

**MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE  
GIRDWOOD ROADS, FACILITIES,  
PARKS & RECREATION**



**DATE:** February 23, 2021  
**TO:** Girdwood Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Kyle Kelley, Girdwood Service Area Manager & Margaret Tyler, Parks and Recreation  
**SUBJECT:** Parks and Rec 2020 Overview

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**Staffing:** In 2020 we expanded the Girdwood MOA staff to include 2 summer parks/trails caretakers, Zach Behney and Amanda Sassi. It was helpful during COVID-19 to have the two positions filled by family members as they could ride in one truck. COVID also increased the number of available local hires, as many summer positions were eliminated in tourism, fishing, guiding industries. Summer season was fairly average weather-wise, lots of trail projects were focused on throughout the summer, which matched the skill set that Zach and Amanda brought to the positions.

Campground host continues to be an important volunteer support position, as the individual minds the campground and pavilions. We will need to find a new host in 2021 and have begun recruitment effort.

**Tennis Courts:**

Tennis Committee hung the nets and wind screens in May, took the windscreens down in the fall. 2021: Parks and Rec would like to encourage a local adult and youth tennis program to increase use of the tennis courts, encourage more diverse use, perhaps basketball, pickleball, etc.

**Girdwood Park:**

2021: Continue to assess and remove hazard trees in the park.

**Nissman Pavilion:**

Maintenance only, summer long blowing out and cleanup.

2021: Replace the other BBQ Grill, remove the artistic chimney, re-stain the entire structure.

**Marlow Pavilion:**

Few rentals due to COVID. No major items to report in 2020.

2021: Maintenance only.

**Girdwood Campground:**

Campground was busy early in the summer but quieted down in July-fall. Summer crew blew out paths and camp sites during the summer. Coordination with host on campground visitors.

2021: Add gravel to camp sites and pathways.

**Disc Golf:**

Some brushing as needed. Disk golf users did the majority of maintenance related to specific events held at the course. Disc golf Association held 2 tournaments in 2020 within COVID restrictions.

2021: rework map of the disc golf course, replace missing tee boxes

**Ball Field:**

Occasional clean up in the ballfield summer long. More effort to establish no dogs in the ball field, with formal signage.

2021: Replace the Outfield fence line. Paint the dugouts (? Possible service project). Work on official renaming of the field in honor of Sladen Mohl.

**Little Bears Playground & park access:**

Little Bears Playground was heavily utilized throughout the summer.

2021: Continue picnic area improvements, add sand and wood chips in spring, possibly with the Fathers and sons group in mid-May.

**Girdwood Skate Park:**

Assisted Friends of the Skate Park with Throwdown Showdown event in March pre-COVID. Work party was canceled, however summer parks caretakers and John Gallup completed the work slated for 2020, including moving the trash cans, rebuilding 2 ramps and constructing 2 new ramps.

2021: Assist with projects determined for this summer by Friend of the Skate Park: Chair 6 benches, repair/resurface of asphalt. Possible construction of 6' half pipe and addition of some street features/rebuild of last of the old ramps. Continue to work to improve flow of the park. Assist with Throwdown Showdown coordination

**Parking Areas:**

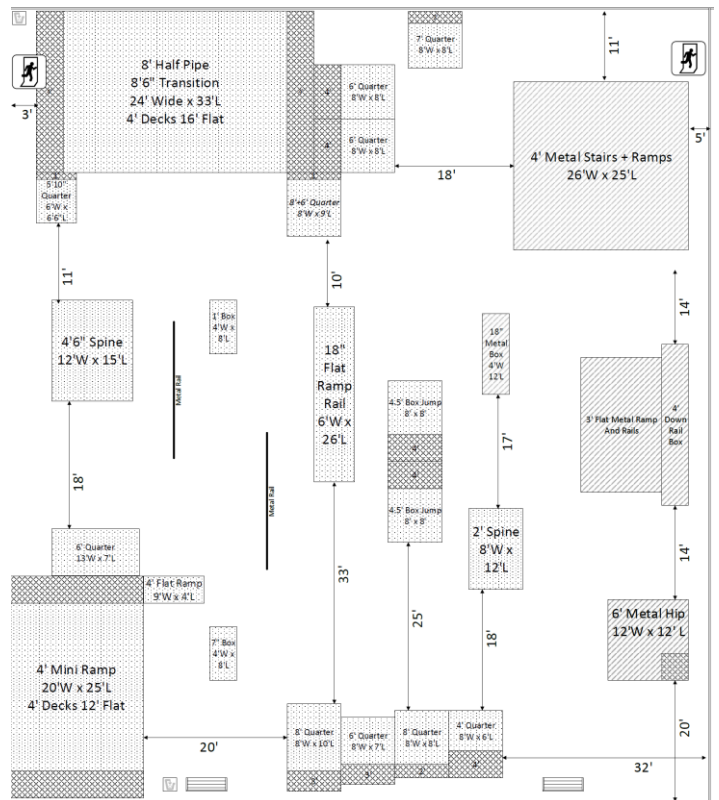
Roads crew improved the surface and drainage. Coordinated rent-a-can and bear resistant dumpsters for the campground/pavilions. We left these items out longer into the fall as public was enjoying an extended park season.

2021: Possible to add some flowers or landscaping to the four corners of Alyeska Highway/Egloff/Hightower to replace culvert-style planters at 2 corners that were removed with road construction.

**Soccer Field:**

Worked with Turf contractor on getting better grass growth, and it came in strong in the fall once it began raining.

2021. Continued planning for better layout and drainage of the park area, replace shed.



### **Lions Club Park:**

Blew leaves out in spring. Light brushing during summer.

2021: Assess and remove cottonwoods that are hazards. Work with Lions Club on construction of pavilion for this park, perhaps through [Anchorage Park Foundation grant funding](#).

### **Town Square Park:**

Inside Park: Maintenance of planters in and around Town Square Park, weeding iris beds, removal of dead trees.

2021: Continue evaluating iris beds inside and surrounding Town Square Park. Assess trees that have been damaged by wildlife and weather. Consider adding lights to one of the live trees for Holiday tree lighting. Evaluate watering necessity for this park if the summer is hot and dry.



### **Beautification:**

Coordinated no-contact planting day in June. Fertilizing, deadheading, weeding all summer

2021: evaluate condition of planters, some have significant cracks from freeze/thaw, and 2 have broken completely and been removed without replacement. Coordinate beautification day in June.



### **Perennial Gardens:**

Perennial beds are located at Fire Hall, inside/perimeter of town square park, Community Room/Library, and Nina's Wall. They all need attention and maintenance. Bulbs planted at the library garden bed worked out great. Coordinate and plant donated perennials where needed.

### **Nina's Wall:**

Staff cleaned out bed this spring and added more mulch, staked tall plants, cleaned out fountain. Replaced pump and water.

2021: Similar maintenance required. Garden bed receives debris from winter sanding and requires maintenance early season. Likely need new pump in spring for fountain. Consider having AWWU turn on the spigot for summer if the season is hot and dry.

### **Community Center:**

Washed windows inside and out in summer. Pruned shrubs by windows in the fall. John Samuelson Memorial Bench purchased and installed.

2021: add planter flowers by Samuelson Bench, add pathway to bench, add soil and plant grass where cottonwoods were removed.

### **Community Room/Library:**

Handle rentals and coordination of groups. Carpet cleaned quarterly but is showing wear. No rentals after March for the rest of the year. Room was used for primary election, general election and health fair only. MOA installed switch so that we can turn off the fans during meetings, which makes for better acoustics. Friends of the Library approved new A/V equipment. Restrung blinds that needed repair.

2021: Room needs A/V equipment: mics, wireless connectivity to projection. Recommend annual piano tuning as regular maintenance of this community asset.

### **Little Bears & Glacier City Hall:**

Continue support for historic survey of this locations/structures/features and maintenance of those through various methods.

2021: Ongoing repair and maintenance anticipated. Researching options to replace garage for road service warm storage and park equipment. Preservation of oral history of the two existing buildings.

### **Winter Grooming:**

Spring 2020 there were lots of trail users and volunteer groups did an amazing job keeping the ski trails open throughout the spring.

Fall 2020 assisted with multi-use trail grooming proposal with Snow Dog.



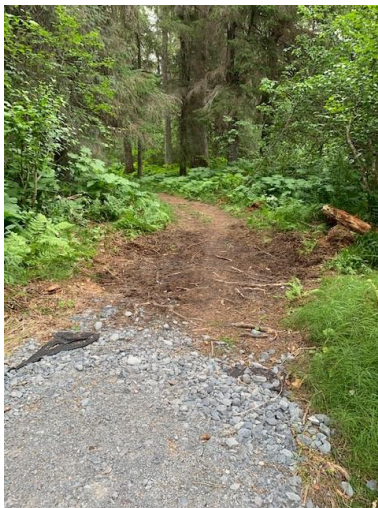
2021: Review need to replace snow machine groomer(s).

### **Hand Tram:**

Hand tram remained closed as MOA risk management and administration overall were focused on COVID-19 issues. Study of bridge alternatives to be addressed in late 2020-early 2021.

2021: Staff will follow community direction through Trails Committee following discussions of liability, safety measures, operations and maintenance plan for the hand tram, along with study of alternate route and bridge to reduce pressure on the hand tram. Work with State of Alaska planners regarding possible Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) Grant, and with USFS on getting the bridge on the list of projects for possible Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) funding.

### **Trails:**



Girdwood Trails Master plan project is under way. Andy Hehnlin completed upgrades on Lower INHT, completing the project except for the interpretive signs, which are being composed by a GTC sub-group and are likely to be installed in spring 2021. We are pleased with the accomplishment of the funding and completion of the Lower Iditarod, Phases 1 and 2 and receive lots of positive comments on the project overall. We thank all the partners who participated in this project, especially Andy Hehnlin.

Following INHT project, we began work on the Virgin Creek Falls Trail, reviewing the area with an archeologist as we needed to complete Section 106 assessment of the area for artifacts. Trail work was completed to work on drainage and assist in confining the trail to a specific trail route before winters shutdown.



Storms dropped some trees of lower INHT and on Beaver Pond Trail. Some have been cleared by staff, others cleared by volunteers.



Mikah Wedeking led Eagle Scout project to install interpretive signs and directional/safety signs on the Beaver Pond Trail complex. These signs will become the template for future trail signage in the valley.

2021: Complete & install signage for Lower INHT, work on the Virgin Creek Falls Trail alignment, work on Interpretive signage for Stumpy's Trails. Continue work on the Virgin Creek Falls Trail, including creating a new trailhead that is within the designated easement.

Easements needed for many Girdwood Trails.

Continue to move forward with connection of lower valley trails via the railroad depot and connector trail related to Seward Highway construction/interchange at Alyeska Hwy/Seward highway.

Plan to hire additional staff with CARES Act funding, hopefully we can also coordinate volunteer projects in 2021.



Work on interpretive sign for Stumpy's Trail, possibly through KMTA grants.

### **Cemetery:**

Project is currenting on hold while Eagle River cemetery committee catches up for joint bond proposal in 2022.

### **Other Issues:**

Homeless camping was less of an issue in 2020 than in previous summers. Staff works with land owners to notify and clean up camps as quickly as possible. Formal notice requires 2 weeks of posted camp before legal clean up.

Vehicles camping outside of campground: Both derelict and running vehicles are used for camping throughout town roads and parking lots. Overnight use of town square area is not allowed, camping is technically allowed on Crow Creek Road and at private areas such as Daylodge Parking Lot and Crow Creek Mine.

Concern of fires related to camping.

Abandoned vehicles, some recreational vehicles and U hauls, and sometimes boats are left in community parking lots. Such vehicles must be tagged for 48 hours before towing can begin,

which usually results in vehicles being pushed or otherwise moved to a different spot in the same lot. Vehicles that are towed are towed at the community's expense.

Land Acknowledgment: Interest in pursuing understanding of Alaska Native use of the Girdwood area and forming a thoughtful statement of land acknowledgement for LUC and GBOS meetings. There is interest from KMTA in pursuing this for the region as a whole and including each of the communities within KMTA in workshops.

Anti-Racism: As part of a GBOS Resolution in 2020 and after a turbulent year, nationwide, there was a commitment to hold a local forum regarding race.

Staff will coordinate and participate in these community-based conversations.

### **Social Media & Website:**

Ongoing contact and updates via website and social media. Shifted email communication to subscription service for meeting notifications.

### **Other Contracts:**

Invasive Weeds contract – Alien Species LLC did a great job with regular weeding, handling spraying in 2020.

Turf Contract – New contract with prior mowing contractor.

Window Washing – Hal LaPointe did an excellent job in 2020.

2021: Likely continue with Alien Species LLC, H&L and mowing contractor.

### **GBOS Grants:**

Ongoing cycle, MOA requirement for insurance has changed, but all are working through it. GBOS increased budget for awards in 2020 to \$60,000 total. GBOS 2020 Grantee year end reports are attached. Working on updated application and information for 2022 grant cycle.

### **Other Grants:**

State of Alaska, Recreation Trails Program Grants:

No application for 2021 cycle as GTC had no projects for consideration.

\$75,000 awarded in spring for Lower INHT, phase 1 part 2. Project closed and reimbursed.

\$75,000 applied for in fall 2019 for Lower INHT, phase 2, from Ruane Rd to Karolius on existing alignment. Project started, plan to close in 2021.

Kenai Mountains/Turnagain Arm Heritage Area:

\$TBA applied for to assist in Stumpy's Early Winter Trail Interp sign in march2021.

\$5000 applied for and granted for Beaver Pond, Abe's, and California Creek Trail sign, closed and reimbursed.

\$7,300 1:1 matching grant applied for and granted for the Virgin Creek Falls Trail work and interpretive signs. Project slated for 2021.

Anchorage Park Foundation:

\$5,000 applied for and granted for work on Lower INHT phase 2, closed and reimbursed.

CARES Act: \$50,000 for 2021 projects.

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2021 grant plans:

Watching for grant openings for a Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant, perhaps to help with Hand Tram work.

Also watching for opening of the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant, possibly for the Lions Club Park Pavilion – this program seems to be on hold. Another possibility may be Anchorage Park Foundation funding.

Great American Outdoors Act: funding to USFS for deferred maintenance projects. We are hopeful that this could be used toward some upper valley trails and trail access to Iditarod system/Crow Pass; Winner Creek; etc).

KMTA will have a grant opening this Jan-March.

Anchorage Park Foundation: Grants with APF are every other year, grant cycle in 2021 is likely.

**Community Meeting Attendance:**

GBOS, GTC, LUC, PSAC, Cemetery, Friends of the Skate Park, Tennis Committee

As needed: Girdwood Bear Aware, Title 21 Chapter 9, Housing Working Group

Alaska Trails Stewardship Grant Partnership – group working on the Southern Trek of the INHT.

Kyle attends Library Boosters and Girdwood Alliance as needed

Margaret attends KMTA and Girdwood Chamber as needed

Imagine! Girdwood (GAP) has become independent of GBOS, neither of us are currently attending in an official capacity.

New group related to Girdwood Historic Preservation was supposed to get rolling in 2020 and has perhaps been delayed by COVID-19. Our role in this group is to be established as the group begins to form.