

**Mat-Su State Parks
Citizens Advisory Board
Minutes
September 11, 2013**

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Meeting was called to order by Greg at 7:07 PM

A quorum of the Citizens Advisory Board was present and due notice had been published.

II. MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Greg Ronnback	Nicole Troyer
Larry Smith	Barbara Russell
Doug Bourne	

STATE PARK STAFF PRESENT

Wayne Biessel, Superintendent
Teri Zell, Secretary to Board

III. APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING JUNE 2013 MINUTES

Barbara made a motion to accept the June 11, 2013 minutes with one grammatical change. Nicole seconds the motion. All vote in favor.

IV. Correspondence – none

V. Persons to be heard - none

VI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- It was a good summer overall despite the budgetary restrictions. Great weather!
- Lost 3 Alaska Conservation Corps (ACC) staff in July. This put a lot more work on the shoulders of our permanent staff, but we only had one complaint regarding dirty bathrooms.
- We have 2 rangers on medical leave at this time and a third will be going on light duty shortly.
- Willow Creek, Little Su Public Use Facility and the Hatcher Pass fee stations suffered casualties this summer. We had 1 iron rangers completely stolen and many others burglarized. Rangers are pursuing leads at this time. Borough and City parks were hit as well.
- Vandals hit the Independence Mine State Historical Park (IMSHP) earlier this month. We believe the culprits are juveniles. Lots of candy and pop stolen and doors kicked in, graffiti and holes in walls. Rangers collected a lot of good evidence and are working the case.

- There was a big challenge on July 1st when we lost the ACC for IMSHP. The mine and tours were closed on Mondays and Tuesdays and the gate was closed due to lack of staffing. We received a lot of complaints. The Mat-Su Borough came up with funding and a staff person to ensure the gate was closed in the evenings. Parks staff made sure that the gate was opened in the morning.
- Friends of State Parks operated the Veterans Memorial and Independence Mine stores this summer. Unfortunately, due to the construction on the Parks Highway, the Veterans Memorial store had light visitation. Even so, both stores ran well and were successful.
- Susitna-Watana Dam – There has been a great deal of research activities on portions of the Susitna River that flows through Denali State Park. We have issued permits to numerous consultants, agencies, and commercial operators to support dam impacts and research.
- State Parks had their first foot race on Kesugi Ridge this past week. There were approximately 45 participants. This type of race in this area poses a great challenge for our staff with impacts to the trail system and weather concerns.
- We will be changing the gate key for the Lynx Lake Road gate this winter.
- We currently have a vacant Natural Resource Technician II for the Denali State Park trails position and the recruitment just closed today. Staff are scheduling interviews for later this month.
- We completed many projects this summer:
 - South Denali has approximately 1 mile of road cleared and will be completed some time in October. Staff will be field locating the new ranger station next week. We hope to have the campground operational by the middle of next summer. Also working on the extension of the electric grid from Milepost 121 of the Parks Highway to Milepost 136.
 - The foundation of the Assay Office at the Independence Mine State Historical Park was re-done.
 - Big Lake North and Big Lake South State Recreation Sites both had new boat launch pads put in this summer.
 - Lake Louise and Squirrel Creek State Parks received brand new CXT latrines.
 - For the first time since the flooding of 2006, the Upper Troublesome Creek trail is completed and open, but there remains some damage from the 2012 storm that is anticipated to be repaired by mid-next summer.
 - Mile 16 Bike Trail is approximately 90% complete.
 - The “Snowbird Village” cabin ruins on the Reed Lakes Trail are being cleaned up with the help of the Division of Mining, Land and Water. Debris is being removed and burned.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Budget Committee – did not meet this summer; nothing to report.
2. Nancy Lake State Recreation Area (NLSRA) Management Plan

The committee has not met since the draft plan came out. Because of the court case SOP vs. State of Alaska/Department of Natural Resources 3AN-11-5670 CI, the plan is on hold until hearings are finished.

At this time the Supreme Court supposedly remanded the case back to the Superior Court for a ruling (upon contact several people in the Anchorage Court, the hearing is still at the Superior Court level).

Background: Certain types of permits that allow exclusive uses in park units have been construed as easements, and those are not allowed by statute. The interpretations of the elements of this case are being contested by the State and will be further reviewed by the courts.

Wayne will let the Board know when this case goes back into session and where it will be held.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

Board Business for the coming season

Wayne asked that the Board start thinking of what they would like to accomplish and focus on this winter. For example, he suggested the following:

- Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Management Plan
- Denali State Park Trails Plan
- Hatcher Pass motorized vs. non-motorized user conflicts
- Budget

Starkey Wilson Memorial – no meeting or action has been taken at this time

IX. NEW BUSINESS

Board Recruitment

A media release for recruitment was put on the Department and Division websites earlier this week. We will also be putting in a classified advertisement in the Talkeetna Times to try and recruit some people from the upper Susitna Valley area of the Mat-Su.

Board Elections

Greg was asked if he would continue to serve as chair. He said yes and everyone voted in favor. Barbara was asked if she would serve as vice-chair. She said yes and everyone voted in favor.

X. NOTICES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wayne gave a hearty Thank You to all that served on the board the last year with special thanks to those who will not be returning, Neil, Jim, Dennis and Nicole.

XI. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Barb made a motion to adjourn at 8:37pm. All voted in favor.