



KENAI RIVER

Special Management Area

"Working together...for the river"

ADVISORY BOARD

Kenai Region Office
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Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

*** Meeting Minutes***

Thursday, January 9th, 2020

5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center

514 Funny River Rd., Soldotna, AK

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. **Roll Call:** Joe Connors, Ben Mohr, Ron Rogalsky, Glen Arundell, Monte Roberts, Ted Wellman, Bandon Borneman, Andrew Carmichael, Andy Loranger, Matt Connors, Jack Blackwell
- B. **Minutes:** Minutes were approved.
- C. **Agenda:** Agenda was approved
- D. **Public Comments**
- E. **Presentation**

REPORTS

A. Agency and Government Reports:

- State Parks-Jack Blackwell provided the board with the following report:
 - State Parks has developed a new Director's Order regarding fees for Special Use permits. One change that affects the Kenai River is charging for floating docks in state park waters. The fee including non-commercial boat docks 80 sq. ft. was \$75.00 per year or \$300.00 per 5-year for a permit.
 - State Parks has received the 2020 application from the City of Kenai for the Silver Salmon Derby.
 - Public announcements for board member recruitment will go out the week of January 13th. The board members have staggered terms and the current terms end on June 30th, 2020. The open recruitment will be end of January to mid-March. There will be a chance for the board to review the application and send their recommendation to the Director. The appointment may be made by the end of June. Currently members term that will expired are Ben Mohr, Glenn Arundell and Monte Roberts.
- DEC- Sara Apsens – No report.
- ADF&G -Colton Lipka No report
- USFWS-Andy Loranger provided the board with the following report:
 - The Refuge is currently working with ADOT on the design of the Cooper Landing Bypass road. In addition, the Refuge is also working on the land exchange with Cook Inlet Region Incorporated where the highway comes out just west of the Russian River Ferry. The property is currently being appraised which will set the foundation for the land exchange. A

final appraisal should be available sometime in April. Once this process is completed the land may be exchanged with CIRI. The two conditions of the land exchange are that the land needs to be of equal value and that the land being obtain by the Refuge must be of higher fish and game habitat than that is being exchanged.

- Ted Wellman asked what type of work is being completed within the burn area of the Refuge? The Refuge is working with the Burned Area Emergency Response program (BAER). This program addresses stabilization and rehabilitation of wildfire problems to protect public safety and prevent further degradation of the landscape and to mitigate post-fire damages to cultural resources. They also help in reestablishing trails and structures that may have be damages or loss due to fire.
- The project at the end of Keystone is currently still in the design phase and work may start as early as fall of 2020.

- USFS/Chugach National Forest –Marion Glaser provided the board with the following report:
 - Folks are returning from seasonal leave.
 - We have made a tentative selection on the Stream Watch Volunteer Coordinator Position.
 - The new Seward Ranger District Admin Officer, Angela Kelley has arrived. She replaces Louis Roy.
 - The Seward Ranger District is open to winter motorized use except for Primrose Trailhead, Snow River and Lost Lake Trailhead.

- City of Kenai –The City of Kenai sent the following report:
 - The City of Kenai’s Personal Use Dip Net report is available at https://www.kenai.city/sites/default/files/fileattachments/dipnet/page/1481/2019_dipnet_report.pdf.
 - The Bluff stabilization project–The City of Kenai is hoping to get approval to proceed with the design phase of the project in the next several months. The design will take approximately one year and is estimated to cost \$1 million. Construction will follow but is contingent on both Federal funding and the required local match.

- City of Soldotna-Andrew Carmichael provided the board with the following report:
 - With cold temperatures, there has been some ice dams forming on the Kenai River. Damage is occurring at Centennial City Park with approximately 75% of the stair being damaged. The cleaning table and parking areas appear to be undamaged by the ice. More assessments will occur this spring.
 - The City is currently working with a consultant on plans to apply for fuel mitigation funds at Swiftwater, Centennial and Rotary parks.

- Kenai Peninsula Borough-No Report

II. Committee Reports

- a. President’s Report-Ted Wellman provided the board with the following report.
- b. Guide Advisory-Monte Roberts provided the board with the following report:

- The committee reviewed stipulation #4 of the Kenai River Guide stipulations. The stipulation reads: **FISHING FROM A GUIDE VESSEL:** The permittee, their paid support staff or employees are not allowed to fish from a registered guide vessel from May 1st through November 30th while the vessel is being used for guiding activities in the Kenai River Special Management Area. The committee determined that it only referred to fishing that the stipulations will stand as written at this time.
- The committee is working on developing an auxiliary program that would create a list of names and phone numbers of Commercial Operators on the Kenai to work with Forestry, Refuge and State Parks in a time of emergency when boat transportation may be needed. The boat operators would be able to supply crew and equipment transportation.
- The committee also discussed the upcoming increase in state park commercial operator fees. There is concern that with the resident and non-resident fees now being one fee that it may disincentive some of the people that made their homes in Alaska to move outside. The thought is that more money will go out of state.
- Scoring system for suspension. The committee has been considering potential changes to suspending guides for violations. Currently, the committee has been reviewing a point system for purpose of identifying frequent violators of state and federal laws while providing guide services in the Kenai River Special Management Area. The committee also discussed that if a commercial operator receives too many points that there may be a method to either do some volunteer work to have some of the points removed.

b. Habitat Committee-Ted Wellman provided the board with the following report:

- There was one item on the agenda which was to discuss the Habitat Protection Work Group that the Kenai Peninsula Borough is forming. The committee discussed what their role would be in with the board, both as public and as a member of the committee. Lucas Byker of the Kenai Peninsula Borough gave a brief overview as to how the committee is being formed. It will consist of 5 members of the public and no agencies. The committee will be reviewing Kenai Borough Ordinance 21. 18 regarding the 50' Habitat Setback along anadromous streams. The committee decided that it was best not to support one candidate of the committee but to attend as many of the meeting as possible. This may include having a signup sheet for members of the board to take turns attending the meetings and reporting back to the board at the regular meeting. If you are interested in attending these meetings please let Ted Wellman know. In addition, there was discussion about the River Center permitting process and that there should be e an inventory of structures in the 50' habitat protection area.

c. River Use Committee- No Report

d. Legislative Committee-Ben Mohr reported to the board the following:

- The EVOS trustee council approved funding for the purchase of the Bookey Property down by Eagle Rock. For the purchase to move forward the legislature is going to have to get receipt authority to move the purchase forward.
- The current funding budget has the funding for the purchase of the property.
- Pre-filed bills for the 2020 legislative session will be released on January 10th. Ben will determine if there are any that directly concern the Kenai River and report back to the board.

- The capital budget does not have any funding for deferred maintenance project for Alaska State Parks. There has been no funding for the last 5 years. With no funding State Park facility may closed due to unsafe conditions.

III. OLD BUSINESS

IV. NEW BUSINESS-February meeting-Ted Wellman stated that many board members will be participating in the Board of Fish meeting in the month of February and ask the board if they wish to have a meeting of not? It was determined that the meeting in February was canceled. Jack Blackwell determined that the River Use committee meeting should meet in February. Ted will chair the meeting while Bill Tappan is out.

V. CORRESPONDENCE-Monte Robert asked if there had been any response for Commissioner Feige regarding the request to include the proposed change on anchor buoys in the Kenai River in the pending regulation packet. Commissioner Feige responded thank you for sending the email.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

VII. BOARD COMMENTS Joe Connors asked State Parks what the overall position is about the Hanson Ranch on Funny River for a boat launch? Jack Blackwell responded that the State went through a public process. After completing the process, it was determined by State Parks and Fish and Game that with the property would stay as is with some revegetation work. Jack said that at this time he does not see this changing since this went through the process fairly recently. Ted commented that this does not mean the board can still cannot recommend the property for the boat launch site. Monte asked Andy Loranger of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge if they would be interested in a boat launch on any of the Refuge lands located out Funny River Road? Andy stated that with the boat launch at the end of Keystone it would not be likely that the Refuge would not make having one on the Funny River side a high priority. Andy said that to look at the bigger picture and where on the river should a boat launch be placed? Where would they be of the most benefit to the public? Currently there are sections of the Kenai River that cannot support any more use. But right now, the Refuge is not currently looking at adding any more boat ramps on the Kenai River, just upgrading the one at Keystone Drive. The other option is to look at CIRI lands also. Jack commented that the River Use committee developed a criteria list that will be used to evaluate land along Funny River Road suitable for developing a boat launch.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT