

Frequently Asked Questions

Alaska Region Outdoor Project Proposals

1. What kind of funding is available and how much?

Through the Great American Outdoors Act, the Alaska Region anticipates receiving several million dollars per year through 2025. The Alaska Region receives some funding at the regional level and can apply for additional funding at the national level for highly competitive projects. We see these combined funding sources as a means for creative and innovative ideas to help us meet the needs of current and future generations. We are asking for help from the public, partners, local governments, Alaska Native corporations, and tribal nations in determining project priorities now, and we are looking for ideas on projects for the future.

2. Is this a new funding source?

Some of this funding is new as of August 2021 and some is recurring. The Alaska Region is working to combine funding sources to meet current and future needs creatively and innovatively. This funding is an opportunity to enhance our current recreation facilities and infrastructure to provide an improved user experience.

3. How are you prioritizing projects? Who develops these projects?

Projects are prioritized using several criteria, such as deferred maintenance needs, visitor access and experience, safety, economic benefits, and forest management. We will also prioritize projects based on public interest and support for projects.

The Alaska Region has submitted 2023 projects for consideration. We will soon be considering project proposals for 2024, and we hope to use ideas and feedback from the public to develop additional proposals for 2025. To allow time for planning and proposal development, the Alaska Region looks forward to hearing ideas early in the process.

4. What are you asking the public to do related to the upcoming projects?

We hope to use this opportunity to reach out and hear from the public on how we can best steward public lands. We are asking people to share their feedback on which proposals matter most to them and their ideas for improving on these project ideas. We also hope people will share their ideas for projects for 2024 and 2025. We hope to offer opportunities for feedback each year as we move through this process. Feedback can be provided through our online interactive map during the open public engagement process.

5. What types of projects can be considered?

We are working to develop projects that focus on improving sites and facilities, and potentially looking at removing some sites that may no longer meet public needs. We are also looking at the possible expansion, upgrade, or addition of sites and facilities to help us meet changing recreation

use. We look forward to hearing from the public on needed work at existing sites such as cabins, campgrounds, trailheads, trails, roads, bridges, boat ramps, and other outdoor facilities.

6. What areas are being considered for future projects?

Our goal is to fund projects in multiple communities on both the Chugach and Tongass National Forests. We are soliciting projects from every ranger district and asking people from neighboring communities to help us decide which projects are priorities. In 2021, for example, every ranger district had at least one project successfully funded.

7. Are there specific projects or areas that would be a good fit for these funding opportunities?

We know that many of our areas are highly used and are treasured parts of the places we call home. Availability of this funding is our opportunity to make these well-loved places a priority and improve them so they can continue to provide great opportunities for locals and visitors alike. Existing facilities on National Forest land in need of maintenance and improvement would be great projects for this type of funding.

8. When will work on projects funded in 2021 start?

Several of the projects that received funding for 2021 began implementation this summer. Some of these projects are large scale and will take more than one year to complete. For a handful of funded projects, we are completing the planning and design work necessary to ensure a successful project when constructed in 2022 or 2023.

9. How are projects being implemented?

Projects are being implemented in a variety of ways. Some projects are being completed by Forest Service staff while others are being contracted or completed through partnerships with non-governmental organizations, tribal nations, local governments, or other agencies. For contracting opportunities related to Great American Outdoors Act projects, visit: beta.SAM.gov | [Home](#). If your organization is interested in partnering with the Forest Service, please contact your local ranger district or Clark Woolley, acting regional partnership, volunteer, and services program manager at clark.woolley@usda.gov.

10. How can my organization get involved in implementing a project?

If you or your organization are interested in helping implement a Great American Outdoors Act project, please contact your local ranger district office or Clark Woolley at clark.woolley@usda.gov.

11. How does the list of projects compare with the funding available?

While this funding will make a tremendous difference in helping Alaska's National Forests address backlogged maintenance, it will not cover all deferred maintenance needs. The public's help in prioritizing projects has, and will continue to, play an important role in prioritizing which critical maintenance projects are more important for funding on each forest.

12. How will the public know if projects are selected for funding?

Projects for 2022 have been included in the President's proposed budget for 2022 and are awaiting approval from Congress. Projects for 2023 have been submitted for consideration and are expected to be announced in 2022. Once final decisions are made, a list of funded projects will be uploaded to this [website](#), announced to the public, and shared with those who submitted comments and provided a valid email address.

13. How can the public get involved?

The public's input and support are invaluable as we move through this process. We look forward to hearing feedback and project ideas from Alaskans and visitors. We hope to conduct public engagement sessions each year as we move through this process. Please check back regularly for updates and to learn when the next public engagement period will take place.

14. How is feedback considered?

Feedback plays a vital role in the overall rating process. Each proposal is scored on a scale and feedback received is part of that scale. We will also take into consideration: how projects connect communities, the economic impact each project will have on the surrounding communities; the value of the infrastructure and/or location to local communities, and the recreation opportunities the projects would provide. We will also consider the importance of cultural sites, existing and new partnerships, and opportunities for rural and tribal youth engagement. We want to create positive change that will help support our communities in particularly challenging times.

15. Why is the comment period 2 years ahead of the current year?

In the fall of 2020, the Alaska Region held a public comment period for help prioritizing 2021 and 2022 projects and to collect ideas for 2023. Projects funded for 2021 were announced on November 12, 2020. Project proposals for 2022 were submitted last fall for funding consideration and proposed projects were announced in the President's 2022 Budget in April 2021. We are expecting Congress's final decisions to be announced in February 2022.

The most recent public comment period (June 22 to July 6, 2021) was for 2023 project prioritization and to generate ideas for 2024 and 2025. Since there is a multi-tier review process, it takes time for projects to be assessed and funding to be decided. The advance notice of projects allows the forests time to work with communities, partners, and tribes to create strong proposals for new project ideas from the public. We will not learn which projects will be funded in 2023 until next year. We anticipate holding a public comment period each year to gather new project ideas.

16. Can I volunteer to help with projects?

Volunteering is encouraged and appreciated. We really thrive on the help of volunteers and partners. We see them as an extension of our workforce and a way to help us accomplish our shared goals. Alaska's National Forests strives to work together with others to accomplish work

on the ground. Anyone interested in helping or volunteering should contact Volunteer & Services Program Manager Kevin Hood at kevin.e.hood@usda.gov.