

Propositions benefit trails, community

By VICTOR MOLLOZZI

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Anchorage residents consistently identify Anchorage Parks and Trails as one of the most important reasons why our city is such a great place to live. I invite you to join with me in voting on April 4 to make a positive statement about the importance of parks and trails to our community.

Propositions 2, 3, 4 and 5 will help better maintain and make safe our parks and trails, add value to our park system and continue to build on the Park and Rec successes of the last year. These successes include the Anchorage Park Foundation raising \$1.2 million to date. We expect to have an additional \$400,000 after Rasmuson challenge grants are awarded this spring. The benefit of these nonprofit dollars is multiplied when combined with federal, state and municipal funds and help supplement the cost of our park system for the taxpayers.

Prop 2 is a bond for \$3.9 million and will provide needed capital improvements in 14 parks, improve areawide trails and improve pedestrian safety. The funds will help protect and maintain water quality, provide for playground and family recreation areas, and enhance and preserve natural areas and open space. These funds will be leveraged and combined with state, federal and Anchorage Park Foundation dollars to maximize the benefits to our community. The cost to the taxpayer will be \$2.52 per \$100,000 of assessed property.

Prop 3, which results in no cost to the taxpayers and no increase in property taxes, will allow the municipality to enter into a long-term, non-exclusive lease of the golf course facilities at Russian Jack Springs Park with the Russian Jack Springs Jr. Golf Association, a nonprofit organization. The golf association would upgrade and maintain public golf facilities for youth programs. The park would remain a community park for year-round family and sports activities.

Prop 4, which results in no cost to the taxpayers and no increase in property taxes, will allow a land trade to expand the existing South Anchorage Sports Park. This would include the development of a year-round multi-use community park on the Klatt Homestead.

Prop 5, which results in no cost to the taxpayers and no increase in property taxes, will allow for a land trade to provide a trail head parking lot and trail connections to Mount Baldy, located adjacent to Chugach State Park in Eagle River.

Generations before us had a vision and recognized the value of parks in the community. They contributed land, money, time and energy and have given us the incredible park system we have today.

Each of us, our children and future generations will benefit from your support as we continue to create a legacy of a strong, vibrant and financially sound park system.

As a package, these four ballot initiatives allow us to use federal, state and park foundation resources, at minimal cost to the taxpayers, to make our parks, trails and fields safer and cleaner for everyone to enjoy.

This partnership between municipal, state, federal and park foundation resources will provide better stewardship of all our facilities and give us all a better place in which to live, to work and to

raise a family.

If we are to succeed in developing a quality park system, cooperation between all of the various park user groups, the Park and Recreation Commission, the Anchorage Park Foundation, the administration and the Anchorage Assembly will be needed.

With strong leadership and passage of the four initiatives Anchorage can and will develop and build a strong and healthy park system.

Support our parks by voting for Propositions 2, 3 4 and 5. We can enjoy safer, cleaner parks and trails today and leave a legacy for future generations.

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