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Fish and Flourish

Mis-matched gloves, borrowed snow pants, and hand-me-down hats grace a gaggle of 5th graders as they spread along a series of holes that dot ice-covered Jewel Lake on a chill Friday in February. Expressions on faces varied from grins to looks of concentration, to grimaces and shivering, yet when asked if they preferred to be in the classroom or on the lake, they all enthusiastically replied, “On the lake!”



For many students, this was their first time fishing or at least their first time ice fishing. Little did they know then how genuinely beneficial this frosty outing could be for them. The new grant-funded project, “Let’s Go Fishing,” allows Title 1 Anchorage School District 5th graders out of their school setting to appreciate nature, gain outdoor skills, and build a sense of stewardship for Alaska’s public lands. Being outdoors also promotes better mental and physical well-being, especially in the winter. It is hard to tell now, but the girl shyly smiling with her first-ever fish may be a future top-notch fisheries manager who decided to stay in Alaska because of this experience as a 5th grader.

As we move into spring and summer, “Let’s Go Fishing,” supported in a partnership with the National Park Foundation, the Anchorage Park Foundation, and the Alaska Public Lands Information Center, will continue to engage youth in fishing opportunities through Outdoor School, Youth Employment in Parks, and partnerships with community programs. To enjoy a video about this day on the ice, follow the QR code:





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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



Anchorage Park Foundation

3201 C Street, Suite 111

Anchorage, AK 99503

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AnchorageParkFoundation.org

Letter from the Director



The increased daytime light inspires me to come out of my quilt-making, puzzle-piecing hibernation, get out there, and build community connections. This year, we are expanding your options for neighborhood involvement with the Anchorage Park Foundation.

Two grant opportunities will have you and your neighbors dreaming of improving your local parks and greening-up your shared spaces with trees and plants. These opportunities to collaborate in the parks are an excellent way to shake off those reclusive pandemic cobwebs, gather with fellow humans, get your body moving, dig in the dirt, and make a difference.

This summer, we will welcome seven new Indigenous Place Name markers, 139 new wayfinding signs along the Moose Loop Trail system, and a fantastic new Skatepark at Taku Lake Park. Snow-covered 2023 accomplishments will be properly celebrated, including the new Inclusive Playground at Elderberry Park and bridges connecting Muldoon and Spenard to parks and trails. We are excited for groundbreakings, ribbon cuttings, Concerts in the Parks, and cycling events.

Trails are an essential public service. In a recent large-scale survey, 92% of respondents say they use Anchorage trails, with most users taking to the trails for walks with friends and family. Trails are an economic driver, with 33% of survey respondents reporting using trails to access local businesses. There is more work to do to fill gaps in trail connections, increase park accessibility, and improve overall quality of life.

Thank you in advance for voting for park bonds (by April 2), dreaming about our shared spaces, making financial contributions to the Anchorage Park Foundation, and believing we can create a difference in our community together. Thank you for marching out into the sunlight and planting the trees for our future neighbors. Bravo Anchorage.

Sincerely,

Beth Nordlund,
Executive Director



Show your neighbors you support Anchorage parks and trails by placing the included sign in your window.

Your Next Best Day is a Park Away

The Municipality of Anchorage manages 11,000 acres of parkland, 226 parks, more than 250 miles of trails, and recreation facilities across the city. All parks and most park facilities are free for the public to use. Costs for renovations of existing facilities and development of new facilities are funded primarily through bonds that require voter approval.

Proposition 4, the 2024 Parks Bond would provide \$4.35 million for improvements to our parks, trail and recreation facilities and leverage another \$16 million in federal match. The Parks Bond provides an affordable way to invest back into our community through the parks and trails that make Anchorage a great place to live, learn, play, and work.

Vote Yes! on Prop 3 for roads, drainage, and for downtown wayfinding to Ship Creek and Coastal Trails.

Vote Yes! on Prop 7 to support the Anchorage Memorial Park, the Girdwood Cemetery, and the Eagle River Cemetery.

Vote Yes! on Prop 8 for restrooms for four parks – Elderberry Park, Peratrovich Park, and Town Square Park. Plus one at 5th Avenue and G Street downtown.

Vote Yes! on Prop 9 for upgrades and parking on Canyon Road, the road that leads to trailheads and berry picking on the south side of Flattop and Rabbit Lake.



Recieve Ballots by March 12
Return Ballots by April 2

Vote YES on Prop 4 Parks Bond

- Campbell Creek Trail Rehabilitation
- Fairview Recreation Center
- Fish Creek Trail to the Ocean (federal match)
- Playground Development - All-Inclusive (citywide)
- Russian Jack Springs Park Safety and ADA Improvements (federal match)
- Sand Lake Dock
- Tony Knowles Coastal Trail to Ship Creek Trail Connection (federal match)
- Mountain View Parks Improvements and Safety Enhancements
- Johnny Ellis Bridge & Park Placemaking
- Athletic Fields (citywide)
- Eastchester Park
- Government Hill Parks Improvements
- Mulcahy Stadium



Visit our website for further information.

anchorageparkfoundation.org/bond

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Park

This window sign was paid for by the Anchorage Park Foundation, 3201 C Street, Suite 111

**YES on
Prop 4
 Parks Bond**

Request for Proposals

Anchorage Park Foundation is seeking proposals from community organizations for two separate grant opportunities – the Community Challenge Grant and the Neighborhood Forest Grant.

The Community Challenge Grant provides funding on a competitive basis for projects that improve Anchorage parks, trails, greenbelts, and recreation centers. Projects must benefit municipal park land and have meaningful community involvement. Grant funding is provided by Rasmuson Foundation to support community engagement and stewardship of public spaces.

The Neighborhood Forest Grant provides funding on a competitive basis for projects that restore, reforest, and sustain urban forests on public or private land. Projects must benefit underserved areas in north Anchorage and have meaningful community involvement. Grant funding is provided by the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program through the federal Inflation Reduction Act.



APPLY TODAY

DEADLINE:

March 20, 2024, 5 pm

IMPORTANT DATES:

January 22, 2024 – Request for proposals announced

February 29, 2024 – In-Person Project Assistance

March 6, 2024 – Online Project Assistance

April 24, 2024 – Awards Announced

May 17, 2024 – Project Kickoff Event

October 31, 2025 – Project End Date

LEARN MORE

AnchorageParkFoundation.org

Welcome to the Team



New Board Chair, Kelsey Potdevin

Kelsey has been a champion for Anchorage's world-class trail system and easily accessible parks since she moved here in 2014. She's an avid walker, hiker, mountain biker, and fair-weather bike commuter to her current position as the Tribal Court Facilitator at the Alaska Native Justice Center. The Anchorage Park Foundation looks forward to working with Kelsey in her new role as Board Chair.



Ally Merrill, Program Coordinator

Ally comes to the Anchorage Park Foundation with a diverse background working as an environmental scientist, an outdoor educator, and a community action advocate. In her role as Program Coordinator, she is excited to improve urban forest health and get youth outdoors. Growing up in New England, Ally developed a deep appreciation for our natural spaces while hiking, skiing, and kayaking with her family. She moved to Alaska in 2022 and fell in love with Anchorage's parks and trail systems. You can often find her taking walks on the beach at Kincaid Park, using her binoculars to search for belugas off the coast.



Gretchen Weiss-Brooks, Community Engagement Manager

Arriving in Alaska at only a few months old, Gretchen cannot say that she was 'born and raised' in Alaska, however, she is a lifelong Alaskan with a love for hunting, fishing, and being out in the wilds. Raised with two siblings that are blind, Gretchen has a passion for accessibility. Gretchen has over two decades of experience as a multi-media storyteller producing award-winning communications and designs for the Anchorage Museum, the Alaska State Troopers, the Alaska Commission for Postsecondary Education, plus media including newspapers, magazines, and television. She is also fond of dabbling in creative visual arts and writing pursuits. Gretchen enjoys spending time outdoors with her family and can often be found roaming Far North Bicentennial Park.



Volunteer with Anchorage Park Foundation

If you're ready to contribute your talents and energy to improving neighborhood parks and trails, there are multiple opportunities to volunteer!

From pulling targeted invasive weeds in parks, to volunteering at park opening events, or simply writing a letter to the editor, we have a way for you to volunteer to support our local parks.

Email Gretchen@AnchorageParkFoundation.org to learn more about volunteer opportunities this summer.

Sign Up





ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION

3201 C Street, Suite 111
Anchorage, AK 99503

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Dates to Remember

- March 17: Last day to apply for YEP at muni.org
- March 20: Community Grant Deadline
- March 30: Volunteer Door Knocking for Parks Bonds
- April 2: Last Day to Vote on Parks Bonds
- April 7: Deadline for Fairness for Fairview Comments
- April 15: Registration Open for Moose Loop Trail Challenge
- April 27: Celebrate Trails Day
- May 11: Anchorage Bike Rodeo
- May 17: Bike to Work Day
- May 24: Outdoor Sports Safety Expo
- June 1: Rollerski Awareness Day
- June 6, 13, 20, 27 – Concerts in the Parks
- June 22: Anchorage Mayor's Marathon
- July 11, 18, 25 – Concerts in the Parks
- September 21-23: Moose Loop Trail Challenge

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

Get A Map!



Playground maps are available for a suggested donation of \$10.

