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The Moose Loop

A DESTINATION TRAIL TO CONNECT ANCHORAGE

In Anchorage, parks and trails are not just places to recreate, but places to connect with one another and strengthen our community.

Our four main multi-use trails—the Lanie Fleischer Chester Creek Trail, the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail, the Campbell Creek Trail, and the Ship Creek Trail—can be connected to each other to form a 32-mile bike loop.

In 2019, we realized that when you view these trails on a map, they outline the shape of a moose, one of Anchorage’s most iconic forms of wildlife, and a major draw for Anchorage tourists. With many of these beloved creatures in the Anchorage area, they are commonly seen on the trail system. We hope this will encourage more children, families, and adults from all walks of life want to complete what we are calling the Moose Loop—whether it’s done in a day, over the course of a summer, or over a lifetime in Anchorage.

Destination trails like the Moose Loop help bring more revenue into the community, contributing to the local economy, and encouraging more infrastructure investments.

While the Moose Loop can be completed in its current form by experienced trail users, there are gaps in the route’s connections, navigation challenges, and access barriers in some neighborhoods. Much of the Anchorage Park Foundation’s work over the coming year focuses on advocating for infrastructure improvements for safer trail connections and building support for the Moose Loop being a popular destination among locals and visitors.





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The Anchorage Park Foundation builds healthy parks and healthy people by mobilizing public support and financial resources for Anchorage parks, trails, and recreation opportunities. Your support and involvement in Anchorage Park Foundation helps make new trails, inclusive playgrounds, and revitalized parks possible.
.....

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Letter from the Director



If I can point to one thing that hasn't changed during the pandemic, it's community love for parks and trails. Once again, Anchorage voters said YES to park bonds, construction plans are slowly moving forward and playgrounds have opened again. At Anchorage Park Foundation, we are so grateful! It feels bewilderingly hopeful to know that voters see Anchorage as a place that needs inclusive playgrounds, connected trails to daily destinations, dog parks and skateparks.

The Anchorage Park Foundation builds community through parks and trails. That means we know neighbors by name and are jumping up and down for your victories. We are putting our thinking caps on for your challenges. We are helping raise funds and promote your causes.

Anchorage may see some construction delays this summer. Anchorage Park Foundation may have to change the way we do things. We certainly won't plan public in-person gatherings for a while. But there will be things we can do to support parks and trails and teenagers and neighbors and eagle scouts and the Mayor and baseball players and dog mushers and.... I think we can come up with quite a list!

I'm so happy to be a part of a movement that is hopeful for the future and that makes us excited about our city, now and in the future. I can't wait to walk around Government Hill's new trail, to play on a new playground with Airport Heights neighbors, and cheer on skateboarders at our dreamed-of in-ground skatepark on the Campbell Creek Trail. Until then, we will find ways to cheer each other on. Thank you, Anchorage!

Sincerely,

Beth Nordlund
Executive Director



Youth Employment in Parks, A Look Toward Summer



Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) is a summer jobs programs for Anchorage teens. Based on the Mayor's Roadmap to Reopening Anchorage, we are working closely with Anchorage Parks and Recreation to offer this empowering service-learning program under new safety guidelines.

Interviews were held and positions were offered to 5 YEP Senior Crew Members for June, and we plan to employ 21 Crew Members for five weeks, rather than 10 weeks, in July and August. Trail work includes improving the Tour of Anchorage Trail, a new Rabbit Creek Trail connection and continuing work on the Government Hill trails. The crews will also be doing invasive weed removal and revegetation. We are moving forward optimistically, knowing things may change in the weeks to come. Anchorage teens seem remarkably resilient and adaptive to dealing with the stresses of this global health crisis.

For the past 13 years, YEP has provided hundreds of local teens with their first meaningful employment with on-the-job training in natural resources, outdoor experiences, career guidance, and other valuable life skills. We do this with the generous support of many local businesses, individuals and foundations who see the value of investing in our diverse youth and community. We are so grateful for the strength of our supporters. We see incredible personal growth in participants, many of whom return to fill leadership roles in the YEP program. This is evidence that our work matters, that this program has a definable impact on Anchorage teens.

Summer Schools on Trails

School was supposed to be letting out this month, but instead students across the city have transitioned to distance learning as families shelter at home to wait out the pandemic. Typically, our Schools on Trails program is busy helping teachers get students of all ages out into nature through walking field trips to nearby parks, teaching regular subject matter in outdoor classrooms, or integrating nature and living with urban wildlife into lessons.

Our Schools on Trails program connects students to their local green spaces to encourage regular outdoor learning for the social, mental, and physical benefits. The program is aligned with research showing that students who spend time learning in nature perform better academically, display fewer behavioral problems in the classroom, and experience fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression. Infusing nature in school also instills confidence, encourages active lifestyles, and stewardship of our public lands. Pandemic or not, kids and adults benefit from time spent in nature.

The official school year may be ending, but our surroundings at home, or wherever our summer adventures take us, are full of learning opportunities. Our long summer days are an invitation to spend more time outside in the garden, on the trails, in your neighborhood park, or backyard. Simply being outdoors inspires curiosity, imagination, problem solving, and appreciation of our environment. A lot can be learned by exploring your world through your senses, listening to birds sing, smelling wildflowers, watching dragonflies hover. Studies have shown that when kids are outside, they are always learning, which can help shorten the summer slump before school starts again, while creating lifelong positive memories.

Visit our website for nature themed activities and resources. As with all outdoor activities please be safe and prepared, adhere to social distancing and, of course, have fun.





The Moose Loop Initiative

Can a moose help improve our existing urban trails system? Yes! In Anchorage, we believe it can. The future of health and the built environment lies in connectivity to and promotion of human-powered transportation. When we walk or bike to “everyday destinations” like work, stores, parks, or schools, we save a car trip, improve our health and support clean air. Our initiative empowers diverse citizens to speak up for walkable, bikeable transportation strategies to increase connectivity, improve health and attract investment in Anchorage.

Anchorage has one of the best urban trail systems in the United States, with hundreds of miles of paved and multi-use trails connecting our city. Linking existing trails to city streets forms 32-miles of an almost-complete urban greenway loop that is in the shape of a moose! You see the ears. You see the dewlap. You see the humped back. The paved trails connect to mountain bike trails that connect to Chugach State Park, an alpine tundra park with mountains ranging from 2,000 ft to 8,000 ft in elevation. That’s something very few states have to offer.

By marketing the Moose Loop as a destination trail for locals and visitors, we believe we can improve public health and bring dollars to local businesses. Our advocacy is focused on connecting the gaps in the trail system from all neighborhoods, improving wayfinding, connecting to our cultural heritage through interpretive signage, and completing one last major infrastructure investment – a bike and pedestrian crossing at Lake Otis on the Campbell Creek Trail. We do this by coordinating comments for short and long-term transportation plans, particularly at the Lake Otis crossing, to improve safety for all users. We worked to pass a resolution at the Anchorage Assembly to encourage increased federal transportation funding to address connectivity issues and build a network for active, human-powered transportation. We traveled to Washington, DC and Juneau with our partners at Alaska Trails, tourism organizations and the Alaska Outdoor Alliance to inform federal, state and municipal governments about the economic value of trail networks. Our trails initiative meetings are open to the public and volunteers are encouraged. Join us!

Bike Your Park Day

SEPTEMBER 26

While nothing is certain in the times of COVID-19, APF is making tentative plans to lead a family-friendly bike ride on the Campbell Creek Trail on September 26. The goal is to help new users discover the beautiful 7.5-mile Campbell Creek Trail.

The event will be held in the Campbell Park neighborhood, which includes numerous neighborhood parks and an elementary school. The trail is bordered by a variety of everyday bicycle destinations such as restaurants, pharmacies, and medical facilities.

Sign up for our enews or follow us on social media for more event information. If you are willing to volunteer to help lead the bike ride or provide directions, please email Diana@AnchorageParkFoundation.org or call Diana at (907) 249-6652.



Linking existing trails and city streets in Anchorage forms a 32-mile urban greenway loop in the shape of a moose! You see the ears. You see the dewlap. Visit our website for a google map to help you navigate your moose-shaped journey.





Welcome New APF Team Members



Heather Handyside
Board Member

As Vice President of Corporate Communications and GCI's lead spokesperson, Heather is responsible for finding new and innovative ways to tell GCI's Alaska-born-and-raised story. Heather and her team lead GCI's media, community relations, philanthropy, and internal communications projects. Before joining the GCI team, Heather served as press secretary for former U.S. Senator Mark Begich, deputy municipal manager for the Municipality of Anchorage, and as Anchorage's director of homeland security and emergency management.



Peter Knappe
Business Manager

Peter originally comes from Michigan, and was drawn to Alaska by the mountains, snow and friendly people. With a deep passion for outdoor activities Peter spends his free time sailing, back-country skiing, and traveling. As a strong advocate for outdoor education and societal well-being Peter has previously worked for The Great Land Trust, The Eyak Preservation Council and Standing Together Against Rape. He is thrilled to be working for the Anchorage Park Foundation where he can contribute to community parks and trails.



Levi Peterson
Communications Manager

Levi's background ranges from non-profits to politics to startups. Over the course of his career, Levi has worked in multiple regions of the Lower 48; in addition to working previously at an Alaska arts nonprofit, the Sitka Fine Arts Camp. An avid runner and hiker, Levi sees a connection to the outdoors as paramount to individual and collective well-being. He is excited to be part of the Anchorage Park Foundation team, building on the organization's history of improvement to and advocacy for vital Anchorage public spaces.

Thank you Anchorage Voters!

Thank you for supporting the park bond in the recent Anchorage Municipal election. Projects scheduled to move forward this summer include improving circulation and lighting at University Lake dog park, replacing infrastructure on Campbell Creek trail, building an inclusive playground at Jewel Lake Park, resurfacing the court at Fairview park, and installing new exercise equipment at Taku Lake Park. Thank you for investing in Anchorage.



How the CARES Act Impacts Your Charitable Giving

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act contains several provisions that may benefit you through enhanced charitable giving incentives. This new legislation, signed into law at the end of March as a Covid-19 stimulus package, intends to provide immediate economic relief to nonprofits. Please keep the following in mind when you consider making a gift to the Anchorage Park Foundation:

- You can now deduct your gift to the Anchorage Park Foundation, even if you take the standard deduction. The CARES Act allows for up to \$300 per taxpayer (\$600 for a married couple) in an above-the-line deduction for charitable gifts made in 2020 and claimed on taxes in 2021. This means that you can lower your income tax bill by giving to APF today, even if you take the standard deduction on your taxes.
- If you itemize deductions, there are new charitable deduction limits. The CARES Act increases the existing cap on charitable cash contributions for those who itemize, raising it from 60% of adjusted gross income to 100% in 2020.

- Corporations also benefit from higher charitable deduction limits. The CARES Act increases the cap on how much corporations may deduct for charitable gifts from 10% of taxable income to 25%.
- Were you planning to take a required minimum distribution (RMD) from your retirement account in 2020? The CARES Act waives all RMDs for individuals over the age of 70 ½ who own specified retirement accounts in 2020. However, for account owners who began taking their RMDs prior to 2020, you can still choose to send a qualified charitable distribution to APF and thereby decrease your tax burden. For more information, please talk with your retirement account administrator or accountant.

You have our deepest gratitude for your continuing support of our parks, trails and green spaces. Parks have always been essential public spaces for us, but it has become even more clear over the last few weeks how critical they are to the mental and physical health of our city.

The above information provides an overview of key parts that may change your charitable donations this year, but is not intended as legal or tax advice.





ANCHORAGE
PARK FOUNDATION

3201 C Street, Suite 110
Anchorage, AK 99503



Tony Knowles
Coastal Trail



You're NOT Invited

We were going to have a fancy fundraiser, but... wouldn't you rather be on a trail?

Please don't join us

June 20th, 2020

Instead, spend the day strolling, rolling, running, or riding on our world-class urban trail system

Location: Your favorite trail

Attire: Outdoor recreation clothing and gear

*RSVP by donating to the
Anchorage Park Foundation*