

From peat bogs to planks: Cordova's most popular trail gets a face lift

Trail work funded by the Great American Outdoors Act Legacy Restoration Fund



Left: Before and after view of a split log replacement.

Right: Before and after of step removal and replacement.



The Chugach National Forest has three distinct geographic landscapes, which is unique among national forests. The Copper River Delta, the Eastern Kenai Peninsula, and Prince William Sound attract adventurers and nature enthusiasts the world over and are once-in-a-lifetime destinations for a million visitors each year.

Cordova is a commercial fishing community in the Copper River Delta region and is home to the world-famous Copper River Wild Salmon. The Cordova Ranger District is nestled between the Copper River Delta and the southeastern end of Prince William Sound and covers approximately 2.3 million acres. Beauty and adventure surround this magnificent place.

The Heney Ridge Trail is a popular 4.1 mile trail that takes hikers through mature hemlock and spruce forests, muskegs, and to an open alpine area with stunning views of the surrounding mountains and Copper River Delta below. From here, hikers can explore the alpine areas without following a defined path and gain views of Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska. Popular with birders, salmon viewers, and those craving a near-town hike, this well-loved trail had some challenging areas that were tricky for hikers to negotiate.

Funding allowed for 1.5 miles of heavy trail reconstruction. This included 600 feet of netted step-and-run boardwalk, 40 feet of split log planks, a 15-foot staircase, 15 log steps, drain ditches, rock culverts and more. District employees are already hearing that the changes are noticed and loved by regular hikers in the area. The 2022 summer season will bring even more improvements to this well-used trail.