



# KENAI RIVER

**Special Management Area**

*"Working together...for the river"*

## ADVISORY BOARD

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### Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

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

Thursday, December 13, 2018

5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center

514 Funny River Rd., Soldotna, AK

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

A. **Roll Call:** Joe Connors, Ricky Gease, Ron Rogalsky, Jeff Dolifka, Glenn Arundell, Monte Roberts, Ted Wellman, Andrew Carmichael, Brent Hibbert, Andy Loranger, Marion Glaser, Colton Lipka, Jack Blackwell, Jeanne Swartz.

**Special Guest:** Director of State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Ethan Tyler

B. **Minutes:** Minutes were approved.

C. **Agenda:** Agenda was approved.

D. **Public Comment/Presentation:** Mike Selzetti-Homer Electric/Grant Lake Hydro Electric Project. Mike gave a brief update of the proposed Grant Lake hydroelectric project in the Moose Pass area. The FERC licensing process has taken the position that the monitoring of fish and fish spawning beds is outside the FERC licensing process. Many of the agencies, interested parties and Kenai Hydro, LLC agree that the monitoring is a very important component of the project. All parties agreed that Kenai Hydro, LLC, Sue Walker, NOAA, and Kevin Keith Fish and Game (Habitat) will develop a Settlement Agreement regarding the future monitoring of fish and fish spawning beds outside the FERC licensing process. KRSMA board members will have an opportunity to review the MOU once a draft is completed.

#### II. REPORTS

A. Agency and Government Reports:

a. State Parks-Jack Blackwell provided the board with the following report:

- Jack reported that State Parks staff has been inspecting all the State Park facilities in the area for earthquake damage. Eagle Rock boat launch facility is currently the only park that has damage on a section of the access road going down to the boat launch. A portion of the slope calved off causing damage to the driving

surface going down to the parking area. State Park engineers have been on site to assess the damage and are scheduling to get this fix in the spring of 2019.

- A new Commissioner for Department of Natural Resources has been appointed. Commissioner Corri Feige started on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, and was the former Division Director of Oil and Gas.
- Eagle Rock and Pillars boat launches are closed for the season.

Director Ethan Tyler thanked members for dedicating time to serving on the board and committees.

- State Park staff has been working through the new Governor Mike Dunleavy administration transition. The administration has asked all Directors, including Ethan Tyler, to submit a resignation letter for his position. At this time, he has not heard if he will be retained by this administration.
- One of the priorities that Ethan has been working on is to be less dependent on the general fund and become self-sustainable. This includes looking at current or future infrastructure and how it would help in generating revenue for the department.
- The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation is scheduling a meeting of advisory board chairs on December 18 at 6:00 PM. We are hosting the meeting as a teleconference, but welcome anyone in the area to join us in person at the Atwood Building, 550 W. 7<sup>th</sup> Ave, Anchorage in the first-floor conference center room 106.
- Ethan thanked Jack Blackwell, Jacques Kosto and Pam Russell for being advocates for state parks and their doors are always open to help you with any questions or concerns.

**b.** DEC-Jeanne Swartz provided the board with the following report:

- The final 2014/2016 Integrated Report has been submitted to EPA and they are reviewing the report and are in the process of consulting with native and tribal associations before they can complete the review. It is estimated this can take up to several months to complete. The 2018 Intergraded Report draft cannot be released for public comment until the 2014/2016 report has been completed.
- DEC is currently advertising for data for the 2020 Integrated report. This will be a notice to the public or any state local or federal agencies that may include any water quality data that they would like to have for assessment for water bodies. DEC would like to have the 2020 report available as soon as possible in 2020.
- Jeanne Swartz has taken a new position with DEC water division. There have been some changes in DEC leadership including a new commissioner and several directors. However, the Water Division Director has been retained. In the Water Quality section, there has been some restructuring and a new Water Quality Program Specialist has been hired in the Soldotna Area office. This person will be the new representative on the KRSAM board and committees. They should be starting in February.

**c.** ADFG -Colton Lipka is the new ADF&G Sportfish Division Region 2 manager and provided the board with the following report:

- The Sportfish Division is currently working on the 2019 pre-season outlook for Chinook and Sockeye Salmon.

- Fish and Game has a new acting Commissioner Doug Vincent Lang. He is a long-term Fish and Game employee.
  - The deadline for proposals for the next Board of Fish meeting scheduled for the spring of 2020 is April 10, 2019.
- d. USFWS-Andy Loranger provided the board with the following report:
- Andy reported that the plans to upgrade to the fishing access and stairways, and the boat launch and parking area at the end of Keystone Drive will go to construction in the fall of 2019 and spring of 2020.
- e. USFS/Chugach National Forest –Marion Glaser provided the board with the following report:
- In January 2019, the Forest service will be hiring a permanent 6-month position to be the coordinator of the upper river stream watch program. The position is going through ANILCA which able to open the position to public that may not have any federal experience.
  - The Forest Service has currently hired a value analyst, for preliminary planning the Russian River Campground Road. This will look at the cost and the benefits of the project. If everything goes smoothly the project could be funded in 2019 and start construction in 2020.
- f. City of Kenai – No Report
- g. City of Soldotna-Andrew Carmichael provided the board with the following report:
- The City of Soldotna has removed all the infrastructures from along the Kenai River. All parks are closed for the winter season.
  - Kenai Peninsula Borough- Brent Hibbert provided the following report:
  - Brent stated that things are quiet at the assembly level for the Kenai Peninsula Borough at this time.
  - There was minor damage at the Kenai Peninsula Borough building main building or other outlining facilities within the borough.

### **III. Committee Reports**

- a. President's Report: Ted Wellman provided the following report:
- Ted stated that he will be attending in person the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation meeting of advisory board chairs on December 18 at 6:00 PM.
- b. Guide Advisory-Monte Roberts provided the board with the following report:
- The committee reviewed the 2018 Kenai River Guide statistics. There were a few questions and recommendations to changes to the new format.

- The committee went over the current Kenai River guide stipulations. These should be finalized in January for the 2019 season.
  - The committee has been reviewing the Guide Academy curriculum. There are some changes to propose. A meeting of the guide academy board has not been scheduled at this time.
  - Joe Connor's four topics for future discussions.
    1. Limitation of guides on the Kenai River
    2. Cost of permits-resident versus no resident
    3. Enforcement of the river
    4. Life Jacket regulation
- c. Habitat Committee-No report.
- d. River Use Committee-Ted Wellman provided the board with the following report:
- Monica Alvarez from DNR planning has volunteered to come down and have a work session with the advisory board to go over concerns with the plan. The work session meeting date has not been determined at this time.
  - The committee will start working on a list of areas in the plans that may need revision. Each board member should also look through the plan and make a list of areas that may need to be changed.
  - It has been determined that the Funny River Recreation Site will not be a suitable area for a boat launch. The committee is to come up with a list of alternative site and rank them in order of favorable sites. There will be some community outreach.
  - Jack Blackwell has also recommended that committee compile a list of State Park facilities needs on the Kenai and develop a proposed list of changes, repair or possible upgrades.
- e. Legislative Committee-Ricky Gease provided the board with the following report:
- The committee had a meeting this morning with Sue Walker from NOAA and Kevin Keith of Fish and Game to discuss the memorandum of understanding between Homer Electric and the agencies to address the monitoring of fish and fish spawning beds. The committee and agencies decided for the KRSMA board to review this agreement that an extension would be required by FERC for the current comment deadline of January 9<sup>th</sup>. If the board determines the agreement meets all the concerns a letter would be written to rescind the current letter to FERC and send a new letter supporting the Grant Lake Hydro project.

#### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Status of Past recommendation to DNR Parks-Ted Wellman asked if a list of past recommendation and their status be compiled for the committees and board to review. Ted Wellman has asked State Parks to help compile a list of past recommendation and the status of the recommendation.
- b. Comprehensive Plan Status- Monica Alvarez, Chief DNR Planning Section will be attending the February 14 advisory board meeting which will also include an afternoon work session with the board. This will help determine if the Kenai River Comprehensive Plan should be modified or revised.

- c. Grant Lake Hydro Project-The board decided to write a letter to FERC request a ten-day extension to the January 19, 2019. This was to allow enough time for the agencies to draft the agreement and KRSMA board members to have time to review the agreement at the next board meeting January 10, 2019.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**VI. CORRESPONDENCE**

**VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- a. **BOARD COMMENTS:** Happy Holidays
- b. Andy Loranger announced that The Kenai National Wildlife Refuges 77 years of conservation with refreshments, kid-friendly activities, and a Year in Review presentation. Saturday December 14, 2018 at the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**