



Kachemak Bay State Parks Citizen Advisory Board
PO Box 3248, Homer, AK 99603
Meeting Minutes
April 10th, 2019

1. Call to Order:

- a. Roll Call:** Board Members: Beaver Nelson, Jonathan Sharp, Kristen Dixon, Aron Peterson, Nancy Hillstrand, Glen Green, Sera Baxter, Kevin Walker, Marc Romano, Jeff Lee, Patrick Miller and Curtis Jackson

State Park staff –Jack Blackwell and Park Director Ricky Gease.

Public Members Tom Young, Mako Haggerty, Eric Clarke, John Allardice, Janet Klein, Bob Evenson, Willi Dunn, Carl Dixon, Jesse Nelson, Gary Fandrie and Jason Harraman

- b. Minutes:** Under members of the public Mitchell Hrachiar name was added to the minutes. Minutes were approved as amended.
- c. Agenda Changes:** Nancy added under new business Jeff Lee’s resolution on noise in the park. Agenda was approved as amended.
- d. Public Comment:**
- e. Presentation:** Jason Herreman from Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Jason handed out a report that gave an update of wildlife harvest in the park. This report is available by contacted Jason at Jason.harraman@alaska.gov. Jason commented that Fish and Game would like to have State Park to change the firearm discharge regulation to match other agencies. State Parks regulation is ½ half from a develop facilities and the other agencies is discharge of a ¼ mile of a developed facilities. These regulations can be found in the Fish and Game regulation pamphlet.

2. Committee Reports

a. Operations Report

- Jack Blackwell introduced State Park Director Ricky Gease. Ricky is trying to get out and visit as many of the State Park units and attend advisory board meetings as his schedule will allow.
- **Ricky Gease reported to the board the following:** Ricky has been on the peninsula since 1992, he was a park ranger at the Kenai National Fjords Park Service, 6 years with the Kenai Convention and

Visitor Center and 15 years Kenai River Sportsman Association. He has experience with parks, tourism and fishing experience. He commented it is a great job working with great people.

- The day Ricky started his job was the day the Governor budget was released. One of his first tasks was to inform not only Jack Blackwell but other State Park areas that there was staff reduction within the budget.
- Ricky commented that State Parks has great staff and great people across the state. There are over 150 State Park units in the state and over the next several months Ricky will be visiting as many of these areas. He has been to the Southeast area and will be visiting Wood Tikchik and Kodiak in June. After that he hopes to head to Fairbanks and Matsu areas in the fall.
- Currently State Parks has a 6-million-dollar budget. There are currently 3, \$1million buckets that generate revenue for the state park system. They are public use cabins; camping, parking and boat launching fees; and commercial operator/ permit fees. The department is looking for other opportunities to create revenue and become self-sufficient.
- Ricky is reviewing the Recreational Trails Program. The management plan for this program is reviewed and updated every five years. One thing that has become prevalent is that it does not matter what part of the state you are in the priorities are the same, the availability of bathrooms and garbage service is important for trail systems. Many of the trail heads along the highways are not designed to be highway waysides, but many are used that way. 2026 is the 250-year anniversary of the country and Ricky would like to have a functional highway wayside program in place in the state. This program would help to elevate the pressure on the State Park trailhead system.
- The Recreational Trail program brings in approximately \$1.2 million to the state. Those funds have been divided with programs inside state park system and those outside of state parks. Currently State Park units across the state have a \$65 million in deferred maintenance. The Kenai alone has about \$20 million alone in deferred maintenance, so at a recent meeting with state park staff they were able to come up with a list of items that would use three or more years of the recreational trail programs funds. A shift in the program is to use all those funds in State Park units and work with non-profits to help work on trails within the state park units. For the next three years, all of the RTP funding will be devoted to focusing on deferred trail maintenance in the state park system.
- One of the challenges for State Parks is to come up with an additional \$3 million in revenue to become self-sustaining. Currently the South Denali visitor center would bring a \$1 million in revenue once it is built. If anyone has ideas on how to create revenue in the park, please pass that idea on to Ricky.
- Ricky encourage the board to continue bringing up issues that are of concern for the State Park and Nancy offered a letter of support from the board for the highway wayside project.

Jack Blackwell reported the following to the board:

- Jason Okuly is in Anchorage for his mandatory 40 law enforcement training.
- Homer Electric Association is currently in the processes of finishing the Stonehocker Creek project. This was repairing the section of line that was damaged by water of Stonehocker formed a new channel and compromised the power poles.

Eric Clarke reported the following to the board:

- Diamond Creek = Multiple ground fires in lower parking lot, with lots of trash. Six trees harvested, vehicles driving off easement to collect wood. A large pile of slash was dumped in one of the parking spaces midway down the road. Trail cam installed. Reports of shooting at the beach trailhead. Shotgun shells picked up. Dead eagle and otter found at trailhead. Eagle had talons missing, federal law enforcement is investigating. The road is in bad condition due to breakup.

- Halibut Cove Lagoon -Public dock is down for the season. Inspection of facilities with TRAILS, a non-profit dealing with mobility impairment, discussion on improving the facility for mobility impaired individuals. Friends of KBay are looking to upgrade decking to the East and Lagoon Public Use Cabin along with other upgrades.
- Kachemak Bay -Continue to conduct hazard inspection reports – nothing significant to note. Yurt inspection at Humpy Creek – Fire extinguisher was discharged or out of service, smoke alarm was found in package. Investigating local guiding company regarding false reporting to State Park on activity and clients. Report of a Jet Ski operating in Kachemak Bay. No follow up conducted. Complaints of feeding eagles at Gull Island and China Poot Bay. Not illegal under State or Federal law unless it is altering their behavior which must be proven. There may be a possibility of a violation of Park Regulation, creating hazardous conditions or disturbance of natural resources.
- Maintenance: 4.3-meter vessel – fixed sponson covers, reinstalling sponsons. ATV – known problems - fuel leak and 4-wheel drive does not function.
- Trainings: Firearms and DT training in Soldotna. EMT - continuing education training in Homer
- 50th Bday Planning meetings: Discussion of birthday celebration on Saturday, May 9th, 2020. Hosted at the middle school sports field and SPARK. Event will be from 3 to 5pm. This day coincides with Shorebird key note speaker. Collection of photos for history timeline, working to convert slides to digital format.
- Public Use Cabin designs and models. Discussion of where to put a public use cabin (Diamond Creek, Eveline, or Cottonwood Eastland).
- Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat and Fox River Flats meeting: Discussion of the hatchery and net pens, fish marking is not a requirement of the State why should it be a requirement in this management plan, why are strays bad - there is no proven negative impacts to wild stock, what type of water testing should be conducted, how is the impact to other species monitored. Discussion of storage of fuels within Kachemak Bay and Fox River Flats.
- HEA: Site visit – issuing after the fact permit for unauthorized activities (instream crane platform). All other agencies have been kept in the loop and are issuing permits as needed.
- Staffing: Volunteer Coordinator – Christina Whiting will be returning. Her start date will be June 1st. The Friends group will not provide funding to start the position early to help with trails day. There is a possibility the State can hire May 15th.
- Eric has hired two ACCers for his RTP grant projects, China Poot trail reroute. We have returning staff from last year. A VIP and an ACC crew member from last year will be returning. We have not been able to find a qualified crew leader.
- Park Ranger I – we have been authorized to hire a Park Ranger I for the Ninilchik Area starting July 1st, 2019. Unless the Ninilchik Ranger has previous LE experience they will be attending the Public Safety Academy in January of 2020. Tim Blackmon, current KBay Ranger will need to focus his effort in Ninilchik during the Summer of 2020 due to new ranger training.
- Jason will be focusing his efforts in Ninilchik this summer.
- Trails Day: The Friends will have to be a large part of planning and organizing trails day. Parks will provide projects, tools, and three project leads (Jason, Eric, and ACC crew project). The Friends will have to collect donations, collect volunteer paperwork, find additional leaders, be the point of contact with the public for questions, and organize the kickoff.
- Saddle Trail/Glacier Spit Trail: Contractor will be periodically closing section of the Saddle Trail during the summer during tree felling operations. Closures should only be for a maximum of 1hr.
- Outreach

- Eric Clarke will be conducting a radio interview with Hig on KTLL regarding the Tutka Trail. The program will air the 17th of April at 10am. Eric will be presenting at the Alaska Trails Conference in Anchorage with Hig. They will present on nonprofits partnering with a State entity to build trails with volunteers.

b. Friend's Report- Mako Haggerty reported to the board the following:

- The Friends group met on Monday April 1, 2019. The currently balance of the account is approximately \$18,000.
- Alan Parks brought the proposal to the group to clear the Emerald Lake trail. He was looking for recommendation on how to get more volunteers to help.
- Mako thanked Director Ricky Gease for attending the meeting.
- The celebration of the 50th anniversary for the first state park of Kachemak Bay State Park is currently planning a large picnic at the Middle School fields on May 9th, 2020.
- The North Eldredge food locker has fallen over and the Friends group is working on getting this repaired as a project.
- The group has merchandise of hoody, t-shirts and sweatshirts for sale.
- A letter of support for Alaska State Parks is being developed for the Diamond Creek project.
- Friends Pancake breakfast and Friendship walk on May 11, 2019.
- Trails Day is scheduled for June 1, 2019. This is a big community event for everyone to help with a large trail project in the park. Just remember if you would like to volunteer you need to fill out a State volunteer agreement form and these need to be completed a week prior to the event. These are available from Jason Okuly or Eric Clarke.
- Mako commented that some of the discussion to create revenue for the park would be to create more group camp sites in State Park units and another idea is to create a traveling park show. Trailer with loaded videos, merchandise and other things to advertise the Park units thorough out the state.

c. Kachemak Bay 50 Anniversary celebration: Janet Klein gave the following report:

- The group is going to have a birthday party on May 9th, 2020 at the Middle School fields.

3. Old Business

- **Kachemak Bay State and Wilderness Park management plan update:** Jack Blackwell reported that the planners are working through the comments and preparing the response summary. With the appeal from CIAA on the denial of placing the new pens in Tutka Bay that response summary will not go out for public review until the Commissioner's Office has responded to the appeal.

4. New Business:

- **Elections-**This was postponed until the May meeting.
- **Bylaw Update-**Nancy Hillstrand had a proposal to change the bylaws to change the appointment to the Advisory board. This would take an adjustment to the bylaws. The board needs to put a draft of the recommendations that would change the bylaws, that needs to be reviewed by the board and voted on. Then that recommendation would go to the Director for consideration. The proposal will be submitted to the board in May.

Curtis made a motion that the board make a change to the bylaws that would change the board appointment to be from September to May. The board will provide a revision to the bylaws at the May meeting to take a vote.

Jeff Lee seconds.

A motion was made by Patrick Miller to form a committee to look at the bylaws and come back with a draft in the May meeting and the final to be voted on at the September meeting. Curtis Jackson seconds.

The committee is John Sharp, Patrick Miller and Curtis Jackson.

- **Letter of support for EVOS funding projects at Diamond Creek and Anchor River-**Jack Blackwell reported that State Parks will be applying for funding to improve Diamond Creek SRA. The improvements would include a designated parking lot, trailhead facilities such as a kiosk and a bathroom. The Anchor River project will be to develop a boardwalk along the wetlands from Slide hole to Halibut campground. This project was first proposed in the late 1980 as a transportation corridor project.

The board would like to have additional information before consenting to a letter of support.

- **Resolution of increase noise in the Kachemak Bay State and Wilderness Park:** Jeff Lee provided the board with a resolution. The resolution helps on how to provide guidance and a volunteer agreement for user of the park to reduce noise. Jeff also provided additional reports and information on how noise effect wildlife and Park users.

Jack commented that State Park issued a Director Determination for commercial operators to land only a Grewingk Glacier and no other place in the park. The State does not control airspace only landing in the park.

Kristen Dixon asked how many companies are currently registered and is the concern that there will be growth in the industry created more noise.

Jeff said yes, the concern is more growth in the industries. Jeff would like to see stipulation written into the management plan for tools to be used when commercial operator applies for a State Park permit.

Jack stated that the helicopter operator would have to volunteer to abide by these stipulations for State Parks does not have jurisdiction over airspace. We cannot mandate that they abide by these stipulations.

The board is going to work on making any changes or recommendation to the resolution and look at it again in May.

5. Correspondence-none

6. **Comments and Discussion by Visitors:** Alan Park commented Hilcorp is not going to complete the work in Kachemak Bay at this time. He also had concerns about Climate changes and how they are affecting the park;

7. **Comments and Discussion by Board Members:** Aron Peterson commented that the Eastland property that is trying to be acquired to gain access to the State Park land internal agency land assignment is being developed. The parcel between East End Road and Elmer Way is the agreement being developed. Aron is looking for volunteers to help dig a hole at Cottonwood for a bathroom. They are looking at early May for the project.

Curtis Jackson asked if there is some way to eliminate some of the discussion that occurs at the meeting by have more discussion by email before the meeting.

Jack commented that maybe having committees meet before the regular meeting would help element some of the discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm

