



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, April 11th, 2019

5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center

514 Funny River Rd., Soldotna, AK

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. **Roll Call:** Joe Connors, Ron Rogalsky, Jeff Dolifka, William Tappan, Glen Arundell, Monte Roberts, Ted Wellman, Mike Frost, Andrew Carmichael, Lisa Gabriel, Andy Loranger, Colton Lipka, Sarah Apsens, and Jack Blackwell.

Special Guest State Park Director Ricky Gease.

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

- C. **Agenda:** Changes, under new business the letter of support for EVOS funding at Slikok Creek and Izaak Walton were postponed until May's meeting. There will be no committee reports for the board had another work session looking at the management plan. Agenda was approved as amended.

- D. **Public Comment/Presentation.**

REPORTS

- A. Agency and Government Reports:

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

- Jack welcomed the new Director of State Park Rickey Gease and Monica Alvarez from the Planning Department to the meeting.
- Currently with the nice weather State Park staff has been able to focus on park maintenance.
- Rangers are in Anchorage this week for the mandatory 40 hours law enforcement training.

Monte asked when the Pillars boat launch would be open and about the Eagle Rock earthquake damage? Jack said that the Pillars would be closed until hazard trees could be removed and he would check on when this was scheduled. He also said that the Eagle Rock boat launch road repairs would occur this spring and the site would be open by July 1.

Direct Ricky Gease provided the board with the following report:

- Ricky commented that State Parks has great staff and great people across the state. There are over 150 State Park units in the state and over the next several months Ricky will be visiting as many of these areas. He has been to the Southeast area and will be visiting Wood Tikchik and Kodiak in June. After that he hopes to head to Fairbanks and Matsu areas in the fall.
- Currently State Parks has a 6-million-dollar budget. There are currently 3, \$1million buckets that generate revenue for the state park system. They are public use cabins; camping, parking and boat launching fees; and commercial operator/ permit fees. The department is looking for other opportunities to create revenue and become self-sufficient.
- Ricky is reviewing the Recreational Trails Program. The management plan for this program is reviewed and updated every five years. One thing that has become prevalent it that it does not matter what part of the state you are in the priorities are the same, the availability of bathrooms and garbage service is important for trail systems. Many of the trail heads along the highways are not designed to be highway waysides, but many are used that way. 2026 is the 250-year anniversary of the country and Ricky would like to have a functional highway wayside program in place in the state. This program would help to elevate the pressure on the State Park trailhead system.
- The Recreational Trail program brings in approximately \$1.2 million to the state. Those funds have been divided with programs inside state park system and those outside of state parks. Currently State Park units across the state have a \$65 million in deferred maintenance. The Kenai alone has about \$20 million alone in deferred maintenance, so at a recent meeting with state park staff they were able to come up with a list of items that would use three or more years of the recreational trail programs funds. A shift in the program is to use all those funds in State Park units and work with non-profits to help work on trails within the state park units. For the next three years, all of the RTP funding will be devoted to focusing on deferred trail maintenance in the state park system.
- One of the challenges for State Parks is to come up with an additional\$3 million in revenue to become self-sustaining. Currently the South Denali visitor center would bring a \$1 million in revenue once it is built. If anyone has ideas on how to create revenue in the park, please pass that idea on to Ricky.
- 2020 is the 50th anniversary of State Parks and all the units are planning special celebrations throughout the year. It would be great for the board to come up with ideas to celebrate the anniversary with all state park users.

Ted Wellman asked about the spruce park beetle damage closing state park units? Ricky commented that several park units in the Matsu area are going to be closed until fuel mitigation can occur within the units. There is a high fire danger and public safety concerns. There is some impact within the units on the Kenai but there is currently no closure scheduled.

b. DEC- Sara Apsens provided the board with the following report.

- The 2014/16 integrated report was submitted to EPA at the beginning of November 2018. DEC is currently waiting for the approval. The Kenai River was going to be listed for turbidity, but DEC decided that more data needs to be obtained before that determination can be made.
- Public notice for the 2018 integrated report is still going through internal review, once completed it will be release for public review. After the public review is completed the

report will be sent to EPA for review. Within this report the Kenai is going to potentially be listed impaired for zinc. The Kenai Beach will not be listed for fecal coliform at this time.

- DED is currently asking for a call for data for the 2020 integrated report. The information on how to submit the data is available online on the DEC web site.
- ACWA grants have been awarded to the Kenai Watershed Forum for the baseline water quality sampling on the Kenai River and tributaries. They will also be monitoring the City of Kenai beaches for bacteria.
- In May, Teri Lomax from DEC will give the KRSMA board an update on the integrated report.

c. ADFG -Colton Lipka provided the board with the following report:

- The deadline for 2020 Board of Fish proposals were due on April 10, 2019. Proposal books should be available in August.
- Freshwater logbooks will sunset after the 2019 season.
- Rainbow closure is May 1st through June 10. Reports are that rainbow fishing has been good at this time.
- Fish and Game is currently hiring for seasonal technicians.
- The Crooked Creek culvert replacement is scheduled to happen within the next few weeks. The road will be re-routed, and the closure will take up to a month to complete.

d. USFWS-Andy Loranger provided the board with the following report:

- The Refuge has completed the hiring of their seasonal workers. Everyone should be up and running by mid-May.
- The planning and design phases are continuing for the boat ramp at the end of Keystone drive. The work is continuing on the platforms on Keystone Drive and the design of the Jim's Landing facility.
- Andy brought in the summaries from the Federal Subsistence Fishery on the Kenai River for the board members to review.

e. USFS/Chugach National Forest –Marion Glaser provided the board with the following report:

- The Forest service is developing two new interpretive panels, one will be on bear safety and one will be on fishing tips and regulations.
- The Forest Service is in full swing with the 2019 seasonal crews returning. Orientation will be conducting for both seasonal and permanent staff on May 13, 2019.
- The road going into the Russian River Campground will be improved in 2020.
- The Russian River Interagency group is currently working on the five-year action plan.
- The Forest Service will be working with the Youth Conservation Corps from the Seward High school in the month of June.
- There will be three seasonal Forest Service seasonal employees working on the Russian River.
- Stream Watch is currently getting ready for the 2019 season.

f. City of Kenai –Lisa Gabriel provided the board with the following report:

- The City of Kenai is currently advertising for the summer position.
- Discussion with the harbor commission having the Coast Guard present at the mouth of the Kenai River for three days during the dip net fishing.
- Parking fees at the dip net fishery will stay the same this year.

- The City of Kenai bluff erosion project has been approved by the Corps of Engineers. That city will now work on the design phase of the project, will then go into the pre-construction phase. The city will now work on the design phase which will be followed by pre-construction.

g. City of Soldotna-Andrew Carmichael the board with the following report:

- The City of Soldotna is working on summer hires program which include gardeners and camp host.
- Andrew also commented that the Spruce Bark Beetle killed trees are prevalent at Swiftwater this year again. They have currently removed 100 trees and there is still that many more trees to be removed. Centennial Park is also seeing signs of the Spruce Bark Beetle. Andrew stated that the characteristic of the beetles has changed over the years.
- There is currently no major project currently scheduled for Soldotna parks.

h. Kenai Peninsula Borough-No report:

II. Committee Reports

- a. President's Report-Ted reported that all board members that were able attended a work session pertaining to the Kenai River Comprehensive Plan with DNR's chief planner Monica Alvarez. The group spent an additional 4 hour reviewing the management plan. Bill Tappan reported that board members had a work session prior to the board work session and the group came up with approximately 18 items that they wanted to have included in the plan if a total revision were to happen. Some of the items included how to create new fees within the plan and how the revenue could be used within State Parks. The group went through the list of 20 items Bill determined that all the items are within the current plan. It was also discussed at the end of the meeting if updating the plan was a priority at this time? It may not be a high priority for the state at this time.

Monica Alvarez explained that it was very useful to see what the group prioritized. Monica explained that there are tremendous planning needs within DNR and that compared to other needs, the Kenai River Comprehensive Plan is not a top priority to revise, however it is still near the top of the priorities.

Monte felt it was good to have a plan review and that revision and amendments would take a long time. Many of the items that were discussed are in the plan, so we need to focus to implement some of the items that are already in the plan.

Oz agree that the board can work through the committees and work on some of the action items that are in plan that have not been address over the last 20 years.

Ted Wellman is disappointed that we are unable to update the plan but agree that the board needs to work with the plan they have.

Bill Tappan made a motion that the board will not be pushing to have a plan modification but work hard using the plan to advance things that are uncompleted in the plan.

Joe Connors seconds

Monte made a friendly motion that the board take the 20 items and divide them up between the committees to work on and that the board agrees to review the plan again in five years.

Bill Tappan accepted the friendly amendment, Joe seconds the motion.

Passed unanimously.

- b. Guide Advisory-No report
- c. Habitat Committee-No Report
- d. River Use Committee-No Report
- e. Legislative Committee-no report

III. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Advisory Board Recruitment update:** Jack Blackwell reported to the board that there were five vacancies and we have received five applications. Joe Connors, Ted Wellman, Bill Tappan and Mike Frost positions were up in May and Ricky Gease's position was open because of his new position. The commissioner has not made board appointments.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

V. CORRESPONDENCE

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

VII. BOARD COMMENTS

VIII. ADJOURNMENT