

# 2020/2021 Annual Corporate Report



## Trapper Creek Community Services Association, Inc. (TCCSA)

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**2020/2021 ANNUAL CORPORATE REPORT**

The Trapper Creek Park and Cemetery is managed by Trapper Creek Community Services Association, Inc. (TCCSA), which in 2021 celebrated thirty-five years as a corporation. Our Park is one of a few parks in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough that is not maintained by the Borough itself. As such, fundraising for the upkeep of the buildings and development of the grounds is largely the responsibility of the Board of Directors and the membership of TCCSA for the benefit of the residents of the Trapper Creek area.

Trapper Creek Community Park consists of 87.7 acres located at 9971 E. TC Park Circle just off Milepost 115.2 George Parks Highway. The Park grounds include a covered picnic shelter, playground area, a Free Box building, an outhouse, tool shed, Conex container, warm storage building, and the Trapper Creek Community Building, which is surrounded by a gravel parking lot. The Park has a ten acre, cleared recreational area, a community garden, 2.5 kilometers of winter and summer trails through a wooded area, and the Trapper Creek “Alaskans Forever” Cemetery, which has been in existence since 1991.

Bylaws provide that “the Secretary shall prepare an annual report and submit it to the membership for the Association.” Following is the 2020/2021 Annual Corporate Report for Trapper Creek Community Services Association, as provided by the Board and Directors: Elise Dooley (Chair,) James Morrill (Vice-Chair), Paula Glenka (Treasurer), Elizabeth Marsh (Secretary), Lon McCullough (Director), Tammy Morrill (Director), and Debbie Filter (Director).

Respectfully submitted by,

Elizabeth Marsh, Secretary, TCCSA

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## **ORGANIZATION AND MEMBERSHIP**

In February 1986, the desire to establish a cemetery led the Trapper Creek Community Council, under the Chairmanship of Marino Sik, to “support the formation of a community non-profit organization to promote the common good of the Trapper Creek Community.” Two months later, TCCSA was formed on April 18, 1986. By March 6, 1987, it was determined to be a non-profit corporation exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The purpose of the association, as indicated in the bylaws “shall be to provide recreational and community services for the general well-being of the Trapper Creek area.” Membership is categorized as primary or associate. Primary membership is confined to those who have paid their lifetime dues and reside within the area bounded by the Susitna River on the east, Chulitna River on the north, Peters Creek on the west, and where the Parks Highway crosses the Susitna River to the south. Primary members may vote in elections. Associate membership is offered to those who reside outside the geographic boundaries mentioned above. Associate members do not vote. Our membership currently consists of 101 lifetime members: 78 primary members and 23 associate members.

At the risk of omission, the volunteers, who served on the TCCSA Board of Directors during the early formative years from the conception of the Park in the 1980s through the present, include at least Bill Devon, Denvy Saxowski, Jack MacDonald, Patti Christensen, Earl Theroux, Joyce Nash, Pauline Floyd, Ginny Robson, Terry Miller, Dave Porter, Glenn Turner, Lynn Moore, Tom Taylor, Allan Ruhter, John Moore, Kurt Devon, Duronda Twigg, Martin Bee, Dawn Fitzpatrick, Diane Bee, Mary Anna Jurasek, Dave McCown, Susan Henderson, Amy Jurasek, Cricket Stankowitz, Robin Watkins, Rocelyn Daniels, Brandy Dalrymple, Lon McCullough, John White, Tom Michaud, TeriLynn Dyrud, Paula Glenka, Klondike Hughes, Michele McCullough, Darlene Rich, Shawn Stankowitz, Jennie Earles, Debbie Filter, Elaine Yelverton, Deborah Roberts, James Morrill, Tammy Morrill, Elizabeth Marsh, Stephanie Harris, and Elise Dooley.

Over the last thirty-five years, many of these members have held multiple offices and have served several terms.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our non-profit organization. Although many people are mentioned in this annual report, there are others who have contributed significantly by offering a helping hand, services, donations, personal time, and care over the last thirty-five years. To all our volunteers and active members, we offer our great appreciation.

## **TRAPPER CREEK "ALASKANS FOREVER" CEMETERY**

In 1983, the Trapper Creek Community Council requested the classification of some Borough land specifically for a cemetery. At the time of filing, the Borough indicated that due to their lack of cemetery powers, they could not make land available and requested that TCCSA approach the State of Alaska to ascertain the availability of land for community use. Finally, in 1991 after much effort by TCCSA Board members, the State of Alaska Division of Land notified the Borough of intent to sell a parcel of land to Trapper Creek Community Services Association, as a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation organized exclusively for the operation and management of a community cemetery. On August 16, 1995, the State of Alaska issued a patent to TCCSA for the 20.2 acres of land that is reserved for our community cemetery forever.

The original plat of the cemetery consisted of ten plots, which were laid out by Jack Brockman. The first burial of Jan McKenzie occurred on May 4, 1991, before the final approval by the state. Ten additional plots were added in 2010. The next year land was cleared for graveyard extension 100 feet to the west of the original clearing and access roads constructed. In 2016 twenty graves were plotted in the new section. In May 2017, another forty full graves and sixteen half plots for cremains were plotted and staked with rebar.

Currently, in the cemetery, there are twenty-seven burials and twenty plots reserved. There remain available fifty-five graves and fourteen cremains' plots in the new section, which are not reserved.

On May 20, 2021, the completed Memorial Wall was dedicated in a solemn Memorial Day ceremony. Janet Grelson sang an acapella National Anthem, which was followed by a prayer by Jeff Grelson, who then spoke of the solemnity and celebration of the occasion. All the names on the wall were read by Darlene Rich, Elise Dooley, Kathy Ernst, Duronda Twigg, Debbie Filter, Ralph Kolbeck and Lon McCullough. Joe May spoke of the Memorial Wall and respect for Veterans, while Shawn Stankowitz offered his memories of departed Trapper Creek citizens. The ceremony concluded with much appreciation for all those who worked to develop the concept, the design, cutting and sawing of lumber, the construction, and the very many people who supplied information that allowed the Memorial Wall to become reality.

A gravesite is now \$400 or \$1000 for non-residents and a cremains plot is \$300 for residents. Graves can be reserved for \$100 to be verified every five years. Digging a grave in the summer is \$400 if dug by TCCSA. Winter arrangements must be approved by TCCSA, and the purchaser must bear all costs. Purchaser has one year to erect a headstone or grave marker.

## **PARK GROUNDS AND STRUCTURES**

After some development of the Trapper Creek Park, even before the official acquisition of the cemetery parcel, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly, on March 19, 1996, formally approved the sale of 60.68 acres of Borough-owned land to TCCSA for a sum of \$2000. This parcel of land, located adjacent and north of the cemetery plat, was patented by the State of Alaska on May 12, 1997, to Trapper Creek in perpetuity. Subsequently, on October 9, 1998, Kurt Devon and Duronda Twigg, as Officers of the organization, signed the quitclaim deed that conveyed the land to TCCSA for the benefit of the residents of Trapper Creek.

The park is situated mostly on high ground covered with an original growth forest of spruce and birch. A two-and-a-half-kilometer trail winds through the woods from near the southwestern corner of the park parcel to the north along the floodplains of Trapper Creek and then circles back to a separate opening onto our clearing.

This non-motorized trail is available for walking or hiking in the summer and is groomed in the winter for cross-country skiing and ski races during the Cabin Fever Reliever in March.

On the southern border of the parcel, there are approximately ten acres that are cleared, leveled, and sodded. Aside from the community garden on the north end of the open acreage, there are two structures and a playground.

The Park Shelter, dedicated to the memory of pioneer Rinda Hasson, was built in 1991 by a group of volunteers under the chairmanship of Terry Miller. The structure is of beam construction with a northern wall holding two windows covered with greenhouse plastic. It houses picnic tables and has a nearby BBQ grill. In 2015 the building was roofed with metal, sprayed, and additional electrical outlets were installed, which required running another line. It has served as the location of many a birthday party and the staging of music by the Fireweed Arts Festival and a central part of Cabin Fever Reliever.

To the north is the playground area with a large play apparatus, slides, and climbing areas. This was obtained and set up, again by volunteers, under Chair Martin Bee in the early 2000s.

The remaining building was designed and built by Klondike Hughes as a moveable 12'x20' building in 2013 for a Free Box, which it is today. All construction was done on a volunteer basis. Subsequently, the interior was finished, electric and heat added, and the whole building was spray preserved. Upgrades in 2018 include roof weatherization and interior.

At a lower level of the grounds on the southeastern corner of the park parcel is a gravel pad that holds our well, community building, tool shed, a Conex storage container, and a warm storage building that houses the tractor, implements, and a back-up generator.

The lower level also includes a septic field and an outhouse. A two-sided outhouse was constructed in 2000 to accommodate the park before water was installed in the original building. In 2009 two large panels donated by the Fireweed Arts Council were added to its eastern side. On these, Sandra May, our venerated local artist, painted fireweed stalks and blooms, which fit nicely into the decor of the park. In 2016, the outhouse was upgraded to cedar siding to match the community building, the roof replaced, and new metal roofing added.

A standard "schoolhouse" module, 24'x40', was moved onto a foundation on the pad in 2000, again, by a cadre of volunteers, under the chairmanship of Martin Bee. Jim Schorr, Art Porterfield, Allan Ruhter, Jackson Parry, and Jay Smith, among others, donated time and equipment. The ramp at the western end of the original building was made and installed by Bill Devon, "by myself," as he said.

In the summer of 2003, the Upper Susitna Soil and Water Conservation District, Youth Conservation Corps, under the supervision of Ben Daniels, painted the Community Building and installed the metal-reinforced steps up to the upper level and performed the first improvements to the shelter. In 2008 Bob Filter headed up a group of volunteers who added insulated skirting and two roofs over the porches at either end of the building. In 2009 the building was painted and improved by adding handrails for safety. Finally, in 2010 the interior of the building was refurbished with new carpeting, office space, and overall painting.

The addition to the original Community Building was initiated in 2012 by securing a 24'x40' modular building from the Mat-Su Borough. The Borough's Community Development Department, through a series of Capital Improvement grants, funded moving the building to Trapper Creek for use as an annex to our existing Community Park Building. Assemblyman Vern Halter, as well as our Board members, and those of the Trapper Creek Community Council were instrumental in obtaining additional funding to completely renovate the whole building. The new, greatly expanded building, finished in 2016, was designed for maximum utility, energy conservation, and emergency preparedness.

The contractors, who bid on the projects, were all residents. Craig Cebula set the foundation and seated the modular next to the original. Bob Filter, Josh Filter, and Rod Thomason constructed the connection between the two modular units, added metal roofing to the whole building, and erected the front porch with two large, burlled logs supporting the roof. Mark Richter of Glacier Country Construction added an extra restroom, drywalled, plumbed a utility closet with a shower and new pressure tank, wired in a back-up generator with switch, laid a simulated hardwood floor and a pine tongue and groove ceiling over the whole interior, as well as cedar siding, skirting and another ramp and roof to the exterior with blown-in insulation in the attic.

Architectural drawings were provided pro bono by Gary Wolf of Wolf Architecture of Palmer. Also, many others contributed generously and in many

significant ways, to ensure that the project was a success. Most of the paid labor was conducted by locals.

The building is beautiful and utilitarian. It houses the offices of TCCSA and the Trapper Creek Community Council, two restrooms, a utility room, and a high foyer centered between the two wings.

The west wing is currently set up as a museum of Trapper Creek history with yearly rotating exhibits. On display now are photographs and memorabilia of Michigan 59ers, pioneers Marino and Carol Sik. Another exhibit highlights the history of the Cabin Fever Reliever Festival. History of our local dog mushing as a tribute to Trapper Creek's one-time status as the "dog mushing capital of the world" is also on display.

The east wing is used for meetings, bingo, and facility rental. On display are photo reproductions of pastel portraits of seven Trapper Creek pioneers by local artist Sandra May: Pete Hasson, a self- portrait of Sandra, Red Cooney, Joanne Porterfield, Art Porterfield, Bill Devon, and Allan Ruhter. Also on display is a photo reproduction of a pastel portrait of Judy Stankowitz by local artist Lynn Turner. Pastel image photography by Garry Kinder.

In June 2016, The Mat-Su Borough Assembly proposed a Recreational Bond for the October ballot, which included some \$22 million in Borough-wide projects. Borough Assemblyman Randall Kowalke included Trapper Creek in the bond issue, which passed. By March 2017, Trapper Creek Community Services proposed a warm storage building for the park to house the tractor, implements, and a back-up generator.

After an as-built survey and some soil testing in the summer of 2017, construction of the 20'x20' building was initiated in August and completed in October. The Borough managed all construction. The structure, used as a garage, is cedar-sided to match the Community Building, and is heated by propane. It is located on the north side of the Community Building in line with the tool shed and storage Conex. This building was a welcome and unexpected addition to the Trapper Creek Park, which serves the recreational needs of many.

In 2019 a Memorial Wall was proposed to honor those individuals, who resided in Trapper Creek for some amount of time and have since passed on. Proposals and ideas for a structure were solicited from the community and a modified design was selected. A committee selected the original concept for the Wall by Tammy Morrill.

That summer John White and James Morrill cut twenty-some dead spruce from around the cemetery and the periphery of the field for use in construction. Many of the trees were sawn on-site by Clint Robson, Keith Robson and Jerry Robson to provide the wood needed for the structure.

In 2020 the Memorial Wall and was constructed at the east end of the Cemetery. It is covered by a gabled metal roof supported and protected by a free-

standing structure that consists of four upright, peeled logs supporting a gabled, metal roof.

The Wall itself is constructed of 6"x6" spruce timbers stacked horizontally in three interlocking sections. The area under the roof and around the wall is graveled with a bench installed. Mounted on the wall are vertical birch boards on which stainless steel plates are affixed with individual names, date of birth, date of death, and any military affiliations. The three sections are designated for veterans, those buried in our cemetery, and all others.

The Memorial Wall and structure were completed in October 2020 by Kevin Connolly and Kelly Thompson, who added many touches that make the Memorial unique and fitting to our frontier Trapper Creek lifestyle, including many burled logs, the joining of the timbers of the wall in the style of a log cabin, and the fine wood-burning of the titles for each of the three wall sections: Veterans, Trapper Creek Memorial, and Cemetery.

## **FREE BOX**

The Trapper Creek Free Box was originally established approximately thirty-five years ago, to provide a public receptacle for donations from area citizens for area citizens. It has been housed in different buildings around the community in different capacities, but always by caring individuals with good intentions to help others.

In 2012 the Free Box found a permanent home at the park. Originally set up by Toni Hughes, this valuable resource is now maintained by a Free Box Committee consisting of Katherine Willie, Tammy Morrill, and Debbie Filter. They organize and distribute donations and ensure that the Free Box is kept clean, tidy, and well-tended daily. Seasonal clothing as well as other household items are available.

Every year, with enthusiasm, the holiday seasons are highlighted by the committee volunteers, displaying appropriate decorations or costumes for patrons to take home. A Christmas Gift Give-Away, the first one held in 2016 inside the Community Center building, was very appreciated by patrons. The 2017 and 2018 holiday décor and donated gifts were available inside the Free Box. The 2019 Christmas Gift Giveaway was held in the community center; the goal was to provide a holiday potluck dinner and offer an array of gifts for all ages to choose from for their loved ones.

As of late March 2020, marking the onset of the Corona Virus pandemic, the TCCSA Board and Free Box committee members decided to operate the Free Box within a more controlled capacity. In keeping with all other operations within the park, for the safety and well-being of the volunteers that maintain it, as well

as the patrons, it was available by appointment only. This control ensured proper social distancing and enabled the volunteers ample time to sanitize between customers. Committee members accepted donations, at offsite locations, and by approval only, thus eliminating clothing that was already in abundance and items that were of unacceptable quality. The outside receptacle was closed and not accessible for donations. Unfortunately, the 2020 Gift Giveaway was canceled due to the COVID19 pandemic.

Maintenance and operation of the Free Box requires funding for electricity, heating oil, Toyo Stove maintenance, trash disposal, miscellaneous cleaning supplies, and snow removal. In September 2020, The Jessica Stevens Grant Foundation, an affiliate of the Alaska Community Foundation awarded TCCSA \$1,600.00 in August of 2020. It was expended by the allotted period of July 2021.

Operation of the Free Box facility resumed its original, daily schedule and patron access on May 1, 2021, when health and safety stringencies lessened. The donation procedure, however, which was adopted during the pandemic, did not change due to its proven efficiency and effectiveness in lessening volunteer hours and trash removal expenditure. The Holiday seasons resumed special attention, in the Free Box, in 2021. Donated decorations and items that were new or like-new condition were creatively displayed and made great gift-giving ideas.

In July of 2021, the Free Box received a grant from the Jessica Stevens Grant Foundation in the amount of \$1,700.00. This grant will provide necessary maintenance and operations assistance and will be expended by August of 2022.

Free box improvements for 2021 include: Replacing of the old style, expensive bulb track-lighting with flush-mounted LED light fixtures. The outside of the front door was painted, the outside trim boards and bottom fascia boards were painted as well as the donation box. Metal roofing was also installed on the main building.

## **COMMUNITY GARDEN**

Trapper Creek Community Garden was established in 2008 with the tilling of a 100' x 100' garden space near the northeast corner of the cleared park area. The work was done by community volunteers and the Cooperative Extension presented information on composting and gardening in Alaska. Originally, in collaboration with ongoing elementary school projects, the first year allowed students to have their plots at no charge. There were fifty plots named after the states. Other community members paid \$25 per 10' x 10' plot. Many vegetables were harvested, and a harvest party was held to savor the fruits of our labors. Potatoes were the main producer.

A 300-gallon tank provides gravity-fed water warmed by the sun for light irrigation in the garden. A small compost pile is located north of the garden. Three raised beds were funded by 2010 Revenue Share monies and contain perennials.

The garden participation waxed and waned over the years. In 2016, a group of hearty citizens agreed it was time to make it at least fifty percent perennial food-bearing plants. Strawberries, raspberries, rhubarb, sea buckthorn berry, Nanking cherry, serviceberry, and both fruit and nut trees were introduced during the 2016 season. Approximately twenty-five percent of the garden is now planted with perennials bearing edibles. Plans include the addition of blueberry, currants, grapes, and other possibilities. Unplanted areas continue to be offered to the citizens of Trapper Creek for any additional gardening needs they may have.

Purchased garden implements include hoses, tools, a hose storage wheel, an aeration tiller, plants, manure, and potting soil. A regular tiller and many young plants were donated. Disking is now done with the TCCSA-owned tractor. Plans include an area dedicated to roses and peonies, how to encourage involvement, and the possibility of cash crop fundraising for the nonprofit association.

## **TRAPPER CREEK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

*“Trapper Creek is where all Alaskan vectors converge - earliest Athabascans, first Caucasian explorers and miners and settlers, statehood patterns of immigration, hunting, trapping, agriculture, guiding, and recreation. Name it about Alaska and we have it. Except the history.” (2008 Grant application to Alaska Humanities Forum, Rick Leo)*

The Trapper Creek Oral History Project (TCOHP) was formed in 2007 by a dozen locals under Humanities scholars Sondra Porter and Rocelyn Daniels, with the expressed goal of gathering and preserving the oral history of the area for public access and education. With so many beloved characters passing, the project members recognized the urgency in documenting the rich but diminishing history of the west side of the Susitna River while there were still indigenous residents and pioneers with exciting and historical memories to share.

In November 2009, the TCOHP was recognized by the Alaska Humanities Forum and the National Endowment for the Humanities with a \$2000 oral history grant. This award enabled the group to formally organize and purchase equipment, including a scanner, computer, and recorders for documenting our fleeting history.

Since the inception of data gathering, many people with ties to Trapper Creek have generously donated oral histories, photographs, newspapers, documents, dog mushing memorabilia, films, ephemera, and other physical items that pertain to the early history of the Upper Susitna Valley.

Only a fraction of the material archived has appeared on rotating display in the community building. Of significance is a large collection of Michigan 59er items, including an original "Alaska or Bust" banner, which was donated by early settlers Marino and Carol Sik in 2012 with the help of Earl Theroux. Without these photographs, TCCSA would have no images of some of the earliest settlers like Shorty and Florence Bradley, Clara Hickok, and others, who were not Michigan 59ers. Also, many newspaper articles were purchased by Trapper Creek Community Services from the Detroit News in 2008. In 2017 we received a donation of over one hundred additional photos of the Michigan 59ers, which had previously appeared in the Detroit News, Anchorage Times, Anchorage Daily News, and other newspapers.

Each year at Cabin Fever Reliever the TCOHP has recognized our early pioneers chronologically by their arrival from the early '50s through the early 1970s with photos, if available, and stories. Honorees include Oliver and Noah Rabidoux, Shorty and Florence Bradley, Dusty and Mary Ann Robson, Rusty Robson, Ruby Robson, Ray Gatz, Dale Saunders, Curt Wagner, J. B. and Lois TCCSA 2019 Annual Corporate Report 10 Wier, Vera Parris, Jake Jenson, Dean Cook, Phil Brandi, Billy Nicoli, Gerald, and Bertha Donaldson, Marino and Carol Sik, Nick and Eleanor Rubino, William Orzechowski, Steve Pankewicz, Ray and Bernice Kula, Anthony and Mary Anna Jurasek, Bob Watkins, Art, and Joanne Porterfield, Pete and Rinda Hasson, Joe and Vera Dul, Allan Ruhter, Earl Theroux, Virginia Robson, Mike Carpenter, Burnu Watkins, Royce, Jane Shaw, and Jim "Stosh" Stanley.

In 2019 TCCSA provided a temporary loan of Michigan 59er memorabilia from our collections for use in an exhibit at the Talkeetna Historical Museum's commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the journey. In return, they lent us four enlarged photos of 59ers. Also, three new exhibits were added to the west-wing museum: local advertisement items, Will Rogers Alaska visit and plane crash at Barrow, and the Governors of Alaska.

The TCOHP maintains a list of residents, who have passed on. The list includes name, date of birth, date of death, and any military affiliations of individuals, who have established residency in Trapper Creek since 1953. Two hundred and eleven individuals with complete information were added to the Memorial Wall, with fifty-one of them honored as veterans. There remain many individuals for whom the complete information is still being researched. Many longtime residents provided information for these lists, which were coordinated and recorded by Darlene Rich for this ongoing project. Additional names will be added to the Wall in May 2022.

Donations of historical items are appreciated anytime. Old photographs of the area, buildings, or our pioneers will be scanned and returned immediately to donors with much appreciation, as we lack photographs of many of our earliest pioneers. All donated photos and memorabilia are entered into the archives of

the TCCSA Oral History Project for historical displays and public education of our unique history.

Anyone with an interest in preserving history is asked to join TCCSA in continuing this critical project. Preservation of our history for public access is a valuable resource for our growing community. If our unique and rich Trapper Creek history is not preserved, it will become lost to future generations.

## **CABIN FEVER RELIEVER**

The Trapper Creek Cabin Fever Reliever annual event is held at the Trapper Creek Park in March. It is a major fundraising effort by the Trapper Creek Community Services Association, Inc. to benefit the Trapper Creek Park and Cemetery.

The event began in 1987, by Bill and Zona Devon, as an outdoor get together to relieve cabin fever after a long winter indoors. Over the years, events have come and gone such as a northernmost swimsuit contest and the blind snowmachine race. Eventually, a raffle was incorporated into the event to raise funds to support the park and cemetery.

The 2020 event was the 33rd Annual winter festival. The opening ceremony begins with the Pledge of Allegiance and national Anthem. Happenings included a Chili Cook-Off, Bake-Off, Ski Races, Outstanding Citizen, Poetry Contest, BB shoot, outdoor games and contests, activities, and food. A T-shirt design contest was held ahead of the event and the winning design printed on T-Shirts and aprons were for sale at the festival.

The fundraising raffle that accompanies the festivities relies on prizes donated from our generous sponsors both local and within the southcentral area. Also, the raffle ticket sellers are invaluable in this effort. There were two raffles in conjunction with the 2020 festival. The \$2 per ticket raffle gave away prizes worth \$7,676.60 with 1,288 tickets being sold. The \$5 per ticket Split the Pot raffle sold 146 tickets. The profit for the 2020 Cabin Fever Reliever was \$2,342.86.

The 2021 event was the 34th Annual winter festival. This was a smaller version parking-lot event get-together for some chili and a weenie roast around a warming fire. Happenings included Outstanding Citizen of the Year and Ralph Kolbeck was the winning nominee. A fundraising raffle that accompanied this 2021 event was Split the Pot. The \$5 per ticket Split the Pot raffle sold 33 tickets. The profit for the 2021 Cabin Fever Reliever was \$52.70. Annual planning for this event begins in January. Work continues past the date of the event for cleanup, prize giveaways, and accounting. Countless volunteer

hours go into the planning, organization, and implementation of this event.

Cabin Fever Reliever is just what the name says - a relief from cabin fever - a festival for the health and entertainment of Trapper Creek and the major fundraiser for the Trapper Creek Park and Cemetery.

## TRAPPER CREEK FIREWEED FESTIVAL

The Trapper Creek Fireweed Festival was founded by a small group of Trapper Creek citizens, who had the desire to see more art and music opportunities in our community. After the idea culminated in the summer of 2004, the Trapper Creek Fireweed Arts Council was established on December 29, 2006, as a registered 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization by the State of Alaska, by Michele Poole, Debbie Filter, and Vicky Watson. In 2016, the Fireweed Festival came under the umbrella of the TCCSA, and the Fireweed Committee was formed. The original goal - to bring the public a spotlight on the importance of arts and music as an integral part of an individual's life still retains that same flavor and inspiration.

Held in July when the fireweed is in bloom, the Fireweed Festival, now in its fifteenth year, entertains folks seeking wholesome outdoor family fun. This one-day event invites craft and food vendors to the Trapper Creek Park for the public to enjoy the festivities while they are entertained by local bands and other types of artists. There are no admittance or parking fees. Craft and food vendors pay a fee, and the musicians donate their time for this fundraiser. A supervised children's tent offers a safe environment for hands-on activities for all ages.

Other activities during the festival include learning about birds of the area, wild edible plants, and wilderness skill techniques. Along with the informative booths, festivalgoers can participate in raffles and a silent auction.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Fireweed Festival, scheduled for July of 2020 was cancelled due to the constraints of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The Fireweed Festival of 2021 was held on July 24<sup>th</sup> becoming the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Vendor booth fees, and the ice cream booth generated \$1,004.50. Donated merchandise, filling three tables in the Fireweed Booth, were rewarded to lucky ticket winners. Two raffles were held in conjunction with the 2021 festival. The \$2 per ticket raffle gave away many prizes. Although ticket sales were 360, we did not tally and place value on all the generously donated prizes. The big raffle prize was a one-man Kayak in which tickets sold for \$5 each yielding a \$1500 profit. The \$5 per ticket Split the Pot raffle sold 181 tickets yielding \$905 to be split with the lucky winner. An added feature for this year's festival was Goat Yoga. For the year 2021, the Fireweed Festival had a profit of \$3,184.68.

Planning for this event has always begun in April each year. Work continues past the date of the event for cleanup, prize giveaways, and accounting. Countless volunteer hours go into the planning, organization, and implementation of the festival. This annual fundraising endeavor will be a bi-annual event as of yearend 2021. The next 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Fireweed Festival will be held in July of 2023.

## **NORDIC SKI AND HIKING TRAILS**

The Trapper Creek Nordic Ski Club was created in 2003 by Ricardo Ernst, a longtime resident of Trapper Creek. He was an avid skate and Nordic ski enthusiast and had a huge passion to teach children and adults alike. His enthusiasm was very contagious, and his involvement was appreciated by all that knew him. The ski club saw members come and go over twelve years. Kathy Ernst, Debbie Filter, Francine Bennis, Joshua Filter, Dave Porter, and Tom Taylor remained active throughout the years, assisting with clinics, after school ski programs, and trail maintenance. Volunteers Bob Filter, Ralph Kolbeck, Tom Taylor, and Rick Ernst accomplished grooming of the Community Park trail and the Trapper Creek Elementary school trails. Roz Daniels was an active and integral part of the culmination of the sport of Nordic skiing in the Trapper Creek Elementary School program, years before the official club was created. With the help of Karen Mannix of Talkeetna, the acquisition of skis for all the school children came about through community assistance and grants. The club obtained several Borough grants for the creation of signage for the community trails and procuring equipment such as a snowmachine, trailer, and groomer. These accomplishments ensured access and enjoyment of winter trails for the community and visitors alike.

The club's assets were offered and incorporated into the Trapper Creek Community Services Association, Inc. with the understanding that the club would become an active Ski Committee under the Association and retain the same goals: enthusiasm with our young children to develop an active and healthy appreciation for the outdoors through Nordic skiing.

## **TRAPPER CREEK WATERING POINT**

The Trapper Creek Watering Point (TCWP) project began in October 2015 after an application being submit to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Division of Water, and the Village Safe Water Program (VSW). The VSW Program collaborates with rural communities to develop sustainable sanitation facilities and funding grants to small communities for water construction projects. VSW ensures appropriate and effective use of grant funds, and manages all the Project Oversight, Monitoring and Control of the granted funds.

Trapper Creek met the VSW grant guidelines due to a population of less than 500, and the fact that our community did not operate a public water system but recognized the need to provide a safe source of drinking water for use by

residents and visitors year-round. Many residents have no dedicated safe source of potable water. The residents relied on rainwater catchment, water purchased at retail stores, well water from friends and neighbors, and untreated water taken directly from the Trapper Creek itself for drinking water and household use. Therefore, considering a new well and watering point is the only community water supply.

In early 2018 a preliminary engineering report (PER) was prepared by Agnew Beck Consulting to evaluate alternatives for a new well and watering point. The VSW granted \$75,000 for the PER to first establish the dire need for the project, and once established, the USDA EPA granted an additional \$325,000 for development.

With the assistance of Eric Phillips, Community Development Director of the Matsu Borough, we were able to acquire 1.5 acres of land on Devonshire Drive. Through the assistance of Nancy Cameron, Borough Land Management Agent, and the blessing by Borough Assembly, TCCSA was granted a land conveyance, and began construction with the granted funds by DEC/VSW.

In May of 2020, the Borough Assembly approved a \$25,000 start-up operating grant for the TCWP. The funds are non-reportable and spent to meet daily overhead expenditures.

In December of 2020, Trapper Creek Watering Point received a Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) grant by the Mat-Su Borough Assembly in the amount of \$13,000.00 for the provision of Free Water to approximately 200 families in Trapper Creek. To turn on the water pump and calculate usage, the lowest meter reading is 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a cent. Therefore, 250 gallons of water sold at 25 cents (a quarter), provides economic support to those suffering from employment and business interruptions due to COVID-19 related business closures.

Trapper Creek Watering Point opened its doors on April 20, 2021. Two certified operators and a bookkeeper maintain the TCWP facility.

## **ECONOMICS**

There are three areas where TCCSA receives funding for the operation and maintenance of the Trapper Creek Park and Cemetery – Gaming, grants, and operations - each accounted for separately.

### **Gaming**

As a licensee, TCCSA applies and pays a fee for a Charitable Gaming Permit yearly from the State of Alaska. The permit authorizes TCCSA to conduct gaming activities in our Community Building and Park to include raffle sales, Pull Tabs, and Bingo. We also retain areawide permits for raffle sales only that allow us to conduct sales of raffle tickets in the Willow, Talkeetna, and Trapper Creek areas.

Over time the raffle has been the mainstay of our organization for revenue, especially from the proceeds of the popular raffles associated with the Cabin Fever Reliever festival and now the Fireweed Arts Festival.

In 2008 the Board initially applied for a Pull Tab permit that allowed annual sales at Cache Creek Lodge, The Big Su Lodge, H & H Lakeside Restaurant, as well as TCCSA. Two of these establishments are no longer in business and the other does not sell tickets anymore, so pull tabs are only sold at the park, during festival times and for bingo until another vendor is established.

In 2020 gaming beneficiaries outside of our organization included: Mr. CY Jolley, a student at Susitna Valley High School, for a scholarship to the Grand Canyon University of Colorado; KTNA Radio; the Trapper Creek Elementary School for a Kachemak Bay donation; the Curry Ridge Riders for an annual membership in support of their non-profit; and miscellaneous purchases of office supplies and event equipment. Other expenses paid for by Gaming funds include infrastructure expenses for the Memorial Wall at the Cemetery; signage at the park and a new metal roof for the Free Box.

In 2021 gaming beneficiaries outside of our organization included: KTNA Radio; the Trapper Creek Elementary School for a Kachemak Bay donation; the Curry Ridge Riders for an annual membership in support of their non-profit; Sunshine Transit; and the Upper Susitna Food Pantry; and miscellaneous purchases of office supplies, event equipment, and maintenance equipment. Other expenses paid for by Gaming funds include infrastructure expenses for the Memorial Wall at the Cemetery.

### **Grants**

Detailed elsewhere in this report, grants are an important revenue source for developing the park. We have obtained grants for critical projects over the

years, including many from the Community Development Department of the Mat-Su Borough to include Community Assistance Program (CAP) formerly known as Revenue Sharing, which is offered by the State of Alaska to communities and is administered by the Borough, and funding of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) also through the Borough, which enabled TCCSA to augment, renovate and refurbish our Community Building. TCCSA acquired grant funds from Jessica Stevens Community Foundation, Inc. and the Talkeetna Bachelor Society, Inc. for maintenance and operation of the Free Box.

In the last ten years, TCCSA has received a total of \$337,457.95 in CIP (Capital Improvement Projects) and Revenue Sharing/CAP grants. In 2019, the CAP (Community Assistance Program) expenditures were \$11,024.46 with \$5,363.44 carried over into the new year. These funds were expended in 2020. In 2020, the CAP expenditures were \$4,567.10 with \$6,432.90 carried over into the next year.

## **Operations**

Operational monies are discretionary as determined by the Board, that is, TCCSA is not required to fulfill reporting and accounting obligations, other than Federal tax reporting, which are in place for both gaming and grants. TCCSA can direct such monies to where they are deemed necessary for the operations of our organization. Sources of operating money derive from any number of sources, such as donations for food or baked goods from Cabin Fever, personal donations that individuals or organizations make to TCCSA, sales of plots in the Trapper Creek Cemetery, and other revenues.

At the beginning of 2020, the balance in the operations account was \$13,732.15. In 2020 we received \$2,321.66 for operations, aside from gaming monies transferred for use in operations. At the end of the year, the balance in the operations account was \$16,053.81.

## **REVENUE SHARING and COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP)**

The last ten years have been an exceptionally busy period for the development of the Trapper Creek Park and Cemetery, especially considering TCCSA operates with a very limited number of uncompensated volunteers on the Board, who handle all the daily operations of the park.

Starting in 2011 Trapper Creek Community Services has taken advantage of Community Assistance Program (CAP) formerly known as Revenue Sharing grants offered by the State of Alaska to communities. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough through the Trapper Creek Community Council administered these grants. Each project submitted by various entities was voted on by Trapper Creek residents. TCCSA has been the recipient of the following Revenue Sharing grants, totaling \$161,532.95.

### **FY 2009 – Total funds received \$16,200**

Upgrade to the Picnic Shelter (\$7,134.83) - replaced rotten wood on the roof, installation of metal roofing, and running of additional electrical lines.

Storage Shed (\$6,252.37) - purchased a shed for the storage of tools and partially finished the interior.

Fixing up Cemetery and Graveling Access Roads (\$2,812.80) - extended the cemetery, replaced broken and missing grave markers, and planted a raised bed with perennial flowers.

### **FY 2010 – Total funds received \$14,770**

Trapper Creek Free Box (\$6,000) - constructed a building with an unfinished interior.

Playground Equipment (\$1,500) – purchased lumber and hardware to augment playground materials donated by the Borough. This project has not been completed but is scheduled for summer 2017.

Upgrade Interior of Community Building (\$2,480) - installed new carpeting and erected enclosed office space.

Community Garden Upgrade (\$1,435) - constructed a water tower and raised beds.

Utility Tractor and Implements (\$3,355) – purchased a John Deere 1026R tractor, loader backhoe, snow blower, front blade, rotary tiller, and a rotary cutter. This project carries over to FY 2011 and FY 2012

**FY 2011 – Total funds received \$20,200**

Utility Tractor and Implements (\$20,200)

**FY 2012 – Total funds received \$13,672.16**

Utility Tractor and Implements (\$8,445)

Operating Costs for the Park (\$4,000) - labor, fuel, equipment, and other necessities for the year-round operating for the Park.

Trapper Creek Oral History Project (\$1000) – purchased recording equipment, scanner, and computer.

Upgrade Interior of Community Building- Additional Funding (\$227.16)

**FY 2013 – Total funds received \$24,690.79**

Operating Costs for Park (\$7,200) - labor, construction, maintenance, and other necessities for the operation of the Park.

Conex Container (\$5500) - purchase of a Conex container for the storage of the tractor and implements.

Finish Outbuildings (\$6,658.50) – purchased a heater, diesel tank, and sheeting for the Free Box ceiling and gable ends for the Free Box and constructed a workbench and tool storage areas for the shed and completed some interior finish work on the shelter. Also, all outdoor buildings were sprayed with a protective coating.

Tools and Implements (\$2,000) - purchased maintenance tools for the park.

Additional Implements for the Tractor (\$3,332.29) - purchased a disk harrow, pallet forks, and a filter pack for the tractor.

**FY 2014 – Total funds received \$12,800**

Operating Costs for the Park (\$12,800) - labor, construction, maintenance, and other necessities for operation.

**FY 2015 – Total funds received \$14,400**

Operating Costs for the Park (\$14,400) - labor, construction, maintenance, and other necessities for operation.

**FY 2016 – Total funds received \$13,800**

Operating Costs for the Park (\$13,500) - labor, construction, maintenance, and other necessities for operation. This project is ongoing.

Maintenance of Bearcat snow machine (\$300) – maintenance of equipment and grooming of the TCCSA and Trapper Creek Elementary School ski trails during the winter season.

**FY 2017 – Total funds received \$10,000**

Operating Costs for the Park (\$10,000) - labor, maintenance, and other necessities for operation. There is \$6,447.89 remaining on this project, which is ongoing for the continued maintenance and operation.

**FY 2018 – Total funds received \$10,000**

Operating Costs for the Park (\$10,000) - labor, maintenance, and other necessities for operation. There is \$5,363.44 remaining on this project, which is ongoing for the continued maintenance and operation.

**FY 2019 – Total funds received \$11,000**

Operating Costs for the Park (\$11,000) - labor, maintenance, and other necessities for operation. There is \$6,432.90 remaining on this project, which is ongoing for the continued maintenance and operation.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

There have been major developments to the Community Building during this period, as well, starting in August 2012. Financing for this phase of development was from Capital Improvement monies provided by the Community Development Department of the Mat-Susitna Borough. Funding for this work, totaling \$196,600.00 was obtained in four installments.

A Borough-owned modular building was secured from the sewage lagoon in Talkeetna, moved to Trapper Creek and placed on foundation twelve feet away from the original module. A connection between the two buildings was constructed. The whole building was finished inside and outside. Additionally, the outhouse was upgraded to match the Community Building.

In 2018 the remaining funds of \$6,588.53 on this project, were expended on parking lot improvement and sewer line maintenance.

## **JESSICA STEVENS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT**

The last year has been an exciting year for the continuing development of the Trapper Creek Free Box, especially considering it operates with a very limited number of volunteers who handle the ongoing daily operations.

Funding in 2019, which was used for maintenance and operation, was made possible by a grant from the Jessica Stevens Community Foundation, an affiliate of the Alaska Community Foundation for \$1,625.00. The remaining balance from 2019 of \$1,350.90 was expended in 2020.

Funding in 2020, which was used for maintenance and operation, was made possible by a grant from the Jessica Stevens Community Foundation, an affiliate of the Alaska Community Foundation for \$1,600.00. The remaining balance from 2020 of \$1,026.49 was expended in 2021.

Funding in 2021, which was used for maintenance and operation, was made possible by a grant from the Jessica Stevens Community Foundation, an affiliate of the Alaska Community Foundation for \$1,700.00. The remaining balance from 2021 of \$1,416.10 will be expended in 2022.

## **PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS Completed in 2020/2021**

Many projects were completed in 2020. New metal roofing was added to the Free Box. A beautiful structure was built for the cemetery memorial wall. New signs were added for the ski trails that include usage rules and a map of the trails, and fallen trees were removed. A sign was added to the park with general park rules and hours. The new community water point was finished and is now open to the public. The hand-painted fireweed panels that decorate the outhouse were touched up, a dog waste station was installed near the outhouses, and the picnic table was repaired.

## **PARK IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS for 2022**

Plans for 2022 include designing and erecting another playground apparatus from materials on site. A ground cover matting will be added to the community garden to combat weeds, and lime will be spread on the cemetery. A concrete sidewalk and rail along the stairway to the shelter is needed. As we have learned more about the problematic watershed, gutters will be installed on the roof of the front porch and at the water point roof. The conex door will be greased for easier use. The barbeque that is provided for the park was hit by the snowplow, so that will be fixed as well. The south facing Welcome to Trapper Creek sign, the sign for ski trail # 2, and the park rules signs will be fixed. The community building will be power washed and log oil applied. There is a hole in the field that needs to be filled in. Finally, keeping community fun and togetherness in mind, plans for a baseball diamond backstop, a volleyball/badminton court, and a horseshoe pit have been put into motion.