

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS

2019 Annual Program Report







Youth Employment in Parks is a unique employment opportunity for teens. It is made possible by cooperation between the Anchorage Park Foundation, a non-profit which advocates for urban parks and trails in Anchorage, the Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department, and the support of generous funders.



WHAT IS YEP?

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS IS A SUMMER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM FOR ANCHORAGE YOUTH THAT ENGAGES A NEW GENERATION OF DIVERSE YOUNG LEADERS AS CONSERVATION STEWARDS OF PUBLIC LANDS AND THE ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY THROUGH MEANINGFUL JOB TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT, AND EDUCATION.

Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) is a joint program of the Anchorage Park Foundation and the Municipality of Anchorage's Parks and Recreation Department.

Since 2007, YEP has hired over 325 Anchorage youth to complete park improvement projects during the summer. The teens learn valuable natural resource management job skills by building trails, restoring stream banks, and performing a variety of other park improvement projects. Additionally, as part of the YEP program, teens 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.

Each year, about 25 teens are selected from more than 150 applicants to be enrolled in the award-winning YEP program. The YEP 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 calendars. For the duration of the summer, these teens work full-time on park and trail improvement projects.

Funding for the teens' wages and project overhead comes from a variety of grants and contributions, both public and private.

YEP IN ACTION

- **YEP creates** employment opportunities and highlights career paths for youth to work in natural resources fields.
- **YEP inspires** youth to embrace nature while encouraging healthy lifestyles.
- **YEP prepares** youth to become effective, contributing citizens and employees through character development and community action skills training.
- **YEP contributes** to the community by improving parks and recreation spaces.



Youth Employment in Parks

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

2019 YEP Crew Members



Carlos

Bagel
Enthusiast



Isabelle

Likes Art



Isaiah

Enjoys
Eating Trail
Mix



Riley

Likes
Swimming



Abby

Enjoys
Soccer



Amya

Likes Playing
Basketball



Ariana

Likes
Skating



Amanda

Enjoys Being
with Family



David

Likes
Photography



Derric

Enjoys
Playing
Basketball



Emily

Enjoys
Playing
Soccer



Gavin

Enjoys
Playing
Nintendo
Games



Omar

Likes to
Play Video
Games



Vang

Loves to
Draw



William

Loves to
Play
Basketball



Zachery

Likes Coin
Collecting



Jesse

Enjoys
Listening to
Music



Lauren

Likes
Making
Music



Jennifer

Enjoys
Memes and
Watching
Netflix



Jalen

Likes to
Draw



Nick

Loves
Playing
Video
Games



Leenona

Likes to be
with Family



Jarra

Likes to Sing



Mairyn

Likes to Play
Basketball

SKILL-BUILDING

YEP crew members participate in park improvement projects like streambank restoration and trail building.



PROGRAM STRUCTURE

PROGRAM DESIGN

Youth Employment in Parks is modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) program of the 1930s. The YEP program is designed as a service learning program which balances the work product with job skills training, recreational activities, civic engagement, and environmental education.

The YEP program employs staff to design and implement relevant service learning activities that will help the youth realize the meaningfulness of their work and become engaged citizens.

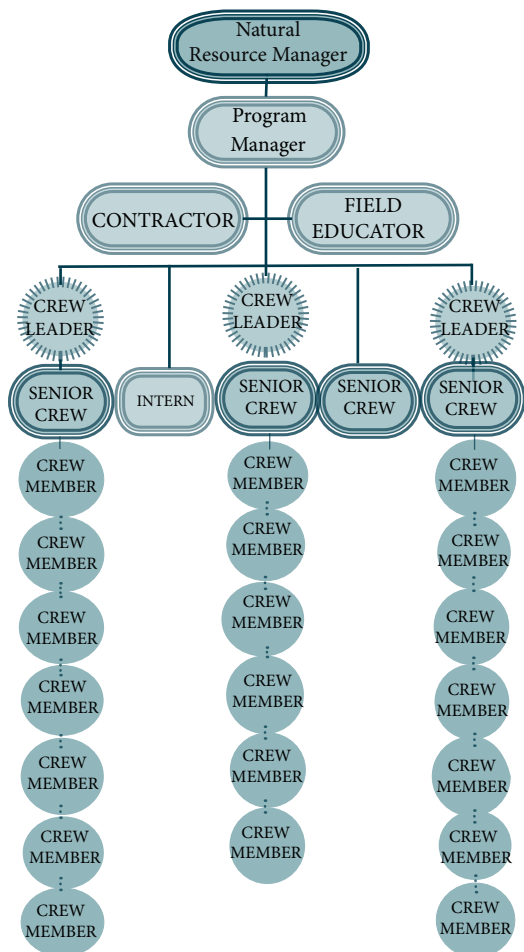
YEP PROGRAM GOALS

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

STAFF STRUCTURE

Youth Employment in Parks requires a variety of skills and a high degree of organization in order to accomplish its goals. Administrative duties are assigned to a handful of staff members, while project supervision and execution are carried out by the structured crews.

In 2019, the YEP staff divided into three field crews consisting of six to seven youth crew members, a youth senior crew member, and an adult crew leader. The field educator planned and implemented the service learning and educational components for the program, while the on-site professional trail building contractor managed the projects and ensured professional quality work. Both the natural resource manager and the program coordinator work year round coordinating projects, writing grants, and planning for the upcoming YEP program.



WE REFLECT ANCHORAGE

ANCHORAGE FEATURES A DIVERSE ETHNIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC POPULATION. THE TEENS EMPLOYED THROUGH THE YEP PROGRAM REFLECT THAT DIVERSITY.

In 2019, the YEP program hired 25 diverse Anchorage youth as crew members, senior crew members, and an intern. In addition, YEP hired three crew leaders, and a field educator. To qualify as YEP crew members, applicants must be a resident of the Municipality of Anchorage, be between 16 and 19 years old, and be enrolled in high school, a GED program, or possess a diploma.

The YEP program coordinates with local recreation centers, hiring centers, and the Anchorage School District to attract applicants. Because Anchorage features such a diverse ethnic and socioeconomic population, YEP participants have a wide range of backgrounds.

Interviewers select applicants for the YEP crew that will benefit the most and make the best use of the opportunity. This means that all of the money that goes into YEP supports not only our parks and trails, but family needs and educational pursuits of YEP employees.

Nearly all YEP teens report a very positive, and sometimes life-changing, experience as a YEP crew member. Youth Employment in Parks aims to set teens on a path toward success in future careers, which many of our past crew members have accomplished. In addition to work and social skills, friendships are formed among YEP crew mates that last for years to come.

2019 YEP PROGRAM NUMBERS:

24/3

**CREW MEMBERS/
CREW LEADERS**

9

**HIGH SCHOOLS
REPRESENTED**

10

LANGUAGES SPOKEN

33

**% SPEAK A LANGUAGE
OTHER THAN ENGLISH
AT HOME**

14

FIRST JOB EXPERIENCES

52/48

% MALE/FEMALE

10

**AVERAGE HOURS/
MONTH YEP MEMBERS
SPENT VOLUNTEERING**

ETHNICITY:

- ☐ 48% - White/Caucasian
- ☐ 28% - Black/African American
- ☐ 12% - Hispanic/Latino
- ☐ 12% - American Indian/Alaska Native
- ☐ 8% - Asian
- ☐ 4% - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

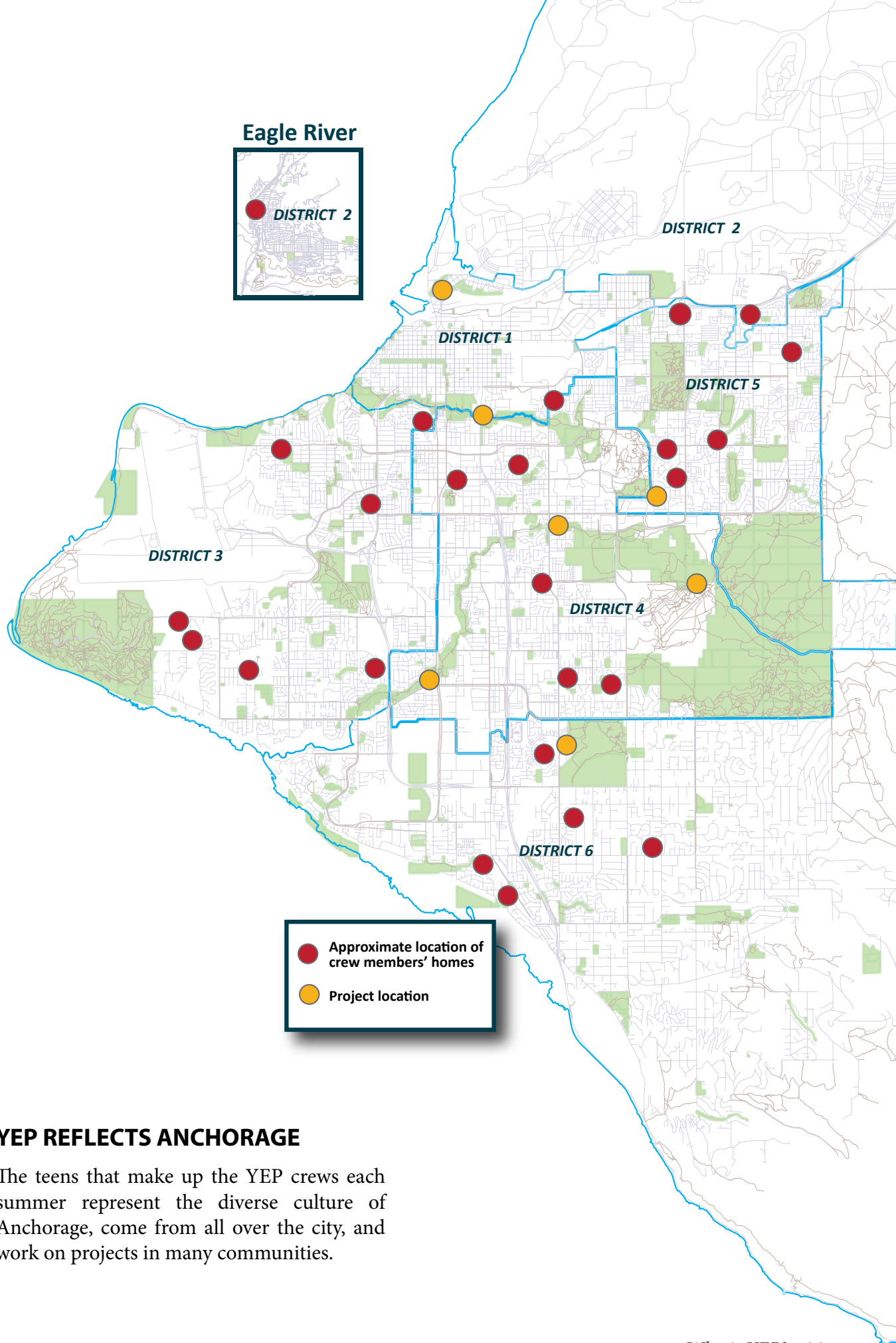
FAMILY:

- ☐ 17% - have families that are considered low income
- ☐ 17% - live in a single parent home
- ☐ 17% - experience a disability
- ☐ 8% - are members of Alaska Native tribes
- ☐ 8% - have parents who are unemployed
- ☐ 4% - are from military families

EARNINGS:

- ☐ 84% - will save part of their earnings
- ☐ 36% - will spend earnings on clothing and food
- ☐ 26% - will spend earnings on tuition
- ☐ 16% - will spend earnings on basic household expenses

Some participants identify with more than one background



YEP REFLECTS ANCHORAGE

The teens that make up the YEP crews each summer represent the diverse culture of Anchorage, come from all over the city, and work on projects in many communities.

EDUCATION

THE YEP PROGRAM IS NOT JUST ABOUT BUILDING TRAILS AND PLANTING TREES. YEP TEENS HAVE A WEEKLY EDUCATION AND RECREATION DAY THAT TEACH A VARIETY OF SKILLS TO HELP THEM HAVE SUCCESSFUL CAREERS, BECOME COMMUNITY LEADERS, AND HAVE FUN!



While park improvement work is a major aspect of the YEP program, the program also incorporates a strong education and recreation element.

Youth Employment in Parks gives crew members the tools and stamina to stand out amongst their peers as skilled and reliable employees, stewards of their community, and future leaders.

On weekly education and recreation days, and sometimes during daily breaks, YEP crew members engage in group activities and discussions that are tied directly to the projects on which they are working. These sessions cover a variety of topics which emphasize civic engagement, job skills, environmental awareness, and healthy recreation. Crew members have hands-on opportunities to serve the community, apply new skills, and learn about a variety of different occupations, all while having fun! Youth Employment in Parks encourages teens to become leaders and create positive impacts wherever they go.



Top: Campbell Creek Science Center team building
Above: Kids Don't Float at Bartlett High School
Right: Volunteer Tree Planting with Wells Fargo



VALUABLE SKILLS

The YEP program not only teaches the value of hard work, but equips teens with the skills to stand out from the crowd as dependable employees and contributing community members.



EDUCATION AND RECREATION

Each summer the teens take a Streambank Rehabilitation and Habitat Protection Workshop with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Alaska Plant Materials Center. The teens learn about techniques for restoring degraded streambanks and fish habitat and put these new skills to use restoring streambanks along our greenbelt.



The YEP teens visited the National Tsunami Warning Center in Palmer, Alaska. This is the headquarters for Tsunami warnings and watches for the entire western hemisphere. The teens learned about how warnings are forecasted and sent around the world.

This summer our education and recreation opportunities were made possible by a Social Justice Grant from The Alaska Community Foundation. Thank You!

"The stream bank restoration class was my favorite educational activity. Seeing visual representation of how they are done was amazing and helps us understand why it is important to restore habitat."

- Jarra Drammeh



"The most satisfying aspect of YEP was doing so much meaningful work." - Isaiah Atseriak



"In YEP, I learned about the value of Natural Resources and that trails can bring a community together."
- Abby Jensen



"My favorite education/recreation day was our Eklutna Trip because we enjoyed swimming, biking, and bonding with the crew."
- William Toliver



YEP PROJECTS: 2019

A SUMMER IN REVIEW: YEP CREWS COMPLETED 6 PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS OVER THE COURSE OF 10 WEEKS.



Castle Heights Park Trail

Trail Maintenance & Training Week



Funding:

MOA Funds: \$24,000

Private Funding: \$7,000

Project Scope:

YEP teens spent their first week learning about tools, safety, team building, and trail building. For their first project the teens worked on improving a trail that connects Castle Heights Parks to Chester Creek Trail and the University Park Trail system. The crews added 25 tons of gravel to the existing tread.

The project consisted of:

- Hauling 25 tons of D1 aggregate
- Raking, watering, and compacting over 400 ft of trail

Project Dates:

June 3- 7

Government Hill Bluff Trail

Trail Construction

**Funding:**

MOA Funds: \$60,000

Federal Funds: \$23,220

Project Scope:

YEP spent three weeks working in the Government Hill neighborhood constructing a trail along the western bluff of Government Hill. This project was spurred by the community council and accomplished by obtaining an RTP grant. This trail completes a network of trails around Government Hill.

The project consisted of:

- Building a 30 ft turnpike
- Removing vegetation from the trail corridor
- Improving sight lines
- Constructing a mile long trail

Project Dates:

June 10 - 20, July 29 - August 2

Campbell Park

Streambank Restoration



Funding:

MOA Funds: \$14,000

US Forest Service Grant: \$6,000

Private Funding: \$8,000

Project Scope:

This project was part of a three year grant from the US Forest Service and this year YEP worked at Campbell Park helping stabilize and restore the streambank while enhancing fish rearing habitat. Many areas along the Campbell Creek Trail corridor have been degraded over time from overuse and erosion. Campbell Creek is an anadromous stream and this project was necessary to restore the banks and vegetation that provide fish habitat. These restoration projects repaired the streambanks while still allowing for public access and recreation.

The project consisted of:

- Installing a silt fence and digging a trench above ordinary high water.
- Restoring a 50 ft section of eroded stream bank along Campbell Creek in Campbell Park by establishing a new toe using a coir log and building up the bank with brush layers, willow trenching, and vegetative mat.
- Planting 2,000 willows utilizing willow trenching, willow bundles, and live staking.

Project Dates:

June 24 - 26

Campbell Park

Streambank Restoration



Far North Bicentennial Park

Streambank Restoration



Funding:

MOA Funds: \$48,000

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant \$16,000

Private Funds: \$2,300

BLM Funds: \$3,500

Project Scope:

This project was part of a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. YEP worked with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to stabilize and restore approximately 3,000 sq ft of streambank along Campbell Creek in Far North Bicentennial Park. The youth stabilized a 140 ft section of streambank using willow trenching with brush layers and vegetative mat. The teens also planted a variety of native plants, utilized willow trenching, and built a 75 ft buck and rail fence to reestablish vegetation and help protect the bank. Campbell Creek is an anadromous stream and this project was necessary to restore the banks and vegetation that provide fish habitat. These restoration projects repaired the streambanks while still allowing for public access and recreation.

The project consisted of:

- Decompacting a 3,000 sq ft area and putting down approximately 500 cu ft of additional top soil.
- Revegetating approximately 3,000 sq ft of bank along Campbell Creek using a combination of native plants, live stake, willow trenching, and willow bundles. The teens planted 99 native shrub and herbaceous plants: 12 Iris, 20 rose, 20 labrador tea, 27 high bush cranberry, 12 western oak fern, 4 lady fern, 3 chocolate lily, 1 dolls eye, and a combination of 5,200 willows using live stakes and bundles.
- Restoring a 140 ft section of eroded streambank under the mushing bridge at Campbell Tract. This involved establishing a new toe using a coir log, building up the bank with brush layers, willow trenching, and vegetative mat.
Constructing a 75 ft buck and rail fence to protect the restoration site.

Project Dates:

June 27 - July 11

Far North Bicentennial Park

Bank Restoration



Ruth Arcand Park

Schools on Trails (SOT) Connector Trail



Funding:

MOA Funds: \$27,000

Private Funds: \$17,900

Project Scope:

Pacific Northern Academy (PNA) applied for a challenge grant to pay for the construction of a quarter mile long trail to connect their school and adjacent neighborhoods to Ruth Arcand Park. The YEP team worked on grubbing, vegetation removal, laying down geotextile, and graveling the trail from Lake Otis Parkway to Ruth Arcand Park.

The project consisted of:

- Grubbing approximately 1,300 ft of new trail and laying down geotextile
- Hauling approximately 90 tons of gravel
- Watering and compacting 1,300 ft of trail
- Removed ten 50 gallon bags of invasive *Vicia cracca*

Project Dates:

July 15 - 19

*To learn more about the School on Trails (SOT) program visit: <https://anchorageparkfoundation.org/programs/trails-initiative/schools-trails/>

Chester Creek Single Track Trails

Trail Construction



Funding:

MOA Funds: \$48,000

Private Funds: \$7,000

Project Scope:

YEP helped construct 2 miles of single-track trails in the Chester Creek Greenbelt. This series of trails utilizes social trails and previously impacted areas along the Chester Creek Corridor. These multi-use trails offer additional recreation opportunity in the heart of the city and was a community driven project.

The project consisted of:

- Grubbing approximately a 0.25 mile of trail and limbed up sight lines
- Hauling approximately 500 tons of gravel to reinforce and help build up areas along the 2 miles of new single track
- Removed thirty 50 gallon bags of invasive *Vicia cracca* (bird vetch) and *Prunus padus* (European birdcherry)

Project Dates:

July 23-27 and various additional days

Volunteer Tree Plantings



YEP 2019 Group Photos





"Helping the environment was the most satisfying aspect of YEP." - Isabelle Magana



"I learned that communicating with people is important." - Amanda Ford



"The most important lesson I learned this summer was how to work with tools, make the community a better place, and work with others.." - Derric Crain

"Team work is cool!" - Amaya Crain



Mentorship Week


The final week of Youth Employment in Parks is a mentorship week. To kick-off the week, the youth shadowed professionals to learn more about the careers they are interested in pursuing. A few of the mentorship opportunities included engineers, park rangers, a lawyer, an outdoor educator, a physical therapist, a veterinarian, and a teacher. YEP teens spent the rest of the week hearing about future job options, writing resumes, touring a renewable energy facility, the recycling center, the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), and the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), and learning about financial literacy from Wells Fargo. Thank you to all of the mentors and partners who helped make this week so successful!





THE YEP CREW

The YEP program provides Anchorage youth an opportunity for employment that allows them to build social and leadership skills to use in their community and their careers.

A group of youth, mostly of Asian descent, are gathered outdoors in a park-like setting with trees showing autumn foliage. They are wearing warm clothing like hoodies and jackets. Some are holding tools like shovels and gloves, suggesting a cleanup or maintenance activity. The ground is covered with fallen leaves and some trash bags are visible. The overall atmosphere is one of active participation in a community project.

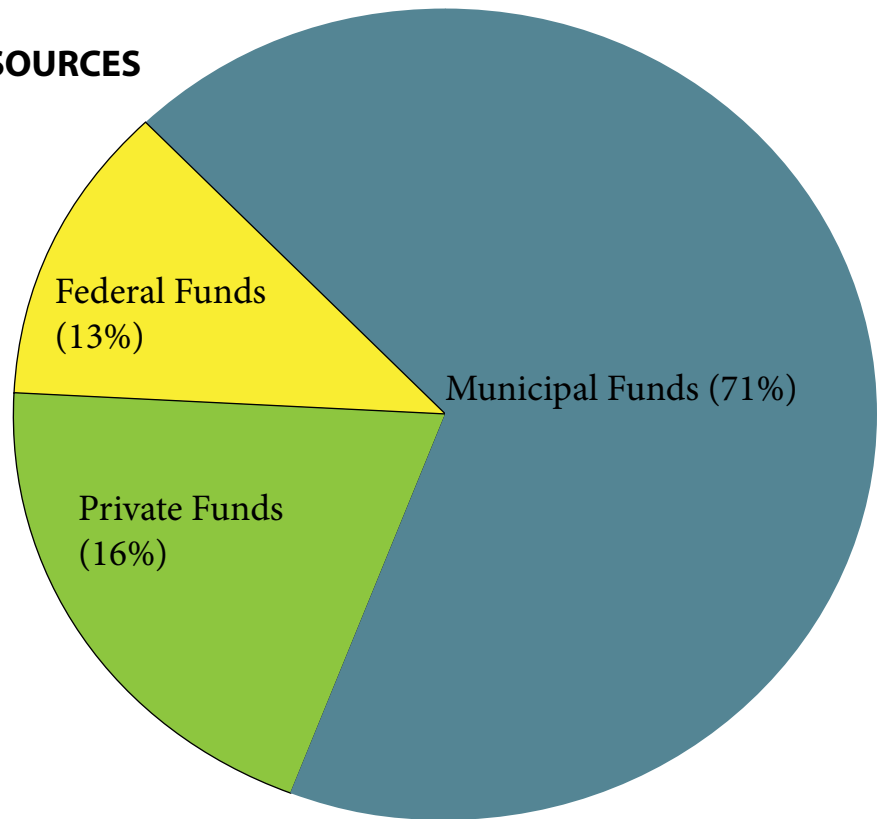
MAKING A DIFFERENCE The YEP program has a positive impact on local youth and our parks. You can support their work by becoming a funding partner.

YEP FUNDING

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS IS MADE POSSIBLE BY A COMBINATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING.

*2019 PUBLIC-PRIVATE FUNDING SOURCES AND FUNDING BREAKDOWN

- Private Funds - \$56,200
- Municipal Funds- \$245,000
- Federal Funds - \$45,220
- Total Funds = \$346,420



*Funding includes all program cost

THANK YOU!

We are grateful to these partners and funders of the 2019 YEP program who have made a difference in the lives of 25 youth and thousands of community members through Anchorage parks and trails improvements.



YEP ACCREDITATION

THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS PROGRAM IS EXCITED
AND HONORED TO BE ACCREDITED BY THE CORPS NETWORK.



Anchorage's Youth Employment in Parks was accredited in 2014 by The Corps Center of Excellence. This esteemed honor is granted to highly rated youth development programs that provide participants with opportunities for leadership skills, job training, community improvement, and the development of environmental stewardship.

The Corps Center of Excellence is a leader of the corps movement. They provide an example for corps programs nationwide to harness the power of young adults to solve some of the nation's greatest challenges-- often while transforming their own lives in the process.

Youth Employment in Parks is proud to have been granted accreditation by this leading organization. This accreditation assures partnering agencies and donors of the quality of the YEP program; further, the YEP program joins a group of nationwide youth development and service programs that have been evaluated to the highest degree.



The Anchorage Park Foundation builds Healthy Parks & Healthy People by mobilizing public support and financial resources for Anchorage parks, trails, and recreation opportunities.

To learn more about supporting Anchorage's Youth Employment in Parks program, please contact the Anchorage Park Foundation:



907-274-1003



www.anchorageparkfoundation.org



3201 C Street, Suite 110
Anchorage, AK 99503



2020 YEP Employment Information

YEP will be accepting applications for the following positions on the following approximate dates:

YEP Crew Leader, Jan 14-Feb 18 (3 positions)

YEP Senior Crew Member, Jan 14-March 15 (4 positions)

YEP Crew Member, Jan 14-March 15 (21 positions)



A Special Thanks....

We would like to thank the following individuals, organizations and groups for helping to make YEP a reality this year!

- Alaska Community Foundation
- Alaska Department of Fish & Game
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Forestry Division
- Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Boating Safety
- Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center
- Alaska Geographic
- Alyeska Resort & Hotel Alyeska
- Anchorage School District
- Anchorage Sand and Gravel
- AWUU
- BLM Campbell Creek Science Center
- BLM Anchorage Field Office
- Chugach Adventures
- E.A. Hamm
- Fire Island Bakery
- Kaladi Brothers
- King Tech High School
- Lifetime Adventures Alaska
- Moose's Tooth
- Musk Ox Farm
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- National Tsunami Warning Center NOLS
- People Mover
- Rasmuson Foundation
- Skinny Raven Sports
- The Student Conservation Association
- University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA)
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Victor Mollozzi
- Wells Fargo
- WestRock Anchorage Recycling Center

Many individuals get involved with YEP by helping conduct education activities. Contact us if you want to contribute!

To Contact YEP:

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**YOUTH
EMPLOYMENT
IN PARKS**