

# Huts Update

Alaska Mountain  
and Wilderness  
Huts Association



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- Kevin Lynch
- Roger Shaw
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We're on the  
Web!

See us at:

[alaskahuts.org](http://alaskahuts.org)

## Thanks for Your Support!

Welcome! The Alaska Mountain and Wilderness Huts Association would like to thank all who have contributed time, money, and expertise to our efforts to establish a hut-to-hut system here in wild Alaska that will provide comfort, camaraderie, wilderness education, and stewardship for its users.

## Volunteers Gathering Wednesday, Nov. 13

As a direct outcome of our Annual Fall Retreat, we will host a slide show and discussion for any members, friends of members, and advisors interested in the Huts Association's current status. The emphasis will be on the tasks confronting us as the organization moves forward to making our dreams a reality. At the meeting, people may sign up for tasks that could take from two hours to two months. We have specific new committees with interests such as Education, Outreach, Fundraising, Trails & Facilities, and Operations; each needs volunteers to help accomplish goals. Refreshments provided. Meet at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Kevin Lynch, 2516 Susitna Dr., Anchorage (in Turnagain). Contact Kevin at 243-1951.

## USFS Considers Huts Proposal

The Huts Association's formal proposal to the U.S. Forest Service to establish a "hut-to-hut" route in the Ptarmigan Lake / Snow River area was submitted in June 2002. The Forest Service responded to the proposal this fall with some good questions. There are many important issues that need to be worked out such as human waste and resupply systems, but they did not have any show-stopping issues. Board members met with Seward District Ranger Mike Kania and other experts from his staff in September and provided additional information to answer their queries. Before 2002 is out, the 'proposal' is expected to become an application. Although the federal application process looks positive now, there is no guarantee. Thorny issues may arise during the environmental assessment. **Your support will be important throughout this process.**

## Huts Association Urges Iditarod Support

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is currently studying the possibility of re-opening the Iditarod National Historic Trail between Seward and Girdwood. This project is entirely separate from our Huts proposal, but there is some overlap in area at the south end of Kenai Lake. One section of the Iditarod's "proposed action" route will likely use the historic Iditarod route in the constrained area where the lake, railroad, and highway are pinched together at the base of the mountains. The USFS has also studied a possible additional route using the Paradise Valley Trail—the same route we proposed. This would provide a longer alternative off the road.

The Huts Association believes the Iditarod Trail should remain on its historic route wherever possible. However, because the Paradise Valley route (without huts) appears in the USFS Iditarod study, and because the Iditarod is a great trail in itself, huts supporters should be on the lookout for Iditarod information and a comment period due to start any time. Your comments could help both the Iditarod project and our proposal as the Forest Service begins to write an environmental assessment. When the comment period opens, **the Forest Service WILL NEED TO HEAR THAT OUR HUTS PROPOSAL IS ON YOUR MIND and that it COMPLEMENTS THE IDITAROD PROJECT. This will help ensure that these efforts, while separate, are not planned in isolation.** More information on the Iditarod Trail proposal is available on the USFS website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach>. Send comments to: Iditarod Trail EA/Mike Kania, P.O. Box 390, Seward, Alaska 99664.

### Our Mission:

Include Alaska's back country in a world-wide tradition of places in which hikers and skiers can travel hut to hut, and provide warm comfortable huts in inspiring settings to foster camaraderie and promote wilderness education and stewardship.

**Alaska Mountain and  
Wilderness Huts Association, Inc.**  
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## Do You Know What We Did Last Summer?

-Larry Aumiller kicked off our summer activities at the Annual Meeting by telling us about his unique experiences with bears and people in the McNeil River Bear Sanctuary. He fondly recalled relationships he has fostered by meeting people from around the globe in a wilderness setting not entirely different than the Huts concept.

-The Huts Association participated in the Earth Day Celebration and the Spring Creek Cleanup in Anchorage. These two events are especially appreciated because the huts will incorporate passive solar energy, composting toilets, and preservation of clean Alaskan waters in the huts.

- Board members and volunteers conducted numerous reconnaissance trips consisting of hundreds of hours as volunteers for a U.S. Forest Service Iditarod Trail effort and to support our own effort to rediscover a 1950s-era trail from Ptarmigan Lake over Snow River Pass and out Paradise Valley for our U.S. Forest Service proposal. Many days of backpacking and flagging new and historic trails provided a glimpse into the future of this wonderful and world-class area. Adventurers documented bears, goats, sheep, wolves, and many species of birds.

-The fifth annual Huts Association fall retreat took place in a small cabin Oct. 28-30. Much was done in the way of strategies and organizational needs to bring the hut-to-hut concept to fruition. As in all cabin situations, many closer personal bonds were advanced.

*Thanks to all members and friends who put unpaid time into the organization this summer!*

## \$500,000 Status

You may have read in the newspaper that Sen. Ted Steven had included in an appropriations bill \$500,000 for the Huts Association to work with the U.S. Forest Service to build huts in the Paradise Valley area. This certainly would help us with the costs of building huts in an environmentally sound way, and we were very excited. However, at this point, the bill has stalled in Congress, and fiscal year 2003 has been funded only by continuing last year's budgets. No new monies, including huts funds, were appropriated. This highlights the fundraising needs of the organization, a topic addressed at our recent annual retreat. Find out more at the Nov.13 gathering (see page 1).

## Web Site Off-Line

The alaskahuts.org web site is currently unavailable, because our inexpensive web host was a tad too cheap and has gone out of business. Please keep checking. We hope to have it back on-line quickly. The June 2002 proposal to the Forest Service was and will be available on the site, and we hope to have some photos from our extensive fieldwork of the proposed Paradise Valley Trail.

## January Annual Public Meeting

This year we would like to hold the meeting at the Kincaid Chalet in late January and give people the opportunity to ski off some calories before the food and music begins. More details to come.

2002-2003

### Calendar of Events

**Nov. 13**

Volunteers Gathering  
- 2516 Susitna Dr

**Jan. (late)**

Annual Meeting  
- Kincaid Chalet

**May 17**

Creek Cleanup

**June 7**

National Trails Day

For additional information about any of these events or additional items, check our website or contact Christie Kearney at 376-0883.

Thank you for your on-going support; come join the fun!