



Kachemak Bay State Park Citizen Advisory Board
PO Box 3248, Homer, AK 99603
Meeting Minutes
March 10th, 2020

1. Call to Order

- a. **Roll Call:** Board Members: Aron Peterson, Mark Romano, Kevin Walker, Curtis Jackson, Glenn Green, Sera Baxter, Robert Archibald, Beaver Nelson, Johnathan Sharp, Patrick Miller, Carol Harding, Nancy Hillstrand, Robert Ostrom, Curtis Jackson, and Jeffrey Lee.

Not present: Kristen Dixon

State Park staff –Park Ranger Jason Okuly, Superintendent Jack Blackwell

Public Members – Jean M, Troy Jones, Roger MacCampbell

- b. **Minutes:** Carol noted that Janet Klein name was spelled wrong. Minutes were approved as amended.

c. **Agenda Changes:**

2. **Public Comment-** Jean M. lives on Elmers way and is disappointed that there has been no community public outreach to the community about the development and plans of Cottonwood Eastland. This includes properties that border the area. Jean would like to see this area be left undeveloped and that State Parks and the board have more community outreach before proceeding with any development.
3. **Visitors-**Troy Jones is at this meeting to solicit support from the board to approve his permit to graze his horses on State Park Land. Mr. Jones lives at Mile 18 of East End Road just above Glen Green. The horse has grazed in this area before the State Park was put in place. Mr. Jones property shares property with the park and is an area of the park that is not used by public. There was no conflict, and no one never mentioned it was a problem. State Parks said that they can permit the horse grazing but needed the support of the board. The benefit of the horse grazing is fuel reduction in the area for fire danger. There is a lot of down trees from beetle killed trees. The horse's stump down the grass and there are horse trails in the area. People could use the trails. There was a fire a few years ago and made a fire lane through the park and the horses use the fire break to walk down to the park. Troy is asking for the board support of this permit.

Jason asked what year the grazing started? Mr. Jones responded since 1976 the horses were able to free range in the area. A fence was built and then destroyed by the moose and other natural factors. Mr. Jones does have the material to build a new fence.

Aron Peterson asked if the fence would prohibit the horses from going to the Cottonwood Eastland Creek? Mr. Jones said the horses just use the area to drink from the creek and do not disrupt or pollute the stream. The fences will not be inside the park.

What was the land prior to State Park? The land was general state land that was than given to state parks to manage.

How many horses: 20 horses is the maximum number of horses. He would pull them off the property in the fall. Troy is trying to keep them off the hay fields. After the hay is harvest, he brings the horses back to his property to graze in the hay field.

How far do they graze on the property? Down to the bluff. The horses eat the grass down to about ½ inch.

How many acres would the horses graze on? Troy believe it is about 150 acres. A horse can graze in over 100 acres. The horses are checked on daily and they are ridden regularly by family.

Aron Peterson talk with the Water and Soil Conversation and they stated that it takes 2 to 3 dollars a day to raise a horse, so with 20 horses 50 bucks a day. The horses would be on the land from May 15 thru September 15 for a total of 122 days for an estimated cost of \$6100.00 dollars. Aron asked Troy if he would be willing to share some of that value with the Parks? Troy said no, he believes the horses are improving the land and reducing the fuel for fire.

Nancy remove the land from public land and that it should not be removed from public interest. This area is a park. What happens if someone else wants to graze horses in the same area?

Glenn Green said you filed an application for the board to consider. Yes, a permit application has been filed. Sera ask the personality of the horses. There is no stud which are the most aggressive and his mares are not.

Jonathon asked about the fence. Was there a fence there before? Yes, a fence was put up about 30 years ago. It was a barbed wire and wooden post. Now Troy is looking at metal post and metal sheets. This would be placed on the boundary line between Troy and the State Park land.

Kevin walker commented that after reviewing the current management plan that this activity is incompatible with the plan.

Jack ask the board to change the agenda and have the discussion about the fence now. The board agreed.

Jack Blackwell provided the board with a summary regarding the permit process. Mr. Jones applied to Alaska State Parks to allow the grazing of his horses on State Park Land. State Park Staff first reviews regulations and statutes. The management plan is clear that grazing of domestic or commercial animals for domestic use in the State Park is incompatible with the park. State Park regulation do allow issuing a permit contrary to regulation if certain criteria is met. We have pretty good direction with the management plan state it is incompatible, but the director can issue a permit if the activity meets certain criteria.

The regulation 11 AAC 18.025 state the Director may issue a permit if the activities meets certain criteria as follows:

The director may, upon proper application, issue a permit for activities described in 11 AAC 18.010(2) - (11) if he or she determines that **(1)** park facilities and natural and cultural resources will not be adversely affected; **(2)** the state park is protected from pollution; **(3)** public use values of the state park will be maintained and protected; and **(4)** the public safety, health, and welfare will not be adversely affected.

We have a permit application that was submitted and evaluating the four criteria and we brought the permit application to the board review and give their input on the permit and the activity associated with the permit. The board does not have the final decision, but State Parks is interested in hearing their thoughts on this permit activity.

State Parks cannot issue a permit to one person we would have to give them the same consideration. There is not exclusive use of an activity, everyone needs to be treated equally.

If we issued more than one permit and it became too much for the area all permits could be revoked at will until the issue could be re-assessed.

Glenn thinks that the permit could limit the number of animals and the time of year.

Beaver thinks this is a separate little area and a traditional use and is supported of this use.

Jonathon asked if the permit is annual? The permit can be issued for 1 to 5 years. Jonathon than asked the permit application that Mr. Jones submitted state exclusive use of the park? Mr. Jones was not sure how to answer that question and is not asking for exclusive use?

Aron commented that 11AA18.025 states that other applicable fees can be charge for activities.

Patrick asked if State Parks has any clarification on what a traditional use is. Jack said no, the management plan gives us the guidelines to follow for such permits.

Nancy asked how the horses would affect the flora of the area. Jack stated that staff will research that question.

Sera stated that animals could be limited. What about trails? State Park does not have staff to build trails the horses could do it for us.

Curtis stated this would be good for fire suppression.

Nancy asked how large is the park? Aron stated 2, 400 plus. How much would be used for horse grazing. Would the horse use limit the use by the public?

Carol asked if the management plan state the activity is incompatible why are we looking at this permit application. A permit can be considered if it meets the criteria in the regulations.

Beaver stated they use the horses for hunting, rodeo, guiding and personal riding.

Aron thinks we need to add a stipulation regarding the horse waste.

Robert asked if these are commercial animals than maybe a fee would be applicable. Now it is a commercial entity to use State Park land for commercial use.

Jason Okuly stated that there is bare dirt, trampled vegetation and puddles of water. Also, the trails go in many directions on the state park land.

Aron commented this is a beautiful area and we don't want less State Park land we want more.

Robert stated this will be a special use permit and that anyone else could ask the same permit we would have to issue permits to them also. This could open the door to another permit request.

Robert recommended that State Park staff should talk with the Soil and Conversation staff about invasive plant spreading by the horses. Another question would be how destructive horses to the land are.

Aron made a motion a resolution to oppose grazing/pasturing of domestic animals in Kachemak Bay State Park. Kevin second the motion.

The motion passed with 8 yes and 5 no's (Robert-y, Kevin-y, Jonathan-n, Mark-y, Aron-y, Beaver-n, Patrick-y, Sera-n, Glenn-n, Carol-y, Nancy-y, Curtis-n and Jeff-y).

4. Committee Reports

a. State Parks and Operation Report: Jason Okuly provided the board with the following report:

- Returning employees - Eric Clarke is back to work
- Trails day planning
- Seasonal planning meeting – Did not received RTP grant for Saddle Trail. Did received RTP for general park maintenance was widening or maintenance of the trails.
- New Staff - Carter Forney – PR I – is at the academy. He is currently the leader of his squad and doing well.
- Meetings - Meeting with the Bike Club to discuss signage at Dimond Creek, Friends, Water Trail, Environmental Task Force
- Invasive - In communications with the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District to raise awareness of invasive species. Looking to install a few educational signs and boot brushes around the harbor.

- ILMA - Working on an Interagency Land Management Agreement for Cottonwood Eastland to transfer certain parcels of land from Mining Land and Water to State Parks for management. These parcels would provide for road access off Eastend Road as well as connectivity within the unit.
- VIPs - Working on recruiting and hiring a volunteer crew
- Ranger Station - Daren and Julie, the Ranger Station Volunteer Hosts, are heading to Alaska early this year. They may arrive as soon as April.
- Park Projects - Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council has removed all State Park projects from the discussion table. We had Dimond Creek Parking Lot improvements to be considered.
- SAR – I've reached out to the troopers statewide training coordinator requesting information for this board pertaining to SAR resources in and around Homer. I've also reached out to Homer Volunteer Fire Department; they are willing to have the discussion but feel it would be better to have an agency meeting first.
- Nomad Yurts – I've responded to the end of season report received from the park concessionaire addressing 1) State Parks to bypass DEC to authorize a composting outhouse, 2) Expansion of the yurt operation, 3) Issuance of a 5-year permit, 4) Better communications with the park, 5) Withholding information from the advisory board, 6) Changes to the draft management plan, 7) Invoicing of permit fees.
- Permits – issued a permit to land on Grewingk Lake in the winter months to a wheeled aircraft for a private pilot. Denied a permit to use a commercial helicopter in the park to conduct a privately led single winter expedition citing the previous director's determination.
- Homer Harbor Master – Provided with Kachemak Bay Supplemental boater brochures as well as Safe Boating in Alaska.
- Trainings – working on organizing a joint training with Fish and Game regarding shotgun training for bear safety.

Jack Blackwell commented that the State Parks is currently asking for comments for the use of drone for the new regulation packet that.

Right now, there is a State hiring freeze in place. Right now there are no exception to this freeze, but things may change in the future.

The Alaska Exxon Valdez Oil Trustees has removed all State Park funding from consideration. Diamond Creek has been removed from consideration.

b. Friends' Report- Mako Haggerty provided the board with the following report:

- 1) Cathy Sarns –made the State Park banner and is taking over trial's day.
- 2) Public use cabin on the homer side of the bay. Looking for a permit or MOU to maintain and build the cabin.
- 3) Grants for trail work and looking of other funding sources to buy tools for the park (go fund me for ILMA).
- 4) Go fund me for tools and a trailer. We just bought 2k in tools and we are looking to buy a trailer.
- 5) Increasing membership.
- 6) Looking for empty bear spray containers.

c. Kachemak Bay 50th Anniversary Celebration- Roger MacCampbell

- 1) Friends and state parks float won in the parade – we will use the winnings for the state park volunteers.
- 2) Coffee sales made \$177.00/2 bags
- 3) Wine Sales –no reports, we get 1\$/bottle
- 4) Historical timeline –Janet Kline display-50 things to do.

- 5) Educational series – Next one is Thursday, 7 to 8:30, Marine mammals of the bay, Deb Tobin and Mark Webber. April's will be Jason Herriman – animals of Kachemak Bay state park.
- 6) Earth Day concert for the park
- 7) May 9th birthday party
- 8) 4th of July parade
- 9) Trails day
- 10) The next meeting is Tuesday 4 to 6pm at Cook Inlet Keeper.

d. Trail Committee- Mark Romano:

- 1) Eric is back and we are meeting the 26th of March at 5:30 at islands and Ocean with to discuss the current direction of the trails.

e. Habitat Committee – Nancy Hillstrand

- 1) NERR conversation, meeting on the 16th. Nancy Hillstrand will be attending to talk about habitat in the State Park.

5. Old Business

ILMA Mile 17 Eastend Road – Jack Blackwell reported to the board:

Kenai Peninsula Brough Plan recommend the parcel be added to the park. Up to 640 acres of park can be created by this ILMA process. The Commissioner can assign this as a park without having to go through the legislative process. The Division of Land Mining and Water is charging \$2,400. These funds are being raised by the Friends.

6. New Business

Grazing Permit Discussion -discussion above.

Red Mountain Road – Jeff Lee asked why is the park interested in something that is not inside the park?

Blackwell – The departments are looking at recreational opportunities Seaward to Fairbanks. One item that has come up is a loop route from Seward along the coast to the old logging roads between Jakolof and windy bay. This loop would continue to Homer then to back to Seward through Soldotna. Parks is involved b/c this loop route could provide access to the state wilderness park. The 1995 management plan recommends continuing trails to the Port Dick area of the Park. Last January we met with the native associations and Seldovia to talk about reopening the logging roads. During those meeting we heard a desire to reopen the roads to Red Mountain. Senator Sullivan's office has been in these discussions to utilize the military as a training exercise to open an airport. Red Mountain has national defense significance.

We've also had meeting with Port Gram Corporation, and we plan to meet with Seward guiding businesses.

7. Action Items

8. Public Comment –

Confused on the development of cottonwood East Development is going off the 1995 management plan.

Robert Archibald – I doubt any development will happen before the new management plan will be released.

Roger MacCampbell – in 1989 cottonwood Eastland was added to the park, in 1994 and 1995 we walked the area and laid about 11 or 12 miles of trails. The beetle kill happened and stopped development. Cottonwood Eastland became a Park, I told Troy's brother he could not have horses in the road. The fire created a lot of roads in the area. The forest service had to restore those roads.

The 70's management plan called for stables in the cottonwood Eastland area.

Grazing permits are not the park's expertise. Be cautious setting a precedent for this type of activity. If you issue a permit for this activity who is to say someone in Chugach may use this as an example. This will be a downstream effect statewide.

Mako Haggerty – Hiking in the desert where grazing release are allowed. Cattle have destroyed the area.

9. Comments of Board Members

Aron Peterson – need canisters to fill the bear spray containers with water to use for training potential users.

Johnathan Sharp – Thank you roger for the background info regarding the history of Cottonwood Eastland, thanks to the Friend's work working on the ILMA. At the next meeting I would like to bring a proposal to raise 6K to bring kids into the park.

Glen Green – I think we need more discussion on animal use of the park and grazing.

Curtis-was at Sadie Cove and saw Mountain goats grazing along the shoreline. Get out a visit the park/

Sera Baxter – I do not agree we should restrict Troy Jones so quickly. We should slowly taper him off.

Robert Archibald – His concern we would be opening the door if we issue one permit, others would start submitting an application. It would open the door.

10. Adjournment