

# Youth Employment in Parks

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



Beaver Pond Trail in Girdwood

## 2013 Annual Program Report

ANCHORAGE



PARKS & RECREATION





# Youth Employment in Parks

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

## What is YEP?

Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) is a joint program of the Anchorage Park Foundation and the Municipality of Anchorage's Parks & Recreation Department. YEP aims to positively engage a new generation of diverse young leaders as conservation stewards of public lands and of the Anchorage community through meaningful job training, employment and education.



Since 2007, YEP has hired over 200 Anchorage youth to complete park improvement projects. The teens learn valuable natural resource management job skills by building trails and restoring stream banks. In addition, youth engage in relevant educational opportunities to increase their civic engagement, environmental awareness, recreational activity and leadership skills. At the end of the program, Mentorship Week links their new skills to future careers.

**YEP puts teens to work making a difference in our community!**

## YEP Goals

- 1) Create a meaningful "first job" experience and open a career pathway for diverse youth to work in the outdoors and natural resources fields.
- 2) Expose youth to the outdoors and connect them with nature to support healthy lifestyles.
- 3) Provide youth with community action skills and character development so they may become effective citizens.
- 4) Build community through enhanced recreation opportunities, parks and public spaces.



## Accreditation

In 2013, Youth Employment in Parks became one of the first provisionally accredited youth corps programs in the country by the Corps Center of Excellence. Accreditation assures partner agencies and donors of the quality of the program.

Guidelines for accreditation were determined by the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps Federal Advisory Committee. The committee was composed of leaders of corps programs, representatives from federal and industry partners.

Alaskan members of the committee included:

**Beth Nordlund,**  
**Anchorage Park Foundation**

**Carol Ann Wren,**  
**Cook Inlet Tribal Council**





## Senior Crew Members

Each YEP crew has a Senior Crew Member, hired to help lead crews on projects and serve as peer role models.

Senior crew members are selected from previous YEP crew members and youth leaders in the community.

After a summer of work with crew leaders developing technical skills, teamwork, and leadership, Senior Crew Members are challenged to develop a Community Action Project.

**In 2013 the Senior Crew Members organized a YEP Arts and Crafts Fair.**

## Program Design

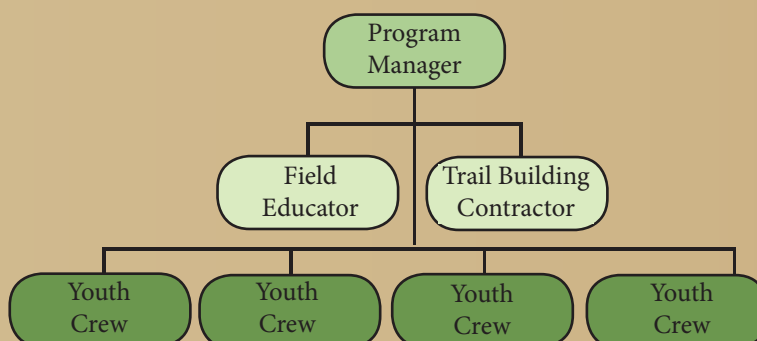
Youth Employment in Parks is modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) program of the 1930s. YEP is designed as a service learning program which balances the work product with job skills training, recreational activities, civic engagement and environmental education. YEP employs staff to design and implement relevant service learning activities that will help the youth to realize the meaningfulness of the work and become engaged citizens.



The summer program lasts for ten weeks and coincides with the Anchorage School District schedule to ensure opportunities are available to area youth without interfering with school schedules.

## Staff Structure

The staff is divided into four field crews that consist of five youth crew members, a youth senior crew member and an adult leader. On work sites there is a professional trail building contractor to manage the project and ensure a professional quality of work. The field educator manages the service learning and educational components for the program.



# Youth Employment in Parks

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

## Recruitment

In 2013, YEP held four public outreach sessions at Fairview Recreation Center, Spenard Recreation Center, Mountain View Boys & Girls Club and the Muldoon Boys & Girls Club. These sessions reached approximately 40 youth.

Youth Employment in Parks' main outreach and recruitment tool was 11 High School presentations.

The Alaska Department of Labor's Youth Hiring Center was a major recruitment partner, providing additional outreach and working with the YEP program manager to organize application workshops for 62 Anchorage teens.

## Interviews and Participant Selection

As part of the first job experience, YEP interviews all crew member applicants who meet the basic qualifications:

- a resident of the Municipality of Anchorage
- 16-19 years old on June 1st, 2013
- engaged in high school or GED education

With 115 qualified applicants, interviewing becomes a challenge. Youth Employment in Parks engages community partners to help interview and select applicants.

Our community partners interviewed 107 applicants and selected 20 YEP crew members.

## Interview and Selection Partners

Alaska Youth for  
Environmental Action

Alaska Department of Labor

Anchorage Parks &  
Recreation Department

Anchorage Park Foundation

Anchorage Community Land  
Trust

Friends of the Anchorage  
Coastal Wildlife Refuge (FAR)

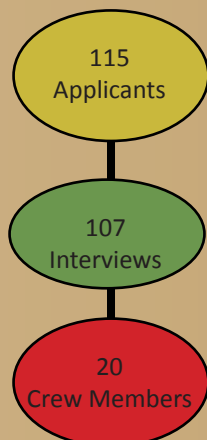
Great Land Trust

Recreational Equipment Inc  
(REI)

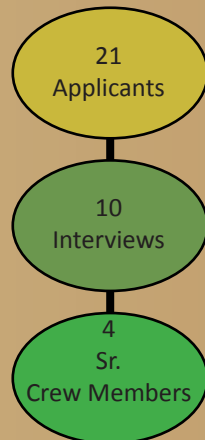
Wells Fargo

**Thank you for  
helping to select the  
2013 YEP Crew!**

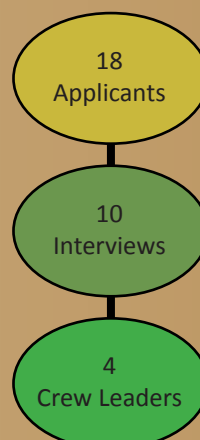
### Crew Members



### Senior Crew Members



### Crew Leaders





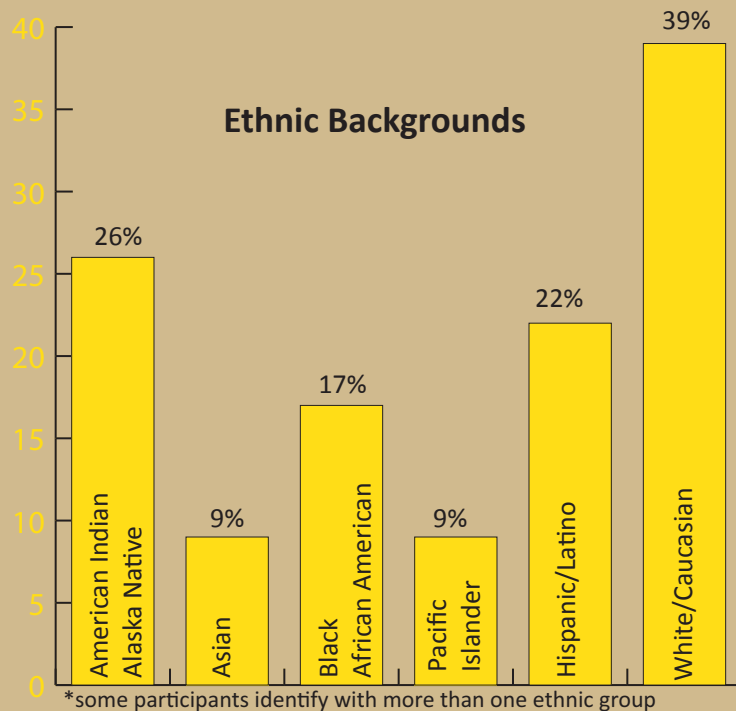
## Participant Backgrounds

- 21% live in a single parent home
- 43% have families that are considered low income
- 18% have parents who are unemployed
- 35% are from military families
- 13% are members of Alaska Native corporations
- 9% experience a disability
- 22% identify as LGBT

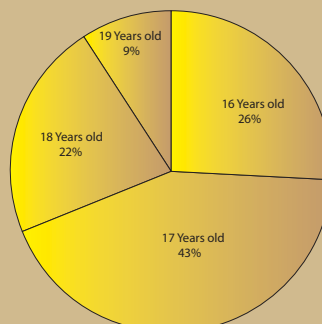
**In 2013, YEP was a first job for 8 Participants**

## Opportunities For All

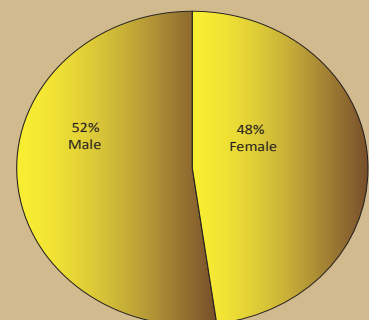
The YEP program seeks to hire from all areas of Anchorage. The program coordinates with local recreation centers, hiring centers, and the Anchorage School District to get applicants. One of the strengths of the program are participants who come from a large range of backgrounds. Anchorage features a diverse ethnic and socioeconomic population and YEP strives to represent that diversity.



## Age Distribution



## Gender Ratio

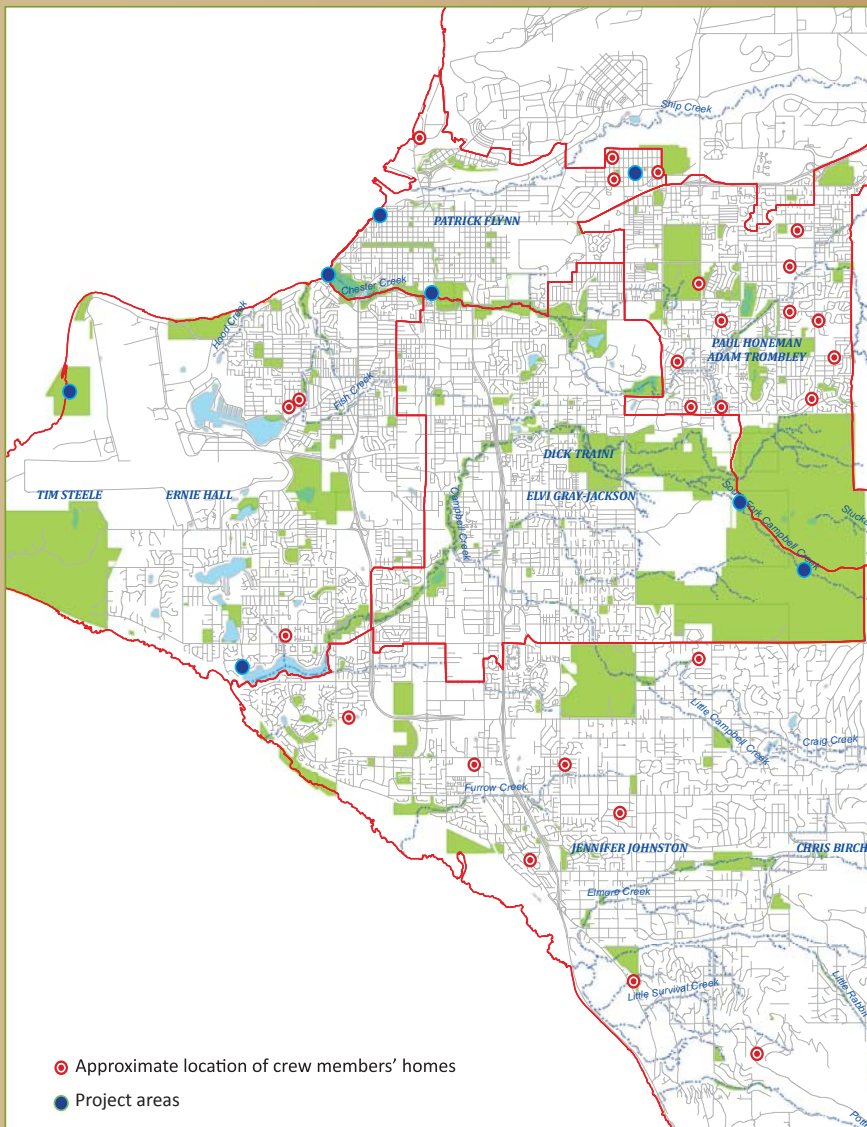


# Youth Employment in Parks

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

## We Reflect Anchorage

YEP teens represent neighborhoods throughout the Anchorage bowl.



## 10 High Schools Represented

AVAIL

Bartlett High School  
Benny Benson  
Dimond High School  
East High School  
Frontier Charter School  
Grace Christian School  
South High School  
Stellar Secondary School  
West High School

## 6 Languages Spoken

French  
Hmong  
Japanese  
Samoan  
Spanish  
Thai

**26% speak a language other than English at home**





## Why did you apply to YEP?



### Trails Curriculum

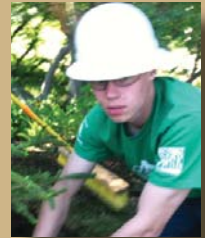
YEP Crew Members receive specialized training based on the Urban Trails Curriculum.

This curriculum was developed for the YEP program by professional Alaskan trail builders under a grant from the Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

The curriculum is designed to develop the next generation of trail builders and resource managers in large urban areas with extensive trails systems like Anchorage.

It adapts skills used to build trails in the wilderness to build successful, sustainable trails in an urban environment.

"To earn money for College while doing a job that allowed me to be outside"  
- Carson, YEP Senior Crew Member



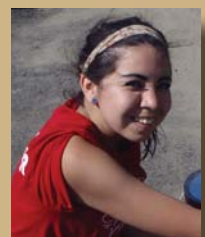
"I want to make a difference in my community"  
- Tyler, YEP Crew Member

"I wanted an opportunity to be a part of something great and to help give back to a community I love"  
- Cheng, YEP Crew Member



"I applied to YEP because I wanted to learn how to work"  
- Mina, YEP Crew Member

"I wanted to gain skills and experience with a job that is engaged in our community"  
- Jamie, YEP Crew Member





# Youth Employment in Parks

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

## Education

Youth Employment in Parks includes a strong educational element. The program operates under the philosophy that understanding why your work matters increases ownership and stewardship in your project and your community.

Educational aspects are tied directly to the project crew members work on. YEP focus on four areas of education:

1. Job Skills
2. Environmental Education
3. Civic Engagement
4. Recreation Activity



First day of YEP 2013

## Job Skills for Successful Futures

### Job skills developed in the YEP Program:

- Basic on-the-job conduct
- Punctuality
- Preparation for the work day: being well-rested, packed lunch and a positive attitude
- Workload management
- Conflict resolution
- Team building
- First Aid & CPR certification
- Theory and philosophy of the management of public lands
- Resume building
- Interview skills
- Leave No Trace training for minimum environmental impact during outdoor activities.
- Work place safety
- Tool use and safety

YEP strives to give crew members the tools and stamina to stand out amongst their peers as skilled and reliable employees, stewards of their community and leaders of the future.



## Anchorage Assembly Presentation

The Anchorage Assembly offered YEP the opportunity to present their work at an Assembly meeting. Crew members each spoke before the Assembly about their YEP experience and learned how local government works.

The Assembly asked crew members about their projects and thanked them for helping make Anchorage a great city to live in.



### 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.



# Youth Employment in Parks

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

## 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.



# Youth Employment in Parks

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

## 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.



# Youth Employment in Parks

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

## 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.

# Youth Employment in Parks

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

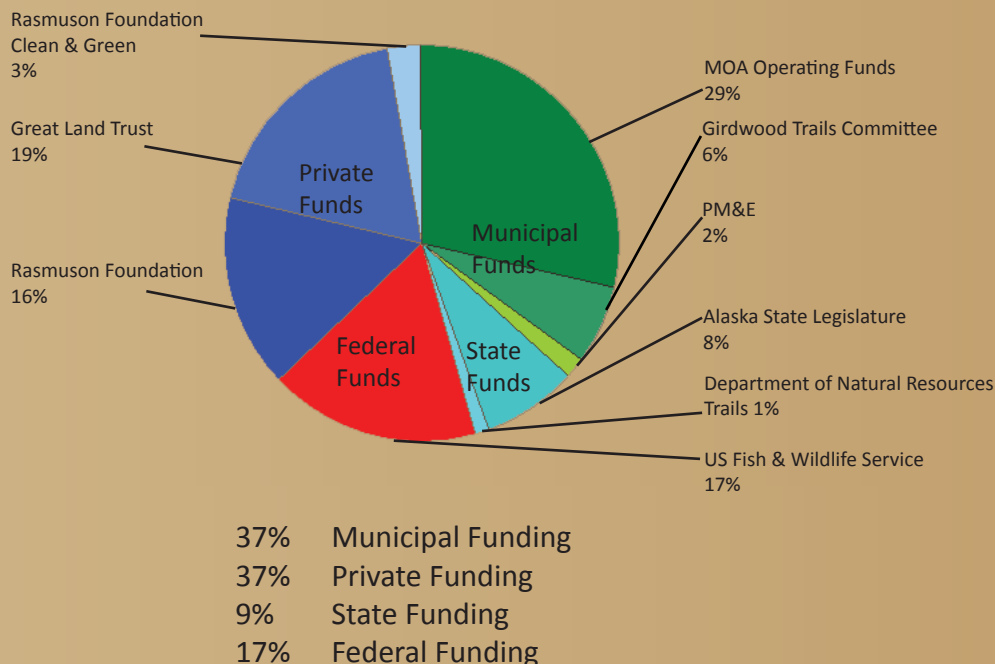
## Funding for Youth Employment in Parks is a combination of public and private funds

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



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



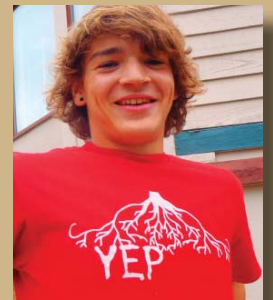
"I don't ever want to work inside again" - Adrienne



"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