

## **Science- Based Programs for Youth in Alaska**

### **• Youth Partnership Program**

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

P.O. Box 439

Copper Center, AK, 99573

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Project Website: [www.nps.gov/wrst/](http://www.nps.gov/wrst/)

### **Project Description:**

Wrangell-St. Elias NP&P partners with the Copper River Native Association (CRNA), the nonprofit health and welfare arm of Ahtna Incorporated, and the King Career Center in Anchorage. Youth are identified as outlined in the Youth Partnership Program (YPP) announcement for minority and disadvantaged candidates. All partners conduct outreach and education, and work to eradicate invasive plant species along the road corridors between Chitina and McCarthy and the Nabesna road in the northern region of the park. Between 8-12 weeks of work are conducted during the summer season. The program culminates with a presentation and celebration with park staff, partners, and parents and the youth involved.

### **• Youth Habitat Restoration Corps Program**

Laurel Devaney

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### **Project description:**

Fairbanks students between the ages of 13 – 16 participate in a four-week program. These students work alongside biologists on local wetland and stream bank restoration projects. The program includes invasive plant removal, restoring riparian vegetation in nearby wetlands, stream bank restoration, fish sampling, and stream crossing data collection.

Students also sample undisturbed aquatic habitats to understand their characteristics and values for wildlife and fish.

### **• Water Quality Program at Begich Middle School**

Begich Middle School

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### **Project description:**

Through their enrollment in an elective Freshwater Science class, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at Begich Middle School in Anchorage, Alaska are involved with the adoption of Chester Creek, which runs through the school property. An ecological perspective to water management and

watershed science is taught in this class with Chester Creek serving as the focus for the entire course. Through a battery of 9-week long activities, students come to know Chester Creek intimately and report on the overall health of the stream. In addition to this, students analyze human impact on the stream and are tasked with educational outreach to spread the word on how we as a community can better take care of our creek.

- **Chugach Children's Forest**

Chugach National Forest  
Supervisor's Office, 3301 C Street  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

**Ann Mayo-Kiely, Program Director**

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Project Website: <http://www.chugachchildrensforest.org/>. Youth-created media from the Children's Forest is available on a YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/ChugachChildForest#p/u/9/whLH8UzbE8U>.

**Project Description:**

The Children's Forest has three primary components:

**The Youth Expedition Series:** These annual expeditions engage youth in stewardship projects, and provide them with an understanding of what public lands mean to adjacent communities. The stories and discoveries from expeditions are shared through youth-produced media, public presentations, interactive websites, and integration into school programs.

**Youth-Managed Public Lands:** Students from Anchorage's King Career Center are actively developing a proposal for Alaska's youth to manage a section of the Chugach National Forest. The program will incorporate elements of resource monitoring, long-term planning, recreation, and education.

**Student Internships and Employment:** Teens in the Chugach Conservation Corps work with trail planners, scientists, and land managers to help build trails, conduct wildlife research, improve campsites, and document their experience through traditional and social media.

- **Copper River Stewardship Program**

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**Project website-** <http://copperriver.org/programs/watershed-education/copper-river-stewardship-program>

**Project information:**

This program took five students from communities in the Copper River watershed on a 10-day in-depth exploration of the region. The students had the opportunity to meet with a wide range of stakeholders in the Copper River watershed to learn about different perspectives and issues related to the health of the watershed and salmon populations. The students started in the Copper Basin, and then rafted down the Copper River to Cordova in order to learn about the ecosystem and lifestyle in the lower watershed.

All students developed outreach projects to share their experiences. These include a poster on the different fisheries in the watershed, a 9-piece photo show, newspaper articles, 2 websites and a movie. Future plans include developing a website that can be used into the future to track ecosystem indicators over time, and incorporating more school year projects associated with this program

**● Adopt a Stream Program**

Anchorage Waterways Council (AWC)/Polaris K-12

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**Project Website:** [www.anchoragecreeks.org](http://www.anchoragecreeks.org), Adopt-A-Stream

**Project Description:** By working with youth and teachers in the AWC's "Adopt-A-Stream/Creeks as Classrooms" program, we have learned the broad extent of youth capabilities regarding developing meaningful projects, doing inquiry (research and field work) to problem solve, and finally compiling the results in order to make use of their findings and initiate change and resolution. The youth are guided with expertise from their science teacher, Kathryn Smith, and others in the community. This provides the youth with role models and hopefully a desire to continue in the sciences. Peer-to-peer communication of the projects is important as well as their presentation to adults.