

YEAR 4 - APDES Permit No. AKS-052558
Stormwater Outreach: Ongoing Education and Public Involvement
Final Report Summary Submitted by Anchorage Waterways Council (AWC) 1/15/14

The 4th year of the AWC outreach and education program was to be spent evaluating changes and trends that have occurred over the first 3 years of the program. AWC has:

- Evaluated the results and the need for modifications in previous campaigns
- Focused on campaigns that are most needed and have the greatest impact on healthier waterways, and spent less time on those that are not as successful
 - Those that appear most important are Scoop-the-Poop, keeping yard waste and fertilizers out of creeks, reduction of littering especially of plastic and cigarette butts, and general stormwater education
- Reviewed venues where static information has been placed and where tabling events occur, replenishing brochures and fliers previously placed, added and removed locations
- Updated all outreach records to date (attached)
- The original general survey will be repeated in Year 5 due to a change in Year 4 scope in order to produce the Chester Creek Watershed Plan.

Scoop-the-Poop Campaign Activities (Year 4):

- Scoop the Poop Meetings:
 - February 7, 2013: regular committee met to develop upcoming year's activities.
 - Of particular importance after a long winter were issues at Connors Bog. Cherie Northon met with a private citizen in late April to come up with a solution. The citizen donated \$600 which was matched by her company to go towards cleaning up the waste at the park. Additionally, two other individuals contributed \$260. Cleanup was accomplished over the next several weeks (to the extent it could be based on the budget).
 - A small sub-group of committee members met to review issues of dog parks, pet owner responsibility, and leash vs. off-leash areas. Various tactics for a unified campaign that tied print, PSAs, and other media were discussed. A preliminary plan has been developed, but a budget needs to be set and funds devoted to the project. Meetings with the PR person were held August 21, September 18, and Oct. 11.
- Tabling:
 - January 26, 2013 - Hogs and Dogs at the House of Harley, 12 noon-4 pm (not reported in year 3 due to late date)
 - February 2, 2013 - Pet New Year at Alaska Mill and Feed, 11 am – 4 pm
 - February 24, 2013 - Fur Rondy Mutt Show at Alyeska Canine Trainers, 12 noon-4 pm
 - May 18, 2013 - AWC Creek Cleanup, Cuddy Park, 9 am – 1 pm
 - June 29, 2013.- Pawstice, Ruth Arcand Park (David Jensen Photography), 12 noon – 2 pm
 - July 27, 2013.- Dog Jog, Service High (Friends of Pets), 9 am – 1 pm
 - August 3, 2013 - Pet Day at Spenard Farmers Market , 9 am – 2 pm
 - August 17, 2013 - Dog Daze of Summer, Downtown Partnership, 11 am – 4 pm
- Activities:
 - Two Earth Day Scoop the Poop events were held at Connor's Bog and University Lake on May 4, from 12 noon-3 pm. (rescheduled to early May because of a late breakup)
 - A BLM-organized Scoop the Poop Day at Campbell Tract was held on May 6, from 5 pm – 8 pm. (rescheduled to early May because of a late breakup)

- In June, 30 hours of poop cleanup at Connors Bog took place. The time was funded by 3 private individuals and a corporate donation (see above).
- Two Mutt Mitt stations were obtained through the Anchorage Parks Foundation Challenge grant and were installed on the Campbell Bike Trail near Shelikof and Rakof and at Waldron Lake. Additionally, 2 more stations were purchased with leftover funds, and will replace one that was vandalized at Old Hermit Park and an old style unusable station at Arnold L. Muldoon Park.
- A DEC FY14 ACWA grant was submitted by AWC and funded to develop an inventory and evaluation of the 100+ pet waste stations presumably located in Anchorage's seven primary watersheds. Between July 1 and December 31, 2013, stations were located (or found to be missing), coordinates and photographs were taken, the locations were mapped in a GIS, the condition of the station and surrounding area have been evaluated, and recommendations will be made during the next 6 months for several parameters. The final report will be provided to the MOA in Year 5, but some of the preliminary information is included in this report. (Attached is an example of the Arnold L. Muldoon Park Information Sheet and Location Map and a Map of Pet Waste Stations along Anchorage's three primary creek trails.)
- Additional Scoop the Poop door hangers were placed in some new areas based on citizen complaints (see map.)
- Media:
 - Two thousand new bumper stickers were printed, which were designed from the previous year's bus sign (attached). These are distributed at tabling and other events.
 - Scoop the Poop bus signage ran for 16 weeks on the rear of 5 Muni buses (using signage from Year 3).
 - Submitted a Compass piece dated 4/29/13 (attached) that was not published.
 - A letter to the Editor was published 5/7/13 regarding pet waste (attached).

Garden Campaign Activities (Year 4):

- Tabling:
 - March 9, 2013 Spring Garden Conference Trade Show at the Millennium, 8:30 am - 4:45 pm
 - April 6, 2013 Garden Show at Sears Mall, 9:30 am – 5 pm
 - Written surveys were collected (attached) and books were mailed to entrants in the drawing
 - May 25, 2013 Alaska Botanical Garden Plant Sale
 - August 10, 2014 Alaska Botanical Garden Harvest Fair
 - Written surveys were taken and gift certificates were mailed to selected entrants
 - 115 new surveys were added to the 2013 data set on yard habits (attached)

Various Activities (Year 4):

- Worked to expand partnerships more with other similar entities such as ALPAR, the MOA Rain Garden Program, Anchorage Park Foundation, Alaska Geographic, and several pet groups.
- Outreach presentations, publications, and talks:
 - Developed tri-fold display on the Year 3 AWC programs for presentation at the APDES Annual Meeting, February 25, 2013.
 - Executive Director Cherie Northon made two presentations at APU to students in their Ecohydrology program on stormwater (April 11 and April 16, 2013).

- Research Associate Thom Eley was invited to make a presentation on water issues at the Anchorage Universalist Fellowship on April 28, 2013, to approximately 150 members.
 - Cherie Northon and Tim Stevens (ADEC) appeared on Kathleen McCoy's Hometown Alaska, "How healthy is the water in Anchorage creeks, streams and lakes?" <http://www.alaskapublic.org/2013/05/10/how-healthy-is-the-water-in-anchorage-creeks-streams-and-lakes/> (attached).
 - KTVA news story 9-26-13 <http://www.ktva.com/news/local/Cigarette-add-to-pollution-225436702.html> on problem with cigarette butts. Note: since KTVA changed ownership, their archived stories are no longer accessible, but there is a written summary titled, "Cigarette butts add to pollution" (text attached).
 - Education and stewardship outreach continued in schools, at camps, and other venues from K through University level. At the AWC Annual Meeting on Dec. 2, 2013, several students made presentations, which are posted on the AWC website (anchoragecreeks.org). See attached database list for Outreach, where over 5,000 participants were reached. Meeting agenda attached.
 - Letter to the Editor published 8/24/13 "Praise for those who noticed [Little] Campbell Creek turning orange" (attached).
 - AWC's Streamline Newsletter added discussions regarding creeks. These are sent to nearly 500 email addresses once a month (copies for 9 editions attached), and back issues are posted on the AWC website.
 - Expanded use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Items of interest are sent out nearly daily to over 200 followers.
- Information items:
 - Cards for "do-it-yourselfers" developed in Year 3 were replenished at 7 equipment rental companies
 - A new door hanger titled "How to Live with a Creek" was created and printed. These are being targeted specifically to residences adjacent to creeks (see map and hanger example).
 - Fifteen additional stormwater medallions were placed during summer (see map)
- Selected responses to citizen complaints:
 - Multiple complaints came in about a strange foam substances pouring out of storm drains down by Fish Creek Estuary (May through August). Appeared to be from natural circumstances.
 - Call and emails from a bright orange liquid spill on 68th Ave that ran into Little Campbell Creek on 8/20/13. The cause was an orange mulch dye that spilled out of barrels in a truck during transport.
 - Online report regarding Fish Creek at Lois Drive that involved setback infringement, trash, an illegal camping situation, etc. Was handled by MOA personnel and the homeowner reporting she was very pleased with the response.
- Invasive education:
 - A grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2012 for invasive eradication on Chester Creek near DeBarr and Muldoon at Grass Creek Village was turned into an education experience for residents. Several are involved in reporting problems to AWC from the tarped Reed Canarygrass. A handout explaining the project was developed (attached).

Year 4 Education Outreach

DATE	EVENT/LOCATION	PARTICIPANTS	CHEMICAL TESTING	MACROINVERTEBRATES	INVASIVE SPECIES	HYDROLOGY
8/29/2012	Rogers Park Elementary	60	x	x		x
8/31/2012	Rogers Park Elementary	60	x	x		x
9/7/2012	Chugach Optional School Scouts	25		x	x	
9/13/2012	BLM Water Discovery Days	120		x		
9/14/2012	BLM Water Discovery Days	120		x		
9/25/2013	Polaris K12 School	30	x	x	x	x
9/27/2013	Polaris K12 School	30	x	x	x	x
10/1/2013	Polaris K12 School	30	x	x	x	x
10/3/2013	Polaris K12 School	30	x	x	x	x
10/8/2012	APU Teach the Teachers	20		x		
11/5/2012	Girdwood School	30	x	x		
11/7/2013	Romig Middle School	100	x		x	x
1/2013-4/2013	ASD Gifted Mentorship Program	1	x	x	x	x
2/13/2013	Polaris K12 School	30	x	x	x	
2/18/2013	Get Outdoors Anchorage Kids Day	80			x	x
2/28/2013	Polaris K12 School	30	x	x	x	
3/21/2013	Trailside Elementary Math/Science Night	150		x		x
4/11/2013	APU Creeks 101	10		x		x
4/27/2013	Eagle River Nature Center Jr. Naturalist Program	35		x		
4/27/2013	UAA STEM Program	15		x		x
5/3/2013	ANSEP Middle School Academy	160				x
5/2013-8/2013	UAA Civiv Engagement Internship	1	x	x	x	x
5/8/2013	Polaris K12 School	30	x	x	x	x
5/13/2013	Mears Middle School	25	x	x		
5/22/2013	Begich Middle School	60		x		
5/23/2013	Begich Middle School	60		x		
5/25/2013	Eagle River Nature Center Jr. Naturalist Program	35		x		
6/4/2013	Anchorage Christian School Adopt A Stream	22		x		
6/5/2013	AF&G Outdoor Youth Day Camp-Cheney Lake	75		x		
6/7/2013	AF&G Potter Marsh Discovery Days	400		x		
6/8/2013	AF&G Potter Marsh Discovery Days	250		x		
6/11/2013	Youth Employment in Parks Creeks 101	20	x	x	x	x
6/12/2013	AF&G Outdoor Youth Day Camp-Cheney Lake	75		x		
6/19/2013	Indian Enrichment Program-Begich Middle School	120		x		

Year 4 Education Outreach

DATE	EVENT/LOCATION	PARTICIPANTS	CHEMICAL TESTING	MACROINVERTEBRATES	INVASIVE SPECIES	HYDROLOGY
6/20/2013	Indian Enrichment Program-Begich Middle School	120		x		
6/21/2013	Trailside Discovery Camp	20		x		
6/26/2013	Trailside Discovery Camp	20		x		
6/27/2013	Kincaid Adventure Camp (Anc Parks & Rec)	40	x	x		
7/3/2013	Trailside Discovery Camp	20		x		
7/5/2013	4H Adopt A Stream	18	x	x		
7/8/2013	Trailside Discovery Camp	20		x		
7/9/2013	ANSEP Middle School Academy	160				x
7/9/2013	Russian Jack Explorer's Camp	25	x	x		
7/15/2013	Trailside Discovery Camp	20		x		
7/22/2013	Trailside Discovery Camp	20		x		
7/23/2013	ANSEP Middle School Academy	160				x
7/24/2013	Indian Enrichment Program-Begich Middle School	120		x		
7/25/2013	Indian Enrichment Program-Begich Middle School	120		x		
7/26/2013	Trailside Discovery Camp	20		x		
7/31/2013	Trailside Discovery Camp	20		x		
8/2/2013	4H Adopt A Stream	13			x	
8/6/2013	Trailside Discovery Camp	20		x		
8/7/2013	Trailside Discovery Camp	20		x		
8/13/2013	Trailside Discovery Camp	20		x		
8/14/2013	Trailside Discovery Camp	20		x		
9/2013-12/2013	ASD Gifted Mentorship Program	1	x	x	x	x
9/11/2013	Water Discovery Days/Campbell Creek Science Center	400		x		
9/12/2013	Water Discovery Days/Campbell Creek Science Center	400		x		
9/13/2013	Water Discovery Days/Campbell Creek Science Center	400		x		
9/19/2013	Winterberry School	20		x		
9/24/2013	Mears Middle School/Campbell Estuary	80	x			
9/26/2013	Mears Middle School/Campbell Estuary	80	x			
9/26/2013	Winterberry School	20			x	
10/1/2013	Ursa Major Elementary School/Ship Creek	60	x	x		
10/2/2013	Aquarian Charter School	20		x		

Year 4 Education Outreach

DATE	EVENT/LOCATION	PARTICIPANTS	CHEMICAL TESTING	MACROINVERTEBRATES	INVASIVE SPECIES	HYDROLOGY
10/3/2013	Winterberry School	20		x		
10/4/2013	UAA Environmental Planning and Problem Solving	22				x
10/5/2013	Winterberry School	20	x			
10/21/2013	Romig Middle School	25		x		
10/23/2013	Romig Middle School	25	x			
10/29/2013	East High School	13				x
11/1/2013	Romig Middle School	25		x		
11/13/2013	Romig Middle School	8	x	x		
11/19/2013	East High School	15		x		
	Total	509				

Year 4 APDES Outreach Events
(Scoop the Poop, Garden and Health)

Date	Event	Location	Attendance	Outreach					
				STP	Invasives	Stormwater	Lawn	Auto	Monitoring
1/26/2013	Hogs and Dogs	Harley Davidson of Alaska	150	x				x	
2/2/2013	Pet New Year	Alaska Mill & Feed	300	x					
2/24/2013	Fur Ronly Mutt Show	Alyeska Canine Trainers	200	x					
3/9/2013	Alaska Botanical Garden Conference	Millenium Hotel	175		x		x		
4/6/2013	Sears Mall Garden Show	Sears Mall	200		x		x		
4/17/2013	Reel Paddling Film Festival	Tap Root	100			x			x
5/4/2013	Scoop the Poop Day	University Lake/Connors Bog	30	x					
5/6/2013	Scoop the Poop Day	BLM Campbell Tract	35	x					
5/25/2013	Alaska Botanical Garden Plant Sale	Alaska Botanical Gardens	100				x		
6/29/2013	Pawstice	Ruth Arcand Park	100	x					
7/27/2013	Friends of Pets Dog Jog	Service High School	300	x					
8/3/2013	Pet Day at Spenard Farmer's Market	Spenard Farmer's Market	225	x					
8/10/2013	Alaska Botanical Gardens Harvest Fair	Alaska Botanical Gardens	40		x	x	x		
8/17/2013	Dog Days of Summer	Downtown Anchorage	150	x					
12/9/2013	UAA MPH Symposium	Anchorage Hilton	180	x		x			
			2285						

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
ALASKA CLEAN WATER ACTION (ACWA) GRANT
SFY14 WORKPLAN**

PROJECT #: ACWA-14-01

PROJECT TITLE: Evaluate Scoop-the-Poop Stations in Anchorage

Description and Purpose: Anchorage Waterways Council (AWC) proposes the following project objectives:

- 1) develop an inventory (map and list) of existing pet waste stations based on information provided from the Municipality and other entities, i.e. Bureau of Land Management (BLM); and personal observation;
- 2) field check the locations for accuracy and condition of each station along with any other issues that might become apparent through observation (i.e. access, visibility, use frequency);
- 3) create a map in ArcGIS that has layers of existing (confirmed) stations, their condition (including access to waste disposal such as garbage cans and dumpster), high pet use areas, locations where pet waste is not well cleaned up or it may be bagged and left, and a ranking of effectiveness of stations already in place;
- 4) interview the maintenance staff of the stations for information on usage (high or low), how much waste is hauled away by the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) Parks and Recreation maintenance, the restocking of bags, etc. to evaluate the effectiveness of current locations;
- 5) compile information from other sources: observation, personal communications (phone, email, tabling events), suggestions from members of the Scoop-the-Poop Committee, and survey of recreational users of trails;
- 6) complete a final report that includes maps, photographs, existing station conditions, proposed locations for new stations, costs, and educational suggestions. The environmental benefit of the project is to reduce fecal coliform in the Municipality's urban creeks. In order to accomplish this, pet owners will be provided with more opportunities to supplies for picking up pet waste (we all, on occasion, forget a bag), but the station's presence will also be a constant reminder of why pet waste should be cleaned up. Not having a bag will not suffice as an excuse. If this plan reduces the amount of pet waste left for urban runoff to carry into our creeks, then fecal coliform bacteria should be reduced in waterways, which would allow waters to be removed from the impaired waters list.

Arnold L Muldoon

INFORMATION

Location ~ E Northern Lights Blvd - between
Patterson St & Muldoon Rd.

Latitude/Longitude ~ 61.19513/-149.73930

Pet Waste, Bag Dispenser (Type) ~ old, unused "scoop dispenser"

Pet Waste Bags Stocked? ~ N/A grocery bags tied to post

Dispenser Accessibility ~ N/A

Dispenser Visibility ~ N/A

Trash Container ~ 2 silver trash cans, 30 gallon

Trash Container Condition ~ good, maintained with plastic liners,
small dents, chained to post, no lids

Cleanliness of area ~ good

Trails ~ looped, gravel trail with an exercise course through the
woods, paved trail along 3 sides of this park

Watershed – Chester Creek

Station sponsored by ~ N/A

Park Adopted by ~ 673rd Dental Squadron-Airmen's Committee

Maintained by the Municipality ~ North Maintenance Crew

See map for location



OBSERVATIONS

lots of dog walkers, one picnic table
residential neighborhood at the back
of this park
well maintained
grass mowed around parking lot
parking for 9 vehicles with 2 turn-around
spots at both ends for safe entry onto street
located along a noisy, heavy traffic road

RECOMMENDATIONS

- needs a new mutt mitt station
- trash can at 32nd St entrance
- Station donor/sponsor group needed

Surveyed by Anchorage Waterways Council
www.anchoragewaterways.org

Date of Survey - July 11, 2013





East Northern Lights Blvd

Arnold L Muldoon Park

East 32nd Ave

Patterson St

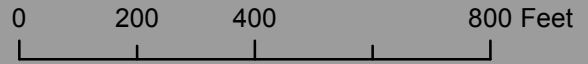
Muldoon Rd



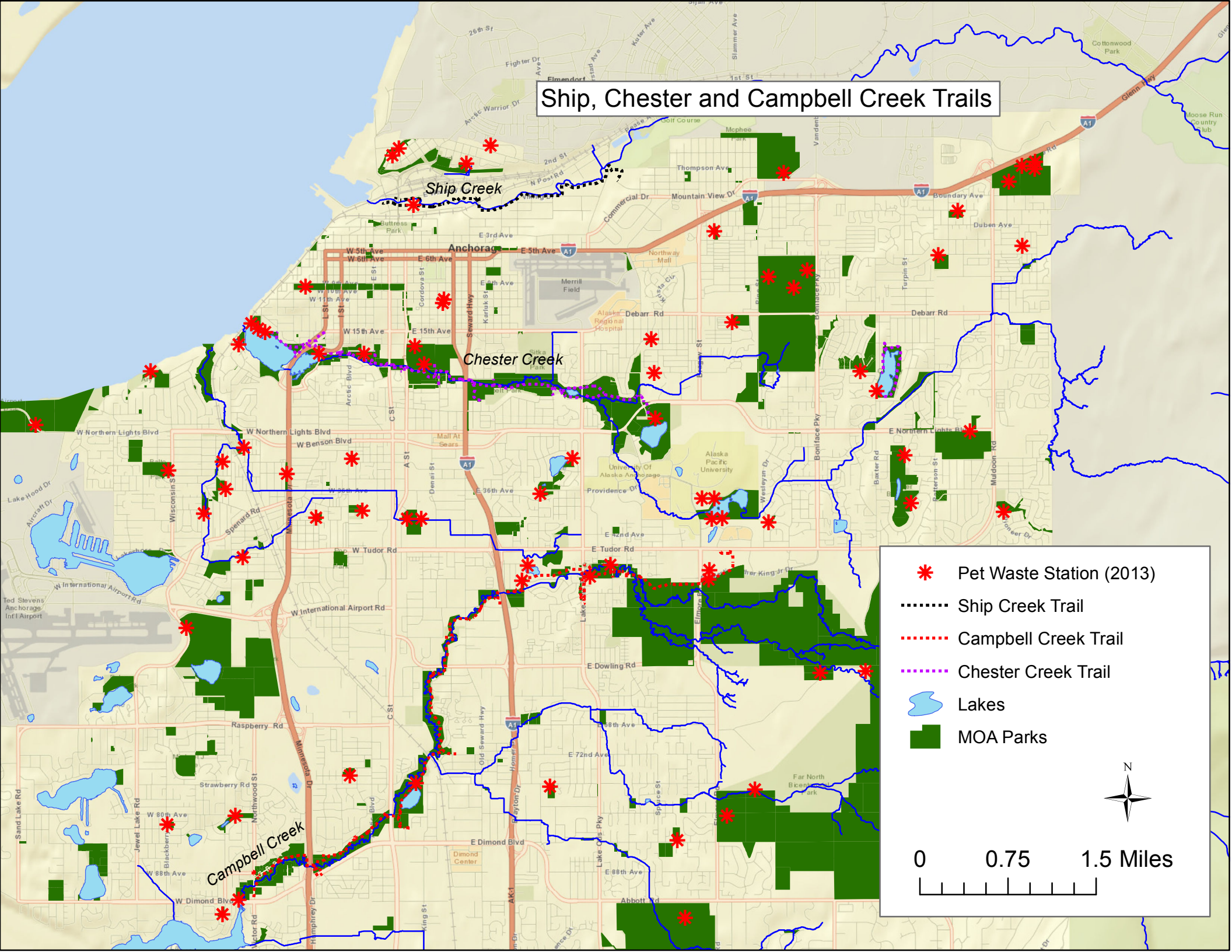
Pet Waste Station



MOA Parks




Ship, Chester and Campbell Creek Trails



- * Pet Waste Station (2013)
- Ship Creek Trail
- Campbell Creek Trail
- Chester Creek Trail
- Lakes
- MOA Parks

0 0.75 1.5 Miles



There is no Poop Fairy! (submitted 4-29-13 as a Compass Piece to the ADN)

The “Divine Appendage” (aka Sheila Toomey) summed it all up on Sunday, April 28. “Febreze air freshener has created a new scent. It’s called ‘Alaskan Spring.’ So does it smell like dirty snow and recently thawed dog poop?” she asks. Yes, Sheila, it just might. Step outside on one of these glorious sunny days, take in a deep whiff, and your olfactory senses will be treated to the smell of dog poop breaking down in snow melt and running toward storm drains (and ultimately our creeks). On Friday last, I was down at Town Square Park as one recipient of the Anchorage Park Foundation’s (APF) Challenge Grant. My project was to obtain 2 Mutt-Mitt[®] Stations for an area of the Campbell Creek Bike Trail and Waldron Lake (one of the many places where pet owners “forget” to clean up dog poop). When we were lining up for publicity photos, Beth Nordlund, APF Executive Director, and I looked at each other and said simultaneously, “I smell dog poop.” It was wafting through the air as from an air freshener. To further confirm that spring was here, Anchorage Waterways Council (AWC) has been deluged with our annual spring online complaints, emails, and phone calls about dog poop.

The disturbing aspect is that dog poop is appearing all over Anchorage as the snow melts. Trails, greenbelts, streets, sidewalks, parks, school yards, and more are displaying mounds of dog poop that have been lying in wait to emerge as the snow melts. Besides the unpleasant smell, pet waste causes multiple problems to our city and its environment. No one likes to step in dog poop (nor have their kids and dogs do so either). But, there is much more. Every creek in the Anchorage Bowl carries an impaired water quality listing because of fecal coliform. The impaired water is an EPA determination, and AWC, routinely monitoring Anchorage creeks for 15 years, has the data to show fecal contamination in all our creeks.

According to Clemson University Cooperative Extension, [f]ecal coliform bacteria are the most common microbiological contaminants of natural waters. Fecal coliform live in the digestive tracks of warm-blooded animals, including humans, and are excreted in feces. Although most of these bacteria are not harmful and are part of the normal digestive system, some are pathogenic to humans. Those that are pathogenic can cause disease such as gastroenteritis, ear infections, typhoid, dysentery, hepatitis A, and cholera.

Need more be said? Pet waste/dog poop is pervasive in Anchorage. Anchorage Animal Care and Control estimates that 21,000 lbs. of dog waste is produced each day in our city. That is over 10 tons daily. Everyone I meet claims that they pick up after their pets, but there must be a lot of people out there who aren’t. What happens when waste isn’t cleaned up? First, the pet owner leaving the waste could be subject to a \$100 fine. Second, poop eventually flows untreated into our waterways where it can infect humans with illnesses described above. What can you do? Be a responsible pet owner and clean up your yard and wherever you take your pet to recreate. Set an example. Carry extra bags for people who might have forgotten one. Spread the WORD about fecal coliform rather than fecal coliform. Be a concerned and caring citizen for our city, neighbors, visitors, and environment. If you would like more information on the Scoop-the-Poop program, contact Anchorage Waterways Council. And, like a good pet owner, show up to help at one of the venues for Scoop the Poop day on May 4. Better yet, let’s make every day a Scoop the Poop day, because, Sheila, there is no poop fairy—but fortunately there are a lot of caring people who not only cleanup after their pet but also that left by others.

**THERE IS NO
POOP FAIRY!**



BE A SUPER HERO!

**SCOOP UP AFTER
YOUR PETS!**



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Letter: Do the right thing and clean up after your dog

May 7, 2013

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On May 4, dozens of fantastic volunteers braved the snow, rain and cold to get out and help clean up pet waste in two Anchorage dog parks. A huge thank you to them!

Obviously, the weather made it much more difficult to accomplish a task that shouldn't even be necessary, but it still went on and people showed up. Dog owners — our pets leave an estimated 10-plus tons of dog poop in Anchorage on a daily basis. It carries harmful bacteria. It needs to be cleaned up — by you. It does not just biodegrade into the soil. It runs off with snow melt, rain, yard watering, and car washing into our creeks — untreated. Your kids swim, wade, fish, and tube in those creeks, as do adults and pets. Horrible illnesses can result from fecal coliform bacteria. Do everyone a huge favor and show your respect. Scoop your pet's poop and dispose of it properly.

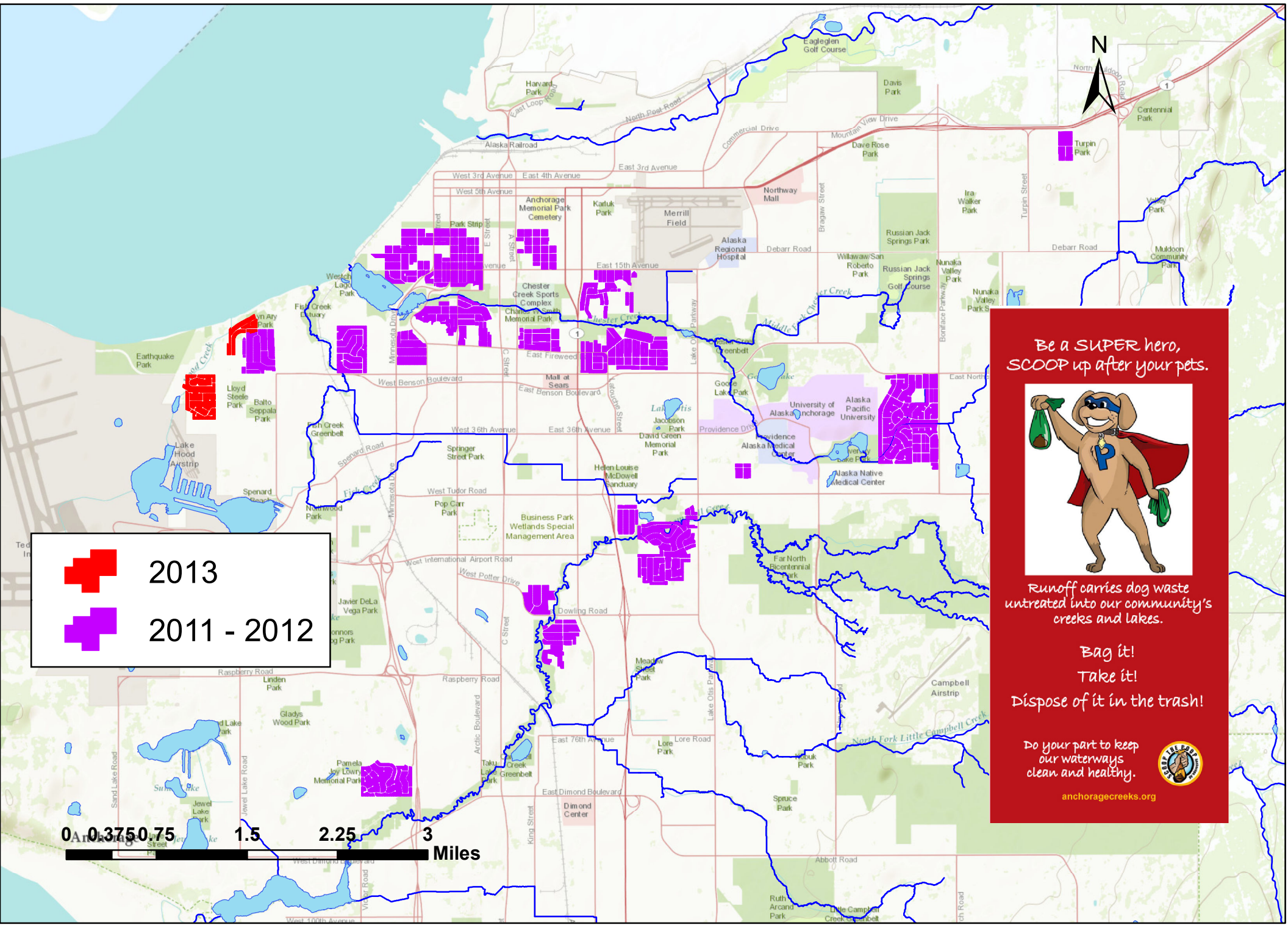
And thanks you to all those who worked Saturday and every day to help keep our city cleaner and creeks healthier.



— *Cherie Northon*

Anchorage

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Scoop the Poop Door Hangers (N~4,700), 2011-2013



	2013
	2011 - 2012

0 0.375 0.75 1.5 2.25 3 Miles

Be a **SUPER** hero,
SCOOP up after your pets.



Runoff carries dog waste untreated into our community's creeks and lakes.

Bag it!
Take it!
Dispose of it in the trash!

Do your part to keep our waterways clean and healthy.



anchoragecreeks.org

Anchorage Waterways Council Gardening Survey and Drawing

1. At your residence, do you or a gardening service apply any of the following lawn or garden products? Please check ALL that apply.

	Conventional	Organic	Both	None	N/A
Fertilizer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weed killers/herbicides	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pesticides	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Which of the following statements represent(s) your gardening preferences (you can answer more than one)?

- I prefer the look of a manicured yard with grass and flowers.
- I prefer a yard with natural/native vegetation.
- I have a vegetable garden, berries, fruit trees, etc.
- Other:

Other (please specify)

3. How do you typically dispose of green waste (lawn clippings, leaves, etc.)?

Please answer all that apply.

- Bag it and put it out with the garbage
- Compost it in the yard
- Mulch onto lawn
- Dispose of it in a wetland area or water body (creek or lake)
- Dispose of it along a creek bank or lake edge
- Gardener takes it
- Other:

Other (please specify)

THANK YOU!

Please provide an answer for all 3 questions above.
Fill in your contact information and place this into the vase.
Contact information will not be given out.

Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip

Phone: ()

Email:

Would you like to receive the Anchorage Waterways Council e-newsletter? Y N
(If yes, please provide email).

AWC GARDENING SURVEY

1 At your residence, do you or a gardening service apply any of the following lawn or garden products?

Please check ALL that apply.

	Response						TOTAL
	Conventional	Organic	Both	None	N/A	Unchecked	
Fertilizer	24	48	16	22	5	0	115
Weed killers/herbicides	18	14	6	65	12	0	115
Pesticides	6	7	2	80	20	0	115

2 Which of the following statements represent(s) your gardening preferences (you can answer more than one)?

Question:	Responses	Comments:
A I prefer the look of a manicured yard w/ grass & flowers.	19	
B I prefer a yard with natural/native vegetation.	24	
C I have a vegetable garden, berries, fruit trees, etc.	36	
D Other	7	
A,B	1	
A,B,C	10	
A,C	5	
B,C	13	
B,C,D	--	
B,D	--	
* Response Unchecked	--	
Surveys	115	

3 How do you typically dispose of green waste (lawn clippings, leaves, etc.)? Please answer all that apply.

Question:	Responses	Comments from "Other"
A Bag it and put it out with the garbage	16	
B Compost it in the yard	41	make a compost
C Mulch onto lawn	30	compost
D Dispose of it in a wetland area or water body (creek or lake)	1	no yard
E Dispose of it along a creek bank or lake edge	1	compost in yard & toss over hill
F Gardener takes it	2	bag & give to neighbors goat
G Other	7	
A,B	1	
A,C	2	
B,C	11	
A,B,C	1	
B,C,G	--	
* Response unchecked	2	
Surveys	115	

AWC Board of Directors' Ballot

Pete Pritchard—President
Robert Shipley—Vice President
Lance Powell—Treasurer
Sarah Warnock—Secretary
Birgit Hagedorn—Director
Dianne Hall Pendergrast—Director
Carolyn Kinneen—Director
Isaac Watkins—Director
Sammie Shephard—Youth Director

AWC Staff

Cherie Northon—Executive Director
Matt Kays—Program Director
Thom Eley—Research Associate
Vangie Wight—Research Assoc./Admin Assistant



ANCHORAGE WATERWAYS COUNCIL
P.O. Box 241774
Anchorage, AK 99524
907-272-7335
anchoragecreeks.org



Creeks as Classrooms: Explore - Engage - Enhance Anchorage Waterways Council's Annual Meeting

Monday, Dec. 2, 2013

BP Energy Center



Program

5:30-6:00: Arrive, enjoy refreshments, peruse exhibits

6:00: Creeks as Classrooms: Explore—Engage—Enhance

Pete Pritchard—AWC President

Cherie Northon—Executive Director

Matt Kays—Program Director

Kathryn Kurtz—ASD STEM Coordinator

Shannon Lamasko—ASD Gifted Mentorship Program

Romig Middle School 8th graders

Haley Huff—UAA student

Joshua Alvey—UAA graduate student

Sabrina Larsen—APU graduate student

Matt McMillan—APU graduate student

Student produced PSAs—Polaris K12

Wetlands Live! Video Contest Winner—Girdwood School

6:45: Refreshments, student exhibits, Q&A, door prizes

7:00: AWC Business Meeting and Election of Board

7:15: Adjournment



Founded in 1984, Anchorage Waterways Council is a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation whose mission is to **protect, restore, and enhance the waterways, wetlands, and associated uplands of Anchorage.** Funding for AWC consists of grants, donations, membership fees, and contracts.

Participating Schools

Chugach Optional, Girdwood, Mountain View, North Star, Rogers Park, Ursa Major, Begich, Goldenview, Mears, Romig, East, King Career Center, Polaris, Steller, Aquarian, Winterberry, University of Alaska Anchorage, Alaska Pacific University



Creeks as Classrooms Partners

Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska Geographic, Anchorage Park Foundation, U.S. Department of Interior-Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Funding for the Creeks as Classrooms program is provided by a generous grant from

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Alaska

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ANCHORAGE WATERWAYS COUNCIL

UPDATE



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The recent weather reminds us more of an Anchorage summer, however it will be a while before most of us forget how warm and glorious it was this summer. The days are getting shorter, a little cooler, and the rain seems incessant. Creeks are running very full and somewhat turbid. Now is a good time to clean storm drains near your home or business so that all the debris doesn't wash down into the creeks. Enough will, so every bit you can remove and put into the trash is one less piece of debris in the creeks.

School is back in session, and that means another year for AWC to be involved with local students from K-12 to university level. For the past several years AWC has been growing a program known as "Creeks as Classrooms". This last year nearly 3400 students worked on creek problems and learned how to be better stewards of waterways. Matt Kays, our education director, travels to classrooms, camps, and a variety of organizations to teach students about macroinvertebrates, creek health, invasive plants, and the many pollutants that affect our waterways through stormwater runoff. What can be more fun than looking at bugs and being in water? And, what they are doing is beneficial to learning how well our creeks are functioning. A huge THANK YOU to ConocoPhillips for funding this program the past 3 years. If you know of a group that would be interested in participating, please contact Matt at matt@anchoragecreeks.org.

And, guess what? The video produced by the Girdwood School at [/vimeo.com/groups/wetlandslivevideo](https://vimeo.com/groups/wetlandslivevideo) (scroll down to the bottom left) won \$1,000 in the Wetlands Video Contest. This video was made by the students of Girdwood School teacher Molly Hickox with the help of AWC's Matt Kays. Molly and her students are excited about the \$1,000 prize that was awarded for their video. Again, Matt's participation at Girdwood School was funded by ConocoPhillips.



Matt Kays working with Scouts and macroinvertebrates

OTHER NEWS

AWC says good-bye to UAA summer intern, Zoe Seppi

Zoe Seppi worked most of the summer as an intern for AWC from the Center for Community Engagement and Learning at UAA. This is a great program that allows students who are interested in community involvement an opportunity to help a variety of groups. AWC greatly benefits from interns, and Zoe was no exception. While her work helped her fulfill some certificate requirements, it also became the start of AWC's current water quality data entry into our new database. Zoe completed almost all of our 2012 records, and as soon as a few "oddball" sheets are entered, AWC will endeavor to post the data on our website. Zoe has returned to her studies at UAA, and we thank her and wish her the best.

AWC says hello to Steller Secondary fall intern, Shannon Lamasko

Steller senior Shannon Lamasko, who is interested in pursuing a career in environmental engineering, has stepped up to spend fall semester as an intern for AWC. Besides continuing the data entry that Zoe began during the summer, Shannon will be working with Program Director Matt Kays on a variety of projects. This week (Sept. 11, 12, 13) she will assist him up at the BLM Campbell Creek Science Center for Water Discovery Days. This is a great program offered annually to 4th grade students in the Anchorage School District. AWC will present information on macroinvertebrates and their importance to creek habitats and as indicators of creek health. A generous educational grant from ConocoPhillips is funding AWC's participation in this project along with many other outreach opportunities.



AWC welcomes new board member, Diane Hall Pendergrast

In August Diane, who works at Weston Solutions, joined the board of AWC. Diane is particularly interested in education of youth and adults about being good stewards to our waterways, emphasizing that AWC is the **ONLY** group that regularly does water quality monitoring of our creeks, and providing assistance in our governance and fundraising. We are excited to have Diane working to strengthen our organization.



SAVE THE DATE

Sixth Annual Northwest Tribal Water Rights Conference, October 9-10, 2013

The Sixth Annual Northwest Tribal Water Rights Conference will be held at the Alaska Lofts Hotel in Anchorage. The theme of this year's conference will focus on how Alaska Native Tribal Water Rights and sovereignty can be applied to protect in-stream flows, water quality, subsistence uses and food security in the Northwestern United States. A Wild and Scenic Film Festival, a series of short films, will take place on Tuesday evening, October 9, from 6 pm to 9 pm at the Anchorage Lofts (236 W. 4th Ave.) www.centerforwateradvocacy.org.



OTHER NEWS

AWC to Partner with Trout Unlimited on Bank Restoration Grant

A grant that will help restore the degraded creek bank on Chester Creek near the outlet of University Lake at Elmore was obtained by our friends at Trout Unlimited. Next summer we will be looking for volunteers to help save this bank from continuing erosion. The spot is adjacent to one of our water quality monitoring locations, and monitor Marilyn Houser has been documenting its demise for months. The funding was provided by the Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI) 2013 Small Grants Program. When we begin to gear up for it next spring, information will be sent out on Facebook and in our e-newsletter for interested volunteers.



Bank erosion most likely from human foot and bike traffic on the South Fork of Chester Creek by Elmore (M. Houser)

AWC's Online Citizen Reporting Form

Many users of our creeks and the areas adjacent to them find numerous problems, but they are often at a loss on who to contact. Because various parts of the creek ranging from the bed to the bank to culverts to street flooding (and more) are handled by a variety of agencies, it is often difficult to figure out who should be called. On August 20, a pigment spill on 68th Ave. by a truck resulted in Little Campbell Creek turning a bright orange as the "mulch dye" flushed down storm drains into the creek. Some people contacted AWC, others called the spill response line at the Alaska Department of Environmental Conversation (ADEC), and even the Anchorage Fire Department showed up. This is a great example that Anchorage residents are watching their waterways and responding to problems. It's unfortunate that these often happen after work hours or on weekends. ADEC has a 24-hour spill response line for daytime at 269-3063 or after hours at 1-800-428-7200. AWC has a citizen response online form at anchoragecreeks.org/pages/citizen_reporting.php that can be used any time. This is checked daily, so don't hesitate to use it if you have any concerns about a waterway.

AWC is forming a Creek Cleanup Committee for 2014

Next year will be AWC's 30th year for Creek Cleanup. We want to celebrate that great milestone with a tremendous cleanup effort and exciting new ideas for a celebration and letting our citizens know more about Anchorage's wonderful creeks. If you would like to be part of this committee, please contact Board Member Carolyn Kinneen at carolyn@fresh49.com. We need ideas and help on all fronts so we can continue to enjoy and protect our urban waterways!



Creek Cleanup is not always as fun as this year when it SNOWED on May 18!

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well-being, our waterways need protecting for our own benefit, as well as for the countless other species that rely on them. Adding your name to our membership means we can make a stronger stand when it comes to the issues that can affect us all--use your vote and become a member today!

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ANCHORAGE WATERWAYS COUNCIL

UPDATE



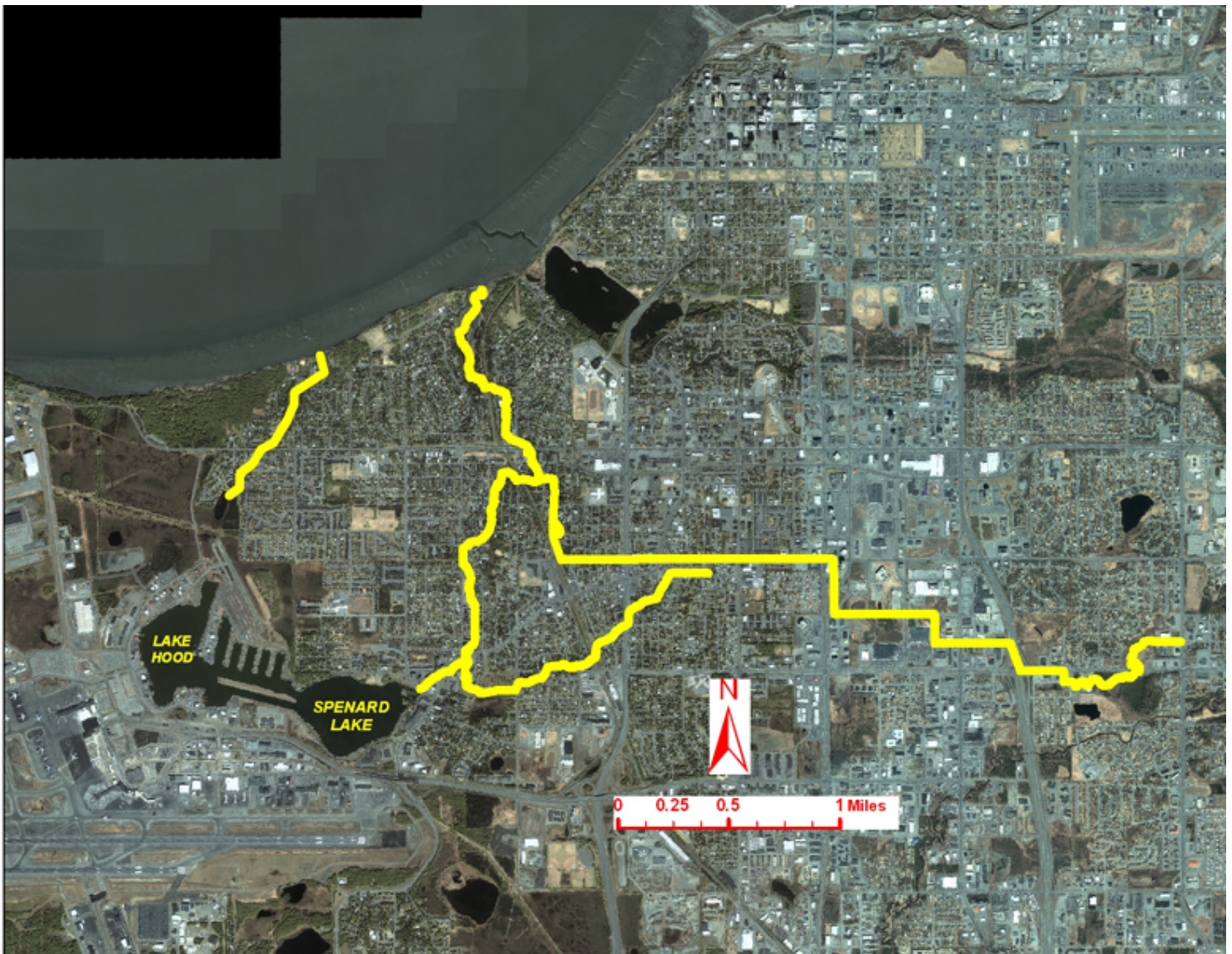
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

AWC would like to thank all those people in the Municipality who watch over our streams and take action when they find something wrong. Granted, trying to work your way through the bureaucracy to report concerns can be daunting, but still many of you prevail. This e-newsletter will visit Fish Creek. It was once an important creek that has been immensely impacted by development and a lack of caring and respect by many. Regardless, there are countless people who care for it, try to look over it, clean it, and monitor it--which is heartening. From the following two maps you can see how its channel has been changed with rerouting, channelization, and being placed in culverts over the past nearly 100 years.

Part of Fish Creek has been "daylighted" in Cuddy Park where dozens, if not hundreds, of ducks and geese gather, which has encouraged it as a popular place to feed waterfowl. While this is undoubtedly very exciting for children and their parents, it's not good for the birds. Bread and crumbs are not a healthy meal for birds, and articles have been written about how the ducks' nutrition can be compromised by high carbohydrate loads. This practice also encourages over-wintering (many ducks do overwinter anyway), but the high number of them in the pond at Cuddy increases the amount of fecal contamination in Fish Creek, and these conditions could contribute to a fast spread of disease among them due to the crowding as the water freezes up. Last winter Lauren Maxwell of KTVA did a story on this problem which can be viewed at the following link: www.ktva.com/home/outbound-xml-feeds/Human-Fed-Ducks-Not-Flying-South-for-Winter-179859121.html.



Fish Creek digitized from a 1916 map overlaid on a 2010 image of Anchorage



Fish Creek from 2010 GIS files overlaid on a 2010 image of Anchorage

The yellow straight lines for Fish Creek on the modern map are indicative of its change from the original channel by being put into culverts. Fish Creek originates around 42nd and Lake Otis, flows west in ditches, through an open area along Tudor including wetlands, then it goes underground near Shelikof and Tudor. Old maps show the original channel went by the BP Building as well as under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Offices and Sears Mall. It peeks out in a few locations such as Cuddy Park by the Loussac Library. Further west there are still some areas where the creek flows through neighborhoods above ground. However, not everyone in these locations realizes, understands, or cares that it is an anadromous stream. One neighborhood west of Minnesota and south of 36th has been particularly impacted. A caring neighbor had had enough and reported it to AWC. The creek was littered with trash, asphalt chunks, building materials and more as is evident in the following photo.



How Fish Creek is treated in some areas (October 2013, photo by Matt Kays)

When able, AWC staff respond to issues or find the appropriate agency to report them to. This particular case was checked by an AWC staff member and then reported to the Municipality where it is being reviewed by 2 or 3 different departments for violations. It's unclear if this area will be cleaned up before snowfall (note that the Municipality is unable to do so), but it certainly is a prime target for AWC's Creek Cleanup in 2014. Why do our creeks have to take this abuse? They are not refuse pits, and yet we continually find that refrigerators, washers, bicycles, grocery carts, building materials, and other large objects are thrown into them. These are the obvious, but there are less visible impacts.

Recall that anything on our streets, walkways, parking lots, and driveways will be washed down untreated into our freshwater creeks by way of storm drains. This includes pet waste, vehicle drips, cigarette butts, fast food trash, fertilizers, ice melt chemicals, yard waste, and much more. In 2012 Fish Creek was surveyed by citizen volunteers in our "Creek Report Card" program, and a summary report is available on the AWC website www.anchoragecreeks.org. Note that similar reports on other Anchorage creeks can be found among these links.

Finally, lower Fish Creek's water quality has been monitored by a faithful volunteer for years. AWC is entering her data into a database that should be available on our website in the near future. Some of her findings regarding water quality can be found in the "Creek Report Card" for Fish Creek.

"525 Bulldogs" adopt a section of Ship Creek

A weapons unit from Elmendorf (JBER) is taking time once again to help make Anchorage's creeks healthier by adopting part of Ship Creek. In September they began their first cleanup from Viking Blvd. west to the Ulu Factory, and they hope to get in one more cleanup before snow flies. Thanks, BULLDOGS!



Members of the "525 Bulldogs" and their families clean hundreds of pounds of trash from Ship Creek

SAVE THE DATE

On February 7, 2014, the Anchorage Museum will be opening the GYRE Exhibit. This is a fantastic opportunity to view the impact that we humans have on our oceans through some very minor articles we use in our daily life. One of the most dangerous is plastic: from water bottles to BIC lighters. An Alaskan expedition in 2013 by scientists and artists brought together a huge

partnership of groups to educate Anchorage citizens about this global problem. Read more about it and put it on your calendar! www.anchoragemuseum.org/galleries/gyre/.



Albatross mosaic made from discarded BIC lighters found on Midway Atoll (June 4, 2012, photo by C. Northon)

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ANCHORAGE WATERWAYS COUNCIL



UPDATE

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In late October and early November my husband Thom and I drove from Orlando, Florida, to Washington, D.C. Along the way we visited family, beaches, waterways, landmarks, and places of significance for us. Overall, we drove 1,200 miles in about a week. The countryside was beautiful as trees were just turning color despite temperatures often in the 80s. We are both trained cartographers/geographers so were fascinated by Hertz's "Never Get Lost" GPS in our rental car as well as by information on the paper maps that we refuse to travel without. One aspect that I found particularly interesting on both maps and road signs were areas that sported designations as "river basins".



North Carolina's River Basins from their state road map

In South and North Carolina, as well as Tennessee, when you drive over a bridge the name of the waterway is listed as well as the

river basin in which it lies. Signage was similar to what one would see as they entered a county or state, but river drainage areas were given significant attention.



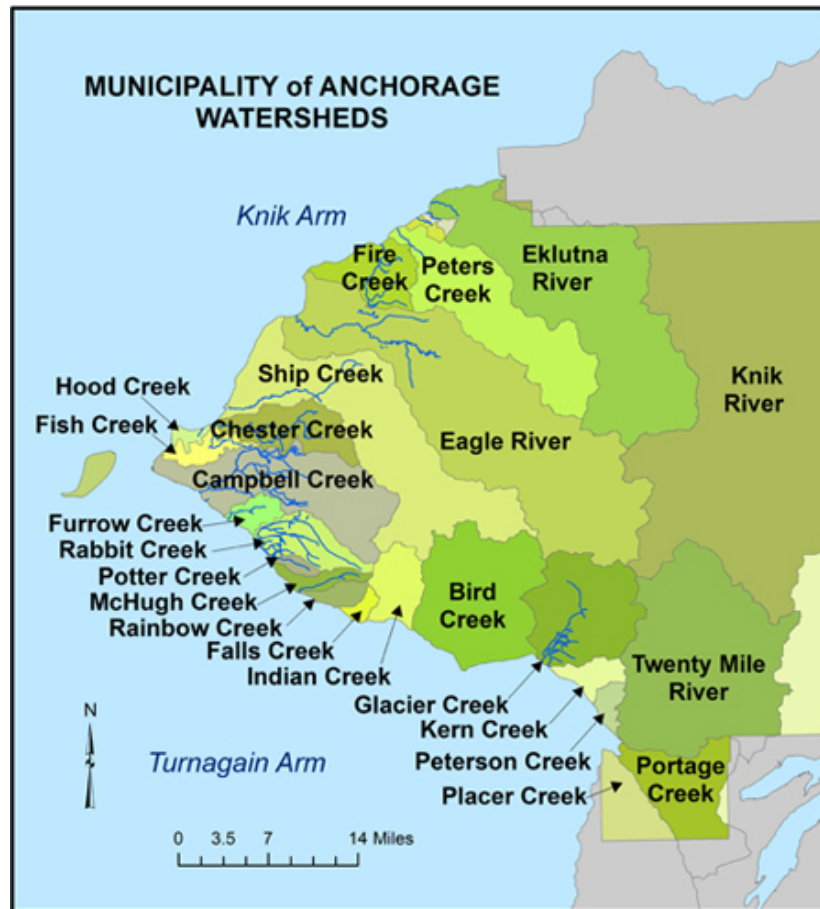
Bear Creek from the Neuse River Basin

Puzzled by this overt emphasis on water boundaries, I discussed this with a colleague, Barry Toning in Tetra Tech’s Kentucky office. He wrote me that, “in the 1950s some state conservation agencies began to identify river basins (even watershed conservation districts!) with signs. This continued off and on, depending on funding, district activity, etc. for decades—until some of the state conservation functions (and public health functions) were peeled off and merged into state environmental agencies in the 1970s and 80s. With the watershed management concept now coming to the forefront (again!), the signs are reappearing. Besides N.C. and S.C., Tennessee has them all over the place.”

In the past few years there has been a move by researchers, agencies, and organizations to focus more broadly on management of watersheds as opposed to merely a creek, because a watershed approach is more holistic. Rivers, creeks, and streams are conveyors of a variety of pollutants, debris, and undesirable things—but they don’t just develop these problems on their own. Watersheds and river basins receive whatever is on the ground through stormwater runoff into the nearest water body. Current

thinking (actually a return to previous practice) is that the entire watershed, its activities, land use, pervious and impervious surfaces, settlement patterns, vegetation, etc. need to be studied in order to solve problems and achieve healthy waterways.

Let's look at Anchorage. Our Municipality is divided into over 20 "watersheds" that cover the area from a tiny portion of the northeastern Kenai Peninsula to the headwaters of the Knik River. Political boundaries are not always consistent with geographic features, and many people don't realize that the Knik River watershed is both in the Municipality of Anchorage as well as in the Mat-Su. Watersheds are basically smaller versions of river basins. A river basin may collect from several rivers before flowing into the ocean or other large water body, whereas a watershed usually consists of the tributaries of one main river or creek (i.e. Eagle, Ship, Chester, Campbell, etc.).



The watersheds in the Municipality of Anchorage

Besides being a good unit for study, it is important for citizens to know what watershed they live, work, or recreate in. As you drive along the New Seward now that construction is finished and the bridges over Campbell Creek have been raised, there is nice new signage telling the traveler that he or she is going over Campbell Creek. Just a few miles south, did you realize that you drive over the north and south forks of Little Campbell Creek? A few miles north of Campbell Creek you travel over Fish Creek? Most of us probably would have a difficult time identifying these areas, because they can't be seen. Little Campbell and Fish Creek have been placed in culverts and run under the New Seward—and there is no signage to tell us that they exist in that location even though we are in their watersheds. Just this morning I checked the New Seward for signage over Chester Creek (near 20th) and couldn't find any. It seems that creek signage in Anchorage is sporadic and a hit or miss proposition. I applaud the efforts of these southern states that make locals and visitors aware of their water resources, and I hope that one day more people in Anchorage will know where their creeks are and that poor, pathetic looking ditch just might be a branch of a creek where salmon smolt grow up before returning to the ocean. Increasing the visibility of creeks would, I believe, help makes us better stewards of them.



The North Fork of Little Campbell Creek emerges from 2 culverts under Homer St., where a drainage ditch empties into it. How many people realize that this creek is an important overwintering area for juvenile salmon? Perhaps the muddy drainage ditch would not be allowed to pour into it if it was identified as a creek.

SAVE THE DATE

Monday, December 2, 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm.

The Anchorage Waterways Council cordially invites its members and the general public to attend our annual meeting on December 2 at 5:30 pm at the BP Energy Center. The theme of this year's meeting is "Creeks as Classrooms: Explore-Engage-Enhance". We will highlight our five-year old education and outreach program and feature presentations from students and teachers ranging from elementary to graduate school. Discover and learn about the many ways Anchorage youth are being encouraged to connect with their local watersheds and creeks and to become their stewards. The program begins at 6:00 pm preceded by a time for refreshments and to mingle and view student displays. A short business meeting will follow the presentations. Please check our website www.anchoragecreeks.org/ for additional information on the program.

CONGRATULATIONS

Eric McCallum and Robin Smith were awarded the 2013 Outstanding Philanthropist for an individual/family by the Association of Fundraising Professionals on November 7. Eric and Robin have been long-time, strong supporters of AWC from water monitoring to providing financial challenge matches to our members and friends. We are thankful to have them in the non-profit community and as caring supporters of Anchorage's creeks.

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ANCHORAGE WATERWAYS COUNCIL



UPDATE

CREEK CLEANUP MAY 18, 2013



Cleanup 9am - 1pm  Celebration at Cuddy Park 12pm - 3pm
ANCHORAGE WATERWAYS COUNCIL
ANCHORAGECREEKS.ORG

By Laura Tauke Design

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We are in the last stages of organizing our 29th Annual Creek Cleanup, which is this coming Saturday. New celebration venue (Cuddy Park), 9 honcho supply locations so you can clean where they are or go where you think it needs to be done, fantastic drawing prizes for cleanup volunteers, trash awards, a food truck rally, entertainment, and more.

**Without the generous support of our sponsors and volunteers,
there would be no Creek Cleanup.**

Thank You for Helping our 29th Annual Creek Cleanup!

CORPORATE and PRIVATE SPONSORSHIPS

Creek Champion (\$5,000-\$9,999) - ConocoPhillips

Creek Steward (\$3,000-\$4,999) - BP

Creek Defender (\$1,000-\$2,999) - CIRI, GCI

Creek Protector (\$500-\$999) - HDR♦Dan & Cathy Gleason



Alaska Center for the Environment♦Alaska Railroad♦Alaska Serigraphics♦
Alaska Wildland Adventures♦ALPAR♦Arctic Self Storage
DiTomasos♦Kaladi Bros.♦Hot Dish♦Laura Tauke Design♦Moose's Tooth♦
Pete Pritchard♦REI♦Snow City Cafe♦Spenard Roadhouse
And all our fantastic volunteers!

WHEN: Saturday, May 18
CLEANUP* - 9 am - noon
CELEBRATION: noon - 3 pm at CUDDY PARK

Brought to you by:
ANCHORAGE WATERWAYS COUNCIL & ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION



*Cleanup supply locations can be found at
www.anchoragereeks.org
or email matt@anchoragereeks.org
or call 529-9289



Anchorage Waterways Council is so grateful to be working with the Anchorage Park Foundation this year. And, if it weren't for our fantastic sponsors and donors, we could not make this happen. Our creeks had a long, hard fall and winter and need a good cleanup. So, come on out, bag some trash, and celebrate this event with us.

THANK YOU to all the brave souls who came out in the SNOW on May 4 to help clean up a LOT of dog poop. Many people are saying this is the worse they've seen it in years. Every day it needs to be cleaned up, so do your part and help convince all pet owners to be responsible. This makes our environment--including the creeks--much more pleasant and healthier.

SAVE THE DATE

"Hometown, Alaska" hosted by Kathleen McCoy, KSKA, Wednesday, May 15 at 2 pm and 7 pm, "How healthy is the water in Anchorage creeks, streams and lakes?"

Ready to pull out the canoe? Take the dog for a game of swim-and-fetch? Dip your toes in a local lake? Let's find out how healthy the water in our backyard playgrounds—the creeks, streams and lakes around Anchorage—really is. Two savvy water scientists, including AWC E.D. Cherie Northon, will join host Kathleen McCoy to discuss what's helping and what's challenging the health of our local waterways. Online link can be found at [how-healthy-is-the-water-in-anchorage-creeks-streams-and-lakes/](#)

"The Ends of the Earth", a film premiering in Alaska on May 16, 5:30 pm and 7:30 pm

Join filmmaker John Grabowska for the
Alaska Premiere
 of his new film



The Ends of the Earth

Alaska's Wild Peninsula

Embark on an extraordinary journey to the mysterious Alaska Peninsula, a wild and wonderful volcanic landscape that is home to the greatest concentration of brown bears on Earth. At its heart is Katmai National Park and Preserve; park biologists and filmmaker John Grabowska will discuss the film after the show.

May 16, 2013

5:30pm and 7:30pm

Tickets: \$3.50



Bear Tooth Theatrepub
 1230 West 27th Avenue
 (907) 276-4200

Sponsored by



Alaska Geographic

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ANCHORAGE WATERWAYS COUNCIL



UPDATE

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This edition of our "March" newsletter is a little late coming out. I had the wonderful opportunity of visiting Ireland during March. It's a beautiful and diverse land. The creeks and streams in the countryside are very stunning, but urban waterways are, well, just urban waterways. Granted, people have been living in places such as Dublin for several centuries, and its population (~1.2 million) is about four times that of Anchorage, however, like those of us in Anchorage, the Irish are also concerned about the health of their waterways. Ireland's "Heritage Council" www.heritagecouncil.ie/ publishes a variety of reports, presentations, and brochures about many aspects of the country's resources. A 2003 leaflet titled "Irish Water" addresses the decline in water quality, the causes, threats, and how to contribute to improving water resources.



River Liffey in Dublin by the Sean Heusten Bridge (looks like a good candidate for Creek Cleanup)



Mute swans resting on the banks of the River Liffey by the Sean Heuston Bridge



River in County Kerry along the Dingle Peninsula

Ireland is also part of the area where Atlantic salmon were once incredibly abundant. The story of Atlantic salmon has been written by David R. Montgomery in *King of Fish: The Thousand Year Run* (2003). It's a compelling history of huge runs of *Salmo salar* in Europe that culminates with stories of the last of the wild stocks on our Pacific coast. In the 18th century, a few European countries recognized that poor management practices were

drastically depleting the once abundant resource, and some stop-gap measures were adopted. However, as the Industrial Revolution spread and waterways were then used as open sewers for factories (in addition to human waste), it was the death knell for salmon in many regions. Today, only four European countries--Norway, Ireland, Iceland, and Scotland--have comparatively healthy populations. While in Dublin, I visited Howth, which is a few kilometers northeast of Dublin along the Irish Sea. It's a small fishing village with a dock lined with rows of stores selling fresh fish. I was intrigued by the beauty of the thinly sliced fish and packaging that said "Irish Organic Smoked Salmon". Just what is Irish Organic Salmon?

I looked up the company that sold the salmon, and their website said that the family had been smoking salmon since 1893. More recently they have turned to using organic Irish salmon in order to help conserve wild stocks, which remained available for a price (hefty, no doubt). I was still left wondering what organic salmon was. There are several companies that provide organic Irish salmon, so I looked further. What I found is that they are farmed salmon, but there are strict rules about their treatment (humane), diet, density in pens, and they must be carefully tracked. Most are raised along the cold western (Atlantic) coast of Ireland, and they must meet standards to receive the "organic" title. Despite what appear to be better conditions and care, more information and worry is emerging about the problem of sea lice (a naturally occurring parasite) in this and other areas where salmon are farmed. While they can be found in wild stocks, it seems that the numbers of lice are typically low and haven't been a major concern. The fear now is that farming conditions will increase the populations of sea lice, and then wild stocks will be imperiled. There is a lot of information on sea lice, and my advice would be to read it carefully and look at the source. Those with a vested (economic) interest in farmed salmon tend to play up the fact that sea lice are "naturally occurring", while the opposing view does not deny that, but increased numbers of sea lice can take a huge toll, especially on juvenile salmonids.

Further, it would be important to acquaint oneself with the many terms used for fish and other products in order to understand what the true meaning of "organic" is, or maybe the differences between "farmed fish" or "fish ranching" or "hatchery fish" or "wild fish". Also, be an informed consumer about genetic alterations and additives. Read labels and do your homework. There is no doubt that the debate regarding the virtues and problems of fish (and plant) alterations will continue, so it is worthwhile to learn as much about the history of salmon, their rise, their demise, their threats, and their future particularly for Alaskans. Montgomery's book is a good read. And, let's not forget how many other factors are out there impacting our waterways--many of which we can control, such as cleaning up pet waste, chemical pollutants, and litter.

IMPORTANT DATES AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, April 6--Garden Show at the Mall at Sears, 9 AM to 5 PM

Coming up on the first weekend in April is the annual garden show at the Sears Mall. Tables with all sorts of gardening goodies, plants, and information will be there. AWC will have a display on gardening practices that help keep our creeks healthy plus a drawing for 5 copies of gardener Jeff Lowenfels' book "Teeming with Microbes". Stop by and see us.

Sunday, April 7--Alaska SPCA Spay-ghetti Dinner and Silent Auction at the Kincaid Chalet, 4 PM to 7 PM

This event is a wonderful way to support Low Cost Spay/Neuter and Vaccination Clinics, adoptions, and many other great activities that provide a better quality of life for Anchorage pets. Why does AWC care? Because the

Alaska SPCA is a partner with AWC and other groups on the Scoop-the-Poop committee, and our common goal is to reduce pet waste that makes Anchorage's creeks unhealthy. For more information, go to www.alaskasPCA.org/get-involved/special-events/2013-spay-ghetti-dinner/.

Saturday--April 20, Scoop-the-Poop Day at University Lake and Connors Bog, 11 AM to 3 PM

Come on out to help celebrate upcoming Earth Day by cleaning up the residue of winter in dog parks. AWC will provide nitrile gloves, plastic sacks, trowels, shovels, buckets, and great give-aways to all people who stop by to help. For more information, contact Matt Kays at matt@anchoragecreeks.org or at 529-9289.

Monday--April 22, Scoop-the-Poop on Earth Day Eve, BLM Campbell Tract, 5 PM to 8 PM,

All equipment will be provided for Campbell Tract trail users to get out and clean up trails for spring. Meet up at the Campbell Airstrip Trailhead at mile 1.1 of Campbell Airstrip Road or at the Smokejumper Trailhead off of Elmore near 68th.

Saturday, May 18, Annual AWC Creek Clean-up, 9 AM to 2 PM

Put this date on your calendar. Final details are being confirmed, so check our website at www.anchoragecreeks.org.

AWC Annual Meeting Talks on Line

Matt Kays has finished editing and uploading four of the five presentations from the October Annual Meeting, and they can be found on Facebook and YouTube under Anchorage Waterways Council. If you want to know more about human impacts in waterways, of cigarette butt waste, plastic breakdown, and marine debris--you can get some great information here.

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AWC MEMBERSHIP!

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It's easy, you can go online at www.anchoragecreeks.org and click the "JOIN" button, to join, renew or donate. If you have a question about your membership and when it expires, please contact us at awc@anchoragecreeks.org. If you know someone who wants to help support our great waterways, please forward this email to them, or if you want to provide a gift membership--contact us. Thanks to all for your continuing support and especially to our sponsors and volunteers who watch the waterways, monitor the creeks, and help this great organization--the ONLY one in Anchorage dedicated to protecting our creeks, wetlands, and watersheds.

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ANCHORAGE WATERWAYS COUNCIL

UPDATE



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It's barely a distant memory that 5 weeks ago we were trying to conduct our Annual Creek Cleanup in the snow on May 18. Regardless, the show went on and intrepid volunteers turned up to clean that day or on one with nicer weather (like Sunday!). It seems like Anchorage has finally settled into a decent summer pattern. Who is not loving the sun and warmth?

Before we look at upcoming events, we at the Waterways Council would like to thank all those who turned out to help during Creek Cleanup as well as our great sponsors. This event commands a tremendous amount of time and energy, and it could not happen without corporate and personal financial support and inkind donations. ConocoPhillips, BP, CIRI, GCI, HDR, and Dan and Cathy Gleason helped us achieve our needed funding. Gift certificates for drawings were provided by Alaska Wildland Adventures, the Alaska Railroad, the Spenard Roadhouse, REI, Moose's Tooth, and Kaladi Bros. A variety of other contributions came from the Alaska Center for the Environment, Alaska Serigraphics, DiTomasos, and Laura Tauke Designs. Poetry was provided by Brave New Alaska Voices, music by Hot Dish, and our emcee was Trey Josey. Again, our most sincere thanks to the above and the volunteers who came out to help. Finally, it was great to partner with the Anchorage Park Foundation on this event. Thanks to APF's Beth Nordlund and Shannon Kuhn as well as AWC Board Member Carolyn Kinneen who organized the food truck rally and Creek Cleanup Coordinator Matt Kays.



Big smiles despite the snow!

Checking out the waterways of Vietnam

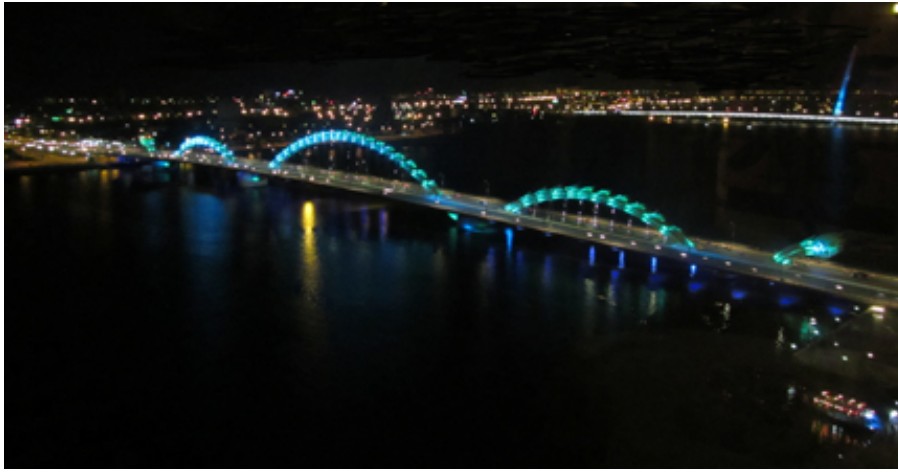
I was very fortunate to be able to spend two weeks in central and north Vietnam in the middle of June (well, weather-wise it wasn't the greatest with temps approaching 100 degrees with about the same number for humidity). Vietnam is a country with many waterways and a great dependence on them for fishing, irrigation of rice and other crops, raising ducks, boat homes, and often as conduits for trash and other nasty things. Rivers in some of the main cities I visited (DaNang, Hue, and Hanoi) are much greater in size than any in our Municipality. Many are a solid muddy brown from which their names are derived, such as the Red River (from deposition of iron oxide).

Vietnam is a beautiful country with many friendly people. Cell phones, scooters, stylish clothing, expensive cars are intertwined with the poor who often use a bicycle or a shoulder yoke to carry tremendous loads of fruits, vegetables, and cooked food. Visually, it runs the gamut. Temples are being restored, new homes (tall and narrow) are being built, and yet one of the most distinctive memories from this trip and one a few years ago is the enormous amount of trash everywhere. The only place I did not see trash was in the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum complex which is plastered with security. Otherwise, plastic bags and bottles are everywhere along with a variety of other debris. Some storm drains had residue of dried paint that had been poured down them. It's very sad to see how little attention is paid to the environment. And, as we know, much of these plastics and other detritus will eventually make their way into the rivers through the street drains and continue their long journey to the ocean where they become part of the great trash gyres.

Often I am discouraged by the trashing of Anchorage and Alaska, but it seems miniscule relative to Vietnam, which is a huge shame because a country that is trying to get onto its financial legs and encourage tourism certainly could use some help in how its areas are maintained and managed. One of the people I was traveling with called it a "disconnect" between the person and the environment. Many people think nothing of dropping trash as they walk along the street or directly into the water. Alternatively, there is a group of very poor people who make their living by picking up many of the plastic bottles and other recyclable items to sell. In the rural areas the rivers are much more pristine, and there are even some that do not run with silt. In the urban areas, bridges across the rivers have been taken to a new art form. There is the Dragon Bridge in DaNang that changes colors at night, but in the daylight the water of the Han River runs with trash. It is truly a conundrum.



Trash thrown down the Perfume River bank in Hue



DaNang's Dragon Bridge at night



Silt-laden tributary near DaNang

And so I am home and on my first walk around the neighborhood adjacent to Campbell Creek (where all the New Seward bridge construction is going on), I see a huge couch sitting cross-wise in the water. That must have taken a great deal of effort to get into the creek, and now that it's waterlogged, it will be near impossible to lift out. Another conundrum--why do people use our waterways for disposal? We thank the Alaska Department of Transportation, that is working just above on the Brayton Bridge with several cranes, which has consented to remove it.



A place to cool down while watching the creek?

OTHER NEAT NEWS

Sydney Treuer, a former youth board member and volunteer with AWC, is headed off to Kamchatka, Russia, for six weeks this summer. Sydney will be interning at the Komandorsky Nature Reserve on the Commander Islands, a sister park of the Alaska Maritime Wildlife Nature Reserve. The Commander Islands are home to nearly a million sea birds, and an important breeding site for the Northern fur seal. Sydney will be volunteering at the reserve teaching English to park rangers, and local community members as well as doing research towards her senior thesis in Environmental Studies at Yale University. Sydney will also be assisting with the Reserve's community outreach program, something she is uniquely qualified for, having spent some time as AWC's former Education Outreach Committee chair! See how far a local student (West High) can go? Congratulations, Syd!

On Sunday, June 23, the Alaska Coastal Cleanup collected over 500 lbs. of beach debris. Remember that much of that comes from cigarette butts which don't weigh very much. If you are interested in getting on their email list for next year's cleanup, drop a note to anchoragecoastalcleanup@gmail.com.

SAVE THE DATE

Friends of Pets Dog Jog, Saturday, July 27 9 AM to 1 PM, at SERVICE HIGH (venue change)

Put this date on your calendar. This is always a great event for a worthy cause. Bring your 4-legged friends. AWC will have a booth that focuses on our Scoop the Poop outreach. Information can be found at www.friendsofpets.org/dogjog/.

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ANCHORAGE WATERWAYS COUNCIL



UPDATE

TONIGHT--Join the conversation on HB 77

Wednesday, Dec. 11, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Alaska Experience Theater at 333 W. Fourth Ave. in downtown Anchorage. DNR is making a presentation at 6 p.m., a panel will discuss the measure at 6:15, and the public can make comments and ask questions starting at 6:30. This is a very important meeting that covers the potential silencing of Alaskan voices regarding clean water and healthy salmon. For more information, go to www.standforsalmon.org/ or any of several other organizations. Please attend tonight and speak out.

**DEFEND YOUR RIGHT
TO CLEAN WATER &
RENEWABLE RESOURCES**



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, Cherie Northon

Wetlands: *Wetlands are areas where water covers the soil, or is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods of time during the year, including during the growing season. Water saturation (hydrology) largely determines how the soil develops and the types of plant and animal communities living in and on the soil. Wetlands may support both aquatic and terrestrial species. The prolonged presence of water creates conditions that favor the growth of specially adapted plants (hydrophytes) and promote the development of characteristic wetland (hydric) soils. Wetlands are found from the tundra to the tropics and on every continent except Antarctica. Two general categories of wetlands are recognized: coastal or tidal wetlands and inland or non-tidal wetlands. (U.S. EPA)*

Alaska has both tidal and non-tidal/inland wetlands. Along our coast, even as close as Cook Inlet, the tidal wetlands that have returned to the estuarine area of Westchester Lagoon's outlet after the 2009 rehabilitation of the dam are a good example of their importance. This area allows fresh and salt water to mix, which is extremely important for acclimation of young salmon leaving Chester Creek and adult salmon returning to spawn. Going from either extreme of salt or fresh into the other has long been considered a hindrance to their survival irrespective of the constraints caused by the dam that was built in the 1960s. Fish counts show a rising trend of salmon every year.



New box culvert passage between Westchester and Cook Inlet, which allows a direct connection thus restoring tidal flushing and wetland habitat to nearly 5 acres of the original 60-acre estuary (photo by C. Northon)



Upstream of the Westchester outflow showing the freshwater from Chester Creek on the left and the tidal estuary and wetlands on the right (photo by C. Northon)

Examples of freshwater wetlands in the Anchorage Bowl are getting more difficult to find as development expands. Along creeks and streams, wetlands act like "sponges" to absorb excessive water, and their presence is becoming more important as impervious surfaces increase (often at the expense of vegetation and wetlands). The consequences are more likely to be flooding rather than the uptake of excess water and its gradual release.



This is the viewing platform over Campbell Creek at Piper St. just after a heavy rain. Note the water has flooded back up to the edges of the bike trail. (photo by C. Northon)



Another view of Campbell Creek at Piper St. where the riparian vegetation is able to tolerate periodic inundation (photo by C. Northon)

So why are we having this discussion when there's snow outside, most creeks are frozen, and the wetlands aren't visible? An article in the *Washington Post* on December 8 titled "Study says U.S. can't keep up with the loss of ecologically-sensitive wetlands" begins with an attention-grabbing statement--over a 4-year span the U.S. lost more than 360,000 acres of freshwater and saltwater wetlands to fierce storms, sea-level rise and booming development along the coasts, according to a recently released federal study. Note that this only mentions coastal wetlands' loss, which is the home and nursery for numerous species of birds and assorted marine life. "Nearly half of endangered species depend on them to live" the article states. Freshwater wetlands soak up stormwater runoff that often causes sewers to overflow--and that would be into our creeks, rivers, streams, and lakes. Besides the potential loss of species and harm to human health, there are economic impacts on important sectors like recreation, which includes bird watching, canoeing, kayaking, boating, fishing and enjoyment of nature. A variety of studies regarding Anchorage show a major decrease in wetlands in the past 100 years in every watershed as areas develop.

Wetland management in Anchorage is primarily overseen by two agencies, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which issues or denies permits for development in wetland areas, and the Municipality of Anchorage, which has compiled atlases of various categories of wetlands beginning in 1996. They have published individual sheets of categorized wetland areas in 2004, 2008, and 2012 maps are now up for review by the Municipal Assembly. Existing maps can be found at www.anchoragewatershed.com/. Public hearings on this version began on December 3 and will continue into 2014. You can follow the actions regarding this plan on the Municipal website at www.muni.org/Departments/OCPD/Planning/Projects/Pages/AnchorageWetlandsManagementPlan.aspx and AWC will put out periodic updates.

An interesting juxtaposition to the *Washington Post* article appeared 2 days later on Dec. 10 in the *Anchorage Daily News* titled "Outlet mall with dozens of shops proposed for South Anchorage." The second sentence of the article reads, "on a 27-acre swath of wetlands southwest of the intersection at 100th Avenue and C Street, the developer, JL Properties, is angling to provide 200,000 square feet of retail space for dozens of outlet shops." I am not going to debate whether or not Anchorage needs outlet shops or another mall, but I do find it disturbing that the building of this outlet mall could deplete Anchorage wetlands by 27 acres. These are Class B wetlands, which is a category meaning "moderate value, conservation". B is one rank below A or "high value, preservation". Many people in Anchorage don't realize that several malls have gobbled up wetlands and even riparian areas: the Dimond Mall was built on wetlands near Campbell Creek and the Sears Mall was built on Fish Creek and its associated wetlands. Granted much of this work happened in the last century, so why are we still doing it? Economic studies show that it is a lot less expensive to preserve wetlands and other fragile areas than to construct new ones or rehabilitate those that have been degraded. This is aside from the protective and nurturing qualities that established wetlands provide. If the Army Corps of Engineers grants the permit to build on the wetlands, it is likely that some mitigation wetlands (or credits) will be purchased or traded in another part of the city. Whatever the exchange is, it will not be the same as the original wetlands.

And, lest we forget, it was barely a week ago that residents along the lower section of Chester Creek at Valley of the Moon Park were inundated by flood waters associated with ice-filled culverts. If there had been more of a setback between Chester Creek and the homes with a wetland buffer, it's possible that the flooding might have been lessened. We have altered our creeks by straightening them, placing them in culverts, expanding adjacent impervious surfaces, and removing vegetation so much that they now do not run with the sinuosity and speeds of natural waterways. Straighter means faster velocity as well as increased erosion of banks and the addition of sediment to creeks because riparian vegetation has been compromised. My wish would be that we could start thinking of consequences and not creating more problems as society stretches to more and more marginal areas to develop.

OTHER NEWS

AWC's Annual Meeting on December 2 was a fun and different event from times past. For the most part, the presenters were Anchorage's youth and young adults. The program focused on our Creeks as Classrooms program which is in its 5th year. Initially started with funding by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, it has been supported by ConocoPhillips for the past three years. The number of schools and groups has expanded dramatically from the few that were there in the beginning. One of the issues is that a dedicated teacher is necessary to make this program go as teachers are already inundated with teaching to the "standards", dealing with the exit exam, and making sure all student requirements are met. There's not much time left to bring experiential learning into the classroom, but there is a core group of teachers out there who make the effort. And, from what we have seen and heard, the students are recipients of the benefits. These young people will one day be the adult stewards of Anchorage's creeks and resources, so we are all benefiting from this program. AWC is posting their talks on its website and will let readers know when they are up.

Giving Tuesday on December 3 was a huge success for us. Contributions were matched dollar for dollar by Eric McCallum and Robin Smith, who only last month received the 2013 Outstanding Philanthropist for an individual/family by the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Over \$5,000 was raised for AWC's Citizens Environmental Monitoring Program (CEMP), and a huge thanks to the contributions from local citizens and the match by Eric and Robin!

Good-bye to two of our great AWC team. Long-time board member Craig Valentine has resigned and long-time former board member and Ship Creek water quality monitor Liz Rocha has also resigned. AWC volunteers, especially monitors, donate hundreds of hours a year to our programs. They are all special, and we thank them for their time helping make our creeks healthier.

SAVE THE DATE

January 1 is when Alaskans can start filing for their PFDs. AWC is so excited that we are now part of the Pick, Click, Give (PCG) option on the forms. This is where Alaskans can show their care for the many non-profits that help make this a great state. The theme chosen by PCG is "Loyalaska". It's very simple, but has a multitude of meanings. Alaska is a gorgeous state that draws over a million visitors a year. Our state is important to those of us who live here for so many reasons. Dennis McMillian, President and CEO of the Foraker Group, states that *"Alaska is a better place to live because of its nonprofit sector, whose organizations pursue a broad range of missions contributing to the health and well-being of everyone who lives, works and visits here. The significant impact of Alaska's nonprofit sector can be seen in all parts of Alaska's economy – in our local communities, across our diverse regions, throughout the state"* (from the January 2011 report on the Alaska nonprofit economy). Not everyone is fortunate enough to work in the nonprofit sector, but Alaska's residents can show their thanks by making contributions via Pick, Click, Give. Past years have shown the great response by our state's residents, which is one of the lowest populations in the U.S. (Alaska ranks #47). So, show your love for Alaska, its non-profits, and do your part in Pick, Click, Give. And, please remember Anchorage Waterways Council, whose mission is to "is to protect, restore, and enhance the waterways, wetlands, and associated uplands of Anchorage." There is no other organization dedicated to doing this in Anchorage.



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ANCHORAGE WATERWAYS COUNCIL

UPDATE



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The July 25th article by Laurel Andrews in the *Alaska Dispatch* titled, “Heat wave bakes Anchorage, Alaska, after winter that wouldn’t end” says it all. We had the longest snow season since 1917—including snow on May 18th for Creek Cleanup, and on July 29 Anchorage broke the record for the longest streak of days that were 70 degrees and above. And, if we keep going, we may overcome the previous number of total days over 70 degrees, which was 49 set in 2004. There isn’t much grumbling about the great weather, however it has its negative impacts.

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) has standards for a variety of water usages (such as drinking, contact recreation, and “growth and propagation of fish, shellfish, other aquatic life, and wildlife”). Temperature standards for freshwater fish have the following listed as “not to be exceeded”: 15 degrees C. for Migration routes, 13 degrees C. for Spawning areas, 15 degrees C. for Rearing areas, and 13 degrees C. for Egg & fry incubation. Unfortunately, the warm weather is increasing the temperatures in our streams and creeks just as salmon are returning to spawn. On Campbell Creek near the New Seward, the water temperature measured 16.8 degrees C. from one instrument I used and 16 degrees C. from a thermometer on July 31. Three days earlier, one of our water quality monitors reported 19.7 C. and 19.9 C. on Chester Creek just west of University Lake at Elmore. Clearly the ideal water temperatures for migrating, spawning, rearing, and incubation have been exceeded, but there isn’t much that can be done regarding the warm weather.

Warmer water temperatures also reduce the level of dissolved oxygen (DO) in the water. Colder, faster water has a higher DO level than slower, warmer water—and aquatic life needs a high DO. Only a few days ago in Southeast Alaska near Petersburg 1,100 king salmon died on their return to a hatchery and it is suspected that warm water (air temps in the 80s) was the cause. Another factor in this sad event besides warm water and low oxygen levels is thought to be smaller tides that didn’t provide cooler ocean water far enough upstream for the fish. This is not the first time that Blind Slough has had large fish die-offs as it has been recorded 6 times in the last 35 years.

Sometimes nature trumps us and there is nothing we can do. However, as we look at changing and extreme climate and weather patterns globally, we should examine our role in the bigger picture. It doesn’t take very long to learn about reducing our carbon footprint and instituting some relatively easy lifestyle changes. We can also help on a scale that is closer to home. Overhanging vegetation on creeks is extremely important for providing shade to help cool waterways (and also creates some neat hiding spots from predators). Last fall Anchorage lost a lot of trees along the creeks from heavy windstorms, so replanting trees and other types of vegetation is important. Also, while not affecting temperature, residents should keep their yard clippings and grass cuttings OUT of waterways and off of creek banks. This “greenery”, besides often containing high levels of yard chemicals as well as natural nitrogen

and phosphorus, decomposes in the water and further depletes DO. Save your back—mulch your cuttings onto the lawn when mowing and by avoiding raking and bagging. Place yard waste in compost piles.

Although Mark Twain was credited with the witticism “Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it” (it was really spoken by his friend Charles Dudley Warner), it’s pretty true. We can’t do much about the weather, but we do have some control over our environment and how weather and other human actions impact the environment.



Silver salmon heading upstream in Campbell Creek on July 31, 2013

OTHER NEWS

The Parnell Administration: Alaska’s Salmon Streams open for Coal Mining

On July 29, the *Seward City News* reported that the Parnell administration had denied protection to wild salmon streams by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR) rejecting a petition filed by local citizens who were seeking protection specifically from coal mining in the Upper Cook Inlet region. Pac Rim Coal's mining plans are to remove roughly 11 miles of natural salmon stream. Detrimental impacts of surface mining on waterways are well documented. Once a resource is damaged, it can never be returned to its original state. To follow this story, go to the Chuitna Citizens Coalition at chuitna.org or Cook InletKeeper at inletkeeper.org/energy-and-alaska/coal/chuitna-coal-strip-mine.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, August 3, Spenard Farmers' Market, "Love Your Pet Day", 9 am to 2 pm AWC will be there providing information on how important it is to clean up after our pets. More information is on our website and Spenard Farmers' Market at www.spendardfarmersmarket.org/p/events.html.

Saturday, August 10, Alaska Botanical Garden (ABG), "Harvest Fair", 10 am to 4 pm AWC will have displays on good yard practices as well as a drawing for ABG gift certificates. Additional information can be found at www.alaskbg.org/Events/event.html.

Saturday, August 17, "Dog Days of Summer Block Party", 11 am to 4 pm, 7th Ave. between D and E Check out all the neat events at www.anchoragecreeks.org/upcoming-events/dog-days-of-summer-block-party/. Stop by the AWC booth.

Reminder: You can follow AWC on Facebook under "Anchorage Waterways Council" as well as on Twitter.

AWC MEMBERSHIP!

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It's easy, you can go online at www.anchoragecreeks.org and click the "JOIN" button, to join, renew or donate. If you have a question about your membership and when it expires, please contact us at awc@anchoragecreeks.org. If you know someone who wants to help support our great waterways, please forward this email to them, or if you want to provide a gift membership--contact us. Thanks to all for your continuing support and especially to our sponsors and volunteers who watch the waterways, monitor the creeks, and help this great organization--the ONLY one in Anchorage dedicated to protecting our creeks, wetlands, and watersheds.

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Anchorage Waterways Council | P.O. Box 241774 | Anchorage | AK | 99524-1774



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ANCHORAGE WATERWAYS COUNCIL

UPDATE



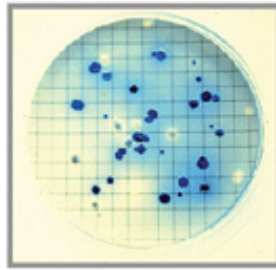
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Yesterday morning AGAIN I brushed off yet another layer of snow from my car and let it warm up before heading out. The air temperature is above freezing however, and the past few days have been some of the bluest sky and "warmest" (remember it's relative) weather. Whether it looks like it or not, spring is here. Part of how we know this has to do with all the great events happening. Check below for what's going on around town.

One piece of exciting news is that AWC just received an ACWA (Alaska Clean Water Actions) grant from ADEC. In an effort to stem the persistent problem of creeks that are considered impaired waters--almost always by fecal coliform--AWC will spend the upcoming summer, fall, and winter inventorying and evaluating the effectiveness of the Mutt-Mitt stations around Anchorage's trails, greenbelts, and creeks. The Municipality has over 100 stations and there are 6 along the BLM Campbell Tract trails. Many private businesses have also invested in Mutt-Mitt stations, such as veterinary clinics, apartment complexes, and pet-friendly lodging areas. What is sad to notice is that often even when bags and waste disposal receptacles are close, some pet owners still do not use them. It would be nice to get into peoples' heads to see what their reasoning is. Do they think someone else will come along and clean it up? Do they view dog waste as non-problematic? None of us want to step in it and even more importantly due to stormwater runoff, waste left on the ground washes directly into our creeks--untreated--by way of our storm drain system. This is the water we recreate in, our animals and kids splash around in, people fish in, and more. Fecal coliform can't be seen by the naked eye, but it's a nasty bug that can make humans miserable. Clemson University Cooperative Extension nicely sums it up,

Fecal coliform bacteria are the most common microbiological contaminants of natural waters. Fecal coliform live in the digestive tracks of warm-blooded animals, including humans, and are excreted in feces. Although most of these bacteria are not harmful and are part of the normal digestive system, some are pathogenic to humans. Those that are pathogenic can cause disease such as gastroenteritis, ear infections, typhoid, dysentery, hepatitis A, and cholera.

If pet owners were to take full responsibility for cleaning up after their animals, it would make Anchorage an even nicer city to be out and about in. When you're out, carry your own bags and spares for those who might have "forgotten" one. Also keep in mind that AWC is the ONLY organization that regularly (and has for 15 years) tested our urban creeks for this and other pollutants. It is an expensive program that could only happen by the efforts and dedication of our great volunteer monitors and funding from a variety of sources including AWC members. If you care to keep this program going, consider how you (or your employer) can help fund it. Contact me for further information at cherie@anchoragecreeks.org or at 272-7335.



Colonies that are light to dark blue are counted as fecal coliforms

Another exciting announcement is that AWC has secured an Anchorage Parks Foundation Challenge Grant to install two Mutt-Mitt stations along Campbell Trail by Shelikof and near Waldron Lake. Members of the Campbell Park Community Council have agreed to provide grant match through money and labor to install these two stations in a very heavily-used dog area. It would be really nice to walk along the trail and not see dog poop one of these days. If you are aware of an area that could be a candidate for a Mutt-Mitt station, please contact Matt Kays at matt@anchoragecreeks.org or at 529-9289 so it can be evaluated.

Because we don't have 100% compliance with cleaning up pet waste, it is necessary to have Scoop-the-Poop days for the clean up value as well as public education. As you probably know, AWC had to postpone the April 20 event that coincides closely with Earth Day, and it will now happen on May 4 at University Lake and Connors Bog from 11-3 and at the South Anchorage Sports Park from 11-1. We hope you can join us then. AWC will provide nitrile gloves, plastic sacks, trowels, shovels, buckets, and great giveaways to all people who stop by to help. For more information, contact Matt Kays at matt@anchoragecreeks.org or at 529-9289.

The Scoop-the-Poop on Earth Day Eve at the BLM Campbell Tract has been rescheduled for the evening of May 6 from 5 pm to 8 pm. Supplies can be obtained at the Smokejumper Trailhead and Campbell Airstrip Road (mile 1.1) Trailhead.

SAVE THE DATES

29th Annual AWC Creek Clean-up and Celebration, Saturday, May 18, 9 AM to 3 PM

Put this date on your calendar. Final details are being confirmed, so check our website at www.anchoragecreeks.org for updates. Clean-up honcho locations will be posted on our website, and the magnificent volunteers who clean the creeks will be feted at the Cuddy Family Midtown Park from 12 noon to 3 pm. There will be live music from Hot Dish, other performances, prizes, education information, and a Food Truck Rally. Creek Clean-up is funded by generous contributions from individuals and local businesses that take pride in preserving our fabulous creeks. A big thanks to ConocoPhillips, BP, CIRI, GCI, HDR, Moose's Tooth, and Dan and Cathy Gleason for financial support and the Anchorage Parks Foundation for partnering with us to make the Cuddy Park Celebration a great event.

ALPAR 2013 Awards Banquet

This is being held on May 2 but it is sold out! Better get in on the action early next year. Hurray to ALPAR for bringing back glass recycling to Anchorage!

AIRPORT Clean-up Day, May 3, 10 am to noon

If you want a chance to mosey around the Ted Steven Anchorage International Airport--now is your chance. Two hours of litter cleanup will take place from 10 am to noon, and it will be followed by a celebration picnic at the Old Airfield Maintenance Building. Food, beverages, prizes and lots of fun are promised. For more information, contact Tom Johnston at 266-2546. Trash bags will be available at the Airfield Maintenance office on 5740 DeHavilland Drive.

BIRD TLC Live and Silent Auction Fundraiser, Saturday, April 27th,

This great event that helps rehabilitate our feathered friends will take place from 5:30 to 10 pm at the Egan Convention Center. Information can be found at www.birdtlc.net

DEA National Take Back Day, Saturday, April 27

Time for spring cleaning! Clean out your medicine cabinet and drop off your expired medications (prescription or not) during DEA National Take Back. Find your closest drop off location here: www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/index.html. Please don't flush them down the sink or toilet into our water system--they eventually find their way into our ocean ecosystem!!

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How healthy is the water in Anchorage creeks, streams and lakes?

By [Kathleen McCoy, KSKA - Anchorage](#) | May 10, 2013 - 1:00 pm

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Water is life, for fish, birds, humans—all living creatures. How healthy is the water in Anchorage’s backyard playgrounds? (Potter Marsh photo by Cherie Northon)

Ah, spring! And right on its heels, a glorious Alaska summer, we hope.

This is the time of year when we peel off an armor of winter jackets, hats and boots—ready to feel that sun on our backs and faces.

We go outdoors to play hard, whether that’s a dip in a local lake, paddling around in canoes and kayaks, or exercising our dogs with games of swim-and-fetch.

And I didn’t even mention fishing, often more important than sleep when the reds are running.

What these loved activities all have in common is water—which we assume is clean and fresh. We live in Alaska, right? With pristine environments that our Lower 48 cousins only dream about.

Well, let’s test that assumption. This Wednesday on Hometown Alaska, we’ll feature two water-savvy scientists who can give us a report card on Anchorage’s local recreational waters, creeks, streams and lakes.

How healthy are they? What’s helping and what’s challenging their stability? What can Alaskans do to keep them fish-friendly?

KTVA CBS 11 | Anchorage, Alaska News and Weather Anchorage, AK

[Print this article](#)

Cigarette butts add to pollution

Originally printed at <http://www.ktva.com/news/local/Cigarette-add-to-pollution-225436702.html>

By Lauren Maxwell
September 26, 2013

ANCHORAGE - You don't have to look far to see cigarette butts in Anchorage. You can find them on the street, on the ground, almost anywhere but in the trash. Experts say, when you toss a cigarette butt on the ground you aren't just littering, you could be causing health problems for animals and polluting local waterways.

Cigarette butts contain more than 160 toxic chemicals. When they land on the ground they end up in the water. Butts from all over town get washed into storm drains which empty right into local creeks.

That "cleansing" action happens most often when it rains.

"Fish can eat the whole cigarette butt, as can birds and other wildlife," said Anchorage Waterways Council Director Cherie Northon. "They see anything going by and it looks like food so they ingest them. But butts will also leach out into the water and change the water chemistry over time."

People who toss their butts on the ground may think they'll just disintegrate, but that doesn't happen, according to Northon. The filters are made of a type of plastic that's almost impossible to break down. She said the best solution is to provide more receptacles for people to place their butts, then hope people will use them.

ADN.com

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Letter: Republicans are in it for themselves

Letter: Praise for those who noticed Campbell Creek turning orange

Published: August 24, 2013

Anchorage

Kudos to Anchorage citizens who responded to the orange mulch dye that entered Little Campbell Creek on Tuesday evening. Besides fielding calls at Anchorage Waterways Council, I discovered that the Department of Environmental Conservation, municipality, fire department and others had been notified. You did great. We need your eyes on our creeks, and for people to take the initiative on issues.

This is a perfect lesson on how our street storm drains work. Residents who live a couple of miles downstream from the spill on Little Campbell Creek and were unaware of what had happened were upset by an orange creek.

Runoff from yards, snow melt, spills, etc. goes into storm drains, which lead directly to our creeks. These storm drains do not connect to our sanitary sewer. Our creeks are the conveyance and anything that is on the ground (cigarette butts, pet waste, fast food packaging, yard chemicals and more) is carried to them and eventually out into the Inlet and beyond.

— *Cherie Northon*

executive director,

Anchorage Waterways Council



Typical view walking along Little Campbell Creek.
(Photo by Cherie Northon)

Cherie Northon, the executive director for Anchorage Waterways Council (AWC), and Tim Stevens, a representative from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, will join host Kathleen McCoy to discuss what's behind swimmer's itch, fecal coliform from dog poop, the impacts of sediment and the benefits of vegetation in and around our area waterways.

Creek Cleanup this year is May 18, sponsored by the AWC and the Anchorage Parks Foundation, including a community celebration at the Cuddy Family Park near the Loussac Library from noon-3 p.m.

Learn what you need to know about the water you'll play in all summer. We welcome your questions and concerns, so give us a call at 550-8433 and join the conversation.

GUESTS:

In the studio

- **Cherie Northon**, executive director, Anchorage Waterways
- **Tim Stevens**, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation

LINKS:

- [Anchorage Waterways Council](#)
- [Adopt-a-Stream](#)

- [Storm Water: The problem starts at your doorstep](#) (11 min video)
- [Alaska's Impaired Waterways, 2010](#) (9-page PDF, Alaska DEC)
- [Public Health Issue of Cigarette Butts](#), Dr. James Novotny, (16-min video)
- [Scoop the Poop campaign](#)
- [Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan, 2012 update](#), Municipality of Anchorage Planning Department (18-page PDF)

PARTICIPATE:

- Call 550-8433 (Anchorage) or 1-888-353-5752 (statewide) during the live broadcast (2:00 – 3:00pm)
- Send e-mail to hometown@alaskapublic.org before, during or after the live broadcast (e-mails may be read on air)
- Post your comment or question below (comments may be read on air)

HOST: [Kathleen McCoy](#)






LIVE BROADCAST: Wednesday, May 15, 2013. 2:00 – 3:00 pm (Alaska time)

REPEAT BROADCAST: Wednesday, May 15, 2013. 7:00 – 8:00 pm (Alaska time)

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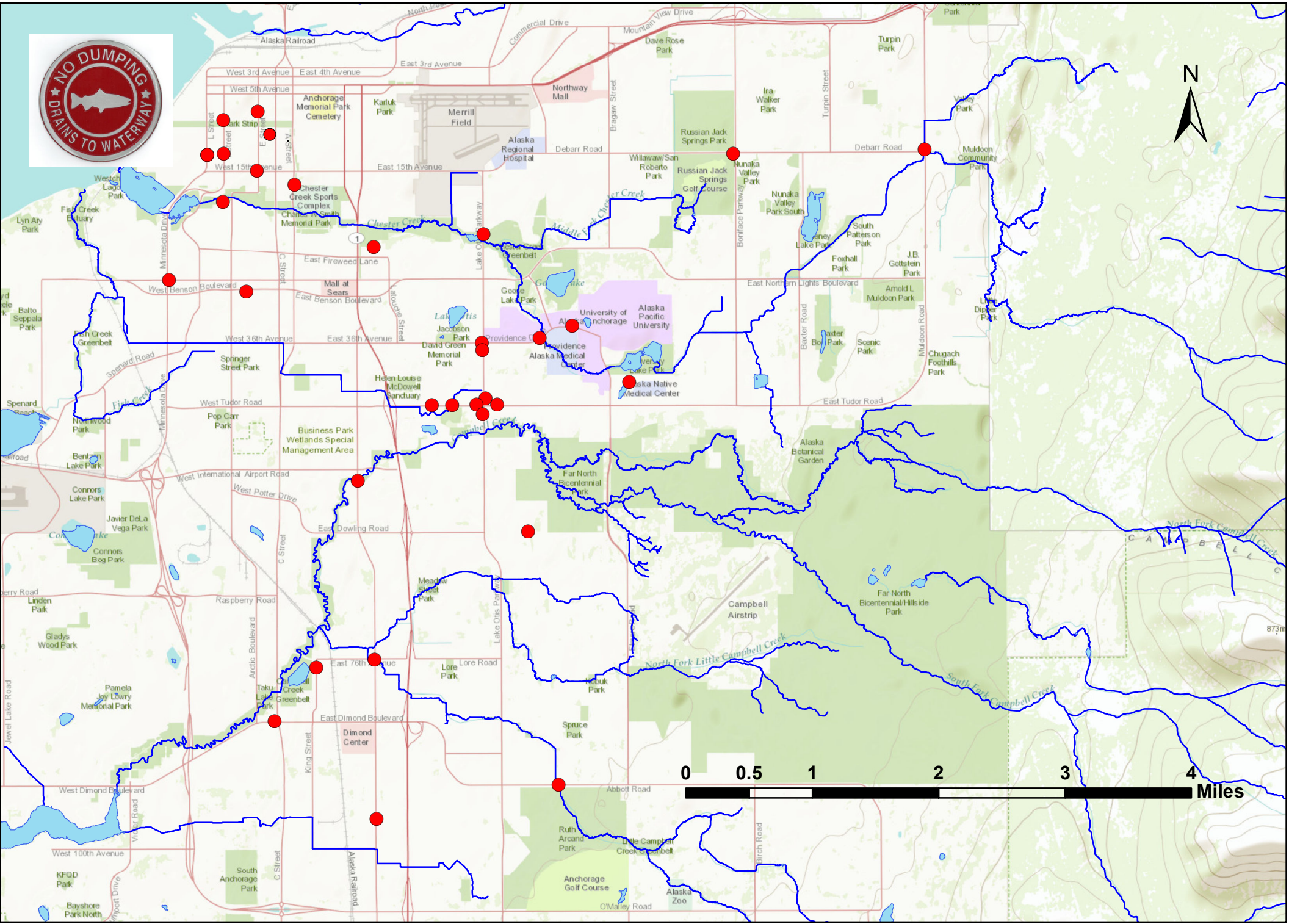
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Storm Drain Markers (N=32), December 1, 2013



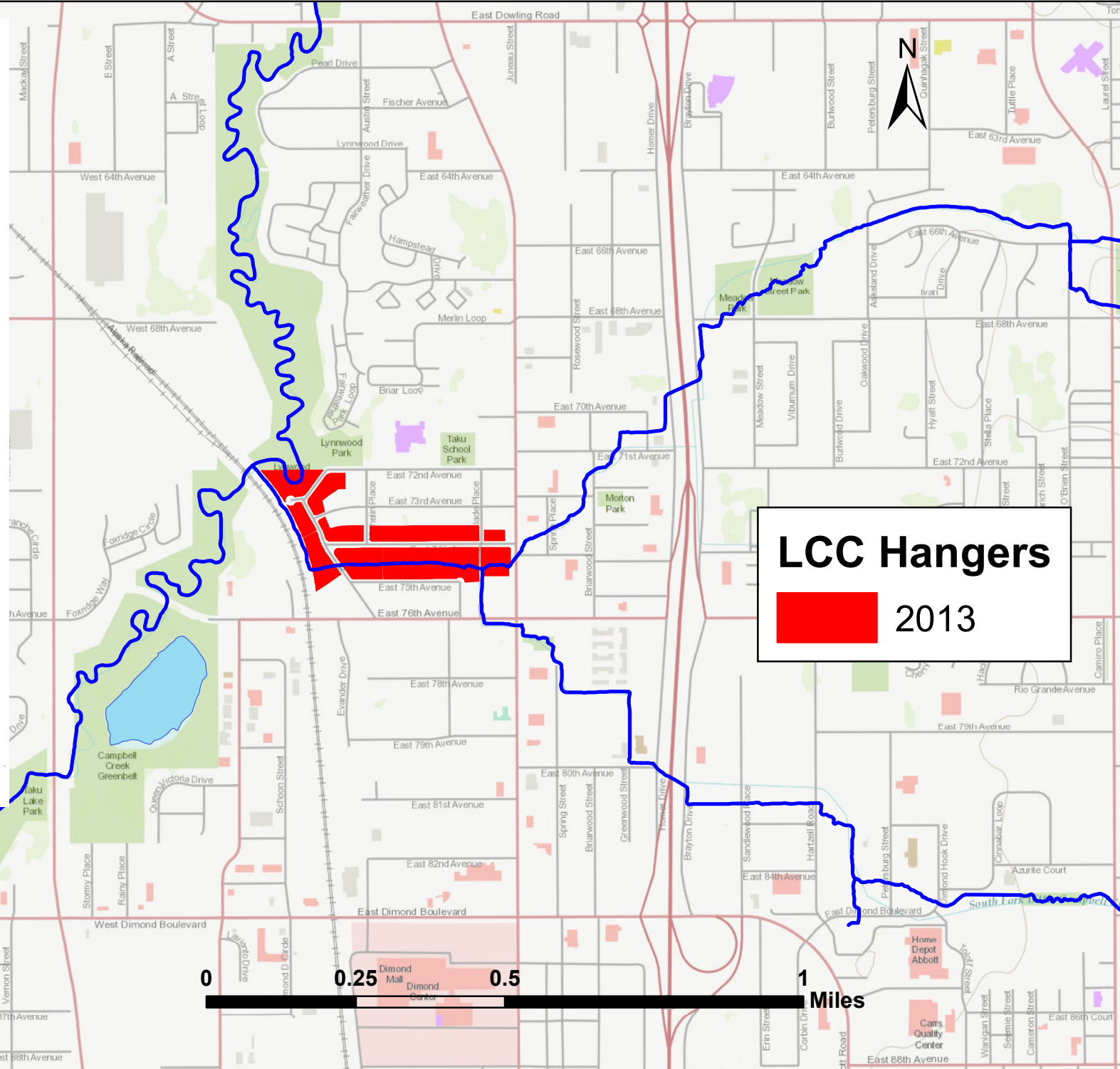
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"How to Live With a Creek" Hangers (n=76), Lower Little Campbell Creek, 2013

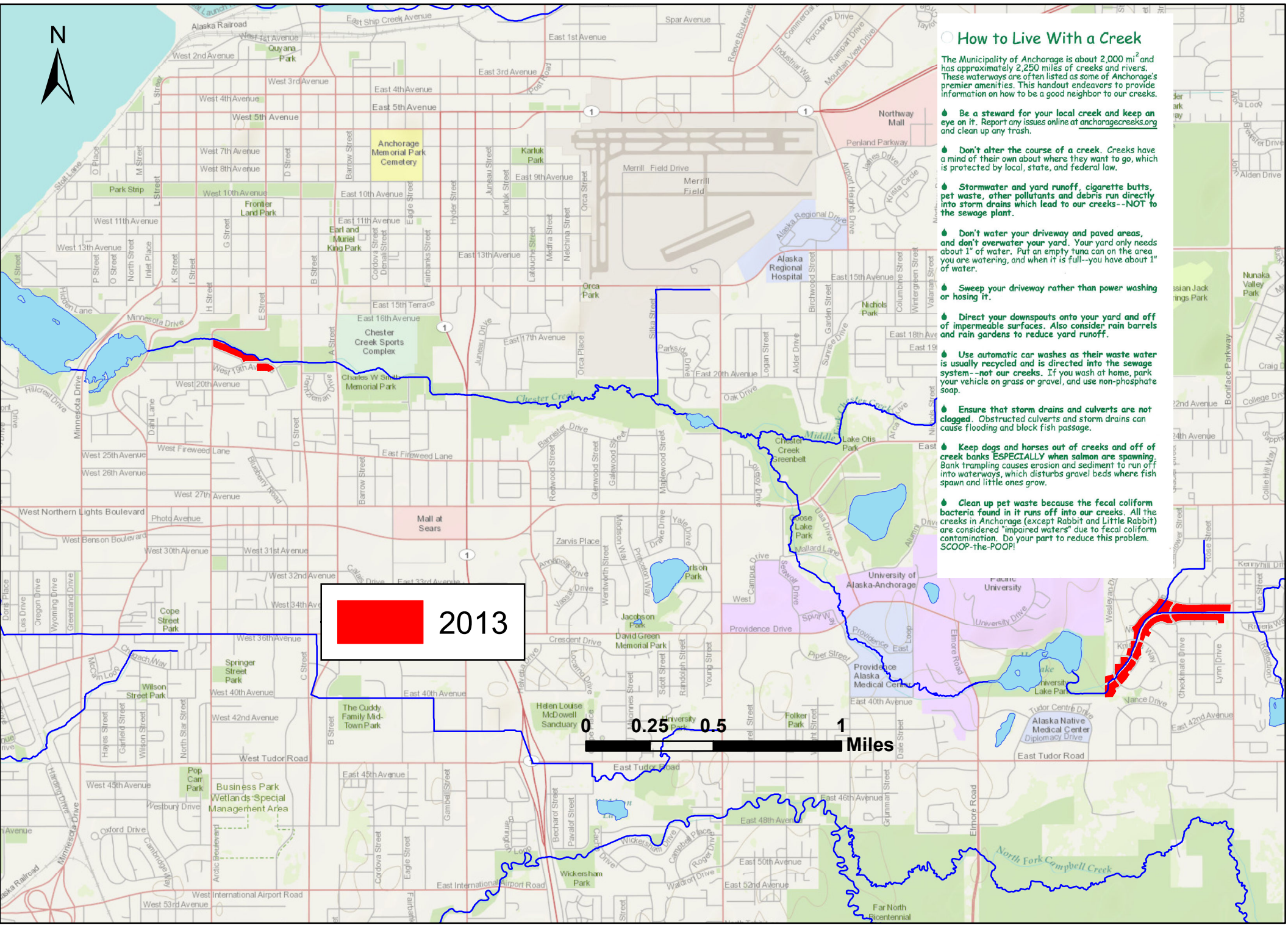
How to Live With a Creek

The Municipality of Anchorage is about 2,000 mi² and has approximately 2,250 miles of creeks and rivers. These waterways are often listed as some of Anchorage's premier amenities. This handout endeavors to provide information on how to be a good neighbor to our creeks.

- ◆ **Be a steward for your local creek and keep an eye on it.** Report any issues online at anchoragecreeks.org and clean up any trash.
- ◆ **Don't alter the course of a creek.** Creeks have a mind of their own about where they want to go, which is protected by local, state, and federal law.
- ◆ **Stormwater and yard runoff, cigarette butts, pet waste, other pollutants and debris run directly into storm drains which lead to our creeks--NOT to the sewage plant.**
- ◆ **Don't water your driveway and paved areas, and don't overwater your yard.** Your yard only needs about 1" of water. Put an empty tuna can on the area you are watering, and when it is full--you have about 1" of water.
- ◆ **Sweep your driveway rather than power washing or hosing it.**
- ◆ **Direct your downspouts onto your yard and off of impermeable surfaces.** Also consider rain barrels and rain gardens to reduce yard runoff.
- ◆ **Use automatic car washes as their waste water is usually recycled and is directed into the sewage system--not our creeks.** If you wash at home, park your vehicle on grass or gravel, and use non-phosphate soap.
- ◆ **Ensure that storm drains and culverts are not clogged.** Obstructed culverts and storm drains can cause flooding and block fish passage.
- ◆ **Keep dogs and horses out of creeks and off of creek banks ESPECIALLY when salmon are spawning.** Bank trampling causes erosion and sediment to run off into waterways, which disturbs gravel beds where fish spawn and little ones grow.
- ◆ **Clean up pet waste because the fecal coliform bacteria found in it runs off into our creeks.** All the creeks in Anchorage (except Rabbit and Little Rabbit) are considered "impaired waters" due to fecal coliform contamination. Do your part to reduce this problem. **SCOOP-the-POOP!**



"How to Live With a Creek" Hangers, Chester Creek (N=96), 2013



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2013



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- ◆ **Protect and preserve shoreline vegetation and don't cut trees or remove vegetation within 25' of the creek.** This vegetation provides habitat, shade to keep the water cooler, protection from prey, and stabilization of the streambank. It also reduces bank erosion. Naturally fallen wood produces in-stream habitat and nutrients for fish and other aquatic organisms. Leave NATURAL vegetation in the creek.
- ◆ **Do not dump yard wastes into the creek or cut your lawn up to the creek's edge.** Yard waste contains chemical additives and high nitrogen and phosphorus. Rather than bag your grass clippings, leave them on the lawn as a source of fertilizing mulch. Yard waste that decomposes in streams and lakes will use up dissolved oxygen in the water that is essential for fish habitat. Leave native vegetation buffers creekside.
- ◆ **Don't disturb instream rocks or build dams and footbridges.** The undersides of rocks are habitat for macroinvertebrates, which are the food for fish, birds, and other aquatic organisms. Dams can block fish passage, and during high water events, dams and footbridges can catch debris and increase the likelihood of flooding in your yard.
- ◆ **Participate in the Anchorage Waterways Council's Annual Creek Cleanup (every spring), and become a member of the organization.** Memberships help support a variety of programs.

BE THE GUARDIAN OF YOUR CREEKS!



Anchorage Waterways Council is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation that is funded by memberships, donations, and grants.

anchoragecreeks.org

907 272-7335

Follow us on Facebook at Anchorage Waterways Council



What is with those black tarps by the creek?

In June, 2012 the Anchorage Waterways Council (AWC), in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), undertook an effort to eliminate a serious infestation of **Reed Canary Grass** in the vicinity of Chester Creek in the Grass Creek Village development.

Reed Canary Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*) is a problematic invasive species in Southcentral Alaska.

An Invasive Species is defined as a species that has been introduced to an ecosystem that poses a threat to environmental, economic, or human health.

Reed Canary Grass (RCG) spreads rapidly, has no natural predators, and can quickly outcompete the native plants for nutrients and space. Invasive plants like RCG take advantage of newly cleared ground, as was the case for the infestation in this new neighborhood. If left unchecked, RCG has the potential to take over an entire area, eliminating the natural species diversity of an ecosystem. RCG has been known to grow into streams, choking their flow, impeding fish passage, and resulting in potential flooding hazards.

Water bodies, such as Chester Creek, can serve as transportation networks for invasive plants such as RCG. An infestation such as the one that exists in Grass Creek Village, can quickly spread downstream and threaten native vegetation throughout the entire riparian corridor.

AWC and its partners felt that the threats posed by this infestation were serious enough to require **immediate and thorough action**.

Multiple treatment methods exist for eliminating RCG infestations: Chemical treatment involves application of herbicides to an affected area. Biological treatment involves the introduction of a competing or predatory species to eliminate the infestation. These methods have the potential of creating undesirable consequences; often causing additional problems for an ecosystem or human health.

The method chosen by AWC and USFWS, which has proved effective in other areas of Southcentral Alaska, is elimination by **mechanical means**. The procedure calls for mowing the affected area and covering the ground with tarps that will effectively “starve” the grass, eliminating the sunlight necessary for plant growth. The tarps will remain in place for the duration of three growing seasons, which should allow enough time for all dormant seeds to become unviable. When the tarps are removed, the area will be reseeded with native grasses and other plants, and the area will return to a more natural state. During the time the tarps are in place, the site will be routinely inspected and maintained by AWC staff and volunteers to ensure their effectiveness. Additional tarps may be required as patches of RCG emerge beyond the existing tarps.



Reed Canary Grass looks similar to a healthy native plant known as Blue Joint Grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*). The two can be differentiated in several ways: the inflorescence (seed structure) of RCG are more tightly clumped than Blue Joint Grass (BJG), and the leaves of RCG tend to be spikier and wider, while BJG leaves curl downward.

In late summer Reed Canary Grass will become very obvious as it grows much taller than native grasses and remains green far longer. Other grasses will die off in September and October, but RCG is often still green and standing up until and during early snows.

How can you help to make the project a success?

1. Keep the tarps in good condition by avoiding walking on them and keeping pets off of them as much as possible.
2. Report damage to the tarps by calling AWC Program Director, Matt Kays at 529-9289 or emailing matt@anchoragecreeks.org.
3. Be patient while the treatment runs its course. Although the tarps may be somewhat inconvenient during the months they are not covered with snow, this is the most effective way to eliminate what would otherwise be an even more widespread problem.

By helping AWC to **counter this invasion**, you are improving the ecological and aesthetic value of your neighborhood and the entire length of the Chester Creek corridor.

The Anchorage Waterways Council thanks you for your support and cooperation in this important mission to restore the natural beauty of our great city.



www.anchoragecreeks.org • matt@anchoragecreeks.org

Anchorage Waterways Council is a member-supported, non-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to protecting, restoring, and enhancing the waterways and wetlands of Anchorage through education, outreach, and action.