



# KENAI RIVER

Special Management Area

*"Working together...for the river"*

## ADVISORY BOARD

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### Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

\*\*\* Meeting Minutes\*\*\*

Thursday, November 14, 2019

5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center

514 Funny River Rd., Soldotna, AK

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. **Roll Call:** Ben Mohr, Ron Rogalsky, Jeff Dolifka, William Tappan, Glenn Arundell, Monte Roberts, Ted Wellman, Andrew Carmichael, Marion Glaser, Colton Lipka, Jack Blackwell, Ricky Gease, and Sarah Aspens.
- B. **Minutes:** Minutes were approved.
- C. **Agenda.** The ADOT presentation was removed from the agenda and postpone until December. Agenda was approved as amended.
- D. **Public Comments**
- E. **Presentation**

#### REPORTS

##### A. Agency and Government Reports:

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

- State Parks had some vandalism at the Pillars Boat Launch. The restroom doors were painted with graffiti. Parks has closed the boat launch and removed the doors to be repainted by the maintenance staff. The Division of Forestry is also removing hazardous trees in the area. Once the work is completed State Parks may open Pillars back up to the public.
- The State Forestry Division has also been helping with fuels reduction at Funny River SRA and Izaak Walton SRA. T
- State Parks received some funding from the US Forest Service/Division of Forestry for fuels reductions in the Kenai Peninsula state parks. We are using these funds to extend some of our seasonal staff. Park rangers and maintenance staff will also work on this project. Izaak Walton has been identified as a top priority to remove hazardous trees.

Ricky Gease provided the board with the following report:

- The Exxon Valdez Trustee council has two funding sources; one is for research and one is for projects. State Parks usually puts in about three million dollars' worth of projects. This year

Parks applied for projects at Diamond Creek SRA, Slikok Creek and Izaak Walton. The Trustee Council has postponed making decisions on these until February.. One project that did get approved was the purchase of the Bookey Property which is adjacent to the Eagle Rock SRA and the design and construction of a new parking area.

- The Trustee Council has several new members and wanted to have some time to understand the remaining proposal so everything else was put on the February agenda for consideration. The current remaining funds in the Exxon Valdez funds are approximately 60 million in research and 47 million in projects.
- Ricky also stated that a lot of people come down to the Kenai area and use the Anchor Point and Deep Creek Tractor launches. With the help of some FEMA money received due to storm damage in the area, both launches have received rip rap armor along the shore to protect the area.

**b. DEC- Sara Apsens provided the board with the following report.**

- The current 2018 integrated report is being reviewed by DEC staff. Once the reports are approved by staff there will be a 45-day public review process. Once the public process is started DEC will hold two question and answer sessions; one in Soldotna and one in Anchorage. Terry Lomax will present for the one in Soldotna.
- DEC is also seeking input on 6 questions about nonpoint source (NPS) water pollution in Alaska. The responses to these questions will help guide DEC's priority focus over the next 5 years for addressing nonpoint source pollution. Please take a couple of minutes to respond to the [Water Pollution Survey](#) before November 30, 2019. Responses are anonymous. Feel free to share the survey link with others.

**c. ADFG -Colton Lipka provided the board with the following report:**

- Colton and his staff are working on Board of Fish tasks. An informational meeting is going to be held for the Lower Cook Inlet Area meeting in Seward on December 10 – 13, 2019. The comment deadline is January 23, 2020 for the Upper Cook Inlet meeting which will be held in Anchorage. The Board of Fish meeting to review the proposals are February 7<sup>th</sup> through the 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and will be held in Anchorage.
- There are still a few people out fishing for Coho Salmon. Several people have called about the large numbers of seals on the Kenai River.

**d. USFWS-No Report**

**e. USFS/Chugach National Forest –Marion Glaser provided the board with the following report:**

- Marion gave the board a brief overview about the Russian River Interagency Team End of Season Report for 2019. A copy of this report can be obtained by contacting Marion Glaser at [marion.glaser@usda.gov](mailto:marion.glaser@usda.gov).
- During the Swan Lake Fire the Russian River Campground needed to be evacuated and closed.
- The Fish and Wildlife Service is hiring a permanent GS7 a Streamwatch Coordinator which is currently open until November 25, 2019.
- There is a Streamwatch Facebook and Instagram account for the Russian River. It has 2000 followers and the post on the account consist of emergency orders and safety concerns such as high-water event. These posts have reached over 4,600 people.

f. City of Kenai –No Report

g. City of Soldotna-Andrew Carmichael provided the board with the following report:

- The City of Soldotna is working with a consultant on completed a fuel reduction grant for the Spruce Bark Beetle outbreak. They have currently removed 400 trees from Swiftwater and many other public lands.
- Swiftwater has just currently received \$50,000 dollars for a new gravel top to the roads and the camp sites. Some areas were raised as much as 11 inches.
- The City is currently working on a Swiftwater improvement to the boat launch area.
- The City is waiting to receive the money for paving the paths in Soldotna Creek Park.
- There was an increase in visitor use in June and August.
- All the platform and stairs have been removed for the winter season.

h. Kenai Peninsula Borough-No Report

## II. Committee Reports

a. President's Report-No Report.

b. Guide Advisory-Monte Roberts provided the board with the following report:

- A Kenai River Guide asked the committee to review the permit stipulation about fishing from a guide vessel and the fishing regulation that prohibits guides from fishing while a client is present or within the guide's control or responsibility. Permit stipulations state that the permittee, their paid support staff or employees are not allowed to fish from a registered guide vessel from May 1<sup>st</sup> through November 30<sup>th</sup> while the vessel is being used for guiding activities in the Kenai River Special Management Area. The concern with the fishing regulation that prohibits guides to fish when clients are present is that it could be a good opportunity to train new guides. There were many recommendations to either remove or revise the stipulation. The committee will discuss this again at the December meeting.
- The committee also discussed the 2019 concerns on the Kenai River. There were only three citations issued to guides this year which is down from last year.
- The other topic that came up is the Swan Lake Fire and the Kenai River Guides would like to come up with a pool of emergency guides that could help with transporting fire crews and equipment.
- The committee also discussed the draft anchor buy regulation that has been proposed by the board and supported by Parks staff. The draft regulation is in a packet that has been forwarded to the department. The committee recommended sending a letter to the commissioner requesting the regulation be adopted.

Monte introduced a motion that an email be sent to Commissioner Feige stating that this regulation be put back into the list of regulations that are being considered.

Bill seconds the motion

The motion passed unanimously.

b. Habitat Committee-Jeff Dolifka provided the board with the following report:

- There was one item on the agenda which was to discuss the Habitat Protection Work Group that the Kenai Peninsula Borough is forming. The committee discussed what their role would be in with the board, both as public and as a member of the committee. Lucas Byker of the Kenai Peninsula Borough gave a brief overview as to how the committee is being formed. It will consist of 5 members of the public and no agencies. The committee will be reviewing 21.18 of the Borough Ordinance for the 50 Habitat Setback along anadromous stream. The committee decided that it was best not to support one candidate of the committee but to attend as many of the meeting as possible. This may include having a signup sheet for members of the board to take turns attending the meetings and reporting back to the board at the regular meeting. If you are interested in attending these meeting please let Ted Wellman know.

c. River Use Committee- Bill Tappan provided the board with the following report:

- There were 12 members of the public at the meeting. Bill took a straw vote and the were 4 in favor and 8 were against developing a boat launch on the South side of the Kenai River. With that said, they all agreed that a boat launch would be helpful in the area to help local resident access the river.
- The committee also discussed the 12 criteria that was developed by the board and members of the Funny River Community. There was also discussion on how to rank the criteria and also to keep the community involved in the process.
- The River Use committee received two letters of correspondence. Both letters were submitted by the Kenai River Access at Funny River Road Community Coalition members. The first letter is from a group of community members that are not in favor of developing a boat launch on the South side of the Kenai River. The second letter is in support of developing a boat launch, which will help with access to the river for recreation and in times of emergency.
- The Funny River Community Association also sent out 1448 survey post cards asking to vote yes, I want a boat launch/river recreation area in Funny River or no, I do not want a boat launch/river recreation area in Funny River. They received 574 postcards back and the results were 346 (60%) in favor and 222 (39 %) against. At this time State Parks does not have any money for a boat launch but will continue to work ahead to determine a site and then work to acquiring the monies to build the launch.
- The committee also talked about the goals and Funny River will dominant a lot of the time and two other issues is the anchor buoy and anchor drift boats on drift boat Monday.
- Re-opening of closed banks areas on the Kenai for habitat protection may be on a rotating basis.
- Public and Private use of walkway. State Parks would partner with private land owners to submit a request for proposals to be able to provide a walkway in the closed area and pay a fee to use the walkway. This is preliminary discussion, and nothing has been developed at this time.
- Monte made a motion that the 12 proposed criteria be acceptable to the board. These would be the criteria use to selecting the site for the boat launch on the south side of the Kenai River.  
Oz seconds the motion.  
Passed unanimously

- d. Legislative Committee-Ted Wellman reported to the board that Ben Mohr be appointed chair of the legislative committee.

**III. OLD BUSINESS**

- IV. NEW BUSINESS**-Board Elections- Ted Wellman reported to the board that he is willing to be chair of the board for one more year and Joe Connors is willing to serve as Vice Chair.

Bill nominated Ted Wellman as chair of the KRSMA board. Oz seconds that motion.

Passed unanimously.

Bill nominated Joe Connors as vice Chair of the KRSMA Board. Oz seconds the motion

Pass unanimously.

**V. CORRESPONDENCE**

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- VII. BOARD COMMENTS** Happy Thanksgiving to all

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**