

Seward State Parks Citizen Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

February 21, 2024 5:30-7:30 pm

AVTEC Culinary Academy, 809 Third Ave, east entrance, third floor

I. Call to Order

- A. Call to Order: Chair Griswold at 5:32 pm
- B. Volunteer minutes-taker: Mica Van Buskirk
- C. Roll Call: Bob Barnwell, Carol Griswold, Mark Luttrell, Tom Miller (phone), Cliff Reid (phone), Mica Van Buskirk
- D. Board members absent: Nick Jordan
- E. State Park Staff: Superintendent Hans Rinke, District Ranger Jack Ransom
- F. Public Present: Amy Hadow, Robin Collman, Reed Lane, Casey Bryden, Ben Ambrosiani
- G. Minutes Approval for January 17, 2024: Mark moved, Bob seconded, unanimous
- H. Agenda Changes and Approval: Moved Eagle Scout presentations to beginning. Mark moved, Bob seconded, unanimous.

II. Public Comments: none

III. Board Contact and Correspondence with Public: Mica commented that several park users expressed concern about the icy conditions of the road to the upper parking lot.

IV. Reports: Please be brief

A. Staff Report:

1. Hans Rinke:

- announced recruitment for the advisory boards
- reported that he will still be getting a list of deferred maintenance items to our board.
- explained the K-Bay Friends of State Parks and offered them as advisors to create our own
- explained the governor's executive orders to dissolve several citizen advisory boards
- The board requested an update on the engineering of an expanded parking lot which was a board priority last year with many public input meetings. The board requested to be a part of the process while it is still being planned. There were many concerns with the administration's priorities concerning the design of the parking lot. He said he would get information back to our board at or before the next meeting on a status. He believed that it was in a scoping and conceptual design process now.

2. Jack Ransom:

- shared that the Army Corps of Engineers sealed up several septic and fuel tanks that were considered hazardous. These tanks were filled with foam and resealed. This was done under a FUDS grant (formerly used defense site). The final report was set out on September 23rd, 2023 and was approved by the DEC.

- Metco was able to push snow back some in the upper parking lot
- He is applying for a grant to purchase a Toolcat so they can do more on-site maintenance
- Several high school groups will be doing an outdoor education trip in the park in early May
- Tonsina Cabin report – still no funding/plan to move or protect this cabin from tidal erosion
- Callisto Cabin – this cabin is still closed and in the original condition from the flooding event last fall. There is still no funding/plan to repair or move this cabin.
- He said he would bring information on the timing of the Lowell Point Bridge abutment repairs this spring. There are community concerns that the bridge will be closed and access will be blocked for hikers.

B. Committee Reports

1. Local issues (except parking) (Nick at LP/Tonsina, Tom at Marine Parks):
Many people have been using Lowell Point beach this winter to “Cold Plunge” for health. Carol noted this is a good reason to have a throw ring on the Kids Don’t Float kiosk as adults may suffer shock year-round.
2. Mining (Cliff, Bob, Carol): see Goals. No update.
3. Legislative Committee (Bob, Mica) Budget and Friends of State Parks:
The City of Seward is updating its Comprehensive Plan and will also be updating their Recreation Plan soon. We should be involved in that process. Bob is going to talk to Nordic Ski Club about creating a “Friends of” group under their 501c3.
4. Board Recruitment Committee Mark: two vacancies for 9-member Board
There were questions about who to send applications to. Mark has 4 people interested in applying. Tom mentioned one more possible applicant.

V. New Business:

A. Eagle Scout Leadership Project presentations. (Note, moved to top of agenda after Call to Order.) Ben Ambrosiani presented photos and narrative on his Kids Don’t Float project, one at Lowell Point Beach, and one at Bear Lake. Nick noted that his project was nominated as Alaska Eagle Scout Project of the Year. Robin Collman commented that the design of the Kids Don’t Float Signs was very solid and should last many years.

Casey Bryden presented photos and narrative on his prefab South Beach latrine project. It was built in Seward so that it could be disassembled for transport and reassembled on site. Scoutmaster Karl Van Buskirk was acknowledged for his active involvement and support with local state park projects since these seniors were in first grade. Carol requested that the spec sheets and plans be submitted to Jack for future reference.

B. DPOR CAB vacancy on-line application period open until March 4. Carol, Mica, and Cliff’s 3-year terms expire on June 30, 2024. Carol submitted her application on-line. The other two said they would be reapplying.

C. Discuss changing meeting calendar to meet September-November, and January-April, deleting December and May as members and staff are too busy. Mica moved, Bob seconded, unanimous.

VI. Old Business:

- A. Minute-taker issue discussed; resolved to rotate task among Board members.
- B. As time allows, discuss Goals.
 - 1. The SCORP plan is still not approved
 - 2. Hans Rinke will report at the next meeting if there is a plan/funding to move Callisto Cabin or Tonsina Cabin. It was discussed that it might be beneficial to do this work while there is a contractor on site working on the Tonsina Creek Bridge in May. Tonsina Cabin may not have to be moved if a rock abutment could be built to prevent further erosion. Hans said there may be some Kenai River money he could use to do these emergency repairs
 - 3. There was a discussion on staying on top of applying for a grant to add interpretive signs at Caines Head and have a celebration in 2025.
- C. Drone and jet ski regulations: no clear consensus so Board letters not sent.
- D. Advertising of meeting: Carol contacted KBBI, 91.7 FM, and added it to the Chamber Events Calendar. PSA not available through City Clerk's Office.

VII. Goals 2023-24 Updates and discussion

- 1. Continue to pursue and support Lowell Point Parking plan: 2023-2027 SCORP draft still awaiting final approval as of January 7, 2024:
<https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/scorp.htm>
- 2. Support funding for deferred maintenance of infrastructure including latrines at LPSRS, upper and lower parking lots, Fort McGilvray, trails, and PUCs. Letter approved and sent January 8, 2024.
- 3. Support additional funding to move the Callisto PUC
- 4. Support additional funding for relocation of Tonsina PUC. Approved in July, may need more funding.
- 5. Support update of 1998 CHSRA Management Plan, especially with the addition of Fort McGilvray Historic District on December 22, 2022, and send letter of support. Draft letter by Chair 3-15-23, Chair emailed Board-approved letter to Director Gease on 3-17-23, no reply. 11-23, Rinke: provide more support for update. What has changed since 1997?
- 6. Support a Fort McGilvray Historic Preservation Master Plan and Interpretive Plan, and alternate funding opportunities as recommended by DPOR Shawna Popovici. Letter approved and sent January 5, 2024.
- 7. Continue to pursue resolution of Tonsina Creek mining issue: Case file so convoluted, may be best to start over.
- 8. Support annual lifting of protective barrier rocks at LPSRS by boat launch.
- 9. Support annual budget for METCO to plow and maintain lower parking lot at LPSRS.
- 10. Support Friends Group, whether locally or statewide: in 2023-2027 SCORP comments
- 11. Update Parks website: re high tides, stove fuel, slides, and other changes: Tonsina PUC section updates were moved and approved on 02-22-23, sent 3-2-23; in progress
- 12. Maintain laminated tide charts at both kiosks (Carol, Nick): continuing. Carol laminated and posted Jan-April tide charts and 2024 Seward tide charts on December 28.
- 13. Explore new public-use cabin locations: Board voted unanimously 2-22-23 not to support this; area has enough, locations are difficult, deferred maintenance and relocations of existing PUCs are expensive and difficult. Mica later proposed new locations at Thumb Cove north end, Fox Island Spit, South Beach CHSRA, North Beach south side, Tonsina Point between bridges or near the campground pavilion.
- 14. Support installation of tent platforms in park: determine locations and include in

grants. 2-22-23 Board supported Eagle Scout project to provide tent platforms. 2023: two installed at North Beach. Need more? Where?

15. Support ASLC meeting with all Resurrection Bay stakeholders: Nick, 2023 pending.

16. Support mooring buoys in the Park.

17. Discuss consolidation and/or relocation of LPBSRS beach fishing line collection station, trash can, no ground fires, no camping, and any other signs to reduce clutter.

18. Support purchase of Toolcat, attachments, and trailer for LPSRS, 2024.

VIII. Informational Items:

State Parks Recruiting for Kenai Peninsula Citizen Advisory Boards

<https://dnr.alaska.gov/commis/pic/releases/2.8.2024%20Alaska%20State%20Parks%20Recruiting%20for%20Kenai%20Peninsula%20Citizen%20Advisory%20Boards.pdf>

Dunleavy wants to eliminate council for Wood-Tikchik State Park

<https://alaskapublic.org/2024/02/06/in-bristol-bay-shock-and-concern-follow-move-to-nix-council-for-nations-largest-state-park/>

IX. Public Comments: none

X. Adjournment

A. Board Comments: comments were made about the importance of expanding our parking lots as soon as possible and that the board and community remain involved in the planning process. Comment on the importance of participating in the City of Seward Comprehensive Plan Update.

B. Date/Location of next meeting: Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 5:30 pm, AVTEC Culinary Academy.

C. Motion for adjournment: Mark moved, Bob seconded, unanimous at 7:30 pm.