

Application Form

Profile

Mathew

First Name

Brunton

Last Name

Email Address

Valdez Mailing Address (PO BOX # or HCI BOX #)

Home Address

Suite or Apt

City

State

Postal Code

Primary Phone

Alternate Phone

self

Employer

Outdoor & Environmental
Educator

Occupation

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Parks & Recreation Commission: Submitted

Question applies to multiple boards

Required Time Commitment: All board/committee members and commissioners are expected to (1) be physically present at most, if not all, board/committee or commission meetings and (2) review agenda materials prior to arriving for the meeting to be best prepared for discussion and decision making. Are you aware of the time commitment involved in serving on this particular board, committee, or commission? Are you willing and able to commit to regular meetings plus work sessions every month for your full term?

Yes. It seems P&R Commission has struggled with establishing agenda items and quorum in recent months (well before the unfortunate passing of a commissioner that created this vacancy), which resulted in cancelled meetings. That was disappointing to me as a community member that sees no shortage of agenda items that could be created and discussed. I'd be an invested and committed member of this board.

Question applies to multiple boards

Regular attendance at meetings by commissioners/board members is crucial to the commission/board's ability to conduct business. Attendance for commissioners/board members is tracked. Under current City Council policy, the seat of a board/committee member or commissioner will be considered vacant following three consecutive absences from regular meetings. At that time, the member will be asked to either resign or be removed by formal action of Council to allow other interested citizens a chance to serve. Are you committed to in-person attendance at most, if not all, commission/board meetings? Do you understand you must provide your commission/board staff as much notice as possible if you must be absent to ensure a quorum is available to conduct commission/board business?

Yes

How did you learn about this vacancy? *

☒ City Website

Interests & Experience

Why are you interested in serving on a City of Valdez board or commission?

There's no place in the world I'd rather live than Valdez. It is surrounded by some of the greatest mountains and wilderness on the planet, which provide adventure unlike no other place. Prior to moving to Valdez, I'd lived in Anchorage for 16 years. I explored the state of Alaska and its mountains extensively during that time. I came to Valdez many times, practically once a month for a couple years to ski and climb, before moving here. I would like to help Valdez achieve its potential as the "outdoor recreation capital of Alaska" in a way that improves the community by diversifying and bolstering the economy, but also while protecting the integrity of the raw, unspoiled, and uncommercialized wilderness that makes this place so unique. My primary interest is helping Valdez develop a trail network for alpine access that would make it one of the greatest hiking, backcountry skiing, and mountaineering destinations in North America. This isn't as big a task as it seems. It just requires a vision for how to create a unique, low-impact, and also very affordable trail network to get through the lower elevation Chugach jungle of our temperate rainforest ecosystem. I've been contemplating this vision for years and developing it daily since I moved here.

Please outline your education, work, and volunteer experience which will assist you in serving on a City of Valdez board/commission.

I have a BA Psychology and MS Outdoor & Environmental Education from Alaska Pacific University, through which my studies focused on outdoor recreation and wellness (individual and community). My graduate thesis was a pilot study of a grassroots, minimalist model for a recreational avalanche information program for Alaska's most readily accessible avalanche terrain where 19 avalanche related fatalities have occurred: the Western Chugach Mountains (primarily of Chugach State Park) around Anchorage. This thesis project became the Anchorage Avalanche Center, through which I ran a volunteer avalanche information and education program for the greater Anchorage area community for nearly a decade. Of note, the community of Valdez struggles with avalanche information and education despite providing significant funding to the Valdez Avalanche Center (~\$60,000/season more funding than the program I ran in Anchorage). With their forecaster being based at 46 mile, the Valdez Avalanche Center provided basically no professional observations and information for the Valdez side of Thompson Pass to the Port this entire past season. That's unacceptable, considering Valdez taxpayers fund the avalanche center through the CSO program and that the majority of winter recreation is very arguably done closer to the Port (e.g. Dayville/TAPS, Glacier Lake, and Mineral Creek areas) than Thompson Pass. The Valdez Avalanche Center provided no youth avalanche education last winter (which is unacceptable in a community like Valdez where EVERYONE should be educated about avalanches considering how much potentially deadly avalanche terrain is near the community). As an outdoor leadership instructor at Prince William Sound College, the students in my outdoor safety and risk course filled a bit of that void by delivering avalanche education programs at Hermon Hutchens Elementary School. Another huge issue in the community I discovered this spring was the lack of any coordinated bear safety education for youth in our schools. Again, my PWSC students and I filled part of that void by providing a day of "Bear Science & Safety" education at the local elementary school that was very well received. There are other areas in which the community of Valdez needs increased and improved outdoor and environmental education programs. I would like to see the community develop a sustainable means for delivering bear, avalanche, fire, and water safety programs to school-aged youth every year. Living in Valdez, it's as essential to know and understand bear (wildlife), avalanche, fire, and water safety as it is algebra and the scientific method. I worked for Anchorage Parks & Rec in a couple different positions as a grad student. Most significantly, as the "Field Educator" for the Youth Employment in Parks program (a partnership between the non-profit Anchorage Park Foundation and the city's Parks & Rec Dept.) through which I developed and delivered the summer youth employment program's integrated outdoor and environmental education curriculum in addition to helping the Program Manager with program management. I also supervised the program's Americorps intern, so am familiar with that interface. Finally, I regularly pursue and enjoy many different outdoor pursuits: skiing, climbing, backpacking, mountain biking, packrafting, hunting, and fishing. I understand user-group conflicts and the necessity of associated institutions creating a public land experience that is respectful of and enjoyable for all user groups.

[Mat Brunton -
_Outdoor Resume Spring 2022.pdf](#)

Upload a Resume or Letter of Interest