

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



**DATE:** April 19, 2023  
**TO:** Girdwood Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Kyle Kelley, Girdwood Service Area Manager & Margaret Tyler, Parks and Recreation  
**SUBJECT:** Parks and Rec 2022 Overview

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**Staffing:** In 2022 we hired 1 summer parks caretaker, Bob Mucha. Bob took a year-round position at the Girdwood Clinic mid-summer and continued to work part-time for parks and rec. Alaska Trails crew leader arrived at our office in the spring to see about camping in the campground while they worked on projects on Upper Winner Creek. This opened up the opportunity for us to get them on board on an un-committed week to work in Girdwood. It was a lucky score for us! Campground host continues to be an important volunteer support position, as the hosts mind the campground and pavilions. In summer 2022 we were well-matched with hosts who worked at a local restaurant. Ryan and Brittany did a great job for us as hosts.



Volunteers have provided invaluable assistance in trail, park and playground maintenance. Winter trails are groomed almost entirely by volunteers; grooming machines are dialed in and maintained by Shane Bowlin. Summer trail work was largely achieved through volunteer work parties. In addition, Ben and Jill Kohler handled some large blowdowns that impeded trail access. Over 100 volunteers participated in the Girdwood Trails Plan meetings to bring that project to completion.

2023: We are recruiting for 2 seasonal full-time parks/trail caretakers, but so far have not received many applications. Our goal was to have these 2 mainly work on trails as there is significant punch list of deferred trail maintenance and storm damage repair to accomplish. We have requested trail crew through Alaska Trails for early season trail maintenance and are seeking funding from KMTA to help pay for this additional crew. GTC plans to hold work parties and encourage smaller groups to volunteer as they are able throughout the summer. We have secured campground hosts for 2023 and are looking forward to them moving to the site in early May.

**Tennis Courts:**

Tennis Committee hung the nets and wind screens in May, took the windscreens down in the fall. 2023: 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:**

Maintenance only. Forest Fair activities resumed in 2022 and were a great success.

2023: Continue to assess and remove hazard trees in the park.

### **Nissman & Marlow Pavilions:**

Maintenance only, summer long blowing out and cleanup. We replaced the broken bbq grill.

2023: Remove the artistic chimney, re-stain structures.

### **Girdwood Campground:**

Summer crew blew out paths and camp sites during the summer. Coordination with host on campground visitors.

2023: Add gravel to camp sites and pathways.

### **Disc Golf:**

Eagle Scout project completed to provide new maps on the course. Disc Golf Association held 2 tournaments in 2022, plus an individual coordinated a commemorative event in early season.

New group has formed that is providing input on Disc Golf course needs.

2023: Interest from new group in adding material to the Tees.

### **Ball Field:**

Occasional clean up in the ballfield summer long, repair of turf damage with seeding and water in the early part of the season. More effort to establish no dogs in the ball field, with formal signage. Formal dedication of the field in honor of Sladen Mohl.

2023: Paint the dugouts (? Possible service project). Mohl family has been completing fundraising to purchase a batting cage for the field.



### **Little Bears Playground & park access:**

Little Bears Playground was heavily utilized throughout the summer.

2023: Continue picnic area improvements, add sand and wood chips in spring.

### **Girdwood Skate Park:**



Assisted Friends of the Skate Park with Throwdown Showdown event in March. Staff and volunteers re-built ramps and demoed some that were beyond repair.

2023: Assist with projects determined for this summer by Friend of the Skate Park: Repair/resurface of asphalt. Continue to work to improve flow of the park. Assist with Throwdown Showdown coordination.

Work on acknowledgment of donors to the Skate Park.

### **Parking Areas:**

Roads crew improved the surface and drainage at Moose Meadows and Playground lots.

### **Soccer Field:**

Worked with Turf contractor on getting better grass growth.

2023: Continue effort for planning better layout and drainage of the park area, replace shed.

### **Lions Club Park:**

Blew leaves out in spring. Light brushing during summer. Staff applied for Anchorage Park Foundation grant for pavilion to be added to the park, but the project needed full design documents to gain traction.

2023: Assess and remove cottonwoods that are hazards. Construction documents for a pavilion are complete, this will allow Lions Club and Parks and Rec to seek funding from a variety of private and grant sources.

### **Town Square Park:**

Maintenance of plants during the hot dry start to the season, then trying to keep them going through the rain the rest of the summer.

2023: 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. Consider replacement/removal of the 3 flower bowls in the center of the park.

### **Beautification:**

Heat followed by incessant rain was a tough combination this year. Fertilized, deadheaded, weeded as possible all summer.

2023: 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 and add a lot of color in April.

2023: Coordinate and plant donated perennials and bulbs.



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

Von Imhof family hired Alyeska Landscaping give the garden a big facelift with significant pruning, mulching and planting. Staff staked tall plants, cleaned out fountain and replaced water frequently. Access to water on-site was very helpful.

2023: 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:**

No opportunity for window washing in 2022 due to weather.

2023: New turf contact allows for pruning in lieu of mowing if weather inhibits mowing.

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

Handle rentals and coordination of groups. Piano Tuning.

2023: Update of A/V to allow public to hold hybrid meetings/project on screen. Recommend continue annual piano tuning as regular maintenance of this community asset.

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

Used for storage for parks and warm storage area for contractor snow clearing equipment.

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

2023: 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 2021 started additional grooming with snow dog around the perimeter of Moose Meadows, 2022 added perimeter trails around the meadows, which have been well-received. Fall 2022 received support from GTC to groom the Winner Creek Trail, also well-received by trail users.

2023: Continue to support GNSC and other volunteer grooming efforts.

### **Hand Tram:**

Hand tram formally decommissioned. Study of bridge alternatives to be addressed in late 2020-early 2021 has brought about proposal for suspension bridge. Ongoing meetings with USFS regarding bridge and contractor for design as USFS must agree to the concept in order to take over maintenance/operation eventually.

2023: Contractor has been selected to create construction documents, planning to go out to bid for construction in 2023/24 aiming for construction in 2024.

### **Trails:**

Girdwood Trails Master Plan was a year-long project, ultimately gaining GTC support in Jan 2023. This project took a lot of staff and GTC time, with many special meetings in addition to regular meetings to complete review of the plan and revisions.

We completed Virgin Creek Falls Trail work initiated in 2020 to improve the trail tread and move the trailhead alignment off private property with the help of Alaska Trails. Interpretive sign at Virgin Creek was completed and installed in the fall of 2022.



A trailhead location off the parking lot to the Nordic 5K has been initiated with addition of a gravel pad that will continue to be developed to create a more formal trailhead experience. Interpretive sign based on Stumpy Faulkner was designed and installed at this location in fall of 2022.

Trail brushing and trail maintenance as possible with our lack of staff.



2023: The largest upcoming project is the suspension bridge to replace the hand tram. 2023 likely to be office work on this project, with construction in 2024.

Future work at Virgin Creek Falls Trail will require more professional assessment of how to work around the roots toward the crest of the overlook hill. Continued development and installation of trail map signs at the Nordic 5K trailhead. Trail locator signs will be installed on the Middle Iditarod National Historic Trail.

All trails are slated for brushing and drainage maintenance. Iditarod NHT is slated for will have wayfinding signage added at trailheads and crossings at Crow Creek Road.

Trails Committee is working on updating trail maps for download, printing and for creation of trailhead trail maps signs. The first of these is to be installed at the Nordic 5K trailhead. Other locations for universal trail map signage will be considered.

Rob Hammel commemorative bench will be added to an overlook location at the mouth of the valley.

GTC is likely to continue their effort to get easements for Girdwood trails, starting with Stumpy's Winter Trail.

### **Trash & Toilets:**

GVSA has been updating old smaller bear-resistant trash cans with a type that is easier for public to operate and don't freeze shut. 4 were replaced in 2022, 4 more are on order for 2023. GVSA purchased about a 3 year supply of mutt mitts in 2022 to save on shipping. Mutt mitt stands are being added to the trash can locations where possible. Girdwood Bear Aware continues public information and bear abatement work and is a great partner for the GVSA.

Rent-A-Can provides and services portable toilets. Year-round locations in 2022 were at the Nordic 5K, Little Bears parking and the Moose Meadows parking. During summer we add locations at the park, playground, campground, town square, etc. Groups that plan large events are required to provide additional trash and toilets.

### **Cemetery:**

Project is currenting on hold while Legal dept figures out the status of cemeteries as an area-wide vs service area responsibility. It is hoped that during this time the Eagle River cemetery committee catches up for joint bond proposal in 2024.

### **Other Issues:**

Homeless camping was less of an issue in 2022. 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. This project lost momentum in 2022 but is returning to LUC in 2023.

**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.

2023: Project is nearing completion with 3 community conversations facilitated by the Alaska Humanities Forum.

### **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 contracted for handling spraying in 2022. Volunteers also assisted in mitigation of weeds.

Turf Contract – Mowing contractor faced a difficult season with heat and rain. New contractor in 2023 with some updated specs to hopefully achieve more consistent mowing and other options if weather prohibits mowing.

Window Washing – Hal LaPointe was not able to wash windows in 2023, he was rained out both days we tried to schedule. He is scheduled in 2023.



### **GBOS Grants:**

GBOS grant cycle is application in Aug/Sept, fall review, spring contracting and disbursement. GBOS 2022 Grantee year end reports are included in the report. 2023 grants are currently in the queue for disbursement.

2024 Grant applications will be due Sept 15, 2023.

### **Other Grants:**

State of Alaska, Recreation Trails Program Grants:

No application for 2021 or 2022 cycle as GTC had no projects for consideration.

Previous grants with RTP have been closed and reimbursed fully.

Kenai Mountains/Turnagain Arm Heritage Area:

GTC unsuccessful in application for KMTA grant for hand tram interpretive sign in 2022. This will be a good project for KMTA partnership once the bridge construction has begun (2024 cycle)

Closed out grants for Virgin Creek Falls Trail/Interp sign and for Stumpy's Interp sign in 2022.

Anchorage Park Foundation:

GRP unsuccessful in application for APF funding for pavilion in Lions Club Park, pending design documents. This will be a good project to re-apply for in 2024.

2023 grants:

KMTA: 2023 application to assist with trail crew from Alaska Trails has been submitted, pending notification of award.

TAP Grant: Applied in early 2023 for funding for rebuild/paving of pathway along Arlberg Road. Pending notification.

CTP Grant: Applied in early 2023 for funding for fish passage culverts in neighborhoods. Pending notification.

Watching for grant openings for a Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) and Land and Water Conservation Fund grant.

AARP Community Grant: Possibility for grant to improve connectivity in the community.

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).

Rasmuson Foundation: Likely funder for final push on the new bridge.

Anchorage Park Foundation: Grants with APF are every other year. Next grant cycle is 2024.

**Concern:** With many new and complex granting, Girdwood may need to hire a fund finder and grant writer to help us navigate and lobby for community projects.

**Community Meeting Attendance:**

GBOS, GTC, LUC, PSAC, Cemetery, Friends of the Skate Park, Tennis Committee, Holtan Hills Housing Working Group

As needed support for: Girdwood Bear Aware, Housing Working Group

2023: Likely addition of formal Housing committee to regular meetings

Kyle attends Library Boosters, Rotary and Lions Clubs meetings as needed

Margaret attends KMTA meeting and sits on the board of this organization.

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