

Anchorage Park Foundation Anchorage Parks & Recreation



2010 Neighborhood Park Fix-Its

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Anchorage Park Foundation and Parks & Recreation: Public-Private Partnerships Improving Parks

The Anchorage Park Foundation (APF) and the Anchorage Parks & Recreation Department (APRD) are rehabilitating, restoring and revitalizing Anchorage neighborhood parks with community and volunteer support.

The Anchorage Park Foundation works to build a stronger community by ensuring that our neighborhood parks are clean, green, safe and secure. We call this our Clean & Green campaign, which is made possible with generous support from the **Rasmuson Foundation**, the **Alaska State Legislature** and volunteers like you. Clean & Green projects use volunteer and professional labor to accomplish park projects that are immediate, doable, supported, needed, and produced visible results. Volunteer support enables private and public dollars to stretch further and make real improvements to parks.

Why neighborhood parks?

These are the parks that touch us close to home and strengthen neighborhood connections. A neighborhood park is within walking distance of your home, with the playground where your children play and where you enjoy lunch at a picnic table. Where you see moose browsing in the trees and you enjoy the summer sun.

To ensure that Clean & Green funding is leveraged effectively to meet community needs, the Anchorage Park Foundation partnered with the Parks & Recreation Department to create the Anchorage Parks Report Card in fall 2008. Over 1,000 Anchorage parks supporters participated in grading parks and creating "Fix-It Lists" for the parks they love.

In summer 2009, APF and APRD partnered with community members to accomplish the improvements in 12 neighborhood parks. In 2010, we worked to make the fix-its in 8 more parks.



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Very Important Park Committees: Volunteer Leadership at Work

APF and APRD use information from the Anchorage Parks Report Card to engage local Very Important Park Committees in planning Fix-It efforts in neighborhood parks.

Beginning in the wintertime, APRD and APF staff invited park neighbors and Community Council members to join the Very Important Park (VIP) Committee for each selected park. Each VIP committee partnered with staff from the Parks & Recreation Department to identify priority repairs and recruit volunteers to accomplish park improvements in eight Anchorage parks. The Very Important Parks Committees met regularly to assess conditions in the park, collaboratively create project plans, and recruit volunteers for park improvements.



In summer 2010, the VIP committees worked with APF and APRD to put their plans in action, by engaging volunteers, staff and contractors in park improvements, from replacing trash cans and play equipment to restoring landscaping and removing graffiti. APF is proud to draw communities closer together through the VIP Committee process: by engaging in decision making at every level, park neighbors feel ownership of their community parks and will become strong stewards for their parks in perpetuity.



Community Support Attracts Diverse Dollars

In 2010, neighborhood park fix-it volunteers contributed more than XXXX hours to cleaning and greening neighborhood parks in Anchorage. This community commitment and investment in neighborhood parks inspires other funders to match community "sweat equity" with cash grants that can be used to replace park equipment and add new features.

The Anchorage Park Foundation and Parks & Recreation Department's successes in 2009 inspired the Alaska State Legislature to match community and Rasmuson Foundation investment with more than \$1 million for neighborhood park improvements in 2010 and 2011.

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Al Miller Park

APF and APRD worked closely with the Government Hill Very Important Park Committee to prioritize work at Al Miller Park, a small neighborhood park on Cook Avenue. After reviewing locally available parks resources, the VIP Committee decided to focus their fix-it efforts on:

- Creating a permanent entry path with gravel;
- Planting attractive native deciduous trees;
- Providing updated signs;
- Re-seeding the lawn area;
- Adding a skateboarding grind rail along the entry path;
- Creating a new seating area with pavers, a picnic table and trash cans; and
- Removing dead and dangerous trees to improve safety.



Al Miller Park Fix-It Day

On May 22, 2010, more than 100 volunteers from all over Anchorage came together to accomplish dramatic improvements in Al Miller Park, and celebrated with a sunny group picnic.

Cheney Lake Park

The Northeast Very Important Parks Committee partnered with the Parks & Recreation Department to identify priority repairs and recruit volunteers to accomplish park improvements in Cheney Lake Park, a community center for walking, fishing, boating and wintertime ice skating. Parks volunteers were eager to improve the park amenities while preserving and emphasizing the natural beauty of the park. The VIP Committee elected to focus community resources on:

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- Improving trail user safety by removing hazardous pea gravel in trail corridors and replacing it with more stable D1 gravel;
- Creating new pathways linking the play area to the walking trail around the lake;
- Beginning an erosion remediation project on the west lank bank;
- Installing updated signs;
- Installing new benches and trash cans; and
- Removing graffiti and replacing components of the play equipment.



Cheney Lake Park Fix-It Day

APF and APRD engaged teen crews from the Youth Employment in Parks program to complete the trail repairs improving drainage and safety. This internal leveraging of resources connects teens to opportunities to develop job skills while accomplishing visible improvements to neighborhood parks.

From Bouncy Houses to Barbecue

APF and APRD are committed to ensuring that volunteers feel valued and enjoy their time in their parks. We work with VIP committees to plan fun community celebrations (with bouncy houses and great food) to mark the end of each volunteer work days.

We appreciate all our volunteers, big and small!



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Creekside Park

APF and APRD worked with the Northeast Anchorage VIP Committee the Creekside Elementary Parent and Teacher Association to plan extensive improvements to Creekside Park. Creekside Park provides playspace and recreational facilities for students at Creekside Elementary School next door. Community volunteers created the following “fix-it list” for Creekside Park:

- Repair the tennis court by installing sturdy new nets to restore the tennis courts for playable use;
- Remove graffiti and re-paint equipment;
- Install updated park signs;
- Install new picnic tables and benches; and
- Replace unsafe play equipment.

The Creekside Park Fix-Its have successfully engaged neighbors and park users in planning the future of the park and accomplishing improvements with their “sweat equity”.



Creekside Park Fix-It Day

The Rasmuson Foundation

The Anchorage Park Foundation deeply appreciates the Rasmuson Foundation’s commitment to investing in Alaskan communities. Without their generous financial support, the Neighborhood Park Fix-Its program would not be possible.



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Ira Walker Park

Ira Walker park neighbors and Northeast Community Council volunteers partnered with staff from the Parks & Recreation Department to identify priority repairs for improvements in summer 2010. Volunteers identified the following needed fix-its:

- Repaint park equipment and remove graffiti;
- Repair cracked asphalt in the patio areas;
- Install updated park signs; and
- Remove weeds from the play area and prune trees to improve sight lines.

In addition, after further community discussion, APF and APRD will add new play equipment to Ira Walker Park in 2011 with funding from the Alaska State Legislature.



Ira Walker Park Fix-It Day

Minnesota Park

Minnesota Park is a 1,200 foot long, narrow park along Minnesota Drive between Spenard Road and Benson Boulevard. It is a highly visible community asset with room to become a neighborhood destination for play and recreation. The Spenard Very Important Parks Committee has actively recruited volunteers and supporters to dramatically restore the park. The VIP Committee elected to divide repairs into two phases, with the 2010 Phase One including the following efforts:

- Removing graffiti and re-capping the fence along Minnesota Drive;
- Removed the mugo pine shrubs along Minnesota Drive, improving visibility into the park;

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- Pruning trees and spreading mulch in tree beds;
- Planting several new trees at park entryways;
- Installing updated park signs;
- Removing an unused and dilapidated tennis court;
- Installing new benches and trash cans; and
- Installing boulders along the border of the park to discourage people from parking their vehicles on the lawn.



Minnesota Park Fix-It Day

In addition, the Minnesota Park VIP Committee has successfully obtained an Anchorage Park Foundation Challenge Grant to make further repairs at Minnesota Park in 2011 targeted at adding new recreational components to attract more park users.

The Anchorage Parks Report Card: Coming back to a park near you in summer 2011.

This is your chance to work with your neighbors to identify needed repairs in your neighborhood park.

To participate, contact Volunteer Coordinator Christine Geis at 343-4587 or geisct@muni.org.



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William B. Lyons Park

William B. Lyons Park is Mountain View's "Central Park", offering a community gathering space and play opportunities to youth participating in Boys & Girls Club programs at the Mountain View Community Recreation Center next door.

After reviewing needed repairs to William B. Lyons Park, APF and APRD partnered with the Mountain View Very Important Parks committee to seek an Alaska Legislature capital grant to accomplish a complete "make-over" of William

B. Lyons Park. This \$193,500 grant will enable APF and APRD to make extensive improvements to the equipment and facilities in the park.

In order to engage Mountain View youth in planning the park improvements, volunteers from the Alaska Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects are working with students at Clark Middle School to design new elements for the park. APF and APRD will implement this community vision in summer 2011. In summer 2010, the Mountain View VIP committee elected to make Phase One repairs designed to make the park more welcoming. Specifically, volunteers:



William B. Lyons Park Fix-It Day



William B. Lyons Park Fix-It Day

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- Removed parking area that served as a drive through area, changing neighborhood traffic for the better and increasing the play space in the park; Spread top soil to prepare for reseeding the lawn;
- Re-painted park equipment and removed graffiti;
- Planted new trees and perennials in William B. Lyons Park; and
- Planted seasonal flowers in the planters around the park.

APF and ARPD look forward to the results of Clark Middle School's partnership with ASLA and the opportunity to ensure that 2011 work truly meets the community's need.

Willawaw Park

The Russian Jack Community Council is deeply committed to creating a community center at Willawaw Park. In the past 10 years, the RJCC has raised funds for and constructed a playground and also secured a legislative grant for further improvements to Willawaw Park. This summer the Russian Jack Very Important Parks Committee gathered extensive community support for improvements, and even secured volunteer commitment to watering the lawn. The VIP Committee elected to focus its resources on the following “fix-its”:

- Removing graffiti and repainting park equipment;
- Creating a new flowerbed;
- Adding a new trail connection;
- Installing a new basketball court;
- Relocating the baseball backstop;
- Installing updated park signs; and
- Irrigating the lawn area.



Willawaw Park Fix-It Day

APF and APRD engaged teen crews from the Youth Employment in Parks program to create the new soft-surface trail linking the east and west sides of the park. These partnerships enable APF and APRD to connect youth to job opportunities while accomplishing needed improvements in neighborhood parks.

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Woodland Park

The Woodland Park Fix-Its have inspired a unique partnership between Spenard park neighbors and members of the Filipino Community of Anchorage, who are working to memorialize Thelma Buchholdt, a Filipino-Alaskan legislator and former Woodland Park neighbor. The Filipino Community raised funds from the Alaska State Legislature and an APF Challenge Grant in order to install and endow the Thelma Buchholdt Memorial Picnic Shelter in Woodland Park in summer 2010. The Filipino Community and park neighbors identified a variety of other needed park improvements, including:



Thelma Buchholdt

- Constructing picnic shelter;
- Planting flowers;
- Repainting park equipment and removing graffiti;
- Repairing cracked asphalt; and
- Installing updated park signs.

In June 2010, volunteers and the Filipino Community partnered to make improvements to Woodland Park and celebrate Filipino Independence Day, with traditional food, dance and music. This project has succeeded in meeting the APF and APRD's goals of connecting community members and building stronger neighborhoods while making needed repairs and improvements in Anchorage parks.



Woodland Park Fix-It Day

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Another Season of Success in Neighborhood Parks

At the end of each work season, the Anchorage Park Foundation and Parks & Recreation Department reflect on our successes and failures. This year, we are proud to have increased volunteer participation throughout the planning process, increased the number of volunteers and volunteer hours contributed to neighborhood park projects, and come in under budget on all of our projects.

Our success is based on a foundation of community involvement and commitment to neighborhood parks. We are proud to build healthy parks and healthy people in partnership with volunteers and supporters like you.



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Carlson Park
Cope Street Park
Harvard Park
Ira Walker Park
Little Dipper Park
Sand Lake Park
William B. Lyons Park



Neighborhood Park Fix-Its

COMING TO A PARK NEAR YOU

SUMMER 2011