



THE FALL 2023 ISSUE

ON THE PAPER TRAIL

News for Sitka Trail Works Members

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Trail Plan
- Sitka Sound Viewpoint
- Volunteer Program
- Salmon Lake
- Harbor Mountain
- Welcome Ops Coordinator
- New Board Member
- Thank you Lynne
- Youth Program reports
- Recap Summer Hikes

ANNUAL MEMBER MEETING

THURSDAY OCTOBER 19TH

5:00 PM - 7:30 PM

CENTENNIAL HALL

Join us to discuss the future of Sitka's trails!

TRAIL PLAN PUBLISHED

Sitka Trail Works is excited to unveil the 2023 Sitka Trail Plan at this year's Annual meeting. Over the course of the last two years, we've listened to Sitkan's desires, scouted new routes, and gathered feedback on proposals. Hundreds of Sitkans provided thousands of comments through two community-wide surveys and we've winnowed down the over one hundred new trail ideas to two dozen priorities. The proposed list of projects is evenly split between restoring existing trails and expanding the network with new construction. Given the interest stated in surveys, we'll be further investigating opportunities to establish day-use sites and overnight sites along a designated marine trail network.

Sitka Sound Viewpoint Completed



Working with the Forest Service and local contractor, Island Enterprises Inc., Sitka Trail Works supported the development of an accessible walking path to a spectacular viewpoint on top of Harbor Mountain this summer. To ensure that the viewpoint can be enjoyed by all, it is intended for day use only. Camping and fires are not permitted.



VOLUNTEERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

JOIN THE MISSION BY VOLUNTEERING FOR TRAIL PROJECTS

NEW PROGRAM TO BOOST VOLUNTEERISM ON TRAILS

Sitka Trail Works is committed to taking care of the amazing trail system, which is why we're increasing our investment in trail maintenance by launching a new volunteer program. With support from the Forest Service, we'll be scoping priority trail repairs and coordinating more volunteer work parties over the coming year. Following a successful pilot this spring, we'll be hosting another Trail Master Summit. A weekend-long training session for volunteers to learn the foundations of sustainable trail design and maintenance. In launching this program, we hope to grow community and teach transferable technical skills. We've seen that many Sitkans want to give back to the trail system and that passion will fuel this collaborative effort to better care for our trails.

Interested in attending future volunteer events? Sign up on our website for our monthly email newsletter where we will communicate future volunteer events and community hikes.



Photo Credit: Alexander Kelsey

VOLUNTEERS SUPPORT REPAIRS TO SALMON LAKE

Last year, Sitka Trail Works managed the helicopter transport of gravel and lumber to the Salmon Lake Trail with funding from the National Forest Foundation. By partnering with the City of Sitka and NSRAA, we had considerable savings in mobilization costs and were able to put those savings to use this year by hiring Allen Marine to ferry volunteers to the trailhead. We were able to stretch funds even further by splitting transportation costs with Outer Coast to bring students out for the day. Over two weekend events, volunteers shoveled, carried, and distributed over 30 thousand pounds of gravel. Several sections of the trail that used to be deep mud are now dry and easily walkable with compacted rock. While much more work remains to repair from flooding and erosion on the trail, this community effort will save the Forest Service weeks of crew labor, allowing them to accomplish more with limited resources. To all the volunteers - thanks a ton, literally!

VOLUNTEERS ADD FINISHING TOUCHES ON NEW VIEWPOINT

As the official launch of our new volunteer program, we celebrated National Public Lands Day with a work party on Harbor Mountain, in partnership with the Forest Service. Volunteers restored vegetation to the surroundings and previously trampled terrain along the newly finished viewpoint trail. Thank you to District Ranger, Eric Garner, for your stellar leadership!



Photo Credit: Hannah Nelson

YOUR SUPPORT MAKES SITKA'S TRAILS WORK

Renew your membership today to stay in the loop on news, get early access to off-island hike tickets, and be a part of the future of Sitka's trails.

SCAN TO DONATE

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ON THE TRAIL WITH SITKA TRAIL WORKS

Board Updates

Eric Estrada has joined the Sitka Trail Works volunteer Board of Directors as a passionate and active hiker and cyclist with a desire to contribute to hands-on building and maintaining our trails. Originally from San Diego, Eric served on the SD County Bicycle Coalition board and assisted in the creation of the Chula Vista Cyclist Committee. He is also a professional in bicycle repair and shop operation from the United Bicycle Institute. He enjoys bike pack rafting, split boarding and backpacking. **A big thank you to Jessika Beam for her board service and hike leading over the past two years!**



Welcome our Operations Coordinator Hannah Nelson

Hannah is passionate about contributing to her community. Since moving to Sitka in 2015, Hannah has worked and operated various small businesses. She's excited to keep our Trail Works operations running smoothly with her business administration skills. Hannah grew up among the Blue Ridge Mountains on East Coast and has enjoyed exploring the wilderness since childhood. She continues to explore the outdoors here in Sitka and now brings along her daughter Marleigh to teach her foraging and instill a love of the outdoors.

Thank you Lynne Brandon

We are extending our gratitude and congratulations to Lynne, who is retiring after decades of public service. Lynne led Sitka Trail Works as Executive Director from 2015 to 2021, when she stepped into a project management role to finish the Cross Trail extension. During her time here, and for fourteen years as the City of Sitka Parks and Recreation Manager, Lynne led the development of many local recreation projects, including trails at Starrigavan, the skate park, the Kimsham Fields and many smaller greenspace and landscaping sites. Lynne also supported the volunteer-led creation of the Sitka Community Playground, a million-dollar, accessible playground. Lynne's next venture is undertaking an art quilt business! She can often be found at the Island Artists' Gallery downtown where her work is displayed.



Pitch in to get to the end of the trail!



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Help us reach our goal by year end! Donate today!

SUMMER RECAP

YOUTH PROGRAM GETS KIDS OUTSIDE

In partnership with Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Sitka Trail Works hosted our first full summer of Lingít Aaní Trail Works Camp this year. Over the course of the six-week program, seventeen middle schoolers worked, learned, and played outdoors. Working with the National Park Service, the City of Sitka, State Parks, and the Forest Service, students assisted with brushing, drainage maintenance, and marine debris cleanup, learning about public land stewardship. Local artists and cultural educators led traditional harvesting and craftmaking activities to build campers' confidence in native plant knowledge. To fill the void of local programming that connects youth with nature, Sitka Trail Works will be offering more opportunities for kids to get outside over this school year and next summer.



Photo Credit: Lee House

SUMMER EVENTS SERVE SITKANS

In fulfilling our mission of helping get more Sitkans outdoors, Sitka Trail Works hosted over a dozen summer hikes and events this year. Over 150 people joined us on trails around town as well as off the island. We were able to host a trip to Sea Lion Cove for the first time in years after conducting maintenance on the route last fall. Also, with the support of SEAK Adventures, a group of paddlers ventured to the the Causeway. In addition to our usual slate of volunteer-led group hikes, we piloted an opportunity for Sitkans to try out recreational activities facilitated by local businesses. Thanks to twelve generous local businesses, Sitkans bid on donated excursions such as, water taxi, wildlife tour, kayak expedition, snorkel trip, bike rental, and more. Our first annual Summer Adventure Auction highlighted the considerable economic impact of outdoor recreation in our community. We're looking forward to next year!

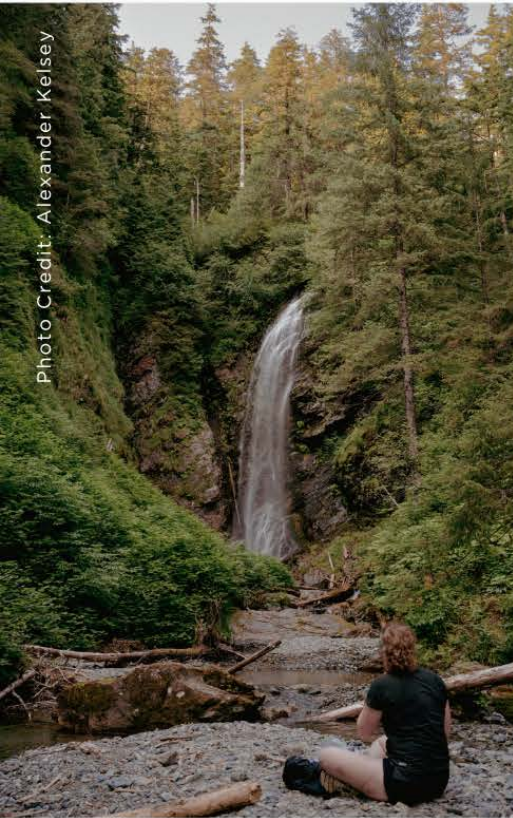


Photo Credit: Alexander Kelsey



Photo Credit: Lione Claire