



KENAI RIVER

Special Management Area

"Working together...for the river"

ADVISORY BOARD

Kenai Region Office
PO Box 1247
Soldotna, AK 99669
907-262-5581

Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

*** Meeting Minutes***

Thursday,

May 13, 2021

5:30 p.m. via Microsoft Teams

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Roll Call- Joe Connors, Ron Rogalsky, Jeff Dolifka, William Tappan, Glenn Arundell, Monte Roberts, Ted Wellman, Andrew Carmichael, Ben Mohr, Matt Connors, Marion Glaser and Colton Lipka.
- B. Minutes Approval- Minutes were approved as written
- C. Agenda Changes-None
- D. Public Comment: None
- E. Presentations: none

II. REPORTS

- A. Agency and Government Reports
 - a. ADNR – Jacques Kosto reported the following update:
 - All of the areas boat launches and camp grounds were open by May 1st, 2021. The only camp ground currently not open is Funny River Campground. Staff is working to have that open by the end of the week.
 - The Crooked Creek and Eagle Rock habitat project will be completed within the next few weeks.
 - As the water levels come up on the river, floating docks will be put in as time allows.
 - The Kenai River is fully staff this year with 4 Park Rangers on the Kenai and host in the park units.
 - b. ADEC - No Report
 - c. ADF&G – Colton Lipka provided the following update:
 - The King Salmon Sonar is installed in the water and counts are scheduled to start on May 15th, 2021.
 - All other projects are scheduled to start on time. These projects include the Russian River weir, the sockeye sonar site and netting projects.
 - ADF&G is currently hiring for a Technician III position.
 - d. USF&WS – Matt Connors provided the following update.
 - Jim's landing: The Draft Environmental Assessment has been completed and sent out for public review. Starting May 5, the Draft will be available at <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/kenai/> & <https://usfws-jims.blogspot.com/>.
 - Jason Oles has been hired for the Outdoor Recreation Planner. He will be in charge of such things as Commercial and Special Use permits and long term plans for recreation in the Refuge to name a few.

- Commercial Use permit are currently being processed as they were last year. This can be done by email, taking pictures on your phone or the dropped box located at the entrance to the visitor center.
 - Moose Range Boardwalk: The downstream Moose Range Boardwalk on East Redoubt is under construction. Progress is being made to have this open before July. Updates will be provided as progress is made.
 - The staff is currently working on installing the seasonal fencing along the Russian River.
 - Seasonal Hires-The refuge is currently in the process of hiring seasonal staff. This year they will have an extra-large trail crew to work on many of the trails within the burn area.
- e. USFS – Marion Glaser provided the following update:
- The Russian River Campground area is currently having all of the spruce bark beetle trees removed. There appears to be twice as many as what was original considered. The campground will be closed until May 28, 2021.
 - There is a link for the becoming a Stream Watch Ambassador on the Forest Service Website. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/chugach/home/?cid=stelprdb5406170>
 - The Seward Ranger District is focused on orientation for all the new summer crews. This included a Red Card fire refresher backpack test.
 - The road leading into the campground area is slated to be worked on in the 2022 season.
- f. City of Kenai –No Report
- g. City of Soldotna – Andrew Carmichael provided the board with the following report:
- Crews are working on putting in all of the walkways and stairways in along the river. They are also working on spruce bark beetle mitigation in Centennial and Swiftwater parks.
 - Swiftwater and Centennial campgrounds are set to open on May 17th, 2021.
 - The City is in the middle of their summer hiring. They will be hiring about 27 employees this year.
- h. Kenai Peninsula Borough – No Report

B. Committee Reports

- a. President’s Report-Ted Wellman provided the board with the following:
- Ted reported we are going to try to have in-person meetings at the River Center starting in September. We won’t be able to have members of the public. Those that do not attend in person can log in to Teams and participate.
- b. Guide Advisory-Monte Roberts provided the board with the following:
- The draft suspension information sheet. The meeting was just to catch ups on information from 18 months ago. Currently there is no new information, but this will continued to be worked on in September.
 - All of the Kenai River Guide Academy course for the 2021 season have been completed using the online Zoom program. All testing will be completed in person at the Kenai Peninsula College.
- b. Habitat-No Report
- c. River Use-Bill Tappan provided the board with the following report.
- The committee discussed what priority would be set if the State received some money in the budget. First item was the deferred maintenance that has been on the list for years, getting the existing facilities up and running before developing any new facilities.
 - Looking at getting a revision to the Kenai River Comprehensive Management plan.

d. Legislative/Government Activities-Ben Mohr provided the board with the following report:

- HB 80 is currently in the Senate Finance Committee. It has been discussed that the bill will not be approved with the amendments that are attached on the Senate side. On the House side the feeling is that it should be rolled back to the Governor's office. The House and Senate do not feel comfortable asking Alaskan for more money. The Bill will probably go back to what it was originally. Which was a \$4.00 license increase to support maintenance and operation of hatcheries in the state.
- The Governor called two special sessions. One starting immediately and the other starting on August 2, 2021. To deal with unresolved business.

III. OLD BUSINESS:

- a. Salmon Stamp Proposal-Ted Wellman reported to the board that a letter was set to support House Bill 80 which stated that some of the monies collected would be used for improvements to the Kenai River. The letter was sent to the Committee Chairs of the legislature and no response has been received at this time.
- b. KRSMA board member selection review-The interviews were conducted on May 2, 2021. The committee spent time questioning each of the applicants. Jack completed a summary of the committee recommendations. The application and committee recommendation have been sent to the commissioner for final review.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

V. CORRESPONDENCE

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

VII. BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS-Monte Roberts commented that he hopes everyone has a great and safe summer. Joe Connors, Oz Arundell and Bill Tappan wish everyone a safe and sane summer. Everyone is hoping for everything to slowly get back to normal before the fall season. Ted Wellman wish everyone a safe summer and maybe next year the board can get some things done.

Monte thanked Jeff Dolifka for his services on the board.

Everyone Have a great summer.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: Next Meeting: September 9th, 2021.