

## Seward State Parks Citizen Advisory Board

### Minutes

Wednesday, November 17, 2021 5:30-7:30 pm

Teleconference

#### I. Call to Order

- A. Call to Order: 5:30 pm
- B. Minutes taker: Cliff Reid
- C. Roll Call: Bob Barnwell, Carol Griswold, Nick Jordan, Paul Paquette, Cliff Reid, Mica Van Buskirk
- D. Board members absent: Mark Luttrell, Tess Tulley, Kat Sorensen
- E. State Park Staff: Superintendent Jack Blackwell, District Ranger Jack Ransom
- F. Public Present: none
- G. Minutes Approval for October 20, 2021: **Paul moved, Nick second, unanimous**
- H. Agenda Changes and Approval: Carol called for adding Superintendent Jack Blackwell to Staff Report. **Mica moved for approval, Cliff second, unanimous**

#### II. Public Comments: none

**III. Board Contact and Correspondence:** Nick put out a request on social media for anyone using Tonsina Trail to please help pack and widen the trail with snowshoes, wide skis, and sleds to start a good base to the trail for the winter. Cliff submitted FB notice of meeting.

#### IV. Reports:

- A. Staff Report: Jack Ransom deferred to Jack Blackwell:
  - Congratulations to Mica on her appointment to the Board and to Cliff for his reappointment. The nomination approval turnaround time is now much quicker.
  - Thanks to Jack R and Mike B for their work installing the new interpretive signs at the fort, a goal accomplished with Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm (KMTA) partnership.
  - For the first time since 2019, the capital budget funded projects for the Kenai Peninsula including the \$300K North Fork Tonsina Creek bridge abutment reinforcement and riprap.
  - The transfer of the WWII rifle to the Resurrection Bay Historic Society is progressing as is the nomination of Fort McGilvray to the National Historic Register.
  - We need to work with the communities of Seward and Lowell Point and the Kenai Peninsula Borough on a comprehensive community plan, both short-range and long-range, to manage and prepare for the impacts of increased visitation, including cruise ship passengers, on the natural resources, infrastructure, facilities, parking, etc in local area park units, especially Lowell Point SRS. SE Alaska has already experienced this rapid evolution. A plan was created, the 1998 General Management Plan for the Sitka National Historical National Park <https://www.nps.gov/sitk/learn/management/upload/98GMP.pdf> (Check out the Sitka Trail Plan 2003 at <http://sitkatrailworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/trailplan.pdf>)
  - Bob has talked to the new Community Development Director about this and will contact him, the Planner, and Sustainable Seward this week; he needs more information. He expressed concern about helicopters hovering over hikers in Park; Jack said the Park has no control over the airspace. Carol noted the CHSRA Management Plan prohibits helicopter landings and supports that. Mica said the LPCC has written letters to the helicopter companies complaining of noise and they now try to travel out in the bay.

- Mica asked about mooring buoys at Thumb Cove and North Beach; Jack recapped the history of this former goal; in brief, there is no funding to maintain them at this time. Mica wished to add it to the priority list as they are as important to boats as a safe parking lot is for cars, and they would reduce damage to the ocean floor from anchors dragging.
- Jack hopes to replace the Iron Rangers with convenient \$7K Luke II pay stations that accept credit cards; it would save a lot of staff time and cash management. Nick noted locals typically don't pay. Mica supported the Lukes and suggested more advertisement of the seasonal pass available for sale at the local Chamber and on-line. Bob wondered about raising the fees; administration has decided to keep fees the same. Carol noted a need for a "Fee Station" sign across the front of both LPSRS kiosks as people walk right past and don't know where to pay. Jack B. agreed that that could be done as well as add a Fee Area sign at the lower parking lot.

## B. Committee Reports

### 1. Local issues (except parking):

- Board appreciates the plowed lower parking lot.
- Mica proposed adding the cost of plowing to the budget as a regular, year-round maintenance item to avoid public safety issues for the users and community. Jack B noted that the funding level is very austere, has not been funded to provide the services required, and no discretionary funding has been appropriated since 2014, when the budget was cut 70%. We lost another \$7,000 in 2020. On a regional basis, if Seward gets funding, then Homer or Kenai lose funding. We are down to the bare bones. We have no funding for manpower or equipment needs, not even chainsaws or roofing which are not "fluff". The Prince William Sound position was cut; no staff are in the Valdez area; it is run by a contract operator just to keep some Park units open. He noted that the fees collected from parking, permits, PUCs, guide fees, user fees, etc goes into the State General Fund. Over half of the operating budget (52%) is funded by fees collected in the Region, which is pretty remarkable. He has no control over the budget. He suggested that if the Board is interested in moving forward, we go through the proper channels and work with the Director's office, elected officials, and the Legislature. He stressed the need to get funding in the Legislative budget. CABs with strong community support from the grassroots level have a powerful voice. The Governor's budget will be released in mid-December. Mica noted she has written letters for the LPCC and is willing to write more. She would love to see the Regional Budget and summary for Seward. **Jack B. said he would provide the numbers by the next meeting.** Mica would also like to create a Political Action/Legislative Committee. Board agreed and it will be on the December agenda. Nick noted the new redistricting plan combines Lowell Point and Seward with Kodiak.

2. Mining (Cliff): Jerold Luck's mining claims on Tonsina Creek are listed as "Abandoned" by DNR due to non-payment of fees in 2020, so he no longer has any legal mining claims. Cliff found on the DNR mapping site that six new 40-acre claims on Tonsina Creek were filed in September 2021 by Jaime Fritz of Tok, including Luck's two recently abandoned claims downstream of the other four. No activity along the creek has been observed yet. Cliff contacted David Sharron for more information. Bob volunteered to help. This led to a discussion of the dilapidated "duck shack" in the Tonsina watershed, but that's another issue for another time.

## **V. Old Business:**

1. ADFG Advisory Board No Salmon Fishing signs for N and S Fork bridges (Cliff): no response yet from Jay Baumer.

2. Parking issue update: Proposed LPSRS lower parking lot design is a first draft concept. Jack B noted the BLM Conservation Easement allows for a parking lot but the wetlands can only be filled if it is necessary, with careful consideration: is it in the site's best interest? It doesn't matter if it was a man-made wetlands; the USACE only considers that it's a wetlands now. Concern expressed about the design that funnels vehicles from parking lot across wetlands to the congested boat launch area, and the small number of parking spaces with none for buses or RVs, or boat trailers. Much work will be needed with multiple agencies (BLM, USACE, Borough, etc) to expand the parking lot into the wetlands. It is a long, slow, process.

Discussion of rearranging existing curb bumpers and adding more in both upper and lower parking lots; one-way traffic on Pinnacle View Road to allow angle parking on one side (not supported by LPCC), (Dil at KPB Roads will look into it); realigning road ROW per platting to allow more parking alongside road on west side with a designated fire lane on the east side; need for No Parking/Fire Lane signs north of lower parking lot entrance and on Shady Lane; need for consistent enforcement (especially in summer); create angle parking in utility easement north of lower parking lot entrance; provide off-site parking with shuttle service (has been tried and failed). Consider carrying capacity; if provided parking is exceeded, then they should leave; provide reader board by LPVFD to show availability.

**Carol moved that CAB request a Zoom meeting with key people of the Lowell Point Community Council, Borough Roads, Borough Assembly representative, BLM, to work on this parking issue both short- and long-term. Paul second, unanimous.** Jack Blackwell suggested starting at the top with Mayor Pierce and the City of Seward. Mica volunteered to contact them and urgently request assistance.

3. 2021 Bylaws: Jack B gave an overview on the need to establish standardized minutes for the 13 CABs in State. Ransom noted he has the capability to set up audio video recording. **Mica moved to create a Bylaws Committee to collaborate with other State Parks CABs to work on changes to the draft bylaws and report back in January. Cliff seconded, unanimous.** Carol offered to continue working on the Bylaws with the other CABs.

## **VI. New Business:**

1. Donated latrine for South Beach (Cliff): postponed to December due to lack of time.

## **VII. Public Comments: none**

## **VIII. Adjournment**

A. Board Comments: Carol thanked Jack Blackwell for joining us at the meeting.

B. Date/Location of next meeting: Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 5:30 pm. TBA

C. Motion to Adjourn: **Paul moved to adjourn, Nick second, unanimous at 7:35 pm.**