

Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

*** Meeting Minutes***

Thursday, December 10, 2015,
5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center
Soldotna, AK

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. **Roll Call:** Joe Connors, Ricky Gease, Keith Baxter, Dwight Kramer, Ted Wellman, Brent Johnson, Matt Conner, Jack Blackwell and Jeanne Swartz.
- B. **Minutes:** A quorum was not present for the meeting so the minutes and agenda were not approved.
- C. **Agenda**

- II. **Public Comments/Presentations-**Joe McCullough (Office of Boating Safety) provided the board with an update that the Office of Boating Safety is developing a NASBLA (National Association of State Boating Law Administrators) module that is specific to the Kenai River. This module will be part of the current Water Wise course that is a classroom course. NASBLA is a national nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization that works to develop public policy for recreational boating safety. NASBLA represents the recreational boating authorities of all 50 states and the U.S. territories. NASBLA is the organization that certifies a course to meet national standards. Joe is asking the board for any suggestion or recommendation for the course curriculum. What would they like to see offered for the Kenai River? Joe asked that once the course has been completed that the KRSMA board approve the course. This would be helpful when advertising classes that it can be considered a KRSMA approve course. This can help with boat insurance and can also be used for continuing education. Courses are taught by request and there needs to be at least 8 students per class.

Jack Blackwell also recommended that State Parks offer an incentive to take the class, such as two free boat launches at any KRSMA State Park boat launch.

Ted Wellman recommended that once the course is developed that the KRSMA board take the course.

III. REPORTS

1. Agency and Government Reports:

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

- Jim Richardson informed the KRSMA Board of the DOT&PF plans to reconstruct and rebuild Beaver Loop Road, adjacent to the Lower Kenai River. This project is a realignment of the road and a bike path. An open house meeting is scheduled for tonight from 5-7 pm at the Kenai Visitor Center.
- The Mullen's family has contacted DNR in regards to donating a 4.6 acre parcel adjacent to park lands along the Kenai River. This property will be managed for habitat purposes and included in KRSMA.
- Governor Walker has released the 2017 proposed budget. State Parks is facing a 3 % reduction in unrestricted state general funds which amounts to approximately \$84,000.00 dollars. Two positions will be eliminated including one permitting position in Anchorage and the other is an administrative position in Kodiak.

Ricky Gease suggested that State Parks send a letter of thanks to the Mullen family for their donation.

2. DEC-Jeanne Swartz 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



- DEC has finished their methodology policy report on turbidity. The director has approved the report and it has now moved to EPA for their comments. If EPA approves the listing determination the report will go out for public comment.
- Governor Walkers proposed FY 2017 budget would eliminate 6 positions in the DEC Division of Water.

3. ADF&G - No Report

4. USF&WS- Andy Loranger provided the board members with the following report:

- The Refuge is planning a proposed project that would add 600 feet of Elevated Light Penetrating (ELP) walkway downstream of the ferry landing on the South side of the river and downstream from the confluence of the Russian River and Kenai River. This will help improve access to the Kenai River and limit resource damage. The Refuge is currently being looking for partners in funding this revegetation portion of the project.

5. USFS/Chugach- No Report

6. City of Kenai- No Report

7. City of Soldotna- No Report

8. Kenai Peninsula Borough- Brent Johnson provided the board with the following report:

- Brent will be making quarterly reports to the Borough assembly about what the KRSMA board is working on.

2. Committee Reports

a. President's Report-Ted Wellman reported that he was disappointed that DNR and the Department of Law have not prepared the white paper for the KRSMA proposed legal questions. Ted encouraged that the committees to move forward in pursuing such matters as guide limitation and limitation on public access on the upper river. Ted recommends that the committees and board work through a proposal and then it will be sent up to the Director for consideration.

b. Guide Advisory –Joe Connors provided the board members with the following report:

The guide committee discussed the following items:

- The meeting was very honest and provoking.. There were several members of the board that attended but only one other guide was present.
- Joe is still struggle to get guides involves in the committee process, but he is still working on it .
- District Ranger Jacques presented the guide committee with a white paper on guide citations.
- Stipulations for the Kenai River Guides will remain the same for next season.
- The committee also recommended that the new purchased Kasilof river boat retrieval (Trujillo's) be operated for the 2016 and 2017 summers until improvements can be made.

Ted also added that State Parks is going to provide the committee with the past several years suspension and the violation that determine the suspension.

The committee also recommended that there be an open house meeting with State Park staff and Kenai River guides. This opportunity would allow the guides to meet the rangers currently working on the river and also other staff for questions and concerns.

c. Habitat –Keith Baxter provided the board members with the following report:

There were nine members in attendance and the following three committee priorities were identified:

- Pam presented to the Habitat Committee about the details of the plat review process with input from Nancy Carver with Kenai Peninsula Borough. Based on today's discussion the committee decided to compose a letter to the KPB P&Z Commissioners outlining the important considerations when reviewing plats for riverside lots in the future. The letter will also address concerns about the prevalence of variances and conditional use permits and a

loophole regarding condominiums. The letter will also invite P&Z commissioners to a future Habitat Committee meeting.

The letter will be introduced for approval at the next KRSMA Board meeting.

The Habitat Committee will begin receiving plats that are flagged by Pam via email to weigh in during the P&Z public comment process.

- Jack Blackwell provided the committee with an overview of the process involved with making recommendations to the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council for land acquisitions and projects.
Habitat Committee members were asked to bring suggestions to the next meeting.
Jack will forward an example of previous recommendations.

d. River Use – Dwight Kramer provided the board members with the following report:

- Joe McCollough provided the committee with an update on options for developing a voluntary boating education program for the Kenai River. The committee discussed how to promote people to volunteer and take the river water wise course.
- Dwight also discusses the sign pertaining to the rules of the road that could be placed along the river and heavily used boat launch area.
- In January the committee plans on spending time on developing a fair and equitable way to limit guides on the Kenai.
- Heather Pearson a new committee member put together an overview and plan for permitting for public access on the upper river.

e. Legislative/Government Activities-No Report

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. River Use Limitation-Postponed, pending additional information from DNR and the Department of Law..
2. Board Vacancy- Jack Blackwell provided the board members with the following report.
 - The committee interviewed seven applicants for the vacant seat on the board. After the interviews were completed the committee of six members listed the strength and weakness of each applicant and ranked the top three. This information was submitted to the commissioner for the final selection.

V. NEW BUSINESS

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT- Happy Holidays

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

a. Board Comments

