



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

632 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 630  
P.O. Box 196650  
Anchorage, AK 99519  
Tel 907-343-4355

URL [www.muni.org/departments/parks](http://www.muni.org/departments/parks)



## MEMORANDUM

**Date:** May 9, 2024

---

**To:** Parks & Recreation Commission

---

**Cc:** Taylor Keegan, Parks Superintendent

---

**From:** Brad Muir, Natural Resource Manager

---

**Project:** **PRC 24-05:** Youth Employment in Parks 2024 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. Since 2007, YEP has hired over 475 Anchorage youth to complete park improvement projects resulting in millions of dollars of improvements to Anchorage Parks and Trails.

YEP aims to engage a new generation of young leaders in the conservation of public lands through meaningful job training, employment, and education. A major component of the YEP program is education and civic engagement. Through the course of the ten-week program, YEP teens learn about environmental stewardship, natural resource conservation and land management. Each week, the YEP program sponsors an education day and at the end of the program teens participate in a mentorship week that links their new skills to future careers.

Last year, the Youth Employment in Parks teens completed \$170,000 worth of improvements in Anchorage Parks and Trails. This summer, the YEP teens will complete an additional \$270,000 in improvements in Anchorage Parks.

#### Proposed 2024 Youth Employment in Parks Projects:

1. Wesleyan Connector Trail Improvement
2. KFQD Bike Skills Loop
3. Cuddy Family Park Rain Garden and Vegetation
4. Hillstrand Pond Restoration and ELP
5. MOA Greenbelt Tree Planting
6. Ship Creek Bank Restoration
7. Government Hill Trail Improvements

### 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 (2006) *Anchorage Bowl Park, Natural Resource and Recreation Facility 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 mutually beneficial outcomes.

## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN PARKS (YEP) 2024 PROJECTS

### **Wesleyan Connector Trail Improvement** **\$1,000**

Youth Employment in Parks will improve a 200 foot connector trail between Wesleyan Dr and the asphalt bike trail near University Lake Park.

### **KFQD Bike Skills Loop** **\$15,000**

Youth Employment in Parks will construct a 300 foot bike skills loop at KFQD Park. The bike skills loop will consist of gravel and be approximately 4-6 feet wide. Bike features, such as rollers, bank turns, and other features.

### **Cuddy Family Park Rain Garden and Vegetation** **\$170,000**

Youth Employment in Parks will construct a rain garden at Cuddy Family Midtown Park. This rain garden will include native plants and trees, as well as mulch and a gabion retaining wall. This rain garden will help improve water quality in Cuddy Pond. YEP will also plant many additional natives shrubs around Cuddy Pond to help with erosion issues. Temporary fence will be constructed to help protect the newly revegetated areas.

### **Hillstrand Pond Bank Restoration and ELP** **\$13,000**

YEP teens will work along Chester Creek at Hillstrand Pond to perform a bank restoration project. Teens will plant native plants and shrubs along the bank of Hillstrand Pond, including three 50 foot layers of willow trenching. A 24 ft x 5 ft Elevated Light-penetrating Platform (ELP) will also be installed for wildlife viewing, while protecting the reestablished shoreline. Temporary fence will be installed to protect the new plantings and restoration.

### **MOA Greenbelt Tree Planting** **\$15,000**

The Parks and Recreation Department was awarded a Urban Forestry Grant to help replant trees lost to the spruce beetle. The YEP crew will perform one week of planting trees along MOA Greenbelts to help replace the forest canopy. Teens will plant over 1000 trees throughout this greenbelt.

### **Ship Creek Bank Restoration** **\$36,000**

YEP teens will work along Ship Creek to help improve a bank restoration project. Teens will plant native plants and shrubs along the bank of Ship Creek. Temporary fence will be installed to protect the new plantings and restoration.

### **Government Hill Trail Improvements** **\$20,000**

Youth Employment in Parks will perform approximately a half mile of trail improvements in Government Hill. Gravel will be added to existing trail. In addition, new wooden steps will be constructed as well as other wooden structures. Teens will improve drainage and tread along this trail between Sunset Park and Alderwood Park. Crews will add gravel and drainage features along these trails and improve sightlines throughout the park for improved safety.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

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



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

632 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 630  
P.O. Box 196650  
Anchorage, AK 99519



**PRC RES NO. 2024-05**  
**Youth Employment in Parks - 2024 Projects**

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission serves in an advisory capacity to both the Mayor and the Assembly; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission has the responsibility and duty to provide for the long term vision of our park system by ensuring that a balance of parks, natural resources, and recreation facilities provides for the health, welfare, and safety of all residents of the Anchorage Bowl; and

WHEREAS, the Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) is a joint program of the Anchorage Park Foundation and the Municipality of Anchorage's Parks & Recreation Department and is focused on providing Anchorage teens with meaningful job experience, outdoor education and environmental stewardship skill in Anchorage Parks and Trails; and

WHEREAS, the Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department, the Anchorage Park Foundation, and various project partners has dedicated or achieved \$270,000 in funding to support the 2024 Youth Employment in Parks projects; and

WHEREAS the Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) is in its 18<sup>th</sup> year of operation with a planned scope of work that includes trail work, bank restoration, slope stabilization, landscaping and vegetation rehabilitation, and park beautification projects to be completed during the 2024 YEP program season; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission approves the scope of work submitted by the Department for the 2024 Youth Employment in Parks Projects.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 9th day of May, 2024.

---

Chair  
Parks and Recreation Commission

ATTEST:

---

Mike Braniff, Director  
Parks & Recreation Department