



# 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 October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020

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, Glen Arundell, Monte Roberts, Ted Wellman, Branden Borneman, Andrew Carmichael, Matt Connors, Marion Glaser, Colton Lipka, Jack Blackwell and Sarah Aspens.
- B. **Minutes:** Minutes were approved.
- C. **Agenda:** Agenda was approved
- D. **Public Comments**
- E. **Presentation**

#### REPORTS

##### Agency and Government Reports

- A. **Alaska State Parks**-Jack provided members with the following update:
  - Oz Arundell, Ben Mohr, and Monte Roberts were reappointed to the board.
  - COVID Impacts: The closure of the Canadian border resulted in fewer camp host volunteers in Alaska which delayed the opening of certain state park facilities. Alaska received CARES Act funding and was able to hire additional temporary seasonal staff to help open and operate park facilities. The Kenai Parks Office has and is currently closed to the public, but will schedule appointments to meet with people.
  - The Kenai/Prince William Sound Region currently has all staff positions filled.
  - The Kenai River Guide Academy will likely not be offered in person this winter/spring. The KRGA board is meeting to discuss a video conference platform for offering the classes.
  - DNR and DFG co-manage a parcel at Soldotna Creek next to the city park. DNR and DFG have been meeting with city staff to discuss long-term plans for the site. The property has a conservation easement to protect habitat, but allows for an educational facility and trail system.
  - DNR received fuels reduction funding from the US Forest Service. This fall, Parks seasonal staff have been funded to extend their seasonal employment to work on reducing fuels and removing hazard trees killed by spruce bark beetles in Kenai River park units and Captain Cook State Recreation Area.
  - Parks has awarded a contract to rehabilitate stream banks and improve angler access at Crooked Creek State Recreation Site and the Eagle Rock boat launch. Work will begin later this month and finish by May 2021.

- Kenai Peninsula Borough land managers recently completed a project to update the public lands display at the Kenai Airport. Thanks to the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge for their leadership and assistance funding the project!

**B. DEC-** Sarah provided the board with the following report:

- Data analysis and evaluation of waters submitted for inclusion in the 2020 integrated report is underway. A draft report with proposed decisions planned for spring 2021, a public comment period would follow shortly thereafter.
- Data request for the 2022 integrated report will be issued late 2020. Any organization with water quality data is welcome to submit data for evaluation and inclusion in the integrated report.
- The request for proposals for 2021-23 ACWA grants is out. Proposals are due Nov 9<sup>th</sup>. Please contact DEC staff with any questions. Information on high priority actions and grant requirements are online: <https://dec.alaska.gov/water/water-actions/acwa-application>
  - In 2020 there were three active ACWA grants on the Kenai Peninsula. These were a supplemental project to the Kenai multi agency baseline monitoring program that looked specifically at zinc and copper, bacteria monitoring at Kenai Beaches, and a green infrastructure instillation and drainage basin mapping of the City of Homer. The final report for the City of Homers project is available on DEC's water reports webpage. The reports for the Kenai metals and Kenai beach monitoring projects will be available early 2021.
- 2021-2024 Triennial review underway - review of water quality standards in 18 AAC 70. <https://dec.alaska.gov/water/water-quality/triennial-review/>
  - 60 day Public comment period starting October 2020 – ends November 30<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.
  - Public testimony planned for November 5, 2020 from 4-6 pm. Teleconference number is available online.
  - If you have questions before then, contact Brock Tabor ([brock.tabor@alaska.gov](mailto:brock.tabor@alaska.gov)). Please submit questions 10 days before the end of the public comment period (November 20<sup>th</sup>).

**C. ADF&G -**Colton Lipka provided the board with the following report:

- Please see the link below for a summary of Northern Kenai Peninsula sport fisheries and escapements:  
[http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R2.endOfYear&Area\\_Key=5](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R2.endOfYear&Area_Key=5)
- The personal use fishery numbers have not been finalized at this time.
- The Coho fishery should be winding down getting into October. It been stated that it has been a pretty poor run.
- Rainbow fishing is doing pretty good.
- Pink Salmon has been abundant this year.
- The board of fish work session on October 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> and will be presented virtual using Zoom.

**D. USFWS-**Matt Connors provided the board with the following report:

- The most popular trail in the Refuge were affected by the 2019 fire. Matt was able to find some funding to hire some additional crews to rebuild these trails. A crew of that consisted of local area hires worked on these trails. The crew build Sky Line that was completed destroyed so the crew completed rebuild a new trail by hand. The trail is better than what it was before. A new Kiosk and tunnel under the highway. A new bathroom is proposed to go into the left hand corner of the parking lot of 2021.

- Reopen Kenai River trail is now open. This trail included multiple bridges and steps. The crew also built 300 feet of boardwalk at lumigan trail. Hideout trail was completed and open to the public.
- Refuge visitation levels for hiking trails and camping were at historic high levels.
- The Refuge is currently looking at securing funding for replacement the steps at the confluence of the Russian and Kenai River. The steps were put in place in 2006 and are starting to be in disrepair. The new stairs would include walkway that would connect all of the stair together and keep visitors off the vegetation.
- Moose Range Meadows walkway replacement project and the upgrading of the Keystone boat launch will be starting this fall.
- Visitor center at HQ we're closed due to COVID. Refuge staff increased patrols and stationed outside contact stations following Covid precautions to better orient visitors while maintaining social distances.
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is reopening the public comment period on proposed amendments to the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge's public use regulations on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 for 30 days

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

- Attached is a summary of the Chugach National Forest agency report.

F. City of Kenai –No Report

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

- The City of Soldotna worked on several mitigation plans to finally be able to open of the parks. Alaskan were out in force, the city was up 2% over previous years at Centennial, Swiftwater and the Sport Center.
- The crews rebuilt 10 set or stairways along the Kenai River that were damage due to ice. This was done for under \$1000.00 by reusing material.
- 300 spruce bark beetle trees were removed from Swiftwater this spring. It looks as if no trees were removed. Swiftwater has a similar problem. There has been some work to cut some down to at least get them on the ground to eliminate the threat of them falling.
- There was work completed at Swiftwater boat launch to help eliminated some of the water seepage and heaving of the ground. It appears to be working well.

H. Kenai Peninsula Borough-No Report

## II. Committee Reports

- President's Report-Ted Wellman provided the board with the following report.
  - For the November meeting the board will be electing new officer for the next year and if you are interested in a position please let the chair know.
- Guide Advisory-No report:
- Habitat Committee-No report
- River Use Committee- No Report
- Legislative Committee-No report

## III. OLD BUSINESS

## IV. NEW BUSINESS

- Funny River Boat Launch- Jack Blackwell provided the board with the following report:

- Last Spring the board had discussed some criteria and found that the criteria from the Kasilof Boat retrieval criteria could be used with the criteria that was created for the Funny River Boat Launch. At that time the groups was going to conduct site visits to evaluate the sites on Funny River road and then the board would make a recommendation. With Covid and meeting schedule we were unable to complete that process. The Criteria that was sent to you was the process of putting Kasilof and Funny River together. If you have any concerns about this criteria please let Jack know as soon as possible.
- Ted stated that after discussion with him and Jack that it would be great to have a small committee go out and evaluate these site , pictures, comments
- Ted ask for some volunteers including someone from the River Use committee,
- Monte Roberts, Bill Tappan, Jacques Kosto, Ben Mohr.
- The site visits will be scheduled for Friday October 16<sup>th</sup>. At the next meeting we would like to be able to make a recommendation in the next month meeting or

**V. CORRESPONDENCE**

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**VII. BOARD COMMENTS**

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**