

**Kenai River Special Management Area
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Gilman River Center
Thursday, October 14, 2010 5:30 p.m.**

I. Call to Order

- A. Members Present:** Joe Connors, Jack Sinclair, Terri Carter, James Czarnetzki, Bruce King, Tim Stevens, Andy Loranger, David Carey, Bobbi Jo Skibo, Wayne Ogle, Janet Schmidt.
- B. The Minutes** for September 9, 2010 were approved as written.
- C. Agenda Changes and Approval:** Added New Business Item A Letter to Borough Assembly with regards to the 21.18 review.

II. Public Comments/Presentations

Ricky Geese, of Kenai, put an application in for the KRSMA board and gave a brief overview of his experience and education regarding the KRSMA board.

Doug Whittaker presented information regarding the Kenai River User Study.

James King, director of state parks, stated last night they had their statewide teleconference for the advisory boards across the state. This has been an exciting time for state parks. This year we were able to accomplish a lot of capital projects and improvements. We've got some money over the last few years; it's exciting to see it go in that direction. We have a large deferred maintenance database; \$65 million dollars worth of projects. We are taking baby steps towards getting those fixed, which is exciting to see. One of the big projects this year was Johnson Lake campground, in which half of it was completely rebuilt. There are many other projects going on around the state. We are also working on our outreach and brochures. We talked a little about our needs, as we go through our process every year. We came up with a list and it has been emailed out to all KRSMA board members. The process of going through and defining what our priorities are for taking care of deferred maintenance projects, new projects, replacing equipment, and emergency repairs is a pretty extensive process and it should have that detail on it. We talked some more amongst the board about outreach and how we communicate to the public all the incredible things that the division does and help them understand all the good work that is going on. It was a good meeting. We will do another meeting in January after the Governor's budget comes out. Thanked the board for all the energy, effort, and time that is put into the KRSMA board.

Bruce King inquired about the Kasilof boat launch.

James King stated the Kasilof is one of the needs we have identified; it has been talked about forever. The fact is that there is a public boat launch on the Kasilof River and there is no public take out, which makes it difficult when you are in a drift boat. We have worked hard to identify the amount of money it would take to go through a planning process, to really figure out where the right location for a take out would be, work with the public and the neighborhoods, to work towards a solution to purchase property and put infrastructure on that.

Joe Connors asked if state parks had a dollar figure.

James King stated yes, \$3.6 million give or take a little.

James King also stated Claire Leclair is the new state parks division deputy director, as Chris Degernes retired at the end of June. Claire Leclair has worked for the division; she was a Kodiak District Ranger and also worked as special assistant in the director's office.

III. Reports

A. Agency and Government Reports

- a. State Parks - Jack Sinclair** gave a brief overview on the 2010 Kenai River Field Operations regarding Staffing, Staff Priorities, and Law Enforcement Statistics; Work on other projects has been happening this fall, we were recently notified that the Weimer property just downstream from Honeymoon Cove around the corner from Eagle Rock was going to be deeded over to State Parks as North American Wetlands

Conservation (NAWCA) Grant replacement lands, which is the wetlands conservation lands that were used to replace the lands near the mouth of the river near the city docks in Kenai; there was an 8 acre parcel given to the City of Kenai and then leased to Enstar, for a gas underground storage. Weimer property title will be coming to State Parks, it is 42 acres. Most of the property is wetlands; the conservation fund was the go between for parks, the land is mostly for wetlands conservation for habitat. No planning is taking place for this property and it is difficult to access. We have been working with our chief engineer on redesigning the Pillars docks, gangway, and fish cleaning station. Trying to make facility more user-friendly for boaters and people cleaning fish. We continue to work with Kenai Peninsula Borough on some issues regarding the Rapids Avenue access and the Bings Landing access for anglers. Met with the Mayor's staff. We are hoping that we can start a public process in earnest, in the next month, regarding how we can change public access. To change the primary access from the Rapids Avenue, Bings Backline to something on the other side.

- b. **DEC - Tim Stevens**, DEC non-point source program is working on developing their Alaska Clean Water Action for high priority waters, which the Kenai River is one. Working on three potential actions that will go out to a grant solicitation— one would be to support twice, the annual Kenai Watershed Forum monitoring that is being done; another one is to address fish waste in the lower river related to the bacteria exceedances we found this summer that is kind of outside the KRSMA area, but it is still on the Kenai River. One thing to add to that is that we have received raw data from the turbidity study that was collected this summer so we all three years of that. We, as well as our granted contractor, will be crunching those numbers and starting to look at the baseline.
- c. **ADF&G- Vania/ Begich, was not present.**
- d. **USF&WS - Andy Loranger**, Russian River Ferry parking area is about 3-4 weeks from completion we are re-graveling and re-arranging the parking facility it will be within the same footprint. We have a planning document out for public comment regarding a winter gas exploration project, on the Northern part of the Refuge, very close to Captain Cook State Park, it is for exploring a prospect that is part of the CIRI subsurface that is within CIRI owned subsurface within the boundaries of the refuge. This is out for 30 day public comment thru the end of October. We are filling some key vacancies very soon, the Deputy Refuge Manager for the Kenai Refuge, will be arriving here with his family late November, his name is Steven Miller.
- e. **USFS/Chugach – Bobbi Jo Skibo**, showed a power point about Streamwatch. Will be going on maternity leave, but will be working intermittently. After December, Travis Mosley the district ranger will be sitting in for her. We are embarking on a collaborative public process for managing Human/Bear conflicts at the Russian River. That contractor is in place now and we will be starting to contact some stake holders for an initial assessment. Each agency is going to be identifying who those individuals or groups will be. Let her know if you would like to be involved. Yesterday, we held a workshop with Cook Inlet Region Incorporated, the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Forrest Service, on the implementation on what is called the Russian River Land's Act and there was a selection agreement there based on Alaska native claims settlements and some land issues, and you will probably see some media coming out next week on this. The Russian River is within the Sgilantnu Archeological District; very unique, very special has between 10,000 and 14,000 years of cultural heritage in that area. One of her projects is to start managing human waste. There is a blog and a web type of movement with some people Janet Schmidt connected her with. It is called Managing Human Waste in the Wild; a ranger from Denali National Park is leading that effort. Plugged in and learning as we go; and through the River Use committee she will bring that information forward. There is a River Management Society meeting coming up in May.
- f. **City of Kenai – Wayne Ogle**, we have a couple of construction projects down by the river 2 permanent outhouses are being constructed now. We have a bridge across Rhine's Creek which is pretty nice; as soon as the ground freezes we will put the foundation down and stretch the bridge across it in two sections. We are finishing up internal review of our personal use fishery report and that will be presented to our council sometime in the next month. Finished up the 4th avenue culvert, this was the one that the Kenai Watershed Forum headed up with Foster Construction. They put a very sizable culvert in and the city benefited by raising the water line from 17 to 11 feet.
- g. **City of Soldotna – Peter Micciche, not present.**

- h. **Kenai Peninsula Borough - David Carey**, moving toward phase II of Kenai Peninsula Borough Ordinance 21.18 review, we did put off slope and grandfather rights, but we are getting ready to proceed with that. Cannot adequately express my appreciation to the individuals out there and their energy and enthusiasm for the draft idea for Rapids Avenue. We have been spending more time on enforcement. We had our second meeting for the Federal Cook Inlet Beluga Whale task force; the first hour to hour and a half we argued about whether or not we would be allowed to listen to the science panel as they come up with their ideas and we were told we were not allowed to listen to them or talk to them or be at their meetings ; we spent the next 4 ½ hours talking about what each person thought was important. Next meeting will be in 3-6 months. The designated critical habitat area does include the mouth of the Kenai River. We were told everything we do is advisory, everything the science panel does is advisory, everything the federal agency does is advisory, which really says there is a small group of people in Washington that are going to decide.

B. Committee Reports

- a. **President's Report**, couple concerning things, we did not have a quorum tonight and people being committed to schedule and have committee meetings.
- b. **Guide Advisory**, we had a two hour meeting today. We are going to deal with our membership, the guide advisory membership. We have two guide positions that are at large; we have an upper river guide position that is at large, and a commercial, large business/rental position that is at large. We are going to put these on the same 3 year cycle that the KRSMA board just went to. We are going to bring everything before this board to vote on who we want on the guide advisory board. We did pass out the preliminary river use study to the guide advisory board. We also reviewed the law enforcement statistics. The number of Kenai River Guides has declined this year, lowest number since 1995. We got our first look at the Kasilof River special use area proposal. We just got our first insight to the Bing's Landing Backline proposal fishing access.
- c. **Habitat**, met today, the primary issue for discussion was the symposium and it is on track for October 2011. Today we spent a lot of time finalizing the agenda and we are actively recruiting the speakers at this point. The money situation is starting to come together, so we are getting pretty excited about it. The idea is that we are going to bring in people from other parts of the country, who have had to deal with complex water related issues to tell us how they went about it and what sorts of things worked and what didn't work. Our primary audience is the KRSMA board, but we are also inviting decision makers from local governments and agencies with the idea that we will have one day of presentations about watershed plans and how they work or if they work followed up by discussions about what sort of planning has been done locally and some round table discussions about what can planning do for us, are there avenues for planning down the road. Our approach is that this group isn't interested in writing a watershed plan, because we don't have the expertise for that, but when we get invited to participate in a watershed planning processes like the fish habitat partnership, we want to make sure we are knowledgeable enough to participate. Next month we will be sending out save the dates and putting together a flyer.
- d. **River Use**, did not meet. Bobbi Jo has volunteered to call the next meeting.
- e. **Permits**, did not meet.
- f. **Legislative/Government Activities**, Tuesday was the last day for 3 members of the Assembly the combined number of service for those individuals was just under 50 years; the 3 that have come on have all served on the borough planning commission, which means regardless of where they have been representing they have been on a body that looks at the entire borough. It is also very important that the committees get out what they plan to discuss to the public in advance.
- g. **Board Development**, nothing to report.
- h. **Agenda/Board Structure/Housekeeping** discussed voting procedures used last election period.

IV. Old Business

- A. **Board Seat Nominations** – 6 members of the current board have positions up, 4 of those members have re-applied; we have 7 applications total.

Joe Connors asked if we could extend the board seat nominations.
Nomination period was extended, public service announcements will be put out on October 15, 2010.

V. New Business

A. Letter to Borough regarding KPB Ordinance 21.18

Bruce King stated that they will be presenting the letter as an action item at the next KRSMA meeting. In the interim, our goal is to get as many co-signers as we can from the local user groups so that when the assembly members get this letter they understand that there is a board based interest in having 21.18 review go forward. Please provide us with contact information with organizations that would be interested in signing on. Please email them to him.

VI. Correspondence - None

VII. Public Comment

Dwight Kramer stated he has applied for the KRSMA board 3-4 times and has served on a lot of different committees for KRSMA because of his interest in the resource and KRSMA as a whole. Last time they said they didn't have enough applicants and extended the application period – it made him feel like he wasn't a worthy applicant. Suggested that maybe it is time to change the bylaws. Just have applications to fill the positions.

VIII. Adjournment

A. Board Comments

Jim gave an update on Kenai Peninsula Borough Ordinance 21.18, River Center staff met with the planning commission Monday evening for a working session work group to talk prior existing use (the grandfather clause) and they want to continue to work with the planning commission to try to work toward coming together with a language that would then go to the Borough Assembly for adoption. There will be an opportunity coming up for us in the near future to comment on these changes.

Dave Carey mentioned on the river use user study, that a lot of work, time, and money has gone into this, and hope we will take this information and use it.

B. Date/Agenda of Next Meeting November 11, 2010 at 5:30 p.m.