

**Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board**

**\*\*\* Meeting Minutes\*\*\***

Thursday, April 9, 2015

5:30 p.m.

Gilman River Center

Soldotna, AK

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

1. **Roll Call:** Joe Conners, Ricky Gease, Brenda Trefon, Keith Baxter, Dwight Kramer, Ted Wellman, Andrew Carmichael, Teri Carter, Brent Johnson, Andy Loranger, Matt Conner and Jack Blackwell.
2. **Minutes Approval:** Approved as written.
3. **Agenda Changes:** Approved as written.

**II. Public Comments/Presentations:**

1. Agency and Government Reports:

**A. State Parks** Jack Blackwell provided the board members with the following report:

- Budget-The current budget has a \$500.000 cut for Alaska State Parks. These proposed cuts include:
  - Eliminating Park Ranger II position at Wood-Tikchik State Park
  - Eliminating Park Ranger position in Valdez
  - Eliminating Park Specialist position in Sitka
- The River Ranch property project is currently being reviewed by Bureau of Land Management. BLM will review the proposed concepts to make sure that they will meet the conditions of the Conservation Easement for the property. Until BLM has completed this process the project is currently on hold.
- KRSMA board recruitment. There were seven applications for the three vacant board seats. Six members of the board were present for the interviews. The board discusses the strength and weaknesses of each applicant. At the end of the interviews the members ranked the applicants for the top 4 to be forwarded to the Commissioner of State Parks.

**B. DEC –No Report:**

**C. ADF&G –No report**

**D. USFS/Chugach-No Report**

**E. US F&WS-** Matt Conner provided board members with the following report:

- The opening planned for the new Kenai National Wildlife Refuge visitor center is scheduled for May 30, 2015. At that time the “name the moose” winner will be announced.
- Senator Lisa Murkowski visited the center on Friday April 3, 2015.
- The Refuge staff is currently working on the Junior Warden class that will be offered on June 24 and 25<sup>th</sup>.
- On May 15, 16 and 17<sup>th</sup> there will be a Bird Festival for 2015.
- The regulations for camping on the middle river have not been published in the register at this time for public comment.
- Andy Loranger commented that the subsistence nets in the Kenai River will possible not move forward for the 2015 season.

**F. City of Kenai-No Report**

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Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the Kenai Peninsula Borough



**G. City of Soldotna** –Andrew Carmichael provided board members with the following report:

- The City is gearing up for the 2015 season. They are currently placing the elevated walkway at Centennial and working on also placing the fish cleaning tables in place.
- The City is moving forward with the river information signage program. This would help with getting people to the river and to protect the habitat area. The signs would provide and develop a signage program for environmental responsible use of the river.
- Keith Baxter talked about the Kenai River Spring Cleanup. This event will be in its second year and it will be held in May. Two of the dates will be a when local schools participate in cleaning up the shore of the Kenai River. A week will be for public cleanup with an event held at the end with a barbecue and also the weighing of the trash. The final days barbecue will be held at the City of Soldotna Park in Soldotna.

**H. Kenai Peninsula Borough**-Brent Johnson provided board members with the following report:

- The Kenai Peninsula Borough passed a resolution to send a letter of reconsideration to the Federal Subsistence board for the proposed nets in the Kenai and Kasilof Rivers.
- A resolution was also passed to recommend Robert Ruffner for appointment to the Board of Fish Board.

**C. Committee Reports**

**a. President's Report**-No Report

**b. Guide Advisory**-Joe Connors reported that the committee met and there were approximately 10 people present. There were several items on the agenda. The first was the proposed Mandatory PFD requirements on the Kenai River. The committee could not come to an agreement to move the resolution forward. Many of the committee members had mixed feelings. The second item on the agenda was behavior by all users of the Kenai River. The committee determined that the behavior on the river appears to be getting worse with the more people that use it. To start making some changes the committee proposed to change the commercial operator stipulations and to also look at changes to the regulations for all user on the Kenai River. The third item discussed was the mandatory boating safety. The committee discussed that this items has been discussed for many years and it has gone nowhere. The last item was that the KRSMA board creates a non-budgeted working group to develop a legislative fix to move board recommendations for consideration to the Commissioner.

**c. Habitat** – Brent Johnson reported on the Habitat Committee. The main agenda items were discussion on the Grant Lake Hydro Project that is located near Moose Pass. Mike Selzetti and Joe Gallagher of HEA attended the meeting to answer any questions that the committee may have. The committee was looking at specifically habitat issues. It was determined that the committee had not had the time to review the draft FERC license application that has been submitted. There have been several seasons of water sampling and fish sampling. There was a concern as if the road to the power house and lake would be private or open to the public? A resolution to support the project will be proposed under new business.

**d. River Use** – Dwight Kramer reported that the river use committee met and talk about several issues. First issue was about the pilings Pillars SRA that are currently being replaced. Second was an update about the Izaak Walton SRA replacement of the boat launch and walkway. The area will not re-open until June 1, 2015. The third was the Mandatory PFD requirement for the Kenai River which will be a resolution under new business and there was also discussion about the mandatory boating safety program that the committee would like to work on for the 2016 season.

**e. Legislative/Government Activities** – Ricky Gease reported that the idea of the sockeye stamp was discussed with the chairs of the house and senate. Ricky recommends that the board call in for the discussion of HB137 and recommend that the Sockeye stamp be part of this bill. It would also include an

agreement between Fish and Game and State Parks to have a reimbursable services agreement . Parks would then have the ability to request funds for projects.

- f. **Board Development/ Nomination – No Report**
- g. **Agenda/Board Structure/Housekeeping – No Report**

**III. OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Resolutions for Mandatory PFD requirements on the Kenai River: Andrew Carmichael moved to adopt the resolution. Ricky seconds the motion.

Ricky called the questions.  
The vote passed unanimously.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS:**

1. ADOT Cooper Landing Bypass- Brent Johnson moved to adopt the motion that the KRSMA board support the ADOT Cooper Landing Bypass and Joe Connors second the motion. The board agreed that the road needs to move as far away from the Kenai River as possible.

Ricky Gease moved to postpone the motion until the May 14, 2105 meeting. Dwight seconds the motion.  
The board passed it unanimously.

2. Homer Electric Grant Lake Hydro Project-Brent Johnson moved to adopt the motion that the KRSMA board support the habitat aspect of the Homer Electric Grant Lake Hydro Project and Joe second the motion.  
The board determined that it should review the draft FERC license before the vote.

Ricky Gease moved to postpone the motion until May 14, 2015 meeting. Dwight seconds the motion.  
The board passed it unanimously.

3. Mandatory Boater Safety Education-Joe Connors moves to adopt the motion to have a mandatory boater safety education course. Andrew Carmichael seconds the motion.

Jack Blackwell discussed that the course should initially be voluntary and has Kenai River specific elements. Dwight said the state has not done anything and a NSBLA course needs to be developed. Ricky believes the board should wait until fall of 2015. At that time the committee may be able to find some grants or funding to have this program on line. The board agreed to move this to fall of 2015. The original motion was withdrawn.

**V. CORRESPONDENCE:**

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**VII. ADJOURNMENT:**

