CELEBRATE THE CHENA RIVER!

Festival Fairbanks
Making Fairbanks a Better Place to Live

Tanana Valley Watershed Association

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Partners for Fish & Wildlife

Fairbanks North Star Borough
Parks and Recreation

FAIRBANKS PADDLERS

Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Northern Region

CITY OF FAIRBANKS
ALASKA

USAG WAINWRIGHT
SUSTAIN SUPPORT DEFEND
The Chena Riverfront Commission was created in 1997 by City & Borough ordinance (Chapter 2.37).

- The Commission is “charged with planning and fostering the development of riverfront property along the Chena River.” “... The Chena River is a very special attribute of Fairbanks that ought to be developed in a careful and thoughtful manner so as to enhance its natural beauty, provide for a wide range of uses, and maintained for the enjoyment of many generations of residents and visitors.”

- The mission of the joint City of Fairbanks / Fairbanks North Star Borough Chena Riverfront Commission is to provide specific policies to guide responsible development along the Chena River corridor from its mouth at the Tanana River to its source, including its several tributaries (Chena Riverfront Plan).
The **Chena Riverfront Commission** is a joint City & Borough appointed volunteer 11-member group. The **Chena Riverfront Plan**, first adopted in 1997, updated in 2016 (every 10 years or as needed).

**2018 Chena Riverfront Commission members:**

- Ian Olson, Chair
- Buki Wright, Vice-Chair
- Robert Henszey
- Ben Jaffa
- Julie Jones
- Carrie McEnteer
- Anna Plager
- Susan Rainey
- Gordon Schlosser
- Lee Wood
- Kelley Hegarty-Lammers

Our success is in no small part due to the many organizations who are our partners in Chena River wise development.

Following are some of the many successes with our partners.
Chena Riverfront Projects in review over the past few years by the:

- **Tanana Valley Watershed Association**
  - Festival Fairbanks
  - AK Dept. of Transportation
  - City of Fairbanks
  - FMATS
  - Fairbanks Paddlers Club
  - U.S. ARMY, Fort Wainwright
  - Fairbanks North Star Borough
  - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
  - Other community clubs & orgs.
Tanana Valley Watershed Association

PROJECTS:
- Chena Riverwalk annual event for families
- Interpretive panel in Gordon Wear Park
- Elodea (in partnership with FSWCD)
- Adopt-a-Stream
- Citizen Scientists

The Tanana Valley Watershed Association promotes and improves the health of the Tanana Valley through education, restoration, collaborative research, and diverse community involvement.

Executive Director: Bryn McElroy
Board of Directors:
- Christy Everett
- Gale Vick
- Ian Olson
- Royce Conlon
- Pat Thayer
- John O’Brien
The **Chena Riverwalk event** offers activity stations along the river for youth to learn about the river.
The Chena River, which winds through the heart of Fairbanks, is subjected to the effects of urban development and policies. Mindful planning and development with community involvement will help keep the river healthy and balanced.

The Chen, the Urban River

A River Fit For Kings
The Chena River winds through a rich cultural landscape. Salmonid populations support a thriving subsistence community and native health. When salmon run, we need the river's health to support us and we need all river health-emotions to support. Removal of natural vegetation during urban development was harmful to ecosystem by one thing local residents of real heat and causing problems to above the water.

Tips for Keeping the Clean River
1. Never throw trash into the river
2. Use new litter trash in appropriate areas
3. Report pollution at Chena River Council's website
4. Take care of the river for the future of the river

The Chena River Summit convened annually 2013 – 2015 for community members

EDUCATION: an interpretive panel in Gordon Wear Park across from Golden Heart Plaza
The invasive water weed *Elodea* has invaded Badger Slough and Chena Slough, choking out other species, creating a navigation hazard and spreading to the Chena River.
These student “scientists” have “adopted” the Chena River
TVWA uses many public educational tools, such as this 3-panel, 2-sided brochure.
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Festival Fairbanks

PROJECTS:
- William Ransom Wood pedestrian bridge
- Chena River pedestrian/bicycle path, south side existing
- Chena River pedestrian/bicycle path, north side proposed
- Golden Heart Plaza green infrastructure (dry well)
- Riverfront rehabilitation, Fairbanks North Star Borough bldg.

Festival Fairbanks plans and facilitates various projects related to historic old Fairbanks and Interior Alaska, beautification, and/or tourism and economic development.

Executive Director: Julie Engfer Jones
Board of Directors: Jimmy Parrish, President
Aaron Rhoades, Vice President
Dave Dean, Secretary Treasurer
Steve Thompson
Karen Wilken
Katherine Yarrow
William Ransom Wood bicycle/pedestrian bridge viewed from Golden Heart Plaza with the Doyon, Inc. building in background.
**CHENA RIVER WALK:**
Alaskan-themed cut-outs on the pathway railings

Flower-lined walkway
Phase III of the **Chena River Walk** plans to start on the North shore at Peger Road, heading upriver to the Pioneer Park footbridge.
Chena River Walk, sheet 2, conceptual plan, December 2012
Green Infrastructure Project -- a “dry well” was placed in Golden Heart Plaza to allow pooling rainwater to drain directly into the ground.
BEFORE: FNSB Building’s grass-covered riverbank was eroding into the river
DURING: Fall of 2013, restoring the riverbank

Root wads deflect the water while the tree trunks are anchored together and buried. Willows are laid on top and all is covered with soil.
The Borough building’s riverbank revetment is ready for spring, 2014.

Original vegetative mat is used along edge of brush. New topsoil is then seeded.
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Projects:
- Green Space between downtown bridges
- Barnette Street bridge bicycle/pedestrian pathway
- Plans for new river view along Airport Way West Project
- Plans for Wendell Street Bridge improvements

Mission: Keep Alaska moving through service and infrastructure.

Joe Kemp, Northern Region DOT&PF CRFC Ex-officio member
CRFC Resolutions & letters about the Illinois Street Project sent to the DOT&PF in 2005, 2006 & 2010
The riverfront’s newest “park” in 2013, called the “Green Space,” since DOT&PF doesn’t build parks

June

September
The Barnette Street Bridge Project bicycle/pedestrian pathway connects Illinois Street to the William Ransom Wood Bridge, providing easy access to the Chena River.
Airport Way West Project with proposed new round-about, scheduled construction 2020.
The existing, uninviting pathway under the Wendell Street Bridge, by Graehl Park

Looking downstream from Graehl Park on North side of river.

Looking up towards Wendell Street from the west end of Front Street by Graehl Park.
DOT&PF plans for the Wendell Street bridge will connect with Front Street and Graehl Park
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The City of Fairbanks is known as the “Golden Heart City”, some say for all the gold that has been found here, but actually it’s because the people of Fairbanks are known for their generosity of spirit, hospitality, and friendliness. The City of Fairbanks’ mission is to . . . increase the desirability of the City as a place to live, work, and visit.

Andrew Ackerman is the City’s Ex-Officio Commission member.
Volunteers proudly display their “haul” from the river & Noyes Slough – more than 1,000 pounds in 2013!
Gordon Wear Park BEFORE: Concrete chute sent polluted runoff from the parking lot directly into the river and was very unsightly & undesirable
Gordon Wear Park **DURING:**
New drainage collector installed
Gordon Wear Park AFTER:
Finishing the landscaping
City of Fairbanks surveys residents to gage general awareness of Stormwater related issues.
The City of Fairbanks mails notices to all riverfront property owners about proper disposal of yard debris --- NOT into the river!

Options they suggest:
- Mulch it!
- Compost it!
- Bag it!
What to do with grass clippings and other debris?
Toss it over the bank – out of sight?  NOT!!

Grass clippings are just as detrimental to the riparian zone as are concrete and old automobiles & junk!
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- City of Fairbanks

*FMATS (Fbks Metro. Area Trans. System)*

- Fairbanks Paddlers Club
- U.S. ARMY, Fort Wainwright
- Fairbanks North Star Borough
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- Other community clubs & orgs.
**Fairbanks Metropolitan Transportation System**

**PROJECTS:**
- Public Outdoor Sculpture in Fairbanks’ newest Green Space
- Historic Plaques in the Green Space display (at the apex)
- Wayfinding signage throughout downtown

Purpose: FMATS plans for local multi-modal transportation system investments that work for the betterment of the community.

Goal: FMATS aims to safely and efficiently move goods and people, while simultaneously supporting economic progress, environmental protection and an improved quality of life.

Jackson Fox is FMATS Liaison for the Chena Riverfront Commission.
Can you spot in this “before” aerial photo where Fairbanks’ *greenspace* was placed?
FMATS reached out to the public in many creative ways for Greenspace design ideas.
Polaris – winning sculpture selected by a special FMATS committee, installed 2014

Members of the FMATS Art Selection Committee:
Donna Gardino, FMATS, Chair
June Rogers, Fairbanks Arts Association
Mark Fejes, Well and Good Studios
Amy Nordrum, Downtown Association
Ron Inouye, Historian, University of Alaska
Carole-Ann Newcomer, Doyon
Julie Engfer, Festival Fairbanks
Sue Sprinkle, Fifth Avenue Design
Kelley Hegerty-Lammers, Chena Riverfront Cmsn.
Well, grandchild, in the fall
they stayed in one place, to make
the snowshoes and toboggans.

Then in winter until the spring thaws, people moved around
all the time.

Ah! Grandchild, they walked around all winter until it
was time to camp for break-up and make canoes.

After they made the canoes, they canoed around until full time.

...That's the way it was, but
today we live here on the point. We just stay in one place and work for ourselves...
Wayfinding signage designed for our city center
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Fairbanks Paddlers Club

- Chena River Clean-up Day
- Wooden Boat Rondy
- Weekly Community Paddle
- Other enjoyable outings

Board of Directors
John Schauer, President
Nick Dallman, Vice President
Anthony Mustered
Cam Leonard
Garrett Jones
Alan Batten
Sam Braband
Larry Fogelson

Fairbanks Paddlers is all about camaraderie, rivers, the Alaskan wilderness, and fun.
Fairbanks Paddlers Club members volunteer each spring to make the river and riverbank cleaner after the ice melts.
Wooden Boat Rondy
Serenading on an evening paddle

Hunting on the Upper Chena

An early season outing before green-up
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Golf Course Streambank Erosion Repair

Problem: outside bend of river is badly undercut by scour; high, steep bank is eroding by golf course, ~ 750’

Treatment: rock toe installed below ground level; staked above ordinary high water with 10 to 16 layers of soil wrapped in coir fabric with geo-synthetic fabric and willow cuttings laid between the soil lifts.

River Road Bank Stabilization

Problem: outside river bend; slope failing due to scour & subsurface drainage; in two sections -- 55’ and 120’.

Treatment: install riprap completely submerged in undulating line; top with 4 layers of coir fabric-wrapped soil lifts with willow cuttings between lifts; restore road to existing surface and reseed the roadsides.
Chena Golf Course bank reconstruction by the U.S. Army – Ft. Wainwright, 2011

A steep, outside bend of the river is being stabilized.

The following summer, as the willows take root and begin to cover the coir mats, the mats will eventually disintegrate.
The U.S. Army supports a healthy riverfront and takes care of their extensive riverbank along the Chena.

A serious erosion problem along the riverside roadway.

Treated with bio-engineered techniques.
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- **Fairbanks North Star Borough**
- **U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

- Other community clubs & orgs.
Griffin Park upgraded and pathway extended to Steese Hwy.

Phase 1 upgrade of Griffin Park has been completed.
The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service offers financial and technical assistance to private land owners to restore habitat and reduce erosion.

3 examples of troublesome riverbanks
Other riverbanks lacking riparian health
Some examples of healthier river bank
More examples of healthier riverbank
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Community Events on the Chena River

- Yukon Quest Sled Dog Race
- Open North American Championship Sled Dog Race
- Sonot Kkazaoot Ski Race
- Iron Dog, Tired Iron
- Rubber Duckie Race (part of Golden Days Celebration)
- The Red-Green Regatta
- The Boy Scout Freeze-up Canoe Race
- And many other activities, such as:
  - swimming,
  - ice skating,
  - picnicking,
  - camping,
  - fishing,
  - bonfires & weinie roasts.
The Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race

A 1,016-mile sled dog race run every year since 1984 between Fairbanks, Alaska, and Whitehorse, Yukon Territories.

Lance Mackey drives his dog team in the 2012 Quest
Open North American Championship Sled Dog Race

Sponsored by the Alaska Dog Mushers Association
For 27 years, cross-country skiers have celebrated the return of springtime by participating in the Sonot Kkaazoot. This year, more than 5,000 skiers from ages under 7 to almost 80 years old participated!
Iron Dog Race

THE WORLD’S LONGEST, TOUGHEST SNOWMOBILE RACE
THE RED-GREEN REGATTA
sponsored by the KUAC Radio/TV
in Fairbanks for
17 wild & whacky summers!
The Red-Green Regatta is a much-anticipated annual Chena event.
The Chena Riverfront Commission meets monthly, 11 months each year (not in January). Members are appointed by the City & Borough mayors. The public is welcome to attend the meetings, on the second Wednesdays of each month at noon at the Borough administrative center building.

Commission members gather for a summer field trip on the river.
After multiple community meetings in 2013 & 2014, the Chena Riverfront Plan was updated and formally adopted by the Borough Assembly and the City Council in January 2016. The revised plan is posted on the Borough’s website.

The Plan’s 5 Goals are to:

* Recognize and restore the river as the crown jewel of the community.
* Develop and integrate the river’s multiple orientations to create an integrated whole.
* Encourage community participation in implementing the Chena Riverfront Plan.
* Create and enhance physical and visual access to the river for all people.
* Ensure that appropriate elements of public safety, protection of private property values and river planning efforts are maintained.
Thank you for your community spirit!

We hope you will share your thoughts about the Plan when the opportunity arises. Contact the Borough Community Planning Office with questions.

Our success is in no small part due to the talented staff who tirelessly support our efforts:
Deputy Planning Director Kellen Spillman
Commission Clerk Nicole Nordstrand
Floodplain Administrator Nancy Durham

Thank you for your community spirit!