

Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board
***** Minutes*****

Thursday, May 11, 2006
5:30 p.m.
Kenai River Center

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll Call

Members Presents: Joe Connors, Ted Wellman, Brenda Trefon, Richard Dykema, Floyd Heimbuch, Ken Lancaster, Richard Hahn, Jeff King, Rick Wood, Keith Kornelis, Deb Cooper, Tom Vania, Jack Sinclair and Tim Stevens.

Members Absent: Pete Sprague, Robin West and Ted Forsi.

B. Approval of 04/13/06 minutes

Approved as written.

C. Agenda Changes and Approval

Approved as written.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ricky Gease Executive Director of the Kenai River Sport Fishing Association supports and encourages the KRSMA Board involvement in the purchasing of the Russell and Corr Property, a key habitat parcel near the heart of Soldotna.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Chugach Electric Association Cooper Lake project

Burk Wick presented a PowerPoint presentation of the Chugach Electric Association Cooper Lake Project and a renewal of permits is being sought for the 2007 season.

B. Board of Fish Proposal

Dick Hahn presented a proposal to change the Kenai River to a drift boat fishery in July that will be submitted for official consideration in April 2007 to the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

Tom Vania commented that fishing from drift boats is a board of fishery issue. Tom is not quite sure that the KRSMA board is charged with these

types of discussions. Tom knows the board of fish deals with regulations that relates to fishing. Tom believes that Parks probably has regulations that if they wanted to restrict boating activity on a river that they could probably do that.

Tom believes this could be through a commercial permit for everyone. Drift boating for general use such as going to your cabin, parks cannot regulate a fishing activity. This is a board of fish issue and that this type of discussion at this boards meeting is inappropriate at this advisory board.

Joe was wondering why this item appeared on the agenda. At any board of fish meeting these issues need to be discussed.

Ted Wellman commented that this issue straddles both the board of fish and this advisory board because of the crowding issue. Ted felt Dick wanted to be up front that he was going to pursue this at the board of fish without representing the KRSMA board.

Ken commented that since this board is advisory that we have the right to discuss any issue that happens in the Kenai River Special Management area no matter what the issue is.

Jack Sinclair referred to the bylaws about what the board may not discuss and fishing allocation falls into that category and anything else may be discussed.

Tom Vania stated the Board of Fish considers this proposal as an allocation issue.

C. Commissioner's visit June 1 & 2

Ken announced that the meetings will be held at the Kenai River Center June 1st from 6:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. A working group meeting will start at 6:00 p.m. to discuss what the KRSMA board would like to present to the commissioner. June 2nd will be a follow up discussions that anyone would like to have with him.

Ted would like to see the proposal to include 50 horsepower, 2006 compliance, and boat length all together as one item when presented to the commissioner. This would leave boat width, hull configuration and loading as a separate item. Ted wants to explain to the commissioner as to why we did what we did.

Joe agreed with the changes to the proposal presented to the commissioner.

The board has many questions about the 2006 EPA requirements and recommended that we have EPA, some outboard motor professional and any other person who may help in not only explaining but also understanding the 2006 compliance for engines.

IV. ACTION ITEM

A. Letter of Support- Russell Property to EVOS

Ken commented that there is a letter of support to EVOS to buy the Russell property, which he asked Jack Sinclair to draft. State Parks has agreed to manage the lands if the acquisition is approved. The property is located when you drive into Centennial Campground on the right hand side. It is a 4-acre parcel that runs down to the river. Protection efforts may include extending the boardwalk and added parking.

This purchase also includes the Corr property. Joe voted that we should support this action item and Floyd seconds it. With no objection this action was approved.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Guide Academy Report-Joe Connors

Joe commented that the guide academy had the second class and there were 25 students, which makes 48 completing the class. The class was modified from the first class and Joe was pleased with the level of instruction and felt the course is improving all the time. The bottom line is that these were all volunteers and the level of experience range from 30 years to brand new guides. Everyone passed and friendships were built between the participants.

B. Guide Advisory Committee-Joe Connors

Basically what we have is an application and we have five different positions to fill of the nine that are available. There will be a period that will be announced fairly soon that will run through the middle of August, approximately 10 week application period, people will have to fill out an application and identify which positions they are applying for. They will fill these out at the Kenai River Center and reviewed by the current commercial user group and rank the candidates for each position. These will be brought to the KRSMA board for final approval and then this will include the two seats that are being offered to the Kenai River Professional Guide association that are selected. In addition Jack put together of how the board will functions.

D. Boat Wake Study update -Jack Sinclair

A draft report is due in June from Steven Maynord.

E. Bridge Update-Matt Coullahan

Matt gave a brief update. First, they are getting ready to pour the center pier, and after that they will begin to remove the cofferdam. The schedule is running pretty much on schedule and they are hoping to start setting the girders some time in June. River closures will be in four-hour stretches at night. These closures will be advertised in advance. The

storm drain system will be in place by the end of June and the only scheduled delay that may occur is the removal of the temporary bridge and dirt work on the north and south end of the temporary bridge later in November and December.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Herman Fandel: Perhaps we should limit the number of days a person can fish the river per year. This would be easy to do with the Non-resident fishing licenses since they fish 24/7 on the river. Regarding the 35 vs. 50 hp, it's a good idea to remove the restrictions for the reasons of safety, wakes and emissions.

Walt Arthur: Lived on the river since 1975. Supports the 50 hp change because of safety. Recommended that every board member float the river on the 11th or 18th of July each year to keep abreast of the amount of use on the river in July. The Commissioner should be on the river in July, too. The loophole that allowed Riverquest is still on the books. The KRSMA Board should approach the KPB Assembly to seek a change. IF this board cannot address allocation then address habitat. Supports the 20.5' boat length limit, 5 people with 50 HP.

Questions:

Jeff King How can we close the Riverquest Loophole?

Joe C: We voted unanimously to oppose this two years ago. Were some Grandfathered in?

Walt: Max best would know; the borough code hasn't changed

Pam R: John Mohorcich would be able to explain this best

Jim Fasler: Lives above Stewarts Landing. If the river were made float only it would offend him. The guides are doing a good job. Guide Academy instruction should be extended to include the public.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

A. Board Comments

Jeff King: Glad to hear about the defibrillators being placed along the river. Jack had not heard so it must be a Bill Berkahn project.

Rick Woods was asked whether the construction at Centennial CG was to expand the parking. Rick said he did not know.

Tom Vania: Reported that there was some difficulty in getting compliance with the freshwater logbooks, but a notice had been sent out to remind the guides about the requirements.

Keith Kornelious: Two launches are opening near the Kenai Dock this year.

B. Date/Agenda of Next Meeting

September 14, 2006