



Anchorage Waterways Council

P.O. Box 241774

Anchorage, AK 99524

www.anchoragecreeks.org

Anchorage Waterways Council's Creek Report Card

"No creek left behind."

Dear Eagle River, Eagle River Valley and South Fork Community Councils:

The Municipality of Anchorage is about 2,000 mi² and has approximately 2,250 miles of creeks and rivers. These creeks and rivers are often listed as some of Anchorage's premier amenities. During the summer of 2012, 70-hardy citizen volunteers surveyed nearly 175 miles of these creeks for issues, problems, access, suggestions for projects and repairs and general comments. These volunteers "graded" the creeks on a variety of criteria, including human impacts, recreational opportunities, natural processes, and aesthetics. Specific findings will be provided to the appropriate agency or organization.

This survey was modeled after the Anchorage Park Foundation's Park Report Card as well as another 50+ citizen creek surveys around the U.S. and a number in other parts of the world. These citizen creek report cards have been encouraged by a number of organizations including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and American Rivers. The Anchorage program was sponsored by the Bullitt Foundation and the USFWS.

Additionally, the Anchorage Waterways Council has volunteer water-quality monitors along our creeks, and is the only organization that routinely monitors the water quality of our creeks.

With this note, the Anchorage Waterways Council (AWC) would like to provide information to you about the "state of the creeks" in your Community Council area. They are one of our urban assets, and **we ALL need to be involved in protecting and enhancing our creeks.**

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas J. Eley, Ph.D.

Creek Report Card Coordinator

Anchorage Waterways Council is a non-profit, membership organization

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Community Council(s): **Eagle River, Eagle River Valley and South Fork**

Creek(s): ***Eagle River and Meadow Creek***

Water Quality Monitoring: **Meadow Creek, the Eagle River Nature Center, and under the bridge at Eagle River Road**

Issues:

- Unfortunately, due to the high, fast and dangerous water levels in Eagle River this summer, Eagle River was not surveyed by raft as planned. However, Meadow Creek and Eagle River at the Nature Center were surveyed.
- Both the Meadow Creek and Eagle River Nature Center surveys found no major problems.
- A small bit of trash was found along Meadow Creek but it was cleaned up by the surveyor.
- Several home owners along Meadow Creek are mowing their lawns and other vegetation to the creek's edge, ignoring the 25 foot setback.
- Water quality monitoring at the Nature Center and on Meadow Creek finds high quality water is entering Eagle River with essentially no fecal coliform bacteria (*Escherichia coli*). However water sampled under the Eagle River Road Bridge found high fecal coliform counts. In high density, urban areas, pet waste is the primary source of fecal coliform bacteria, but this is probably not the case for Eagle River. The source is unknown, but leaking septic systems are the most likely source of fecal contamination.
- Residents should be reminded to not throw yard and lawn debris and pet waste into the creek or river.
- The biggest threat to Meadow Creek and Eagle River is most likely from storm water runoff from roads, commercial properties and yards. Storm water runoff, and whatever it carries with it in the way of pollutants, ultimately ends up in our creeks and rivers and **is not routed** through the sewage treatment plant.
- Another concern is runoff and pollution from construction activities along the creek and the river. These activities should be monitored by local residents and any problems reported to the Municipality of Anchorage.
- We congratulate the residents along Eagle River and Meadow Creek for maintaining their river and creek in high quality condition and we trust this will continue in the future.