

Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

*** Meeting Minutes***

Thursday, May 10, 2018
5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center
514 Funny River Rd., Soldotna, AK

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. **Roll Call:** Joe Connors, William Tappan, Glenn Arundell, Ted Wellman, Michael Frost, Andrew Carmichael, Lisa Gabriel, Brent Hibbert, Marion Glaser, Brian Marston, Nancy Sonafank and Jack Blackwell. Special Guest Deputy Parks Director Matt Wedeking.
- B. **Minutes:** Minutes were approved as written.
- C. **Agenda:** Agenda was approved.
- D. **Public Comment/Presentation:** Larry Opperman stated that he fully supported the placement of Automatic Electronic Defibrillators (AEDs) along the Kenai River. The cost for the equipment would be approximately \$2000 per unit and this would not include the cost of a weatherproof container. Jack Blackwell stated that each Ranger boat and three of the camp hostd have AEDs.

Jack Sinclair the Executive Director of The Kenai Watershed Forum (KWF) gave a presentation of the boat count study that will be conducted in July 2018. This project is a DEC ACWA grant project that was awarded about a month ago. The project consists of two cameras that will be placed, one, approximately 400 meters below of Eagle Rock and the other approximately 100 meters north of Pillars from July 6th to July 31st. The cameras will capture every boat on the Kenai River within a twelve-hour period. This will be done with digital high definition cameras that will be going across the river in a straight line. There will also be 8 days during the study when there will be human observers on site conducting boat counts. The observers will be looking for the number of boats powered, direction they are going on the river, placement on the river (far, mid or near channel), relative speed of travel (on step, plowing, slowing down or speeding up), best description of the wake, type of hull (flat or V-shape), relative load (number of people in boat), if a dip net is present, and any present of plum around the boat. KWF will be working with several agencies to fine tune the data sheet and the information that will be collected.

Another part of the project will be to deploy two hydro labs within the Kenai River Special Management Area. The sites are located at river miles 11.5 and 23 of the Kenai River. The purpose of the project is to collect hydrologic data, including water quality, stream temperature, pH, turbidity, and conductivity and water quality flow for collaborative research purposes.

The Watershed Forum is looking for volunteers to help with the boat count study. This includes helping in the boat count study and with the maintenance of the sites. They are looking for 8 people to help at the sites for 6 hours at a time for 8 days in the month of July.

Included in this study for the last seven days in July, KWF will be doing a fly-over every day to perform a boat count of the entire river up to the bridge at the outlet of Kenai Lake. They flight should occur between 11 am and noon weather permitting.

1. Agency and Government Reports:

- a. State Parks-Jack Blackwell provided the board 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



- Jack thanked Nancy Sonafrank from the Department of Environmental Conservation for spending the day with the committees.
- Jack also introduced the Deputy Director of State Parks, Matt Wedeking.
- Advisory board interviews are scheduled for May 21, 2018. There are currently three vacancies and the board has received 6 applications. Jack will be sending out an email to request have board members help with the interviews. Any board member can participate in the interview process if the seat you currently hold is not up for re-appointment.
- State Park staff is very busy getting all the infrastructure in place for the summer.
- The Eagle Rock boat launch renovation project is under way and should be ready for use the first week in July.
- The Kenai River cleanup is scheduled for the week of May 9 and 11th, 2018 and currently there are 600 school children sign up to help.
- There were two Guide Academy courses offered this spring, in April and May. Both courses were full.
- Jacques Kosto reported that ranger staff is currently working on three riverbank restoration projects on the River. These are location at Bing's Landing, Big Eddy SRA and Funny River.
- State Park Rangers participated in the Safe Kids pool event up at Skyview High School. This event includes putting children in life jackets in which they must perform certain activities with the life jacket on.
- Rangers are also participating in the Salmon Celebration that is put on by Alaska Department of Fish and Game at Johnson Lake State Recreation Area.
- On Saturday May 12, 2018 park staff will be helping with the Ranger Camp at the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge.

b. DEC-Nancy Sonafrank provided the board with the following report:

- DEC received several comments on the integrated report that listed the Kenai River impaired for violating turbidity standards. DEC determined that there should be additional studies to be done with the hydro labs to correlate with the boat count studies. The hope is to be able to match the number of boats with the data collected from the hydro labs including water quality, stream temperature, pH, turbidity, and conductivity and water quality flow for collaborative research purposes. This is also to see if the information has changed since the last study that was conducted from 2000 through 2010. The labs will be placed in the same areas of river miles 11.5 and 23 of the Kenai River.
- DEC is currently working on the 2018 Integrated report. One trend observed on the Kenai River is a rise in zinc and copper. These two materials are hard to calculate based on the hardness of the material. So the lower the hardness level the more toxic the material becomes. With the coordination of several agencies the Kenai Watershed Forum has been collecting this data since 2001. With the data collected DEC results are showing that there is a problem with zinc and that the copper levels are rising. These tends to be caused by storm water issues. The higher levels are found between river mile 23 and 6.5 of the Kenai River which is all a fresh water stretch. More studies need to happen to determine where these higher levels are coming from. These studies may result in more regulations for storm water management. The full report for Zinc and Copper can be found at: <https://dec.alaska.gov/water/water-quality/reports>

- Bacterial monitoring along the Kenai River will occur in July during the dip net fishery. The City of Kenai has taken actions on trying to reduce this waste and more testing will be conducted in 2018 to see if there has been a reduction in levels.
- c. ADF&G- Brian Marston provided the board with the following report:
- Field projects are beginning on the Kenai River. There is currently a trout study on the Kiley River. This project includes tagging trout but the study is a little smaller. There will also be a trout study completed on the upper river.
 - The Sonar site on the lower Kenai River it currently being installed.
 - New and replacement signage is being placed back on the river that may have been destroyed during the winter.
 - The first management meeting for King Salmon will be the week of May 15th.
- d. USF&WS-No Report
- e. USFS/Chugach National Forest –Marion Glaser provided the board with the following report:
- The construction work at the Russian River Campground entrance is on schedule. A new overflow parking area and contact station have been built. The project should be completed by June 8th.
 - There will be Forest Service technicians working this summer. The technicians will be assisting with helping with fish waste along the river and installing temporary fencing and signage.
 - The Kenai River/Russian River confluence brochure will be completed soon. This is a new public interpretative handout for people to learn not only about fishing and camping in the area but also the cultural features and historical uses. Marion has the second draft of the brochure completed with several comments that were submitted by several agencies and groups. Safety and in compliance of State and Federal regulations.
- f. City of Kenai – Lisa Gabriel provided the board with the following report:
- The City of Kenai is busy getting ready for the 2019 dip net fishery.
 - The beautification department is planting all of the flowers in the city parks.
 - New no wake signs are going to be placed at the mouth of the Kenai River during the dip net season. The current language is going to state please minimize your wake. This is in place to going to a formal no wake zone that would take a longer process and would require additional law enforcement. The sign will be more informational.
 - The Silver Salmon Derby is scheduled for later this summer..
- g. City of Soldotna – Andrew Carmichael provided the board with the following report:
- The City of Soldotna crews are getting ready for the summer. Centennial Campground should be opening the second week of May. Swiftwater Campground will open the following week.
 - The Spruce Bark beetle has returned and the City of Soldotna is working on mitigation measure to cut down trees.



- The contractor is finishing the walkway and stairways at Swiftwater Campground. The area should be available for use in the next few weeks.
- The trail at Centennial is also receiving some work to improve those trails.

h. Kenai Peninsula Borough- Brent Hibbert provided the board with the following report:

- The Borough Assembly is still working on the current budget. There are several meetings that have been scheduled with the city manager.
- Funding schools is also another area that the assembly is currently working on.
- On May 17th the Soldotna Rotary club will be cleaning up Rotary Park.

2. Committee Reports

a. President's Report-No report

b. Guide Advisory/River Use/Habitat Committee

These committees had a joint meeting Bill Tappan provided the board with the following report:

- The committee heard an informative report from Jim Harpring on the Funny River area on the benefits of having a boat launch in the Funny River Area.
- Jack reported that Alaska State Parks will be applying to the Exxon Valdez trustees Council for some funding for restoration work at Morgan's Landing and Funny River SRA. There will be access components with this request.

Joe Connors made a motion that the board support to two projects with a letter. Glen Arundell seconds the motion.

Motion passed unanimously

- Nancy Sonafrank gave a scientific briefing on turbidity in response to the letter that was sent to DEC in March 2018. Information can be found at the following website: <https://dec.alaska.gov/water/water-quality/reports>

c. River Use –No report

d. Legislative/Government Activities-No Report

II. OLD BUSINESS:

III. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Proposed Boat Launch at Funny River State Recreation Site.

Jim Harpring has lived at Mile 11 of Funny River Road and is proposing that a boat launch be constructed in the area for those land owners that live in the Funny River Area. There currently is no developed public boat launch along Funny River Road. The proposed boat launch would be placed at the existing Funny River State Recreation Site. . It was recommended that the State Parks and Fish and Game study this proposal and bring back their recommendation back to the board in the fall. Parks and Fish and Game had a site visit of the area with Jim and other area residents as to the proposal of placing the boat launch in this area. There is a possibility that there may be some cultural

resources in the area and also to place some cameras to look at the water levels in the area. Jack Blackwell believe the site may have potential but further research needs to be completed.

Joe Connors made the motion the Alaska State Parks and Fish and Game look at alternatives to placing a boat launch at the existing Funny River State Recreation Area and bring it back for discussion as for a recommendation in the fall of 2018.

Motion passed unanimously.

IV. CORRESPONDENCE

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

VI. BOARD COMMENTS: The board wished everyone a great summer and to be safe.

VII. ADJOURNMENT



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