

Meeting Minutes

Seward State Parks Citizen Advisory Board

January 7, 2014

Seward Library Community Room

- I. **Call To Order:** 17:00
- II. **Board Members Present:** Mark Luttrell, John Eavis, Pat O’Leary, Dan Walker, Carol Griswold, Terry Rude, Benjamin Pister, Denise Plush, Mark Dalpes

Absent: Kent Berkland
- III. **Staff Present:** Ben Ellis, Jack Blackwell, Jack Ransom, Tom Kain
- IV. **Public attendance:** 5 persons
- V. **Introductions:** The park staff and board members gave informal self-introductions. Jack Blackwell asked the board if there were any topics that needed to be added to the agenda. There were none.
- VI. **Director’s Welcome:** Ben Ellis thanked the group for dedicating their time to the citizen advisory board and expressed how invaluable the board’s input is. He then briefed the board on the budget and expressed that it was a much brighter budget for state parks than a year ago. 18 positions were left vacant statewide last year including the Seward Ranger position. The governor’s budget has addressed that and we plan on filling some of the positions or in some cases moving positions around so we can deliver our “human assets” to best serve our parks. The Seward Ranger position is very high on the priority list and we understand the critical need of that position.

Ben explained how to access the governor’s budget online and encouraged the board members to research it. < <https://omb.alaska.gov/html/budget-report/department-table.html?dept=DNR&fy=15&type=Proposed>>

State Park Citizen Advisory Boards were encouraged to work together to support the parks. The boards can lobby the Legislature, determine priorities, pass resolutions supporting projects, such as the Tonsina Creek bridge, and help with budget needs. Board members were also encouraged to meet and greet legislators when they are visiting, and invite them to attend meetings.
- VII. **Operations update:** Tom Kain briefed the group on recent activities within the Seward operations. The majority of his time was spent working on the Lowell Point Volunteer Bunkhouse Renovation Project. The present status of the project is in the demolition phase and

awaiting approval to access funding. Jack Blackwell explained that the project funding came from capital money from FY14 appropriated for deferred maintenance.

Carol Griswold asked for more information about moving the office into town. Jack B. responded with number of benefits that would be accomplished. Ben Ellis also replied expressing the desire for the park staff to be a fiber of the community which is hard to do from Lowell Point. It is hoped that State Parks can co-locate at the US Forest Service office on Fourth Avenue by February.

Long-time volunteer Cliff Sisson was recently recognized by the Seward Phoenix Log as a "Friend of Seward".

State Parks day use permits can now be purchased at the Seward Chamber of Commerce.

- VIII. Finalize Bylaws/elect chairperson:** Some revisions were discussed regarding the bylaws. All board members present were involved with the editing and new revisions. Dan Walker made a motion to approve the bylaws pending the revisions discussed at the meeting. Carol Griswold seconded the motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous consent. The election of the Chair was not discussed.
- IX. Approval of minutes:** Jack B. opened the floor for discussion on the minutes from the 12-5-13 CAB meeting. There was no discussion from board members on the minutes. Carol Griswold made a motion to adopt the minutes from the 12-5-13 CAB meeting. John Eavis seconded the motion. Carol Griswold called for a motion for a unanimous consent. There were no objections to the unanimous consent from the board members. Jack Ransom stated that the meeting minutes will be posted on the division's website once they are approved by the board.
- X. Board Goals and Board Member comments:** In response to a request from board members at the previous meeting, Jack Ransom shared some ideas for goals of the Seward Area State Parks Citizen Advisory Board. Ideas included: WWII interpretation for the CHSRA, moving the office in town, build a shop in town, and obtaining a 28' landing craft for the Seward operations. Tom Kain shared additional ideas: the need for rerouting trails within the CHSRA, a Quonset hut-style public use cabin along the South Beach trail, and the North Beach mooring system replacement. Jack Blackwell opened the floor for questions regarding the suggested goals. John Eavis asked about the status of the DOT facility in Seward for a potential shop opportunity. There was discussion about the topic. John Eavis also suggested reviewing the Caines Head State Recreation Area (CHSRA) management and creating a list of recommendations that have been completed and a list for recommendations to be completed. Tom Kain will provide that list to the advisory board members at the next meeting. The board members were asked to present ideas for CAB goals.

Mark Luttrell listed his goals: fill the ranger position, explore addition of Box Canyon and Fourth of July Beach to the State Parks, establish the carrying capacity of each unit, and discuss the need for the Resurrection Bay Marine Trail. He noted the existence of an apparently abandoned

mining camp at the headwaters of the south fork of Tonsina Creek that should be investigated, expressing concerns about the two fuel tanks and general trash. Mark supported a interpretive sign project for Caines Head, documenting its history and suggested several local experts for more information. He would like to invite Cliff Sisson to speak.

Carol Griswold expressed an interest in expanding the park boundaries to include what people believe is park, such as at Tonsina, and to create new park units such as Fourth of July Beach.

Mark Dalpes expressed a desire for better parking and management at Lowell Point SRA beach as it gets very congested in the summer with all the kayak companies and boat trailers. He noted the issues with adjacent residential homes and no parking along the roadside. He noted a need for additional hardened campsite areas at North Beach, dispersed towards Derby Cove and in between as use of North Beach has greatly increased and needs to be managed for rising use.

Terry Rude supported the ranger position and a longer season for the specialist to cover. He noted the need to catch up on deferred maintenance before starting big new projects. The South Fork Tonsina Bridge only has a 2-year lifespan with all the flooding. The mooring buoys and replacement boat are his top priorities as they are safety issues.

John Eavis expressed an interest in park expansion, especially in areas around existing park units, such as Bear Glacier. He noted the ADNR is soliciting comments about the classification of Kenai Peninsula Borough land around Bear Glacier now. He would like to establish a policy about use of the state-owned waters near park units so that conflicts such as the barge in Thumb Cove can be avoided. Should the park boundaries in the water adequate or should they be expanded to protect the park resources? Terry Rude confirmed that the waters belong to the State.

Dan Walker asked about the ownership of the Bear Lake weir, and wondered if the adjacent DNR land could be a park unit. Issues with the lack of parking, the hairpin turn, and high traffic were noted.

Jack Blackwell noted that the staff plans to revise and update the maps on the web.

Community outreach ideas included clean-up, possible kayak tours to Caines Head, First Day Hikes, Art in the Park, and possible winter expansion by setting the trails with snowmachine.

- XI. Public Comments:** The member of the public offered a few ideas and concerns to the advisory board. Rick Brown was in support of filling the Park Ranger position, the Alaska State Parks obtaining management of the Bear Glacier area, and an increase in trail maintenance funding. Lynda Paquette requested support from the Alaska State Parks to expedite the upgrade of the City of Seward Wastewater Treatment facility located at Lowell Point. She also expressed concern for the hazards presented with the parking issues that arise along the Borough and Lowell Point State Recreation Site boundary. Lynda stated illegal parking limits access for emergency service personal.

Ben Ellis concluded the meeting with his positive impressions of the new advisory board: intelligent, enthusiastic, knowledgeable, idealistic, and with a big wish list.

XII. Next Meeting: February 11, 2014 at 5 pm at the Seward Library Museum meeting room.

XIII. Meeting Adjourn: 18:20