CHUGACH STATE PARK CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD

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

Agenda for September 14, 2026 **Regular meeting #6**

1. Call to Order: 5:00 pm

2. Roll Call:

	September 14
Kyle Shedd	Present
Bill Britt	Excused
Robin Dublin	Present
Tyndall Ellis	Present
Rob Clark	Present
Sarah Brey	Present
Clark Saunders	Present
Kristin Vantrease	Present
Alison Smith	Present
Irene Turletes	Excused
Mark Miner	Present
Gus Gustafson	Present
Gabbie Jordan	Present
Joe Hackenmueller	Present
Open position	

3. Changes to Agenda & Approval:

- Justin demonstrated Online Public Notice and how to access previous minute minutes and agenda items
- Link: https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/Notices/Search.aspx
- Search “Chugach” and it should be the only or one of the top choices
- Motion/seconded to approve agenda: Kyle/Alison

4. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:

- Motioned/seconded by Gabbie/Kyle (no edits)

5. Public Comments:

- Bill Sherwonit
    - Interested in the new business item from STA
    - Appreciates the new signage for fat bikes vs. regular bikes and the dates associated with allowance
    - Signage should be immediately removed/replaced when it's damaged or missing (ex: Wolverine)
    - Encouraged members to vote for JKT because of his stance on parks
- Betsy Oliver
    - INHT historic trail alliance, has stickers to hand out
    - No other comment
- Shaun Sexton
    - Would like to elaborate on Bill's signage comment, particularly on the Eklutna Lake trail. There are some signs that are a safety hazard.

6. Old Business:

A. Rabbit Lakes TH design update from Rys Miranda
    a. Rys is present in person, in charge of design for Alaska State Parks
    b. Rabbit Valley Trailhead project is advancing, bid opened September 4th and came in favorably. Low bid was within 2% of the engineer's estimate.
    c. Currently in the notice of intent to award stage and the 10-day protest period ended today.
    d. No schedule or details yet, but some work will happen this year for clearing so they don't interfere with migratory bird timeline in the spring.
    e. Will continue to present and keep us updated on the status of the project as deadlines, closures, and user conflicts become apparent.
    f. Majority of the construction will take place next year.
    g. Still set for more than 130 vehicles.
    h. Plan for trailhead closure: no details yet, but the contractors were required to have a public access point in their proposals.
    i. Final design is gravel, not paved.

j. Warning: Design starts at Sunnyside Trailhead, the road leading up to it is steep and is not addressed by this project.
k. Half of funding came from LWCF money (federal, National Park Service), the other half is coming out of capital budget from the legislature, which must be spent within 5 years of the allocation.

B. Basher TH Discussion: Justin's Update
   a. Current trailhead won't be closed until the new one is open.
   b. Delayed until next year due to the need to go before the Planning and Zoning Commission (meeting this evening).
   c. No updates about discussions between state parks and planners because discussions haven't happened.
   d. CSP is not involved in the design or management of the project, except for a potential MOU with the muni.
   e. Chugach Electric Association has stipulations around the powerlines, which their easement gives them control over.
   f. CSP has made comments in alignment with the CSP Access Plan.
   g. Last proposed size was 52 vehicles, which included bus/firetruck turnaround and vendor areas.
   h. Fuel break created by muni from 2025 Wildfire Protection funds at the request of Basher residents, re-done from 2011 fire break. Looks ugly but may have long term advantages.
      i. Potential to use the fire break as a new trail once the new trailhead construction is complete.
      ii. Fire break opens the view for bear interactions.
   i. Question from Betsy Oliver: is the future plan for the fire break to keep hydro-axing that area? Robin elaborated on the wind events that are significant safety concerns with the trees.
   j. Justin: CSP does not intend to spend money on maintenance for the fire break.

7. New Business:

A. George Pollock introduction from Single Track Advocates (STA).
   a. Has been in his role for about 6 months.
   b. He was a two-term member and chair of the CAB, ending in 2018.
   c. Explained what they've been up to with trail building and maintenance, how they connect to the park.
   d. George is focused on maintenance, not necessarily new projects.

e. Justin re-emphasized maintaining what we have instead of focusing efforts on new trails/projects.
f. STA allocates $40k per year for their trail maintenance. For reference, Falls Creek work this year was $15k.
g. Sustainable trail building techniques, for example peeling back the moss, laying tread, and re-laying the moss so the alders can't grow back into the trail.
h. Cooperation/coordination between AT volunteer events and STA events. Trying to work with NSAA to get bike trail status updates.
i. Award ceremony Alaska Conservation Foundation during that busy time.

8. CSP Staff Report: Justin Dipaola-Allen, giving all staff and ranger reports

A. "Back to Basics" has been good for operations, for example: outhouses have been pumped before winter
B. Alaska State Parks switching to new reservation system: Tyler Technologies, also used by the muni for various services
C. Homestead in ER entirely contained within the CSP, preventing various access points and bridges across the SFER. All the steps required from DNR have been completed to acquire the property. Fundraising is in place, $250k is required and about $150k has been raised. Will significantly help ER greenbelt accessibility.
D. CSP had 4 trail crewmembers, all returners with Leo and Spencer leading. 6.5 miles of trail cleared on TAT and boardwalks replaced, plus logging after high wind events. Extending the trail from Falls Creek to Windy Corner will be challenging, but they are looking into it.
E. Interior Trails was out on Crow Pass this summer, doing significant work along the Chutes and Ladders area. New reroute of stacked switchbacks was jackhammered out of the rocks. All summer was spent on .7 miles of trail, plus brushing an additional half mile of trail. That was all the funding for the Crow Pass improvement project. Price tags for more improvements are very high, beyond what can be assisted by INHT.
F. Alaska Trails did a LOT of brushing within the park during volunteer events, boardwalks, and a great bridge.
G. Stairs on the front side of Flattop: there is funding that has been allocated and they have a few years to use it.

H. This winter, many culverts froze in and very significant damage sustained on Rabbit Valley trailhead and Stewart trail. Staff helped significantly with recovery from that.
I. Rainy July: culverts on Indian Valley Road filled up with debris and logs. Residents had to use sandbags to prevent flooding. That road is now not great, users are encouraged to walk or use a high clearance vehicle.
J. Road in Bird Valley is also significantly damaged, no way to repair it now.
K. New technician out at Eklutna, working on signs and brushing. Re-established Bold Airstrip. Serenity Falls was pumped.
L. Bird Point: got a big haircut and face lift ☺ lots of brushing happened. Vandalism from kids playing beer pong in a building has been cleaned up.
M. Funding from Matson for improvements to bulletin boards at Glen Alps.
N. Safety issues at Flattop are being mitigated by encouraging users to hike Little O'Malley instead.
O. Mobile pressure washing unit is helping actually clean bathrooms for the first time in 20 years.
P. Staff has been cleaning out shops, cleaning out cobwebs and fixing leaky roofs.
Q. Staff was alerted to a structure being built near Hidden Lake, someone was hiking in 2x4s.
R. Shoutout to Ella for hiring the most incredible campground host at ER Campground. No issues with campground hosts, all of them want to come back despite a cost of $5-8k for them to drive their rigs up.
S. Lots of Boy Scout groups helping in the park this year.
T. Will Taygan connected CSP with Bartlett High School picnic table projects, 13 total new tables.
U. Indian Valley Trail Update: mostly complete, but not quite to the pass, but next year will probably get to the pass. Alaska Trails is hosting celebration on September 23rd.

Ranger Report:

A. Rangers were very busy. Enforcement, traffic violations. Coordination with Fish and Game for wildlife management within the park.
B. Lots of SARs, injured hiker near Black Lake, lost child at campground.
C. 8 SARs in a two week period, rangers were able to respond to 6. State Troopers are technically in charge of SARs and then they delegate to CSP rangers.

D. Brown Bear mauling in Bear Valley, provided armed overwatch during the evacuation.
E. Temporarily closed multiple trails, including Hemlock Burn.
F. Assisted with Crow Pass Crossing Race.
G. Violations for fishing issued at Eagle River.
H. Boater safety violations given at Eklutna Lake.
I. Lots of nonprofits have permits. The geocaching group was interested in some permits but they received bad advice; the management plan needs to be followed. Rangers helped pick up 140 caches within the Eklutna area, although there are more out there.
J. Users were crossing private property in Peters Creek to access the park. Investigation remains ongoing.
K. Upper Huffman trailhead after hours partying has been quieter since rangers stayed late and intercepted the violators.
L. Helicopter landing on Pioneer Peak was posted on social media. FAA charts have the park boundary wrong.
M. Rangers have been cutting brush.
N. CSP rangers were helping out at Hatcher Pass and on the Kenai for peak fishing.
O. Budget related: Legislature appropriated VRT tax from companies like Turo, plus a one-time capital increase for fee-generating facilities. 9.B. ACC, Alaska Conservation Corp. Helps with personnel but can't be used for hiring other full time personnel. One part of the funding is a one time allocation, the other part is to be used over 5 years.
P. Operating budget had a modest increase due to VRT increase. 8 new pay stations have also helped with increased revenue. New ones have tap to pay. The park needs options for pay by phone as well.
Q. Increase in price of oil has increased the state's budget.
R. Last year, CSP brought in $1.8 million and cost $2.6 million to operate. State Parks gets $18 million total.

9. Committee Reports:

A. Access (Bill): CASA Assembly Ordinance.
    a. Background: About a year ago the mayor's office produced an ad-hoc committee to provide a list of prioritized CASA projects.

    b. State workers like Justin don't have a role in municipal affairs, hasn't been following it since it's a municipal function but it would be good to have him there as an ex-officio member.
    c. Municipal hearing from August 4th and it will be discussed again on September 25th. We could provide a letter of support for or against.
    d. The ordinance establishes the advisory board and removes that any road project needs to be approved by the LRSAs. Some people feel that LRSAs have veto power, but then they need to maintain the roads that were bonded by others.
    e. Anna Brawley giving presentation at community council meetings. Advisory board will consist of a well-rounded group of individuals (LRSAs, etc.)

B. Budget (Tyndall): CAB has lobbied over the past few years for the VRT to include online rentals like Turo. 50% of the VRT goes to parks, 50% to DOT. $1.9 million extra.
C. Nomination (Gus): Didn't receive any applications over the summer, will re-visit some of the stale ones. We'll need more folks because some term out in December. A member from the Valley would bring a unique perspective to our board. Gaps in "interest coverage:" equestrian, hunters, non-Anchorage users.
D. Seward Highway Design (Alison): None. Public meeting on the 22nd and 23rd. There will be another public comment period from 9/22 to 10/22. 6F has stalled out.
E. Trails (Gabrielle): Governor's webinar, Trails Guidelines.
F. Chugach Park Fund (Kyle):
    a. Alaska Trails crew worked on Lost Cabin/Wolverine Ski Bowl. Brushed Little O'Malley. 5 volunteer events. Northern Trail Maintenance brushed Falls Creek. CPF paid for some directional/fat bike signs and CPF signs for trail heads.
    b. 2027: Near Point (stage project) uphill from the 4 corners, replace bridge.
    c. 2028: work on that trail above tree line. Annual meeting tomorrow. Goal is to have Near Point mirror Sunnyside as a northern option for switchback to peak.
G. Outreach (Robin): Nothing to report.

H. Wildlife (Gus/Robin): Through his role at ERNC he speaks with Corey Stantorf often. Will sit down and chat about a few things with Robin and Corey after conflict season. August 10th the Albert Loop is closed UFN.

10. Adjournment: 6:55 pm.