



David Bronson, Mayor

2022 Stormwater Outreach Public Education and Involvement APDES Permit No. AKS-052558

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Prepared for:

Municipality of Anchorage
Watershed Management Services

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Introduction

Anchorage Waterways Council (AWC) is responsible for the outreach and education sections of the APDES AKS-05258 2020-2025 permit for the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) and Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (AKDOT). These sections are: Part 3.6.1 — “Public Education and Involvement” and Part 3.6.3 — “APDES Annual Meeting”. This is the Year Two report for the current permit period.

Public education and outreach on stormwater are accomplished through a variety of avenues: tabling opportunities and events, social media, e-newsletters, lectures/presentations, publications, and regular TV/radio/news media.

This permit period, while still affected by the pandemic, was much more open than the previous two years. Several of the regular events for outreach returned including:

- Scoop the Poop Day (April)
- Annual Creek Cleanup (May)
- Potter Marsh Discovery Day (June)
- Friends of Pets’ Dog Jog (July)
- Informational tabling at South Anchorage Farmers Market, Spenard Farmers Market, Muldoon Farmers Market, Downtown Market, and Ship Creek (June – August)

AWC’s 38th Annual Creek Cleanup was a huge success again this year, and a new event called “Flotilla” was created to expand cleanup locations on lakes. On June 18, AWC coordinated a group of volunteers to clean up a catchment basin on the south side of the Glenn Highway at Bragaw St., which had become a popular place to deposit everything from vacuum cleaners to car batteries.

A new test was added to AWC’s long-standing Citizens’ Environmental Monitoring Program (CEMP) which is yielding information on how road salts might be infiltrating local waters. And, a new program, “Loons, Line, and Lead” was initiated that focused on the impacts of monofilament fishing line and lead tackle on wildlife—especially birds.

AWC continued putting more messages out on Facebook. Its regular Facebook posts reached 106,286 Anchorage subscribers, and Scoop the Poop Anchorage reached 43,406 posts during Year Two. As was accomplished in 2021, another graphic animation video was produced which focuses on the impacts of stormwater and things residents can do to help minimize them.

There was one news story on KTUU/Channel 2, three publications in the Anchorage Daily News, and one in the Senior Voice.

Public Education and Involvement

AWC promotes public education on stormwater by focusing on a variety of topics that affect water quality. The primary ones have been, and continue to be, on pet waste; waterfowl feeding; invasive species; yard treatments; disposal of green waste; snow melts and snow removal; residential vehicle repairs and car washing; plastics including monofilament fishing line; hazardous waste and materials; trash and litter; and illegal dumping into storm drains.

Scoop the Poop Campaign

AWC’s Scoop the Poop (STP) Campaign provided information and STP-related items (brochures, stickers, pet waste bags, etc.) at Scoop the Poop Day on April 23, Dog Jog on July 23, and other outreach events. This year’s Scoop the Poop Day was held with staff, AWC board members, and several volunteers who handed out buckets, shovels, gloves, and bags to scoopers at Connors Bog and University Lake. DIY scoopers were also encouraged to clean up an area of their choice,

and we received several reports of various areas cleaned—many of them were trailheads which are common places for dog poop that is not picked up. To date, 80 STP-focused signs that AWC created last year (Figure 1), have been placed at dog parks and trails.



Figure 1 - Pooper scoopers at Connors Bog Dog Park – April 23, 2022, and AWC STP signs that are being placed along trails and trailheads.

The turnout was great this year with over 150 scoopers, and over 100 bags were filled with pet waste. Coffee and snacks were provided by Starbucks who also promoted the event.

Friends of Pet’s Dog Jog returned in 2022 to an enthusiastic crowd of over 200 pet lovers, and AWC was there with a variety of STP giveaways and information.

Annual Creek Cleanup and Flotilla!

This year was AWC’s 38th Annual Creek Cleanup. Forty teams signed up, which was a fantastic turnout for the 13-day cleanup which ran from May 14 to the 26th. One of AWC’s cleanup volunteers proposed that a single-day event be established for kayakers to encourage cleanup of local lakes. The First Annual “Flotilla” was held on May 21 with 40 kayakers heading out to Westchester Lagoon and Cheney, Goose, Sand, DeLong, and Jewel lakes. Matson’s “Caring for Alaska” program was again a generous sponsor of the program, and they are promoting AWC’s event as well as others¹.



Figure 2 – Anchorage Adventurers Meetup team on Chester Creek, May 2022, and the Rage City Roller Derby team at Cheney Lake for Flotilla, May 21, 2022

¹ See [youtube.com/watch?v=dYT62wzh3aI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYT62wzh3aI)

Less trash was reported again which could be attributed to the Sullivan Arena continuing to shelter part of Anchorage’s unhoused population which typically camps along local waterways. Unfortunately, the Sullivan Arena shelter was shut down on June 30, and the result has been multiple tents as well as small and large encampments along local creeks, roads, and highways, and in parks. On October 1, 2022, the Sullivan shelter reopened, but it’s unclear how many campers decided to stay in their encampments. A quick glance at the existing camp areas reveals a considerable amount of trash strewn throughout which likely will find its way down through local watersheds and into creeks and lakes. Our May 2023 cleanup should provide an idea of the impacts after the June 30 shelter closing.

Creek Cleanup is always a realistic check-in for participants who experience the issues of trash and other pollutants in local waterways first-hand, and it’s clearly evident from the comments in reports that they return to AWC. Aside from reporting how the amounts of trash differ annually, cleanup volunteers are particularly tuned in to such issues as batteries, aerosol cans, plastics, human waste, etc.

Issue Response

In May, a resident in the neighborhood near E. 3rd Ave. and Bragaw St. saw the KTUU news story on AWC’s Creek Cleanup and contacted us. “William” had been trying unsuccessfully for weeks to get someone to respond to a small pond (a catchment basin that returns water to the N. Fork Chester Creek) near Bragaw St.; and the Glenn Highway that had become the recipient of several vacuum cleaners, grocery carts, and trash. AWC actively encourages citizens to report problems and has a form on its website² for this. Staff visited the area, took photos, and called MOA Street Maintenance to assist with removing some large items, including two vacuum cleaners and several grocery carts.

Even so, much trash still remained, so a volunteer cleanup was organized by AWC on June 18. AWC board members and staff as well as volunteers from the Rage City Roller Derby waded through stormwater and muck to retrieve cell phones, a laptop, a car battery, truck straps, a sledge hammer, and several bags of trash. Grates on the incoming and outgoing storm drains were also cleared out so that stormwater could flow again. Within a few days, the water cleared up from the initial orange that spewed forth from the recently open storm culvert, and a family of ducks took up residence.



Figure 3 – Batteries, truck straps, and much more were removed on June 18 by volunteers.

Loons, Line and Lead program

Summer 2022 saw a new program for AWC — “Loons, Line and Lead”. Tamara Zeller, a migratory bird specialist at the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), pulled together funding for a two-pronged approach to help remove some hazards

² anchoragecreeks.org/report-an-issue

to wildlife—especially birds. The program’s specific focus is on monofilament fishing line and lead fishing tackle. An information campaign called “Love a Loon” was developed for fishermen to encourage cleaning up their unused fishing line and to consider switching from lead fishing weights, which can poison birds, especially loons and grebes³, to non-lead, e.g. tin.

The new program led to a variety of tabling events that were held at the South Anchorage Farmers’ Market (June 18), Muldoon Farmers’ Market (July 9), Spenard Farmers’ Market (July 16), the Downtown Market (July 17), and Ship Creek at the Slammin’ Salmon Derby (August 9). Besides providing education on hazards from plastic litter, monofilament fishing line, and lead tackle, information on AWC programs and concerns was given out.

Potter Marsh Discovery Day

This very popular annual event returned in 2022 with an estimated turnout of 600+ attendees. Potter Marsh Day is always a family-friendly nature celebration, and traditionally AWC uses hands-on activities with benthic insects to explain their use in determining water quality. The “Love a Loon” campaign was also highlighted.



Figure 4 – Chloe Hansen (intern) and Bob Shipley (AWC board member) at Potter Marsh Discovery Day, and the “Love a Loon” campaign logo.

Road Chemicals

Electrical conductivity from road salts

AWC has not detailed its long-running volunteer CEMP program in previous APDES reports. However, since we have added testing for electrical conductivity (EC) to our regular sampling⁴, it is worth mentioning this as it involves another measure of stormwater impact on local waterways. The EC meters and supplies are being funded by a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant that falls under a new initiative called “Navigating the New Arctic⁵”. Dr. Jennifer Schmidt of

³ Lead fishing weights that a bird ingests are ground down in its gizzard which can then be impacted by stomach acids ultimately traveling into its bloodstream and poisoning it. It only takes one small lead weight to kill. See <https://www.fws.gov/lead-poisoning-in-loons> for more information.

⁴ In 2016, AWC had to reduce costs of its water quality monitoring program as some of the chemicals that were shipped to Alaska became cost-prohibitive. The current tests (besides EC) include: air and water temperature, dissolved oxygen (DO) using a comparator, pH using test strips, turbidity, apparent color, and *E. coli* measured using Charm Science’s Peel Plate EC (charm.com/products/test-and-kits/microbial-detection-tests/peel-plate-microbial-tests/).

⁵ [nsf.gov/geo/opp/arctic/nna/index.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/geo/opp/arctic/nna/index.jsp)

University of Alaska Anchorage is the principal investigator, and AWC board member Birgit Hagedorn is coordinating the EC effort with AWC's volunteer monitors.

Beginning in November 2019, eight sites on Chester Creek (Figure 5) have had monthly readings for EC taken. The data shows, as would be expected, that EC readings increase along Chester Creek as it runs downstream (Figure 6), with stronger numbers during winter due to the high use of road treatments. The idea behind this work is to look at this trend in terms of climate change with more frequent thaw and freeze events as they impact the immediate environment and infrastructure.

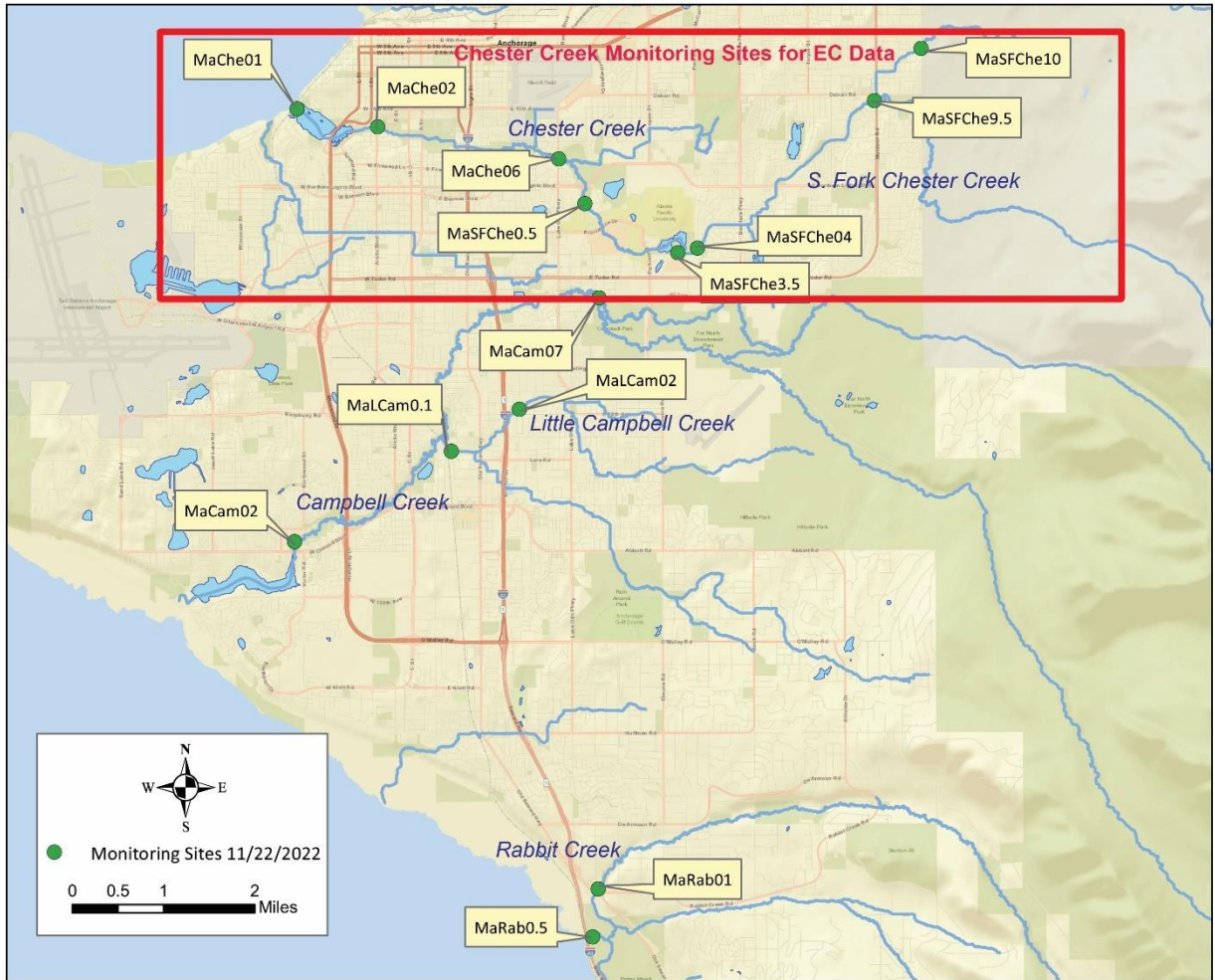


Figure 5 – Monitoring sites on Chester Creek where EC is sampled.

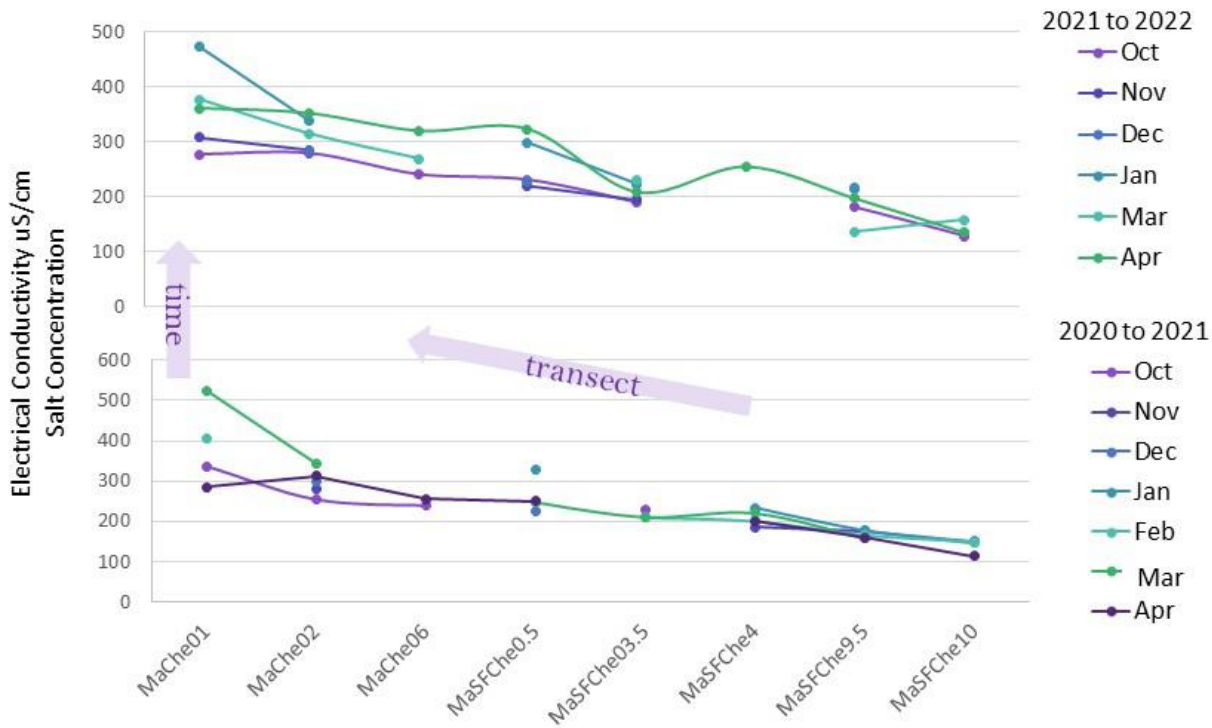


Figure 6 – Electrical conductivity on Chester Creek, Anchorage, 2020 to 2022.

6PPD Quinone Update

As introduced in AWC’s 2021 APDES report⁶, some preliminary samplings for 6PPD Quinone were taken in 2021. The analysis found the chemical at lethal amounts in the stormwater entering Chester Creek at the New Seward Highway, however, it was apparently diluted enough that the amounts in the creek water were below lethal levels. The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has formed a diverse working group that meets twice annually (June and December) in regard to 6PPD quinone. Representatives from AWC, DEC, USFWS, Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10 (EPA), U.S. Tire Manufacturers Association (USTMA), and a variety of private citizens and NGOs share updates related to ongoing and new research with regard to the impact of 6PPD quinone on aquatic habitats.

The EPA gave a presentation at the December 8, 2022, meeting which highlighted recent research including evidence that there are additional species besides coho salmon, e.g. rainbow and brook trout, that are threatened by the tire dust chemical. Fortunately, studies are being expanded for other affected species as well as the impacts on different life stages. Of utmost importance currently is the concern that lethality to pre-spawn coho could ultimately impact the entire existence of the species in the Puget Sound area. With the pervasiveness of the chemical, the general consensus is that filtering stormwater runoff may be the best way to reduce 6PPD quinone from waterways. This problem certainly highlights the importance of adding Green Infrastructure (GI) as a BMP to reduce stormwater runoff.

⁶ anchoragestormwater.com/Documents/2021AnnualReport/AppG12021StormwaterOutreachSummary.pdf, p. 61.

Media

One television news story was shot by KTUU/Channel 2, two “Letters to the editor” were printed in the *Anchorage Daily News* as well as a story on the May 21st “Flotilla” cleanup, and the *Senior Voice* published a story written by AWC during this permit period. A PDF of each story is included in Appendix A, and the link to the news story, “New effort to keep fishing line off the shore and away from birds” can be found at: alaskanewssource.com/2022/06/29/new-effort-keep-fishing-line-off-shore-away-birds/.

Newsletters

AWC sent out 11 newsletters during this period that announced upcoming events, discussed its various programs, and provided a wrapup of events. The most pertinent newsletters are in Appendix B. Current readership is around 200 from the direct email using Constant Contact, and the newsletters are also boosted on Facebook where another 2,000 readers receive them.

Social Media

Over the many years of this contract, AWC’s outreach tactics have changed considerably in order to keep pace with how society wants its information delivered. Accordingly, our methods have shifted almost entirely away from printing to our digital newsletter, “Streamline”, and Facebook posts at facebook.com/anchoragewaterways and facebook.com/ScoopthePoopAnchorage. Between these two Facebook accounts, AWC has over 1,000 followers, and when important information is posted, they are “boosted” for a fee. As mentioned in the Introduction, there were 106,286 AWC post recipients and 43,406 for Scoop the Poop Anchorage.

Graphic Animation Video

One of this year’s major achievements was the creation of another short video by graphic animation filmmaker, Dan Redfield⁷. Its focus is on stormwater impacts and some solutions for minimizing them. The video has been posted on Facebook and sent in AWC’s newsletter, *Streamline*, which was well-received. It’s available on the AWC website and YouTube at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6QR7w9zpy8k>. Following are two clips from the video.

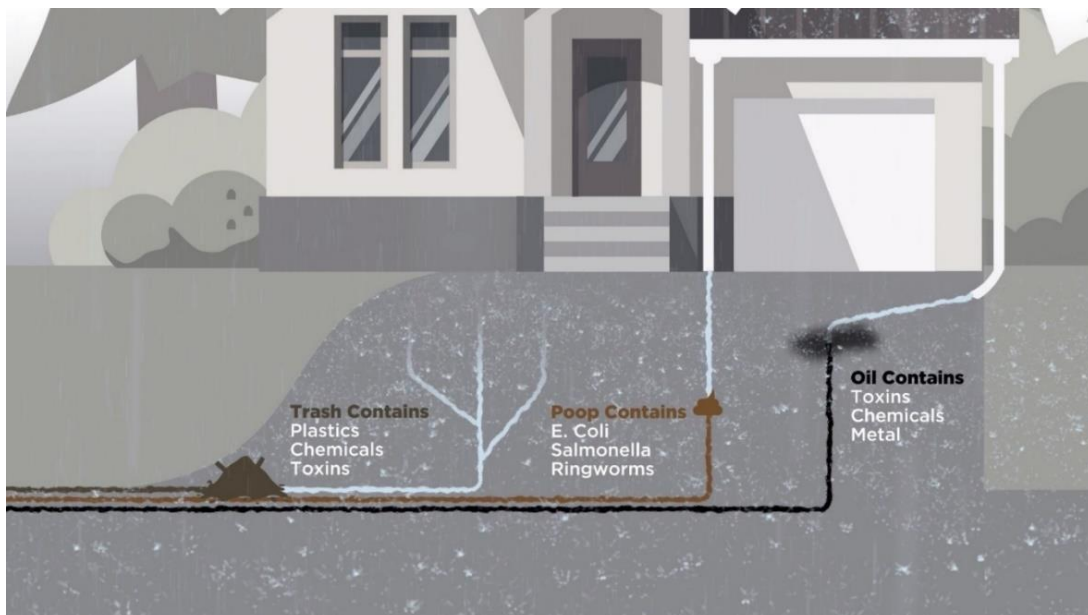


Figure 7 – Video clip showing some of the elements that travel in stormwater runoff.

⁷ danredfield.com/work

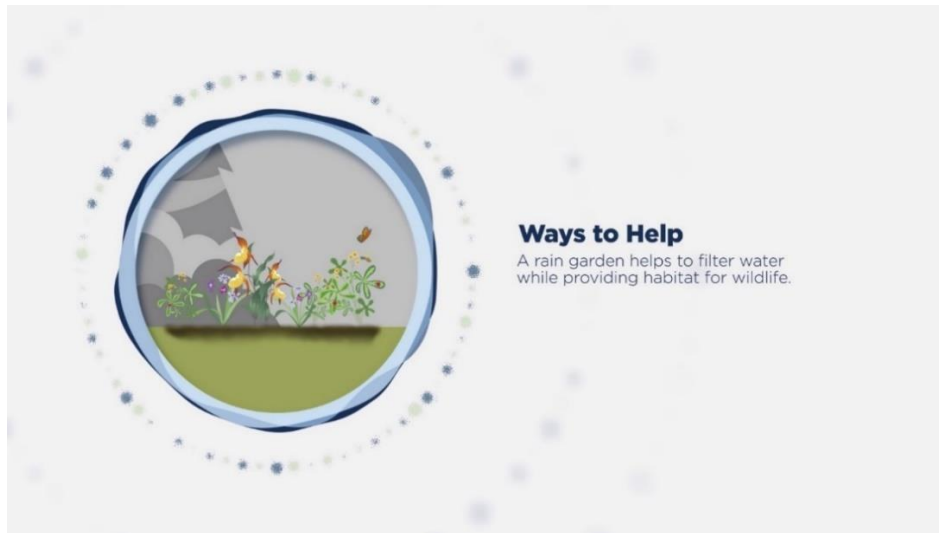


Figure 8 – Video clip showing a rain garden as a solution to reduce stormwater runoff.

APDES Annual Meeting

On March 9, 2023, AWC will present at the APDES Annual Meeting. The topic focuses on AWC’s stormwater outreach.

Conclusion

AWC was able to successfully continue its regular programs devoted to stormwater outreach during Year Two while expanding its scope with regard to winter road treatments and the effects of lead fishing tackle on birds. For Year Three, the regular campaigns and outreach will continue as well as a project that aims to engage residents through education about their close proximity to local creeks. This situation was brought to light during 2022 field work on the Middle Fork Chester Creek. AWC staff identified several locations on creeks in the Anchorage bowl where a water course may not be readily recognized as an anadromous waterway. Figures 9 and 10 are an example.

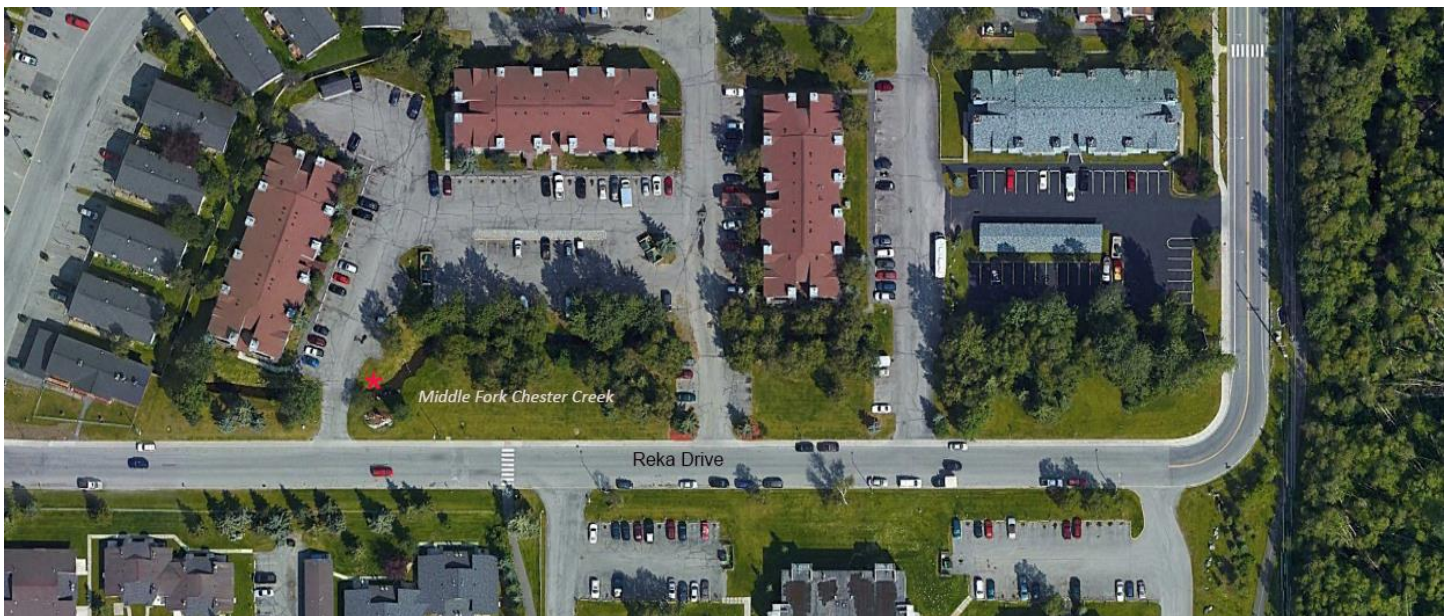


Figure 9 – The proximity of the Middle Fork Chester Creek to the Russian Jack Apartment Homes. The creek winds through the property almost in a park-like setting. The * denotes the location of the Figure 10 photo.



Figure 10 – Middle Fork Chester Creek (an anadromous waterway) shown along the parking lot of the Russian Jack Apartment Homes. (Looking south towards Reka Drive.)

AWC is looking forward to expanding its stormwater outreach to include this new area.

APPENDIX A - Media

Mark Sherman and Jessica Gresko
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court has stopped a major push by the Biden administration to boost the nation's

the administration to proceed with a vaccine mandate for most health care workers in the U.S. The court's orders Thursday came during a spike in coronavirus cases caused by the omicron variant.

The court's conservative majority concluded the administration overstepped its authority by seeking to impose the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's vaccine-or-test rule on U.S. businesses

“OSH a manda though C

YOUNG BULL MOOSE MAKES HIS MARK NEAR GOOSE LAKE



MARC LESTER / ADN

A young bull moose bends a thin tree repeatedly near Goose Lake in Anchorage on Thursday. The moose spent several minutes circling the tree, sometimes stripping its bark, but mostly rubbing its antlers on it. The tree eventually gave way and fell to the ground, at which point the bull moved on to a small cardboard sign asking park users to scoop poop nearby, which it also knocked over. Note: the sign is one of AWC's Scoop the Poop messages.

Letter: A necessary message on dogs

By Cherie Northon

Published: Published: January 27, 2022

If Alli Harvey's "Alaskans, get a grip on your dogs" column is her most unpopular of all time, then kudos to her! This is far from the first time that issues, such as poop left on trails, loose dogs not under voice control and continual barking, have been brought up on a variety of forums. I love dogs, own three, and second her admonishments.

I'll put aside my personal experiences with loose dogs and barking, and harp on the poop problem, which is especially obnoxious at this time of year.

The Anchorage Waterways Council (AWC) is tasked with trying to get pet owners to scoop their dogs' poop. Why? If you haven't noticed, it's unsightly. It's also maddening to step in and track it into your car or house. Third, it infects local creeks and lakes with bacteria and a whole host of other deleterious organisms including worms, parasites and viruses. While this doesn't appear to be a problem when local waterways are frozen, during breakup and all through summer and fall, these pathogens are carried into local creeks and lakes where people are wading, swimming, kayaking, tubing and fishing. Humans and dogs can and have become quite ill from contact with "impaired" water, an EPA category for fresh water that does not meet state and federal health and safety standards. Did you know that

Anchorage's popular waterways, such as Ship, Chester, Campbell, Little Campbell, Fish, Furrow, and Rabbit creeks, as well as University Lake, Campbell Lake and Westchester Lagoon, are all considered "impaired?" Consider that next time you're enjoying them.

One of AWC's goals is to remove these waters from their "impaired" status, and we need your help. It starts with every pet owner making sure that they clean up after their dogs on trails, in dog parks, neighborhoods, and in their yards. The estimated number of dogs in Anchorage is 65,000, pooping an average of three-quarters of a pound per day, which adds up to more than 45,000 lbs. Twenty-two tons, every day. Your participation makes a huge difference, so please scoop the poop. There are so many benefits.

— Cherie Northon

Anchorage Waterways Council

Anchorage

Have something on your mind? Send to letters@adn.com or click [here](#) to submit via any web browser. Letters under 200 words have the best chance of being published. Writers should disclose any personal or professional connections with the subjects of their letters. Letters are edited for accuracy, clarity and length.

Letters to the Editor

By Cherie Northon

Updated: March 20, 2022

Published: March 20, 2022

Mary Cocklin's annual spring [letters to the editor](#) continue to remind pet owners that cleaning up dog poop every day makes for a much nicer breakup (ADN, March 10). Clearly, many still don't think ahead to the cumulative impact that all that poop has as winter recedes. It mixes with melt water and runs off into local creeks and lakes where Anchorageites like to spend time fishing, kayaking, tubing, swimming and wading.

What does pet waste carry in it? Billions of fecal coliform and other bacteria, viruses, and parasites which can infect humans and their pets. Think about that next time you or one of your children or pets is wading around in our fecal coliform impaired waterways!

As she also noted, there are pet waste stations (Anchorage Waterways Council has documented more than 150 in parks and along trails) which provide free pet waste bags. Finally, besides Mary's unselfish act of picking up poop left behind by others, there are other people out there — many not even pet owners themselves — who do the same. Why? Because they care about clean parks, trails, sidewalks, and waterways, and they are doing their part where others have neglected to do theirs.

Please be more diligent about cleaning up after your pets. Remember, the MOA estimates that about 20 tons of pet waste hits the ground every day.

— Cherie Northon

Anchorage Waterways Council

Anchorage

Volunteers remove bottles, yard signs, a bicycle and more during Anchorage's lake cleanup day

By Emily Mesner

Updated: May 21, 2022

Published: May 21, 2022



Shannan Krause maneuvers her kayak along the edge of Westchester Lagoon in Anchorage as she picks up litter from the lake during a lake cleanup day on Saturday. (Emily Mesner / ADN)

Glass bottles, cans, and even an intact bicycle were just some of the items pulled out of Anchorage's lakes and lagoons during a lake cleanup event Saturday afternoon.

The Flotilla event was organized by the Anchorage Waterways Council, Anchorage Park Foundation and the Municipality of Anchorage's Parks and Recreation Department with a mission to create a day dedicated to cleaning lakes around the city. The event coincided with the waterways council's 38th annual creek cleanup, running May 12-24, and [Anchorage's monthlong citywide cleanup](#).

The idea came from Larry Monsma, a resident and avid kayaker who does impromptu cleanups around Westchester Lagoon, said Cherie Northon, executive director of the Anchorage Waterways Council. Matson donated hand sanitizer, safety vests and tools for the day.

About 40 teams spread out around Anchorage to clean up Goose Lake, Sand Lake, DeLong Lake, Jewel Lake, Cheney Lake, Taku Lake and Westchester Lagoon.

"This is when I get to interact more with the cleanup teams," Northon said. "They're all just so jazzed about it."



Rage City Roller Derby members photographed after volunteering to help remove trash from an Anchorage lake. (Photo courtesy Alex France)



A candy wrapper is partially covered in sand and rests under the water of DeLong Lake in Anchorage on Saturday. (Emily Mesner / ADN)



Shannan Krause maneuvers her kayak along the edge of Westchester Lagoon in search of trash. (Emily Mesner / ADN)

Emily Mesner

Emily Mesner is a multimedia journalist for the Anchorage Daily News. She previously worked for the National Park Service at Denali National Park and Preserve and the Western Arctic National Parklands in Kotzebue, at the Cordova Times and at the Jackson Citizen Patriot in Jackson, Michigan.

Senior Voice

A publication of Older Persons
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Volume 45, Number 4 April 2022

**Senior transportation
is on the comeback
in the Interior.**

- page 3

**New regulations
mean big changes for
Alaska's SNAP and
Medicaid recipients.**

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**How and why to
preserve your
digital legacy.**

- page 23

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SPRING CLEANING

Foma Khokhlov and his father Alexander "Sasha" Khokhlov pick up debris near Taku Lake in Anchorage during the 2021 Creek Cleanup. Sponsored by the Anchorage Waterways Council, the annual cleanup returns this year from May 12-24. Read about the council and its mission of stewardship on page 16.

Photo courtesy Keith Baxter/MSI Communications





Rambles

News from the Grapevine

continued from page 15

... Also in Soldotna, the senior center is hosting an Easter Dinner on Friday, April 15 at noon. The event will include an **Easter Bonnet Parade**, with prizes awarded. Show off your bonnet, enjoy live entertainment and help yourself to a turkey dinner with dressing, mashed potatoes, green beans and Jell-O cake. Sign yourself up, being sure to add any guests, by noon on April 13 ... **Anchorage Senior Activity Center** continues to loan out **free tablet devices** to seniors, an excellent option for those who do not already have a computer or access to the internet. The TCL TAB Pro 5G tablets are 9.75" tall by 6.2" wide, have full high definition screens and access to the internet, and the Zoom meeting app is already installed. Tablet training is available. Call Julie McFarland for more information at 907-770-2009 or email programs@anchoragecenter.org to make an appointment ... Creative writers in Seward are encouraged to submit their stories for possible inclusion in the upcoming publication, "Seward Unleashed Volume 3: Water and Wonder". Entries can include fiction, non-fiction, poems and black and white illustrations. Submissions are limited to 2,000 words, or 10 pages double-spaced. Or two illustrations or poems per person, submitted by email as a Word doc. Help is available with editing – email your draft by April 30 to **Sean Ulman** at seanulman@gmail.com for questions and clarity. All entries are due, at the same email address, by May 31.

Rambles is compiled from senior center newsletters, websites, newspapers and reader tips from around the state. Email your Rambles items to editor@seniorvoice-alaska.com.

Council is devoted to health of waterways

By **CHERIE NORTON**

For Senior Voice

Have you ever wondered who organizes Creek Cleanup? Perhaps you have seen people taking water samples along local creeks and tried to figure out what they were doing. Have you been concerned about something along a creek and wondered who to contact? Are you curious about who is behind all those Scoop the Poop messages? The answer is the Anchorage Waterways Council (AWC), and it's been doing all this and more for nearly 40 years.

AWC was established in 1985 by a group of citizens and officials who were very concerned about local creeks that were rife with raw sewage. Its mission has been to foster and maintain the health of those waterways. Even though it's a small nonprofit, AWC manages to respond to a multitude of challenges that impact the quality of Anchorage's well-loved creeks and lakes. Very few

large urban areas can boast about having easy access to prize-winning salmon derbies in their downtown as well as nature trails that wind through neighborhoods along spawning salmon habitat. And yet,

outreach. Since 2008, AWC has worked with thousands of young people in hands-on classes along creeks where water bugs are collected and identified and stream measurements are taken. Since 1998, AWC



Volunteers receive instructions before heading out to pick up trash during last year's Anchorage Waterways Council annual Creek Cleanup.

Photo courtesy Keith Baxter/MSI Communications

it's this close proximity that also imperils the health of waterways. The primary problem stems from urban stormwater runoff that carries a witch's brew of dog poop, vehicle drips, garden chemicals, ice melt and traction products, litter and other pollutants.

Stewardship of Anchorage's great riparian resources is AWC's primary goal, which is achieved through education and

has trained more than 200 citizen monitors who go out monthly to collect and analyze water samples at over 35 locations. An estimated 25,000 citizens have participated in AWC's past Creek Cleanups, which have removed over 50 tons of trash and debris since 1985. Seven years ago, AWC created monofilament recycling bins that were

next page please

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Anchorage Opera receives operating support from the Atwood Foundation, the Richard L and Diane M Block Foundation, and from the Municipality of Anchorage. Anchorage Opera is supported in part by an American Rescue Plan Act grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to support general operating expenses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a grant from the Alaska State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, a grant from the Kumin Foundation, as well as from many generous individuals and corporate community leaders. Our Guest Artists' Fitness Sponsor is The Alaska Club. Our Official Airline Sponsor is Alaska Airlines. Anchorage Opera is a member of OPERA America.

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Zoom conference updates on senior bills

Senior Voice Staff

Keep track of senior-related bills, budget decisions and other issues by attending the Alaska Commission on Aging Legislative Teleconferences. Available by toll-free call-in, the teleconferences provide a convenient forum for seniors and advocates across Alaska to share information about issues and specific bills of concern, including Medicaid, state budget and funding, senior assistance, retirement, Pioneer Homes and more.

Zoom conferences are scheduled every Thursday

through the remainder of the session: April 7, 14 and 21. Note, the start time has been changed to 3 p.m. (ends at 4:30 p.m.)

Draft agendas will be available to print from the state Notices website at <https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/>. The website will also have the Zoom address and phone numbers (for non-computer attendees).

Individuals who require special accommodations to participate should contact Lesley Thompson at 907-465-4793 at least two days prior to teleconferences.

Waterways

from page 16

placed at local fishing spots to reduce the impact of fishing line and debris on birds and wildlife.

One of AWC's primary programs is Scoop the Poop, because pet waste that is not cleaned up has human and pet health consequences from fecal coliform bacteria. Every creek and major lake (University, Campbell and Westchester Lagoon) in the Anchorage bowl is listed as an impaired waterbody by the EPA due to fecal coliform. It is only through education and compliance that there is any hope of removing this status.

AWC is highly reliant on residents to be its "eyes on the creeks". This vigilance is often the only means of learning about issues of concern that would otherwise never be known. These issues range from

the illegal dumping of trash or illegal substances into creeks to setback encroachments. If you see something that is disturbing, it can be reported at www.anchoragerecreeks.org/report-an-issue.

All of these programs are dependent on funding from memberships, donations, grants and contracts as well as the time given by Anchorage's great volunteers and working board. We are proud of the work that has been accomplished despite limited resources. If you care about Anchorage's creeks and lakes, please consider becoming a member and also volunteering. A perfect opportunity is coming up. Our 38th Creek Cleanup is between May 12 and May 24. All information is on our website at www.anchoragerecreeks.org.

Cherie Northon has been the executive director of AWC since 2010. Contact her at Cherie@anchoragerecreeks.org.

Senior Voice Calendar of Events is now online!

Submit your events at seniorvoice.com and click on the "Calendar" tab. **It's free!**

Calendar of Events

Editor's note: Due to COVID-19 safety concerns and restrictions, all events are subject to change or cancellation. Confirm before attending.

April 1 Wasilla Vinyasa flow yoga class each Friday at Wasilla Senior Center. Call for information, 907-206-8807

April 4-10 Juneau 47th Annual Alaska Folk Festival. Concerts, dancing, workshops, performances, signature events like the Coffee and Jam, Songwriter Showcase, more. Note, many events may be canceled due to COVID. www.akfolkfest.org

April 4 Homer Knitting circle at the Homer Public Library, every Monday from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Stop by to look for ideas or solutions or to work on your projects in a friendly environment. Call Homer Senior Center for information, 907-235-7655

April 7 Chugiak Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center offers assistance via Vietnam Veterans of America on Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call for information, 907-688-2619

April 8 Statewide Alaska Farmers Markets Association virtual summit, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Theme is "Gather and Grow". National speakers, skills workshops, networking, annual meeting, more. Event is free but registration is required. Visit www.alaskafarmersmarkets.org and click the "Events & Trainings" tab.

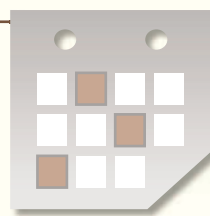
April 14 Valdez Valdez Senior Center annual board of directors meeting, 1:30 p.m. Held via teleconference, public welcome. Election results will be announced, along with other board and membership business. Call for dial-in and passcode numbers. 907-835-5032

April 15 Nationwide Tax day

April 22-May 8 Wrangell Stikine River Birding Festival at the Nolan Center. Events are spread out over several weekends and include presentations and talks, storytime sessions, outdoor events, boat trips, movies, photo contests and more. More information and an updated schedule of events at www.wrangell.com/birdingfestival/birding-festival-schedule

April 23-24 Wasilla Mat-Su Home Builders Annual Spring Home Show at the Menard Sports Center, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. See, learn about and buy the latest home products and services from more than 100 local vendors. Food trucks available. Tickets \$5. Free to children under 12, active military and older than 65. www.matsuhomeshow.com

April 25 Soldotna Soldotna Senior Center board of directors monthly meeting, 1 p.m. New ideas are always welcome. Teleconference is available. Call for information, 907-262-2322



Send us your calendar items

Send to: Senior Voice, 3340 Arctic Blvd., Suite 106, Anchorage AK 99503
editor@seniorvoicealaska.com
Deadline for May edition is April 15.

SENIOR APARTMENTS

VRS Property Management Office located at 1075 Check Street, Suite 102

Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

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507 E COPE INDUSTRIAL WAY, PALMER



New effort to keep fishing line off the shore and away from birds



By [Lauren Maxwell](#)

Published: Jun. 28, 2022 at 4:39 PM AKDT

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (KTUU) - Conservation groups are communicating to local anglers that improperly discarded waste from fishing such as hooks, line, and sinkers can be hazardous to birds near waterways.

"The line can get wrapped around their wings, and then it actually cuts the tendons that they need for flight," said Bird Treatment and Learning Center Director Laura Atwood. "It can get wrapped around their legs, and we've seen it cutting in as deep as to the bone."

Atwood said birds can also swallow hooks, which despite valiant efforts to save them, more often than not will lead to death.

The Anchorage Waterways Council is making it easier to discard line properly by replacing nearly 20 bins used to collect and recycle fishing line at local lakes and streams. Waterways Director Cherie Northon said some of the current bins were put up in 2015 and are starting to wear. The group received a \$10,000 grant from the Alaska Conservation Foundation to replace them, as part of a legacy donation from Jean Tam and Scott Christy, devoted loon researchers in Anchorage, who died in a plane crash in 2019.

Northon said the grant will also pay for a second bin where people can deposit lead sinkers and other tackle, which can be deadly to birds, including loons, if accidentally ingested. The group is encouraging people to buy tackle made with different metals, such as tin that is available online and at some local sporting goods stores. Northon said they are also distributing free tin sinkers at community events in Anchorage so that anglers can give them a try.

[Stay informed with breaking news and weather alerts from the Alaska's News Source apps](#)

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APPENDIX B - Newsletters



Anchorage Waterways Council - *Streamline*



Happy Holidays and a Wonderful New Year
Anchorage Waterways Council

Why we are thankful...

We are celebrating another successful year, our 37th, of guarding the health of local waterways. This is accomplished in many ways, but much of it is due to the support of volunteers and memberships. First and foremost, our 37th Annual Creek Cleanup last May had an overwhelming volunteer turnout which means more creek miles than ever were cleared of litter and other pollutants (litter is said to account for 60% of fresh water pollution). Additionally, Matson's "*Caring for Alaska*" became one of our new Creek Cleanup sponsors--joining long-time supporters ConocoPhillips Alaska and CIRI.

AWC's *water quality monitoring program* (entirely funded by donations) currently has 8 dedicated volunteer monitors who spend several hours a year sampling at 12 sites; Chester Creek has 8, Campbell Creek has 2, and Rabbit and Little Campbell creeks each has 1. The December monitoring was conducted on one of the coldest days we've had this fall.

Oona Martin, our monitor on the South Fork Chester Creek at the east end of University Lake site (shown following), recorded the air temperature at -17C/1.4F degrees and the creek water temperature at -3.8C/25.1F. Note the ice starting to form along the shore in the bottom left of the photo. Other monitors reported the creek water in their buckets started to turn slushy once gathered.

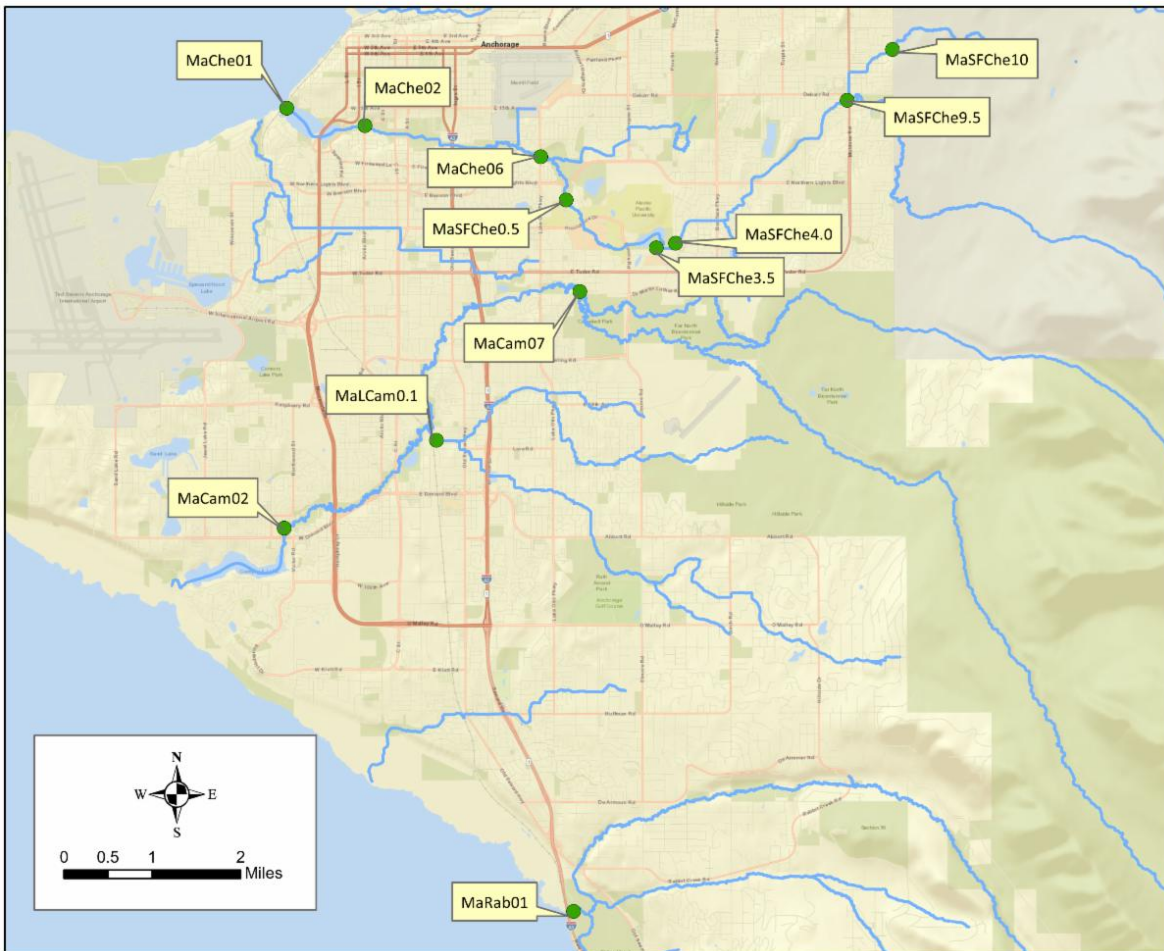


South Fork Chester Creek at the east end of University Lake (O. Martin 12/12/21)

One of the reasons that Chester Creek is currently getting broader coverage is to track levels of road salts and chemicals from stormwater runoff. This is accomplished by measuring the Electrical Conductivity (EC) in the creek. The higher the readout, the greater the amount of impact from traction chemicals.

This testing is part of a National Science Foundation (NSF) initiative called "Navigating the New Arctic". The data collected by AWC's monitors contributes to understanding how changes in the frequency of thawing during the winter months combined with the different road and parking area treatments (more salt or other deicing agents) affect the water quality in Anchorage creeks.

Chester Creek's 8 sampling sites extend from Anchorage's eastern boundary on the S. Fork of Chester Creek to Chester Creek's outflow at Westchester Lagoon. (see map following) The test results show a perfect trend of low readings upstream to the highest at Westchester Lagoon's outflow.



Map showing AWC's 2021 Monitoring Sites

How to read the naming convention for the monitoring sites:

- Ma = Municipality of Anchorage
- SFChe = South Fork Chester Creek
- Cam = Campbell Creek
- LCam = Little Campbell Creek
- Rab = Rabbit Creek
- 01 = 1 mile upstream from the mouth
- 10 = 10 miles upstream from the mouth

MaChe02 = Municipality of Anchorage, Chester Creek, 2 miles upstream of the mouth

One of our monitors, Margie MacNeille, has been sampling over 15 years for AWC, and Matt and Ellen Murphy-Welk cover 5 sites. Two of our monitors, Donovan Camp and Valerie Tompkins, are also board members. In 2015, AWC's volunteer board voted to become a "working" board. This means that besides governance, board members are expected to contribute a certain amount of time every year to projects (mostly unfunded programs) where their input allows us to accomplish more than our budget would ordinarily allow. Some of the work they undertake, besides monitoring, is helping with events, e.g. Scoop the Poop day and Creek Cleanup, responding to creek issues, and tackling new projects that have no funding. It is crystal clear that memberships as well as one-time and project-dedicated donations are critical to our work.

One example of this is a study initiated by AWC board member Birgit Hagedorn to collect creek and stormwater outfall samples during breakup 2021. Her plan was to ascertain if the chemical compound 6PPD-quinone, which results from the breakdown of vehicle tires and is toxic to coho salmon, is occurring in local waterways.

With no grant support for this study, the first round of highly expensive lab tests (\$500/each!) was underwritten in early 2021 by local donors to a GoFundMe campaign. The lab results from April and July testing confirmed that the compound is, indeed, entering *Ship and Chester creeks* from stormwater runoff, so we are planning to do another round of testing at breakup in 2022 which means raising the funds again to support it. AWC is currently looking for grants to cover these costs, and we meet semi-annually with a group of stakeholders from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, other local environmental and sport groups, and representatives of the tire industry. This emerging concern is being taken very seriously by several researchers, and we hope that our work on this will be a further contribution to the pool of knowledge. If this sounds interesting to you, please consider contributing to this project by contacting *Cherie Northon* directly.

AWC staff, board, volunteers, and members are a small, yet very committed, group that has traditionally taken on issues that are impacting local waterways for nearly 4 decades with the overarching goal of making and keeping our creeks and lakes healthy. We want to recognize and thank everyone who is committed to achieving this goal.

May your holiday season be one of health, thankfulness, joy, and peace.

Cherie, Thom, Vangie, and the AWC Board of Directors

Please Consider a Membership

Many of AWC's programs are self-funded, which means that we rely on memberships and donations from you to support them. Every amount helps, and our ever-popular recurring monthly donation option can reap big benefits for us. Please consider a year-end donation to further our work. You can join, renew or donate [here](#). Anchorage's creeks will appreciate it, and so will you!

Donate items and shop to help AWC

Fashion Pact is a new resale shop in downtown Anchorage where items you donate and purchase generate income for AWC. This is an excellent way to reuse items and keep them out of the waste stream. EVERYTHING in the shop is \$5. Everything! Of that \$5, \$1 goes to the non-profit that you designate when you donate items, and if you shop--an additional \$1 of the \$5 goes to the non-profit of your choice. It has turned out to be a great source of revenue as well as a good place to donate gently used items. Please check it out, and consider us if you shop or donate there.

Our *Fred Meyer Rewards* program and Amazon Smile are additional ways to support our work.

Contact: 907 272-7335 or awc@anchoragecreeks.org
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[Visit our website](#)



Anchorage Waterways Council - *Streamline*



Campbell Creek, June 2, 2021



Campbell Creek, February 2, 2022



Campbell Creek, March 18, 2022

Changing of the Seasons

I find it interesting to use a creek to follow the passage of time and seasons. Campbell Creek at Shelikof St. is a short walk from my home, and I've been watching it for over 20 years. Today, a moose browsed on the south bank by the foot bridge, and, several years ago, there was a family of beavers that took up residence just west of the bridge. Every visit provides a new nature experience and illustration of where we are in the seasonal cycle.

In early March 2022, the thick ice started to break up and expose the chilly waters flowing below. As large chunks of ice broke off and floated downstream, trash from the previous season revealed its ugly presence. Spring is always a busy time at AWC as we prepare for "Spring Cleaning" on Anchorage's waterways as well as on the land surrounding them.

Besides trash making an appearance, all those nasty little dog poops that weren't picked up begin to emerge. While still frozen, they're not so bad, but once breakup begins in earnest--they melt into ponds of brown water. Before long, this "poop soup" finds its way down into a waterway where it releases trillions of fecal coliform bacteria. Add in all the accompanying trash and litter, and you can see why our work is cut out for us. To address these problems, AWC organizes the following cleanup events every spring:

Scoop the Poop Day, Saturday, April 23, 11-3

&

38th Annual Creek Cleanup, May 12 to 24

Scoop the Poop Day!

To show your support for clean waterways, stop by University Lake or Connors Bog dog parks on April 23 where you'll be greeted by volunteers handing out gloves, bags, buckets, and trowels. Sign in and clean up, and you'll be entered into a drawing for **Alaska Mill and Feed \$15 gift cards!**

Hoping to see you out there!

DIY Scoop the Poop: If you wish to clean up an area of your choice, AWC can provide bags and gloves. Contact us at: awc@anchoragecreeks.org for assistance. After your cleanup, send us a photo with the date, and you'll also be entered into the gift card drawing.



A gorgeous day at University Lake dog park, April 18, 2021

38th Annual Creek Cleanup! May 12 to 24

Always a great team or family event, please come on out for our 38th cleanup! For the past 37 years, thousands of Anchorageites have fanned out along local creeks and lakes to pull tons of trash from them. Last year was a banner year for the number of teams, so let's do it again!

How? AWC provides teams with a tote filled with bags, hand sanitizers, a

first aid kit, a location map, and sign-in forms. This year, there will be trash pickers, safety vests, and gloves donated by Matson's [Caring for Alaska](#) program. This [video](#) highlights the program and features a team from PND Engineering cleaning up Campbell Creek in May 2021. Besides supplies, Matson has also made a very generous donation of \$10,000 to help defray our expenses. Other sponsors include ConocoPhillipsAlaska - \$5,000, CIRI - \$2,500, and GCI - \$500. A huge THANK YOU to all!

[Team signups](#) will open on April 1. If you want to check out the locations beforehand, go to this [link](#). Questions? Email: awc@anchoragecreeks.org



PND Engineers' team on Campbell Creek, May 24, 2021
Photo courtesy of Keith Baxter

Where is this?



Can you identify the LOCATION of this aerial photo as well as the CREEK?

Send your answers to [AWC](#). The first 5 responding with correct answers will win an AWC water bottle!

Memberships and Donations

Help us be advocates for local creeks and lakes in the Anchorage watershed. Join an active community of like-minded citizens and businesses. Your support makes a tremendous difference to a small organization like AWC.

\$30-\$99 Waterway Watcher
\$100-\$249 River Keeper
\$250-\$499 Habitat Protector
\$500-\$999 Watershed Steward
\$1,000+ President's Circle

AWC is also a recipient of Pick, Click, Give donations. Please consider us when you fill out your PCG application.

DONATE TODAY



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Anchorage Waterways Council - *Streamline*



Fall Creek Cleanup on Chester Creek, September 2021

Give back on Earth Day

April 22 is Earth Day, an event that began 52 years ago as the Environmental Movement was born. Concern about our planet was strong in 1970 when the world's population was only 3.6 billion. Today, that number has more than doubled, and we are struggling with many new problems that are extremely dire. The effects of climate change are especially alarming as erratic weather patterns, devastating wildfires, warming/rising oceans, food and water scarcity, and changing disease vectors impact humans and other species that share this planet with us.

There is no doubt that this feels overwhelming at times, but that shouldn't keep us from improving the environment even on a small scale. Let the words of Pete Seeger remind us of this, "[t]he world will be solved by millions of small things."

What are some small things that you can do? Join like-minded folks at our annual **Scoop the Poop Day, Saturday, April 23**, and sign up for our **38th Annual Creek Cleanup, May 12 to 24**.

How does scooping dog poop help the greater world?

A gram of dog poop contains about 23 million fecal coliform (FC) bacteria! Multiply that out to get an idea of how many FC are in the droppings of one pet. All poop that is not cleaned up will eventually make its way to the nearest waterway in stormwater runoff. It doesn't take much math to get the idea of how much FC enters our waterways every day, and these bacteria have pathogens that can make humans and their pets sick. ALL water is precious, and it needs to be cared for. So please, make every day a Scoop the Poop Day!

Scoop the Poop Day! April 23, 11-3

To show your support for clean waterways, stop by University Lake or Connors Bog dog parks on April 23 where you'll be greeted by volunteers handing out gloves, bags, buckets, and trowels. Sign in and clean up, and you'll be entered into a drawing for **Alaska Mill and Feed \$15 gift cards!**

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How do clean creeks help the greater world?

We all live in a watershed. Everything we do in our local environment can affect the larger world. A simple piece of trash, like a plastic soda bottle, that is left on the ground could eventually make its way to the Pacific Ocean and the "great garbage patch"! Cleaning up the trash and litter along our creeks now prevents it from making its way down a local creek to Cook Inlet to Prince William Sound to the Gulf of Alaska and finally the Pacific Ocean!

38th Annual Creek Cleanup! May 12 to 24

Always a great team or family event, please come on out for our 38th cleanup! For the past 37 years, thousands of Anchorageites have fanned out along local creeks and lakes to pull tons of trash from them. Last year was a banner year for the number of teams, so let's do it again!

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NEW event! Paddler Cleanup on local lakes, ponds, and lagoons!

Saturday, May 21, 10 -1

One of our member groups, Team Orange, has proposed a single day devoted to the cleanup of lakes, ponds, and lagoons. It is an on-the-water event, and we are inviting anyone who has a kayak, canoe, or packraft to participate. Following is a list of the locations we would like to cover for the inaugural event. Note that there is a suggested number of people per location in order to cover as many places as possible. Signups will open in early May.

- Westchester (East): 8
- Westchester (West): 5
- Connors Bog: 2
- DeLong Lake: 2
- Jewel Lake: 3
- Sand Lake: 4
- Taku Lake: 2
- Sundi Lake: 2
- University Lake: 6
- Cheney Lake: 4
- Goose Lake: 4
- Cuddy Pond: 2 - reserved for Challenge Alaska

Supplies will be available from 9-10 on Saturday, May 21, at the 40th Ave. entrance to Cuddy Pond. Paddlers can head out to their spots and clean until 1 pm. A small reception will follow at Cuddy Park for participants who can show off their most coveted piece of trash. Awards will be given for several categories, and paddlers can partake of pizza and share their "sea" stories.

Please email Cherie Northon at cherie@anchoragecreeks.org for details and to be notified when the signups open.

Memberships and Donations

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\$30-\$99 Waterway Watcher
\$100-\$249 River Keeper
\$250-\$499 Habitat Protector
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Anchorage Waterways Council - *Streamline*



Pacific Northern Academy's 5th grade class cleaning at Campbell Creek, May 2022

Welcome to Summer!

Summer is in full swing, and AWC is going full speed into it. This busy period was heralded in by our annual *Scoop the Poop Day* in April, and was quickly followed by our *38th Annual Creek Cleanup* in May. Creek Cleanup was expanded to include a day devoted to cleanup by paddlers. Called "Flotilla", its inaugural popularity assures that it will become a permanent event every year.

June was every bit as busy with two exciting new projects underway. The first is a successful \$25,000 grant proposal to the Anchorage Park Foundation for a Challenge Grant to build a viewing platform at the *Waterfowl Sanctuary at Westchester Lagoon* off of Spenard. The second is a \$10,000 grant from the *Alaska Conservation Foundation* to upgrade monofilament recycling bins at local fishing sites and add lead recycling bins. We are working with USFWS Outreach Biologist *Tamara Zeller* and her summer intern Chloe Hansen as well as *Bird TLC* to educate on lead hazards to birds and other wildlife.

In addition, ConocoPhillips has again funded our ever popular *Creeks as Classrooms* program which was suspended due to the pandemic. We're

excited to gear up for summer and fall activities with local youth.

Please keep in mind that all of the above as well as our regular activities (water quality monitoring, event coordination, issue response, and salmon toxicity testing) are carried out by AWC's small staff--a full-time director (me) and part-time staff members Thom Eley and Vangie Wight--and an 8-member working board that is expected to contribute dozens of hours annually to fill the gaps on programming needs. Funding and volunteers are essential to help us work for keeping Anchorage's creek and lake habitats healthy and enjoyable for all. [Thank you to everyone who steps up!](#)

Scoop the Poop Day! April 23

Dog owners showed up *en masse* for Scoop Day! Thanks to all who ventured to University Lake, Connors Bog, and various local spots to clean up pounds of poop that sprouted up during breakup. It is always a fun day to gather and meet like-minded souls. Special thanks to Starbucks for providing coffee and snacks!

Remember: EVERY DAY is SCOOP THE POOP DAY because there is NO POOP FAIRY!





38th Annual Creek Cleanup! May 12 to 24

Anchorageites never disappoint us! Thank you to the 40+ teams that signed up and spread out across Anchorage's creeks and lakes over 12 days in May. Several tons of trash were picked up by hundreds of volunteers including Scouts, environmental engineering and consulting firms, local, state, and federal employees, NGOs, families, neighbor groups, medical staff, and elementary and high school students. The opening photo above shows 5th grade students from *Pacific Northern Academy*. Stewardship needs to be fostered early on.

This year was notable for exceptionally generous corporate sponsors who helped make Creek Cleanup a phenomenal success. A HUGE thanks to *Matson's Caring for Alaska* program, ConocoPhillips Alaska, CIRI, and GCI.

1st Annual Flotilla! May 21



One of our long-time creek/lake cleaners, Larry Monsma of Team Orange, is constantly thinking up new ways to involve volunteers for cleanup events. This spring he decided that one day of Creek Cleanup

should be designated for kayakers, canoers, and packrafters. He quickly pulled in AWC (in a heartbeat), Diana Rhodes of the [Anchorage Park Foundation](#), and Ellen Devine of MOA Parks and Recreation. A few Zoom meetings later and the inaugural event was launched!

Tasks were divvied up, a date was chosen, an iconic Flotilla sticker was created by Ellen, and Flotilla happened. There was an official signup which helped to spread cleaners around various lakes, and, on a MOST gorgeous and warm May 21 morning, paddlers picked up supplies (gloves and trash pickers courtesy of Matson) and trash bags. Paddlers then fanned out and returned to Cuddy Park for pizza in the afternoon.

There were 45-50 paddlers on Westchester Lagoon, Cheney Lake, Sand Lake, Jewel Lake, Taku Lake, DeLong Lake, and Goose Lake. Trash was collected, oddities were brought in (a bicycle, skateboard, and more), and stories were told. Stay tuned for Flotilla 2 next May!

This event was entirely made possible thanks to [Matson's Caring for Alaska](#) program.



Larry Monsma and an intact bong from Westchester Lagoon just before it was dropped and shattered!



Rage City Roller Derby gals at Cheney Lake

And, speaking of the Rage City Roller Derby...

A once pretty little pond in East Anchorage had turned into a particularly nasty place, and a frustrated neighbor wanted something done. A [KTUU news story](#) by Lauren Maxwell on this year's Creek Cleanup prompted a nearby resident named William to call and ask for help. He had spent a considerable amount of time (unsuccessfully) trying to get the attention of the MOA or AKDOT & PF to see who was responsible for an area that had been built near the highway interchange and was now home to grocery carts, vacuums, scooters, trash, and more.

I tried to sort it out, which was not easy. Ultimately, I contacted the MOA's Street Maintenance department and miraculously some large items--3 grocery carts a scooter, and 2 vacuum cleaners--were fished out and hauled off. That still left a significant and unsightly mess in what could be an attractive green space. The water feature is actually a catchment basin for runoff from north of the highway and the surrounding area. A path has been paved around it, an obelisk has been placed, and there were birds visiting the area. I decided that it needed an impromptu cleanup, so I put out feelers to the AWC board and the "love-to-volunteer-for-cleanups" [Rage City Roller Derby gals](#). The date was set for Saturday, June 18. Five rollergirls showed up along with 3 AWC board members, Donovan Camp, Valerie Tompkins, and Bob Shipley, and all staff. It was completely transformed in about 2 hours! See for yourself.



Grocery carts and vacuums (!!!) in the pond



AWC board member Donovan Camp and Stormy retrieve a car battery



Rage City Roller Derby's "Bam" finishes up at a storm drain grate



BEFORE!



AFTER!



Bam, Donovan, Daniel, Bekah, Lorelei, Bob, Alex, Jessica, Vangie, Thom, Valerie & AWC mascot Stormy

Love a Loon Campaign



Who doesn't love loons and other waterfowl that are icons of Alaska? Did you know that Anchorage has the distinction of being the largest city in North America to still have nesting loons?

“Love a Loon” is the theme for a new important program being developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Anchorage Waterways Council, *Bird TLC*, and several other stakeholders. The goal is to educate the public, in general, and fishermen, in particular, to be more mindful of how their actions can affect birds and wildlife—especially loons and other waterfowl that share the same waters.

There are 2 particular hazards that can have dire effects on birds, loons, and other waterfowl. These are monofilament fishing line that has not been properly disposed of and lead fishing tackle that birds ingest. Tangled birds unable to fly or feed are at risk of starvation or predation, and ingesting *lead fishing weights* and hooks can bring illness or death from lead contamination.

With a grant from the *Alaska Conservation Foundation* funded by a legacy donation from Jean Tam and Scott Christy--AWC has been able to purchase materials to build a new set of monofilament line recycling bins which are being placed out at popular fishing spots this summer. In addition, there is a new component--bins to collect lead tackle. Another aspect of this project is to provide anglers with information on why switching to lead-free tackle is important. USFWS intern Chloe Hansen is providing free samples of non-lead fishing shot at tabling events along with information on where to purchase them locally. Please consider getting the lead out!



USFWS Intern Chloe Hansen at the South Anchorage Farmers Market, June 18, 2022

Westchester Lagoon Viewing Platform

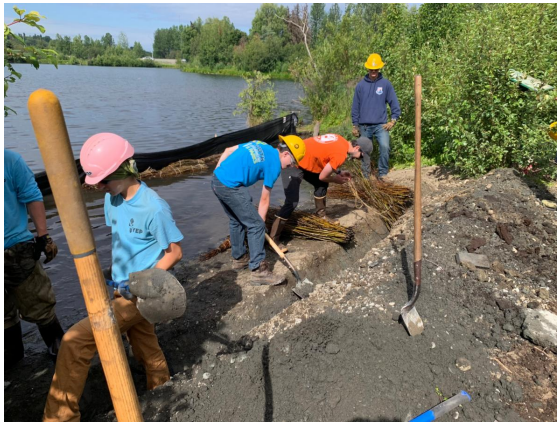
More good news for waterfowl and bird lovers! AWC has received a

\$25,000 Challenge Grant from the Anchorage Parks Foundation (APF). The project is for restoring an area of degraded bank on Westchester Lagoon at Spenard. The "challenge" part of the grant means that AWC has to provide 1:1 matching funds either through donations, volunteer time, non-federal grants, or donated materials and/or services.

We are fortunate to have board members and community friends to help us achieve this goal. AWC Treasurer Alex Jefferies prepared a detailed workplan and budget for the project and also submitted applications for the required permits from ADF&G and the Municipality. Todd Heyworth, a design engineer, prepared the final drawings that were submitted for various permits that are required for work along a shoreline.

On Wednesday, July 6, *ground was broken* at the site. In attendance were AWC staff and board members, APF staff and board members, MOA Parks and Rec staff, and the fabulous YEP crew (*Youth Employment in Parks*). Most of the "heavy lifting" is being done by the YEP crew which is overseen by staff from Anchorage Parks and Rec. They have turned over the compacted soil, added new top soil, planted shrubs and grass, and added an ADA accessible path to the platform. The viewing platform will be delivered from Soldotna and installed in the next few weeks. New signage will also be added along with more landscaping.

It will be fenced off for the near future to protect it, but you can stop by and check it out now. Let us know what you think!



YEP crew at Westchester trenching for willow staking and preparing soil for planting

Memberships and Donations

Do these projects inspire you? These are some of the things that AWC is able to do with memberships and donations. Help us to more and be advocates for local creeks and lakes in the Anchorage watershed. Join an active community of like-minded citizens and businesses. Your support makes a tremendous difference to a small organization like AWC.

- \$30-\$99 Waterway Watcher
- \$100-\$249 River Keeper
- \$250-\$499 Habitat Protector
- \$500-\$999 Watershed Steward
- \$1,000+ President's Circle

Donate items and shop to help AWC

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Our [Fred Meyer Rewards](#) program and Amazon Smile are additional ways to support our work.

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Anchorage Waterways Council - *Streamline*



Westchester Lagoon Waterfowl Sanctuary - June 2022

From that to this!



Westchester Lagoon Waterfowl Sanctuary - July 2022

New Westchester Lagoon Viewing Platform

If you've been following us, you're undoubtedly aware of this fantastic project that AWC has just undertaken. Funded by an [Anchorage Park Foundation Challenge Grant](#), the eroded shoreline of Westchester Lagoon at Spenard was repaired and willow stakes were added, an accessible gravel path was created, new vegetation was planted, and a 5' x 24' elevated light-penetrating viewing platform was installed. A few upgrades remain--including new signage that will be placed in September.

We will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony followed by a creek cleanup on Chester Creek on August 13, 10 am. AWC is doing this in conjunction with [Alaska Environment Action](#) and the local chapter of the [Sierra Club](#) who are celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the [Clean Water Act](#).

Grab your boots!

AWC will have a table with creek cleanup bags, gloves, and hand sanitizers near the platform between 10 and 10:30. After the ceremony, head upstream for an hour or so along Chester Creek or spread out along Westchester's shoreline!

CHESTER CREEK CLEANUP

CELEBRATE THE
CLEAN WATER ACT 50TH ANNIVERSARY
&
WESTCHESTER WATERFOWL SANCTUARY VIEWING PLATFORM RIBBON
CUTTING



13 August 2022 · 10:00am

Westchester Waterfowl Sanctuary Viewing Platform off Spenard. Recommended parking at Valley of the Moon Park, 17th Ave between E Street and Arctic Blvd.

Wear suitable shoes. Gloves & bags will be provided.



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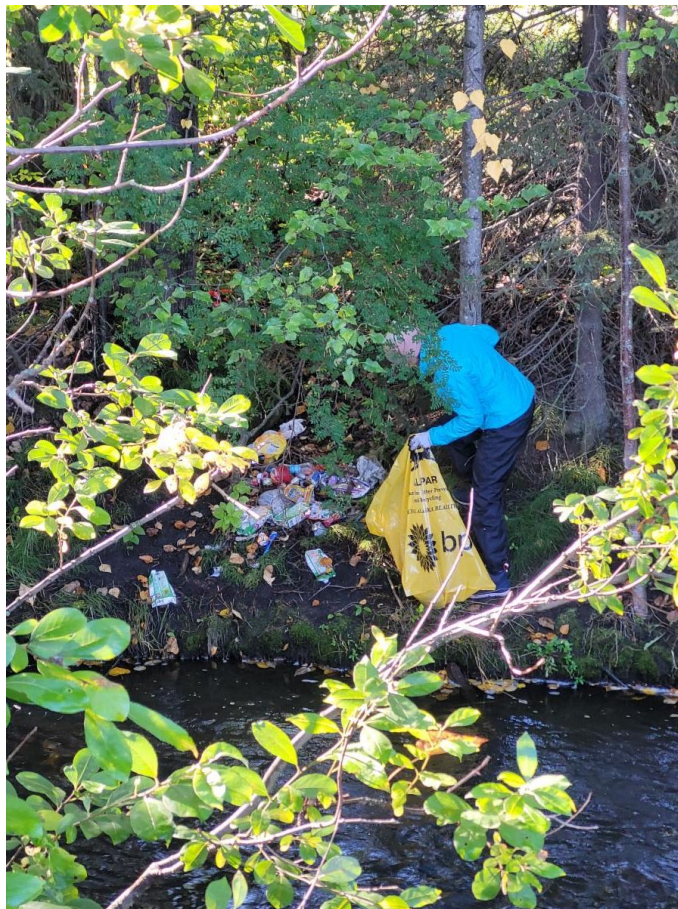
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Anchorage Waterways Council - *Streamline*

Fall Creek Cleanup

Thanks to all who came out to clean up Chester, Fish, and Campbell creeks last month. It's always a good idea to get as much out of local waterways before they freeze up. See you next spring for our 38!!! Annual Creek Cleanup.

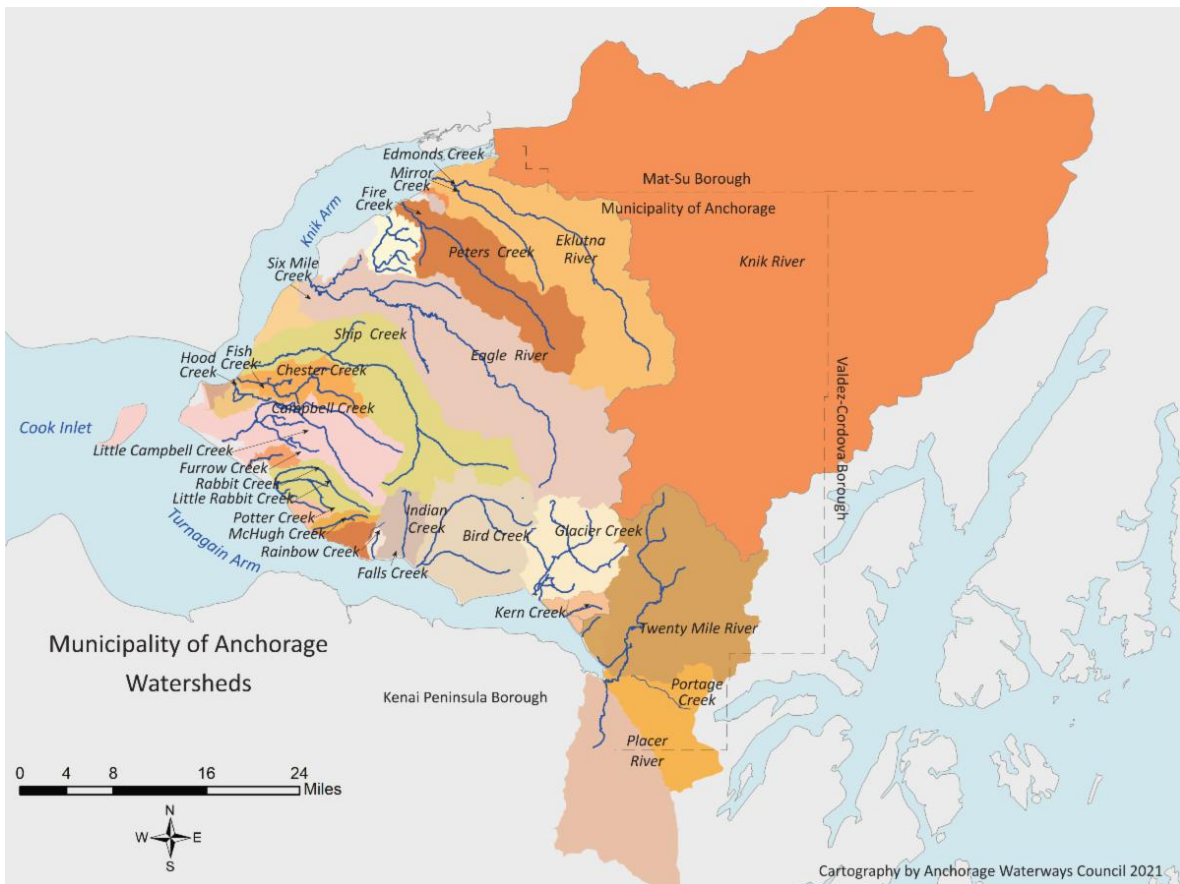


Cleaning up trash dumped along Chester Creek at Eastchester Park

AWC's "Taking Action on Issues" Program

Did you know that there are 28 watersheds in the Municipality of Anchorage? AWC works mostly on the 10 urban creeks that extend from Eagle River in the north to Little Survival Creek in the south. With a staff of only 3, it's impossible to keep an eye

on every creek mile, so we rely heavily on local citizens to report anything that doesn't seem right. Here is the link to our "[Citizen Reporting Form](#)" if you ever have a concern.



Every year, we receive about 2 dozen reports from citizens-- some can be easily explained and others require a site visit and forwarding information to the proper MOA or state agency. Following is a sample of reports that we've received recently and over the years.



S. Fork Little Campbell Creek at Petersburg--snow from the parking lot has been pushed up to the edge of the creek which is illegal. When it melts, there will be all sorts of trash and pollutants, e.g vehicle drips and ice melt chemicals, entering the creek.



S. Fork Little Campbell Creek at 76th and Old Seward--snow disposal from the parking lot was at the edge of the creek, which, when melted, left piles of road sand and gravel tumbling into the creek.



Chester Creek between A and C Streets--watching an orange plume like this coming towards you (AWC staff was working in the creek with students from North Star Elementary) is rather disconcerting. Sightings of "orange water" have been fairly common around Anchorage, and they usually occur on Chester and Fish creeks. In reality, they're basically harmless.

Anchorage has the perfect conditions that contribute to this phenomenon--rusting and aging stormwater infrastructure that carries runoff into local creeks whose water is iron-rich.

Several types of bacteria are characterized as "iron-eating" which, when they have the right mixture of oxygen, water, and iron, feed on the iron and produce an orange slime. The above example is rather extreme, and was most likely exacerbated by the storm drain being "flushed" at the time. These events are almost entirely episodic, and, once in the creek, the orange water will dissipate rapidly.



Rabbit Creek at the Old Seward Highway--paint and electronics were dumped down near the creek. It's very frustrating that creeks have become such a magnet for dumped objects. We've had reports of couches, mattresses (they are NOT fun when waterlogged), washers/dryers/refrigerators, shopping carts, and more. The above had the potential to cause some really significant damage to the creek if spilled.



Little Campbell Creek near E. 74th--a young man was observed by a neighbor pouring gasoline or something from a gasoline container into the creek. It was reported to the MOA Watershed Management Services who visited the youth's family. We did not receive a follow-up on it probably due to a minor being involved. This is a perfect example of how important it is to document concerns with photos.



S. Fork Little Campbell Creek at Birch Road--A constituent of Assemblyman John Weddleton notified him of this brown "ooze" running down the path adjacent to Birch Road, which is about 500' uphill from the creek. The incident occurred during 2021 breakup, and the concern was runoff contamination into the creek. The source was confirmed to be from the adjacent equestrian area that had stormwater running through its grounds. MOA Watershed Management suggested their on-site manure storage and runoff mitigation plans be reviewed. The fecal coliform tests that we did showed very high *E. coli* bacteria counts.



South Fork Chester Creek--someone with extraordinary strength managed to dislodge the cover from a manhole and toss it into the creek. A neighbor alerted AWC, and one of our board members, Bob Shipley, responded. AWWU was contacted and both parts were reunited the next day.

It is vitally important to have an organization that concerned citizens can contact about creek concerns. Often, we hear that they have called various state and local agencies, which can be difficult to wade through in the first place, but they never received a response or the assistance necessary. AWC tries to be that liaison. We cannot always "fix" the problem, but we can find the right person or agency who will respond.

This program remains, however, unfunded now as it was in the past, which is the reason why memberships and contributions are so important to our work. AWC also depends heavily on its volunteer working board to help investigate these complaints. Bob Shipley, a long-time member, is usually the one who responds, and Birgit Hagedorn steps up to help as well.

Please Consider a Membership

Many of AWC's programs are self-funded, which means that we rely on memberships and donations from you to support them. Every amount helps, and recurring monthly donations can reap big benefits for us. Join, renew or donate [here](#). Please consider this if you have not already. Anchorage's creeks will appreciate it, and so will you!

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