



## ANCHORAGE PARK FOUNDATION MEDIA RELEASE

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### **YOUTH CREWS BUILD TRAIL CONNECTING SENIOR CENTER TO CHESTER CREEK GREENBELT**

#### ***Funding from Legislature Enables Project Benefiting Youth & Seniors***

In partnership with the Anchorage Senior Center and the Alaska State Legislature, this week crews from the Youth Employment in Parks program are building a trail connecting the Anchorage Senior Center to the Chester Creek Greenbelt. This connection will enable seniors and other community members to conveniently and safely access Anchorage's 250 miles of greenbelt trails.

The Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) program is a program of the Anchorage Park Foundation, the Anchorage Parks & Recreation Department and Alaska Youth for Environmental Action, a program of the National Wildlife Federation. Each summer, the YEP program hires diverse Anchorage teens to complete park improvement projects and offer free recreation programs in our community.

"The YEP program is a core focus for the Anchorage Park Foundation because it achieves our core goals: engaging the community in their public lands, improving parks, and creating stewards of natural resources," said Anchorage Park Foundation Board Member Eleanor Andrews. "We are particularly proud of projects like this one, which engage the teens directly with the community members who will benefit from their hard work."

With funding from the Alaska State Legislature, this trail construction project offers YEP crews the opportunity to learn a valuable job skill, trail-building, while enhancing a beloved park asset. Project partners have retained the services of professional trail-builders from Alaska Trails in order to provide technical training and leadership to the YEP teen crews. Alaska Trails will also be on hand to ensure that this trail connection is built to an accessible standard to ensure that Alaskans of all abilities will be able to enjoy this recreation opportunity.

"We are thrilled to collaborate with the Senior Center, the Park Foundation and the Parks & Recreation Department to create this new trail," said State Senator Johnny Ellis. "The Legislature is proud to fund this project in order to ensure that Alaska's pioneers have access to our community's greenbelt trails, which are a great place to walk, run, bike or just experience the natural beauty of Alaska."

Crews will be at work on the trail between 9 am – 4:30 pm, from Monday, July 26 – Thursday, July 29. Volunteers from REI and the Anchorage Senior Center will be working alongside teens throughout the week, enhancing the crews' connection to the purpose of their work. On Wednesday, July 28, from 3-5 pm, crews and volunteers will enjoy a barbecue at the Senior Center.

YEP is made possible by generous support from more than 100 community partners. Major funders include the Rasmuson Foundation, the Municipality of Anchorage, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the Atwood Foundation, the Alaska State Legislature and the Alaska State Council on the Arts.

For more information about Youth Employment in Parks, please visit the Anchorage Park Foundation website at [www.AnchorageParkFoundation.org](http://www.AnchorageParkFoundation.org).

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