

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

Thursday, October 11, 2012
5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. **Members Present:** Joe Connors, Ricky Gease, Brenda Trefon, Carol Padgett, George Heim, Andrew Szczesny, Bruce King, Teri Carter, Robert Begich, Jack Blackwell, Tim Stevens, Janet Schmidt, Brent Johnson, Bobbie Jo Kolodziejki and Peter Micciche
- B. **The Minutes** from May 12, 2012 were approved as written.
- C. **Agenda-** was approved as written

II. Public Comments/Presentations

III. REPORTS

A. Agency and Government Reports

- a. **State Parks**—Jack Blackwell stated how he was looking forward to working with all of the, property owners, stakeholders and agencies that manage the Kenai River. Jack has been with Alaska State Parks for 21 years as a Park Ranger in the Marine Park Area. Jack gave a short presentation on the 2012 Kenai Area Operations. It included such things as hired a new Park Ranger Jason Oukley for the Kenai River, installed a new dock at Pillars Boat Launch and installed a fence along Rapids Avenue at Bing's Landing. It gave an overview of the Citations, written warnings and verbal warnings for the 2012 season and gave some future project goals as Bing's Landing dock and walkways, Kenai River brochure update and resolving the Park Dispatch issue.

Pam Russell gave the year end summary of the number Commercial operator trends and numbers. The total number of fishing guides are 301 and the overall number of guides registered for all activity is 353. This also included some new interesting additional statistics.

- b. **DEC**-Tim Stevens received the addendum of the Kenai River Turbidity study on Monday October 8, 2012. In the Addendum they correct the value references, which will possible cause more turbidity exceedances at Kenai River mile 11.5 study site. DEC is in the middle of reviewing the addendum and is trying to work as quickly as possible to get it out to the public.
- c. **ADF&G**- Robert Begich comment that the Board of Fish went through the ACR and at this time will not be making any changes the to Kenai River king salmon season. They did develop a king salmon task force with a diverse group of members. It is planning on meeting once a month during the winter season. Whatever solutions that may come out of the task force may be put into regulation for the upcoming year. It would be presented at the Board of Fish in March of 2013.

Stormy Lake rotenone treatment the water samples taken have shown that the rotenone has degraded 72% since being applied in August. Fish and Game is planning to put the fish that were rescued before treatment back in the lake in November. The Department dipped out 100 pike before treatment and all the pike that were tagged prior to treatment have been accounted for.

- d. **USF&WS**- Janet Schmidt stated that in September during the flood event there was some damage to Jim's landing area. The maintenance crew was able to get in and complete all repairs after the water receded. There is a special event at the Lower Skilak Lake called the "Big Site" It is a birding event, where participants sit in an imaginary 17 foot radius circle and count as many birds they can see or hear. All is invited.
- e. **USFS/Chugach**- Lisa Beranek gave a power point presentation of the Stream Watch Volunteer Program for 2012. It was noted that volunteer hours have increased since the start of the program in 2009. Stream watch is in the tributary of the Kenai River and the Kasilof River.



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



Bobbi Jo Kolodziejski stated that there was no human bear conflict at the Russian River Area. That is defined as no injuries to humans and no dead bears, but there was some property damage such as tent collapsed toward the end of the season. This was believed to be a black bear causing this conflict. The bear was never found. Fish waste was monitored but a final report has not been completed. The five-year action plan by the Forest Service on how to work with Human and Bear conflict is in the final stages. There is a meeting on November 5, 2012.

- f. **City of Kenai-** was not present.
- g. **City of Soldotna-** Peter Micciche stated the city has received some grant money in developing the trail for Centennial recreation site to the visitor center. It has been a tough year for visitor, such trip cancellation for guided trip and vacationer coming to the Soldotna area. This is going to have an impact on revenue and taxes for the area. The new waste management at Centennial work very well.
- h. **Kenai Peninsula Borough** Brent Johnson stated that there is some concern about moving the position that was once a department position on the Gilman River Center to a manager back under the planning department. There is also some concern in regards to the law enforcement department for the borough. Brent thought that the KRSMA board would be interested in the information since this may affect the Kenai River.
Brent also commented on the ordinance 21.18 that refer tot the addition of all anadromous streams and the 50-foot habitat buffer. There is a task force meeting for 21.18 on October 18, at 6pm at the Borough Building. Support from the board would be helpful

B. Committee Reports

- a. **President's Report-** Joe Connors stated that we are just getting started for the 2012-13 year. There are a lot of issues that need to be dealt with and would appreciate if every member of the board would take one day a month and participate in one of the three committee meetings that meet on the same Thursday as the board meeting. Joe was also concern because he was not going to be available for the November meeting and the Vice President has not available. Peter M. made a motion to have a second vice president and Ricky second the motion. It was then determined that the board would nominate Bruce King and the motion passed unanimously.
- b. **Guide Advisory** –Joe Connors commented that there was less than ten members that attended but the committee accomplished a few items. The first item of topic was the boating safety program, the committee asks Jack Blackwell for a status of that program and Jack will report back to the committee in November. The guide advisory board will be looking at the state park commercial operator stipulations for the 2013 season.
- c. **Habitat** –The habitat committee met today, the first issue that was discussed was the committee is seeking approval from the board to start the process getting in touch with the agencies that have concerns about the turbidity listed of the Kenai River and to encourage them to start look at the solutions.

The second item of discussion was the Borough for 21.18, 50 foot habitat setback for all anadromous streams being removed from regulation. There is a draft letter from the Kenai Watershed Forum that states to have the borough to continue to support the habitat and why it is important to fish and wildlife. The board can support this letter of the board can send it own letter to send to the borough assemble. He board has supported the concept of habitat protection along all anadromous streams and rivers.

Bruce made a motion to add our name to the Kenai Watershed Forum letter and George Heim.

Discussion among the board. Brent explained some of the complaints from the public, such as this regulation work great for the Kenai but it is not for us. One size does not fit all. It great for a river and not for lakes or small streams. There is a suggestion to revise the letter that Robert Ruffner has drafted or to create a letter of the board. Bruce recommended to vote yes or no on Robert Ruffner' letter and then write a letter supporting the concept from the board. There is concern that there is momentum to repeal the regulation 21.18.

Bruce is making an amendment to amend the original motion to have the board get back with Robert Ruffner and ask if we can provide comment and or suggestion on the letter for him to delay is process. Andy Second the motion. We make sure all of our concerns are address in the new letter.

It passed unanimously.

Peter and Bruce will work with Robert on the board concerns.

- d. **River Use-** The committee talks about a number of items. The committee also wanted an update on the boater education program that was drafted and sent to director Ben Ellis. Jack also updated on the Bing's Landing back line and the new fence installation and also future plans. They also ask Jack Blackwell about the concept volume

information on the website for baseline data; this was proposed for the 2012 season and was not completed. They also wanted to know if there are plans to hire a fourth ranger for the Kenai River Special Management Area.

Bobbie Jo gave an update on the AmeriCorps program and waste management program on the Russian River. They also have a discussion with Jack Blackwell about the procedure for the river closer and reopening during a flood event. Jack talk about how we were faced with flooding and the criteria of 17 years ago and address the criteria that we use and ask for help on how to close the river in the future. Some guidelines need to be established for the future and the river use committee would be a good avenue for this process. If you have any suggestion on the closer comes to the committee or sends e-mails. An action item may be ready for the December meeting. They were also some concern about Sterling Highway mile 57. The river is only about five feet away from the highway edge and during another high water event may become impassable. Closing the river to bank anglers, where all are the closer are located on the river. The committee would also like to look at where all of the public facilities are located along the river and possible different strategy to management those that are already in place. Do we need more bathrooms?

- e. **Legislative/Government Activities-** Ricky would like to get a letter of support for future park future projects such as the 4th State Park ranger for the Kenai River Special Management Area. We received 4 applications and are scheduling interviews soon.
- f. **Board Development** –nothing to report
- g. **Agenda/Board Structure/Housekeeping-**nothing to report.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

V. NEW BUSINESS

1. The Habitat Committee had been discussing at length the Kenai River Turbidity study. From this discussion the committee has produced the document containing all the notes. Bruce explains the packet of information that the Habitat committee has developed to work on the possible listing of the Kenai River as impaired for turbidity. It contained the water quality standards, miscellaneous discussion points that are a series of random thoughts, the state antidegradation law which is currently under review, and a three page frequently ask question to aid in educating the committee. Next, is a timeline to determine what the possible solution is if the Kenai River is listed as impaired for turbidity? The report is definitive for listing the river for turbidity but is not completed and there need to be some correction of the analysis formula. But the draft report did determine that there is a significant increase of turbidity in July. Also the level of turbidity increases as you get closer to shore.

The habitat committee is looking at habitat, aquatic organism and fishing rearing areas. If the river is listed there is concern about those entities that discharge into the river. Permits will be more difficult to obtain. If the river is listed impaired it could affect visitors coming to the area which in turn will affect business. That many will look as the river not impaired but polluted. The habitat committee has determined that there is enough information to move forward with some sort of recommendation to help reduce the turbidity level. Bruce went over the frequently asked questions.

The habitat committee would like to know what the boards thought on how to proceed is it the board wish to start tackling this issue now. Have all the other committee to review all the information and formula the board should take up the issue and formulate a decision. Prepare in the event that is will be listed not that is going to be listed. Find solution that so that it is not listed.

The Straw dog letter would be sent to DEC and EPA and the other effective entities stating that KRSMA wants to move this issue forward now and not what until 2014.

Peter made a motion that we begin KRSMA board education about turbidity and the potential impact it may have on the river if it is listed. Then to have all the committees to start working on a plan and working on solution if the river is listed.

Brent seconds the motion.

Peter stated that his motion is education and preparing for a potential listing.



Peter amended to the motion to have a on the March 2013 agenda an item that is a formal decision on the findings of all the committees decisions to determine if the board should create an action plan. This would be based on

Bruce voted No
1 no and 9 yes the motion passed.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE-none

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT-Todd Smith live in the community all his life, a commercial fisherman and owes a small business Commend the board on all the issue they have taken today. Especially the habitat issues and how they may affect the economy and the future of the river.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

- A. **Board Comment**-Andy thanks the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge for their quick response for fixing Jim's landing and reopened after the flood.
Bruce talked about a book called the King of Fishes (the demise of king salmon) and the parallels as to what is happening to the State of Alaska.
Brenda-the October 18, 2012 is the next meeting for the 21.18 task force meeting at the Borough Chambers. Public is welcomed.
Brent thanks Bruce for all his work on the Turbidity concerns in the Habitat Committee.
- B. Date/Agenda of Next Meeting November 8th, 2012 at 5:30 p.m.