



KENAI RIVER

Special Management Area

"Working together...for the river"

ADVISORY BOARD

Kenai Region Office
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Soldotna, AK 99669
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Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

*** Meeting Minutes***

Thursday,

January 14th, 2021

5:30 p.m. via Microsoft Teams

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Roll Call-Joe Connors, Ben Mohr, Ron Rogalsky, William Tappan, Glenn Arundell, Monte Roberts, Ted Wellman, Branden Bornemann, Andrew Carmichael, Lisa Gabriel, Matt Connors, Marion Glaser, Colton Lipka, Jack Blackwell and Sarah Aspens.
- B. Minutes Approval- Minutes were approved as written
- C. Agenda Changes- Agenda was approved as written
- D. Public Comment-Lenore Woods ask that the board approve Resolution 2021-1 regarding the Funny River Boat launch location as it is written. Ted Wellman and Ricky Gease explained that the resolution is a recommendation that will be forwarded to the Department of Natural Resources.
- E. Presentations: None

II. REPORTS

A. Agency and Government Reports

- a. ADNR - State Parks – Jack Blackwell provided the following update:

Governor's FY 2022 Budget:

- Operating budget includes \$250.00 increment to cover premium pay
- Capital budgets includes
 1. Land and Water Conservation Fund: Receipt authority, administration, match
 2. Recreation Trails Program: \$1.6 M
 3. More Electronic Fee Stations (LUKES): \$250.00

Ben Mohr asked about the status of the EVOS funding in the capital budget for the property acquisition next to the Eagle Rock boat launch. Director Gease responded and said it would be included in the Governor's amended capital budget.

Guide Academy 2021:

- Due to COVID, the class will be offered on-line this year with three classes scheduled in February, March and April
- Office of Boating Safety has partnered with Kenai Peninsula College, Parks, and the Kenai River Guide Association to offer the classes on-line.

- b. ADEC – Sarah Aspens provided the following update:

- The 2020 Integrated Report (IR) is undergoing intra agency review. We're hoping that there will be a Notice to the public and public comment period sometime next week. I'll send out the notification to this board when a public notice becomes available. There are no pending actions for the Kenai River in the 2020 IR.

- The notice for data submission for the 2022 IR closed in late 2020. If you have any water quality data you'd like to submit for a future IR please contact me or Amber Bethe (amber.bethe@alaska.gov).
 - The 2021-23 Alaska Clean Waters Actions (ACWA) Grant applications are being reviewed. Applicants will be notified before the end of the month. Successful projects will start as early as March 2021.
- c. ADF&G – Colton Lipka provided the following update:
- The department is getting into the final draft of the projection memos for Chinook and Sockeye for 2021 season should be out in late January.
 - Otherwise quiet at the office. Most staff are working from home or working on a rotating basis to cover office for public traffic coming in. It is recommended that you call before going into the office. Most request can be completed online or over the phone. If you do have to come in the office a mask is required.
- d. USF&WS - Matt Conner provided the following update.
- Keystone fishing platform Boardwalk rehab underway
 - Keystone Boat ramp paused but will restart soon due to drainage.
 - Jim's landing latest on comments and public feedback will be sent out on Monday January 25, 2021. Comments can be found at : <https://usfws-jims.blogspot.com/>.
- e. USFS - Marion Glaser provided the following update:
- Over at the Chugach National Forest, we are planning for summer hiring and scope of work for each crew.
 - I received production photos of the Russian River bear safety and ethical angling kiosks and they look great.
 - I am working on NEPA for Vagt Lake Trailhead as well as outfitter guide permits.
 - Amber will come on early (Feb 14th) to take care of Stream Watch business while I am on a leave of absence to take care of my daughter.
 - We continue to coordinate on the Sterling Hwy project as well as the Great American Outdoors Act projects.
- f. City of Kenai -Lisa Gabriel provided the following update:
- The City of Kenai is preparing the request for bids for the engineer service for design of the Kenai bluff erosion project. They are hoping to have that out in the next few weeks and the design for the work would take about a year.
 - The final City of Kenai Dip Net report is available upon request.
 - The City is also working on the best dates for the 2021 Silver Salmon Derby. They are leaving towards some August dates.
- g. City of Soldotna - Andrew Carmichael provided the board with the following:
- The City is still working on mitigation for Spruce Bark beetle removal in Centennial and Swiftwater.
 - All the stairways along the river are up and out of the water and there has been no ice damage currently.
 - Andrew is working with NOAA regarding ice conditions along the bank in the City of Soldotna.
- h. Kenai Peninsula Borough – No report

B. Committee Reports

- a. President's Report-Ted Wellman provided the board with the following:
 - State Parks will be advertising for application for new board members Board members up for renewal this year are Ron Rogalsky, Jeff Dolifka and Branden Bornemann. Application can be found online at the State Park website or requested from board support.

- b. Guide Advisory-Monte Robert provided the board with the following:
 - The committee is working with Alaska State Parks to come up with a fair and equitable way to deal with suspension of Commercial Operators on the Kenai.
 - The Committee talked with the Kenai River Park Ranger Jacques Kosto and some of the conversation on the current violations. One was on slot limit and the other two were revolving around bait and multiple hooks. These took place up by the upper Kiley River where there are no boundaries and around the date the regulation changed. The committee will work with other guides and organizations to help get the word out regarding these specific regulations.
 - The committee has some good conversation about the Funny River development goes. The committee received input from the Guide Association and member of the public. The committee supports bathrooms at site 10 at the end of Fisherman Drive and along with that would be a boat ramp.
 - Pam gave an update on the Kenai River Guide Permits application process. This puts the responsibility on the Commercial Operators to make sure all the information is in order and up to date.
 - The committee will also get some comments together and sent to Matt regarding the Jim's landing boat launch re-design.
 - Overview from Jack about Kasilof Boat Ramp. Some work should start this year.

Colton from Fish and Game added that if anyone has recommendation about signage on the Kenai River to please send those to him for consideration.

- c. Habitat-No report

- d. River Use-Bill Tappan provided the board with the following:

The committee's primary focus has been on the Funny River boat launch site selection. There was a lot of good input from the public. The committee reviewed 17 letters form members of the public and reviewed Ted Willman's' draft resolution. The subcommittee determined that they would not move forward a resolution. First choice would be to develop site 10 and the end of the road, second would River Ranch and the third would be Mykiss.

- e. Legislative/Government Activities-No Report.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

- a. Funny River Boat Launch Selection-Resolution 2021-1- Ted Wellman provided the board with the following:
 - The board asked Ted Wellman to draft a resolution whereas the KRSMA Board recommends a location for a boat launch or launches on the South Side of the Kenai River near the community of Funny River.

Bill Tappan made the motion to except Resolution 2021-1.
Monte Roberts seconds.

After a lengthy discussion it was determined that the Resolution be revised to reflect the following:

Therefore, be it resolved that the Board accepts the Committee recommendation to develop a boat launch at the end of Fishermen's Road contingent upon the receipt by DNR of federal grant funds to offset the cost; and

Further it be resolved that the Board accepts the second recommendation asking the Kenai Peninsula Borough to improve the access at the Mykiss Road right of way; and

Finally, be it resolved that the Board recommends DNR seek an appropriation to study development of a boat launch on the Kenai River Ranch Property.

A vote was taken, 12 members were present, 11 voted for the resolution and 1 opposed.

The full resolution is available upon request.

- b. Update on Kenai Peninsula Borough 21.18 Anadromous Stream Ordinance- Branden Bornemann provided the board with the following:
- The Kenai Peninsula Borough Anadromous Waters Habitat Protection Work Group was established to analyze the current borough code governing anadromous waters and evaluate whether changes should be recommended to better serve all residents of the Kenai Peninsula. Findings from this analysis are anticipated to result in borough code change recommendations. Meeting information can be found at <https://www.kpb.us/assembly-clerk/active-task-forces/anadromous-waters-habitat-protection-work-group>.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

V. CORRESPONDENCE

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT-Richard Galloway commented that any commercial operator who breaks the law on the Kenai River should be suspended. People are ready to kick the can down the road again. We have been working on the Funny River Boat launch for so long and site 10 is a nice place for bathrooms but you must go through people's property. Richard also felt the public process for the River Ranch was not correctly presented and that the board should have excepted the resolution as first written. The Mykiss road can be closed by the Borough and not used by the public.

Jim Harpring commented on a few things. First, he has been attending all the meetings for 21.18 and at the very first meeting there was discussion about a 100 setback along the river. Jim is commented that not visiting the River Ranch property is a stall tactic by State Parks. If we plan that through, there were three options. There 2400 survey set out and it was overwhelming support for the River Ranch property from Funny River residents. The oppositions came from people in Anchorage and Sterling. Were just kicking the can down road. Why not let everyone use the old boat launch that is on the Hansen Property.

Lenore Woods commented that she did not receive the 2015 communication regarding the boat ramp at the River Ranch property. If you are going to use Anchorage folks' comments and a weighted option than just by population, they would always out vote us. Why would the area resident recommendation have more weight since they live in the area? Lenore agrees that the 21.18 committee is not advertising the meetings enough and that there is very little public input.

Ray DeBardelaben is doing a great job on the issue that are being presented to the board. The Association has a new board. Ray looks forward to continuing in working with the KRSMA board on future issues.

VII. BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS- Monte commented that some of the public members thought the meetings were high jacked by public from Anchorage. Monte attended several of the meetings and Funny River Community members had plenty of opportunity to come and voice their concerns. Joe Connors stated that he agrees to develop the River Ranch property and that maybe 5 years has been long enough. Joe business would benefit from the boat ramp at the River Ranch property and not at the one at the end of Fishermans Drive.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: Next Meeting: February 11, 2021