

Kachemak Bay State Parks Citizen Advisory Board Meeting Draft Minutes

February 9, 2022

Virtual Meeting with Microsoft Teams at 5:30 pm

Call to Order

Roll Call – Board members present: Kirsten Dixon, Nancy Hillstrand, Sue Christiansen, Jeffrey Lee, Glenn Seaman, Robert Archibald (Chair), Yarrow Hinnant, Kevin Walker, Louis Dupree, Mark Romano, Carol Harding, Beaver Nelson, Aron Peterson, Curtis Jackson, Jack Blackwell, Jason Okuly, Monica Alvarez, and Pamela Russell

Board members absent: Sera Baxter (Robert Archibald announced that Sera Baxter is retiring from the board.)

Chair Archibald moved to amend the agenda to 1.) add under new business B. bylaw discussion. 2.) Letter to the Conservation Fund that would like a letter of support for grants.

Agenda –Sue Christiansen moved to approve the agenda. Nancy Hillstrand seconded.

Minutes approved 12/30 and approved for 1/12 (with corrections of Carol Harding's name not on the roster and Dave Brann's name spelled incorrectly).

Public Comment:

Cristen San Roman – She opposes the new version of HB52 and asks what is most important to the Park - land or a hatchery. She asks that the CAB upholds the resolution. She encourages all to submit testimony on upcoming public comment period.

Penelope Haas – with Kachemak Bay Conservation Society, is in opposition to HB52. Says the bill is a threat to the integrity of the Park. The removal of the land from the park would no longer designate the Tutka Lagoon land to be preserved for outstanding natural features and public enjoyment. Even with the reverter language, the bill doesn't help the Park in any way.

Liz Mering – new advocacy director at Cook Inlet Keeper. Expressed concern about the reversal language. Unclear on why three years was picked for reversal and how that land would be protected during those years. And, also why the ILMA is being increased from what was 6 acres to 123 acres. (Jason Okuly mentioned that it includes the body of water of the lagoon).

Committee Reports:

State Park Report: Superintendent Jack Blackwell – Accepting applications for positions on the advisory board. Members that are set to expire this June of 2022 are Sera Baxter, Aron Peterson, Carol Harding, Kirsten Dixon and Mark Romano. Turn in applications by March 31'st.

Operations Report - Jason Okuly – No report in addition to his email. Sue Christiansen asked about the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. Jason is looking into the designation and if we can follow the best management practices required through the designation and if it is in the States best interest. Species of concern are entitled to better protection but need to interface with the draft management plan. Mark Romano mentioned that there are several bird species of concern for FWS including the Pribilof subspecies of Rock Sandpiper. Suggests talking with FWS and USGS researchers that are doing research in Kachemak Bay and lower Cook Inlet.

Louis Dupree asked if watercraft could operate in the Park and it was clarified they could not.

Friend's Report – No report. Chair Archibald mentioned that Friends ended with \$40,000.00 that will benefit the Park.

Water Trail Annual Report– No report

Eveline State Recreation Site Report- Camile Johnson – No report.

Cottonwood Eastlands – Aron Peterson – Lots of snow, more than six feet. Parking is still a problem.

Habitat Committee – No report.

Trails Committee – Mark Romano – encouraged all to join the next meeting. It meets the hour prior to the monthly CAB meeting under the same Zoom connection.

Old Business

HB 52 resolution: Chair Archibald introduced Rep. Vance and assistant Jake Almeda. An amendment was introduced providing language that recommends a safeguard to the Parklands. Conditional language states that any time that

ADFG decides not to have a hatchery on the site, after three years, the land will revert to the Park. The Commissioner of DNR would have 30 days to make the adjustment in statutes that the carve-out language would go away. The language states that the land must be always managed by DNR. The land cannot be sold.

Discussion: Sue Christiansen asked about the buildings needing to be removed. IMLA says this can be negotiated, they don't have to be removed. She also asked about the potential of the hatchery to make significant changes to the property, like damming the creek or enlarging the lagoon opening... Rep. Vance explained that ADFG has an intent to return land to its natural state. Jake Almeda said that legally there is a difference in protection of the land once it is removed from the Park. If the bill is to pass, it is unlikely that further development would happen to those 123 acres. Monica Alvarez with DNR mentioned that it is not so easy to make changes on this land. Every change would need to be in review. There is still a process on general State land and public notice and input.

Glenn Seaman asked if all the land on the disposal site would be required to have public notice.

Monica Alvarez stated that it would depend on the level of activity requested.

Mark Romano asked if the hatchery remains situated on DNR land, if there are positive or negative impacts on adjacent Park lands, would DNR mitigate any problems. Monica Alvarez said the land would be general State land but managed by DNR. Alvarez imagines that the management of the hatchery would not look much different than it does now. If the public has concerns, they would bring them up to DNR.

Chair Archibald asked about the three-year reversion to Park land. Rep. Vance said that one year was not long enough and five years was too long, so she selected a happy medium. Chair Archibald asked if other activities could be conducted on the site and Rep. Vance said it would have to go through review.

Sue Christiansen feels that carving the land out of the Park is not in the Park's best interest and she questions some of the methods and reasons used to have the land removed.

Kirsten Dixon asked about what happens to the Bill as It moves through the House.

Glenn Seaman encouraged Rep. Vance to consider that ADFG doesn't always look proactively on impact. He asks if ADFG would take some proactive action along with NOAA, Research Reserve and others to help answer some of the conflict questions

about the hatchery's presence in Tutka Bay. Rep. Vance stated that she is working on supporting salmon research. She is in the process of writing a resolution but it is not specifically addressing Tutka hatchery.

Nancy Hillstrand commented that the issue in Kachemak Bay is not salmon but shellfish. What is needed is the trophic status of these species and what they eat. When pink salmon are released, they eat the same foods as the shellfish. If the hatchery continues the fish swimming into the Park will damage Park resources. If HB52 fails and CIAA hasn't found a more suitable lake system for sockeye releasing, is there a way for the Park to get a commercial use permit to continue the sockeye program?

Jeff Lee questioned if the first resolution that was crafted was submitted. Chair Archibald confirmed that it was submitted. Jeff Lee asked if the first resolution needed to be updated. Chair Archibald stated that it is a board decision. Chair Archibald read the resolution.

Jeff Lee made a motion to modify the resolution and resubmit to oppose HB52 as it is written as of February 9'th. Nancy Hillstrand seconded.

The motion was voted on: Yarrow Hinnant yay, Erin Peterson yay, Beaver Nelson nay, Jeff Lee yay, Robert Archibald yay, Nancy Hillstrand yay, Kirsten Dixon nay, Sue Christiansen yay, Louis Dupree yay, Kevin Walker yay, Mark Romano yay, Glenn Seaman yay, Carol Harding yay, Curtis Jackson yay. 12 yay, 2 nay. The motion passed.

Louis Dupree asked about the hatchery being in violation of the Park rules if HB52 doesn't pass. It was clarified that CIAA has until 2031.

Jeff Lee mentioned that the infrastructure could remain, and that the China Pool dip netting could remain with workarounds. Jeff Lee mentioned that the Park and CIAA could work together without taking the land out of the park.

Sue Christiansen mentioned that it would make an amazing headquarters for a UNESCO World Heritage site, and we meet all the criteria for this designation.

New business:

A. Firearm discharge in the park proposed reg. change from 1/2-mile to 1/4-mile from structures.

Jack Blackwell states that there are inconsistencies in the State Park system between 1/2 to 1/4 mile of a facility. There is an effort to make these distances uniform.

Louis Dupree mentioned that he would like to stop bear baiting in the State Park. He believes this is unsportsmanlike.

Erin Peterson has a box of Remington 22 bullets that say they travel 1 ½ miles. He would prefer the distance to be one mile rather than a quarter mile.

Kevin Walker has several friends that live within the boundaries of the State Park. He is against any minimizing of distances between structures and hunting.

Carol Harding states that she has property within the State Park at Neptune Bay and is opposed to reducing the hunting distance because of safety concerns.

Beaver Nelson is opposed to shortening the distance since the Park has been a traditional hunting area for a long time and feels there would be public push back by opposing this reg. change.

Jason Okuly explained that any trail head, outhouse, or other facility is considered a structure. Staffing is difficult and enforcement is reactive due to staff restrictions. Park personnel try to be more available in the springtime during bear season. Dawn and dusk is the most popular hunting time period. Many people violate the Park regulation and generally the comment is that the hunter wasn't aware of the regulation.

Jeff Lee states he is in the Park often and moving shotgun allowances closer in encroaching on Park users and not in the best interest of the Park. He wants to pass a resolution that the area should be greater, more like a mile. Bringing it closer is not fair to other user groups.

Carol Harding stated that this is an issue of safety, not tradition or historic use. There are too many people using the Park.

Louis Dupree stated that it is a safety issue with more and more people using the Park.

Jason Okuly mentioned that the law is in place and hunters are liable if they shoot someone ¼-mile or 1 mile away and it is viewed as a crime.

Beaver asked for clarification on developed sites (structures). Jason stated that private dwellings do not count as a State Park facility.

Kevin Walker asked for clarification. If one cabin is next to another cabin, is it OK to shoot a bear in between the two cabins, would that be legal at this point?

Jeff Lee asked if we wanted to pass a resolution to recommend that the Park regs. stay the same or move to ¾ – mile. Louis Dupree seconded it. A discussion occurred

regarding whether to keep ½-mile or increase to ¾-mile. The decision is to keep the distance ½-mile. The resolution will be available at the next meeting.

B. Bylaws Discussion - Typos will be corrected. Discussion moved to the meeting.

C. Letter of support to the Conservation Fund for going after grants for grants.. Chair Archibald can write this and will state the CAB's approval for grants for the Saddle Trail land. No one was opposed to that idea. Chair Archibald will construct a letter and send it to Chris Little.

Comments from the public:

Mako Haggarty - Thanked the board for all the Park work and the letter of support regarding the Saddle Trail. Stated it is a terrible thing when we start to carve up Park lands.

Robert Vernon - Asked why the land disposal needs to happen at all. He stated four irrevocable points of the HB52 does not seem to be valid and correct. Banks don't continue with bad loans. He feels it is the wrong hatchery in the wrong location and it is time to stop it.

Comments from the Board:

Kirsten Dixon - Felt that we are potentially losing land in the Park because we failed at collaboration or political dialogue with CIAA. She hoped the hatchery could be deemed not in conflict with the Park rather than losing the land. She hopes we can find common ground and outreach through conflict resolution. Doesn't agree with shooting in the Park. People pressure creates these stress points. UNESCO is a positive inquiry for the Park.

Sue Christiansen - Discussed looking at solutions through finding other lakes for sockeye support. She recommends a dip net fee for China Poot personal use permits. Asked if Rep. Vance could work on a loan forgiveness program to relieve the lower Cook Inlet fishermen's debt.

Carol Harding - No comment

Nancy Hillstrand - No comment

Jeffrey Lee - For those on the board who voted yes on the resolution, personal comments are important to submit those to the House.

Glenn Seaman - No comment

Beaver Nelson - Voiced unhappiness about the bad feelings about the hatchery. He doesn't see anything bad happening to the people of Kachemak Bay because of the hatchery. Thanked Rep. Vance.

Erin Peterson - HB52 sets a bad precedence to pull in to help a few. Supports restrictions on bear baiting in the Park.

Mark Romano - Believes the hatchery does change the character of the Park. Requests we schedule a break in long meetings. If we provide comment on HB52, can we mention we are members of the advisory board. Jack says we should not reference the advisory board.

Chair Archibald clarified that the chair could speak for the board in pertaining to the resolution.

Kevin Walker used to work for hatcheries some years ago. He was surprised that the comment was mentioned that without the hatchery the brood stock couldn't be raised there. He said it was done very easily. He felt that the net pen mess-up reflects on the operations. Some beaches in Kachemak Bay State Park were littered by dead salmon.

Yarrow Hinnant - No comments.

Motion to adjourn at 8:10 pm. Next meeting March 9, 2022.

Kirsten Dixon - transcribed 2/20/2022