

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



**DATE:** June 23 2026  
**TO:** Girdwood Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Kyle Kelley, Girdwood Service Area Manager & Margaret Tyler, Parks and Recreation  
**SUBJECT:** Parks and Rec 2025 Overview

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**Staffing:** In 2025 we re-hired 2 summer parks caretakers, Luke and John, our awesome caretaker team from 2023 and 2024. As there was a quick break-up, Luke and John worked early the season on tidying up the playground, parks and then began work on trails. We were able to keep them a little later in the year as well, helping to button up the parks before winter.

Summer crew assisted volunteer and paid crews with trails projects. They also handled weekly duties such as trash, watering, weeding, fertilizing and weed whacking.

Our volunteer campground host, Cory, kept an eye on the campground until mid-July. Unfortunately he became ill mid-summer and the position was left vacant for the remainder of the season

2026: We plan again to hire (or rehire) 2 staff members and to recruit a volunteer campground host. Paid and volunteer positions start mid-May and end mid-September. We also plan to have groups from YEP and Alaska Trails, again primarily focused on the Middle Iditarod NHT, however they'll work on smaller side projects as well.

**Volunteers:**

2025: Dedicated volunteers provide a huge lift to our staffing and are instrumental in getting projects completed. Winter 24/25 was very stormy, leaving a lot of downed trees and debris on trail. There was little snow, so few grooming days, but a lot of staff and volunteer effort went into cleaning up and making trails accessible.

Summer 2025 volunteers worked to plant the annual planters and there were several efforts for trails work parties. Enthusiasm for these trail events was high in the spring and early summer.

2026: 2025/26 winter started with light powder and nothing under it but blueberry bushes. Super deep freeze started in November and continued throughout the season, detrimental to drainages and roads. There has been enough snow to buff the 5K, but not enough to groom the meadows.



Summer Parks Crew kicked off the season with a new bridge in Forest Fair Park



Ben Kohler tackles a huge tree on Beaver Pond Trail



Paul Crews leads first work party of the season adding turnpike to Beaver Pond Trail

Trail volunteer projects will be focused on events early season. If awarded the Forest Foundation's MAP grant for the Middle INHT, specific benchmarks for volunteer work are required.

**Contracted work:**

**Turf:**

2025 was the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final year of our contract with the company from the Mat-Su..

2026 contract was awarded in March.

**Trail Crew:**

In 2025 we had Alaska Trails Crew of 5 for about 10 weeks and Youth Employment in Parks (YEP) crew, which assisted with some serious heavy lifting. was a great season of work, with 5 bridges built, miles of trail tread work, turnpikes built and many bucketloads of gravel hauled and placed.



Carolyn Brodin and Kyle Kelley haul buckets of gravel for the last trails work party of the season on Middle INHT

2026 we are securing crew to work on Girdwood Trails projects, again on Middle INHT, Beaver Pond Trail. We are keenly aware that completion of the suspension bridge will dramatically change the needs of trail users accessing along Crow Creek Road.



YEP Crew hauling buckets of gravel



Alaska Trails Crew peeling logs for turnpike



Lots of drainage work, turnpike and gravel by Alaska Trails

**Girdwood Parks Plan:**

2025: Girdwood Parks Master Plan began in Spring 2025 with completion of local process in about 1 year. In 2025 the advisory committee met and provided guidance, stakeholders were interviewed, public was surveyed, preliminary draft reviewed.

2026: see Major projects, last page

**Suspension Bridge to replace the Hand Tram:**

2025: Full design documents received in 2025 too late to put up for RFP for summer and amid uncertainty about tariffs on steel.

2026: see Major projects, last page

**Tennis Courts:**

2025: Caretaker crew cleaned the courts and determined that they didn't need professional repairs.

2026: Parks and Rec caretakers will continue to oversee court cleaning and crack repairs, hanging nets and wind screens.

**Girdwood Park, Pavilions, Campground**

2025 Park, Pavilions and Campground received maintenance only.

Forest Fair 2025 was a great success. Marlow Pavilion is rented 3+ times a month in the summer. Nissman is used for overflow and for informal groups without reservation required. California Creek did not pop out of the usual banks in 2025, however significant rain and runoff events change the drainage pattern and impact the park significantly.

2026: Continue to evaluate the shift in California Creek to see if it will shift back within its banks in the spring and repair damage, particularly to tent site pads, or if we will need to adapt our use of the floodplain accordingly. Remove the artistic chimney at Nissman.

Re-stain pavilions via MOA facilities.

Continue to assess and remove hazard trees in the park.

**Little Bears Playground & park access:**

2025: Little Bears Playground was heavily utilized throughout the summer. Unable to purchase wood chips of proper grade for the park due to closure of wood mill that provided them. Vendor permit from 2024 was requested but not renewed in 2025.

2026: Add sand and wood chips if saw mill is able. Continue picnic area improvements. Permit with vendor if they are interested in returning to the park in 2026. Otherwise, another vendor could take over the location.

**Girdwood Skate Park:**

2025: Throwdown Showdown in March. Considering 1 day event focusing on younger competitors. Battleship rebuild completed as a contracted project with help from parks staff.

2026: No major projects expected at the Skate Park.

**Disc Golf:**

2025: Installation of Tee boxes

2026: No major work was anticipated or completed in the Disc Golf course. Typically there are 3 events per year there, two hosted by ADGA (spring/fall) and one private event just prior to the season start.

**Ball Field:**

2025: Demo and replacement of dugouts was completed.



Clint Kyffin working on the new battleship

2026: No major projects anticipated in the Ball Field in 2026.

**Parking Areas:**

2025: Homeless encampment from 2023-24 did not reappear. One large RV was abandoned in winter 25/26 and eventually removed in early 2026 through significant effort and at cost of the service area of approx. \$2300.

2026: Staff will continue to have WPD tag vehicles that are left in parking areas longer than allowed. 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. Unoccupied vehicles have been towed. Vehicles that are towed are towed at the community's expense.

**Soccer Field:**

2025: Late thaw created a tough space to mow in 2025. Worked with Turf contractor on getting better grass growth.

2026: Area is included in Parks Master Plan effort. Field needs better layout.

**Lions Club Park:**

2025: Once LWCF funding was secured, design documents and permitting went forward. Lions Club raised funds for part of the construction. Continue working forward on pavilion construction. Permit for commercial use.

2026: Early season construction of Pavilion and installation of interpretive signs.

**Town Square Park:**

2025: Continued rental bi-monthly for Girdwood Farmers Market by Girdwood Community Land Trust.

2026: Continue to work on sustainable garden/turf approach to Town Square Park. Assess trees that have been damaged by wildlife and weather. 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 as they are broken but still intact.

**Beautification:**

2025: April snowfall was a challenge but plants went in first week of June and thrived in the moderate summer. Plants were fertilized, deadheaded, weeded as possible all summer.

2026: Plan plantings and coordinate beautification day in June.

**Perennial Gardens:**

2025: Perennial beds are located at Fire Hall, inside/perimeter of town square park, Community Room/Library, and Nina's Wall. All need attention and maintenance. Bulbs planted at the library garden bed worked out great and add a lot of color in April.

2026: Coordinate and plant donated perennials and bulbs. It will be interesting to see how the harsh winter has impacted the gardens.



Annuals loved the moderate Girdwood summer temps and precipitation

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

2025: Staff cleaned out fountain and replaced water throughout the summer. Fountain leak was repaired. Access to water on-site is very helpful at the beginning of the season and for adding to the fountain throughout summer.

2026: Similar maintenance required. Garden bed receives debris from winter sanding and requires maintenance early season. Consider having AWWU turn on the spigot for summer if the season is hot and dry.

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

2025: Maintenance included window washing and piano tuning. Handle rentals and coordination of groups.

2026: Fee increased to \$20 per hour. Work with MOA to have Community Room and Marlow Pavilion calendars available on line so public can check space availability. Coordinate tuning and window cleaning.

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

2025: Used for storage for parks and warm storage area for contractor snow clearing equipment. Little Bears new building is under construction at Alyeska Resort.

2026: Ongoing repair and maintenance anticipated. Research options to replace existing buildings for road service warm storage and park equipment. Preservation of oral history of the two existing buildings.

### **Winter Grooming:**

Winter 2024/25 arrived in November with a lot of promise and then ended up...in endless October with rain and wind.

Winter 2025/26 also arrived with great promise but turned out unusually cold and dry, which allowed for grooming on 5K but not on meadows. New machine arrived and was outfitted. Continue to support GNCS and other volunteer grooming efforts.

### **Trails:**

2025: Girdwood Trails Management Plan has an informal group working on making changes to the management plan so that it will match the Girdwood Trails Master Plan.

2026: Trails mapping project is on-going, summer map completed in 2025, winter map in 2026. Map frame is installed and ready for summer map installation at the 5k trailhead/parking area. Trails committee has a list of volunteer projects, including work on connector trail from Alyeska highway to Davos and connector trail from Virgin Creek Road to the Danich Trail.

### **Trash & Toilets:**

2025: 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. Late winter order for more trash cans has them ready for installation in 2026. GVSA purchased about a 3 year supply of mutt mitts in 2025 to save on shipping. Mutt mitt stands are being added to the trash can locations where possible. Girdwood Bear Aware continues public information. 2025 was a very quiet year for bear activity in the area..

Rent-A-Can provides and services portable toilets. Year-round locations in 2025 were at the Nordic 5K, Little Bears parking, Moose Meadows parking and town square. During summer we

add locations at the park, playground, campground, etc. Groups that plan large events are required to provide additional trash and toilets.

2026: Installation of additional bear cans purchased late in 2025. Recommend continue with Rent A Can for public toilet facilities.

**Cemetery:**

2025: Effort stalled in 2024 while MOA legal completed steps to clarify that cemeteries are an areawide responsibility. Areawide Bond effort failed in Spring 2024 election, however Assembly members began looking at options address shortage of cemetery sites in Anchorage.

2026: Unclear what the role is for GVSA at this time as this falls under Areawide responsibility.

**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 weeds mitigation.

2025: hand pull only

2026: likely hand pull only.

Window Washing – Hal LaPointe washed windows in 2025 and we will get him on the schedule for 2026.

Community Center Cleaning: carpets are cleaned quarterly, maintenance cleaning also under contract.

**GVSA Grants:**

GVSA grant cycle is application in Aug/Sept, fall review, spring contracting and disbursement. GBOS 2025 Grantee year end reports are included in the report. 2026 grants are currently in the queue for contracting and payment in summer 2024.

2027 Grant applications will be due Sept 11-ish, 2026.

**Other Grants:**

Anchorage Park Foundation: GTC is applying in grant round 2026-28 for funds related to interpretive signs for the interpretive display at the suspension bridge. Next opportunity is 2028.

Recreational Trails Program Grant 2024 for the Middle Iditarod National Historic Trail was approved by ORTAB, there were delays in approval by Federal Highways Administration, which funds the program. Work that would have been completed in 2024 was delayed to 2025. GVSA did not submit an application for 2025 RTP Grant.

LWCF: 2024 grant awarded and under way. No application for funds in 2025

Alaska Community Foundation (ACF): 2025 grant for trail tools awarded and closed.

National Forest Foundation MAP Grant: application submitted for additional work in MINHT trail. Pending response.

Rasmuson Foundation and National Forest Foundation committed funding for the new bridge.

2026 grants:

ACF Trail Care Grant is open Feb 15-March 31. GVSA plans to apply.

Watching for grant openings for a Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) Grant, AARP Community Grant:

Anchorage Park Foundation: Determine which project for next grant round (spring 2028)

KMTA: No community grants are likely from this federal source.

RTP and LWCF will likely also have fall grant cycles.

**Community Meeting Attendance:**

GBOS, GTC, LUC, PSAC, Cemetery, Friends of the Skate Park, Tennis Committee, Housing and Economic Stability Advisory Committee; various subcommittees as they arise.

As needed support for: Girdwood Bear Aware and other meetings

2025: PSAC now quarterly. Cemetery Committee status TBA.

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

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

**Major Projects for GVSA parks/rec in 2026 are:**

**Bridge replacement over California Creek** Project is adjacent to Town Square park/Crow Creek Road and funded by private donation. Permitting delayed this project from 2025 list. Permitting is now complete, construction expected early in summer 2026.

**Construction of a pavilion in Lions Club Park.** Cofounded by GVSA, Lions Club, private donations and LWCF grant. 2025 project was deferred to 2026. Materials are in hand, project expected to be completed by July 2026.



**Suspension bridge to replace the Hand Tram** funded by a variety of sources. Likely 2026 start with completed project in 2027. Bids have been opened and bid should be confirmed soon. It is assumed now that project will be completed in 2027.

**Middle Iditarod National Historic Trail Tread and drainage.** Section of trail from School to USFS boundary (minus the rerouted part through Holtan Hills Ph 1). Funding for this is via RTB Grant. In 2025 GPR applied for other funding via Forest Foundation MAP Grant, which has not yet been awarded. Goal is to improve the MINHT so that there is good connectivity to the Winner Creek Trail and the bridge that is to be constructed, to support trail use year-round.



*Artistic rendering of the new bridge*

**Approval of Girdwood Parks Master Plan**, which will provide guidance on future park projects. Project was initiated in 2024 via GBOS funding, Huddle AK is lead on the project and has met with public, stakeholders, advisory committee and staff to create a draft Master Plan that is currently available for public review. After public review, GBOS will be asked to provide Resolution of Support for final document. Approval of the plan will be handled by Planning and Zoning.

