

## Seward State Parks Citizen Advisory Board

### Minutes

Thursday, February 17, 2022 5:30-7:30 pm

Teleconference

#### I. Call to Order

- A. Call to Order: 5:34 pm
- B. Minutes taker: Bob
- C. Roll Call: Bob Barnwell, Carol Griswold, Nick Jordan, Mark Luttrell, Paul Paquette, Cliff Reid, Tess Tulley, Mica Van Buskirk
- D. Board members absent (excused): Kat Sorensen
- E. State Park Staff: Superintendent Jack Blackwell, District Ranger Jack Ransom
- F. Public Present: Chip Arnold, a member of the Lowell Point Community Council
- G. Minutes Approval for January 19, 2022: will be resent and postponed to March 16
- H. Agenda Changes and Approval: Add HB52 to New Business 4. Mark moved for approval, Mica second, unanimous.

#### II. Public Comments: none

**III. Board Contact and Correspondence:** Mica heard from several Tonsina Trail users about treacherous icy section before bridge. Carol received report of another downed tree at Tonsina PUC. The erosion there is alarming.

#### IV. Reports:

- A. Staff Report Jack Ransom, Jack Blackwell
  - A1 Jack Blackwell met with Senate President Micciche and State Parks Director Gease about the Lowell Point parking issue. They are fully aware of the issue. Jack also met with KPB Roads Director Dil Uhlin about a possible one-way traffic pattern. This would be legal and not require a traffic study. Mica noted the community wants a larger one-way parking lot, not to change the community traffic pattern. JB suggested keeping all the options on the table and vet them.  
A one-page budget summary was sent last month; Mica requested a priority list of long-time deferred capital improvement projects, deferred maintenance items, and goals to advocate for parks in the budget. Jack B will follow up with the Legislative Committee.
  - A2 Jack Ransom has been in the park a lot, noting steady use and no crime or vandalism. He is considering solutions to the icy section using a natural system like rails or earth steps. Paul suggested a rope; Carol cautioned about liability. Two trail crew dropped out; he is recruiting and will give the Board the description with a link to the application for Cliff to post on FB Seward Daily Trails Report. Sierra Club is returning to volunteer to help with trail work. Mike B is compiling statistics of vehicle and trail use for the last 3 years and will share the spreadsheet.
- B. Committee Reports
  - 1. Local issues (except parking) (Nick): Lowell Point volunteer fire department received equipment for wildland fire prevention and suppression, which affects the park. Discussion on joint cooperation with troopers, LPVFD, and park staff for

rescues in the park. The informal arrangement is working. He expressed concern about the carrying capacity of the park, including parking and latrines. Jack R will remove an outdated sign noting additional parking at Miller's Landing; Carol suggested leaving the post and installing another No Parking/Fire Lane sign on it.

2. Parking Access (Mica, Paul, Nick): Mica shared a letter from the LPCC by email summarizing their January 20 meeting. One-way traffic flow is not supported by the community. The one-way parking lot plan presented earlier would be an acceptable short-term solution. Carol noted that it doesn't add many spaces and concentrates all the traffic at the congested boat launch area. LPCC said the Pinnacle View Rd ROW and easement should be corrected, which might provide more roadside parking. The LPCC decided the best and only viable solution was to fill a portion of the wetlands east of the parking lot. Carol expressed concern about filling the wetlands and asked how many spaces LPCC thought would be needed; she felt the need was endless. Mica suggested 10-15 more would greatly improve the situation.

JB appreciates all the hard work the LPCC has done but said we are not ready to pick an option. He noted the one-way traffic flow would have solved a lot of problems but was ignored. He suggested starting an open public process with a Team meeting with CAB and all interested parties on either March 21 or 24 from 5:30 to 7 pm; please email Jack R which date is best. He recommended a summary compiled by Carol submitted in September 2021 as a good starting point. How many spaces are necessary? What are the goals for a short-term plan and the long-range plan? The Board needs to rank the top choices and make a recommendation. Mark asked when should CAB make these recommendations, but Jack's computer cut off. The Board agreed to meet to discuss solutions, not the problem (which is well known) and will get back to Jack R with preferred dates.

Mica expressed frustration that the LPCC has been working hard on this for the past 3-5 years, that LPCC discussed all the points in Carol's summary. She felt the LPCC input was public input, that the CAB was all on board, and this feels like going backwards. We need to get experts involved to get information on the numbers and what is possible.

3. Mining (Cliff, Bob): Jack R noted no response from MLW David Sharron to his questions but maybe he could be invited to join another meeting. Jack learned that Luck finally paid up his overdue lease fees and thus still has a legal claim. The status of his Argo and other stashed equipment is unknown but Jack R will contact him in March. Luck plans to transfer his 40-acre claim next to Ed Goresen's former claim to two others next year.

The 40-acre claim above Cathedral Fall is leased to a family from Fairbanks who seem to want a recreational site, not an involved operation. They are likely unaware of the difficulty in reaching that site. The claim below Luck's claim with the federal sign is leased by someone from Talkeetna, also not a full-blown operation, mostly a place to go. The intent seems to be to clean up the camps and Jack said

state parks would help (again.) As summer gets closer, it's Important to keep tabs on these operations; they could evolve into a much greater problem.

Carol questioned how anyone could be allowed to lease a mining site for recreational purposes without fulfilling the requirements to actively mine. She thought there were only 6 claims; what happened to the six claims leased by Fritz from Tok? How can there be so many lease-holders? Does MLW stack the claims? Why doesn't MLW inform CAB and the staff of these leases; the miners need access through state park land and it takes staff a lot of time to manage.

Cliff, noted the DNR mapper shows 6 sites claimed by Fritz of Tok; two above the fall and four below. The new DNR info doesn't jibe but he will check tonight. Who owns what? How many claims are available?

Bob also expressed frustration about the use of mining claims for personal use and the use of state park resources and personnel for clean-up. The miners should be held accountable; the system is dysfunctional. He suggested that CAB Political Action Committee get involved to change mining in this watershed.

Tess commented that the miners should be reimbursing the state for the time, resources, and labor incurred by staff for cleaning up after miners. Mica agreed.

Carol thought the miners should have to post a bond to cover these costs.

Mark also expressed frustration that every year we have no power aside from a permit asking the miners not to litter so much while they continue to damage the natural resources. We need a NO MINING land designation on these parcels. The regulations need to be tightened up.

Jack B noted there is language in the Prince William Sound Management Plan about pursuing an ILMA with Mining Land and Water. If State Parks managed it, (as recommended in the Kenai Area Plan) parks could limit the amount of use and enact a moratorium or cap on mining activity. Carol asked who to contact about this. Jack B suggested she contact the MLW Director and ask how to move forward; Carol and Board agreed. Jack B noted this change needs to be a grassroots public process.

4. Legislative Committee (Bob, Mica): Mica still plans to meet with Jack B to further the budget discussion. She requested a list of priorities, deferred maintenance, long-term capital projects, etc. Mark noted a need for more funding for staff.

5. Bylaws Committee (Carol and Mark): A final draft version was emailed recently for consideration at the March meeting, as will the Kachemak Bay CAB. Carol encouraged Board to look it over and comment.

6. Park Expansion Committee (Carol): postponed to next meeting

## **V. Old Business:**

1. Explore creation of Friends of Seward Area State Parks (Bob): We need to determine our priority list and goals for any funds raised. What do we want for our parks: more (or fewer) users? More quality? We need something akin to a strategic plan with short-term and long-term goals.

Mark suggested that Bob and Mica meet with Jack R and Jack B on this issue and get the non-profit angle from Kat as director of the Chamber. Jack B said he would be happy to meet and suggested inviting one of the existing Friends groups. Bob said he's had contact with Robert Archibald of the Homer Friends group and would reach out again.

## **VI. New Business:**

1. Trapping and Hunting in Seward Area State Parks and adjacent state land (Carol): has been working on this with ADFG and will report at next meeting.

2. Discussion and letter to Director re: proposed regulation changes (Carol): Carol noted that neither CAB or the public was notified in June of these changes that would reduce the discharge of firearms from ½ mile to ¼ mile from developed facilities, and allow bicycles of all kinds on our beaches including Lowell Point, Tonsina, the Coastal Trail, and at state marine parks. Many locals were not aware that hunting and trapping were even allowed in our local park units. The letter requested that the comment period be reopened to allow further public comments and from the CAB.

Jack B apologized for neglecting to forward the notice in June as he was so busy with the budget and other issues. He said the Bill has moved forward to the Department of Law, with a final review by the Lieutenant Governor's office, then there will be a final public notice.

Mark commented that we need another Jack B on the staff, that the Board needs to provide comments and the letter requests an opportunity to open up the public comment period. Mica noted a need for a more formal mechanism to notify the CABs. Bob moved for Carol to send the letter to the Director, and Mark seconded, unanimous.

3. HB 52 (Tutka Bay Hatchery/ state park land swap): Carol reported that the bill passed the House by one vote and will now go to the Senate. She was discouraged that state park land was not protected, and felt the management plan did not support this inholding.

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

## **VIII. Adjournment**

A. Board Comments: Carol printed, laminated, and installed approved annual pass permit notices and Jan-March tide tables and tide table books in both LPSRS kiosks on January 31 and February 1. Mica again expressed discouragement about the parking issue at Lowell Point. Carol suggested that we share email comments as we have run out of time.

B. Date/Location of next meeting: Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at 5:30 pm. TBA

C. Paul moved for adjournment, Cliff second, unanimous, 7:37 pm.

Notes: Keep these ideas in mind for our budget requests, and priorities and goals list:

- Parking lots maintenance, year-round

- Deferred maintenance items

- Capital improvement projects

  - Replacement of LPSRS latrines

  - LPSRS parking expansion

- In-town secure storage for equipment, boats

- Emergency shelter and storage at upper Tonsina parking lot

  - KPB Emergency Director Brenda Ahlberg FEMA \$

- Purchase of front-end loader to assist with evacuation and plowing

- Purchase of skid steer to maintain boulder barrier at LPSRS

- Mooring buoys for Thumb Cove and North Beach

- More funding for staff

- Mining claims cleanup and restoration

- Update of Caines Head State Recreation Area Management Plan

  - Comprehensive long-term plan for park

- CHSRA Fort McGilvray Historic Register nomination update, new signage