

Seward State Parks Citizen Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes  
February 11, 2014  
Seward Library-Community Room

- I. **Call to Order:** 17:10
- II. **Board members present:** Mark Lutrell, John Eavis, Carol Griswold, Terry Rude, Benjamin Pister, Denise Plush, Dan Walker, Mark Dalpes  
**Board members absent:** Pat O’leary, Kent Berkland (approved absences)
- III. **Parks Staff:** Jack Blackwell, Jack, Ransom, Tom Kain
- IV. **Public attendance:** 2
- V. **Approval of minutes:** Carol Griswold suggested some additions to the January minutes and I shared her suggestions via email prior to the meeting. Most board members did not have adequate time to review her editing. It was determined to have the board members review the editing and approve or object to the minutes through email. Tom Kain would facilitate the process.
- IV. **Public Comments:** There were no public comments.
- V. **Staffing and budget update:** Jack Blackwell provided an update of the budget and staffing for the Seward area. Jack Ransom’s District Ranger position will be relocated to Seward sometime after July. Jack Blackwell reminded the board members that there was a request from the Director to do internal review of our vacant positions to determine which positions we could fill. The Division shortfall left 7 permanent positions vacant and some addition seasonal (temporary) positions. The Governor’s budget did bring some relief in that shortfall. We’re pretty pleased because most departments didn’t see an increase in their budget and we actually saw a slight bump which allowed us to fill some of our positions. The Seward Ranger position has been vacant since April and we have been authorized to fill that 10 month position, however, it will be relocated to the Homer area. After assessing the needs of the Kenai Area it was determined to restructure our operations which included the transferring of the District Ranger position to Seward. Jack Ransom’s District Ranger position oversees the Seward area (Resurrection Bay & Day Harbor) and Prince William Sound (Whittier to Valdez). This restructuring will fill the void for a 12 month ranger position in Seward which our operations have struggled with over the years. Other restructuring includes moving the statewide permitting position from the Kenai River Center to the main office in Anchorage. Jack Blackwell asked if there were any questions. Mark Luttrell posed the question, “Will the District Ranger position serve as the Ranger I position, too”? Jack Blackwell responded, “Yes”.

Jack Blackwell then shared a recap of his visit to Juneau last week with Director Ben Ellis. Ben Ellis has made a point to spend a week in Juneau to meet with the Legislators. We attended 50 meetings scheduled with different legislators or their staff. It was a very positive week and Ben Ellis acknowledged the continued growth with the relationship between Parks and the Legislators. Jack and Ben meet with Senator Cathy Giessel and Representative Mike Chenault the legislators for this area. Next year the redistricting boundaries will change for Seward area

and the Senator will be Peter Micciche. His boundaries will be the northern Kenai Peninsula and Prince William Sound.

Jack Blackwell shared that there was a lot of discussion about public use cabins with the legislators and their staff. Over the years we have noticed that the public use cabins are very popular amongst Alaskans and our visiting park users. There were discussions with Representative Alan Austerman, out of Kodiak, regarding the possibility of funding a public use cabin at Fort Abercrombie, a World War II historic site. The design would be based on the Pacific Quonset Hut that was prevalent during the WWII era across Alaska. That led into discussions we've had for the Seward area with building a Quonset Hut-style public use cabin in the Caines Head State Recreation Area along the South Beach Trail. Jack Blackwell mentioned that Senator Giessel and Senator Micciche staffs were also interested in that idea. Jack encouraged the advisory board to consider pursuing this idea with either the local legislators or the Kodiak citizen advisory board.

Carol Griswold asked, "Would a letter signed by the board would be an appropriate way to express our support?" Jack Blackwell responded, "Yes, it would and that contacting the Seward legislators would be very positive". Jack Ransom shared his experiences in Kodiak regarding the Quonset PUC concept and the support that it received by the community and its' board. Jack Ransom offered contact information for the Kodiak advisory board if there was interest from the Seward advisory board to partner in a funding request for the Quonset PUCs.

John Eavis asked if there was a cost estimate and a design for the Quonset PUC. Jack Blackwell estimated \$90-100k for a new public use cabin in a remote setting. Jack Ransom shared that Design & Construction had some preliminary ideas for the Kodiak Quonset PUC and we hope to hear back from them soon regarding the Caines Head design. Tom Kain shared a design concept for the Quonset PUC that would entail laminating 2x6s to form the structural ribs of the roof system in the arch shape similar to the NPS storage building on 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. The location has yet been determined but there are a few sites in mind. The most appropriate site is near the high point of the South Beach Trail near the Officer Quarters and the SCR-296. The Office of History and Archeology recommended it be located at a site where there was one located historically.

Benjamin Pister asked if there were interpretative components planned to be incorporated into the Quonset PUC. Jack Blackwell agreed that we should be involving an interpretative element and would plan on integrating that into the cost estimate. There was some discussion on interpretative opportunities in the CHSRA.

Mark Luttrell asked if there would be other funding available for board member goals besides the Quonset PUC request. Jack Blackwell encouraged the board to discuss other goals and determine what they would like to focus on for a funding request for this session. Mark Luttrell asked what the access would be to the new Quonset PUC. Tom Kain said that the best access would be from North Beach as the landing at South Beach is challenging for boats and kayakers. Mark Luttrell expressed that one of the board's concerns with current management of the CHSRA is the overuse of North Beach and felt that the Quonset PUC would add to the current problem. Dan Walker clarified that his concern regarding North Beach was the camping issue (too many people) and that the PUC might help with dispersing the users.

Mark Luttrell asked if the board would be able to also then request funding for a new landing craft. There was discussion about funding requests. Jack Blackwell stated that it was likely that only one request from the advisory board would be funded this session.

Carol Griswold asked Parks staff what their priority would be. Jack Blackwell stated that the advisory board has the ability to do what it feels would be best for the local community and make any requests that the board agrees upon. Jack Blackwell shared his thoughts on the priority of the Landing Craft as very high on the list but currently it is working and meeting our operational needs. The boat also would be an easier sell once we were in need due to safety concerns.

Mark Dalpes posed a question regarding the public use cabin versus the Landing Craft request and if there was a preference between the two being that one brings in revenue and one does not. Jack Blackwell responded that the Director met with the Governor's finance committee and the topic of discussion was ways to generate revenue for state parks. Public use cabins make money for the Division explained Jack Blackwell. John Eavis asked if the money comes back into Parks. Jack Blackwell responded that some of the fees for the PUCs do come back to the Parks. The legislature has given authorization for Parks to charged fees for certain things. There is a cap on that amount and the remaining revenue goes into the general fund. Currently, there is room in the current cap and they are hoping to find ways to increase the cap for the future. Tom Kain stated that each public use cabin, in Resurrection Bay, brings in \$6,000/year which brings the revenue for public use cabins up to \$24,000 for the Division.

Jack Blackwell shared some history of a study that was done by the University of Alaska Fairbank Cooperative Extension Service in 2006. It surveyed state park users in Prince William Sound and Resurrection Bay to determine the economic value of the state parks are in these areas. The average person that rents a public use cabin will spend \$150/day for the regional economy. Jack Blackwell stated the study figured on an average of 3.5 persons per cabin rental. Benjamin Pister quickly calculated the economic benefits of public use cabin rentals, based on the cabin being rented for 90 days, to equal \$47,000/annually for the local community.

Benjamin Pister asked if there were stipulations on the revenue from the user fees and if a certain amount went back into the maintenance of the cabins. Jack Blackwell explained that all of the user fees go back into Park Operations and the fees stimulate about 1/3 of our budget.

Jack Blackwell stated that the cost estimate for the Quonset PUC will be available for the advisory board by the end of this week if there was interest in pursuing the funding request. There was some discussion on the Quonset design amongst the board members and park staff.

- VI. **Operations update:** Tom Kain presented an update of the Seward operations since that last meeting. Tom stated that he was on annual leave for 3 weeks but tried to tackle some of the questions that board members had at the January meeting. He passed out a revised checklist of the objectives from the CHSRA Management Plan as well as a list of Citizen Advisory Board goals that was compiled at the last meeting. There was continued demolition work completed on the Lowell Point Bunkhouse but have reached a stopping point until funding and office space in town is available. Tom then showed a PowerPoint presentation showing satellite images of the park units within the Seward area. The satellite images showed the park

boundaries and ILMA additions to park units. The Alaska Mapper provided the images that were in the presentation. <http://dnr.alaska.gov/MapAK/>

Jack Blackwell explained the Interagency Land Management Assignment (ILMA). The Commissioner of DNR can assign up to 640 acres of DNR-Division of Mining, Land, & Water (general state land) to the DNR-Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation to manage. The Caines Caines Head State Recreation Area was a Legislatively Designated Area (LDA).

There was some discussion on the Tonsina Point area mining claims. Cliff Larson is the contact for the DNR-Mining, Land, & Water regarding mining claims and is interested in hearing from anyone with questions. His contact number is (907) 269-8508.

Tom Kain also shared that there is going to be an updated brochure for the park units for the Seward area by the end of the summer. He has been working on providing corrections, photos, and new suggestions.

- VII. **Adoption of Bylaws/Elect Chairperson/Draft terms of members:** Jack Blackwell mentioned that the editing request to the Bylaws has been completed and asked if anyone had any further corrections or alterations. The board members agreed that they were ready to sign the Bylaws. The members of the board signed the Bylaws.

Jack Blackwell proceeded to the election of the Chairperson/Vice chairperson. A moment of silence fell upon the board. Carol Griswold nominated Dan Walker to serve as the Chairperson. Mark Dalpes seconded that nomination. Jack Blackwell asked if there were any other persons interested in being nominated. There were not. The vote was unanimous. Carol Griswold nominated Benjamin Pister to serve as the Vice Chairperson and that nomination was seconded by Mark Luttrell. No other board members were interested in being nominated. The vote was unanimous.

The board members went around the room drawing numbers for term length. The terms are as follows:

Carol Griswold	2017	Dan Walker	2017
Terry Rude	2016	John Eavis	2015
Denise Plush	2017	Benjamin Pister	2016
Mark Luttrell	2015	Mark Dalpes	2016
Pat O'Leary	2017	Kent Berklund	2015

- VIII. **Board Member Comments:** Terry Rude suggested that we might want to meet again prior to our next scheduled meeting to discuss the board goals and prioritize. Benjamin Pister agreed on having a special meeting due to the time constraints with the current legislative session. Denise Plush agreed that the LPSRS should be included into the new brochure for the Seward area park units. Mark Luttrell volunteered to look into the Tonsina Point mining claims with Cliff Larson. Carol Griswold mentioned that she had met with Senator Micciche and he was very supportive of the Parks. Carol also expressed her interest to continue efforts in clarifying landownership within the Tonsina Point SRS. Dan Walker shared his thoughts on his role as chairperson. He also stated that he feels that it is important to stick to the times as scheduled from 5-7pm.

- IX. **Board Member Goals:** Carol Griswold made a motion to postpone a review of the board goals. John Eavis seconded the motion. The motion was open for discussion. Jack Blackwell suggested

that if the board is going to propose any projects to the legislators they might want to set up a special meeting. Dan Walker agreed a special meeting would be in the best interest of the advisory board. The motion to postpone the advisory board goals until the special meeting was unanimous.

X. **Public Comment:** One person suggested that the state parks consider offering a water taxi service as a means for revenue when purchasing a new vessel.

XI. **Next Meeting Time:** The “special meeting” date will be decided via email. The next regular meeting date will be March 11 from 5:00-7:00 at the Seward Library.

Dan Walker called for a motion to adjourn. Mark Dalpes seconded the motion. The motion was unanimous.