



ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION



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Pickleball for All

Pickleball is making waves as the fastest-growing sport in the United States, and its popularity is no exception in Alaska. Anchorage has embraced this sport with enthusiasm, thanks to the efforts of the Anchorage Pickleball Club, Midnight Sun Pickleball, and others. Pickleball is often described as a blend of tennis, table tennis, and badminton, is played on a smaller court, making it accessible and enjoyable for a wide range of individuals.

In a collaborative effort, Midnight Sun Pickleball with support from the Scenic Foothills Community Council, has been instrumental in transforming one of Scenic Park's underutilized tennis courts into a dual-purpose tennis/pickleball court while preserving another exclusively for tennis enthusiasts. Financial support was provided by the Anchorage Park Foundation through a Community Challenge Grant. This innovative approach accommodates both sports, reflecting the growing demand for pickleball facilities in the community.

The Anchorage Pickleball Club has been working closely with the Anchorage School District to introduce pickleball into physical education classes. PE teachers have been trained in pickleball rules and techniques, enabling them to teach students about this exciting sport. This initiative extends beyond schools, as outdoor ice rinks, tennis courts, and other surfaces across Anchorage are being adapted to accommodate pickleball, creating more opportunities for people of all ages to engage in physical activity.

As pickleball continues to gain traction nationally and in Alaska, the efforts of organizations like Midnight Sun Pickleball and advocates like Laurie Ford, our Community Challenge grantee, are crucial in fostering a sense of community, promoting physical fitness, and ensuring that this exciting sport thrives. Whether a seasoned player or a curious newcomer, pickleball is proving to be an excellent way to stay healthy and active.





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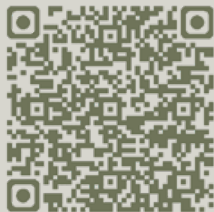
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Anchorage Park Foundation is a small nonprofit working in the space between local government and the people of Anchorage to build community around parks and trails.

SCAN TO DONATE



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Anchorage Park Foundation

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Letter from the (Acting) Director



In this issue, you are hearing from a different voice, but rest assured **Beth Nordlund is still the Executive Director of the Anchorage Park Foundation**. She is currently enjoying a well-deserved extended vacation, traveling to less traveled places, unplugging (kind of) from work, and immersing herself in drastically different cultures and experiences. For almost 20 years, Beth has been the founding Executive Director, passionately leading the Anchorage Park Foundation in improving our parks and trails. Work life balance is important for

everyone and especially nonprofit leaders.

Our short summers are always packed with maintenance and construction projects and this summer was no different. A lot of park and trail improvement projects were completed, including community-led projects funded through our 2022 Community Challenge Grant program. Watch for a new grant cycle announcement in early 2024. We are very grateful for our partners at Anchorage Parks & Recreation who are operating understaffed yet still made exciting progress on renovations to the new Taku Skatepark, Elderberry Park, the new foothills connector trail, and many other projects.

We are also grateful for Macklyn Hutchinson, who interned with us this summer and was a huge help in so many ways. Macklyn biked everywhere she needed to go, for work and fun – all summer long! She was impressed with our trail system and had great feedback on what would make biking even better.

Last month, we completed the Moose Loop Trail Challenge with more than 220 people participating in this annual fundraiser. We are thrilled that so many people got out on the trails in the beautiful autumn weather. This event would not have been possible without all the amazing participants, sponsors, and supporters. We especially want to thank ExperPlay, Inc., our Title Sponsor, for being an integral part of making this a successful event.

This fall, teachers and students continue spending school days in parks with our Outdoor School program. This popular field study experience teaches 5th graders outdoor skills, natural resources, history, and science in their nearest park. We will reach more than 800 students this year with plans to serve more kids in the near future.

Thank you for supporting the Anchorage Park Foundation and making Anchorage a better place to live, work, and play. We are so appreciative of the individuals, businesses, agencies, and foundations whose financial contributions and volunteer time support our work. Your donations make a difference to the health and wellbeing of our community.

Sincerely,

Michelle LeBeau

Director of Philanthropy & Marketing



Growing More Trees in Underserved Neighborhoods

The Anchorage Park Foundation is improving the green spaces of neighborhoods in Anchorage by growing more trees. Local youth and community partners will help green underserved neighborhoods, which have the lowest tree canopy and are disconnected from the greenbelt trail system.

Urban forests contribute to a healthier society and environment because trees reduce climate disruption, keep salmon streams cool, provide essential bird habitat, purify the air, and increase property values.

A recent \$2 million USDA Forest Service grant to the Anchorage Park Foundation will be used to alleviate environmental inequities in Anchorage by combining restoration, environmental education, community involvement, and workforce development measures. The Biden Administration awarded more than \$1 billion in grants nationally in early September as part of an effort to increase Americans' access to trees and green space.

This grant is part of \$5 million invested in four grants announced in September for Alaska.

The funding will go toward restoration projects like planting trees in low-canopy areas that coincide with underserved neighborhoods in north Anchorage, stabilizing and revegetating stream banks for anadromous species, managing invasive species, including the pervasive European Bird Cherry, and replanting areas affected by spruce bark beetle damage.

The project's five-year workplan enables youth career development and firsthand environmental education field studies, directly aiding marginalized communities and increasing local participation in environmental management.

This tree-planting project not only improves the ecological aspects of these areas, but it also instills important ideals of environmental stewardship in the next generation.





Making a Difference in Anchorage

CHALLENGE GRANT PROJECT SUCCESS STORIES



Fish Creek Trail Tunnel Art

The Fish Creek Trail bike tunnel under Spenard Road showcases new art by local artist Sheila Wyne. The mosaic art titled "Scales" is a 60-foot-long frieze made of decommissioned street signs. The scale shape is a reference to Ch'atanaltsegh - commonly known as Fish Creek.



Community Gardens

The community garden at Fairview Lions Park will be ready for more food production next summer, thanks to challenge grantee Lindsey Hajduk of NeighborWorks Alaska. She led efforts to design, build and install nine new beds, and hosted nearly 100 volunteers at four volunteer events totalling 425 hours.



Forsythe Park Learning Lab

Teachers, parents, and students at O'Malley Elementary created an outdoor learning space at Forsythe Park. Third graders designed and installed a field identification guide for 6 different trees in the park. Youth Employment in Parks crews helped volunteers make the park's bridge to the South Fork of Little Campbell Creek accessible to all users.



Russian Jack Springs Park Single Track Trails

Volunteers with Alaska Trails worked alongside Youth Employment in Parks crews to build new beginner and intermediate mountain bike trails in Russian Jack Springs Park. The design includes a special skills development area, a first for Anchorage, and the trails are designed for BMX and dirt jump bikes.



Tikishla Park Chokecherry Removal

Neighbors around Tikishla Park had the support of Airport Heights Community Council, in fighting off invasive chokecherry (mayday) trees that are harmful to wildlife and salmon in Chester Creek. Their goal was to eradicate chokecherry from the park and adjoining spur trails once and for all, through a series of strategic volunteer events.



Kincaid Disc Golf Improvements

Volunteers with the Alaska Disc Golf Association made improvements around the tee boxes throughout the Kincaid course and installed 18 Innova DISCatcher Pro 28 baskets. The Kincaid disc golf course gets played 15,000 times a season and is considered the best course in the State. The new baskets will accommodate more users at all skill levels.

2024 CHALLENGE GRANT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Every two years the Anchorage Park Foundation awards Community Challenge Grants for park and trail improvement projects that are led by community members. A new grant funding cycle will open early 2024. Challenge Grants offer a way to accomplish projects in parks or greenbelts that benefit neighbors and the public but may not be easily completed by the Municipality of Anchorage. Reach out to Diana@AnchorageParkFoundation.org to learn more or discuss project ideas.

Public Private Partnerships at Work

New Taku Skatepark



Taku Lake Park is getting the newest and coolest inground concrete skatepark in the city. National skatepark experts Grindline are leading the upgrade to existing features with a modern built-in bowl that will be the largest and most expansive skatepark in Anchorage. The skating community, including the Blue & Gold Boardshop with support from Tony Hawk Foundation have long advocated and helped fundraise for the improvements. Construction is expected to finish in fall 2024.

Elderberry Park Improvements



One of Anchorage's oldest and most loved parks was renovated this summer with new playground equipment, a custom rock and ice climbing wall, railroad track-themed paths and plazas, and other improvements. Input from community members shaped the park redesign including improved trail connections to the Coastal Trail. The Anchorage Park Foundation advocated for the new playground to be inclusive to welcome children of all abilities. Construction is scheduled to be completed in fall 2023 with a grand opening in spring 2024.

Indigenous Place Making Gets a Big Investment

The Indigenous Place Names Project, a community effort to amplify the identity of the Dena'ina Athabascans of Anchorage, will continue recognizing culturally significant sites with a new grant from the Mellon Foundation. Grant funding comes through the Mellon Foundation's Monuments Project and will fund the installation and celebration of 28 locations over the next four years. Four signs are already installed with the most recent this summer at Nuch'ishtunt, meaning the place protected from the wind, known as Point Woronzof.

The project recognizes culturally significant sites through a series of public art installations along the municipal park and trail system. Each installation commemorates Indigenous culture and history with interpretive signage that combines metal art sculptures, Dena'ina language, and storytelling.

The project advisory committee members include the Anchorage Park Foundation as the host organization for the project, Native Village of Eklutna, Alaska Native Heritage Center, Anchorage Museum, Rasmuson Foundation, Southcentral Foundation, Cook Inlet Region, Inc., Huddle AK, Municipality of Anchorage, First Alaskans Institute, Cook Inlet Housing Authority, Bristol Bay Native Corporation, and Providence Alaska.





Investing in Our Youth and Our Future

This summer, 26 Anchorage teenagers embarked on a transformative 10-week journey as part of the Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) program. YEP crews left an indelible mark on our community by improving our public parks, trails, and greenbelts. Their unwavering dedication resulted in trail construction, invasive species eradication, and the addition of greenery in Anchorage's beloved spaces. Amidst the hard work, camaraderie blossomed, and friendships were forged.

Beyond physical labor, the crew delved into civic involvement with an Anchorage Assembly visit, explored national public lands outside of the city, and received invaluable mentorship from local experts in their chosen fields. Our heartfelt gratitude extends to families, crew members, businesses, mentors, partners, and benefactors for this remarkable transformation.



CHRISTIAN

"My first time hiking and kayaking in my life was with YEP."



JONATHON

"I learned to be in a team with people that had different backgrounds."



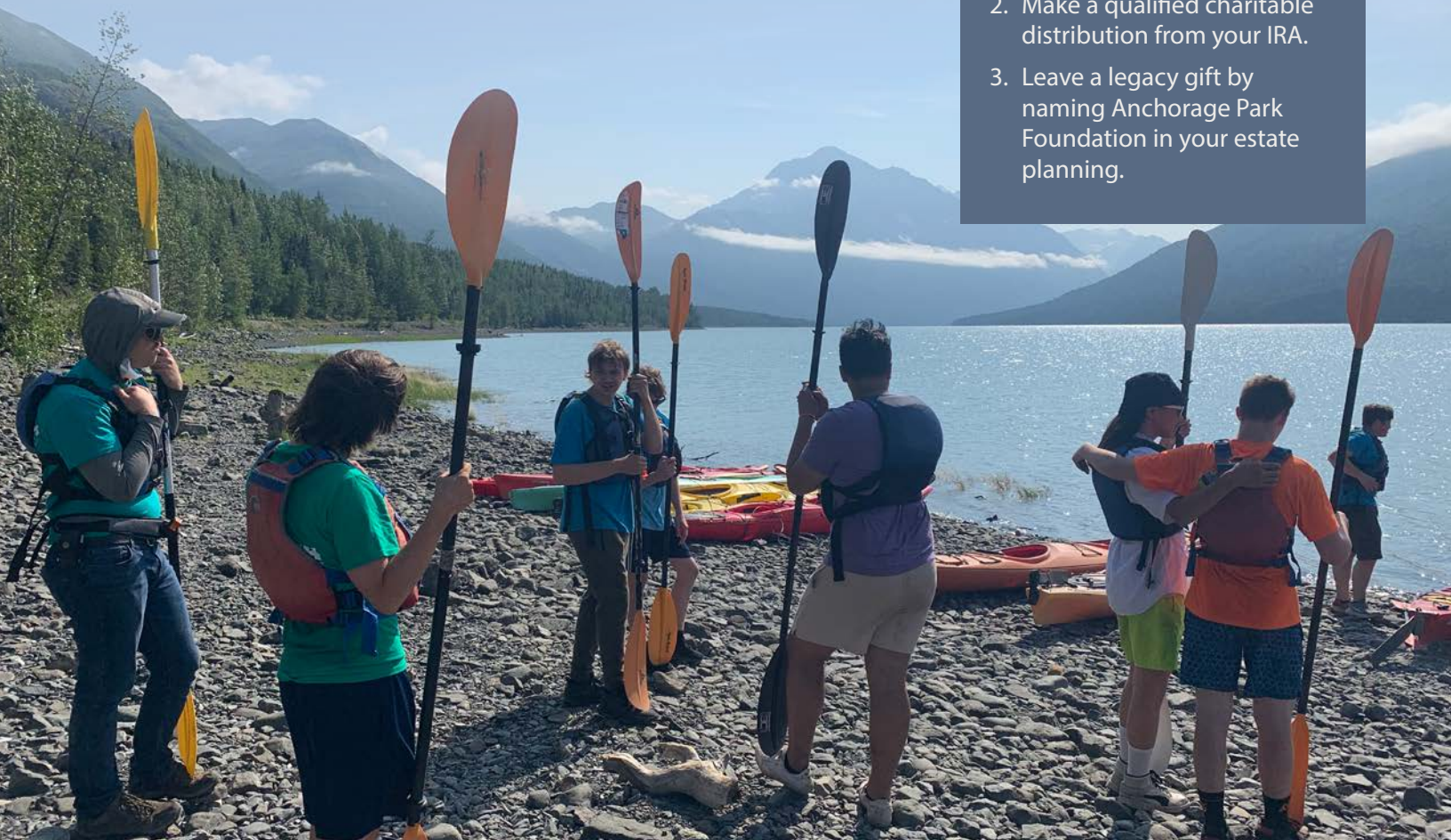
Your Donations Matter

It takes all of us to help sustain the vast network of parks and trails in Anchorage. The Anchorage Park Foundation helps guide charitable giving to the areas of greatest need in our park system and improve neighborhood access.

Please consider donating to the Anchorage Park Foundation today. Financial donations of any size help fund our mission.

Ways to Give:

1. Donate online at **AnchorageParkFoundation.org** or use the enclosed envelope.
2. Make a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA.
3. Leave a legacy gift by naming Anchorage Park Foundation in your estate planning.



19 Years of Making a Difference

Anchorage Park Foundation has been at the center of building community by promoting park and trail improvements and accessibility all over Anchorage.

INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUNDS



18

Rebuilt 18 of 86 playgrounds to be inclusive, so children and adults of all abilities can play together. Anchorage leads the nation in inclusive playgrounds.

TRAILS INITIATIVE



\$59.2 M

Advocated for municipal park bonds, resulting in \$59.2 million in park and trail investments over the last 13 years.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS



456

Offered summer employment and job training in natural resource management to more than 456 Anchorage youth representing the cultural diversity of our neighborhoods.

SCHOOLS ON TRAILS



11,290

Connected 11,290 students in underserved neighborhoods to nature in nearby parks and encouraged an understanding and appreciation of the outdoors.

COMMUNITY CHALLENGE GRANTS



115 +

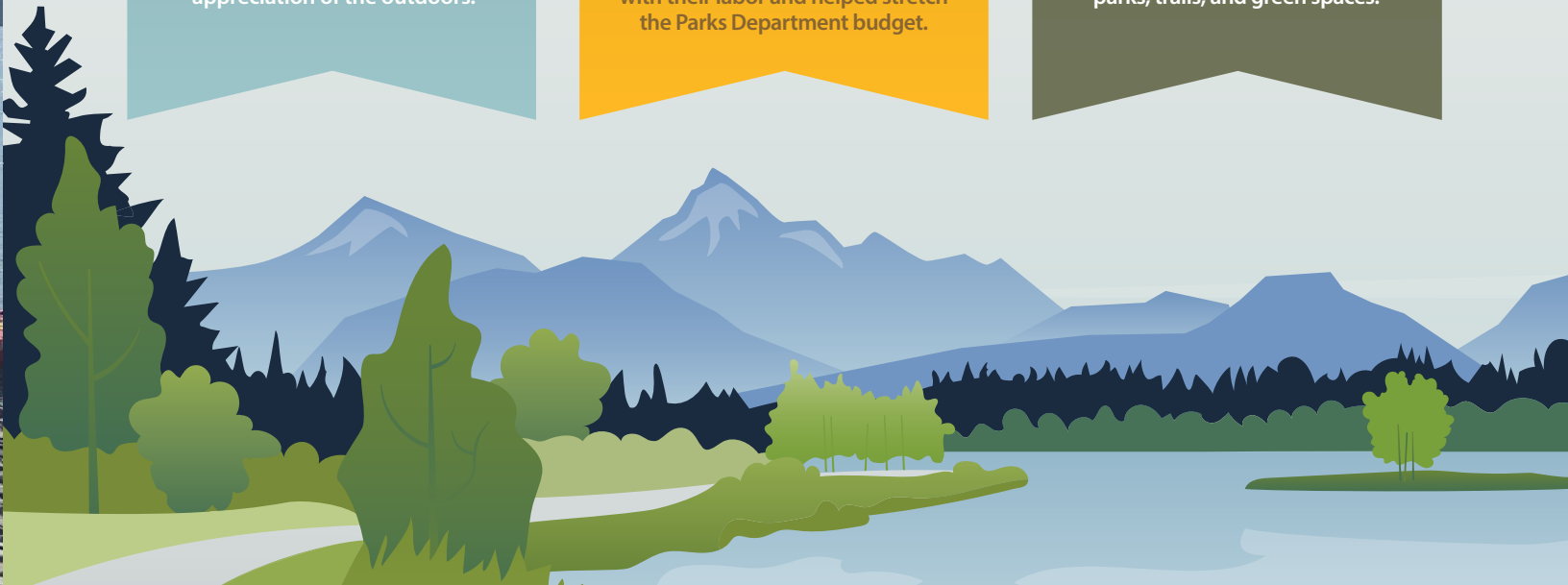
Granted financial support to more than 115 community-initiated park improvement projects. Volunteers matched our investment with their labor and helped stretch the Parks Department budget.

INVESTING IN ANCHORAGE



\$46M

Raised more than \$46 million in funding and volunteer time for projects large and small to help develop and improve Anchorage's parks, trails, and green spaces.





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Dates to Remember

- September 12–October 24:** 2023 Tuesday Night Races
- October 20:** Haunted Trails
- October 21:** Enchanted Trails
- October 31:** Trick or Treat Fish Creek
- November 7:** Election Day
- November 28:** Giving Tuesday, a National Day of Giving Back
- December 1:** First Friday WinterWalk
- December 21:** Winter Solstice Festival
- January 6 - Feb 24:** Westchester (Chanshtnu) Family Skate
- February:** 2024 Challenge Grant Application Period
- March 1:** First Friday WinterWalk

Visit our Events page at AnchorageParkFoundation.org for more details.

