



Kachemak Bay State Parks Citizens' Advisory Board
95 Sterling Hwy, Suite 2
Homer, Alaska 99603
KBSP CAB Meeting Minutes, February 14, 2024

1. Call to Order at 5:30pm

2. Roll Call: – Robert Archibald, Nancy Hillstrand, Kevin Walker, Louis Dupree, Yarrow Hinnant, Aron Peterson, Glen Seaman, Meg Cicciarella, Steve Patton

Absent: Kirsten Dixon, Curtis Jackson, Sue Christiansen

Park Staff Present: Hans Rinke & Jason Okuly

3. Approve Agenda – No changes.

4. Corrections / Approve Minutes from January 2024 / Add Aron Peterson and correct spelling of Nikky Scarzi. Amended Minutes were approved.
Video at <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/misc/kbayadvisoryboard.html>

4. Public Comments: No public comments

5. Parks Superintendent Report - Hans Rinke:

Currently working on compiling the public comments received during the scoping process for personal watercraft and drones in the Park. There have been no regulation changes. He will share the document with this group when it is completed. We are actively recruiting for Citizen Advisory Board members. If interested, or know of anyone, please have them fill out an application or chat with any of the Park Staff. Spring is in the air in Homer, and Soldotna reached 50 degrees. That means Eric Clark, our permanent seasonal staff will soon be back, March 1st. We have filled two other staff positions in the last few weeks. Tiffany Brand was the Soil and Water Conservation Service Lead in Kenai. She has a great background in Natural Resources and will be our Specialist coordinating Citizen Advisory Boards, campgrounds, and our field site operations in the summer. You will be seeing her. We have 1 vacant position left in the region to fill, out of 15. We lost 6 staff last year. Thank you everyone for your assistance and patience with all the transitions.

Nancy Hillstrand asked about the Governor's executive orders disbanding the Wood Tikchik and Haines Bald Eagle Preserve Boards and does it affect us at all? The State Parks' recommendation is that if that does occur, those Governor appointed Boards should be replaced with Director appointed Boards, much like this Kachemak Bay Citizens' Advisory Board is appointed. That is the Parks' Stance. There are 3 types of Boards. There are boards appointed by the Governor (those 2 State Parks we have been talking about fit in this category). We have 1 "Commissioner appointed Board", the Kenai River Special Management Area. The 3rd type of Board is appointed by The Director of State Parks, like this Citizen Advisory Board. There are about a dozen.

Hans doesn't yet fully understand the ins and outs of all the Boards but the Kenai River Board, KRISMA is commissioner appointed, and it takes quite a long time to get those appointments through sometimes. The Director is more nimble in responding to citizens like us volunteering to be on the Park Advisory Boards. Hans will get a pulse from the agency, to discover if a letter from the KBSP CAB in support of the State Parks stance would be helpful. He will circulate that info back through Robert. He apologizes for the political answer, knowing there is pushback, because it is a multi representative board with many interests including agency and native people. He asks us to stay tuned and thanks us for our support. Aron Peterson wonders about the Borough property that is next to Cottonwood/Eastland. Hans reports that there has been no movement on it, either by the State or the Borough. He spoke to the Borough Mayor's office about it and the Borough Land Management Department on it. He will follow up with another Borough meeting with the objective of keeping/getting the land in the Park.

6. Operations Report - Jason Okuly:

Jason has done a variety of training over the month including use of force training, defensive tactics, and ice rescue with the local fire department. He issued a permit to do a winter survival /rescue class on the ice at Grewingk Lake. Carter went out and checked on the permit and while out there noticed some aircraft flying over the Park. In response, they posted, in the local paper, the Park regulations pertaining to aircraft, in terms of what is authorized and what is not. Also in the paper, was an article on Parks, issuing a citation for disturbance of natural resources (with a misdemeanor charge) for construction of a road within the State Park. The citation was to a Halibut Cove Lodge after they drove an excavator through the park, removing rocks, trees, and vegetation, to build a 700-foot trail to their lodge. The Park has a variety of applications for hiring VIP crews. They have hired 1 out of the 5 slots. He is continuing to solicit applications and interviews. He does not yet have a ranger station host, so if anyone knows anyone who wants to live in a cabin in the woods for a summer, let him know. The Ranger staff attended an invasive species meeting and discovered an 11 acre infestation of aquatic Elodea in Crescent Lake. Elodea comes out of aquariums that people dump in the lake. How could it get to Stormy Lake? Kenai Peninsula was thought to be Elodea free but they found it in our remote Lake. Highly unlikely a hiker brought an aquarium up to the lake to dump. Most likely float planes. There are several lakes in the Park that are float plane accessible and at risk. Personal watercraft could also transport Elodea. He can send the Soil and Water Conservation District Recommendations for Invasives to us. Stonehocker Creek power line erosion mitigation steps reviewed with the Board. Historically the Creek flowed into China Poot Bay. The erosion may be affecting the Silver Salmon Creek. HEA decided to reinforce the existing poles. There is a steep channel now and erosion from the HEA power line and the heavy equipment used to drill steel beams down deep into the ground under the existing poles. The new steel beams hold the existing power. The old poles have been left in place until they fall over.

7. Committee Reports

Trails Committee

Cottonwood/Eastland - Discussed earlier in the meeting. Aron Peterson believes it will be a great place for Grandkids. He is not sure he will see it's resolution / potential in his lifetime. During the Trails Work session, (prior to the CAB meeting) numerous user groups were represented (hikers, bicyclers, horseback riders) and discussed plans that everyone could agree on. Encouraged users to get out there with a shovel and ground truth the area to see what will work for all users. Encouraged interested people to attend the Trail Work Sessions, give invaluable input, 4 pm each 2nd Wednesday of the month before the CAB meeting.

Fiends Report

No Report

Water Trail Report

100 Men Who Care' just donated a \$10,000 grant to get underprivileged Kids Across the Bay

Eveline SRS

Nikky Szarzi provided Nordic Ski Club a budget to consider, in hopes they would stay engaged in the area over the summer. They have a couple people who may be willing to maintain the area. Beautiful wild flowers and hiking in the summer, though there is work to be done. Amazing skiing in the winter.

Habitat Committee

No Report

8. Old Business

Personal Watercraft lawsuit - When the ban was rescinded this refers to the ban in the critical habitat area. They have not been allowed in the State Park. The State of Alaska has until the 20th of the month to appeal the judge's decision. If this happens the suit will go to the State Supreme Court. If they don't appeal it, the decision will be in place. No jet skis in Kachemak Bay. How do you report a jet skier racing across the water at 80 miles an hour? Contact Jason, State Troopers have a boat, Wildlife Officer, but there are not many enforcement people truly available. We will do the best we can using interagency cooperation and education, to get the word out. If the State loses this court case, do the people that contributed to keep jet skis out of the park get their money back? Yes, but it is not usually everything. Doesn't happen until the last court case (Supreme Court) decision is made.

9. New Business

Nancy Hillstrand is working with the Board of Fish Habitat Committee. She will have more to report after the Cook Inlet meetings are done.

10. Comments of the Public

Gary Fandrei - Attempting to listen over Teams, but not easy to hear.

11. Comments of The Board

Aron Peterson has 4 bear spray canisters that are spent and can be filled with water for education and practice/demonstrate how to use.

Kevin Walker was asked to write a letter to State DOT regarding our support of the underpass in the Diamond Creek area being considered when the highway is rebuilt. The underpass would provide a pedestrian trail up to the Recreation Site. The City of Homer supports it because they can have City events at the Diamond Creek Recreation Area and it ties all the trails in that area together. Kevin received a letter back from Brian Anderson, Commissioner of DOT and Public Facilities, thanking us for our voice of support. He acknowledged that it would meet community needs and enhance recreation and environmental values, but gave no commitment. It is not off the table, but is not on the table.

Nancy Hillstrand reported that there is a problem with the PH in Halibut Lagoon. It is extremely high. There is also a benthic problem but because the State took over for the federal DEC, the hatcheries are appealing. It was in the NPDES permit that is now called the APDS permit (very complicated) but important to keep an eye on. Nancy will report on this next meeting.

12. Meeting Adjourned at 7:30pm

Next KBSP CAB meeting will be on March 13th at 5:30 pm, Trails Meeting at 4:00pm