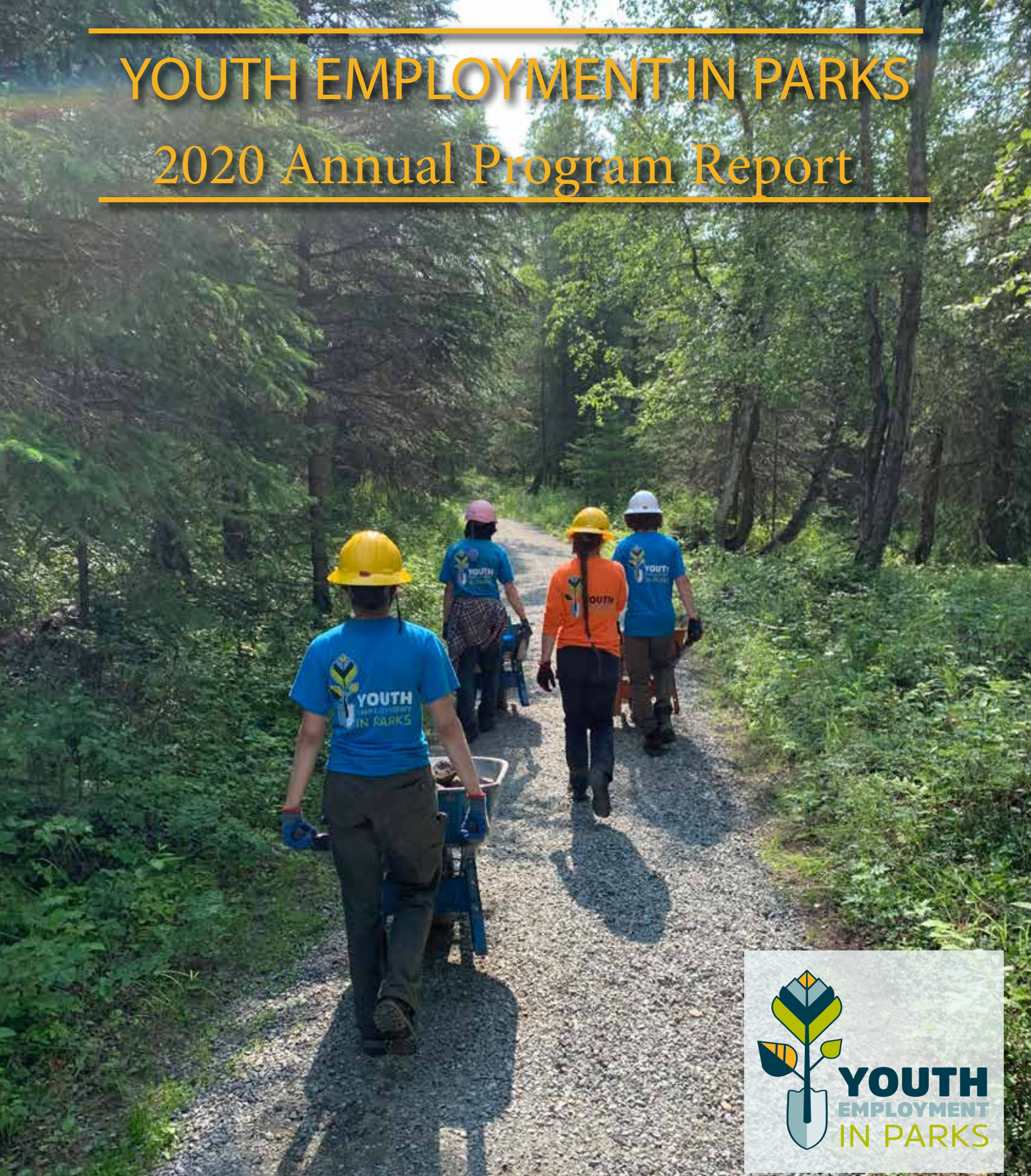


# YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS

## 2020 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.





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# 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.**

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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 400 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 usually 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

## 2020 YEP Crew Members



**Amya**

Likes  
Basketball



**Derric**

Likes  
Gaming



**Omar**

Enjoys  
Skate-  
Boarding



**Emily**

Likes  
Reading



**Gavin**

Enjoys  
Gaming



**William**

Enjoys  
Running



**Shannon**

Studies  
Criminal  
Justice



**Noah**

Likes  
Shoveling



**Eva**

Five-Time  
State  
Wrestling  
Champion



**Zachary**

Varsity  
Soccer  
Player



**Janica**

Plays  
Ukelele



**Kobe**

Likes  
Rapping



**Kianna**

Cooks  
Breakfast  
Foods



**Lucas**

Likes  
Biking



**Max**

Loves  
Cooking



**Emma**

Food  
Enthusiast



**Devon**

Likes  
Existing



**Muhammed**

Plays  
Basketball



**Hailey**

Likes  
Skiing



**Cooper**

Likes  
Watching  
Movies



**Alex**

Likes to  
Bike



**Claire**

Loves to  
Hike



**Gabriel**

Likes  
Looking at  
Grass



**Pam**

Likes to  
Read



**Colton**

Enjoys  
Snow-  
Boarding



## SKILL-BUILDING

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





# PROGRAM STRUCTURE

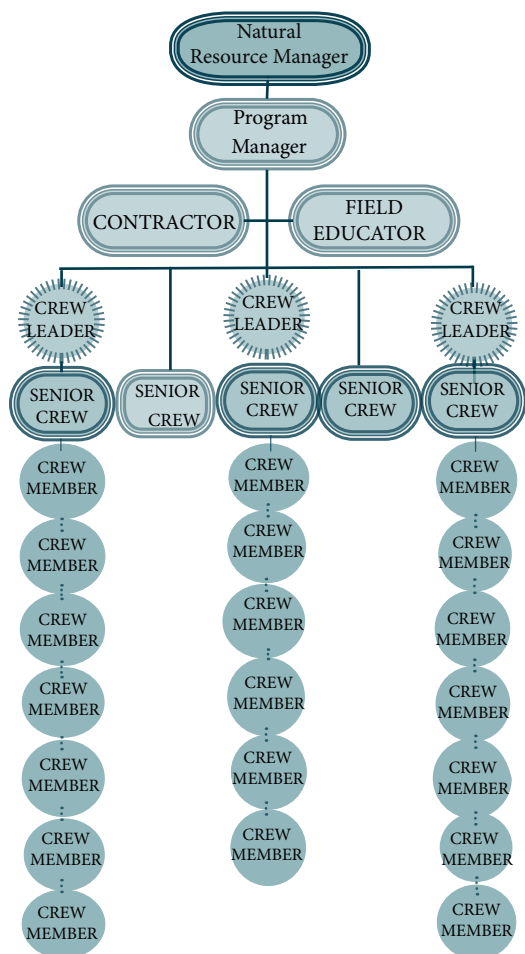
## PROGRAM DESIGN

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 2020, 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 2020, the YEP program hired 26 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.

**2020 YEP PROGRAM NUMBERS:**

26/3

**CREW MEMBERS/  
CREW LEADERS**

14

**HIGH SCHOOLS  
REPRESENTED**

5

**LANGUAGES SPOKEN**

15

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

14

**FIRST JOB EXPERIENCES**

58/42

**% MALE/FEMALE**

10

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

**ETHNICITY:**

- ☐ 65% - White/Caucasian
- ☐ 15% - Black/African American
- ☐ 4% - Hispanic/Latino
- ☐ 4% - American Indian/Alaska Native
- ☐ 12% - Asian

**FAMILY:**

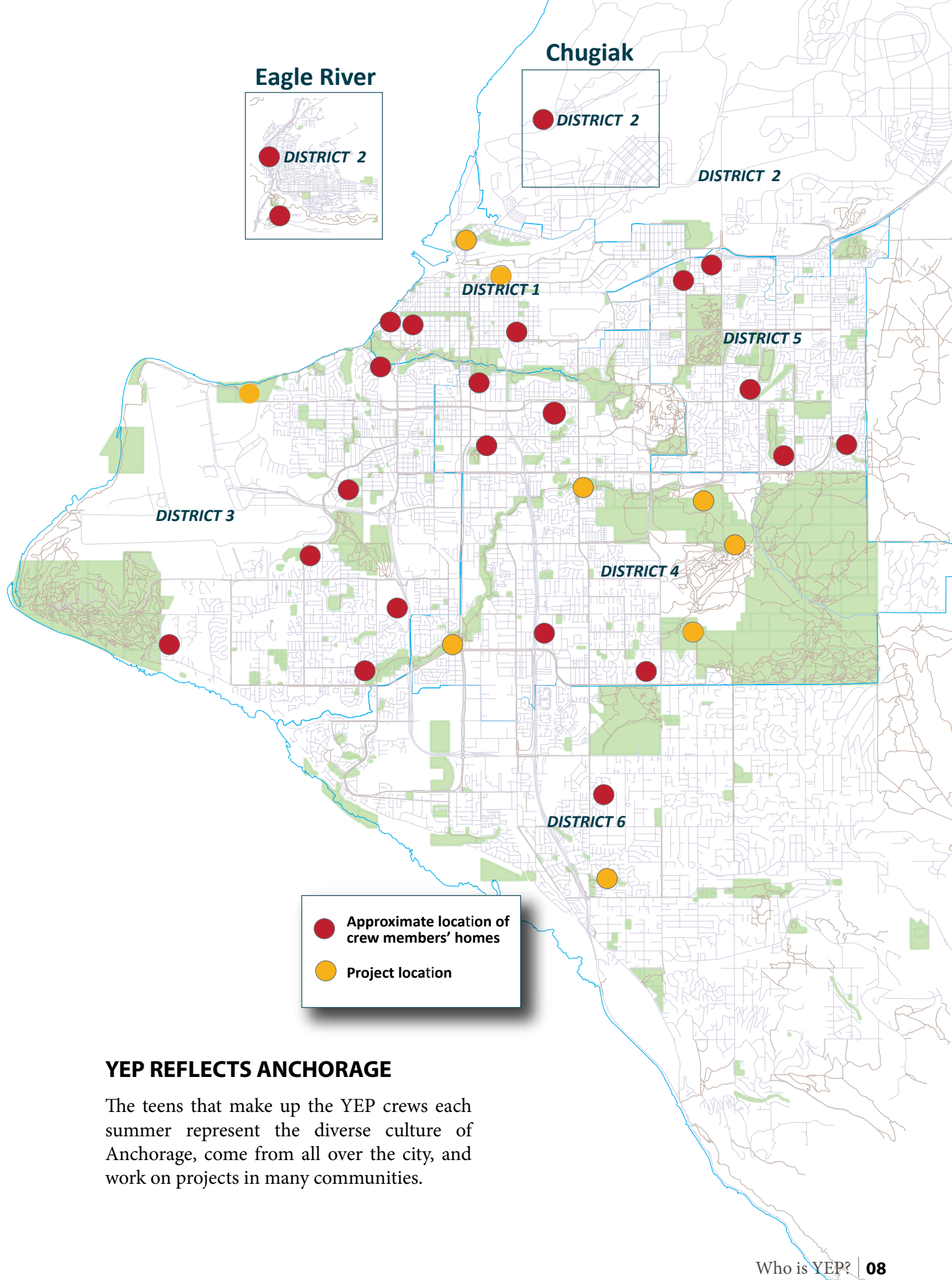
- ☐ 39% - are from military families
- ☐ 25% - experience a disability
- ☐ 15% - have families that are considered low income
- ☐ 8% - have parents who are unemployed
- ☐ 7% - live in a single parent home
- ☐ 6% - are members of Alaska Native tribes

**EARNINGS:**

- ☐ 80% - will save part of their earnings
- ☐ 42% - will spend earnings on clothing and food
- ☐ 27% - will spend earnings on tuition
- ☐ 8% - 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.



# Novel Coronavirus

This year YEP was a little different than years past due to COVID-19. Our Crew Leaders and Senior Crew Members were able to work on projects for the entire 10 week program, but our first year Crew Members were only able to attend an abridged five week version of the program. It was different, but we made it work! Due to COVID-19 and physical distancing, the program adapted by creating some new policies and practices for everyone to follow so we could complete our projects and Education/ Recreation days in a safe and successful manner. Examples of these practices were:

- Driving to each project site separately
- 3 separate crews worked in separate areas
- Physical distancing
- Face mask wearing on site
- 3 separate (each crew) Ed/Rec activities at any given time
- Hand washing and tool sanitizing stations
- Using individually assigned tools and PPE

All in all, it was a very safe and successful summer despite the challenges of a global pandemic. We look forward to things returning to "normal", and hope the program can return to the full 10 weeks for all crew members next summer. We look forward to another great YEP season in 2021!!



Top: Kincaid Geocaching  
Middle: Harvesting trees from the fuel break  
Bottom: Independence Mine at Hatcher Pass



# 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.

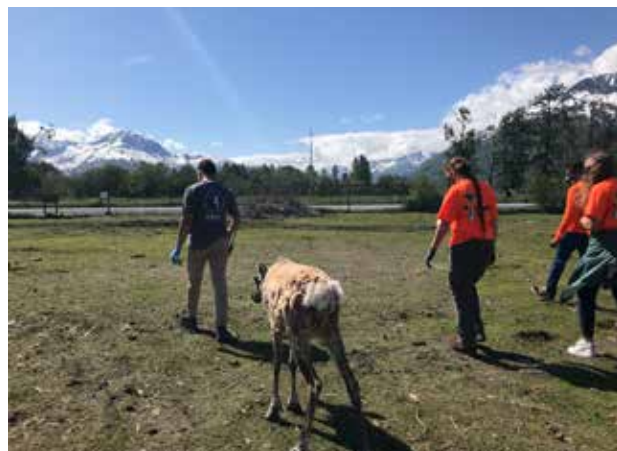
On weekly education and recreation days, and sometimes during daily breaks, YEP crew members engage in group activities and discussions that are tied directly to the projects on which they are working. These sessions cover a variety of topics which emphasize civic engagement, job skills, environmental 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: Team building

Above: Kids Don't Float at Little Campbell Lake

Right: Volunteering at the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center





## 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

Most summers we try to take our teens out to explore all that Alaska has to offer. With COVID-19 this was not possible this year. Instead, we kept our crews in their small groups and met each Friday at various site throughout Anchorage to recreate and learn about our local gems. Each crew cycled through activities and had a blast learning new skills and exploring new parks.



***This summer our education and recreation opportunities were made possible by a North Face Explore Fund Grant. Thank You!***

The YEP teens visited the Alaska Rock Gym and learned valuable teamwork skills and had fun learning to boulder, belay, and rope climb.



*"The most important lesson I learned this summer was to appreciate all the work put into constructing and maintaining our trails."*  
- Pam Sebwenna





*"The most satisfying aspect of the YEP program was seeing the final product of our hard work." - Clare Schimmack*



*"I realized how much work it takes to maintain a trail and our parks in general" - Muhammad Touray*



*"The most important lesson I learned was to put yourself out there more because there are a lot of different opportunities." - Janica Tolentino*





# YEP PROJECTS: 2020

A SUMMER IN REVIEW: YEP CREWS COMPLETED 9 PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS OVER THE COURSE OF 10 WEEKS.





# Government Hill Bluff Trail

## Trail Maintenance, Structures, and Training Week



### Funding:

MOA Funds: \$52,000

Private Funds: \$7,000

### Project Scope:

The YEP crew spent two weeks working on the Government Hill Bluff trail. The teens added structures and performed trail maintenance upgrades on the half-mile long trail that was constructed during the summer of 2019 and improved sightlines along older sections of the Bluff Trail. This phase of the project was funded through a 2019 Municipal Parks and Recreation Bond.

The project consisted of:

- Building retaining walls for erosion control
- Building steps down a steep section of the trail
- Removing vegetation from the trail corridor
- Improving sight lines

### Project Dates:

June 2- 4, July 6 - 9



# Fuel Break

## Trail Maintenance

**Funding:**

MOA Funds: \$1,200

Private Funds: \$800

**Project Scope:**

The YEP crew spent 2 days during our first five weeks performing maintenance on the Far North Bicentennial Park fire break. This maintenance served two functions: 1. to maintain the fuel break for fire mitigation 2. Instead of killing the trees we focused on repurposing them. The trees were dug up and potted to use in current and future revegetation projects.

The project consisted of:

- Removing trees from the fire break corridor
- Potting approximately 160 spruce saplings

**Project Dates:**

June 9 and June 16



# Campbell Creek Revegetation Sites

## Streambank Restoration



### **Funding:**

MOA Funds: \$1,200

US Forest Service Grant: \$200

Private Funding: \$800

### **Project Scope:**

This project is part of a continued effort to upgrade our trails and restore our streambanks through rehabilitation projects. YEP has worked for four years with the US Forest Service and State Forestry program to help with both instream and bank restoration projects along the Campbell Creek corridor. This year YEP worked at two sites along the creek and trail corridor planting trees to provide a buffer against bank degradation. 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 and bank stability. These restoration projects repair the streambanks while still allowing for public access and recreation.

The project consisted of:

- Installing temporary fencing and signage to protect the revegetation area.
- Planting 160 spruce trees, 10 birch trees, and 20 rose bushes.

### **Project Dates:**

June 10 and 17



# Rabbit Creek Trail

## Trail Construction

**Funding:**

MOA Funds: \$48,000

Private \$10,500

**Project Scope:**

This project was part of a challenge grant made possible by the Rasmuson Foundation and the Anchorage Park Foundation. YEP worked with the neighborhood residents to design and construct a sustainable pathway connecting the neighborhood to Rabbit Creek Elementary. The youth grubbed and improved sight lines along an existing corridor, hauled and hand compacted 171 tons of gravel, removed over thirty 50 gallon bags of invasive bird cherry, and planted 143 native saplings and shrubs to revegetate the old trail corridor.

The project consisted of:

- Grubbing a quarter mile trail to remove existing veg mat
- Hauling and compacting approximately 171 tons of gravel
- Revegetating approximately 200 ft of an old social trail using a combination of native trees and shrubs. The teens planted 143 native tree, shrubs, and herbaceous plants: 20 birch saplings, 25 spruce saplings, 15 alder, 10 willow, 15 rose, 12 high bush cranberry, and 45 cinquefoil plants.
- Weed wrenching and hand pulling invasive bird cherry trees and saplings.

**Project Dates:**

June 29 - July 17



# Tour of Anchorage Trail

## Trail Maintenance



### **Funding:**

MOA Funds: \$58,000

Private Funds: \$14,000

### **Project Scope:**

The Tour of Anchorage (TOA) Trail is a main artery through FBNP. The existing trail was uneven, muddy, and rooty; particularly on the Old Rondy Trail segment of the TOA Trail. The trail upgrades will bring the trail to Class 4 specifications. These upgrades will allow increased access for all user types and for a trail groomer. Final trail upgrades will match with the connecting BLM Viewpoint Trail, promoting a seamless transition between federal land and municipal parkland. New surfacing consisted of compacted gravel (E-1 material), or similar, to match existing BLM surfacing. The YEP crew spent approximately two weeks in late July working on the Tour of Anchorage Trail. Crews added gravel to approximately one mile of trail and performed general maintenance to improve the tread and trail corridor. These trail upgrades will be counted as match for a \$2 million dollar Federal Lands Access Program grant awarded by the Federal Highway Administration Western Federal Lands Highway Division.

### **The project consisted of:**

- Grubbing approximately 1,500 ft of new trail and laying down geotextile
- Hauling approximately 244 tons of gravel in 17 dumptruck loads
- Compacting 1,500 ft of trail

### **Project Dates:**

July 20-31



# 5th Avenue Garden Bed Maintenance



## Funding:

MOA Funds: \$1,200

## Project Scope:

The YEP teens worked with the MOA P&R Horticulture staff to rehabilitate a flower bed downtown. The bed had been over run with grasses and was choking out the planted Iris's. The teens pulled out all the invading grasses and the Iris plants to give the bed a fresh start.

The project consisted of:

- Pulling and disposing of thousands of pounds of grasses.
- Digging up approximately 80 Iris plants to re-use in a future flower bed

## Project Dates:

July 28



# Earthquake Park

## Trail Maintenance



### **Funding:**

MOA Funds: \$1,500

### **Project Scope:**

In 2015 the Youth Employment in Parks program constructed an interpretive trail about the 1964 earthquake in Earthquake Park. This summer the YEP teens spent a day doing trail maintenance along the trail corridor. This involved improving sight lines and removing invasives and other vegetation from the trail corridor.

The project consisted of:

- Brushing approximately 1 mile of wooded trail to improve sightlines
- Removing roots and performing tread improvements
- Removing invasive plant species

### **Project Dates:**

July 27



# Far North Bicentennial Park Campbell Tract

## Trail Maintenance



### **Funding:**

MOA Funds: \$24,000

Federal Funds: \$5,000

### **Project Scope:**

The YEP teens teamed up with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to help clear sight lines and clean up the trail corridor along many area trails, including the Tour of Anchorage Trail. YEP performed trail work along approximately three miles of trail. This valuable partnership between the BLM and Anchorage Parks and Recreation helps create a seamless trail experience in Far North Bicentennial Park and the BLM Campbell tract. Our teens worked side by side federal land managers and got to learn about potential career opportunities.

The project consisted of:

- Cutting and brushing approximately 3 miles of multi-use recreation trails

### **Project Dates:**

August 3-6



# Campbell Park

## Tree Planting



### **Funding:**

MOA Funds: \$3,400

Private Funds: \$1,450

### **Project Scope:**

An accessible and green infrastructure pathway was installed at Campbell Park last summer. This permeable pathway slows run off to help improve water quality and provides access to the creek for all users. This pathway was installed using a grant that focuses on healthy forests and healthy streams. The Fish Need a Forest grant was awarded to the Anchorage Park Foundation and the MOA Parks and Recreation Department from the US Forest Service and the Alaska DNR State Forestry division in 2016. The teens planted ten birch trees along this pathway to slow runoff and increase the forest canopy along our creek corridor.

The project consisted of:

- Hauling ten 8-10 foot tall Birch Trees
- Digging holes and planting 10 birch trees
- Watering trees

### **Project Dates:**

July 29



# YEP 2020 Group Photos







*"My appreciation for the natural world has changed because of all the new stuff that I have learned."*

- Gavin Lee

*"I learned valuable leadership skills"* - Emily McKenzie



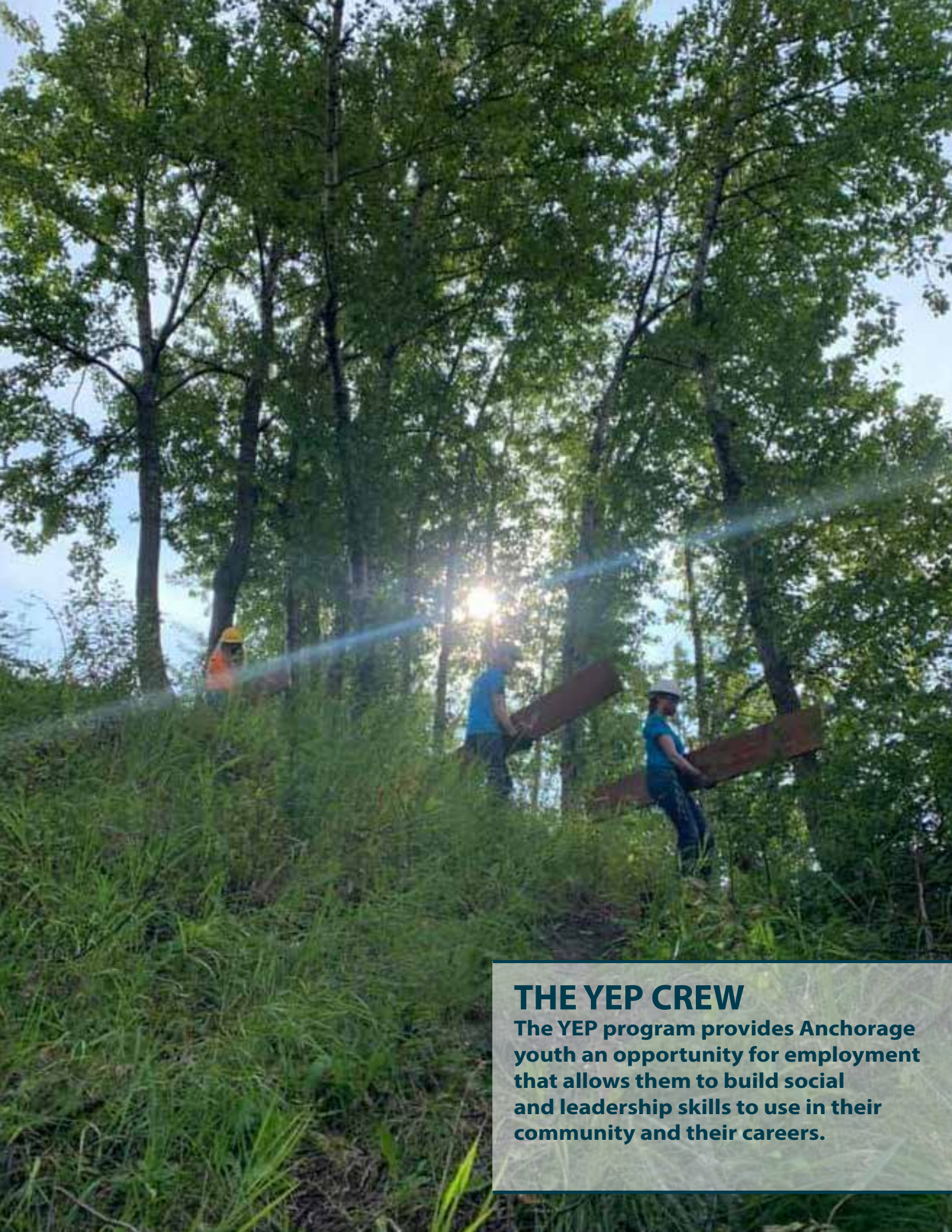
*"I learned that a positive attitude makes the work go faster."* - Derric Crain



*"Hard work is rewarding"* - Alex Westervelt







## **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.**



## 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.



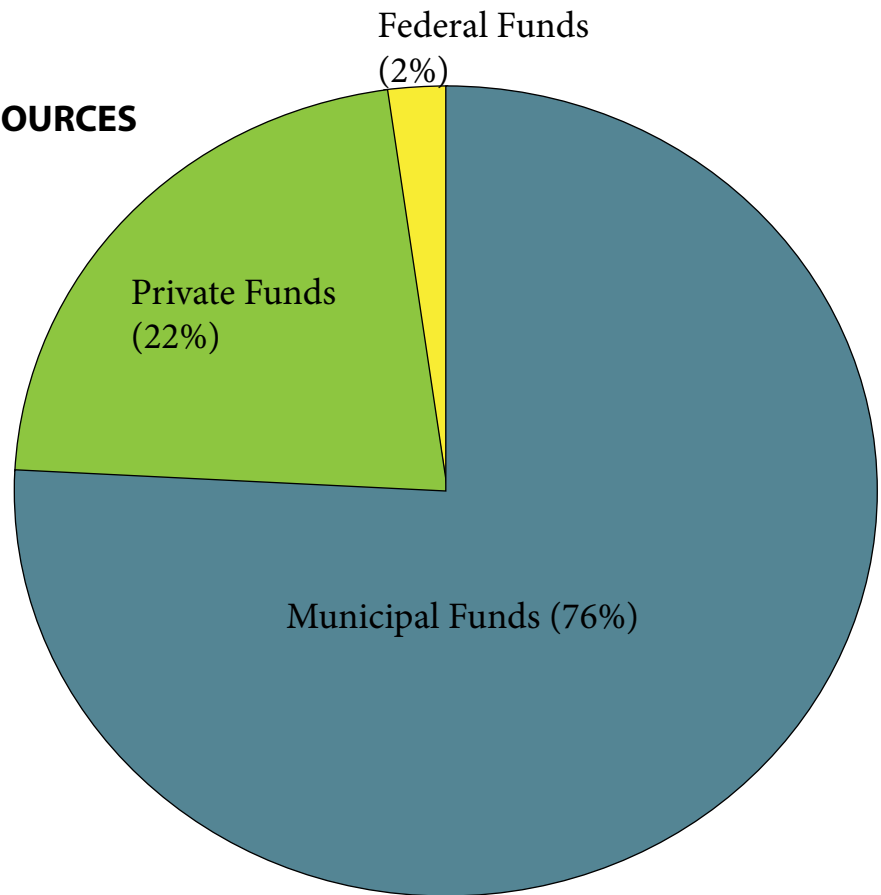


# YEP FUNDING

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

## \*2020 PUBLIC-PRIVATE FUNDING SOURCES AND FUNDING BREAKDOWN

- Private Funds - \$55,000
- Municipal Funds- \$190,500
- Federal Funds - \$5,000
- Total Funds = \$250,500



\*Funding includes all program cost

## THANK YOU!

We are grateful to these partners and funders of the 2020 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](http://www.anchorageparkfoundation.org)



3201 C Street, Suite 110  
Anchorage, AK 99503



#### 2021 YEP Employment Information

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

YEP Crew Leader, Jan 11-Feb 14 (3 positions)

YEP Senior Crew Member, Jan 11-March 14 (4 positions)

YEP Crew Member, Jan 11-March 14 (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
- Anchorage School District
- Anchorage Sand and Gravel
- BLM Campbell Creek Science Center
- BLM Anchorage Field Office
- E.A. Hamm
- Fire Island Bakery
- Kaladi Brothers
- King Tech High School
- Lifetime Adventures Alaska
- Moose's Tooth
- NOLS
- 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

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

### **To Contact YEP:**

**Ann Marie DuBois**, Program Manager  
907.343.4720  
[ann.dubois@anchorageak.gov](mailto:ann.dubois@anchorageak.gov)

