

Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

***** Meeting Minutes*****

Thursday, January 10, 2013
5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Roll Call:** Joe Connors, Brenda Trefon, Carol Padgett, George Heim, Andrew Szczesny, Terri Carter, Brent Johnson, Andy Loranger, Robert Begich, Jack Blackwell. Tim Stevens and State Park Director Ben Ellis.
- B. Minutes Approval:** The minutes were approved as written.
- C. Agenda Changes and Approval:** The agenda was approved as written.

II. Public Comments/Presentations-No comments.

III. REPORTS

A. Agency and Government Reports

- a. State Parks-**Director Ben Ellis/Superintendent Jack Blackwell- Jack Blackwell explained the draft of the governor's proposed budget for 2014 in December. There are two components that affect Alaska State Parks, a capital and operation budget. With the capital budget, state parks did very well. The first page shows the \$2,000,000 dollar appropriation for the Bings Landing river bank stabilization; this has been a long standing problem with conflict between the neighbors and the users. This project will help relocate and develop a new day use area. This will help in moving the users to a different area. For the Kenai Area there was \$120,000 for the expansion of the maintenance shop yard at Morgan Landings headquarters. There is also \$50,000 for the replacement for a Quonset hut for storage space also at Morgan Landing.

On the operating budget state parks received \$160,000 increase for inflation. This increase cost is for such things as pumping toilets and trash statewide.

The problem at this time is the Personal Service expenditure. There is a shortfall of approximately \$700,000. There are several reasons for this shortfall. First, the state only funds positions for a step A or B. State Parks has many employees at the higher steps. In other words merit increases are not funded. Second there is an assumption that there is going to be some vacancies. But most employees that work for the State Park System enjoy their jobs. There are several senior employees and there is not a lot of movement. State Parks is a small unit within the state. This shortfall is affecting all State Park Agencies. Presently State Parks is being asked to live within our budget and not fill any vacant positions. For the Kenai Area currently it is the District Ranger in the Prince William Sounds area, the Natural Resource Specialist I at the Gilman River Center as well as the Alaska Conservation Corps Ranger Assistants or the trail crew that are funded through general funds.

These are concern for all State Park units in Alaska.

The legislature is in favor of supporting public use cabins. They like to use them for recreation, such as skiing or snow machine use.

It has been recommended to the board to send letters to the legislature of the Department of Natural Resources and the finance committee. The letters should contain the most important items to the Kenai River Area such as a new River Ranger, the Natural Resource Specialist I at the Kenai River Center. .

- b. DEC-**Tim Stevens stated that the final report for the Turbidity study should be ready by the next Kenai River Special Management meeting. At that time he will give a presentation to the board.
- c. ADF&G-** Robert Begich announced that there is a Department of Fish and Game Board of Fish Task Force meeting Monday January 14, 2013 at the Challenger Learning Center in Kenai. The meeting is



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Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the Kenai Peninsula Borough



from 8 AM to 5 PM and there will be discussion on such items as the escapement goals and the management strategy for the upcoming season.

- d. **USF&WS-** Andy Loranger reported that the five year action plan for the Human/Bear conflict plan for the Russian River will be finalized and ready for public comment by early February.
- e. **USFS/Chugach-** Bobbie Jo Kolodziejski-Was not Present
- f. **City of Kenai-** Sean Wedemeyer/Rick Koch-Was not present.
- g. **City of Soldotna-** Peter Micciche-Was Not Present.
- h. **Kenai Peninsula Borough-** Brent Johnson commented board member Kelly Wolf was going to present a resolution to repeal the additions to the anadromous stream ordinance. Kelly withdrew his resolution due to a violation of communicating with more than three Borough board members on a subject. Brent believes the resolution will be presented in the future by Kelly Wolf. Jack Blackwell thanks Brent Johnson for supporting the resolution for the additional funding for Kachemak Bay Area.

B. Committee Reports

- a. **President's Report-**No Report
- b. **Guide Advisory-**The guide advisory committee discussed the boating safety course. There are few states without and the board should move forward in developing a course. A committee is being put together with Joe Connors, Mark Glassmaker, Jack Blackwell and Jacques Kosto. The committee is going to look at adopting another state course and tweaking it to fit the needs of either the state of Alaska or just the Kenai River. And then looking at how to implement whether it is voluntary to begin with and then mandatory. They also talked about the facilities in the Kenai River Special Management Area. It was great news to hear the money that has been allocated for the upgrades of the Bing's Landing State Recreation Area. But until the budget is approved we do not have the money yet. There was also discussion about Eagle Rock. EVOS will purchase the property and after this season State Parks will put in walkways and improvements. With regard to the Kasilof issue the appraisals for the two properties Trujillo and Kimbrells for the new boat pullout is moving forward. We are looking at possible upgrades to the road to reduce noise in the neighborhood, such as paving the road or speed bumps. Brent Johnson asked State Parks keep the historical aspect of the Trujillo and Kimbrells with some sort of historical signage.
- c. **Habitat** —No Report
- d. **River Use** —The river use committee discussed river closure guidelines and are in the final aspects of firming those up. They also discussed the Alaska State Park web-page and the option of how to conduct baseline boat counts to be taken on the Kenai River during the summer months of May through August. This would include how many boats, where they are located and how many anglers. They are leaning towards counting from an airplane that would make the counts the most efficient.
- e. **Legislative/Government Activities-** Met before Christmas. Ben Ellis is planning an evening legislative conference while he is in Juneau to give information on update of how the process is going. This will be a good time to start chiming in to the legislature and letting them know what our needs are for the area. Personal phone calls and face to face are the best avenues to communicate with the legislature. Joe is working on submitting a letter of support for the Bing's Landing project as well as a request to restore funding for the River Ranger position and the Natural Resource Specialist I at the Gilman River Center. Brent recommended that we put this on the agenda for the next months meeting, so that everyone can have a chance to give their suggestions. It would be beneficial for all of the committees to discuss their priorities for the Kenai River Special Management Area. Give the legislature something in writing and give them background information or justification for the request. Many other area boards have been successful in helping out State Park areas.
- f. **Board Development** —The Borough land acquisition will be giving a presentation at the February meeting.
- g. **Agenda/Board Structure/Housekeeping** —No Report

IV. OLD BUSINESS

V. NEW BUSINESS

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

- A. **Board Comments** –George Heim suggested that State Parks hire a Ranger with a pilot license. Brenda Trefon suggested that we hire an intern for the position at the Gilman River Center.
- B. Date/Agenda of Next Meeting February 14, 2013, 2012 at 5:30 p.m.

If you would like to tele-conference the meeting the number is 714-2471



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