

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development**Grants to Municipalities (AS 37.05.315)****Grant Recipient: Fairbanks North Star Borough****Federal Tax ID: 920030612****Project Title:****Project Type: Remodel, Reconstruction and Upgrades**

Fairbanks North Star Borough - Parks and Recreation Facility Improvements

State Funding Requested: \$1,950,000
One-Time Need

House District: Fairbanks Areawide (7-11)

Brief Project Description:

The Birch Hill facility improvement project includes construction of a limited service kitchen and viewing deck, parking expansion, competition trail upgrades, timing equipment, wax cabins complex, storage/grooming equipment shelter and insulation for Rikke's Roadhouse. All upgrade projects in the \$1,950,000 request are designed to benefit the community as a whole and will also assist in preparations for the 2013 National Junior Nordic Cross Country Olympics and the 2014 Arctic Winter Games.

Funding Plan:

Total Project Cost:	\$1,950,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$0)
FY2012 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$1,950,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$0

Detailed Project Description and Justification:

The Fairbanks North Star Borough requests funding through the FY12 State of Alaska Capital Budget for Parks and Recreation Facility Improvements: Birch Hill for \$1,950,000. Working closely with the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks, we have identified the needed upgrades for Birch Hill. The Birch Hill facility improvement project includes construction of a limited service kitchen and viewing deck, parking expansion, competition trail upgrades, timing equipment, wax cabins complex, storage/grooming equipment shelter and insulation for Rikke's Roadhouse. All upgrade projects in the \$1,950,000 request are designed to benefit the community as a whole and will also assist in preparations for the 2013 National Junior Nordic Cross Country Olympics and the 2014 Arctic Winter Games. The Birch Hill facility saw over 180,000 visitors last year, which continues a trend of increased visitation every year since the 2002 construction of the new facility.

One of the most critical needs of the facility is securing additional parking. It is not unusual for both Birch Hill parking lots to fill to capacity, forcing parking on public streets all the way down to the Steese Highway. Property adjacent to Birch Hill has become available for purchase. The three lots would be suitable for parking and as an alternate trailhead.

Parking Expansion \$178,000

The most critical need is to secure additional parking for existing and future events. It is not unusual for both Birch Hill parking lots to fill to capacity winter or summer, at times, forcing parking on public streets all the way down to the Steese Highway. There is a short window of opportunity to purchase adjacent properties at Birch Hill which would be suitable for

parking and as an alternate trailhead on days when the stadium and Birch Hill Cross Country Ski Center (BHCCSC) are busy due to Nordic programs and other competitions.

Competition Trail Upgrades \$19,500

National and international course standards have changed since the last major work prior to the 2003 Junior Olympics. Work is required to bring the existing competition trails up to the new standards in order to host major events in the future.

Timing Equipment \$30,975

Due to a lack of sufficient timing equipment and the age of existing timing equipment, timing equipment must be borrowed for events. The acquisition of new timing technology will make a significant difference in the timing capabilities of events held at Birch Hill.

Wax Cabins Complex \$244,855

Teams from 8 delegations will compete in the 2014 Arctic Winter Games. Space is needed for teams to prepare their skis for competition and to store their skis securely during the games. A wax cabin complex will be used several times each season for major events in Fairbanks and provide much needed space for local school ski programs.

Storage/grooming Equipment Shelter \$101,465

Space utilized in the "Cave" or basement in the BHCCSC is inadequate to store all the equipment needed to groom trails and hold events. Additional cold storage shelter would address the storage needs and allow for better use of the Cave in that heated space.

Insulate Rikke's Roadhouse \$5570

Currently the metal roof on Rikke's Roadhouse is sitting directly on top of the tongue and groove decking without any insulation. Installing a few inches of foam installation between the surfaces and also insulating the floor would increase the functionality of the building and would save money on heating fuel.

Timing Building Remodel \$119,635

The space immediately above the timing room in the Birch Hill timing building is unusable for all practical purposes. By raising the section of the roof of the building or adding dormers, and installing glass on three sides of the room, the space would be made functional for a number of purposes, including as a space for public address announcing, event production, and placement and monitoring of photofinish camera equipment;. These functions are extremely important for major events such as Arctic Winter Games.

Project Timeline:

The FNSB will begin the project in the early fall of 2011 and will complete it in 2013.

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

FNSB Parks and Recreation

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

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Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? Yes No

The Birch Hill facility improvement project will include construction of a kitchen, viewing deck and other upgrades in preparation for the Arctic Winter Games and for facility use flexibility. Birch Hill will host the 2013 Junior Olympics and the FNSB expects events of this magnitude to continue into the future.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks and Recreation Department, through partnership with the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks, offers the Birch Hill Recreation Area and the Jim Whisenant Cross Country Ski Trail system for recreational use. The trail system includes more than 32 km of world-class groomed trails, with over 8 km of lit trails. The Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks maintains the trail system and hosts the facility's races.



Birch Hill Recreation Area is the site of the beautiful Birch Hill Cross Country Ski Center that opened in February 2003. This 10,000+ square foot facility can be reserved for meetings and events. There is also a biathlon facility, two log cabins for warming up and race headquarters, and a timing chalet that also hosts the Junior Nordics office.

Birch Hill Recreation Area has had and will host several prestigious events that are important to Fairbanks and the State of Alaska, these include:

International Events:

- 2014 - Arctic Winter Games
- 1988 - Arctic Winter Games
- 1984 - International Ski Federation Men's World Cup Race
- 1982 - Arctic Winter Games

National Events

- 2013- US Ski Association Junior Olympics
- 2003 - US Ski Association Junior Olympics
- 1995 - US Ski Association Junior Olympics
- 1977 - US Ski Association Junior National Championships

Other Major Events

Several Nor-Am/SuperTour events in the 1980's, 1990's and 2000's, including the US Ski Team and/or the Canadian Ski Team, as well as many top national-level racers from the US and Canada, some college teams visiting from the lower 48, and occasional Japanese participants.

1-2 Tang Cup/Besh Cup USSA Alaska/Cross Country Alaska (CCAK) Junior Olympic Qualifying races each year from the late 1970's through the present day

- 2002 - ASAA State High School Championships
- 2003 - ASAA State High School Championships
- 2004 - ASAA State High School Championships
- 2005 - ASAA State High School Championships

The use of the facility continues to grow considerably each year, during the winter of 2006/07; 136,600 participants used the facility; 167,500 used it during the winter of 2007/08; 173,000 during the winter of 2008/09; 175,000 last winter and over 180,000 are expected this winter for an annual three year average growth rate of 110%.

The construction of these upgrades will allow Birch Hill to better host these events further growing the sport of cross country skiing in the Interior and throughout Alaska.