



## Anchorage Waterways Council

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[www.anchoragecreeks.org](http://www.anchoragecreeks.org)

## Anchorage Waterways Council's Creek Report Card

*"No creek left behind."*

Dear Russian Jack Park and Airport Heights Community Councils:

The Municipality of Anchorage is about 2,000 mi<sup>2</sup> 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): **Russian Jack Park and Airport Heights**

Creek(s): ***Middle Fork of Chester Creek***

Water Quality Monitoring: **Irregular monitoring of Russian Jack Springs**

Issues:

- The Middle Fork of Chester Creek was completely surveyed from Russian Jack Springs (the headwaters) to where the Middle Fork meets the South Fork. All the creek is above ground except the section from Pine to Bragaw Street, which is mostly buried.
- The area around Russian Jack Spring is in good condition and is one of our seldom visited urban treasures. The water quality of the springs is excellent with no fecal coliform bacteria; however, as the Middle Fork flows towards its junction with the South Fork of Chester Creek, it picks up a considerable load of fecal coliform bacteria. Pet waste is the primary source of fecal coliform bacteria.
- The area between Russian Jack Springs and Pine Street had essentially no trash, but it did suffer a considerable blow-down of trees during the September 2012 windstorm.
- Between Bragaw Street and the junction with the South Fork some trash was noted along the creek particularly in the commercial area around Nichols St.
- A number of culverts along this section of the creek were plugged with debris, which can enhance flood events and prevent the passage of fish, and the culverts need to be cleaned on a regular basis.
- Several footbridges were found across the creek, and these bridges can act as debris dams in flood events and increase the impact of flooding.
- The biggest threat to the Middle Fork of Chester Creek is 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.
- The exposed portion of the Middle Fork of Chester Creek is one of jewels of the Anchorage Creek system and receives considerable recreational attention.