

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

GIRDWOOD ROADS, FACILITIES, PARKS & RECREATION



DATE: May 20 2025

TO: Girdwood Board of Supervisors

FROM: Kyle Kelley, Girdwood Service Area Manager & Margaret Tyler, Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: Parks and Rec 2024 Overview

Staffing: In 2024 we re-hired 2 summer parks caretakers, Luke and John, our awesome caretaker team from 2023. Luke and John buffed the parks and got our equipment up and running swiftly. Winter 23/24 had dumped a lot of snow in the valley and it took a while for everything to emerge from the snowbanks.

One of the summer's projects was installation of the memorial bench overlooking Glacier Creek on the newly fortified embankment. The bench and location were an instant success with the community.



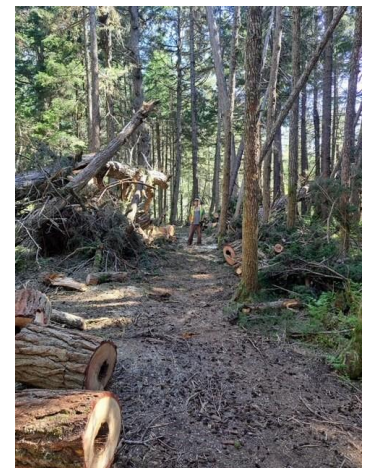
Summer crew also assisted volunteers with various projects in the playground, courts and park as well as weekly duties such as trash, watering, weeding, fertilizing and weed whacking. They built a roof to protect the new snack shack at the ball field. In addition to our paid staff, our volunteer campground host, Ashley watched over the campground and pavilions in exchange for a place to park her RV for the summer.

2025: We plan again to hire (or rehire) 2 staff members and to recruit a campground host. Paid and volunteer positions start mid-May and end mid-September.

Volunteers:



As always our dedicated volunteer base provide a huge lift to our staffing and are instrumental in getting projects completed. 2023/24 season was incredibly snowy and we also experienced a lot of treefall on trails. Volunteers did an amazing job grooming, trail clearing and rolling with the crazy challenges that came along.



Volunteers provide invaluable assistance in other areas as well. John Gallup works tirelessly in the skate park and playground. Of course, our planters are volunteers, too!

Contracted work:

Turf:

2024 was the 2nd of 3 year contract. Contractor is reliable, provides great service and is so fast on his mower! He shared many greens with the community from his garden in the Matsu.

2025 will likely be his last year as he has mentioned retirement. GPR has initiated renewal of this contract.

Trail Crew:

2024 we were unable to secure trail crew and then our project was delayed.

2025 we are securing crew to work on Girdwood Trails projects.

Major Projects:

Girdwood Parks Plan:

2024: Lots of interest in finding places to provide various infrastructure in Girdwood Parks kindled staff recommendation to GBOS to fund an overall Parks Plan.

2025: Parks Plan is to begin in Spring 2025 with completion of local process in about 1 year. Following that, the plan will go to the MOA to review and approve.

Suspension Bridge to replace the Hand Tram:

Pending design documents at the end of 2024. Fundraising is now underway with federal, state, and private funding. Seeking additional project partners to complete the project.

2025: The largest upcoming project is the suspension bridge to replace the hand tram. Full design documents are to be reviewed in February, hopefully putting the project out to bid. Although we hope to complete the project in 2025, it is more likely that disassembly and staging can be completed in 2025, with the bridge installation in 2026.



Artistic rendering of the new bridge

Tennis Courts:



2024: Tennis Committee hung the nets and wind screens in May, parks staff took the windscreens down in the fall. Caretaker crew painstakingly cleaned the courts and determined that they didn't need professional repairs.

2025: Parks and Rec caretakers will continue to oversee court cleaning and crack repairs.

Girdwood Park, Pavilions, Campground

2024 Park, Pavilions and Campground received maintenance only.

Forest Fair 2024 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.

Ongoing concerns of flooding while California Creek settles into a new drainage pattern.

2025: 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. Continue to assess and remove hazard trees in the park.

Disc Golf:

2025: Staff assisted Anchorage Disc Golf Association with work on the T boxes. This was a project of the Anchorage Park Foundation's Challenge Grant secured by the ADGA.

2026: No major work anticipated 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:

2024: Batting cage acquired and new snack shack replaced the old conex

2025: Demo and replacement of dugouts

Little Bears Playground & park access:

2024: Little Bears Playground was heavily utilized throughout the summer. Unable to purchase wood chips of proper grade for the park due to closer of wood mill that provided them. First year of permitting for vendor use in the parking lot (Bruceskis).

2025: Continue picnic area improvements, add sand and wood chips (if supply can be found) in spring. Permit with prior year vendor if they are interested in returning to the park in 2025. Otherwise, another vendor could take over the location.

Girdwood Skate Park:

2024: Volunteer base was unable to complete the battleship rebuild when the park was ready and the project was postponed. Throwdown Showdown held on ch 3 and 7.

2025: Throwdown Showdown in March. Considering 1 day event focusing on younger competitors. Complete sign to acknowledge donors to the Skate Park. Project this year is Rebuild the Battleship and likely installation of a tool bench.

Parking Areas:

2024: Homeless camping was a large concern in parks and public parking lots, adding to safety concerns and complicating snow removal on public roads and parking areas. Legal opinion in spring and assistance from MOA was received to abate camps. Effort took significant clean-up effort, which was funded by Areawide service through alcohol tax.

2025: Encampment has not reappeared in 2024/25 winter. Staff continues 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:

2024: Worked with Turf contractor on getting better grass growth.

2025: Area is included in Parks Master Plan effort. Field needs better layout and drainage replace shed.

Lions Club Park:

2024: Successful LWCF grant for pavilion construction! Shift in permitting from HLB to GPR allowed the service area to permit for commercial use of Lions Club Park, earning approximately \$4330 in revenue from Backroads (park fee and trail fee combined).

2025: Continue working forward on pavilion construction. Permit for commercial use.

Town Square Park:

2024: Continued rental bi-monthly for Girdwood farmers market by Girdwood Inc. Weather was a difficult factor in early summer 2024, market did better later in the summer.

2025: Continue to work on sustainable garden/turf approach to 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 as they are broken but still intact.

Beautification:

2024: A chilly start to the summer was a bit of a challenge but by July things were bursting. Several plants were stolen from the planters during Forest Fair. Fertilized, deadheaded, weeded as possible all summer.

2025: Plan plantings and Coordinate beautification day in June.

Perennial Gardens:

2024: 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.

2025: Coordinate and plant donated perennials and bulbs.

Nina's Wall:

2024: Staff cleaned out fountain and replaced water. Fountain developed a leak in the fall and was turned off at the end of the season. Access to water on-site is very helpful at the beginning of the season and for adding to the fountain throughout summer.

2025: Similar maintenance required. Garden bed receives debris from winter sanding and requires maintenance early season. Likely need to complete repairs to the fountain pond. . Consider having AWWU turn on the spigot for summer if the season is hot and dry.

Community Center/Community Room/Library:

2024: Maintenance included window washing and piano tuning. Handle rentals and coordination of groups.

2025: 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:

2024: Used for storage for parks and warm storage area for contractor snow clearing equipment. Little Bears has secured location and initiated ground work for a new building at Hotel Alyeska project area.

2025: 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 2023/24 was incredible with lots of grooming needed and excellent conditions throughout.

Winter 2024/25 arrived in November with a lot of promise and then ended up...in endless October with rain and wind. Hoping that we get to use the groomers a bunch in the spring months. Lack of snow provided time for grooming equipment to be maintained. It is likely there will continue to be repairs needed on these machines.

2025: Continue to support GNSC and other volunteer grooming efforts.

Trails:

2024: Girdwood Trails Master Plan was adopted in 2024.

Trails Map group completed the update of the Winter Trails Map.

Trails Committee held a trails work party in June, rebuilding a bridge on the Beaver Pond Trail.

Friends of Girdwood Trails helped with messaging on Social Media.

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.

Trails mapping project is on-going, summer map should be completed in 2025. Map installation is planned for the 5k trailhead/parking area.



Significant downed tree removal from the cycles of storms in winter 24/25 and trail repairs are needed. Particularly concerning are landslides which have closed the south end of the Beaver Pond Trail.

Trail work on the Middle Iditarod National Historic Trail is planned with paid crew. Separate private donations will provide funding for work on the Virgin Creek Falls Trail and on the bridge that spans California Creek to connect the town center and Crow Creek Road. Also, there is interest and support of neighbors to maintain the connector trail from Virgin Creek Road to the Danich Trail.

Trash & Toilets:

2024: 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 2024 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.

2025: Likely continue with purchase and replacement of trash cans. Recommend continue with Rent A Can for public toilet facilities.

Cemetery:

2024: Effort stalled while MOA legal completed steps to clarify that cemeteries are an areawide responsibility. Areawide Bond effort failed in Spring 2024 election. however Assembly members

2025: Assembly members are looking at options address shortage of cemetery sites in Anchorage.

Other Items:

2024: GVSA hosted Foraker Group training on board service and Alaska Municipal League session on parliamentary procedure and running effective meetings.

Wildlife: Summer 2024 was pretty uneventful bear-wise.

2025: Coordinate additional training and public information as needed.

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.

2024: hand pull only

2025: to be determined.

Window Washing – Hal LaPointe washed windows in 2024 and we will get him on the schedule for 2025.

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 2024 Grantee year end reports are included in the report. 2025 grants are currently in the queue for contracting and payment in summer 2024.

2026 Grant applications will be due Sept 12-ish, 2025.

Other Grants:

2024 grants:

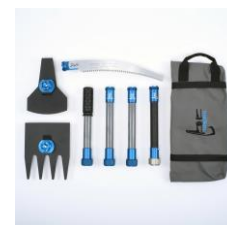
Anchorage Park Foundation: GPR provided staff and materials for the Alaska Disc Golf Association APF Challenge Grant for work in the Disc Golf course. GVSA did not apply for a grant of our own in the 2024 round of the bi-annual grant. Next opportunity is 2026.



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. Project pending (Lions Club Park Pavilion).

Alaska Community Foundation (ACF):
2024 grant for trail tools awarded and closed.



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

2025 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:

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

Anchorage Park Foundation: Determine which project for next grant round (spring 2026)

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.

