has been popular with snowshoers. For the past few winters, recreationists have been able to cross the creek and connect these two trails. The Land Trust had a goal of making the CCP more accessible year-round, and in 2024 we began the construction of two bridges.

Member donations over several years funded the acquisition of trail-specific aluminum bridge frames. The manual labor to assemble these bridges was provided by IALT volunteers. For the final phase, we were elated to receive a GoodCents Grant of \$9,000 for the purchase of Trex decking from Spenard Builders Supply. Now, these bridges are safe, inviting, and durable for many years of use.

Although the trails are relatively new, this park is already a well-loved part of the Chena Flats community. Future plans for the Chinook Conservation Park include the addition of a parking area to increase public access and interpretive signs to enrich the user experience. We expect that when the park is completed and promoted to the public, it will become a very popular local destination.

THANK YOU
GOLDEN VALLEY ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION!





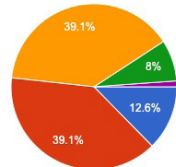
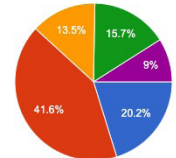
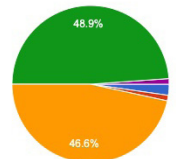
THE FUTURE OF IALT

We asked members their opinions on future directions for IALT and its work.

Question #1 asked how supportive you would be if IALT hired a staff person. You were very supportive of this move towards professional staff: 49% said they would support the addition of staff and might increase giving to cover costs, and 47% said they would continue their current level of giving regardless of the addition of staff.

Question #2 asked about work outside the Fairbanks area. About two-thirds were in favor of staying local, with 42% saying they supported staying local, but were open to some non-Fairbanks projects, and 20% saying they strongly supported staying local. About one-quarter supported expanding outside the Fairbanks area, and 13% had no strong opinion.

Question #3 asked about budget priorities: improving current properties vs. conserving new properties. Both priorities were deemed important, with two-thirds suggesting a balance of 30-50% on current properties and 50-70% on new properties. 13% wanted more spent on conserving new properties, and 8% wanted more spent on current properties.



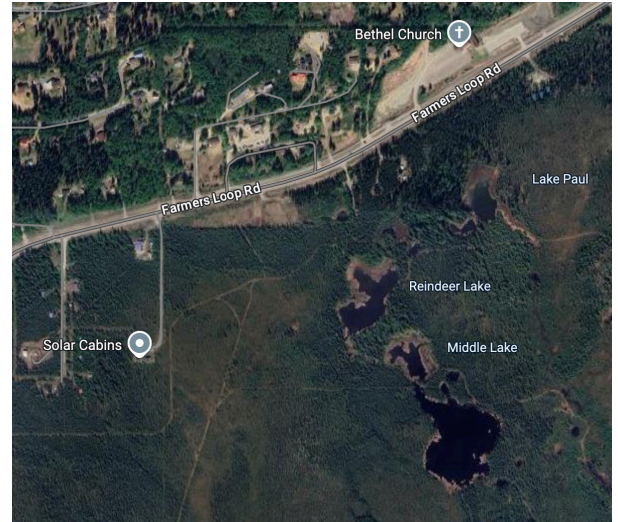
WHAT WE'RE UP TO NEXT

We have the amazing opportunity to conserve 220 acres in Upper Cripple Creek. This land is directly adjacent to the Isberg Recreation Area and the Graceland property that we conserved with your help this year. Many of you may have actually been using the winter trails on this land without being aware that it was private property. Look for more updates as we work on acquiring this parcel.

NEW MUSKRAT LAKES TRAIL ACCESS & PARKING

Cam Leonard
Board Member

An invitation to tour the “Rat Ponds” might not hold much appeal to those who reside in more urban areas of our planet. But to us locals, it’s a different story. For years we have accessed these trails from the golf course at Ballaine and Farmer’s Loop, largely thanks to the long-standing trail grooming services provided by Stan Justice. Now we have another option: the new Muskrat Lakes Trailhead to be found further east on Farmers Loop (just past Midnight Sun Rd. and before Bethel Church).



IALT bought this small parcel in 2022 and then went through an approval process with the Borough to allow this new access point onto the Creamer’s Field trail system. It allows non-motorized access only, and has seen steady use already last winter by skiers, walkers, bicyclists, skijorers, bike-jorers, kick-sledders, and mushers. Multi-use trails like these tend to provide memorable and sometimes hilarious encounters between different users; keep your head up!



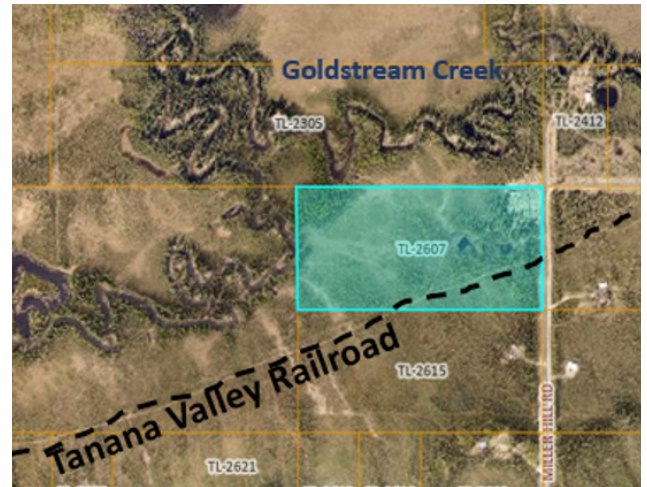
IALT acts as the conduit for your collective commitment to protect our community’s boreal habitats and public access. So treat yourself to a celebratory “rat ponds” tour! Our times on trails like these weave themselves into the fabric of our winters. Caveat: the author has no experience in, and makes no representations regarding, the suitability of these trails for summer use. You might have to share parts of them with the rats themselves.

THANK YOU SHAUN PATTERSON & GREENSTONE STATION

Thanks to Shaun Patterson and his company Greenstone Station for work at all three of the IALT projects highlighted in this newsletter. He smoothed out the parking area for the Muskrat Lakes trailhead and plowed it last winter. For the CCP bridge project, he hauled in dump truck loads of gravel and built snow bridges to prepare the sites. At the Tanana Railroad property, he hauled out the yellow bus (no small feat after 50 years), and loaned us his skid steer for a couple hours.

NEW TANANA VALLEY RAILROAD PARCEL OFF MILLER HILL ROAD

The IALT acquired 20 acres of land off Miller Hill Road that includes a section of the Tanana Valley Railroad. This railroad ran from the old town site of Chena, near the current Tanana River boat landing, to Fox. The railroad went along Goldstream Creek for much of its route. The land to the north of this parcel is part of the state-owned Goldstream Public Use Area. The segment from Sheep Creek Road east toward Ballaine Road is a well-used winter trail, and part of it goes right through this property. The previous owners blocked the trail, so its return to public use is being celebrated.



This parcel has long been a problem site, with abandoned vehicles and trash accumulated over decades. The IALT Board has made huge progress in cleaning up the property. Trails users, Miller Hill Road residents, and local wildlife all appreciate the improvement! Most of the 20 acres is beautiful spruce forest, wetlands, and ponds.



One of many dumpsters hauled off the Miller Hill property, with volunteer Emily Donaldson for scale.

MEET OUR CONTRACTORS



Sally at the Rat Ponds with her friend and dogsitting charge, Fergie.

Sally Kieper signed on with IALT in June 2024 to contribute her skills in publications and grant writing. Sally has lived in Fairbanks for over 15 years. Her first job in Fairbanks was giving tours at the Large Animal Research Station (LARS). Since then, she has had a variety of roles in our community, including classroom teacher at Joy Elementary and Barnette Magnet School, place-based science curriculum developer for UAF K-12 Outreach, program manager for the Golden Heart Community Foundation, and in her current position as a publications specialist at ADF&G.

She first crossed paths with the IALT board in her unofficial role organizing the equally unofficial social event / fun race called the Ivory Quest, which takes place on Goldstream Trails. Much to her delight, IALT board member Max Plichta reached out and offered to help with trail work and also set up an IALT outreach table the day of the race.

In her free time, Sally enjoys canoeing and berry-picking in the summer, and cross-country skiing and skijoring in the winter. She also spends more of her free time than she would like on home improvement projects.

Matt Labrenz embarked somewhat unknowingly into the natural resource management field through a summer forest management position on Joint-Base Elmendorf Richardson. There, he had the good fortune of learning how to use geospatial software for analyzing and mapping land to create silviculture plans. More recently he worked for DNR in the state land sales program where he developed subdivision projects and had great opportunities to travel throughout Interior and Southcentral to meet with communities to receive input regarding various land management proposals, absorbing different viewpoints and becoming fascinated with the process along the way. He is excited to apply his background in land management to support conserving and protecting the integrity of important land in the Interior with the Land Trust. His work with the IALT will include overseeing monitoring of conservation properties and other stewardship projects. Matt loves being in the woods hunting, fishing, admiring the trees and wildlife of the boreal forest, canoeing and cross-country skiing.



Matt inspecting the new Graceland parcel.



FRANK KEIM

Volunteer Spotlight: Frank Keim By Andrew M. Keller

Frank Keim was one of the early monitors of the Interior Alaska Land Trust properties and has continued to monitor properties for over twenty-five years. He has built signs, worked on trail projects, and helped build the Land Trust to what it is today.

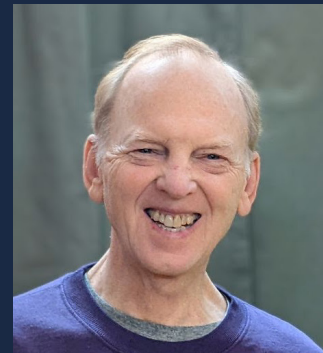
Frank has been an educator for over half a century in Alaska. He taught high school in rural Alaska for twenty-one years and has continued communication with his former students long after retirement. Frank has guided many trips into the Alaska wilderness, often introducing people to wild areas for the first time. He has also led birding trips for Audubon, Alaska Bird Observatory, and Friends of Creamer's Field.

Frank has worked hard to maintain non-motorized hiking and skiing trails in the Fairbanks area. He is also frequently seen educating the public and policy makers at hearings on conservation issues. He is a constant contributor to the local newspaper.

The Land Trust is fortunate to have volunteers like Frank supporting its mission.

SPECIAL THANKS

You may have met Andy Keller over the past few years, as he worked enthusiastically to promote IALT and its conservation activities. Andy has a deep understanding of the importance of the outdoors and the undeveloped land around Fairbanks, enjoying many outdoor activities himself. The Board would like to thank Andy for introducing so many people to IALT, our goals, and our work. His outreach efforts will continue to pay dividends for IALT for many years.



THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS

for your donations of \$25 or more

Helen Adams, Jeff Adams, Kelsey Aho, Dick Anderson, Lillian Anderson-Misel, Anne Armstrong, Sharon Baring, Alan Batten, Elizabeth Belknap, Marilyn Biagi, Mary Bishop, Dan Bishop, Karen Bodony, Ellen Bohman Mitchell, Nicolas Bonjour, Travis Booms, Aurora Bowers, Jim Brader, Karla Bright, Byron Broda, Maida Buckley, Shauna Budge, Christina Buffington, Nathaniel Buffington, Patty Burns, Linda Bursiel, Mary Burtness, Jay Cable, Sarah Campbell, Kathy Cannone, Alison Carter, Marjorie Casort, Mimi Chapin, Brian Charlton, Jaclyn Cheek, Robin Child, Karen Clautice, Jennifer Cook, David Cowee, Pat Crisenbery, April Crosby, Tracie Curry, Janet Daley, Samuel Dashevsky, Sandy Dauenhauer, Gail Davidson, Linda DeFoliart, Conor Dennehy, Janice Densham, Jim DeWitt, Anne Doerpinghaus, Sheree Dohner, Joseph Dupras, Rheba Dupras, Kyla Durham, Muffie Durst, Nicki Eiseman, Heather Eisenman, Melanie Ingram, Alyssa Enriquez, Julie Esdale, Christie Everett, Mary Farrell, Sue Faulkner, David Fee, Brian Feeny, Emzo Fossum, Nora Foster, Jimmy Fox, Christina Foytich, Mike Frantes, Joan Franz, Carter Freymier, Tony Gasbarro, Tom George, Anna Godduhn, Brie Goldstein, Sven & Laura Grage, Joanne Groves, John Hagey, Brian Haley, Melinda Haley, Owen & Anne Hanley, William Hao, Joseph Hardenbrook, Margaret Harings, Robyne Harrington, Becky Hassebroek, Anne Hauer, Melissa Head, David Hejna, Carla Helfferich, Glenn Helkenn Jr, Bob Henszey, Diane Herrmann, Eva Hewitt, Justin Hill, Jon & Jill Holmgren, Grier Hopkins, Garrett Hoppner, Horst Expediting and Remote Operations, Daisy Huang, Laurie Hueffer, Jessie Huff, Tanya Ignacio, Janlee Irving, Barbie Jackson, Jean James, Karen Jensen, Janet Jorgenson, Stan Justice, Karl Kassel, Carol Kasza, Julie Kaufman, Carol Kaynor, Frank Keim, Melissa Kellner, Catherine Kershner, Don Kiely, Danielle Knapp, Louis Knapp, Sam Knapp, Adam Koegle, Heather Koponen, Diana Kovacich, Steven Kover, Brendan La Belle-Hamer, Julie & Kevin Lageson, Jane Lanford, Brian Lawhead,

H. Van Z. Lawrence, Cam Leonard, Carolyn Leonard, Sherry Lewis, Carol Linkswiler, Jerry & Janet Lipka, Shirley Liss, Carol Roblee, Margaret Mannix, Christine Martin, Steve Masterman, Gail Mayo, William McAmis, Scott McCaig, Adam McComb, Brandon McGrath-Bernhard, Bruce McIntosh, Brian McKenna, Carol Meyer, Hal Meyer, Helen Meyers, Mary Mika, Stefan Milkowski, David Mitchell, Stanton Moll, Faye Moore, Jeanette Moore, Briann Morley, Phyllis Morrow, Gael Murakami, Mike Musick, Greta Myerchin-Tape, Ree Nancarrow, Chena Newman, Mary Ann Nickles, Terry Norman, Michael O'Brien, Judy Olson Hicks, William Olson, Daniel Osborne, Jess Panko, Jessica Panko, Carolyn Parker, Elizabeth Parr, Malcolm Peason, Patty Peirsol, Tracie Pendergrast, June Pinnell Stephens, Anna Plager, Max Plichta, Karen Post, Roger Post, Alex Prichard, Bevin Protas, Margaret Rader, Martha Raynolds, Kyle Redilla, Paul Reichardt, Jane Reilly, Jillian Richie, Bob Ritchie, Stephanie Rivet, Hansford Rose, Forrest Rosenbower, Brittany Rozier, Anne Ruggles, Amy Russell, John Sargeant, Linda Schandelmeier, Jen Schell, Megan Schulze, Melissa Schwar, Carol Scott, Bryan Sehmel, Pam Seiser, Dick Shideler, Peter Shurr, Libby Silberling, Mark Simon, Doug Sims, Kathleen Sisson, Howard Smith, Pamela Smith, Mike Spindler, Nicole Stewart, Lisa Stuby, Anne Sudkamp, Christin Swearingen, Dan Swift, Andrea Swingley, Barbara Tabbert, Sara Tabbert, Walt Tape, Ingrid Taylor, Steve Taylor, Isaac Thompson, Kristin Timm, Eric Troyer, Ursa Major Distilling, Brie Van Dam, June Viavant, Steve Vick, Tristan Wagner, Albert Wald, Skip Walker, Jeffery Walters, Andre Ware, Cam Webb, Laura Weingartner, June Weinstock, Joe Welch, Cindy Wentworth, Michael Whalen, Aaron Wilbur, Jack Wilbur, Lezlie Wilfer, Jess Wilke, Frank Williams, Jennine Williamson, Caroline Wolf, Connie Zachel, Mary Zalar, Joesi Zastrow

YOU ARE INVITED

Interior Alaska Land Trust Annual Meeting
6 pm Wednesday, 6 November 2024
Murie Auditorium, UAF

UAF researchers will present their studies on the response to IALT's fish passage restoration project on Cripple Creek. This will be followed by a brief business meeting to elect Board Members for 2025.

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

MONITORS: Martha Raynolds, Maxwell Plichta, Christin Swearingen, Marissa Breslin, Frank Keim, Julie Lageson, Andrew Keller, Magali Vincent, Scott Bredbenner, Tracie Curry, Jerry Lipka, Heather Koponen, Carolyn Loeffler, Betsy and Mathew Sturm, Brie Van Dam, Sara Tabbert, Gail Davidson, Joe McWilliams, and Rick Baumfalk

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Owen Guthrie (President), Brendan Labelle-Hamer (Vice President), Martha Raynolds (Treasurer), Maxwell Plichta (Secretary), Seth Adams, Sue Bishop, Cam Leonard, and Christin Swearingen

SPECIAL THANKS: Sincere thanks to Haley McCaig for her work contacting neighbors about our Graceland project, and to both Haley and Olivia Lunsford for hosting our celebration of the conservation of that lovely 90 acres next to Isberg Recreation Area.

MEMBERSHIP

Member donations make the work we do possible. Please consider making a donation or renewing your membership today on our website interioraklandtrust.org. Membership levels start as low as \$25.

Prefer to donate by check? For your convenience, we provided a self-addressed envelope enclosed in this newsletter.

Lost the envelope? Make checks payable to Interior Alaska Land Trust and mail to >>>

Interior Alaska Land Trust
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Questions? Call 907-322-3462



Muskrat Lakes Trailhead