

CHUGACH STATE PARK CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD

Hybrid Electronic Microsoft Teams, 5:00 pm
BP Energy Center

Agenda for January 12, 2026

Regular meeting #1

1. **Call to Order: at 5:05 pm**
2. **Roll Call:**
 - a. **Present:** Kyle Shedd, Tyndall Ellis, Clark Saunders, Kristin Vantrease, Alison Smith, Gabbie Jordan, Gus Gustafson, Joe Hackenmueller, Sarah Brey, Robin Dublin
 - b. **Excused:** Bill Britt, Mark Miner, Irene Turletes
 - c. **Absent:** none
 - d. **Staff:** Justin Dipaola-Allen, Ella Fitzwater
 - e. **Other guests present:** Bill Sherwonit, Casey Durand, Will Taygan, Tom Meachum, Corey Stantorf (representing ADFG Board of Game), Nancy Pease,
3. **Changes to Agenda & Approval:**
 - a. Gabbie added item 6d: Trails Committee Guidelines
 - b. Tyndall asked to keep item 6a: Rendezvous Ridge and Powerline Pass reroute concepts
 - c. Statement from Irene will be read at next meeting when she attends in person
4. **Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:**
 - a. No changes. Motioned by Joe, seconded by Alison.
5. **Public Comments:**
 - a. Nancy Pease (online): commented on Safer Seward Highway EA and expressed concern that this design is overbuilt. Encouraged us to look closely at the EA, she was encouraged to submit her comments to the CAB in a letter. Comments are due by February 12th.
 - b. Judy Caminer (online): attending for discussion on Rendezvous Ridge reroute
 - c. Erin W (online): no comment
 - d. Tom Meachum (in person): has followed the Safer Seward Highway project for years.
 - e. Bill Sherwonit (in person): attending for presentation from ADFG representatives and would like the CAB to pay attention to hunts within the Chugach range. Is also concerned about the SSH EA disturbing wildlife viewing opportunities.
 - f. Casey Durand (in person): would like to publicize the public funding used for cleaning sluff along Seward Highway and that is why DOT has made the SSH a high priority.
 - g. Erik Gabrielson (in person): president of Chugach Mountain Bike Riders (CMBR), also a board member of Arctic Valley Ski area. Attending to voice desire to expand mountain bike options with CSP and supports the Rendezvous Ridge reroute opportunity.
 - h. Will Taygan (in person): asked the CAB to make a decision on whether or not to take up the Rendezvous Ridge concept plan and not leave it in limbo. He reminded the CAB that the trail will take 5-10 years be created and he would like our comments and feedback.
6. **Old Business:**
 - a. Rendezvous Ridge and Powerline Pass Reroute Concepts (Trails Committee)

- i. Tyndall asked if CMBR preferred Rendezvous Ridge or Powerline Pass as a priority.
- ii. Joe suggested not taking action until we have more members present.
- iii. This will be on the March agenda.

b. Non-CAB Committee Members

- i. Due to the Open Meetings Act, advisory boards must post meetings of 2 or more people discussing a specific topic or agenda item (Teams meetings included). Therefore, committee meetings must be posted and open to the public.
- ii. Inconclusive discussion about whether email discussion counts.
- iii. Social events are allowed.
- iv. Certain committees discuss private information, such as the nomination committee. Therefore those topics fall under executive privilege.
- v. Justin suggested subcommittees be wrapped into regular meetings when possible. All committees should inform him of meeting dates and agendas so he can post it online.

c. Safer Seward Highway Environmental Assessment

- i. Alison led discussion and asked Justin how much discussion there was between CSP and DOT before this EA. There were 5-10 meetings before Justin took over and 8 meetings since Justin has taken over. Multiple lengthy letters with CSP concerns have been submitted. The park doesn't have any input on alternatives and Justin reminded the CAB that individual comments have a lot of sway.
- ii. Justin emphasized that this is just an environmental assessment and not a final design.
- iii. Reminder that DOT owns many of the right of way access points into CSP.
- iv. If CAB members get comments to Alison by January 20th, Alison will compile into a CAB letter for public comment.
- v. Deadline for public comment is February 12th.

7. New Business:

a. ADFG Presentation: Relationship between Chugach State Park and Board of Game

- i. Corey and Nick attended from ADFG, both are the only overseers of Unit 14C which encompasses the park.
- ii. Their goal is to manage populations responsibly and their unit has more human conflicts than other units.
- iii. Discussion topics:
 - 1. How hunting regulations are created
 - 2. ADFG involvement in trail creation within the park and trails management plan
 - 3. Dall sheep at Windy Corner
 - 4. Lynx study
 - 5. Illegal trapping
 - 6. Current hunting proposals within the park
- iv. Get Corey's contact info from Gus if you want it.

8. CSP Staff Report:

- a. **Ella:**
 - i. Grooming at Glen Alps
 - ii. Future Summit Leader training this week
 - iii. Cabin inspections and stocking firewood
 - iv. Weekly snow condition report is being published weekly online ([link](#))
 - v. Currently interviewing for summer campground hosts

- b. **Justin:**
 - i. 56th year of CSP
 - ii. One park tech moved to Anchorage Fire Department, now they only have three park techs on staff
 - iii. Justin met with Eklutna Inc. about work on the Eklutna Lakeside Trail and have a path forward
 - iv. Justin attended the CASA advisory board with the municipality, getting information together for next year's CIB
 - v. Also gave law enforcement report on behalf of Keith

9. Committee Reports:

- a. Access (Bill): No update except to add on to the municipal CASA advisory board meeting. They are developing a way to score all potential projects.

- b. Budget (Tyndall): N/A

- c. Nomination (Gus): Welcome Robin! There are several applications and the nominations committee will be updated on them soon.

- d. Seward Highway Design (Alison): Comments to Alison by January 20th, plus three public hearings this week.

- e. Trails (Gabrielle): Handed out copies of guidelines and asked for feedback before March's meeting.

- f. Chugach Park Fund (Kyle): Lots of year end donations. They are coordinating with Chugach Electric to brush Powerline Pass. They are meeting this month to talk about future projects. Trail Tails fundraising event in March.

- g. Outreach (Rob): N/A

10. Adjournment: Gabbie/Gus

****attach letters from Brad Micklejohn and Shaun Sexton to final version****

25043 Schaff Drive
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January 02, 2026

Chugach State Park
Justin Dipaola-Allen
Chugach Region Superintendent
18620 Seward Highway
Anchorage, Alaska 99516

Superintendent Dipaola-Allen,

This letter transmits the enclosed thumb drive containing files of still photographs and videos taken on trails within and nearby Chugach State Park and north of Anchorage. The largest of the files provides documentation of damage left along the Eklutna Lakeside Trail following the so-called improvements in August and September 2024. The photo documentation captures the disregard of the parties involved for a number of the requirements detailed in the CSP Trail Plan and CSP Management Plan.

The photography of conditions of the Eklutna Lakeside Trail also documents ongoing damage by multi-wheeled transport as does that along the Peters Creek Valley and Edmonds Lake trails. The photography of the new section of the Crow Pass Trail documents areas where revegetation and slope stabilization should have been given more attention in meeting CSP Trails Plan requirements. The reroute, overall, is a favorable modification and well worth a walk to/from The Perch. The SWPPP files present still and video strategies for storm water management practices.

I am confident you may find beneficial uses of the documentation in the files. Such uses may include: persuading those accountable for the damage along the Eklutna Lakeside Trail and Road to remediate that damage; prophylactically using that same information as a “good-bad example” of trail maintenance practices; a future basis to support higher user fees commensurate with greater damage caused by select user groups; a need for funding for construction quality control oversight by either in-house personnel or by engaging an independent third party to perform that service; and, perhaps, de-selection of contractors with a history of non-compliance with CSP Plan requirements and or SOA laws, regulations and guidelines.

Sincerely,

Shaun E. Sexton
Valued CSP Patron

Cc. Irene Turletes, CSP CAB Chairperson (I.Turletes@gmail.com)

THE
CONSERVATION FUND

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January 7, 2026

Citizens Advisory Board &
Superintendent Justin Dipaola-Allen
Chugach State Park

RE: Rendezvous Ridge, Wilderness and the CAB

Dear Members of the Citizens Advisory Board,

First off, thank you for your voluntary service and your dedication to Chugach State Park, the nation's finest state park.

I am writing to you regarding issues raised at the December 8th, 2025 meeting of the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB), specifically bicycles, trails, and wilderness

The Statement of Purpose for the CAB reads:

1. To provide a forum for the collection and expression of opinions and recommendations on matters relating to State parks and outdoor recreation;
2. To promote the protection of the natural and cultural features of State parks and other State lands;
3. To promote communication among the general public, other government agencies, and the administrators of State parks;
4. To inquire into matters of community interest relating to State parks and outdoor recreation; to bring matters of interest to the attention of the public;
5. To appear and testify at public and legislative hearings as representatives of State park users and neighbors;
6. To make recommendations to the Director of the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation concerning, among other things, the following:
 - a) promoting the protection and enhancement of the State's historic and recreational resources;
 - b) promoting the interpretation and public presentation of the natural and human history of park lands;

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- c) increasing public awareness of human impacts on parks;
- d) promoting orderly and consistent planning, development, and management programs for State parks and cultural and outdoor recreation resources;
- e) identifying diverse public recreation uses;
- f) mitigating conflicts among user groups.

There is much that the CAB could be doing to fulfill these Purposes and to create broad benefit to Chugach Park. Instead, a contingent of the CAB is almost single-mindedly devoted to changing existing regulations to benefit one user group, to increase impacts on park resources, to override local community interest and to exacerbate conflicts among user groups.

The proposal from Chugach Mountain Bike Riders to allow bicycles on the Rendezvous Ridge and Muktuk Marston trails is controversial and destined to exacerbate user conflicts and impacts to fragile alpine tundra.

The residents most proximate to these trails, represented by the South Fork Community Council, are opposed to bicycles on Rendezvous Ridge. These same residents of Hiland Road and the South Fork of Eagle River have borne the brunt of recent trail construction that has run contrary to their vision, wishes, and input (e.g. major expansion of the South Fork Trail and construction of the Hunter Pass zig-zag scar). We, too, were given assurances by former Superintendent Ben Corwin that now seem even more suspect, specifically that the Muktuk Marston, Hunter Pass and South Fork trails would never be opened to bicycles.

The justification that the CAB is using for its energetic support of CMBR is that the current Chugach Park Trail Management Plan lists bicycles as a designed use/managed use for the Rendezvous Ridge and Muktuk Marston trails. Therefore, the CAB is throwing its weight behind a regulation change to ratify the use of bikes on these trails. It is worth noting that 28 other trail segments in the Trails Plan cite bicycles as a designed/managed use, such as the Eagle River South Fork Trail, but would require a regulation change to permit bicycles. Does the CAB support a regulation change to open the South Fork Trail to bicycles? If so, you will be summoning chaos and conflict on one of the most family-friendly trails in the park. Simply because the Trails Management Plan lists bicycles as a designed use or managed use does not make it a good idea to open a particular trail to bikes.

Part of the problem is that the Chugach Park Trails Management Plan was drafted in 2009 and adopted in 2016. Thanks in part to COVID, trail use in the park has exploded in the intervening years. Bicycle technology has also changed dramatically in the past 16 years, and few of us who were around in 2009 envisioned the expansion of bicycles into places that once seemed unlikely or impossible. The good news is that opportunities for mountain biking have also increased dramatically, with new trails at Kincaid, the Hillside, Mirror Lake, and Beach Lake, among others. Chugach State Park does not have to be the pressure relief valve to absorb the explosion of mountain bikes.

As we all know, maintenance of existing trails in Chugach Park is inadequate and underfunded. The solution is not to outsource the maintenance of specific trails to special interest groups. This is an unwise step toward the privatization of public lands. The solution is consistent and adequate funding for the maintenance of all trails in the park. This is a place where the CAB can act in support of Chugach Park by traveling to Juneau and lobbying the Alaska Legislature to provide the necessary funding. Outsourcing and privatizing trail maintenance creates a moral hazard where state government is let off the hook for funding routine state services. We do not want a system where certain trails “belong” to certain groups and are maintained at widely varying standards.

Finally, a word about wilderness. At the December 8th, 2025 CAB meeting, Will Taygan suggested that the designated wilderness areas in Chugach Park don’t necessarily have to meet the same standards as federal Wilderness areas. That is a surprising statement. While Alaska does not have its own Wilderness Act that defines what is and is not allowed in wilderness, Alaskans should know better than anybody what does and does not belong in wilderness. We don’t need to resort to semantics or word games to know what wilderness means. Alaska is the finest stronghold of wilderness in the world and we should uphold the highest wilderness standards, not seek to degrade them.

There is much the CAB can do to fulfill its purposes, support the Superintendent and take care of existing park resources. I encourage you to focus your energies in those directions in 2026.

Sincerely,



Brad Meiklejohn
Senior Alaska Representative