



ON THE PAPER TRAIL

NEWS FOR SITKA TRAIL WORKS MEMBERS

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Winter Cross Trail Progress

With the crew's tenacious effort through less-than-ideal conditions, the Cross Trail advances! Despite a seven week break due to snow and frozen ground, we've constructed 70% of the 2.6 miles from Harbor Mountain Road to Starrigavan. Work on the Starrigavan side is complete to Watlachéix'k'i Héen (No Name Creek) and the main line from the other direction is less than a quarter mile away.



New trail under construction about a mile north of Granite Creek, photographed February 2021.

The Sitka Rocks dock connector was started at the end of February with the construction of a small trailhead parking lot off HPR. After the base course trail is complete and the 60-foot Watlachéix'k'i Héen bridge is installed, the full length of the trail will be finished with a compacted topcoat of D-1 gravel. We appreciate your patience in staying off the trail during construction, as the crew is actively falling trees and running heavy machinery.

Sitka Trail Works anticipates completing this phase of the Cross Trail by the end of 2021.

What's next? Planning underway

The State of Alaska, the US Forest Service, and the City of Sitka are launching concurrent planning processes to develop collective goals for recreation. Alaska needs a new Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) to be eligible for federal funding, so a Southeast regional working group is convening to compile project and policy priorities. Meanwhile, the US Forest Service and Alaska Trails are undertaking the Tongass Sustainable Trails Strategy to identify community-based approaches for the maintenance, decommission, reconstruction, and new construction of trails across the Tongass National Forest for the next 10 -15 years. Locally, the volunteer Sitka Parks & Recreation Committee has secured the support of the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) to plan for the future of our City's recreation facilities. Each of these endeavors aim to better understand the needs and interests of communities to focus efforts on shared priorities. So what's your vision for the future of trails and recreation? Stay tuned for opportunities to share your input this summer!

*Show your support and love of Sitka's trails,
donate and become a member today!*

Sitka applies for Cross Trail Connector to Price-Highland Neighborhood

Another neighborhood may have a chance to gain a connection to the Cross Trail. At the end of March, after acquiring approval from the Sitka Assembly, Trail Works partnered with the City and Borough of Sitka (CBS) to apply for funding through the Alaska Federal Lands Access Program of the US DOT. The application proposes designing and constructing a bridge across Indian River (Kaasda Héen) and a short multi-modal trail to the Price Street, Lance Drive, and Hillside Subdivision area. The Price-Highland neighborhood is one of the largest in Sitka, with an estimated 270 households and 80 businesses, but lacks safe walking and biking facilities.

In partnership with the US Forest Service, the project would separately plan a reroute of the Verstovia Trail, from the future terminus of the connector trail at the top of the neighborhood. The current route of the Verstovia Trail trespasses across private property in two places and overflow parking at the trailhead creates a roadway hazard.



If awarded funding, the planning and design process would start in 2024, beginning with an in-depth public and neighborhood scoping process. To best serve the neighborhood, residents will be asked to provide their input on where to locate the trail and access points. The map above is only a conceptual sketch.

Community Conservation Corps puts unemployed Sitkans to work

Did you know that Sitka Trail Works was founded to employ former mill workers after the pulp mill closed in 1993? In that spirit, we were glad to lend a hand this fall in support of the Community Conservation Corps, a CARES Act funded employment program led by the Sitka Conservation Society. The Community Corps put Sitkans back to work building trails and restoring community assets.

The Community Corps tackled a wide range of projects in a short and stormy fall season. The team made repairs to the cold water source at Goddard Hot Springs, built an outhouse at Tom Young Cabin, installed mile markers on the Cross Trail, built a new mountain bike trail behind the high school, scouted the South Sitka Sound Coastal Trail to investigate feasibility, cleared brush from an historic ANB cemetery, and repaired damaged trails around town. We hope to see more win-win recreation jobs programs like this in the future!



Support Sitka Trail Works

Donate at sitkatrailworks.org today!
All donations are 100% tax deductible

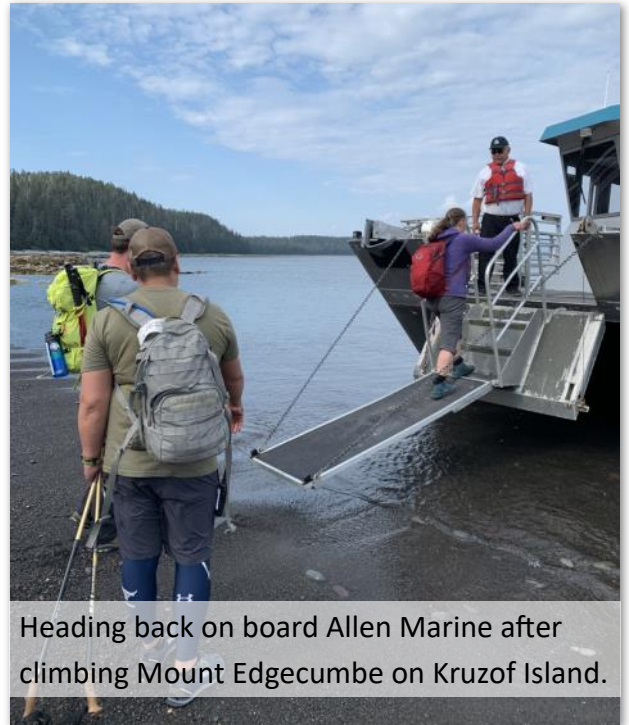
Summer 2021 Membership Hikes

This summer, with proper health precautions in place, we're reviving our popular volunteer led excursions to Kruzof Island.

In July and August, we'll be running two hikes to Mt. Edgecumbe and a bike & hike to Shelikof Bay. The biking is moderately difficult and a bit technical, with larger rocks and bumps than the Cross Trail. We recommend packing a repair kit and getting your mountain bike tuned up beforehand at Yellow Jersey. Both destinations, a volcano crater and an expansive outer coast beach, are well worth the effort, so get your tickets now!

We are also offering a wide range of free, in-town hiking trips this summer. For two hikes this season, we're partnering with Waypoint for Veterans, a non-profit that promotes healing through outdoor adventures. All are welcome!

As always, visit sitkatrailworks.org for the latest information and to register.



Heading back on board Allen Marine after climbing Mount Edgecumbe on Kruzof Island.

Board of Directors Member Changes

We recently said goodbye to Board Members Jeff Arndt and Jill Johnson, who left Sitka for sunnier locales. Jeff and Jill's enthusiasm and valuable input are missed! We are lucky to welcome a tremendous new Board Member Jim Rodgers. Jim spent most of his life in New Hampshire before moving to Sitka in August of 2016. Much of Jim's spare time was spent hiking in the White Mountain National Forest and kayaking in rivers and streams throughout the Granite State. He and his wife, Laura, moved to Sitka to be closer to family. Jim thought he would "retire," but soon discovered this was not how he's wired. He spent a year in AmeriCorps and continued working at his service site at Sitka Counseling once his commitment ended. Jim currently volunteers at the Sitka Animal Shelter and can be seen walking around the city and trails of Sitka with his dog, Teddy.



Staff Changes

This winter, Administrative Assistant Laurinda Marcello accepted an offer to join the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association, where her office management skills will be greatly appreciated. To cover that role, and an expanded portfolio, we recruited Sitkan Ben Hughey. Ben launched his career as a STW crew member in 2006. He spent three seasons working for the local US Forest Service, then built trails outside of Seattle. Ben traded the Pulaski for the pen after college, supporting regional land management planning and public lands advocacy at the local, state, and federal level for six years. A post-graduate fellowship took Ben to the other Washington in 2019 where he worked on environmental policy in Congress. In fall of 2020, Ben returned home to Sitka and directed the Sitka Conservation Society's Community Conservation Corps, leading out-of-work Sitkans on recreation projects with lasting community benefit.



SITKA TRAIL WORKS 2021 HIKES & EVENTS CALENDAR

ALL HIKES ARE FUN AND LED BY VOLUNTEER BOARD MEMBERS; TRAIL/HIKE DESCRIPTIONS & POLICIES [ONLINE AT SITKATRILWORKS.ORG](http://SITKATRILWORKS.ORG)

Participants should bring a daypack with snacks and water. VHF radio & first aid kit carried by STW Hike Leaders.

Date	Hike Info (round trip distance)	Meeting Spot	Donations / Ticket
May 8 - SATURDAY	Cross Trail Bike Ride Indian River to SHS and back 5 miles Moderate difficulty	Salty Spoke Bike Co-op (behind the Hames Center) 1:30 PM	FREE Donations Welcome
May 16 - SUNDAY	Ben Grussendorf Forest & Muskeg + Starrigavan Estuary Trail Loop 1.6 miles Easy	Starrigavan - Boat Launch Gravel Lot (across road from launch) 1:30 PM	FREE Donations Welcome
May 22 - SATURDAY	Herring Cove-Beaver Lake 3.6 miles Moderate w/steep 1/4 mile	Herring Cove Trailhead (out Sawmill Creek Rd.) 9:00 AM	FREE Donations Welcome
June 5 - SATURDAY	National Trails Day Volunteer Trail Maintenance	To be announced	FREE Volunteer Event Tools provided. Bring gloves.
June 12 - SATURDAY	Indian River Waterfall 9 miles Moderate difficulty	Indian River / Cross Trail Trailhead (by Indian River Rd. & Yaw Dr.) 9:00 AM	FREE Donations Welcome
June 19 - SATURDAY	Medvejie Solstice Run	Race & registration information on Medvejie Solstice Run's Facebook Page	
June 26 - SUNDAY	Mosquito Cove Trail 1.5 miles Moderate difficulty	Mosquito Cove Trailhead 1:30 PM	FREE Donations Welcome
July 3 - SATURDAY	Gavan Trail to Harbor Mtn. 6 miles Strenuous uphill climb	Sitka High Cross Trail Trailhead (by Performing Arts Center) 9:00 AM	FREE Donations Welcome
July 17 - SATURDAY	Alpine Adventure Run	Race & registration information Christinemariehoran@gmail.com	
July 18 - SUNDAY	Mt. Edgecumbe Hike 14 miles Strenuous last mile to summit	Depart Crescent Harbor 7:00 AM Depart Fred's Creek 5:45 PM	\$110 - Purchase online at sitkatrailworks.org or call 747-7244
July 24 - SATURDAY	Verstovia 5 miles Strenuous uphill climb	Verstovia Trailhead 9:00 AM	FREE Donations Welcome
August 1 - Sunday	Shelikof Bike Ride 16 miles Moderate difficulty	Depart Crescent Harbor 7:00 AM Depart Mud Bay 5:45 PM	\$110 - Purchase online at sitkatrailworks.org or call 747-7244
August 7 - SATURDAY	Thimbleberry-Heart Lakes-SMC Loop - 3.6 miles Moderate difficulty	Thimbleberry Lake Trailhead 9:00 AM	FREE Donations Welcome
August 15 - SUNDAY	Mt. Edgecumbe Hike 14 miles Strenuous last mile to summit	Depart Crescent Harbor 7:00 AM Depart Fred's Creek 5:45 PM	\$110 - Purchase online at sitkatrailworks.org or call 747-7244