



KENAI RIVER

Special Management Area

"Working together...for the river"

ADVISORY BOARD

Kenai Region Office
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Soldotna, AK 99669
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Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

*** Meeting Minutes***

Thursday,

February 11th, 2021

5:30 p.m. via Microsoft Teams

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Roll Call-Joe Connors, Ben Mohr, Ron Rogalsky, William Tappan, Ted Wellman, Andrew Carmichael, Brent Hibbert, Matt Connors, Andy Loranger, Francisco Sanchez, Colton Lipka, Jack Blackwell and Sarah Aspens.
- B. Minutes Approval- Minutes were approved as written
- C. Agenda Changes- Under old business Ben Mohr added the draft letters for the LWCF funding. Agenda was approved as amended.
- D. Public Comment: None
- E. Presentations: None

II. REPORTS

A. Agency and Government Reports

- a. ADNR - State Parks – Jack Blackwell provided the following update:
 - Next week work will begin on riverbank restoration projects at Eagle Rock and Crooked Creek. These projects are funded by the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council.
 - Applications are currently being accepted through March 31 for three positions on the advisory board that are set to expire June 30, 2021. The following member's terms will expire Branden Bornemann, Jeff Dolifka, and Ron Rogalsky.
 - The Kenai River Guide Academy is being held this week via Zoom. Due to COVID, the academy was offered on-line and is a partnership with Kenai Peninsula College, Parks, Office of Boating Safety, Kenai River Professional Guide Association, Dept. Fish & Game, and Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. Two more classes are scheduled in March and April.
 - Parks staff recently briefed the Kenai Peninsula Borough mayor about the Funny River boat launch locations.
 - Kenai Hydro, LLC, a subsidiary of Homer Electric Association, has received a license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for construction of the Grant Lake hydroelectric dam. Some of the infrastructure for the facility is on lands that Parks manages that are proposed additions to KRSMA. In order for the state to authorize the project a number of items will have to be addressed such as amending the Kenai Area Plan and Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan, changing the Interagency Land Management Assignment to remove the area from lands managed by Parks, and changing the regulations for the Special Use Area.
- b. ADEC – Sarah Aspens provided the following update:
 - A notice to public and public comment period are scheduled to be announced later this month for the 2020 Integrated Report.
 - The 2021-2023 Alaska Clean Water Action (ACWA) grant applications have been reviewed, and successful applicants have been notified. An official press release was

posted on the DEC webpage on Tuesday 2/9/2021.

Visit <http://dec.alaska.gov/commish/press-releases/21-02-dec-awards-495000-in-clean-water-actions-grants/> to see a list and descriptions of successful projects. Projects will start as early as March 2021. The next request for proposals will be winter 2022.

- c. ADF&G – Colton Lipka provided the following update:
- The forecast for early-run kings for the 2021 season is ~4,300 large kings. Which is slightly below average for the past 5-years. Last year’s forecast ended up being 48% off the actual run. The season will begin under general regulation for the 2021 season and the first in season management assessment will likely occur in the first week of June. The forecast for the 2021 late-run is ~18,400 large kings. Which is less than the 5-year average. Late-run management decisions will be made in mid-June when we have in season information available from the early-run. Late-run Sockeye for the Kenai is forecasted to be 2.3 million fish which puts us in the middle tier which will have commercial fisheries managers shooting for the in-river goal of 1.0 to 1.3 million fish. The forecast is available online for public viewing at the following links.
 - Early-run kings:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/fishing/pdfs/sport/byarea/southcentral/2021KenaiEarlyRunOutlook.pdf>
 - Late-run kings:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/fishing/pdfs/sport/byarea/southcentral/2021KenaiLateRunOutlook.pdf>
 - Late-run sockeye:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/applications/dcfnewsrelease/1240755723.pdf>
- d. USF&WS – Andy Loranger provided the following update.
- The design work is being completed on Jim’s Landing. The public comment period will be on the three proposed design plans for the area and should open later March early April.
- e. USFS – Fransico Sanchez provided the following update:
- The area is currently working on there summer work force. The crews will do some work on some of the Great American Outdoor Act and working on some trail heads and trail.
 - There are currently three major highway projects occurring within Chugach National Forest.
 - Last year work was started at the Russian River Campground removing spruce trees that were hit by the spruce bark beetle. It is estimated about 85% of the trees have been affected. Two of the 5 loops were completed in 2020 and the work will continue in 2021.
 - Phase 2 of the Russian River from the contact station to about a mile the work included reconstructing the road that is currently slopping towards the Kenai River. That work is currently going to be postponed until 2022.
- f. City of Kenai -No Report
- g. City of Soldotna - Andrew Carmichael provided the board with the following:
- The City is still working on funding for an interpretive cultural site, a single-track ski loop and snowshoe track at the end of West Redoubt. This would also include some improve river access with some stairs and walkways.
 - Andrew is also working on getting the grant release for fuel mitigation at Centennial and Swiftwater.
- h. Kenai Peninsula Borough – Brent Hibbert provided the board with the following:

- The Kenai Peninsula borough sales tax revenue is down 16% which had previously been 24%.
- The Assembly currently has a work session with the school district. The school district is asking for the max funding of 53 million from the Borough. There was also discussion about bonding for school maintenance. There are several schools around the area that need such things as roofs, repair to water damage and other maintenance.
- They are also looking at funding for building a school at Kachemak Selo.

B. Committee Reports

- a. President's Report-Ted Wellman provided the board with the following:
 - Ted reported that he sent out a memo regarding a proposed sockeye salmon stamp. This stamp goes all the way back to the comprehensive plan. When the management plan was being developed in 1995 -1997 the issue remains the same. Lack of funding and any revenue going into the general fund.
- b. Guide Advisory-No Report
- c. Habitat-No report
- d. River Use-No Report
- e. Legislative/Government Activities-Ben Mohr

III. OLD BUSINESS:

- a. Salmon Stamp-The board discussed the proposal. Ted Wellman would like to have each of the (Habitat, River Use, Guides Advisory and Legislative) committees' review this proposed sockeye salmon stamp and bring their thoughts and recommendation to the March meeting.
- b. Kenai Mountain Turnagain Arm Heritage Grant Application Letter of Support-Jack Blackwell ask the Board for a letter of support. The Interpretive and Education Section of the Alaska Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation has submitted a grant application with the Kenai Mountains Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area. The project is titled Cooper Landing State Recreation Site Orientation and Interpretation and will create a new interpretive panel at this site which will help people learn about the history of the Cooper Landing area. In addition, the project will develop an orientation panel at the Cooper Landing SRS which is a popular stop along the Sterling Highway for visitors and the site also provides boater's access to the Kenai River and Kenai Lake. The board approved the letter of support.
- c. City of Kenai Salmon Derby application-Pam Russell reported to the board that the City of Kenai had submitted the Silver Salmon Derby application for the 2021 season. The proposed dates were for September 14th to the 19th. Board had no objections and the permit will be issued with the proposed dates.
- d. The letters regarding the Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board that encourages the support of the Senate Finance Committee for receipt authority and requisite matching funds for the Land and Water Conservation Fund Federal Grant Program as requested in Senate Bill 50 are completed.
Joe Connors made a motion to have the letters approved and sent pending no changes and signature. Bill Tappan seconds the motion.
The motion passed.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

V. CORRESPONDENCE

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Harpring ask that the proposal regarding the sockeye salmon stamp be made public. This was included in the public notice of the meeting. Jim commented on some wording that is within the KRSMA plan regarding funding going for specific projects and areas and not into the general fund.

VII. BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS- Jack thanked the advisory board for all their work on the Funny River Boat launch proposal.

ADJOURNMENT: Next Meeting: March 11, 2021