



Wrangell Parks & Recreation has begun the difficult process of decommissioning aging playground equipment throughout our community.

This work is already underway. The City Park playground has been removed, and damaged or irreparable playground components are being removed at both Angerman's Playground and Shoemaker Park as they reach the end of their service life. At the same time, we are consolidating our playground system to focus future investments on fewer, higher-quality destination playgrounds that are safer, more accessible, and easier to maintain. While we recognize these changes can be difficult, our commitment is to provide playgrounds that are safe, sustainable, and built to serve Wrangell's families for generations to come.

We understand this news may be disappointing. Playgrounds are where childhood memories are made, and no one wants to see them removed. However, many of these playgrounds are more than 25 years old. Years of exposure to Southeast Alaska's climate, combined with aging, deteriorating equipment, obsolete components, and inconsistent maintenance over the years, have left us at a point where replacement is the responsible path forward.

Rather than spreading limited resources across numerous aging playgrounds, our long-term vision is to create two modern playgrounds that best serve our community while allowing our Grounds crew to more effectively inspect, maintain, and care for each site. Concentrating our efforts on two primary playgrounds will help ensure these spaces remain safe, clean, attractive, and sustainable for years to come.

The first full playground to be decommissioned was the structure located at City Park.

We chose to begin with City Park because, even without the playground structure, the park continues to offer wonderful opportunities for play and exploration. Families can enjoy the beach, forest, and the natural playscape that make City Park such a unique area. The former playground site will be repurposed as the future home of the Freedom Rock, creating a meaningful memorial honoring our local veterans.



While we say goodbye to older equipment, we are already building the next generation of playgrounds.

Our first major revitalization project is planned for Angerman's Playground, where we envision new playground equipment, updated benches, new fencing, and a resurfaced basketball court to create a refreshed community gathering space.

At the same time, we are developing plans for a brand-new playground at Shoemaker Park. The concept relocates the playground to the beach side of the park, utilizing the existing retired tennis court as the foundation for modern safety surfacing. The proposed playground has been designed to serve children of all ages and abilities, incorporating ADA-accessible features, inclusive play opportunities, seating for parents and caregivers, appropriate safety barriers, and improved visibility throughout the site. Relocating the playground farther from Zimovia Highway will also create a safer environment for children and families.

This work will not happen overnight. Building safe, durable, and accessible playgrounds requires thoughtful planning, funding, and careful implementation. This is a marathon, not a sprint.

This effort will also be supported by the newly formed Friends of Wrangell Parks & Recreation, a nonprofit organization created to help turn this vision into reality. Through fundraising, grants, volunteerism, and community partnerships, the Friends group will provide an avenue for individuals, businesses, and organizations to invest directly in the future of Wrangell's parks and playgrounds. Together, we can build momentum, leverage public investment, and create play spaces that reflect the pride, generosity, and spirit of our community.

We ask for your patience and support as we work through this process. We know these changes will generate conversation, and we encourage everyone to seek information from reliable sources rather than speculation. Our goal is not simply to replace aging playgrounds - we are creating a sustainable playground system that can be properly maintained, responsibly managed, and enjoyed by generations of Wrangell families.



Just as importantly, we are committed to establishing long-term maintenance practices and providing our staff with the training needed to properly inspect, maintain, and care for these new playgrounds. By investing in preventative maintenance today, we can ensure future generations inherit facilities that remain safe, functional, and welcoming.

Thank you for your patience as we take these important first steps toward revitalizing play opportunities throughout Wrangell. This effort is about more than replacing equipment, it's about creating places where families gather, children grow, and our community continues to thrive. We are excited for what lies ahead and look forward to building playgrounds that Wrangell can be proud of for generations to come.

Lucy Robinson
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