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## Reforestation for a Greener Future

The Anchorage Park Foundation, in collaboration with local youth and community partners, is enhancing the green spaces of neighborhoods in Anchorage by cultivating more trees. This collective effort is particularly focused on greening underserved neighborhoods, which currently have the lowest tree canopy and are disconnected from the greenbelt trail system.

The involvement of local youth and community partners not only fosters a sense of community but also empowers them to be part of the solution. Urban forests, as a result, contribute to a healthier society and environment by reducing climate disruption, play a crucial role in air quality, stormwater management, provide shade, keep salmon streams cool, provide essential bird habitat, and increase property values.

Warmer temperatures and drier conditions led to the spruce bark beetle outbreak in Southcentral Alaska in 2016, significantly impacting old growth white spruce in Anchorage. In 2020, U.S. Forest Service surveys identified more than 26,000 acres of tree damage within Anchorage from spruce bark beetles.

Our community tree-planting efforts over the next several years will significantly improve urban forests damaged by spruce bark beetles.





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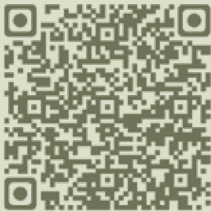
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Anchorage Park Foundation is a small nonprofit working in the space between local government and the people of Anchorage to build community around parks and trails.

SCAN TO DONATE



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# Letter from the Director



The apples are picked, we wear reflective gear in the dark mornings, moose have returned to front yards, and we have had our first snowfall—Anchorage’s short construction season is closed. We made progress on so many projects this summer and we could not have done that without your support. We helped reopen the world-class skatepark at Taku Lake Park and installed seven new Indigenous Place Name markers. Your support helped make our parks more welcoming, and now we can dream of Alaskan

Olympians for skateboarding and BMX freestyle.

2025 will mark our 20th year as a nonprofit building community through parks and trails. We are grateful for our park founders, Indigenous stewards, industrious volunteers, grantees, funders, and voters who passed the park bonds 14 years in a row. Thank you for writing letters, fostering seedlings, planting trees, and helping with events and programs like Outdoor School in Parks. We can’t do this work without you, and we know this work is about you.

2025 will be a year of promoting trail connectivity and safe pedestrian crossings over Lake Otis and the Campbell Creek Trail, the Ship Creek Trail to the Coastal Trail, and the Fish Creek Trail to the Ocean. Grantees will fix neighborhood trails, install bike parking, rebuild stairs, and revitalize parks. We will be installing wayfinding on the Goose Loop Trail, connecting the UAA and the UMED district to our system of trails. We will be helping the Fairview and Airport Heights neighbors dream about the future of Eastchester and Woodside parks. We will install 17 more Indigenous Place Name markers and we hope to grow Youth Employment in Parks with a pilot program for middle schoolers!

Join us and help us continue to grow our impact in 2025.

Sincerely,

Beth Nordlund,  
Executive Director



## Thank You!

We want to extend our **heartfelt thanks to Kelsey Potdevin** for her dedicated service on the Anchorage Park Foundation board of directors. Kelsey’s passion for our parks and her insightful contributions have made a lasting impact on our community.

As she moves on to new adventures, we want her to know that she will be truly missed, and we are grateful for all the time and energy she has invested in our mission. Your contributions have not gone unnoticed, and the community appreciates you, Kelsey. Thank you for everything!

## Grand Reopening of the Taku Skatepark

The Taku Skatepark has reopened after extensive upgrades, making it the largest and most expansive skatepark in Anchorage. The in-ground concrete skatepark includes flow and plaza-style features with uniquely Alaskan elements, such as a whale's tail-shaped bowl and an inlaid Big Dipper, paying homage to our local culture and identity. The new skatepark is a dynamic recreational environment designed for learning new maneuvers and practicing tricks

on a skateboard, scooter, BMX bike, or rollerblades. It caters to all ages and abilities in the Taku/Campbell neighborhood of Anchorage.

The park was designed by Grindline Skateparks, specialists based in Seattle who focus on the planning, design, and construction of cast-in-place concrete skateparks. The custom skatepark design, which incorporates recommendations from the Anchorage skating community, offers numerous

opportunities to transfer between a variety of elements, ensuring an exciting and diverse experience for all.

The renovation was a true community effort, with strong support from the skating community and funding from individual donations, two voter-approved park bonds, a grant from the Rasmuson Foundation, support from the Blue & Gold Boardshop, local artists, and The Skatepark Project grant (formerly the Tony Hawk Foundation).



Local skater Sam Medsker cuts through the ribbon reopening the newly renovated Taku Skatepark on September 29, 2024. Photos of the Taku Skatepark opening are by Michael Conti.



# Planting Trees. Growing Community.

Anchorage Park Foundation has been working with partners to develop a supply of native trees to support our long-term goal of planting 15,000+ trees over five years. In 2024, the first year of the project, the focus has been on planting trees, 8,954 of them with the help of several community organizations, and ensuring a pipeline of seedlings will be available for years to come.

We encountered a hurdle in sourcing native trees as we could not order our seedlings or seeds from sources in the lower 48. This challenge turned positive by building an Anchorage-based community of local native tree enthusiasts. We have purchased seeds and seedlings from local harvesters and nursery owners while developing a locally-grown supply chain that goes from seed to mature seedlings ready to plant. With the help of community partners, we ensure the sustainability of our project and the benefits of a healthy tree population in our urban spaces for generations to come.

## The Seedling Pipeline

### COLLECT NATIVE SEEDS

Local seed harvesting led by the Anchorage Soil & Water Conservation District from a variety of species and locations ensures genetic diversity.

### GERMINATION

Alaska Seeds of Change, a youth workforce development program grows the seeds into seedlings and then saplings.

### SAPLINGS

Saplings are transported to nursery facilities at the Anchorage Soil & Water Conservation District, Parks & Recreation, and Alaska Botanical Garden to continue growing.

### PLANTING

Saplings are planted and maintained by volunteer programs in areas of greatest need.

### GROWING COMMUNITY

This tree - planting project brings many community partners together to improve health through community participation and workforce development.

### WINTER TREE CARE

- 1) Mulch around the base of the seedlings to insulate the roots and retain moisture, using materials like wood chips or straw.
- 2) Wrap the trunks with burlap or felt to protect their young bark from harsh winds, extreme cold, and rodents.
- 3) Stake young trees to help prevent damage from heavy snowfall or strong winds.
- 4) Ensure the seedlings have adequate water before the ground freezes, as hydrated trees are better equipped to withstand the winter.
- 5) Consider placing protective barriers around the seedlings to deter wildlife (moose) from browsing on the tender branches.





### CH'BALA CORNERS

Ch'Bala Corners is Cook Inlet Housing Authority's most recent affordable housing development. Building the property took over ten years, turning a blighted corner into 78 affordable housing units. Ch'Bala is the Dena'ina name for spruce trees; however, after environmental remediation, the property was left completely devoid of spruce trees. Phase II recently opened with a celebration where they recognized the Anchorage Park Foundation for awarding a Neighborhood Forest Grant for purchasing and planting spruce trees, successfully returning ch'bala to the landscape.

*"The trees contribute to the natural environment, serving as green infrastructure, helping with water and air quality, and creating wildlife habitat while making the space more attractive and friendly for the Spenard neighborhood and the residents of Ch'bala Corners."*

— Alyse Loran, Cook Inlet Housing Authority



From left: Ashley List with the US Forest Service, Beth Nordlund with Anchorage Park Foundation, Aaron Leggett with the Anchorage Museum and the Village of Eklutna, Anchorage Mayor Suzanne LaFrance, and Ally Merrill with Anchorage Park Foundation.

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# Making a Difference in Anchorage

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

## INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUNDS



**22**

Rebuilt 22 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



**\$63.9 M**

Advocated for municipal park bonds, resulting in \$63.9 million in park and trail investments over the last 14 years.

## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS



**482**

Offered summer employment and job training in natural resource management to more than 482 Anchorage youth representing the cultural diversity of our neighborhoods.

## SCHOOLS ON TRAILS



**12,870+**

Connected over 12,870 students in underserved neighborhoods to nature in nearby parks and encouraged an understanding and appreciation of the outdoors.

## COMMUNITY GRANTS



**147 +**

Granted financial support to more than 147 community-initiated park improvement projects. Volunteers matched our investment with their labor and helped stretch the Parks Department budget.

## INVESTING IN ANCHORAGE



**\$56M**

Raised more than \$56 million in funding and volunteer time for projects large and small to help develop and improve Anchorage's parks, trails, and green spaces.

## Help Us Continue to Grow our Impact

The Anchorage Park Foundation is a small nonprofit making a **big** community impact.

Help us continue to grow our impact through programs that empower our youth, transform neighborhoods, and improve our quality of life.



[anchorageparkfoundation.org/donate/](https://anchorageparkfoundation.org/donate/)



## Gearing Up for Winter Activities

Anchorage is a true Winter City, and we love it. As a northern city, winter plays a central role in our lives, shaping our experiences and creating unforgettable stories. The first snowfall is a moment of pure joy for many of us, as it gently blankets our city in soft, white beauty. We eagerly await the first opportunity to skate, ski, or take a winter walk.

From November to April, Anchorage transforms into a snow-covered paradise for outdoor enthusiasts with endless recreational opportunities. Anchorage has hundreds of miles of lit groomed trails for activities like cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, ice skating, sledding, dog mushing, and skijoring. Alpine skiers and snowboarders have several choices for alpine skiing all within 45 minutes of Anchorage. Winter isn't just about outdoor activities; it's also a time for community events and festivals that help us celebrate and stay connected throughout the winter.

**Find new ways to stay active this winter by subscribing to our eNewsletter**



## Parks+Trails: Winter Edition

New this year, we published the *Parks+Trails* newspaper, a detailed guide to accessing the abundance of outdoor recreation in Anchorage. The winter edition highlights over 20 ways to enjoy this winter plus a map of local sledding hills and captivating short stories from local writers. Look for copies of *Parks+Trails* at the recreation centers and park chalets or access the pdf online.



[anchorageparkfoundation.org/publications](http://anchorageparkfoundation.org/publications)





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PARK FOUNDATION

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

- October 18 & 19: Haunted & Enchanted Trails
- October 27: Fish Creek Art Installation Celebration
- October 31: Trick or Treat Fish Creek
- November 30: Holiday Tree Lighting
- November 30–February 22: Brighter Winter Lights
- December 3: Giving Tuesday
- December 21: Winter Solstice Festival
- January 4–February 22: Westchester Lagoon Family Skate
- February 14: Winter Bike to Work Day

[anchorageparkfoundation.org/events](https://anchorageparkfoundation.org/events)



2024 PARK OF THE YEAR  
**Kincaid Park**  
*featured art by* **Ted Kincaid**



Get your merch  
before it's gone.  
Sales end 12/31

Proceeds go toward  
park+trail projects



— 2025 —  
**Park of the Year**

Nominate your favorite  
park in October.  
Vote in November.

