



Kachemak Bay State Parks Citizen Advisory Board Meeting
Draft Minutes
October 14th, 2020
Virtual Meeting with Microsoft Teams at 5:30 pm

1. Call to Order

- a. Roll Call -Aron Peterson, Nancy Hillstrand, Sue Christiansen, Beaver Nelson, Jeffrey Lee, Carol Harding, Kirsten Dixon, Marc Romano, Sera Baxter, Robert Archibald, Kevin Walker, Jack Blackwell, Jason Okuly and Pam Russell
- b. Agenda-Kevin made an addition under new business regarding bear activity in the park. The agenda was approved as written
- c. Minutes were approved as written

2. Public Comment 3 Minutes

3. Visitors

4. Committee Reports

- a. State Park- Jack provided the following update:
 - The following people were appointed to the K Bay board and will serve three-year terms: Sera Baxter, Sue Christiansen, Jeffery Lee, and Beaver Nelson.
 - Welcome to Ranger Carter Forney who recently finished training at the Department of Public Safety Academy and is the new park ranger for the South Kenai District.
 - Thanks to Ranger Jason Okuly and Eric Clarke for their great work this summer. And thanks to Pam for coordinating the video conference this evening.
 - A Notice of Intent to Adopt the Kachemak Bay State Park and State Wilderness Park management plan is expected to be released this fall. The planning team is meeting with the DNR commissioner's office next week to review the final draft. Parks Director Ricky Gease has not been involved in any management decisions regarding the Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery.
 - Staff has been unable to work on the horse grazing issue at the Cottonwood/Eastland parcel.
 - The Division of Mining, Land and Water has begun work on the Interagency Land Management Assignment (ILMA) that will authorize Parks to manage a section of general state land near East End Road near mile 16 – 17. This parcel could provide road access to the Cottonwood/Eastland parcel. Thanks to the Friends of Kachemak Bay for paying the application fee.
 - Parks staff are scheduled to meet with Kenai Peninsula Borough Office of Emergency Management staff and Bretwood Higman to discuss the Grewingk Valley potential landslide and tsunami. This meeting will be a briefing for OEM and the start of discussions on how to best manage this issue that affects one of the most heavily visited areas of the park.
 - Stonehocker Creek continues to flow down the power line easement. Discussions continue with Parks, Department of Fish and Game, and Homer Electric Association.

b. Operations Report- Jason provided the board with the following report:

- Park Ranger 1 Carter Forney has successfully completed the Sitka Public Safety Academy and field training. He has been working to become certified to operate vessels for State Parks.
- Halibut Cove Lagoon Ranger Station -Due to Covid restrictions our Ranger Station hosts did not return to Alaska. We were able to hire an Alaska Conservation Corps member with Covid funding to sanitize public use cabins and outhouses in the Halibut Cove Lagoon and China Poot Lake area.
- Additional projects completed: Installed New signpost at Goat Rope alpine access, replaced of multiple damaged signs, cleared trails to China Poot Lake and Moose Valley Cabin. Worked with volunteers to log out trails. Fixed the board walk. Levelled the outhouse due to upheaving, worked on repairing the water line unsuccessfully (water was provided for a short time to the spicket between the Overlook and East Cabin. Install a new ranger station floor.
- Kbay Staff Responsibilities- PR I – Access and maintenance of all public use cabins, front country campsites, ranger station compound, training, and management of Volunteer crew (5 individuals). PR II – Permit compliance (HEA, CIAA, Yurts). Specialist – Backcountry trail maintenance, RTP grants, and crew training/management.
- Bears-Halibut Cove Lagoon Rental (next to ranger station) – Renters were shooting at a black bear with a .22 caliber rifle. Bullets were whizzing over the heads of hikers on the Lagoon trail. Reckless discharge of a weapon and illegal to use a small caliber for the taking of big game.
- Humpy Creek – Closed due to fisherman shooting at a charging brown bear. We do not believe the bear to be dead after searching for it. We, State Parks and Fish and Game, have conducted multiple site visits to the area. We believe we heard a wounded bear moving through the brush. It was able to elude our attempts to visually see it leaving us to believe there is a wounded bear that may be able to feed itself and may survive. Multiple reports of bear encounters throughout the park with multiple bears that have been sprayed with bear spray.
- Violations-Hunting incidents, discharging of weapons within ½ mile of developed facilities. 3 separate incidents, Grewingk Glacier Lake Campground, and two at the Moose Valley cabin. A variety of Fish and Game violations in the China Poot dipnet area. Common violations are failure to clip fins and over limit via fishing for the group or fishing for people who are holding the boat. Leaving food accessible to bears. China Poot Yurt.
- Trail Work-Built a bridge over the flooded section of China Poot. This bridge will not prevent people from getting wet but will reduce the hazard of falling into a deep channel. Rain events cause the China Poot cabin access to become flooded and impassable.
- RTP Grants- We did not have any RTP crews for the 2020 season due to COVID restrictions. We will apply for the same RTP grants for the 2021 season. Finish work on the Saddle and general trail maintenance on Humpy Creek trail, Emerald lake Loop, and Woz trail.

- c. Friend's Report – See attached report. Sue Christiansen did ask about the 5-acre parcel that was for sale next to the Saddle Trail that the Friend's group was interested in buying. That parcel was sold to a private entity.
- d. Water Trail Annual Report on Adopted Camp Sites – Dana Gregoire reported a summary of the reports for Kayak Beach, Cottonwood Eastland and Chugachik Island. Those reports are available upon request. The committee is currently working with the City of Homer to put up a sign for the kayak launch on the Homer Spit.
- e. Eveline State Recreation Site Annual Report – Cameale Johnson gave a brief summary of the report. The full report is available upon request.
- f. Kachemak Bay 50th celebration-Robert reported to the Board the following:
 - Most events were canceled after March, but the group did manage a small gathering at the Homer Chamber of Commerce with Parks Officials, including the Director for a cake cutting and presentations on the History of KBSP. Director of State Parks Ricky Gease spoke to the importance of State Parks as did other folks present.
 - There is still interest in holding some events in the future if the Covid-19 situation permits.
 - Available are some 50th Anniversary items such as coffee, coffee mugs, beer steins and wine at many of the local establishments around Homer.
- g. Trail Committee – Marc Romano gave the board the following update: The committee has not been able to meet with Eric because of the COVID limitation. Marc asked if anyone had suggestion or recommendation on how the committee can move forward with meetings. Is everyone OK meeting on the virtual platform? Please reach out to Marc if you have any recommendations.
- h. Habitat Committee – Nancy Hillstrand gave the board the following report: The habitat committee has also not met because of the COVID limitations. Nancy asked if Sue Christiansen would like to join the committee? Nancy recommended that maybe a conference call or virtual platform would work best at this time.
- i. By Law Committee Report & Discussion-No report at this time.

5. Old Business

6. New Business

- a. Election of Officers: Robert conducted the election of officers prior to any business being conducted.
 - Vice Chair- Carol Harding nominated Nancy Hillstrand and Aron Peterson second. Nancy accepted the nomination and the vote passed unanimously.
 - Board support for taking minutes. Jason Okuly volunteered to be the backup if Pam is unable to take minutes. Carol, Aron, Sera and Sue volunteered to proof the minutes before the meeting.
 - Chair- Carol Harding nominated Robert Archibald and Nancy second. The motion passed unanimously.

The Chair Robert Archibald also welcomed all the reappointments to the board this includes Sera Baxter, Jeff Lee and Beaver Nelson. Robert also welcomed the newest board member Sue Christiansen. Sue commented that she has been very passionate about the State Park for over 40 years. She is happy to be on the board and looking forward to help in protecting the park and doing the best we can by them. A big thank you goes out to Glenn Green and Robert Ostrom for their time on the board.

- b. Letter of Support for Alaska State Parks Interpretive and Education Section for a Recreation Trails Grant which would fund the development of safety and educational material at Grewingk Lake within Kachemak Bay State Park.

We have also received letters of support from Brentwood Higman, Ed Berg and other individuals.

Marc made a motion to approve the letter of support for Alaska State Park Interpretive and Education Section for a Recreation Trails Grant. Kevin second

Motion passed unanimously.

- c. Letter of Support for a Recreation Trails Grant Application Submitted by Kachemak Bay State Park for the purpose of additional trail work on the Park's Saddle Trail to replace a log causeway, that flooded over during the storm events in Dec. 2019, with a turnpike and drain pipe under the structure.

Carol Harding made a motion to approve the letter of support for the Recreation Trails Grant application. Kevin second the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

- d. Bear issues in Kachemak Bay State Park. Jason Okuly reported to the board the following: The Humpy Creek and Humpy Creek Yurt have been closed due to a fisherman shooting at a charging brown bear. It is believed the wounded brown bear was injured but not fatally. Efforts to locate the animal indicated a highly mobile yet wounded bear in the area. It is unknown at this time if the bear has left the area, but a report of a moose cache in the area indicates a high probability of bear activity.

A family of 4 was charged by a sow black bear in between the Grewingk hand tram and Saddle Junction. The family reported that the bear stalked and then attacked without hesitation. The family dog was injured and taken to the local Homer vet clinic. The bear was dispatched at the scene during the altercation with a handgun. Upon examination of the animal no food was found in its stomach and an abscess was located in its mouth.

The Yurt organization voluntarily closed a yurt in China Poot Bay due to a bear hanging around in the area. Renters of the yurt were very uncomfortable by the presence of the bear. The renters reported the bear was feeding on fish carcasses. Upon inspecting the site, the report was unfounded. However, State Parks did request the renters throw any fish carcasses into the bay.

A bear was shot at in the Halibut Cove Lagoon area by the renters of an Air B&B with a .22 gage rifle. The bullets were whizzing over the heads of hikers on the Lagoon Trail. Upon contact with the renters they stated the bear was attempting to break into their cabin and was not scared of people. They were shooting at the bear in an attempt to scare it away.

Nancy Hillstrand recommended that we might want to think about prevention.

Jack Blackwell suggested that this might be a good task for the Habitat Committee to have a look at

7. Comments of the Public

8. Comments of Board Members:

1. Aron Peterson commented about the planned public walk on Sunday October 25, 2020 at 1 pm at Cottonwood Eastland. This will happen rain, snow or shine. The meeting place is at Ratone St. and Elmers Way.
2. Sera Baxter-Infestation of bear in Seldovia, getting in trash and causing problems. The problem has lessened but recommended that some organization buy several bear proof garbage containers and sell them at cost to those that I would like to buy them.
3. Kirsten Dixon- We cannot kill all the bears. Education can go a long way
4. Sue Christensen-Glad to be on the board and look forward to working on the committee.
5. Carol Harding-The number of bears in the park seems to be very high this year. Carol also asked when the management plan would be released. Jack stated that we all hope it will be released very soon.
6. Jeffrey Lee-I was wondering with the use of a virtual platform for meetings including phone participation, are we putting in extra effort to make sure the public is being notified. Everyone that has always been notified is being contacted.
7. Beaver Nelson-Status of the FEMA grant for Diamond Creek and if it is expired? No, it is not expired, and Jack will follow up on that question.
8. Nancy Hillstrand-How long the review process will be for the management plan? The plan does reflect the statutes and constitution.
9. Kevin Walker-Thank Dana and Cameale for all their work and involvement with the K-Bay board.
10. Jason Okuly- Thanks to everyone for their service to the board and the new members that have filled vacant seats. I just want to remind everyone that this is an advisory board and State Park staff looks to the board for guidance and support when making decision. We also keep in mind the legislation purpose of the Park and the integrity and scenic values when making these decisions. Thanks everyone for what they do.

9. Adjournment-

The next meeting was changed to Tuesday November 10, 2020 at 5:30 via Microsoft Teams.