

CHUGACH STATE PARK CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD

(Hybrid-with in person at Potter Section House/Microsoft Teams Electronic Meeting)

DRAFT--Minutes of the December 9, 2024 Meeting

REGULAR MEETING # 10

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Haley Johnston called the meeting to order at 6:01PM

2. **Roll Call & Introductions:**

Present: Haley Johnston, Claire LeClair, Gus Gustafson, Mark Miner, Kyle Shedd, Tyndall Ellis, Rob Clark, Bill Britt, Irene Turletes, Gabrielle Jordan, Marcella Dent, Joe Hackenmuller, Dave Hart, Ted Phelps

Excused: Stephanie Rice, Marcella Dent

Absent:

Staff: Ben Corwin, Superintendent, Wendy Sailors, DPOR Director's Office, Ella Fitzgerald, Chugach State Park

Public: Will Taygan, Cass Frost, Aaron Leggett, Clark Saunders

3. **Changes to Agenda & Approval:** Agenda was approved as written on motion made/seconded by Britt/Ellis.

4. **Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:** Minutes of the November 11, 2024 meeting were approved as written on motion made/seconded by Britt/Ellis.

5. **Public Comments:**

- Will Taygan (representing Chugach Mountain Bike Riders), interests are in grooming multi use trails and advancing trail projects. Requests 1) a letter of support to open the Muktuk Marston trail to bicycle use only to Hunter Pass, 2) letter of support to change regulations to open second section of Peters Creek trail to bicycle use and 3) support for a mountain bike trail from Ship Creek/Arctic Valley to Indian (in the park's trail management plan-TMP- it is classified as a pack & saddle trail)-this would require a modification to the Chugach State Park Management Plan as well as to the TMP.

6. **Old Business:**

- a. **Indigenous Wayfinding Markers (Aaron Leggett & Cass Frost with Huddle)** – Project ongoing since 2017 with outreach to key stakeholders. First three signs installed in 2017, funding from Mellon Foundation secured in 2023; seven signs installed in 2024 and plan to install 17 more in 2025, most to be placed in Chugach State Park. Signs are 8x8 posts with stylized fire bag, place name and information about the origin of the name. Applying for a special use permit from the

Division of Parks and also developing a maintenance agreement. Locations for signs to be installed within the park: two along Thunderbird Falls trail, one in the Eagle River Campground day use area, one on the Muktuk Marston trail, one at Flattop parking area/Glen Alps, one possibly in Rabbit Creek valley, one in McHugh Day Use area, and seven along the Eklutna Lakeside Trail. Lifespan of the signs is about 30 years.

- b. CASA Project Discussion-(Bill Britt)** Muni held meeting in November to develop a CASA planning process with long term goal to develop some kind of capital improvement plan for CASA projects. It has not been determined if planning processes for CASA projects could be a project itself and bonded. Focus for now is on Basher and upper DeArmoun. The upper DeArmoun project is more about road improvement and not so much about improving trailheads and parking. People who live in CASA could vote for a tax to raise funds for access projects, those funds could be used within the park boundary, only the bond projects are restricted to use on muni lands. CAB committee met 12/2 and developed a draft priority list of projects that could be funded through a CASA bond. Committee is seeking consensus from the CAB to forward the draft priority list/policy to the Muni as a formal endorsement by the CAB. Suggestions for additions/changes: add HLB to the partners to coordinate with and reference the park plans and the Chugach Access Plan. Motion made/seconded (Britt/Shedd) to incorporate these changes and that the revised policy/priority list be sent to select Muni staff and Assembly staffers in response to their request for input from the CAB on the CASA bond project planning. Motion passed with no objection.
- c. Crow Pass Update (Ben Corwin)**-Interior Trails have submitted final report which includes a detailed prescription for the Cross Pass Trail from Echo Bend to Crow Pass (USFS boundary). Total estimate to implement all the improvements is \$4.5 million. There are 18 discrete projects outlined in the plan and each project is rated as high, medium or low in terms of safety, potential for catastrophic failure, and connectivity. Remaining funding from the FY2023 CIP for Cross Pass will go towards one or possibly two of the projects, with improvements to the Perch likely to be the first project pursued.

7. New Business:

a. Legislative Briefing (Kyle and Joe)-DNR staff provided a good overview of recent reorganization, park operations and funding. No wish list presented for projects that could benefit Chugach State Park was presented since the presenters are all Division of Parks employees.

8. Staff Report: Ben Corwin

Updates:

- CSP staff picked up our new snowmachines and the crew has been working on breaking them in.
- Albert Loop Trail reopened on 11/8

- Eklutna and Bird Valley closed to use of ATV's as of 11/30
- No areas open to snowmachines yet

Staff:

- Dylan Garbe was promoted into the permanent Park Specialist position. He has worked on the trail crew for several years as an ACC. It's good to see quality staff want to stick around and promote within the Division.

LE:

- Park Rangers have been focusing on fee compliance and public safety issues throughout the park. Rangers responded to search and rescues, issued several fee compliance citations and scores of fee compliance warnings. Rangers also assisted stranded motorists during the freezing rain weather event which left roads very hazardous.
- **Thurs, Nov 7**
Ranger Ford followed up on an individual who was dumping personal trash in the latrine at Potter and issued a verbal warning in person at his residence.
- **Thurs, Nov 14**
Ranger Ford followed up on a possible suspect in game cam/feeding wildlife case. Still under investigation.
- **Nov 3, 15, 21, 24, 29**
Ranger Ford conducted traffic enforcement with radar for speeders along the Seward Highway resulting in multiple traffic stops with a focus in the areas of Bird Creek, Indian and near Girdwood.
- **Sun, Nov 17**
Ranger Ford was notified by APD dispatch of an overdue teenager who had been camping near Green Lake up Powerline Pass. Ford responded to Glen Alps and retrieved the snowmachine. As soon as he started down the trail the individual was spotted by some skiers hiking back to Glen Alps Trailhead. The individual was ok and had just returned about 5 hours later than he said he would be back.
- **Thurs, Nov 21**
Seward Highway traffic enforcement. Fee enforcement at Glen Alps Trailhead. Lost dog recovered at Glen Alps.
- **Sat, Nov 23**
Training with ANSP (Anchorage Nordic Ski Patrol) and AST Helo 3. Conducted helicopter medevac training and avalanche beacon, shovel, probe SAR training.
- **Sun, Dec 1**
Ranger Gurnett & Ford, NRS Fitzwater, Park Specialist Garbe all cleaned up a site at Briggs Bridge where someone had dumped household goods. Ranger Gurnett and Ford followed up with dispatch and got the individual's info and will be following up with him for issuance of citations.

Ranger Gurnett and Ford took two new snowmachines to Eklutna for a patrol along Eklutna Lakeside trail to break-in the new sleds. At Serenity Falls Hut they noticed damage in the latrine where the lid of the toilet had been broken off and there was snowmachine tracks around the cabin and on the trail. Investigation underway for possible vandalism and illegal snowmachine use.

While heading home, Ford came across a vehicle accident at Northern Lights and Muldoon. Ford was the first arriving responder so he provided scene blocking and safety with his vehicle and checked to make sure all involved individuals were ok. There were no injuries so he provided traffic and scene control and requested APD who later arrived on scene.

Wildlife incidents of note:

- There was a report of two bulls being locked at the antlers near Glen Alps. Rangers investigated and determined that the bulls likely broke free on their own.
- DM 466, 467 closed on 11/30.
 - DM466 (at least 2)
 - DM467 1-illegal bull
 - RM435 closed. 7 bulls harvested

9. **Committee Reports:**

- **Access (Dave):** Kyle noted that there was a lot of information on the CAB's google drive about access improvements in the Brewster Drive area.
- **Budget (Tyndall):** No report; governor's budget to be released next week.
- **Nomination (Dave):** Committee met and reviewed the six applications received. Committee members able to contact four of the applicants, two were unresponsive. Recommendations are for Director to appoint Clark Saunders, Kristin Vantrease, and Sarah Bray. Motion made and seconded (Ellis/Gustafson) to support appointment of Sarah Bray; motion passed with no objection. Motion made and seconded (Gustafson/Clark) to support appointment of Kristin Vantrease; motion passed with no objection. Motion made and seconded (Gustafson/Ellis) to support appointment of Clark Saunders to the CAB; motion passed with no objection.
- **Seward Highway Design (Stephanie):** Projects planned for 2025 construction include left turn lane and North bound deceleration lane into McHugh Wayside and improved signage for trailheads. Environmental Assessment still scheduled to be submitted to DOT at the end of December; public review likely not begin before end of January, 2025.
- **Trails (Irene):** N/A
- **Chugach Park Fund (Haley/Claire):** Rasmuson grant submitted; Trail Tales January 21 and ongoing end of year donations.
- **Wildlife (Gus):** N/A
- **Planning (Rob):** Discussion on CMBR request to support a regulation change to allow bicycle use on the Muktuk Marston trail. Motion made and seconded (Shedd/Ellis) for CAB to write a letter of support for the regulation change for Muktuk Marston trail; motion passed with no objection. Discussion on CMBR request to support regulation change to allow bicycle use on the Peters Creek trail from mile six to the boundary of the area zoned wilderness; this section open to snow machine use. Motion made and seconded (Hart/Hackenmuller) for CAB to support regulation change to open Peter Creek trail from mile six to the wilderness zone

boundary. Motion passed with no objection. Discussion to consider the third CMBR request deferred to a later date.

- **Outreach (Rob):** N/A
- **Ram Valley (Haley):** One more committee meeting before the end of the month mainly to go over the scores for the alternatives for the general alignment under consideration.
- **Homicide Peak Name (Irene):** Committee to meet before the January meeting (Bill, Ted and Rob).

10. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn made/seconded (Britt/Ellis) and approved with no objection; PM.

Next CAB meeting January 13.