

Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board
***** Meeting Minutes*****

Thursday September 11, 2014

5:30 p.m.

Gilman River Center
Soldotna, AK

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll Call: Joe Connors, Brenda Trefon, Clayton Holland, Ted Wellman, Teri Carter, Andrew Carmichael, Sean Wedemeyer, Brent Johnson, Andy Loranger, Robert Begich, Jack Blackwell, and Tim Stevens.

B. Minutes Approval: Approved as written.

C. Agenda Changes and Approval: Approved as written.

II. Public Comments—Brian Gabriel and Dwight Kramer encouraged the board to approve sending the proposed Resolution No. 2014-01, requesting the Alaska Board of Fish hold its 2017 Upper Cook Inlet Finfish meeting on the Kenai Peninsula.

III. REPORTS

A. Agency and Government Reports:

1. State Parks —Jack Blackwell provided the board members with the following report:

- During the last legislative session State Parks received \$35,000 to start the planning process for the Kenai River Ranch property (Mile 30 of the Kenai River).
- State Parks also received a \$1 million appropriation for Kenai River recreation improvements. This includes a new toilet on the lower river, a new toilet on the middle river, a replacement toilet at the Eagle Rock boat launch and starting the planning process for renovating the Eagle Rock boat launch.
- In May there was a Kenai River Spring Cleanup and volunteers collected 2,500.00 pounds of debris. This was a very successful event. Mark Glassmaker initiated the idea and organizations, such as the guide association, school district, Kenai River Sportfishing Association, and the City of Soldotna, partnered with this event. Keith Baxter was also very involved in coordinating this effort.
- Parks staff were involved during the Funny River fire this spring. Rangers helped evacuate subdivisions during both evacuations and staff also transported fire fighter and equipment across the river. The state owned Wally's cabin near the Keys was destroyed in this fire.
- The Bing's landing mooring was replaced. We have had issues with the new walkway design and understand the concerns people have with the design. The design works well at lower water levels and is challenging to use at higher water levels. Staff are working with Design and Construction to look at modifications for improving the site before next season.
- Funding has been appropriated for a public boat retrieval site on the lower Kasilof River. State Parks has a purchase agreement with the Kimbrough family for the property just upstream from Trujillo's retrieval site.
- Stormy Lake at Captain Cook State Recreation Area has been closed all summer for the removal of the invasive species Elodea. It has received the initial treatment of Fluridone in July and then a second treatment will be done in September.

2. DEC —Tim Stevens provided board members with the following report:

- One project that DEC has been working with is the beach sampling at the mouth of the Kenai River. This testing was completed from July 9th to August 6, 2014; the results suggested that there were higher levels of bacteria several times throughout the testing. They also conducted some microbial bacteria testing to determine the source of the bacterial. Tim hopes that results will be available by the October meeting.

3. ADF&G —Robert Begich provided the board members with the following report:



Kenai Area Office, PO Box 1247, Soldotna, AK 99669, 907-262-5581
Kenai Peninsula Borough, 144 N. Binkley, Soldotna, AK 99669 907-262-4441
Gilman River Center 514 Funny River Road, Soldotna, AK 99669, 907-260-4882
Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the Kenai Peninsula Borough



- Kenai River chinook salmon sonar estimate exceeded escapement for both the early and late run. This was achieved with the help of a complete closure of the early run and heavy in season restriction on the late run.
- The early sockeye salmon run for both Kenai River and Russian River was very strong. This prompted the opening of the sanctuary and doubling the bag limit.
- The Commercial Fish Division is still sorting out the number for the late sockeye run. Overall the fishery was slow and low at times, but there were no restrictions implemented.
- The coho run appears to be strong and doing well.
- ADFG is starting the fourth Rotenone treatment in the Mackey Lake drainage. The treatment will start October 2, 2014
- There is a Board of Fish meeting on Friday September 19th. You can listen but there is no public comment. This meeting is pertaining to the approval of treatment of the Rotenone for the Mackey Lake, Soldotna creek drainage.

Brent asked Robert if there was a report available of the state funding that is targeted for studying chinook salmon and specifically if it would look at where the juvenile chinook salmon are rearing? Robert stated that this funding includes the East Side set net project. Next season ADFG plans on beginning a Kenai River chinook salmon smolt project that would look at where the smolt are in the river.

4. USFS/Chugach—No report

5. US F&WS- Andy Loranger provided board members with the following report:

- The Refuge is assessing the Funny River Fire. Approximately 35% of the area that the fire went through did not burn.
- Matt Connor is the new visitor center manager.
- The Refuge has been working on improvements to the Kenai River Trail which is located downstream of Jim Landing.
- The new visitor center is under construction and scheduled to open in January 2015.
- Stream Watch just celebrated its' 20th year. It a great program that has been wonderful for the River and we really appreciate the volunteer and the sponsorship of the Forest Service and the Kenai Watershed Forum.
- The Upper River Fly Fisherman organization sponsored a cleanup day on the upper river from Kenai Lake to Jims landing. About 150 people participated.

6. City of Kenai –Sean Wedemeyer provided board members with the following report.

- The Kenai City Council modified the city's fee schedule to only charge for boat launching during the personal use fishery; outside the fishery the facility is free to use.
- The dip net season was successful. Things went well and a draft report should be available at the next meeting.

7. City of Soldotna –Andrew Carmichael provided board members with the following report:

- The City of Soldotna had a successful dip net season.
- The Centennial Sport Center loop was finished and completed under budget.
- The city has started a hydrological study for Swift water campground for future improvements, such as access and bank improvements. The campground will be expanded with 42 new sites.

8. Kenai Peninsula Borough- No Report.

C. Committee Reports

- President's Report**-Joe Connors reported that there is committee process the board follows. Five years ago, there was only one standing committee and now there are three committees. The Habitat committee meets at 10 a.m., Guide Advisory meets at 1 p.m. and the River Use committee meets at 3 p.m. The River Use committee is currently recruiting for a chair person and we need member for each of the committees. The process of the committees is to receive a recommendation and work the recommendation through the committee, which is then moved to the board for a vote. Then action is moved up the ladder to the director's office.
- Guide Advisory**-No Report

- c. **Habitat** – No Report
- d. **River Use** - No report
- e. **Legislative/Government Activities** – No Report
- f. **Board Development/ Nomination** – No Report
- g. **Agenda/Board Structure/Housekeeping** - No Report

IV. **OLD BUSINESS:**

V. **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Board Recruitment** - Jack reported recruitment is currently open for positions on the board. Four seats are available, one vacant to finish out the term and three that will expire in October. Applications are due the 15th of September, close of business. Next month the board will review the application.
2. **Kenai River Ranch Planning** - Jack reported that \$35,000 was appropriated by the legislature to start the process of developing an initial site plan for the area. This parcel is approximately 130 acres at mile 31 of the Kenai River. It was an EVOS purchase and has been recommended for recreation development. Possible ideas for development are a boat launch, walkways or a camping area. The Funny River community worked with the legislature to obtain this funding.
3. **Eagle Rock operations and planning**- Jack said that this summer Parks began operating the Eagle Rock boat launch facility. Initially, there were some conflicts with facility users and subdivision neighbors, but these were addressed when the City of Kenai installed no parking signs. Jack said he really appreciated the assistance from the City of Kenai on this issue. The highest number of users at this facility was from those participating in the personnel use fishery. State Parks only had one volunteer for the area and it was over whelming. Additional staff will be needed for 2015. The revenue report for the 2014 season should be available by next meeting. A new vaulted toilet has been installed at the boat launch. Next month Parks will start the planning process for renovation the Eagle Rock boat launch facility. A joint meeting of Guide Advisory and River use will be held October 9, prior to the board meeting.
4. **Resolution 2014-01**- This is a resolution of the Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board, Requesting the Alaska Board of Fisheries hold its 2017 Upper Cook Inlet Finfish meeting on the Kenai Peninsula.

Brent made the motion to adopt the resolution 2014-01
Andrew Carmichael seconds the motion.

The motion passed: 7 approved, two abstained.

VI. **CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

VII. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Todd Smith, Vern Kornstad and Brian Gabriel all thank the board for passing the resolution 2014-01

VIII. **ADJOURNMENT**

A. **Board Comments-**

- Ted would like to see the guide advisory address some of the guide issue that happen on the river this last season.
- Joe commented on the fish waste that is beginning dropped off the bridge at the Moose River.
- Andy talked about the October 3 show at the Kenai Visitor and Cultural center called Voices in the Wilderness. This is part of the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act.
- Clayton Holland would like to be on the River Use and Habitat committees.
- Brenda Trefon also commented on the fish waste that is dropped in the Moose River at the bridge.



Kenai Area Office, PO Box 1247, Soldotna, AK 99669, 907-262-5581
 Kenai Peninsula Borough, 144 N. Binkley, Soldotna, AK 99669 907-262-4441
 Gilman River Center 514 Funny River Road, Soldotna, AK 99669, 907-260-4882
 Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the Kenai Peninsula Borough

