

Civic Engagement Challenge

This summer the YEP crew members were challenged to engage in voluntary community service outside of the YEP work day. Crew members assisted with volunteer Park Fix-its, local non-profit agencies and the Mayor's Marathon.

YEP teens logged over 150 volunteer hours over the summer. Simon Frohlich, winner of the Challenge, personally logged almost 50 hours.

On average, YEP teens report they engage in 9 hours of community service during the school year.

YEP Park Improvement Projects

Valley of the Moon Stream Bank Restoration

At Valley of the Moon park, crew members worked with a landscaping contractor who specializes in stream bank restoration. In this popular park, YEP restored 600 feet of stream bank along Chester Creek. The crew planted 2,500 willow cuttings, 1,000 alders & prickly roses and twenty to trees stabilize the stream bank. Crew members worked closely with the contractor to install stone staircases, to create environmentally friendly, safe public access to Chester Creek.



These staircases will guide park users to safely access the creek with out trampling the new plantings and destabilizing the stream bank. This project was sponsored by the US Fish & Wildlife Service and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game.

Environmental Education

Crew members engaged in water quality testing and investigated the ecology of Anchorage's streams before they began work on stream bank restoration at Valley of the Moon Park. To acquire comparative samples, two crews tested water samples from Campbell Creek at Far North Bicentennial Park, while two other crews tested samples from Chester Creek at Valley of the Moon Park. Crew members tested for pH, temperature, phosphate levels, nitrate levels, dissolved oxygen and coliform bacteria. While most test results indicated healthy streams, both Campbell Creek and Chester Creek tested positive for coliform bacteria.



Katrina Mueller from the US Fish and Wildlife Service also visited YEP to show crew members the wide variety of small animals, including macro invertebrates and small fish, that live in Anchorage's streams and depend healthy streams to survive.

Youth Employment in Parks

A joint program of the Anchorage Parks & Recreation Department
and the Anchorage Park Foundation

Civics Education

Crew members watched a short film about climate change and indigenous cultures, and discussed the impact of American lifestyles on others around the world. They calculated their own “ecological footprints” to see how our lifestyles and everyday decisions reverberate beyond our own parks and communities, influencing the environment as well as other cultures and peoples.

Recreation

Sara Boario from the US Forest Service spoke to crew members on the wide variety of ways youth can recreate on public lands and explained the importance of having open dialogue and how public lands should be used. Crew members were also introduced to the array of job opportunities that exist in public land agencies.

Westchester Lagoon Re-vegetation

YEP removed tarps installed 2 years ago to mitigate 1,400 square feet of invasive Reed Canary Grass. Crew members broke up and removed the tightly knit root system before covering the area with sixty cubic yards fresh topsoil. 200 pounds of a native grass seed mix was spread over the area to re-vegetate and prevent erosion.



Environmental Education

Crew members broke into small groups and discussed the impact of invasive plants and animals on ecosystems in Anchorage. In addition to identifying Native & Non-Native plants, crew members discussed ways to prevent the spread of invasive plants.



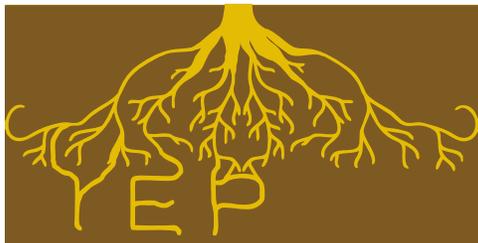
Commuter Challenge

The Bicycle Commuters of Anchorage hosted a summer long Commuter Challenge. Youth Employment in Parks organized a team to promote eco-friendly, healthy transportation to work.

Participants could walk, bicycle commute or take the public transportation.

YEP came in 3rd place for organizations of 20-30 people in Anchorage.

Crew leaders, senior crew members and crew members logged 612 eco-friendly commuter trips to and from YEP this summer.



Crew member comments on projects

“We were able to see how our work affected the people in the community.” - Mellina

“I felt like I was doing something good” - Abi

“Each project kept me engaged” - Daniel

“The progress we made was very noticeable and the community was very inspiring” - Kes-Sativa

“I expected the projects to be fun and all of them were fun!” - A

Tony Knowles Coastal Trail Vegetation Maintenance

YEP worked along the Anchorage’s famous Tony Knowles Coastal Trail. Crew members trimmed vegetation back along seven miles of the trail, trimmed scenic view sheds and painted dozens of bollards, twelve benches and seven bike racks to improve safety and visibility.

Environmental Education

Crew members were introduced to local plants, both local and invasive, to help them identify what they were trimming along the Coastal Trail. A plant scavenger hunt and identification competition to test their knowledge.

Civics Education

Park users sometimes find homeless camps hidden along our greenbelt Trails. YEP engaged in activities designed to increase their awareness of economic inequality in Anchorage.

At Bean’s Cafe, crew members engaged in a service learning project to help make the grounds around the building safer by cleaning up debris and trimming brush. They also had the opportunity to talk with the Bean’s Cafe staff about the challenges they face.



The YWCA invited YEP to their monthly Social Dialogue: *Leading the Charge: Alaska Youth and Social Justice*. Crew members interacted with a panel of youth speakers on topics including LGBT challenges, racism and foster care.

Recreation Activity

The Coastal Trail serves as a hot spot for both commuter and recreational cycling. YEP rented bikes for crew members to enjoy this popular activity while scoping out their upcoming project. Crew members learned about bike safety and bike trail etiquette.

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Beaver Pond Trail - Girdwood

The Girdwood Trails Committee sponsored a YEP project on the Beaver Pond Trail. YEP made tread enhancements, built 200 feet of new boardwalk out of native materials milled on site, forty feet of rock armoring in a seasonal creek and brushed two miles of trail corridor to improve safety and accessibility. Crew members successfully met their goal of completing trail improvements all the way to the Chugach State Park border.

Environmental Education

As a result of the 1964 earthquake, Girdwood has a diverse set of biomes. Crew members discussed the unique environmental challenges facing people living in different biomes and learned how topography impacts ecology and creates distinct biomes, particularly in the Chugach Range surrounding Girdwood. Crew members then created 3-D clay representations of a topographic map of Girdwood and the surrounding Chugach mountains.

Civics Education

Girdwood is a popular tourist destination in the summer for its trails and festivals and in the winter for the Alyeska Ski Resort. Crew members learned about the impact and influence of tourism on Alaskan economy and culture by creating their own tv commercials for fictional Alaskan tourism companies.



Recreational Activity

In preparation for the long hike to their project work, the crew hiked the Winner Creek Trail. Crew members learned about safe hiking, trail etiquette and proper hydration.



Crew Member of the Year

YEP recognizes one crew member each year for their commitment, team work, positive attitude and leadership. This year YEP recognized Savannah Commerford.



Most Improved Crew Member

YEP recognizes one crew member who has gained the most from the program. This crew member has shown improvement in attitude, work ethic and team work. Congratulations to Brendan Hughes!



Potter's Marsh Discovery Day/Get Outdoors Day

This popular event started in 2008 as the grand opening of the new boardwalk at Potter Marsh and has since morphed into an annual event highlighting the marsh and encouraging families to get outside and learn about the marsh.

YEP teamed up with event partners to make National Get Outdoors day a great success for YEP's first field day. The event involved macro invertebrates, building bird nests, archery, water quality testing, spin casting, boating safety, bird bands, bear awareness, birding, salmon education, and much more.

The day ended with the release of a rehabilitated bald eagle.

William B. Lyons Park Landscaping

YEP landscaped the William B. Lyons Park in Mountain View. Located behind the Mountain View Recreation Center, this park is heavily used by neighborhood kids from the Boys & Girls Club. Crew members planted 21 maple and ash trees, 132 deciduous shrubs, 69 evergreen shrubs and 346 perennials. The park looks great and provides a beautiful and safe place for children to play.

Environmental Education

YEP toured the Refugee Gardens in Mountain View and learned about community gardens through a presentation by State Refugee Coordinator, Karen Ferguson.

Crew members discussed local Alaska grown food choices as well as an introduction to organic versus conventional food production. Crew members had the opportunity to bring their palate into the learning process as they conducted an "Is it organic or non-organic?" taste test.



Civics Education

Alaska Public Radio Network director, producer and reporter Annie Feidt presented to YEP. Feidt spoke to crew members about her initiation into journalism and the media's role in shaping local issues.



YEP was visited by an Americorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) team during this project. The team spoke to crew members about the meaning of national service and introduced different service opportunities available to youth.

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Far North Bicentennial Park Trail Maintenance

YEP constructed 2,300 feet of new trail connecting the 4.5K loop and the Campbell Airstrip parking lot. This new connector will improve safety



and reduce conflict between dog sleds and other user groups. On the Moose Loop, crew members rerouted 1,400 feet of trail to avoid sections of standing water that occurs most of the year. YEP built 900 feet of new singletrack mountain biking trails to connect with the Black Bear Trail. On the Old Rony Trail, YEP built a new 24 foot bridge to replace a 16 foot storm damaged bridge.

Environmental Education

Tying into earlier activities crew members learned about salmon life cycles, YEP toured the William Hernandez Sport Fish Hatchery.

The hatchery gave crew members the opportunity to see real salmon development in a semi-natural setting.

Elizabeth Manning, of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, discussed a number of the issues confronting wildlife and wildlife managers on the Wildland Urban Interface here in Anchorage.

Municipal Forester Maria D'Agostino worked with crew members to collect data from trees in Far North Bicentennial Park that fell during last fall's wind storms. Crew members learned the importance of urban forestry in Anchorage's unique Wildland Urban Interface.



Civics Education

YEP crew members researched and discussed the economic and environmental pros and cons of the proposed Pebble Mine project.

Recreation Activity

Crew members visited the Bureau of Land Management's Campbell Creek Science Center where they participated in the BLM's ropes course. Each crew was presented with a number of challenges throughout the course and the YEP crews showed great teamwork and enthusiasm as they were able to conquer each of the obstacles along the course.



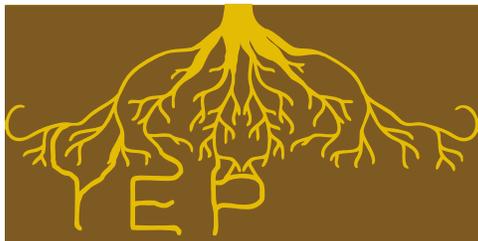
Crew Members of the Week

A rewarding part of a job well done is being recognized for your hard work.

Each week, YEP recognizes individuals hard work by nominating a "Crew Member of the Week."

These are outstanding individuals that have shown personal improvement, gone the extra mile or shown leadership at project sites.





Community Action Project

YEP Senior Crew Members were tasked with developing a Community Action Project that raised awareness on an issue in their community. This summer they chose to tackle recycling by hosting a Recycled Arts & Crafts fair at Margaret Eagan Sullivan Park.

Crew members held activities and crafts for kids using household recycled materials. To parents, they distributed handouts about recycling opportunities in Anchorage.

Over 70 community members attended.

Campbell Creek Estuary Natural Area - New Trail Construction

Crew members built new trails at the Campbell Creek Estuary Natural Area. The Campbell Creek Estuary is an important breeding ground for many types of birds. The Great Land Trust acquired the estuary in 2010 order to protect it and provide educational opportunities to Anchorage residents. YEP built 1,600 feet of new ADA accessible trail, 900 feet of new trail to the Sand Hill Crane overlook and 26 feet of fiberglass board walking.



Environmental Education

Since estuaries have more biodiversity than any other ecosystem, crew members learned about biodiversity. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game gave YEP over 500 cards with information and pictures of nearly every species in Alaska. Using the knowledge of energy webs and ecosystems they learned earlier in the season, crew members placed the cards they found in an energy web to see if they could maintain a healthy ecosystem.

Civic Engagement

Phil Shephard from the Great Land Trust and Barbara Carlson from Friends of the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge (FAR) discussed the role the Great Land Trust and FAR played in helping to transform this former homestead site into a protected public land. They took crew members on a tour of the site and pointed out the areas where YEP would be establishing the first trails at the estuary.

Recreation Activity

Chris Maack of FAR, Bird TLC, and Anchorage Audubon Society introduced YEP to the fascinating world of birding. Crew members were given binoculars and sent to locate avian species within the estuary. Crew members successfully spotted a number of different birds, including a peregrine falcon and sand hill cranes.

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Mentorship Week

At the end of the summer program, teens participated in Mentorship Week, focused on connecting crew members to successful futures. Throughout the summer, the program trains and prepares youth for employment after YEP, Mentorship week shows crew members what the next step is the skills they have learned.

Activities for Mentorship Week included:

- Job Shadowing
- Resume Workshop
- National Service Opportunities
- Youth Civic Engagement Opportunities
- Educational Opportunities
- Financial Awareness Training with Wells Fargo
- Conservation Careers Panel
- Anchorage Assembly Presentation
- Financial Aid for College

Mentorship Week Presenters

YEP enlists community partners to present a variety of career, educational and civic engagement opportunities to YEP crew members.

Thank you to all of our 2013 Presenters!

Alaska Department of Labor Youth Hiring Center, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Alaska Teen Media Institute, Alaska Youth Advocates, Alaska Youth for Environmental Action, Alaska Pacific University, Alaska Vocational Technical Center, AWAIC (Abused Women's Aid In Crisis), Bureau of Land Management, BP, Job Corps, SAGA Americorps, Student Conservation Association, & Wells Fargo

“Just as the YEP students appreciate Wells Fargo’s financial and education commitment, Wells Fargo appreciates the work the YEP students do to enhance our parks in Anchorage. Partnership and stewardship at its best.”

- Judith Crotty, Vice President, Wells Fargo



Job Shadowing

During mentorship week, YEP crew members had an opportunity to job shadow local professionals in careers they are interested in.

Crew members shadowed with:

- Audubon Alaska
- Alaska Air Guard
- Alaska Court System
- Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
- Alaska Department of Fish & Game
- Bettisworth North Architects
- College Village Animal Clinic
- IBEW
- Alaska Integrated Media
- Fire Station #14
- House of Harley Davidson
- Northstar Dental
- Master's Catering
- Walsh Sheppard Marketing
- United Physical Therapy



What is the SCA?

SCA provides college and high school-aged members with hands-on conservation service opportunities in virtually every field imaginable, from tracking grizzlies through the Tetons to restoring desert ecosystems and teaching environmental education at Washington, D.C.'s Urban Tree House.

SCA's YEP Alumni Crew

This year Youth Employment in Parks partnered with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) to give four YEP alumni an opportunity to take their experience a step further. The SCA recruited YEP alumni to use skills gained in YEP on more challenging projects with experienced crew leaders on city lands and on remote Federal Lands.



Projects

Bureau of Land Management - Campbell Creek Science Center
Alumni worked for two weeks removing hazard trees at the Smokejumper Trailhead and around the science center. They replaced and repaired moose fencing around the Aspen Ranch.

Municipality of Anchorage - Parks & Recreation Department
At University Lake Park, alumni made tread improvements to over 550 feet of trail. They enhanced and regraded bridge approaches in Far North Bicentennial Park. In Forsythe Park, alumni enhanced a Safe Route to School by removing and constructing a new bridge.

Chugach National Forest

Alumni spent 30 days living and working at Spencer Glacier. They sawed, cleared, swamped and brushed a quarter mile of new trail that extends from the bridge that crosses the Placer River to the glacier.

Recreation Trip

To finish off their experience, the alumni took a four day recreation trip and backpacked Resurrection Pass.

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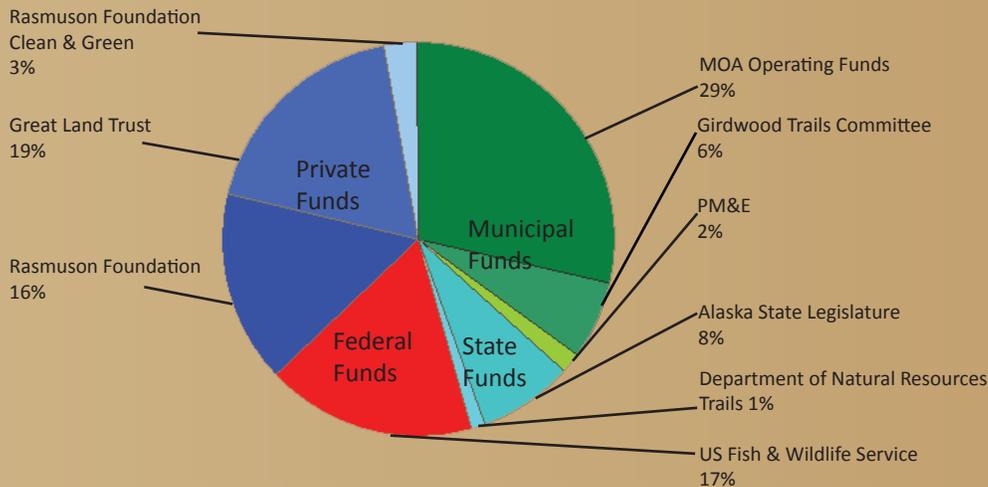
Funding for Youth Employment in Parks is a combination of public and private funds

In 2013 YEP was made possible through a combination of private and public funding directed to specific projects and activities. Funding sources this year include:

- Rasmuson Foundation
- Municipality of Anchorage
- Great Land Trust
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- Girdwood Trails Committee
- Alaska Department Of Natural Resources
- Alaska State Legislature

The unique combination of these funds helped make a difference in Anchorage parks and communities through the Youth Employment in Parks program.

Public-Private Funding Partners



- 37% Municipal Funding
- 37% Private Funding
- 9% State Funding
- 17% Federal Funding

Each year, we must seek out new funding partners who want to make a difference with local youth in Anchorage parks.

Thank you to our
2013 YEP Funders





“It’s helped my ability to work with other people and helped me become part of the workforce”
- Alyeska



“I’ve learned a lot about working in tough situations”
-Gage

For more information please contact:
C. Allen Truitt
YEP Manager
907.343.4504
truittca@muni.org



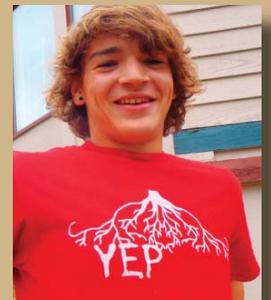
“I don’t ever want to work inside again” - Adrienne



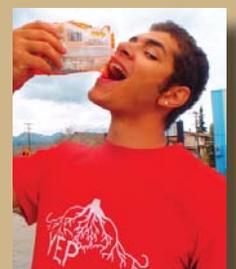
“YEP has taught me valuable job skills and I’ve made some great friends” - Nyamekeye



“I proved to myself that I could do more and I can make a change in my community” - Melinna



“I learned that when you work hard, you can get anything done” - Austin



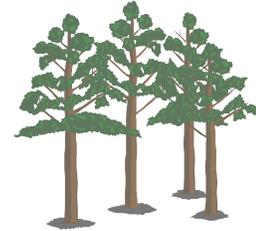
“I got to improve somewhere I visit every day” - Treyveon

Rabbit Creek Community Council

P.O. Box 112354, Anchorage, AK 99511-2354

March 1, 2013

To: Alaska State Legislature
Through: Anchorage Parks Foundation



Re: Support for funding for Section 36 and Moen Parks and wildlife safety upgrades to parks

Section 36 Park. At its February 2013 meeting, Rabbit Creek Community Council passed a motion in support of legislative funding for Section 36 Park. Rabbit Creek Community Council has repeatedly supported trail improvements of Section 36 Park to provide recreation and enjoyment of the natural setting. We support a trailhead from the existing paved parking at Storck Park, and trails on the uplands, as proposed under this funding. These trails would finally, after years of delayed park planning, allow residents to make use of the park.

There is an immediate health and safety need for this trail development. Our community council covers over 4 square miles and has very limited park and trail facilities. Lack of park access contributes to sedentary, unhealthy lifestyles, which are a community wide concern. Lack of trails poses an immediate safety hazard to students on the sports teams at nearby Goldenview Middle School, who frequently train on the shoulders of busy roadways, and for whom trails at Section 36 Park would be a safe and exciting alternative. In addition, the park is adjacent to Bear Valley Elementary School, whose 500 plus students would benefit from safe outdoor education and exercise opportunities.

Moen Park.

Moen Park has suffered from neglect and parts of it are impassable because of wind-felled trees. In 2012, neighbors approached the Council to explore ways to clear downed trees and make the park more accessible: but the park remains criss-crossed by downed trees and is very underutilized. Basic park infrastructure is needed. Rabbit Creek has long been supportive of improvements to Moen Park in accordance with the Moen Park Plan.

Wildlife safety through proper refuse containers.

Funding for properly designed refuse containers at parks and trailheads is an important investment in human and wildlife safety. Our Community Council borders Chugach State Park and the Coastal Wildlife Refuge and bears pass through our neighborhoods. It is important to have well-managed trash management at parks so that bears do not hang out at trailheads.

Signed,

Nancy Pease, Chair

Cc: Rep. Mike Hawkins, Sen. Cathy Geissel

Dear Anchorage Legislators-

I am an active trail user, trail builder and mountain biking program administrator and coach. As such I have seen first-hand the benefits of having Anchorage's Youth Employment in Parks program making social trails sustainable, hardening trails in disrepair, and building new trails in planned areas where Anchorage wants to recreate. Thank you for considering funding for any trails project that has the support of the Anchorage Park Foundation and Live.Work.Play. I appreciate their work.

For several years I have been part of a loose group of volunteers and trail user groups that work together to make sure the trails at Far North Bicentennial Park are used appropriately and maintained to standard. Frankly, it is ground-breaking work to have dog mushers, equestrians, mountain bikers, runners, and all other manner of trail user, agree on trail policy. I am proud of our collaboration. We agree on so many things, including the community trail benefits of Youth Employment in Parks.

Youth Employment in Parks is cost effective, promotes park stewardship among youth (many of whom are disadvantaged), and we get to have sustainable trails when the projects are complete. I couldn't be happier with their work. We need more YEP projects!

Sincerely,

Darcy Davis

Singletrack Advocates, steering committee member

Mighty-Bikes, co-administrator/coach



February 4, 2014

Dear Anchorage Legislator,

Every child deserves a place to play. My daughter, Anna, has spina bifida, which paralyzed her lower legs before she was born. Today, at age 7, she can get around with the help of a walker and a wheelchair. Although Anna participates in numerous adaptive sports, she has been unable to enjoy the most basic childhood activity--playing on a playground. Just last summer, Anna was told at summer camp that she had to sit on the sidelines and watch while her friends played because there was no equipment for her to play on. She just watched.

I decided that day that Anna and kids like her would have places to play right here in Anchorage.

I started the Parks for All grassroots initiative with two other mothers who have children experiencing disabilities: Christy Everett Jordan and Rachel Leask. Knowing that most Alaskans live here for the lifestyle and recreational opportunities, we share the mission to bring accessible play to all Alaskans of all ages and all abilities. For four years, we developed a true community partnership, securing individual donations on our own and working with the Anchorage Park Foundation and Anchorage Parks & Recreation to secure legislative grants and large private donations, all put toward the new inclusive, certified Boundless Playground at Cuddy Family Midtown Park. The playground was installed during the summer of 2013, and has been a hit with children of all abilities, their families and Anchorage's wounded warriors.

I thank the State of Alaska for contributing to this first project along with our other donors.

In 2013, in a great show of support for the Parks for All initiative, the Rasmuson Foundation set aside money for the Anchorage Park Foundation to fund Parks for All projects, including accessible and inclusive playground and park development. Working with multiple local and state organizations and experts in inclusive play, APF is putting some of that funding toward a strategic plan to help guide the Municipality of Anchorage Parks & Recreation Department's playground building efforts over the next 10 years.

Because of overwhelming community support, Alaska is seeing a statewide trend toward inclusive playgrounds. I join the Rasmuson Foundation and Municipality of Anchorage in supporting accessible recreation projects. Anchorage Park Foundation intends to include at least one accessible and inclusive playground or trail component in each of the projects listed below, and I am writing this letter in support of APF's legislative requests for those accessibility and safety improvements on behalf of Parks for All.

Park Projects

Moen Park: Neighborhood Park Safety Upgrades

Dave Rose Park: Neighborhood Park Safety Upgrades

Independence Park: Neighborhood Park Development
Suzan Nightingale Park: Neighborhood Park Safety Upgrades
Heatherstone Park: Neighborhood Park Tot Lot
David Green Park: Neighborhood Park Safety Upgrades
Pamela Joy Lowry Park: Neighborhood Park Safety Upgrades
Pioneer Park: Neighborhood Park Safety Upgrades
Lloyd Steele Park to Balto Seppala Park Trail Safety & Park Improvements
Williwaw East Park: Neighborhood Park Safety Upgrades
Arnold Muldoon Park: Neighborhood Park Safety Upgrades
Jewel Lake Park: Neighborhood Park Safety Upgrades
Westchester Lagoon Nature Trail Safety Improvements
Elderberry Park Rehabilitation and Safety Upgrades
Tikishla Park: Neighborhood Park Safety Upgrades
Forsythe Park: Neighborhood Park Safety Upgrades
Springer Park: Neighborhood Park Safety Upgrades

Thank you for your time and attention. Please do not hesitate to contact with me with questions or ideas for other accessible and inclusive park improvements. Together, we can make Anchorage a place where no child has to sit on the sidelines.

Sincerely,



Leah Boltz
co-founder, Parks For All
907-301-1860
leahboltz@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/parksforall



Moen Support Letter

To whom this may concern,

The Goldenview Park Homeowners Association would like to give our full support in the development and clean up of Moen Park located on Goldenview Drive. The Association believes the additional park with a Playground and trail system will be a great addition to the area. There are many active families in this area that would greatly benefit from additional area to explore and play with their families.

The local community showed their support last summer by helping to get the clean up underway. The community and Goldenview Park Homeowners Association are now hoping to see this amazing area receive the last bit of help that it deserves to better serve the area.

Kindest,

Goldenview Homeowners Association Board Members