

Statement

When the Pooch Loop was developed 20 years ago, it was designed with traditional dog walking in mind. The one-foot-wide path design didn't anticipate people skiing or riding their bikes with their dogs on leash down a snowy wooded path. Given that dogs are not allowed on other ski trails at UAF, and as population increases in the Fairbanks Area, trails need to be upgraded for an increased variety of uses. The current social distancing mandate adds another factor— we need to have wider trails in order to maintain our 6 foot (or more in an exercise state) distance to combat COVID-19 and other viruses. Exercising outdoors with our animal companions has mental and physical health benefits, critical during this time of social distancing. Widening would add safety in a variety of ways to the narrow Pooch Loop trails for students, future students, faculty and staff.

Specifics of Proposal: Grooming the Pooch Loop trails out to 5 feet using a snow-machine to allow safe passage of users, (during time of least use to allow as little disruption to recreational users as possible), every time it snows

Purpose:

A. Passing people and others with dogs is impossible without having to step off into the deep snow and wait while the other party passes.

Example 1: I had to coordinate with a group on which way they were going at an intersection which made it difficult to step off and maneuver and allow them to pass while maintaining a safe distance for us and dogs.

Example 2: A couple with a dog decided to turn around because they thought it was too difficult to pass until I told them that I would step off deep into the trees in order to keep ourselves/dogs separated enough.

B. Allow 6 feet of social distancing

Example 1: One couple stepped off the trail just enough to allow me to pass only two feet away, face to face in each other's breath.

C. Bikers will have more balance and allow a packed surface to fix the bike if broken down and can more easily bike with dogs.

D. Classic skiing on the current trail is near impossible with many curves, narrow cornering making the length of the skis dig into the unpacked trails slowing one down and also falling over more.

Example 1: I have to slow down many times at the slightest curve of the trail which causes my dog's exercise (and my own) to be interrupted.

E. Allow more people to have a connection with UAF.

Example 1: A person can be dropped off at one end and recreate to another end while the partner goes to class/meeting/work and meet at the car.

Example 2: A person can ride to UAF and leave car parked all day without having to drive anywhere to exercise, using less fuel and time.

Example 3: People can make a trip of it to see the Museum/Class/Work. I am looking for more reasons not to drive my car to UAF and have more reasons to attend UAF and use trail systems to get there; allowing safe access to UAF with my dog would be motivation.

G. Grooming will allow moose as well as other heavy footed tracks which punch through the path to be filled in allowing dog and human legs to not twist/sprain/strain/break.

Example: Dogs narrow feet as well as human feet can role/twist ankles in deep holes.

H. Allowing more actives on Pooch Loop would help to keep bikers/skijourers/etc. off of the ski only trails.

Example: Past UAF Chancellor could have gone and walked on a nicely groomed Pooch Loop trail knowing that it was enjoyable to walk on a wide path that was maintained.

I. Current path for foot traffic is narrow and uneven, which caused concern for ankle injuries according to one interviewee.

Example: I have jogged the trails before which causes me to go off course into the deep snow.

J. One person wanted to go for a walk on a trail wit their baby stroller but the trail was a narrow foot path.

Example: Photo below

Counter-arguments:

1. Will create path(s) for non-UAF affiliated snow-machines to come onto UAF property when and where not allowed. Strict public enforcement would be required.

Solution: Use the same access points as the ski trail groomers.

2. Give the Pooch loop an unnatural feeling.

Solution: Pooch Loop serve as a main vein for users to get around where there are many off shoot trails for snowshoers to branch off. There are trails out there that we can maintain for an even more upgraded natural use and every other trail around is maintained with a snow machine. There is also plenty of forest to take in the nature.

3. Snow-machine will bump into recreational users thus ruining their experience .

Solution: Groom at 10pm when no one is around.

4. Funding issues UAF is facing.

Solution: Locals will provide fuel, snow-machines, time and groomer and cut brush that grows up on the trail(all volunteer).

5. Increased use could bring increased trash/vandalism.

Solution: Self-policing and picking up others' trash but there isn't a problem currently and trash really isn't foreseen as an issue.

6. There are wider trails elsewhere around Fairbanks for dogs.

Response: Having a connection with UAF, allowing everyone to know that they are welcomed here in what ever form they come(skijor, bike, run, baby stroller), and to

be able to use less gas after dropping off student/faculty/staff or after class/job and not drive more.

7. One concern would be say the speed of the faster dog actives such as yielding to slower traffic compared to a skier or biker that goes faster than a dog walker.

Solved by: create a yield sign like Creamer's field has and let it be known to stay safe.

8. Increased dog fecal matter.

Solved by: putting up doggy bags at key access points(I will pay for)

Map of Pooch Loop trail system

Link to Pooch Loop trail system:

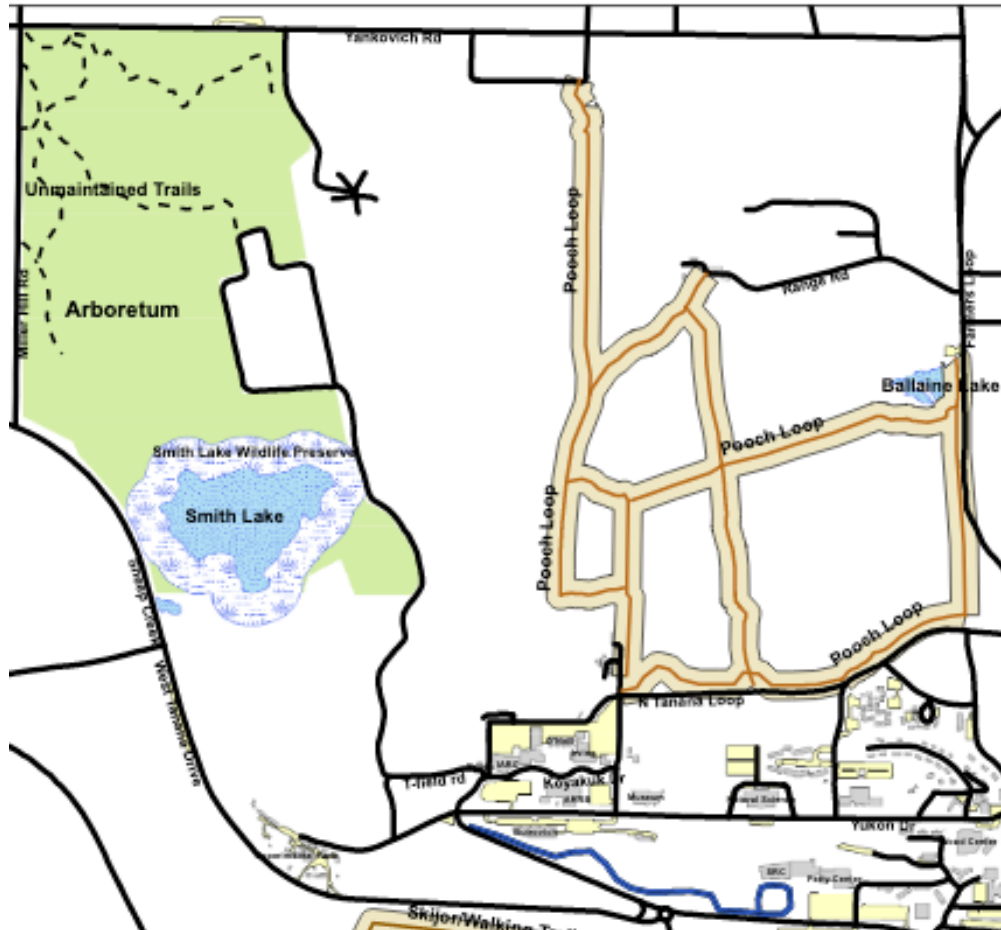
<https://uaf.edu/fs/files/dogwalkingtrails.pdf>

or go to this link for other trail designations

<https://uaf.edu/fs/northcampus/trailmaps/>

and click on winter or summer designated trail use of interest

Dog Walking Trails



6:22

3G



Aliviah Gallegos asked a question in Hiking
in Alaska.

Yesterday at 8:13 PM ·

Went to Winner Creek today only to find out it's not stroller friendly. Hoping to try Moose Meadow next time, it looks nice and wide, is there enough space next to the groomed skiing trail for a double stroller?



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37 Answers



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3:39 3G

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Alaska Outdoor Alliance ⋮
Thursday at 9:03 AM ·

The Outdoor Explorer broadcast "Bikes Belong" airs today on Alaska Public Media, KSKA 91.1 (Anchorage call letters, check your local station in your community to see if they carry OE). Air time is 10 a.m., repeating at 8 p.m. If you miss it live today, a link usually appears within 24 hours of the original broadcast. Outdoor Explorer is also available as a podcast. #bikesbelong #betterlivingthroughbiking #bikeAK



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Bikes Belong - Alaska Public Media

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Gordon Ward ▶ Fairbanks buy and sell ⋮
4 hrs ·

Various kitchen items been sitting in closet to long, microwave and airfryer work good

