

Akis Gialopsos
Acting Commissioner

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**Department of
Natural Resources**

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: July 29, 2022

Clean-up work to begin at Chena River State Rec Site

(Fairbanks, AK) – The Department of Natural Resources’ Division of Forestry & Fire Protection and Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation – in partnership with the City of Fairbanks and other agencies – are initiating the process of cleaning up the Chena River State Recreation Site with the goal of reopening to the public this season. The site has been closed since June 2020.

Today, the Fairbanks Police Department will post 72-hour notices at the site. People who are currently trespassing at the closed site will be informed to remove their personal possessions and depart by Monday, Aug. 1. This removal is necessary for restoring the Chena River State Recreation Site to a safe recreational space for the public. DNR’s Division of Forestry and Fire Protection firefighters will begin work on the morning of Aug. 2.

The firefighters will be targeting underbrush, low tree limbs, and dangerous or standing dead trees in the area. A side benefit of the forestry efforts will be enhanced line-of-sight to discourage illegal activity while maintaining a forest canopy in this urban Fairbanks site. Once the fire risk reduction is complete, a clean-up of the remaining waste will begin, and infrastructure inspected. Residents and businesses in the area may notice increased noise during the day beginning next week.

“Governor Dunleavy recognizes the importance of the Chena River State Recreation Site to the people of Interior Alaska, and also the ability to demonstrate an example of a Firewise community ” said Akis Gialopsos, acting DNR Commissioner. “Today’s announcement begins the process, with the City of Fairbanks, to consider which elements of the site can be reopened to Alaskans in a safe, Firewise manner, while we have the short window of time of fire activity in Alaska diminishing, and Lower 48 fire activity not yet picked up in earnest.”

The 23.8-acre Chena River State Recreation Site has seen chronic illegal behavior that was a threat to staff and the general public, driving out law-abiding visitors and diminishing the quality of life in Fairbanks.

“The ongoing illegal activity at the Chena River State Recreation site has created a nuisance to neighbors, as well as law enforcement officers that have had to address crime in the area,” said Fairbanks mayor Jim Matherly. “Community safety is my top priority when working to address areas of concern in Fairbanks, and I am very pleased that state and local partners are coming together in an effort to return this site to a beautiful, and most importantly, safe, recreational area for the residents and visitors of Fairbanks.”

Once the clean-up is completed and infrastructure inspected, more information will be available about when and how residents and visitors can use the site.

This multi-agency effort also includes the Fairbanks Police Department, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, and Alaska Department of Public Safety.

The Department of Natural Resources' mission is to develop, conserve and maximize the use of Alaska's natural resources consistent with the public interest.

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