



ON THE PAPER TRAIL

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NEWS FOR SITKA TRAIL WORKS MEMBERS

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JOIN US FOR THE ANNUAL SITKA TRAIL WORKS MEETING! MONDAY, OCTOBER 25TH

VIRTUAL MEETING — 6:00 TO 7:00 PM

VISION

Shape the future of Sitka’s trails by sharing your ideas to launch a new era of planning

ADVENTURE

Revel in local author Brendan Jones’ story of crossing Baranof Island this summer

LEADERSHIP

Elect the Board of Directors to guide the coming years of work

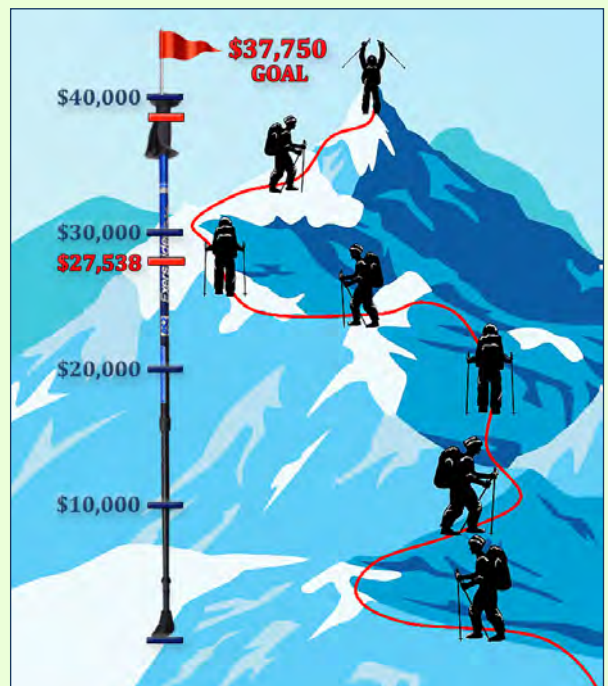
For an inclusive and safe gathering, we will meet virtually. A Zoom link will be emailed to current members. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to register on our website or Facebook to receive the meeting link.

HELP US CLIMB \$10,212 TO REACH OUR 2021 FUNDRAISING GOAL

*Sitka Trail Works has always relied on our members to get the job done. This year, you stood by us — your membership support has gotten us **80%** of the way to our annual goal of \$37,750. Thank you members! If you haven’t given yet, please consider joining us by making a donation during our Fall Drive. Sign up on our website, via the mail, or at the office. If you would like to become a sustaining donor with a recurring contribution, please get in touch with staff. Contributions allow staff to pursue our mission of maintaining, building and promoting a world class trail system in Sitka.*

We are very thankful for our members, volunteers, the dedicated Board, and our incredible community of Sitka.

*Lynne Brandon
Sitka Trail Works Executive Director*



Cross Trail Phase 6 Update

Construction of the 2.6-mile Phase 6 Cross Trail extension, from Harbor Mountain Road to Old Sitka, including a 0.6-mile connector to Halibut Point Road near the Cruise Terminal, has been underway since December 2019.

Sitka Trail Works reached a major milestone on September 26th when northward tread excavation reached the edge of excavation coming south from the Starrigavan end. The two ends of the mainline Cross Trail are now almost connected! Minus one river crossing, the Trail now runs from Starrigavan Boat Launch parking lot to Harbor Mountain Road! Later this fall, the crew will construct the abutments for the 60-foot Watlachéix'k'i Héen (No Name Creek) bridge. After that bridge is finished, the remaining work will be focused on excavating the HPR connector, which will allow direct access for residents and visitors from the Cruise Terminal. Sitka Trail Works hopes to complete the project by the end of 2021 or early 2022 depending on the weather.

We appreciate your patience in staying off the trail during construction, as the crew is actively falling trees and running heavy machinery. Thanks for all your support in getting us this far!



The excavator takes a break after pushing through the final steep hillside to Watlachéix'k'i Héen

**Become a member.
It's easy online at
SitkaTrailWorks.org**



Changing leadership at Sitka Trail Works

This year has been a time of transition for Sitka Trail Works. With the soon-to-be-completed Phase 6 of the Cross Trail, Sitka Trail Works will have accomplished one of Sitka's longest-standing trail priorities.

Since almost the founding of the organization, Brian Hanson has served faithfully on the Board of Directors, for the past 17 years as the Board president. This year Brian set the organization on a hopeful course by making space for younger board members to take charge. Brian led the organization through years of successful planning and development efforts, shepherding fundraising and grant-seeking activities. This summer, Don MacKinnon capably stepped into the role of interim President and Sitka Trail Works members will elect the next slate of board officers at this year's annual meeting.



Brian Hanson at National Trails Day 2004

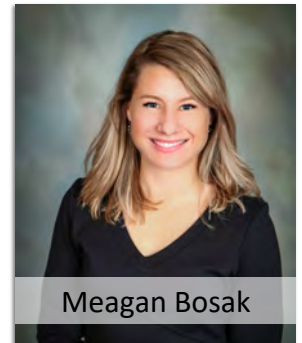


Jessika Beam

The two new board members voted in on a competitive slate are Jessika Beam and Meagan Bosak. Jessika has lived in Sitka for most of her adult life and has deep roots in Alaska. With a Master of Public Health from the University of Alaska, she now works in Health Promotion at SEARHC. Jessika has a lifelong passion for adventure and spends her time hiking, running, biking, and practicing yoga.

Meagan was originally headed to Southeast for a one-year adventure, but has instead spent the last eight years here.

She currently works as the Director of Lands and Property Management at SEARHC after a career in planning at the City of Sitka and journalism degree from her home state University of Oregon. Most days, Meagan can be found on the Cross Trail enjoying nature with her family and dog.



Meagan Bosak



Brian and Lynne with the board in 2006

New faces on the Board are not the only change at Sitka Trail Works. After an illustrious career in parks and recreation, with the last six years at Sitka Trail Works, Lynne Brandon is taking a step toward retirement. Lynne has dedicated her professional life to creating beautiful outdoor spaces in Sitka, working at the federal, state, and local level to improve our trails and open space. Lynne's sharp grant-writing and project management skills have led to the investment of millions of federal dollars in new parks and trails infrastructure in Sitka.

To take a much deserved break, Lynne will be stepping down into a project management role to oversee the completion of the Cross Trail. The Sitka Trail Works board has offered the director role to Ben Hughey, who has served under Lynne since the beginning of 2021. With the Cross Trail near complete, it's time to chart a new path forward and focus on new priorities. This coming year will be spent on a strategic reimagining of Sitka Trail Works role in the community. Please reach out to share your vision of how to best serve our community!

US Forest Service crew makes improvements

The USDA Forest Service trail crew was busy this season conducting maintenance work across the Sitka Ranger District of the Tongass National Forest. You may have seen the crews out on the trail, and we hope you thanked them, because they accomplished a lot! Ridge-top sections of the Harbor Mountain trail had been slowly sinking into the mud, so the crew installed new stone, gravel, and locally made yellow cedar boardwalk across 1,000 feet of tread. This photo shows the crew distributing loads of helicopter-delivered gravel.

Out on Kruzof Island, the Forest Service team tackled some much needed improvements to the Shelikof Trail. Many of the gaping mud holes that have threatened to swallow hikers between Iris Meadows and the beach have been subdued by hours of gravel hauling. With the bridge and reroute completed in 2019, hikers can now pass through the intertidal Meadows at most tides. The crew plans to finish the battle against the remaining mud holes next season.



Harbor Mountain. Credit: Laurent Deviche, USFS

The next 20 years of trails in Sitka

Twenty years ago, Sitka Trail Works led a community planning process that resulted in years of partnerships to build the trails we all know and love today, like Herring Cove, Heart Lake, and the Cross Trail. Much of that collaborative vision has succeeded and it's time for Sitkans to reconvene and imagine Sitka twenty years from now. As Sitka Trail Works embarks into a new era, we will ground our approach in the needs and desires of the community. We know that people are healthier and happier when we spend time outdoors, so we want to build the trails that allow Sitkans to live, work, and play in our spectacular backyard. What do you think our community needs?

Do we need better walking paths between neighborhoods? A destination backpacking route? What does Sitka need to thrive economically and socially? We want to hear from you.



What's around the next bend? A bright future.

At this initial planning stage, we are collecting all the possibilities for Sitka's future trail network. Dream big! We'll put all the ideas on the table now, then future stages of the planning effort will winnow down from the expansive list to focus on options with the greatest feasibility, community benefit, and sustainability.

If you can't make the meeting, give us a ring, send an email, or reach out however you'd like with your ideas. We will be providing more opportunities to dive into maps and trail ideas in the coming months.

We hope to see you at the Annual Meeting to help us launch this community conversation!