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## Hemlock Burn Trail Project

The Hemlock Burn Trail is a proposed new multiuse trail in the Chugach State Park, that connects trailheads at Glen Alps and Prospect. The 2009 Chugach State Park Trail Management Plan identifies this trail for development. Singletrack Advocates will partner with Chugach State Park to fundraise, build, and maintain this new trail. Following are the details of the proposed project:

### 1. Trail Goals

- a. Follow the strategic vision of the Chugach State Park Trail Management Plan (CSP Trails Plan). The Hemlock Burn Trail is proposed in the Trail Management Plan.
- b. Increase safety on the Southfork Rim Trail by reducing downhill bike traffic. This will occur by making the new Hemlock Burn Trail the preferred downhill bike trail and Southfork Rim the preferred uphill bike trail. All other users can travel either direction.
- c. Create a world class, high-quality, sustainable trail.
- d. The trail will create a world-class recreational experience for residents and tourists to enjoy. Opportunities like this provide economic benefits to the Anchorage economy by encouraging tourists to spend extra time in the area.

### 2. Trail Management Plan Direction

- a. **The CSP Trails Plan identifies clear management intent of the development of Hemlock Burn Trail as a trail designed for bicycle use connecting the Glen Alps and Prospect Heights trailheads. This was established through extensive public process during the creation of the plan. The map of Hemlock Burn Trail depicted in the CSP Trails Plan is provided to facilitate understanding of the management intent of the Hemlock Burn Trail, not a final route of the eventual trail.**
- b. The guidelines in the Trails Plan are intended to be flexible so as to respond to changing conditions, shifts in demand and use patterns, and availability of funds. The Trails Plan states that implementation of management recommendations should begin immediately and are intended to proceed in phases over the years as opportunities, staffing, and funding allow.
- c. The updated proposed route of the Hemlock Burn Trail incorporates changes in use patterns and demands, especially the new realignment of the SF Rim Trail. This is clearly allowed for in the CSP Trails Plan. The proposed Hemlock Burn route is not a major departure from the Trails Plan intent and therefore does not require any change to the CSP Trails Plan.
- d. The CSP Trails Plan clearly states that a regulation change will be required to allow bicycles on the Hemlock Burn Trail.

### 3. Design Details

- a. The Hemlock Burn Trail will be designed to the specifications designated in the Trail Management Plan. These specifications include the following:
  - i. The trail design will meet both a Trail Class 3 bicycle trail and a Trail Class 3 cross-country ski trail. This will allow the trail to be designed for both bikers and skiers.
  - ii. The trail will be managed for bicycle, hiking and skiing. It will be a multiuse trail.

- b. The trail will be designed with the following principles, which will increase safety on the trail.
  - i. Have good sight lines so that users can easily see each other on the trail.
  - ii. Design trail intersections so that users are slowed down before crossing the intersection. This will reduce potential conflicts at intersections.
  - iii. The trail alignment was selected to minimize the number of trail intersections, while still maintaining the intent of the trail.
- c. Sustainable trail building principles will be used. This will create a high quality trail that is easy to maintain.
- d. The trail will be similar in design to the Southfork Rim Trail. The following design principles will be used for the Hemlock Burn Trail, which are within the Trail Class 3 design criteria.
  - i. This is intended to be a fun and scenic bike and ski trail. It is intended to be a trail that can be accessible to users both young and adult, as a family friendly trail.
  - ii. The trail will be similar in character to a mix of the Southfork Rim Trail and the Bolling Alley Trail.
  - iii. The trail will be accessible for hikers, skiers, and bikers.
  - iv. The trail will have similar grades of Southfork Rim Trail, which is designed to ski well without frequent snow plowing.
  - v. It will be a scenic trail, with good viewsheds.
  - vi. Not a highly technical challenging trail. No built-up jumps.
  - vii. Use undulations, wiggles, and rollers in the trail to make it fun for bikers and skiers.
  - viii. Keep bank corners at small to moderate size, so that maintenance is easy, and can be easily traveled on by hikers, skiers, and bikers.
- e. The Southfork Rim Trail will be signed as the preferred uphill bike trail, and the Hemlock Burn Trail will be signed the as the preferred downhill bike trail.
  - i. This will create a clockwise flow of bike traffic on Southfork Rim and Hemlock Burn trails.
  - ii. The trailhead map will show the recommended clockwise direction for bikes.
  - iii. Hikers and skiers can travel either direction on Southfork Rim and Hemlock Burn trails.
- f. The trail intersections were investigated onsite to verify good locations for safe trail crossings. This included intersections with established trails in the Management Plan, as well as intersections with winter “social” trails that are not in the Management plan. The Hemlock Burn trail intersections were located so that trail users will be slowed down for all crossings.
- g. The Hemlock Burn Trail is situated away from Denali View, so that it cannot be seen from the vast majority of the Denali View Trail. Also, the trail intersection at Panorama View was located so that it does not get close to Denali View Trail.
- h. At the Prospect end of the trail, the Hemlock Burn Trail finish was located to accommodate an easier connection to the Gas Line Trail near the Prospect Lot entrance. This allows a trail connection from the Hemlock Burn Trail to the Hillside Trails. An

existing trail can also be used by users exiting the Hemlock Burn Trail to go to the Prospect Lot or South Fork Rim trail.

- i. The Hemlock Burn Trail incorporates an intersection with White Spruce trail near the Power Line trail. This allows users coming off the South Fork Rim trail to quickly access the Hemlock Burn Trail. This will reduce bike traffic on the existing White Spruce trail, which is already a well-used trail, and reduce potential conflicts.
- j. The trail will be laid out to minimize impact to existing old growth spruce trees.

#### **4. Partnership**

- a. Singletrack Advocates will partner with the Chugach State Park on this trail project.
  - i. Singletrack Advocates will be responsible for fundraising the money to build the trail.
  - ii. Singletrack Advocates will partner with CSP to build the trail.
  - iii. Singletrack Advocates will maintain the Hemlock Burn Trail, with the oversight of CSP. This will include repairing trail tread and fixing drainage issues as they come up.
- b. Singletrack Advocates is the local trail non-profit 501c3 that has developed over 30 miles of singletrack trails in Anchorage and an excellent track record of maintaining their trails.
- c. The estimated cost is between \$150,000 to \$200,000. An Alaskan trail builder will be used for final design and construction. Anticipated construction date is summer 2021.