

# FINAL REPORT

**To:** Jeanne Swartz, Department of Environmental Conservation  
**From:** Vikram Patel, MOA Parks and Recreation Department  
**Re:** ACWA SFY 17-10 – Cuddy Park Ponds Rehabilitation



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## Summary

The Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) Parks and Recreation Department (PRD) and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) worked together to address the longstanding issue of congregating waterfowl polluting the ponds at Cuddy Family Midtown Park. With the help of this \$30,000 in grant funding, PRD installed a vegetative barrier and signage to discourage feeding of waterfowl.

## Issue and Project Plan

The creation of Anchorage's Cuddy Family Midtown Park inadvertently resulted in a popular waterfowl feeding area. Initially intended to help absorb flood flows from Fish Creek, the Cuddy Park Ponds have attracted waterfowl and, in turn, humans who feed them. Increased numbers of waterfowl, including many mallards that do not migrate in winter, have led to degraded water quality, a park covered with birds and their feces, fouled water, sloughing banks, aggressive bird behavior, changes in migration patterns, algae blooms, and several other issues.

This project was aimed at breaking the cycle of pollution at Cuddy Park Ponds. To accomplish this, PRD planned to install a vegetative barrier around the main pond to discourage visitors from gaining close access to the water's edge. The area south of the main pond would be revegetated with turf and trees to encourage users to access the park via a sidewalk. By rerouting human traffic, PRD aimed to discourage feeding of waterfowl.

Ultimately, PRD hoped that this would cause the waterfowl to redistribute themselves around the Anchorage area, reducing the number of birds at the park and, in turn, the unsafe fecal coliform levels at the Cuddy Park Ponds.

In addition, PRD aimed to install a fence set off from the trail to allow the vegetation to establish and assist the "retraining" of park users. Educational signage developed pursuant to a previous ACWA grant to the Anchorage Waterways Council was also installed; this would also

help discourage waterfowl feeding. Together, PRD hoped that the vegetative barrier, fencing and signage would improve water quality in the ponds. With that in mind, PRD applied to DEC for ACWA grant funding to put towards this project.

Before applying for this grant, PRD contracted Huddle AK to design the vegetative barrier and included that plan with the application. (See attached for initial design drawings.)

### **Grant Award**

DEC awarded PRD \$30,000 in grant funding with a matching contribution value requirement of \$20,658 to effect this project.

### **Project Completion Part I: Barrier and Signage**

During the summer of 2017, PRD, in conjunction with a contractor hired to help manage this project, purchased and installed a vegetative barrier consisting of the following foliage:

- 1. 38 2" Caliper Birch Trees**
- 2. 75 Redtwig Dogwood**
  - a. These replaced the 150 Arctic Willows because there were already Redtwig Dogwoods shrubs in place at the ponds and they proved capable of surviving in that specific location. Also, they are larger than Arctic Willow, so the smaller number is not as noticeable.
- 3. 178 #2 Potentilla (100 white, 78 yellow)**
  - a. These were purchased instead of the originally-indicated 235 Potentilla for fit, aesthetic and cost reasons.
- 4. 113 #1 Iris Setosa**
  - a. These were purchased instead of the originally-indicated 350 iris setosa for fit, aesthetic and cost reasons.
- 5. 13,200 Square Feet of Sod**
  - a. This amount, more than twice the originally-indicated 6,500 square feet of sod, resulted from a determination that the site required more sod than anticipated.

Of note, these amounts do not perfectly match the planting plan; some of the plants cost more than anticipated, so some amounts were adjusted accordingly. Amounts were also adjusted for fit and aesthetic reasons. All grant funds were spent and required matching contributions were also satisfied. (Photos of vegetative barrier have been previously submitted.)

At this time, PRD also installed interpretive signage. (Photos previously submitted.)

### **Project Completion Part II: Fencing**

In the early fall, PRD completed the project by purchasing and installing a protective fence around the vegetative barrier and pond, as designed by Huddle AK, consisting of the following materials:

- 1. 39 Fencing Units**
  - a. 3' x 50' 16-gauge vinyl wire fencing
- 2. 79 T-Posts**
  - a. 5' each
- 3. 1 fence post driver with handles**
- 4. 1,000 cable ties**
  - a. 50 lbs. tensile strength per tie

### **Grant and Matching Funds**

As reported in the Q1 grant and match summary and detail reports, all grant funding – \$30,000 – was spent and the matching amount was more than met. PRD ultimately provided \$36,365 in matching contribution value.

### **Effects**

It is too early to conclusively determine whether, and by how much, the Cuddy Park Ponds have been rehabilitated. Anecdotal evidence suggests that fewer waterfowl spent time at the ponds after the installation of the barrier and fencing.

In terms of the barrier, signage and fencing project, though, it achieved full success.

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MOA ACWA grant 17-10 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter deliverables

Photos Cuddy park ponds vegetation 8/18/16



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