



Schools on Trails

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Anchorage

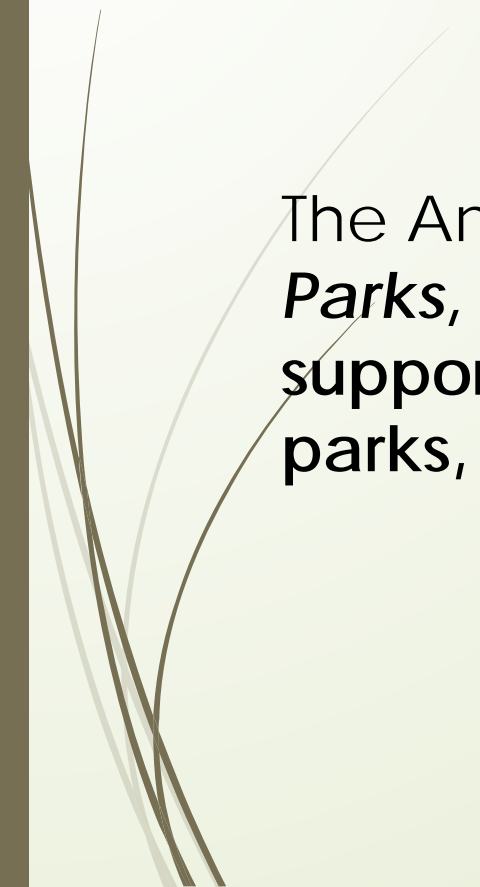


- 300,000 people
- 27 Title I schools
- 250 miles of trails
- 90 parks
- High rate of crime



Anchorage Park Foundation

The Anchorage Park Foundation **builds *Healthy Parks, Healthy People*** by mobilizing public support and financial resources for Anchorage parks, trails, and recreation opportunities.



Mission





Vision

- Engage
- Educate
- Connect
- Foster
- Steward

History of Schools on Trails





Nunaka Valley Elementary School and Russian Jack Springs Park- Anchorage

- Teacher surveyed the class- "Who has seen a glacier?" 3 of 20.
- Teacher surveyed the class- 3 students were aware that RJSP was next to the school.
- In an impressive feat, the 2nd Grade polled the entire student body (300+ students) with ONLY 36.2% being aware of RJSP, located directly across from the bus drop-off loop.
- 20 Students, 1 teacher and 1-2 teacher assistants.

Welcome?

“My class and I got lost because there are no signs, so we did not know we were in Russian Jack.”





Where to now?

After walking around on a trail for about 20 minutes students began to wonder if we would make it to the park.

Without a sign acknowledging the entrance of the park, we didn't know if we were there yet.

We need a sign.

Left or Right?

As we approached an intersection in the trail, conversations arose on where to next.

The lack of signage left us lost.

We could help put signs up.

Outdoor Learning

- Though walking around in the park is fun, we need a place to learn outside.
- We found a great place!
- “We should have a sign that says
 - ‘Leave no Trace, Enjoy our Learning Space!’ I think then people will understand that we are trying to learn about nature without gross stuff”



Date: 1-13-14

Dear Mrs. Beth Nordlund



First, I want to help clean Russian Jack

Springs Park so it will look like

no one ever littered there. I want

to invite you on Wednesday on

one of our nature walks. Our

school is at Nunaka Valley

Elementary. Next, My wonderful teacher

is wondering if our class can also have

a learning space. If we had a space with a

picnic table we could learn about nature.

Last, we would like to put up signs that

say "Welcome to Russian Jack Springs

Park." From Manuia in Ms. Nessel's 2nd grade class

Letter Writing

Monika

1-10-14

Dear Mrs. Beth

I would like to help

you with the graffiti

on the signs. And it will

be much better if

there was a sign so we

wouldn't get lost. We

would like to help you

with Russian Jack Springs

park. The park is right

across the street from

our school. We love

Russian Jack Springs

Park!

from Monika

from Ms. Nessel's 2nd grade class



Support from Administration

- Having a supportive principal was what ultimately made this project possible.
- Ensuring that the students were safe at all times. (cell phone, walkie-talkie and chaperones)
- Proving that learning was happening was important.
 - While outdoor learning is fun and enjoyable, we also connect our lessons, fun and excitement to the Common Core State Standards.




Support from Community Members and Parents

In order to bring students into a park and onto trails I needed support from the community and the parents of my students.

I created a "Chaperone Pool" and a date. Every Wednesday we would visit the park to do our learning outdoors. Parents and community members would sign up for dates and join us.

Parents who were weary of the time on trails received personal invitations to join us.

Soon all could see the benefit of having students and adults on the trails.



Safe Routes to School and During Instruction

Parent Concerns-

All parents received a newsletter explaining my objectives and pros to outdoor learning.

I provided a map and a timeline of the lesson. I texted families when we went out on the trail and when we returned through our Classroom App.

All parents were asked to sign a Walking Field Trip form

I encouraged all parents who were able to join if they had concerns. If their concerns were still relevant after joining us on the trail, I would love to have a meeting with the individual to see if their cons outway my pros



Benefits of Outdoor Learning

- Students developed a sense of ownership of the public lands in their neighborhood.
- Students wanted to become strong stewards and were proud to be helping their community grow.
- Student attendance grew!! With 20 students in our class we decided to have an incentive; we needed 95% of our class in attendance for a week in order to go to the park.
- When attendance rates increased, so did my students' math and reading scores. (Which is all that some care about).



Kid Quotes

- “This is kinda a big opportunity for us, because we are just little kids. We are trying to make a difference in our community and we need your help.” (2nd grade student to Beth Nordlund from Anchorage Park Foundation)
- “ We are just stewards, doing stewardship.”
- “ Graffiti can be artistic, but here is it just GROSS.” (2nd grader to Landscape Architects.)
- “GUESS WHAT, MS. Nessel?! I walked on OUR trail to school today!!”

Nunaka Valley Elementary School

Russian Jack Springs Park **Schools on Trails**
Nature Walk and Learning Lab Map



Leave No Trace.
Enjoy Our Learning Space!



The Nunaka Valley Elementary School trail connection to Russian Jack Springs Park and Learning Labs is part of the Schools on Trails Initiative to promote outdoor learning, student health and environmental education.

For more information visit www.anchorageparkfoundation.org/programs/trails-initiative/schools-trails



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
Alaska Chapter



College Gate Elementary School

Trail Connection to University Lake Park



Where in the Anchorage Trail System?



Map Key

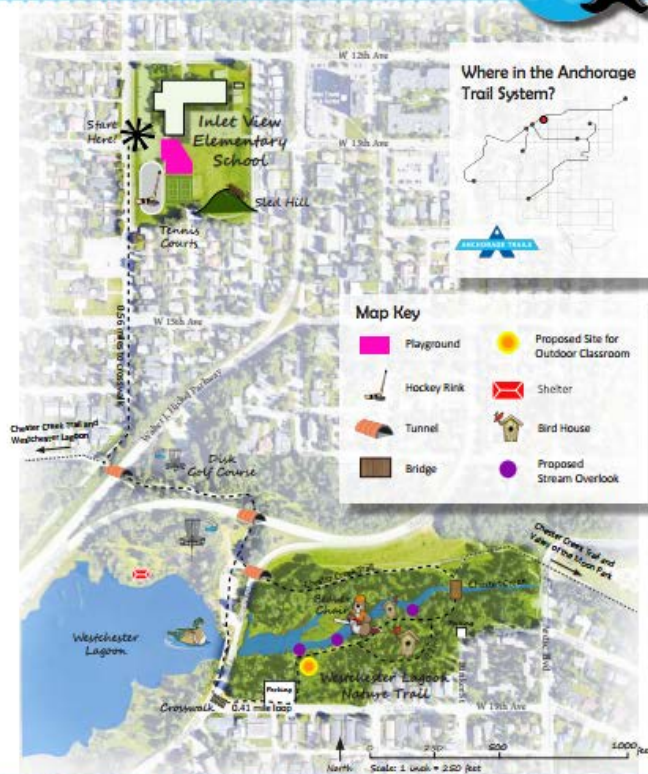
	Playground
	Fence
	Terraced lake access
	Offleash dog trail
	Other trails

Inlet View Elementary School

Chester Creek Trail and Westchester Lagoon Nature Trail Activity Map



Where in the Anchorage Trail System?



Map Key

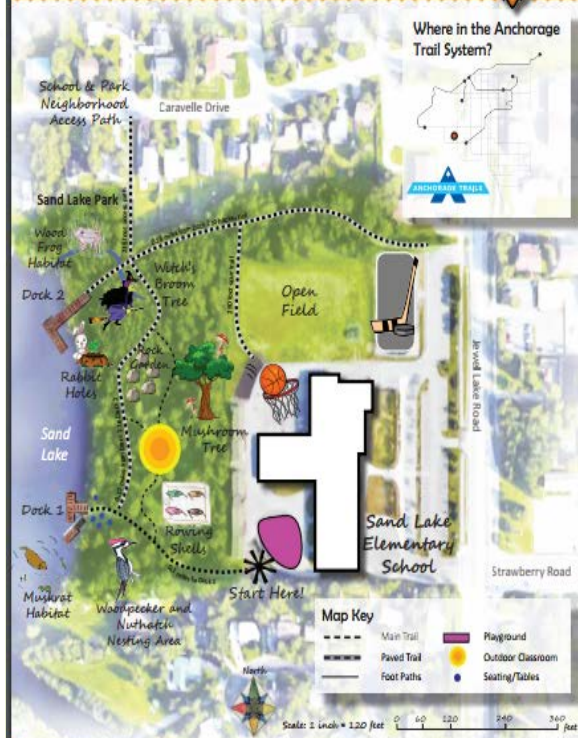
	Playground		Proposed Site for Outdoor Classroom
	Hockey Rink		Shelter
	Tunnel		Bird House
	Bridge		Proposed Stream Overlook

Sand Lake Elementary School

Activity Map and Trail Connection to Sand Lake Park



Where in the Anchorage Trail System?



Map Key

	Main Trail		Playground
	Paved Trail		Outdoor Classroom
	Foot Paths		Seating/Tables

The College Gate trail connection to University Lake Park is part of the Schools on Trails initiative to promote outdoor learning, student health and environmental education.

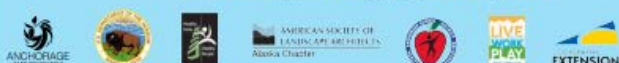
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The Inlet View Elementary School trail connection to the Chester Creek Trail and Westchester Lagoon Nature Trail is part of the Schools on Trails initiative to promote outdoor learning, student health and environmental education.

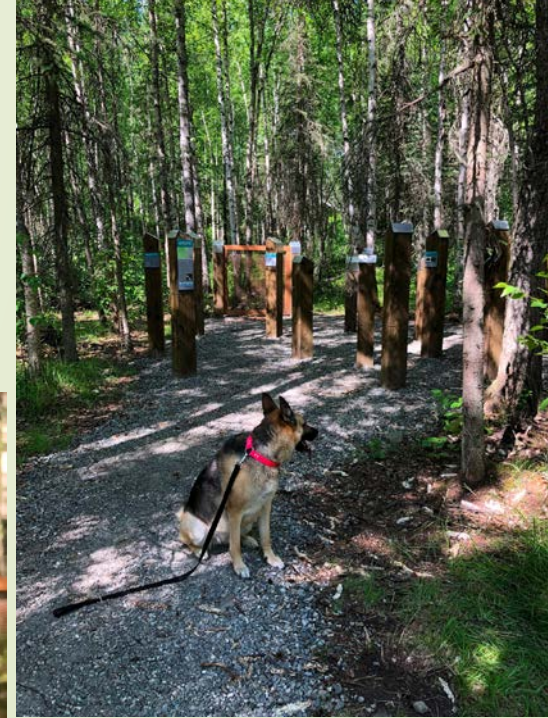
For more information visit www.anchorageparkfoundation.org/programs/trails-initiative/schools-trails

The Sand Lake Elementary School trail connection map to Sand Lake Park is part of the Schools on Trails initiative to promote outdoor learning, student health and environmental education.

For more information visit www.anchorageparkfoundation.org/programs/trails-initiative/schools-trails



Signage





Contact and Links



- Jessica Nessel- schools@anchorageparkfoundation.org
- Molly Lanphier- molly@anchorageparkfoundation.org
- <https://anchorageparkfoundation.org/completed-projects/russian-jack-springs-park-learning-labs-2/>
- <https://anchorageparkfoundation.org/programs/schools-trails/schools-trails-maps/>
- <https://www.adn.com/outdoors/article/immersing-schoolchildren-nature-anchorage-parklands/2016/04/12/>