



Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska  
**Parks & Recreation Department**

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## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** April 10, 2014

**To:** Parks & Recreation Commission

**Cc:** Holly Spoth-Torres, Parks Superintendent

**From:** Josh Durand, Park Planner

**Project:** **PRC 14-18:** Youth Employment in Parks 2014 Projects

### INTRODUCTION

Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) is a joint program of the Anchorage Park Foundation and the Municipality of Anchorage's Parks & Recreation Department. YEP aims to positively engage a new generation of diverse young leaders as conservation stewards of public lands and of the Anchorage community through meaningful job training, employment and education.

Since 2007, YEP has hired over 200 Anchorage youth to complete park improvement projects. The teens learn valuable natural resource management job skills by building trails and restoring stream banks. In addition, youth engage in relevant educational opportunities to increase their civic engagement, environmental awareness, and recreational activity and leadership skills. At the end of the program, teens participate in a mentorship week that links their new skills to future careers.

### PLANNING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Youth Employment in Parks projects receive input from the community and guidance from Parks and Recreation staff to ensure that park improvements are consistent with the goals of the Anchorage Park Plan. Parks and Recreation staff has also worked closely with government agencies and non-profit partners to identify projects that capitalize on available funding and achieve common goals.

### 2014 YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS PROJECTS

In 2013, the Youth Employment in Parks teens completed \$380,000 worth of improvements in Anchorage Parks and Trails. This summer, the YEP teens will complete an additional \$320,000 in improvements in Anchorage Parks. This report presents the six YEP and four YEP Alumni Crew projects to be completed this summer.

- a) Campbell Creek Restoration at the New Seward Highway
- b) Chester Creek Trail Vegetation Maintenance
- c) Far North Bicentennial Park Trail Maintenance
- d) Ruth Arcand Park Trail Maintenance
- e) Moen Park New Trail Construction
- f) Little Campbell Lake Trail Maintenance
- g) Ruth Arcand Park Bridge Reconstruction
- h) Far North Bicentennial Park Bridge Reconstruction
- i) Russian Jack Springs Park (Greenbelt Bridges) Bridge Repair
- j) Earthquake Park Beautification Project

## **Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) Crew**

### **Campbell Creek Restoration at the New Seward Highway** **\$35,000**

Last summer, the Department of Transportation constructed a new bridge over Campbell Creek on the New Seward Highway allowing for the Campbell Creek Trail to connect underneath the bridge. To help mitigate the impacts of construction, the YEP crew will plant trees and shrubs to facilitate long term stream bank stabilization. This project is in coordination with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service who will be providing \$19,000 in funding to invest in youth engagement in habitat restoration projects.

### **Chester Creek Trail Maintenance** **\$26,000**

In coordination with the 2014 Chester Creek Trail resurfacing project, YEP will spend a week performing trail maintenance along the section of trail from Westchester Lagoon to A Street. The YEP crew will clear vegetation to promote healthy growth and improve public safety. YEP will also provide needed maintenance of park amenities along the Trail including new paint for bike racks and park benches.

### **Far North Bicentennial Park Trail Maintenance** **\$51,000**

With over 4,000 acres and 73 miles of trails, Far North Bicentennial Park is Anchorage's largest park. This summer, the YEP crew will spend two weeks maintaining and upgrading existing trails within the park. The YEP crew will focus on improving trail tread and will address drainage issues along trails within the Park.

Trails and areas of improvement are being identified in collaboration with the Far North Bicentennial Park User Group. Areas of focus will be north of the Campbell Airstrip. Specific project sites will be identified during May project walkthroughs and scoped by a professional trail builder.

### **Ruth Arcand Park Trail Maintenance** **\$57,000**

The YEP crew will spend two weeks maintaining and improving the equestrian trails at Ruth Arcand Park. Improvements will focus on upgrading the trail tread and address drainage issues in low lying bog areas. YEP is working with the Anchorage Horse Council to identify areas that have issues of standing water, frequent muddy spots and water flowing over the trail. Tread improvements will include re-grading sections of the trail and applying D-1 gravel to harden trail surfaces. Additionally, brush will be cleared to meet equestrian trail standards.

### **Moen Park New Trail Construction** **\$27,000**

In 2013, Anchorage Parks and Recreation staff worked with a Very Important Parks (VIP) committee to identify and prioritize future improvements at Moen Park. The committee identified a soft surface trail as a desirable new amenity. This summer, the YEP crew will construct a new loop trail through the largely undeveloped Park. The trail will be constructed from native soils and will address existing drainage issues around the playground.

### **Little Campbell Lake Trail Maintenance** **\$36,000**

Little Campbell Lake is located in Kincaid Park just north of the Raspberry Rd. entrance and south of the Ted Stevens International Airport. This summer, the YEP crew will spend one week doing trail maintenance and restoration on soft surface trails around Little Campbell Lake. Trail maintenance will include reclaiming and rehabilitating an abandoned trail and re-grading the trails and tread hardening using D-1 gravel. YEP will also repair and restore the fishing dock.

## **Student Conservation Association's YEP Alumni Crew**

### **Ruth Arcand Park Bridge Reconstruction** **\$14,000**

The Student Conservation Association's (SCA) YEP Alumni crew will spend two days replacing and upgrading wood plank railings on the northern equestrian bridge in Ruth Arcand Park. The bridge is

approximately 8'X12' and constructed of wood and steel. Upgrades to the bridge will improve safety for both horses and their riders.

**Black Bear Trail Boardwalk** **\$13,000**

The SCA's YEP Alumni crew will construct a new boardwalk on the Black Bear Trail in Far North Bicentennial Park. This section of trail experiences periodic flooding and is frequently muddy. Construction of a new boardwalk will limit damage to surrounding vegetation and will provide for a better trail experience for park users.

**Russian Jack Springs Park Bridge Repair** **\$13,000**

The SCA's YEP Alumni crew will be doing repair work on the bridges and approaches to two bridges in Russian Jack Springs Park. On the main bridge, the crew will upgrade railings to modern safety standards and seal structural beams to prevent cracking. The crew will also be repairing the approach for the bridge near the Russian Jack ski hill, to provide safe access over the creek. The approach will be repaired with D-1 gravel and offer a smooth transition on and off the bridge.

**Earthquake Park Beautification Project** **\$13,000**

In honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1964 Earthquake, the SCA's YEP Alumni crew will spend a week working at Earthquake Park. The Crew will provide needed maintenance of park amenities in the Park including new paint for bike racks, bollards and park benches. The SCA crew will paint the bridge and fence at the overlook. They will also clear vegetation to promote healthy growth and improve public safety.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

The proposed improvements of the Youth Employment in Parks projects have been reviewed and are supported by Park Planning staff. The Department recommends that the Parks & Recreation Commission pass the proposed resolution to support the improvements of the Youth Employment in Parks projects as presented.