



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

## Youth for Habitat Program

### Fairbanks Fish & Wildlife Field Office

The Youth for Habitat program was started in 2009 as a way to accomplish important habitat restoration work while providing participants with a quality outdoor learning experience. This program is open to all students (public, private, and home-schooled) between the ages of 13 - 15 in the Fairbanks Northstar Borough. Between 10 and 15 students are selected to participate in three-week introductory sessions each year.

The goals of the program are to help participating youth understand how urban development and the actions of individuals can degrade aquatic habitats. The students also learn different habitat restoration techniques, and begin to understand the characteristics of healthy habitats that are needed to produce and sustain fish and wildlife populations.

Field lessons on salmon biology, habitat health, aquatic insects and water quality along with stream-bank restoration projects and participation in Chinook salmon research,



*Youth for Habitat students assist with invasive plant research conducted by the University of Alaska.*



*Students help to determine fish survival and reproduction in a rehabilitated gravel pit.*

help demonstrate the importance of area streams and rivers to native fish. The students help make gravel pits higher quality wildlife habitat by planting native wetland plants, collecting fish for stocking these areas, and removing invasive weeds. Other projects emphasize

the threat to area ecosystems posed by invasive weeds. By participating in Schoolyard Habitat projects and creating infrastructure for Tanana Lakes Recreation Area, students in this program give other children more opportunities to learn and play outdoors.



Students who successfully complete the introductory session are invited back the following year. In their second year, the students work on a single project and take on more of the design and implementation. Projects can include designing and completing a natural playscape, green infrastructure, or Schoolyard Habitat project, or completing a research internship working alongside a scientist.

Session dates vary from year to year. The application period usually opens in March. Check the website for an application.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
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