

Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

*** Meeting Minutes***

Thursday, April 13, 2017

5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center

514 Funny River Rd., Soldotna, AK

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. **Roll Call:** Joe Connors, Keith Baxter, William Tappan, Dwight Kramer, Monte Robert, Ted Wellman, Brandon Bornemann, Lisa Gabriel, Brent Hibbert, Matt Connors, Brian Marston, Jack Blackwell and Marion Glaser.
- B. **Minutes:** Approved as written.
- C. **Agenda:** Approved as written.
- D. **Public Comment/Presentation:** Phil Steyer and Mike Brodie of Chugach Electric gave the board a presentation on the study of a proposed hydroelectric project on the North Fork of Snow River.

II. REPORTS

1. Agency and Government Reports:

a. State Parks

Jack Blackwell provided the board with the following report:

- Jack thanked Brandon Bornemann for his service on the KRSMA board. Brandon has accepted a new position in Oregon and the April meeting was the last one that Brandon is attending.
- Jack welcomed Lisa Gabriel and Brent Hibbert to the board as new agency members.
- As of April 1, most of State Park seasonal employees have returned to work and Josh Taylor has been hired as the new Park Ranger for the lower Kenai River. Josh comes to Parks from the Kenai Police Department and will not require academy training. He is currently scheduled to go through an accelerated training and orientation program.
- The first guide academy of 2017 had 34 students with all passing the course. Jack acknowledges, Joe Conner, Monte Robert, and agency staff for their participation in the success of the course. There is another week-long course that will start April 24, 2017.
- State Parks has a new reservation system for public use cabins called the Reserve America site.

b. DEC-Jeanne Swartz-No Report

c. ADF&G-Brian Marston provided the board with the following report:

- The news release pertaining to the new regulations that have been adopted for the Southcentral region can be found at:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.NR&Year=2017&NRID=2364>
Both Early and Late run King Salmon escapement has been changed. For Early Run King Salmon one fish may be caught no larger than 36 inches below Slikok Creek and then for the Late Run as of now it will be one per day, no size limit, fishing with bait, below Skilok Creek depending on the early run escapement numbers.
- The new regulation pamphlet can be located at:
http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/fishregulations/PDFs/southcentral/2017sc_sf_regs_kenai_river.pdf

d. USF&WS-Matt Connor provided the board members with the following report:

- 90% of the seasonal employees have returned for the 2017 season.
- Matt has reorganized staff assignments with plans on upping the present of Refuge staff at the confluence of the Russian and Kenai River. This is going to happen with the help of the Forest Service staff. Refuge staff will be paired with a Forest service staff as this is a new duty assignment for the Refuge staff.

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



- New Light Penetrating Boardwalk has been installed at the Russian River Ferry area. The vegetation will be watered by the contractor this season to help ensure success rate of the plants. The fence will be installed this season to keep visitors off the vegetation and on the walkways.
 - The Junior Game Warden Camp for 5th and 6th graders are scheduled for May 14th. They get to see the life and day of a game warden.
- e. USFS/Chugach National Forest – Marion Glaser provided the board with the following report:
- The Forest Service is currently getting ready for the summer season. They are currently working on the hire process and have two technicians in place for the Russian River Area.
 - Marion has been working on updating the annual management plans for the Russian River and the Russian River Interagency Group that includes the Refuge, Fish and Game, CIRI/Kenai and Alaska State Parks.
 - Renewal of the five-year MOU/ Memorandum of Understanding is being updated between all the agencies for the Stream Watch program.
- f. City of Kenai – Lisa Gabriel provided the board with the following report:
- The City of Kenai is currently working on hiring all their seasonal workers for the 2017 season.
- g. City of Soldotna – No Report
- h. Kenai Peninsula Borough- Brent Hibbert provided the board with the following report.
- The Kenai Peninsula Borough is currently in there budgeting process for the next fiscal year. The assembly was able to allocate some money for the stream restoration along the bank of the Kenai River behind the River Center.
- i.

2. Committee Reports

- a. President’s Report-Ted Wellman provided the board with the following report:
- With Director Ben Ellis gone and a new DNR Commissioner, Ted has put in a request for Vice President Joe Connors and Ted to meet with DNR Commissioner Mack. The purpose of the meeting it to determine the rules of the road when dealing with the commissioner’s office when it comes to making requests for decision pertaining to the Kenai River. The meeting is currently being scheduled.
- b. Guide Advisory –Monte Roberts provided the board with the following report:
- Brian Marston reported on the new regulations and the board of fish outcome.
 - Discuss the fishing stipulations that are in place for commercial operators on the Kenai River. One that was brought to State Parks attention is the one that states that the guide is responsible to verify that their client have a fishing license prior to commencing the trip. The board ask for clarification of what verifies definition is.
 - The Kenai River Cleanup is May 11th and 12th with approximately 600 students available to help. The only road block at this time is that there is ice and there is hope the ice will be gone prior to the cleanup day which may postpone or cancel the cleanup.
 - Jack Blackwell also gave a report regarding parking at the Izaak Walton SRA. Commercial operators were at one time able to park their vehicles across the Sterling Highway at a place called Mosquito’s. The parking is no longer available and Izaak Walton only has four available spot for parking.
 - There was also discussion about the proposed Kenai River Silver Salmon Derby and what the recommendation is in the comprehensive management plan. Refer to the comprehensive management plan on page 37.
- c. Habitat – Keith Baxter provided the board members with the following report:

- David Lisi from the Peninsula River Conservancy gave a presentation about concerns with the proposed Snow River Dam project. There concerns can be found at the website peninsulaconservancy.org or nokenaidam.org.
 - Many questions will not be answered until studies have been completed on such things as turbidity, fish and water temperature.
 - Jack Blackwell also gave an update on the Corr property. The Corr family is now in discussions with the EVOS trustees in seeing if an agreement can be reached for the property.
- d. River Use –Dwight Kramer provided the board members with the following report:
- The committee discussed the Izaak Walton parking situation and what possible problems this may create.
 - The Pipeline crossing that is located on the K-Beach side of the river across from Poachers Cove is currently slated for a bank restoration project in 2019. There is also discussion about changes to the current access to the area using an existing road and creating a parking area and new trail to the fishing area.
 - They committee also discussed the silver salmon derby and events that are being proposed on the river.
 - The committee started the discussion about a 5-year plan pertaining to what the committee would like to see accomplish in 5-years for the Kenai River. Some of the items discussed are as follow: start a chapter by chapter review of the management plan looking at areas in the management plan that need updating; evaluating habitat closures that need to be open and those that need to be closed due to overuse; camping areas on the upper river and how they are used; and the availability to bathroom facilities on the middle and upper river.
- e. Legislative/Government Activities-No Report
- f. Cooper Landing Bypass-No Report

III. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Advisory Board Recruitment-Jack said that there are three terms that expire in June and one position will be vacant with Branden’s resignation. State Parks has received 5 applications and the next step is to interview the applicants. Anyone from the board can participate in the interviews and from the interviews a list of recommended candidates will be sent to the commissioner for approval. Jack will send the questions and applications out prior to the interviews.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Silver Salmon Fishing Derby on the Kenai-Ted Wellman referred to the information that can be found on page 37 of the Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan. The board agreed that there is not enough information about the derby to have a discussion at this time.

Jack reported that he had met with the Kenai Chamber Representative and the Kenai City Manager to discuss the requirements pertaining the derby that are within the Kenai River Special Management Area Plan management plan. An application has not been submitted for this event at this time.

Monte stated that Coho are fully allocated and a Pink Salmon Derby would be more palatable than Coho. The derby rules should be based not on a big fish derby, but just a fish caught and every fish being counted. Coho can be susceptible to catch and release.

Joe also agreed it should not be based on a big fish derby just a fish caught and every fish being counted.

Dwight commented that there should not be a COHO event that may attract a lot of people without having any biological data on the run.



V. CORRESPONDENCE:

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT: Oz Arundel commented that they did not do any research pertaining to permit and requirements before making the initial announcement.

VII. BOARD MEMBERS COMMENT-Joe commented that he would like to revisit the monetary incentive and that they should be change to prizes.

Bill Tappan asked about the Cooper Landing bypass project. At this time there are no updates.

Dwight asked about the merchandise incentive has been working for Alaska State Parks.

Brent Hibbert said he has been on the Borough Assembly since January, 2017.

Keith Baxter is hopeful that the Spring Cleanup will happen and the ice will move out. Keith hope the Kenai Chamber will find a way to make the Derby work for them.

Lisa Gabriel commented the ice is moving out of the lower river.

Monte thanked Brandon for his service on the board and wished him good luck in the future.

Brandon commented that habitat first, fish second and people last. He enjoyed serving on the board and may be back some day in the future.

VIII. AJOURNMENT