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2026 Event Calendar



Closing the Trail Gap

Fans of the Moose Loop know the feeling. You're cruising along the Coastal Trail, soaking in a salty sea breeze, when—suddenly—the trail ends and the calm rhythm of the ride is replaced with vigilance as you cross railroad tracks and watch for street cars. Shortly, you're back in nature on the Ship Creek Trail, hoping to spot a salmon in the creek. Almost everyone thinks the same thing: *there has to be a safer way to get from here to there.*

Soon, there will be. Construction for the **Downtown Trail Connection Project** begins this spring and will link one of Anchorage's most high-profile trail gaps. While this project will provide a smoother trail connection, it's also about place, history, and the stories that have shaped Anchorage long before paved paths existed.

Located near the Ship Creek Small Boat Launch, the trail connection will also host a future Indigenous Place Name '**Dgheyaytnu'** Plaza to honor the Dena'ina's influence in the Upper Cook Inlet region. Here, you will be invited to pause, learn, and reflect on the deep history of the land beneath your feet while taking in views of the Knik Arm and Anchorage skyline.

Projects like this don't come to fruition overnight – they are made possible by **your park bond dollars at work.** Years of municipal bond investment has leveraged private and federal funding, turning a long-imagined idea into a reality even more impactful than first envisioned.





Staff

Beth Nordlund,
Executive Director

Michelle LeBeau,
Deputy Director

Diana Rhoades,
Director of Programs

Meredith Gutierrez,
Youth Engagement Manager

Ally Merrill,
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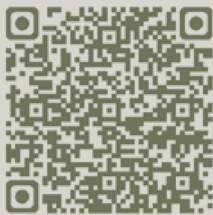
Andrea Rayt
Business Manager

Board of Directors

- Bill Bittner, Chair
- Joelle Hall, Vice Chair
- Shane Baird, Treasurer
- Eleanor Andrews
- Steven Compton
- Helena Hall
- Marilyn Heiman
- Ann Rembert Safranek
- Jim Torgerson
- David Wight
- Shanna Gamble, Ex Officio

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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
3201 C Street, Suite 111
Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 274-1003
AnchorageParkFoundation.org

Letter from Director



Spring always feels like a moment of possibility in Anchorage, and Spring 2026 offers a lot for park and trail lovers to be excited about. The biggest news is that Anchorage is building a downtown connection from the Coastal Trail to the Ship Creek Trail. Thank you voters, for supporting this gorgeous multi-use 1-mile trail segment on multiple park bonds over the years. These are *Your Park Bonds at Work*, and we will celebrate your support for years to come.

Anchorage Park Foundation has a busy construction and celebration season scheduled. Downtown will be getting a lot more attention with the renovation of Town Square and new pedestrian wayfinding signs to help residents and visitors navigate and enjoy our urban spaces. We have four Indigenous Place Name signs scheduled for 2026 as well as plans to celebrate the Fish Creek story and sign with many community partners and artists. We are currently accepting applications for our 10th round of Community Challenge Grants and invite you to apply to bring your community's ideas to life. There are many ways to stay engaged – from making a donation to voting at your ballot box in April.

Spring also marks a new chapter for our team. We're proud to celebrate leadership from within as Michelle LeBeau steps into the role of Deputy Director after years of guiding our philanthropy work and building strong relationships across the community. Ally Merrill, our previous Program Manager, has also begun a new role as Community Engagement Manager and last year we welcomed three new board members to help guide us on our strategic priorities.

While our organization is evolving, our mission hasn't. We exist to make it easier for you to enjoy Anchorage's parks, trails, and recreation opportunities. We hope you'll join us - whether that means volunteering alongside neighbors, celebrating milestones in a park, or exploring a new trail connection.

Sincerely,

Beth Nordlund
Executive Director

Welcome new board members



Marilyn Heiman



Steve Compton



Helena Hall

Vote to Support the Parks & Trails that Shape our Community

The 2026 Parks Bond (Proposition 3) is a crucial investment in Anchorage's identity, economy, and quality of life. Approving the 2026 Parks Bond ensures local funding for 16 improvement projects spread out across the municipality to build the Fish Creek Trail to the Coastal Trail, plan for better sports facilities along the Chester Creek Trail, upgrade the playground at Nunaka Valley North and improve trails and courts at Forsythe Park.

By passing Proposition 3 in the 2026 regular municipal election, we ensure our parks and trails remain safe, well-maintained, and accessible—preserving our reputation as a trails town, boosting property values, and strengthening local businesses.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- March 17 – ballots mailed
- March 18 – Secure Drop Boxes are open
- March 31 – Anchorage vote centers are open
- April 7 – last day to vote (drop boxes or in person)

Vote YES on Prop 3 Parks Bond

- Athletic Field Safety Improvements
- Campbell Creek Trail Rehabilitation and Wayfinding
- Centennial Park Campground Improvements
- Chester Creek Sports Complex Park
- East Delaney Park and Facility Improvements
- Eastchester Park
- Facility Safety Upgrades Annual Program
- Far North Bicentennial Park
- Fish Creek Trail to the Ocean
- Forsythe Park
- Hamilton Park Trail and Playground Improvements
- Mountain View Community Center
- Multi-Use Trails and Access Annual Program
- Nunaka Valley Park Improvements
- Spenard Recreation Center Improvements
- Town Square Park Development

Total Parks & Recreation Bond \$6.05 Million

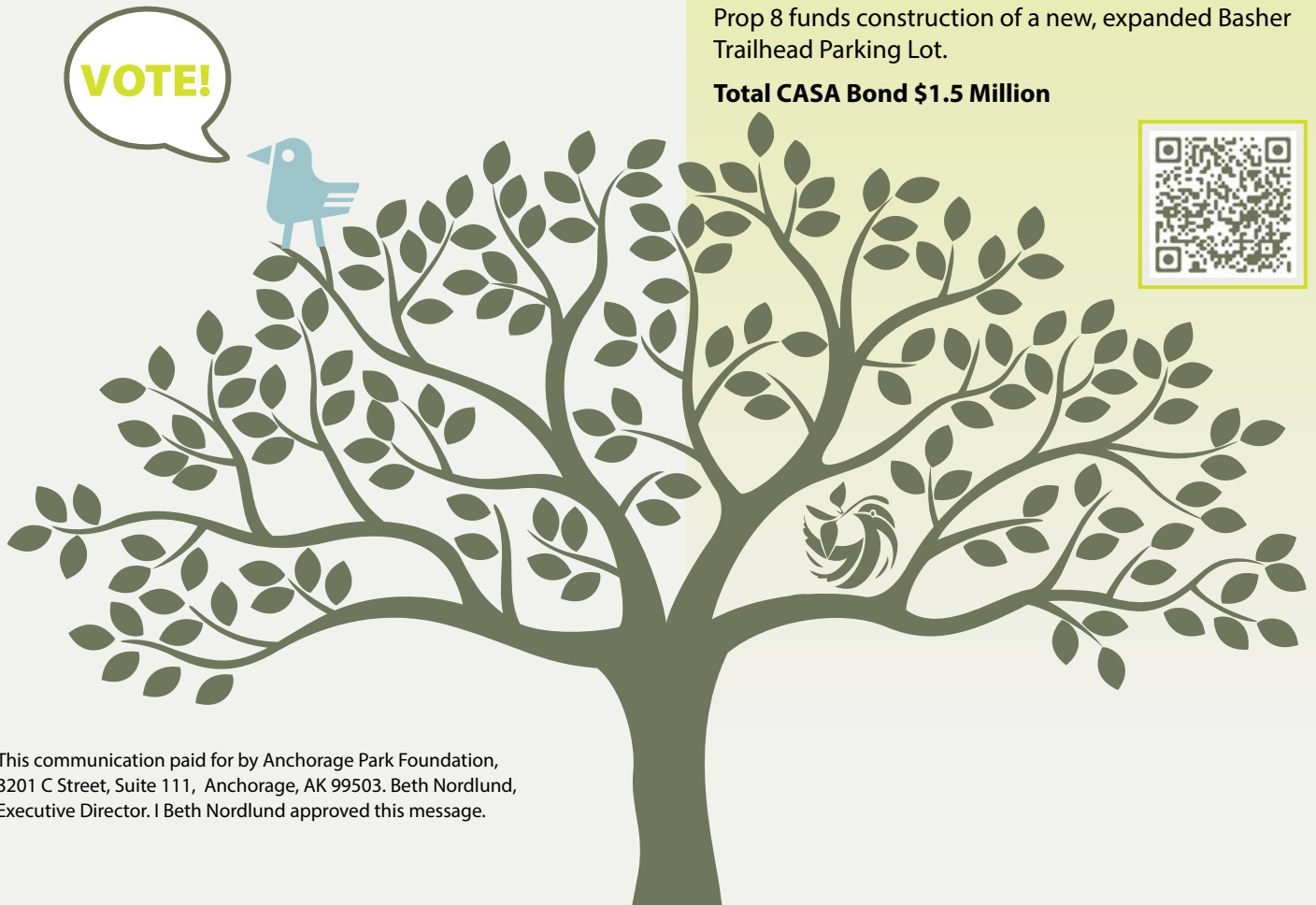
Vote YES on Prop 8 Chugach State Park Service Area bond

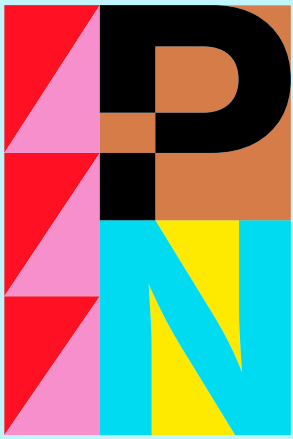
Prop 8 funds construction of a new, expanded Basher Trailhead Parking Lot.

Total CASA Bond \$1.5 Million



VOTE!





INDIGENOUS PLACE NAMES MOVEMENT

Ułchena Bada Huch'ilyut
Point Campbell

Nutu'iy
Kincaid Park

Nen Ghiłgedi
Earthquake Park

Nuch'ishtunt
Point Woronzof

Chanshtnu
Westchester Lagoon

Ch'atanaltsegh
Fish Creek

Niłkidal'iy
Spenard Beach Park

Qin Cheghi Kaq'
Campbell Creek Estuary

Tut'uh
Turnagain Arm


About the Project

The Indigenous Place Names Movement celebrates the Dena'ina connection to this land - Anchorage, which was founded along *Dgheyaytnu* (Stickleback Creek), now know as Ship Creek.

In partnership with the Native Village of Eklutna, 32 culturally significant sites have been identified across Anchorage's park and trail system. These routes follow the ancient pathways of the Dena'ina people.

Each site features Dena'ina language, stories, and art - created with guidance from Alaska Native artists, Elders, and advocates - to honor the living culture of the Dena'ina, and tell a deep story of place.

LEGEND

 Installed Signs

 Future Sign Installations



To learn more about the IPN Movement and the pronunciation of Indigenous place names, please scan the QR code or visit the website below:

anchorageparkfoundation.org/indigenous-places





Dgheyaytnu Ship Creek

Chanshtnu Chanshtnu Muldoon Park

Qin Cheghitnu Campbell Creek

Qin Cheghi Glen Alps Overlook

Hkadtali Potter Marsh

Q'isqa Betnu McHugh Creek

Ggeh Betnu Rabbit Creek

ciation of visit the making/

Dgheyaytnu Ship Creek

Glenn Hwy.

5th Ave. Merrill Field

L St.

A St.

15th Ave.

Northern Lights Blvd.

Tudor Rd.

Boniface Pkwy.

Muldoon Rd.

International Airport Rd.

Connors Lake

Blueberry Lake

Tina Lake

Seward Hwy.

Dimond Blvd.

Campbell Lake

Walter J. Hickel Pkwy.

South Anchorage Sports Park

Carr-Gottstein Park

Abbott Rd.

Ruth Arcand Park

O'Malley Rd.

Lake O' The Hills

Hillside Dr.

Chugach State Park

Rabbit Creek Rd.

Potter Marsh Bird Sanctuary



The Power of a Community Challenge Grant

Story provided by Daniel Clift

As a neighbor and volunteer with the Scenic Foothills Community Council, I had the privilege of being part of a 2024 Community Challenge Grant project that restored the Baxter Bog trail system. I want to share what a difference this grant has made—not just for our trail, but for our neighborhood.

Baxter Bog is a neighborhood treasure. When sections of the trail became waterlogged and nearly unusable, the Challenge Grant program gave us the opportunity to roll up our sleeves and make things better. With the help of an engineer, dozens of volunteers, and the Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) crews, we hauled gravel, reshaped the trail, and made it resilient for years to come.



But the real impact went far beyond fixing the trail. Over the course of our workdays, I met neighbors I had only ever waved to in passing. We got to know each other while shoveling and raking, and by the end of the project, it felt like our neighborhood had grown closer. It gave everyone—from teenagers to retirees—a sense of pride and ownership.

Interpretive signage created and installed by Apple Blossoms Forest School as part of Baxter Bog's Challenge Grant.



BAXTER BOG TRAIL BEFORE



BAXTER BOG TRAIL AFTER

Apply for a Challenge Grant Today!

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. Funding is available for all Anchorage communities, with special consideration given to projects benefitting the communities of Eagle River and Girdwood.

“The pickleball court improvements we did truly rejuvenated the park and surrounding neighborhood. We saw a surge of activity all summer, including families gathering, kids on the playground, and neighbors celebrating milestones. Scenic Park feels vibrant and alive again.”

~ Laurie Ford, Challenge Grantee

Thank you Rasmuson Foundation! Funding for the Community Challenge Program is provided by Rasmuson Foundation, honoring Ed Rasmuson's belief that private investment and community involvement creates a strong sense of community stewardship. The 2026 funding cycle of our flagship program represents the 10th round of support.

APPLY TODAY Deadline: April 10, 5:00 PM. Learn more at anchorageparkfoundation.org/grants/

2026 Park of the Year

As you walk the loop around Cheney Lake, it's easy to forget you're in the middle of the city. Forested trails, open water, and mountain views create a sense of calm that draws neighbors and visitors back again and again, no matter the season.

For Karl Schleich, a Cheney Lake neighbor and Park of the Year voter, that year-round magic is what makes the park so special. He describes a place that's constantly changing, yet always familiar:

"Cheney Park is wonderful in all seasons! In winter, hundreds of mallards congregate at the end of the lake that doesn't freeze and ice skating is enjoyed. In spring, the grebes return, as do the loons. Summer welcomes kayakers and paddle boarders and the lake is stocked with fish. Fall colors are best viewed with the low light of the early evening with the Chugach Mountains first snow."



Park of the Year artwork by Sarah Glaser.

With so many ways to enjoy the park in each season, it's no wonder the park is such a cherished community asset, garnering the votes to become the 2026 Park of the Year! In addition to birding, ice skating, water sports, and fishing, the park features other amenities including a playground, benches, picnic tables, a parking lot, and a trail around the lake. It's the perfect spot for a family outing, with activities for each member of the family to enjoy.

While today Cheney Lake is a popular community hub, it hasn't always been. Until 1972, the area was a gravel extraction site. Roy Cheney, who came to Alaska in 1942 to supervise military construction, was involved with the gravel mine operation. After years of gravel extraction, the mine began to fill with water from underground springs and the workers began to call the site Cheney Lake. The name stuck and became official when the land became park land in the 70s. With funding from the Land & Water Conservation Fund in 1975, park trails and landscaping began to create the park that we love today.

Cheney Lake continues to thrive with regular investment from local, state, federal, and private funding. This summer, the Anchorage Park Foundation will utilize grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the USDA Forest Service to improve bird habitat and forest habitat at Cheney Lake. Cheney Lake is an ecologically important site for migratory birds, but erosion and fishing pollution degrade the quality of this critical bird habitat. With the help of Youth Employment in Parks, **Cheney Lake will see improvements this summer, including new vegetation to help stabilize streambanks and increase tree canopy, trail improvements to improve park sustainability, and increased outreach and education in the park to inform the public about the importance of caring for this migratory bird habitat.**

Join us in celebrating Park of the Year!

- Spring Clean-Up – May 2, 10am start
- Park of the Year Celebration – August 13, 4-6pm





ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION

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Anchorage, AK 99503

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Anchorage Parks NEED YOU!

We have opportunities to plant trees, advocate for park bonds, participate in park clean-ups and more! Learn how to become a volunteer at one of our upcoming events at the QR code below::

Link for QR code: <https://anchorageparkfoundation.org/volunteer-opportunities/>



Upcoming Volunteer Dates:

- April 4 – Door knocking for Park Bonds
- May 2 – Cheney Lake Cleanup
- May 18 – Alaska Arbor Day Tree Planting
- June 5 – Folker Park Work Day