



# MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

## ANCHORAGE PARKS & RECREATION

632 W. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 630

P.O. Box 196650

Anchorage, AK 99519



### MEMORANDUM

**Date:** May 14, 2026

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**To:** Parks and Recreation Commission

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**Cc:** Taylor Keegan, Superintendent

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

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**Subject:** **PRC 26-13:** Youth Employment in Parks 2026 Projects

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#### 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 528 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 \$305,205 worth of improvements in Anchorage Parks and Trails. This summer, the YEP teens will complete an additional \$378,949 in improvements in Anchorage Parks.

#### Proposed 2026 Youth Employment in Parks Projects:

1. Cheney Lake Trail Improvement
2. Middle Iditarod Trail Improvement
3. Davis Park Disc Golf Course Expansion
4. Cheney Lake Bank Rehabilitation
5. Romig Hill Trail Improvement
6. Greenbelt Tree Planting

#### 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) 2026 PROJECTS

### Cheney Lake Trail Improvement

**\$43,224**

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Youth Employment in Parks will add gravel and additional culverts to improve tread along a very popular existing 1+ mile loop trail along Cheney Lake as part of the USFS Urban Forestry Grant.

### Girdwood: Middle Iditarod Trail

**\$10,000**

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Youth Employment in Parks will haul and spread gravel to improve and strengthen the tread of the Middle Iditarod Trail in Girdwood. This will be a continuation of the work YEP did in 2025 on the trail to build on the drainage added last summer.

### Davis Park Disc Golf Course Expansion

**MOA Bond**

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As part of the 2024 Bond for Mountain View Park Improvements, Davis Park will be getting an additional 9 holes to expand the Disc Golf Course. YEP will work along the Disc Golf Community to complete this project over the course of two weeks.

### Cheney Lake Bank Rehabilitation

**\$22,502**

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YEP will take place in a Streambank Rehab Class with ADF&G and then complete a bank rehabilitation project along the banks of Cheney Lake to support as part of a NFWF 2025 5 Star Urban Waters Grant. An elevated light penetrating platform will also be added as part of the grant.

### Romig Hill Trail Improvement

**\$10,000**

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Turnagain Neighbors was awarded a Challenge Grant to improve the existing trail network on Romig Hill adjacent to Romig Middle School and West Anchorage High School. YEP will assist by hauling and spreading gravel along muddy sections to stabilize sections.

**MOA Greenbelt Tree Planting****\$43,223**

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The Anchorage Park Foundation/YEP was awarded a 4 year USFS Urban Forestry Grant to plant trees in historically disadvantaged neighborhoods. The YEP crew will perform one week of planting trees along MOA Greenbelts to help replace the forest canopy.

**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

## PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

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### PRC RES NO. 2026-12

#### Youth Employment in Parks - 2026 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 \$392,572 in funding to support the 2026 Youth Employment in Parks projects; and

WHEREAS the Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) is in its 20<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 2026 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 2026 Youth Employment in Parks Projects.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Parks and Recreation Commission this 14th day of May, 2026.

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Chair  
Parks and Recreation Commission

ATTEST:

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Director  
Parks & Recreation Department