



KENAI RIVER

Special Management Area

"Working together...for the river"

ADVISORY BOARD

Kenai Region Office
PO Box 1247
Soldotna, AK 99669
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Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

*** Meeting Minutes***

Thursday,

March 11th, 2021

5:30 p.m. via Microsoft Teams

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Roll Call- Ron Rogalsky, Jeff Dolifka. William Tappan, Glenn Arundell, Monte Roberts, Ted Wellman, Branden Bornemann, Lisa Gabriel, Matt Connors, Andy Loranger, Marion Glaser, Colton Lipka, Jack Blackwell and Sarah Apsens.
- B. Minutes Approval- Minutes were approved as written
- C. Agenda Changes-None
- D. Public Comment: None
- E. Presentations: Sean Holland from ADOT gave an overview of the new Cooper Landing Bypass. The project will be constructed in five phases, beginning with the \$2.9 million clearing and geotechnical drilling this summer, with all phases wrapping up around 2025. The project is 90% federally funded with a 10% state match.

The project will involve construction of 10 miles of new roadway north of Cooper Landing and the Kenai River, between MP 46.5 and 55.5. From the east (MP 45-46.5) and west (MP 56-58) ends of the existing roadway, reconstruction will include widening shoulders; bringing the roadway curves into compliance with design speeds; and adding passing lanes, pathways, and wildlife undercrossing. The project will also include a new parking area and trailhead for the Resurrection Pass trail, with connections to the Resurrection Pass and Bean Creek trails as well as the Juneau Creek Falls overlook. New intersections will connect the old and new highways and construction will include a new bridge spanning Juneau Creek Canyon. The design features four wildlife crossing structures, including the first wildlife overpass in Alaska.

II. REPORTS

- A. Agency and Government Reports
 - a. ADNR - State Parks – Jack Blackwell provided the following update:
 - The second 2021 Kenai River guide academy is being held this week on-line via Zoom.
 - Applications are currently being accepted for three KRSMA board members terms that will expire June 30, 2021. The seats are currently filled by Ron Rogalsky, Jeff Dolifka, and Branden Bornemann. Applications are due March 31, 2021.
 - b. ADEC – Sarah Apsens provided the following update:
 - Sarah introduced Laura Eldred, the new lead for the Non-point source group at DEC.
 - The public comment period for the 2020 Integrated Report (IR) is currently open. The public comment period will end at 11:59 PM on 3/22/21. Information about the draft 2020 IR can be found here: <https://dec.alaska.gov/water/water-quality/integrated-report>. Comments can be submitted online here: <https://dec.alaska.gov/commish/public-notice/> (look for "2020 Draft Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment

Report”). Written comments can also be submitted by mail to: Amber Bethe, Division of Water, 555 Cordova Street Anchorage, AK 99501.

- DEC will be conducting a water quality monitoring project on the Kenai River this summer. This effort will focus on filling in existing data gaps on the status of metals, specifically copper and zinc. We are in the early planning stages of this project. More information to come.
- Final awards for the 2021-2023 Alaska Clean Waters Actions (ACWA) grants were announced late last month. Information on the ACWA grant program can be found here: <https://dec.alaska.gov/water/water-actions/> . Information on the 2021-2023 ACWA grant awards is located lower right, under “Of Interest” .

c. ADF&G – Colton Lipka provided the following update:

- The staff at the office is working on determining the projects for the summer of 2021.
- Summer hiring is in full swing.

d. USF&WS – Matt Connors provided the following update.

- Jim’s Landing:
The latest for Jim’s Landing design will be shared at <https://usfws-jims.blogspot.com/>. These drawings are at the initial 35% design level. These will be the basis for the Environmental Assessment that will be done for the project. We anticipate the EA going out for public comment in early-April. The 35% design shows two options for off-site (but nearby) parking for the project. Only one or the other will wind up being in the final project but we are evaluating both in the EA to inform our decision on which design will be chosen. We are attempting to move more of the parking to the south side of the Sterling Highway for safety reasons given the widening of the Sterling Highway at this location making it more treacherous for the public to cross the highway at this location.
- Moose Range Boardwalk:
The downstream Moose Range Boardwalk on East Redoubt is under construction. All of the existing boardwalk has been removed and most pilings installed. Some elevation changes need to be made to accommodate ADA requirements and some of the changes needed require approval and we are waiting on decisions on that. Updates will be provided as progress is made.
- Salmatof Boat Launch:
Currently under some modifications to find best solution for water issues (artesian wells) but an agreement has been reached and work should be resumed soon.

e. USFS – Marion Glaser provided the following update:

- The Kenai Watershed Forum worked with the Chugach National Forest to apply for a \$10,000 Stream Watch Grant to help fund the volunteer program.
- The Chugach National Forest Crews will work with Crews from Chugachmuit to continue to clear beetle kill spruce from the Russian River Campground this spring as part of the Russian River Vegetation Management Program that that started last fall.
- The Seward Ranger District is focused on planning for spring hiring and orientation of crews.

f. City of Kenai -No Report

g. City of Soldotna – No Report

h. Kenai Peninsula Borough – No Report

B. Committee Reports

- a. President's Report-Ted Wellman provided the board with the following:
 - Ted reported that he sent out a memo regarding a proposed sockeye salmon stamp. This stamp goes all the way back to the comprehensive plan. When the management plan was being developed in 1995 -1997 the issue remains the same. Lack of funding and any revenue going into the general fund.
 - All of the committees met in a joint meeting to discuss how the funds from the salmon stamp would be dispersed, who would decide who would decide what agencies would receive the funds and where and what projects should the fund be used for.
- b. Guide Advisory-No Report
- c. Habitat-No report
- d. River Use-No Report
- e. Legislative/Government Activities-Ben Mohr

III. OLD BUSINESS:

- a. Salmon Stamp-The board discussed the proposal. Ted Wellman would like to have each of the (Habitat, River Use, Guides Advisory and Legislative) committees' review this proposed sockeye salmon stamp and bring their thoughts and recommendation to the March meeting.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

V. CORRESPONDENCE

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

VII. BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS-

VIII. ADJOURNMENT: Next Meeting: April 8th, 2021