

Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

*** Meeting Minutes***

Thursday May 9th, 2013

5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Roll Call:** Joe Connors, Ricky Gease, Brenda Trefon, Carol Padgett, George Heim, Andrew Szczesny, Andrew Carmichael, Brent Johnson, Janet Schmidt, Andy Loranger, Robert Begich, Jack Blackwell. Tim Stevens, Bobbi Jo Kolodziejski.
Special Guest-Director Ben Ellis
- B. Minutes Approval:** The minutes were amended to reflect under Committee Report change the word to new business. Minutes were approved as amended.
- C. Agenda Changes and Approval:** The agenda was approved as written.

- II. **Public Comments/Presentations** –Patti Berkahn was speaking as a member of the public and not representing the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Patti stated that she is opposed to changing the name of Big Eddy State Recreation Site to Harry Gaines. Also, such a change would cost state parks money to change signs, maps and brochures for printing. If you named it after one person you leave many other people out that have done great things in the area. An alternative suggestion would be to place a plaque or a bench at the Big Eddy State Recreation Site in remembrance of Harry Gaines.

Dennis Randa-Would not oppose changing the name, but the business named after Harry is just a few hundred yards away. Dennis strongly suggested that the board go back and read the enabling legislation of the creation of the Kenai River Special Management area, (AS 41. 21. 400). Denis believes the river is managed more as a playground, not a recreation area and that the governing agencies have not taken the appropriate steps to protect the river its habitat and fishery. Dennis suggested three proposals to the Board of Fisher. They are as follow: 1. Limit the horsepower to 10 hp. 2. Create sanctuaries every mile from the Soldotna Bridge to mouth of the river, and 3. Prohibit any outboard motor exhaust into the river.

Mel Kroseng lives near Big Eddy. She is opposed to changing the name and agrees with many of the comments that have been made.

Ron Weilbacher opposes the changing the name of Big Eddy and the expense the state needs to go through to change the name.

Bob Kroseng is also opposed to changing the name of Big Eddy. There is a commercial service just down the road with the same name.

REPORTS

A. Agency and Government Reports

State Parks –Jack Blackwell gave a brief report on what was passed by the 2013 legislature. The Kenai River Park Ranger I position was funded and it restores the fourth ranger to the Kenai. There is also a \$2 million dollar appropriation for the Bings Landing improvements and \$500 thousand dollars for deferred maintenance for Kenai and Prince William Sound area.

The legislature did not provide any relief to the division's personnel services shortfall. As a result of this shortfall, the Kenai River Center permitting position, the Seward Ranger, and three ACC positions will not be filled.

The Cooper Landing boat launch will be closed for a month for repairs starting May 10, 2013. Launching will be available across the bridge. Pillars and Bings are now open.

Parks is working on developing a purchase agreement with Jim Trujillo to acquire this parcel for a boat launch retrieval site on the lower Kasilof River. The Eagle Rock boat launch acquisition is currently waiting for the Bureau of Land Management inspection of the property. The boat launch will be operated by the previous owner this summer.



- a. **DEC** - Tim Stevens reported as of April 11, 2013 the City of Kenai will receive a grant to look at bacteria in the water during the personal use fishery. This is a project that has been operating for the last three years. City of Kenai has agreement to do the bacteria studies sampling. The thought is the seagull rockery is part of the cause of higher elevation. Sampling should start in June. No decision has been made on the listing of the Kenai River for violating turbidity standards.
- b. **ADF&G** –Robert Begich reported that starting May 16th Kenai king salmon sport fishing will be restricted to catch and release for Kenai Kings more than 20 inches less than 55 inches cannot be retained. This is in effect until June 30 downstream from Slikok creek.
For the 2013 summer season several weirs will be placed on Killey, Funny and Quartz Rivers. Many of these projects are operated in conjunction with Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association.
- c. **USF&WS** – Andy Loranger stated that this summer work will begin on a new visitor center at Kenai National Wildlife Refuge office. Andy also talked about the invasive aquatic plant Elodea that infested Stormy Lake and Daniel's Lake. There has been a town hall meeting in Nikiski. The state and federal working group has submitted an application to for chemically treating these lake to control the spreading of this plant. Janet stated that seasonal workers have been cut back and the Refuge will be relying more on volunteer. The Refuge did receive some extra funding for the YRC program. This is local youth program that help with trail maintenance and other projects. These youth are selected by drawing. The Refuge is moving forward hiring seasonal folks and some of the personnel are professional volunteers that are coming in from the lower 48. They will be assisting in running the visitor center and campgrounds. Janet stated that the Refuge is looking at a 5% cut in budget for the 2014 year.
- d. **USFS/Chugach**-Bobbie Jo Kolodziejski reported that the staff has been out on the river installing signs and fish cleaning tables in place prior to the onset of the run. Stream watch is starting to schedule volunteer meetings in Cooper Landing and at the Gilman River center. Last year they had 80 volunteers and hopefully they will have more in the 2013 season
- e. City of **Kenai** - Sean Wedemeyer/Rick Koch were not present.
- f. **City of Soldotna** – Andrew Carmichael said there is still along the shore of the river. The City of Soldotna is ready to start putting stairs and fish cleaning table before the start of the season.
- g. **Kenai Peninsula Borough** - Brent Johnson reported that John Morton gave a presentation to the assembly and the assembly is hoping to provide funding in eradicating the Elodea. Brent is working on the proposed legislation to help with this process with a possibility of banning the sale of Elodea on the peninsula. The habitat protection legislation is still moving forward. The borough received new suggestions and comments such as not using the Fish and Game catalog because some lakes and stream may have had a fish in it 10 years ago and now a fish has not been seen.

B. Committee Reports

- a. **President's Report** – Joe commented thanked everyone for all the help when issues comes up. Everyone has participated and been very helpful.
- b. **Guide Advisory** - No reported
- c. **Habitat** – No Report
- d. **River Use** –The committee discussed three key items: 1. Baseline boat counts-understanding how many boats and where the boats are located. For the fall meeting the board will be working on drafting a letter to Director Ben Ellis asking State Parks for funding of this project. 2. Human waste management, putting in place an educational, infrastructure, helping people to understand what is the best things to do. AmeriCorps gave a presentation on some new tools for how to manage waste. 3. Discussion on the Red Salmon Stamp. At this time this is still the discussion phase.
- e. **Legislative/Government Activities** – No report
- f. **Board Development** - No report
- g. **Agenda/Board Structure/Housekeeping** – No Report

III. OLD BUSINESS-Action Item:

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Renaming of Big Eddy State Recreation Area to Harry Gaines State Recreation Area. The Office of History and Archaeology has a process for naming state facilities and Parks follows the same criteria. The person needs to be deceased, have done something significant for the state, been relative to the area, have a local support, and be supported by the state legislature. The Big Eddy unit is named in statute. The Department of Law answered that Big Eddy does need to go through the legislature to change the name. When the unit is in statute it needs to be changed by the legislature.
- b. The following points were mentioned during discussion:
 - There was discussion of the financial impacts of the proposed name change such as installing new signs and changing brochures and web information.
 - No public meetings have been held to date and it was stated that the public has a right to voice an opinion. Several letters have been submitted.
 - Has Harry given any significant that he contributed to the area or river? There is no financial gain as to why the name is being change.
 - Jos Connors states that Harry helped him in getting him starting in the fishing industry.
 - Ricky stated that Harry pushed to get professional standards in place on the Kenai.
 - The standards on the Kenai are the highest in the state and Harry helped in getting this established. We do name things after people such as the Kenai River center is now the Gilman River Center.
 - There are other areas and things such as buildings and structures that are names after people. Brenda believes that the area should not be named Harry Gaines because then it makes the area exclusive to just the people who knew Harry.
 - Brent stated that public has a say it what public areas are named.

The motion proposed to change the Big Eddy State Recreation site to Harry Gaines State Recreation Site. 3 voted for and 4 voted against.

- c. Letter to the Kenai Peninsula Borough supporting the 50' Habitat Protection ordinance. The board voted unanimously to send a letter of support in June to support the 50' Habitat Protection ordinance.

V. CORRESPONDENCE - None

- VI. **PUBLIC COMMENT-** Mel Kroseng commented there is plenty of traffic that goes down Big Eddy Road. There are 1400 cars a day in the summer. She also commented that did not mean to insinuate that the reason that the area was being renamed was for financial gain. Dennis Randa stated I hope I have inspired the group to see what you bring to this table outside the scope of just what is brought to the table. To look at other problems and issue.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

- A. **Board Comments-**Have a great summer
- B. Date/Agenda of Next Meeting September 12, 2013 at 5:30 p.m.

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



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

