

**Kenai River Special Management Area  
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes  
Gilman River Center  
Thursday, April 14, 2011 5:30 p.m.**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

- A. Members Present:** Joe Connors, Bruce King, Jack Sinclair, George Heim, Grant Watts, James Czarnezki, Robert Begich, Janet Schmidt, Andy Loranger, Bobbie Jo Kolodziejski, Carol Padgett, David Carey, Tim Stevens, Ricky Gease, Terri Carter, and Kevin Lyon.
- B. The Minutes** for March 10, 2011 were approved as written.
- C. Agenda Changes and Approval:** Jim Czarnezki added under old business, item B for discussion of Kenai Peninsula Borough 21.18 review.

**II. Public Comments/Presentations**

Brad Hamilton stated he was a Caring for the Kenai finalist and his project is called Mile Markers on the Kenai River. He would like to install mile markers on the Kenai River to help improve rescue response time for medical needs and natural disasters.

Joe Gallagher and Mike Salzetti gave update on the HEA-Kenai Hydro Project.

**III. REPORTS**

**A. Agency and Government Reports**

- a. State Parks, Jack Sinclair,** contract for the Pillars dock was awarded to Peninsula Construction. The replacement of the five articulating floating docks with three articulating floating docks, which will help add stability to that floating dock. It will also have a ballast system inside that floatation to adjust the height of those and make sure they are floating in an equal line all the way down. We just finished a great deal of work on the fishing platforms at Morgan's Landing. There is still a little work to be done there, we have approximately 1/3 more fishing platforms now and because of the borough ordinance we were able to lower these to a much more usable height. We have also had our first meeting with the stream watch program folks for Bing's Landing and for City of Soldotna and US Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service looking forward to our second meeting this next Tuesday with the Rangers and we plan to talk more about the specifics about Bing's Landing. We are still looking for a couple of people that might want to volunteer with their boat on the Kenai River to help start a visitor count system for State Parks for the summer. State Parks can pay for boat gas and a subsistence payment. Need people to help from Skilak Lake down to the mouth. Ideally we are asking for at least two days a week for those counts to be taken. Also in your packet, you will see a concept drawing for Bing's Landing. We are just now starting our process of re-designing the Bing's Landing boat access and launch area; we are looking at trying to replace the large cantilevered dock with a more usable for boats to approach or take it out altogether. We are going to be studying the currents and see if it's possible to just bring boats bow in and still protect the habitat on shore; by allowing boats to bow in we could have possibly six to 10 more boats to be pulled up along shore there and they won't have to wade out in deep water. Hopefully, we can extend some of the walkways for fishing. We intend to move most of our fish cleaning stations this year down stream from our boat launches at least 100 feet if not more, to try to get fish waste away from our boat launches.
- b. DEC, Tim Stevens,** last month I mentioned that DEC had received two grant applications for water quality monitoring on the Kenai River. As of yet, we haven't made a decision only because we haven't gotten to our commissioner who has been busy with the legislature, so we haven't gotten on his calendar to brief him. I do expect to have that by the end of the month as to whether both of those applications will be funded or not. For the turbidity work that we have been doing the last couple of years we expect a draft report right around May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- c. ADF&G, Robert Begich,** between now and next meeting we will be getting ready for our upcoming season. Between now and then we have our Salmon Celebration down at Johnson Lake on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Next meeting, I hope to have our king salmon forecast out for you and talk about some other things we will be doing this year on the river.

- d. **USF&WS, Janet Schmidt**, the refuge visitor center is now open Saturday and Sunday. We are also preparing for our field season, which includes bringing 30 or so young people on. One of the groups is the youth conservation corp. program and applications are still being taken for that program. So, if you know of any young folks between the ages of 15 and 19, encourage them to go to our website and get the information they need to apply. We have a new Facebook site and it's becoming more popular. We are trying to keep things updated on it. If you are a Facebook user, please visit our page and give us your ideas on how to improve that. Janet mentioned last time, the Birding Festival is May 19<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011. **Janet Schmidt** has volunteer crews coming again from Scotland; we will have at least 20-40 Scottish folks working on our trails and cabins. We have our campground hosts all decided and ready to go.
- e. **USFS/Chugach, Bobbie Jo Kolodziejski**, we do have our public meetings kicking off on Monday for the Russian River Collaborative Process to Manage Human Bear Conflicts and to get public input on that. So we will be in Cooper Landing April 18th, on April 19<sup>th</sup> we will be in Soldotna at the Gilman River Center, Wasilla on the 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> we will be in Anchorage. Thrilled that State Parks and the City of Soldotna have stepped up to the plate to adopt stream watch. Will be working within the Chugach to look at some sites on the Kenai River from the Kenai Bridge down to the Russian River that has been established campsites in a no camping zone according to regulation. Will be doing a river assessment with some folks on places that have illegal fires, camping, human waste, and litter, and that is based on the Kenai River study that was put out as some priorities we need to address. The Forrest service is working with UAA on a symposium called Classrooms for Climate, and that is May 4 -7<sup>th</sup> 2011. It's called a symposium on the Changing Chugach Northern Eco System and the Implications for Science and Society. You can go online to Classrooms for Climate to find out more.
- f. **City of Kenai, Kevin Lyon**, still getting ready for the personal use fishery. We are still waiting on the federal funding that was promised for the bridge replacement, hoping to get something in our hands in a week or so. We are working to get fish cleaning stations down at the river mouth for the personal use fishery and some totes nearby. The harbor commission met and went over the 10 hp motor to exit fishery. The City of Kenai is going to track their side to see what the effectiveness is and maybe keep pushing for a lower river drift boat pullout.
- g. **City of Soldotna, Peter Micciche**, was not present.
- h. **Kenai Peninsula Borough, David Carey**, gearing up for Phase II looking at KPB Ordinance 21.18. Today we received copies of the states reapportionment options. Once they choose we have 60 days to come up with the borough's re-drawing of lines. On Tuesday, we will have the beginning of an introduction of an ordinance to add all the water bodies of the Kenai Peninsula Borough, minus the flood zone in Seward; these would be added to the responsibility of permitting to the borough. The federal government did make their decision designating the critical habitat. To the best of our knowledge, they did not take a single suggestion that we made into account. We are looking at the decision and there is a period of time in terms of asking for some changes. We are certainly concerned and particularly as one of the appendices, they listed the hundreds of rivers and creeks that go into Cook Inlet; there could be some restrictions in terms of making sure the fish that are going up there are available for the Cook Inlet Beluga Whales. In November of 2008, we were notified that we received just under \$700,000 in a grant; we have gone through a very long public process. On Monday we will see what the projects are and all 5 projects will start this summer and will conclude the following summer in terms of some of the studies.

## B. Committee Reports

- a. **President's Report**, remember the challenge of trying to get every board member involved in at least one committee, we are almost there. Thanked State Parks for attending all the committee meetings.
- b. **Guide Advisory, Joe Connors** stated we had a full committee meeting. We have a couple issues, one of them we will tell you what we want to do and the other we are not sure what we can do. Today we talked about the issue of drug testing; historically, a recommendation came out of a working group that all guides should be involved in a random drug testing program. Somewhere in that process it didn't come out that way, it came out only that the motorized guides needed a drug testing program because the coast guard could require it. Non-motorized guides didn't participate in a random drug testing program. Now we are having complaints about the current drift boat guides program they participate in, they go once a year and pay \$70 and have it done within 30 day of permitting with state parks. Our committee is concerned with the drug program because it seems like there is no value and there is no randomness to it. Our committee wants to see if there is a way to dump that and they are not apposed to going to a regular program. We are going to research and see if there is anyway of working with this. The other issue is enforcement for this coming year on the Kenai River and the lack of having dispatch after work hours and the concern that it brings relative to the security and well being of people in the field when you

can't have radio contact. We feel that it is a significant issue, the entire public safety issue with DNR. We are going to write a letter and it will be an action item next month for us to deal with.

- c. **Habitat, Bruce King** stated they had a brief meeting and got an update on 21.18 from the River Center Staff and talked to Jack Sinclair about Bing's Landing.
- d. **River Use, George Heim**, committee met today, it was the second meeting, we had a work session we kind of piggy backed on the stream watch presentation that Bobbie Jo heads up. The issues that we are trying to address are human waste, liter and prioritizing camping to some degree. We found out that camping within a quarter mile of Sterling Highway is prohibited, which is not currently enforced. Regulations from the comprehensive conservation language included prohibition of camping along the Kenai River from Skilak Lake upstream within 100 yards of the river; we have identified somewhere around 18 to 20 common campsites already. The River might be served if some of those campsites stayed in place. We started to work on that today, trying to identify which campsites along the river might be exceptions to the 100 yard prohibition. We identified 3 or 4 campsites that we are pretty positive would be good places to allow camping as a designated site; There were a few more that we are going to do a little more study on and make sure they are outside of that quarter mile prohibition. Hopefully by the next meeting we will be bringing forward an action item to the board, to forward to the refuge, purposing that some sites be exceptions to the 100 yard rule. In order to qualify as an exception, campers would be required to pack out everything they bring in including their human waste and there would be a time restriction on duration of camping, we are looking at about 3 day duration to minimize the impacts.
- e. **Permits**, did not meet.
- f. **Legislative/Government Activities, David Carey**, tomorrow I am taking a delegation to meet with the public safety commissioners office in Anchorage to start a discussion on dispatch. We have all 9 positions filled for the first time, but 3 will be trainees for the summer. We rejected 2 positions from the state, they were waiting on a grant from the federal government, if we would take the money and we would make them borough employees, they would give us some money, but they wouldn't pay all the benefits and we would be required to pay the retirement for the next 25 years by the new state rules in terms of when someone retires. We said no; we can't take that responsibility, the liability for the next 25 years for those 2 positions, so we are going to have some good discussions.
- g. **Board Development**, nothing to report.
- h. **Agenda/Board Structure/Housekeeping**, nothing to report.

#### IV. OLD BUSINESS

##### A. Response from Parks regarding Bing's Landing passenger vehicle parking restriction Aug 1 through Sept 15

Jack Sinclair stated the question was, would state parks entertain a resolution from this board for restricting vehicles in the Bing's Landing boat launch parking to vehicles pulling trailers and no passenger vehicles between August 1 through September 15. Jack stated he didn't get a very positive response from his staff. There were some questions about fairness to all that use the boat launch, but what bothered them the most about this was that it does not guarantee everyone with a boat and trailer a place to park there. We don't have any real data that actually says how many passenger cars versus trailers park there during the summer. So to give you any kind of reliable information about how many cars park there and who is going to be affected by this, we don't have that data. We don't have enough information to make the best decision on this. In addition, with the proposal to construct a new day-use parking area and new stipulations for long term parking permittees, it seemed overly burdensome to attach this parking restriction to all the other issues now in the mix at Bing's Landing.

The board agreed to wait 1 year before implementing the passenger vehicle parking until state parks can get more information.

##### B. Discussion of Kenai Peninsula Borough 21.18 Review

Jim Czarneski stated at the April 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, two draft ordinances will be introduced. One is for the prior existing use which has gone to the planning commission, we wrote a letter supporting it at the planning commission level; it was passed with some minor changes. So, it will be introduced on the April 19<sup>th</sup> meeting and at the May 17<sup>th</sup> meeting they could take action on it. We met on May 12. We will probably have an action item at that time for a draft letter supporting the ordinance at the assembly level. The other thing that is being introduced on April 19<sup>th</sup> is an ordinance to include all

salmon streams in the borough. There now are 25 or 26 streams that are under the ordinance, just one person full time does that.

David Carey stated if anyone would like to look at the ordinances they are available online.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**VI. CORRESPONDENCE - none**

**VII. PUBLIC COMMENT - none**

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**A. Board Comments**

Jack Sinclair stated Alaska Waste is going to be donating a bear resistant trash container to raffle off at the Kenai River Festival this year.

**B. Date/Agenda of Next Meeting May 12th, 2011 at 5:30 p.m.**