



Kachemak Bay State Parks Citizens' Advisory Board
95 Sterling Hwy, Suite 2
Homer, Alaska 99603
KBSP CAB Meeting Minutes, March 13, 2024

1. Call to Order at 5:30pm

In Attendance: – Robert Archibald, Nancy Hillstrand, Kevin Walker, Louis Dupree, Yarrow Hinnant, Aron Peterson, Glen Seaman, Sue Christiansen.

Absent: Kirsten Dixon, Meg Cicciarella, Curtis Jackson, Steve Patton

Park Staff Present: Jason Okuly

Guests: Welcome Tiffany Brann - Natural Resource Specialist, year round Park position.
Mako Haggerty, Jeanne Roche, Darlene Perkins and Gary Fondrei

2. Approve Agenda – No changes.

3. Approve Minutes - No current hard copy, recording online
<https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/misc/kbayadvisoryboard.html>

4. Public Comments:

Dave Brann - Shout out and public thanks to Todd Mitchell, who is an active Kayaker, (made 18 crossings of Kachemak Bay last year). He has provided Dave with Park reports on the state of things, including outhouse pictures, which are greatly appreciated. We can follow Todd Mitchell on You Tube. Dave encourages other Park users to provide him feedback regarding Park facilities. There will be a Social at Grace Ridge Brewery on May 7th, during the Shorebird Festival, with presentations from Todd, Dan Weatherly, and Hal and Jess Shepard, all active Water Trail users.

Mako Haggerty: Reports added Park bookkeeping burden on commercial operators, once simply required to purchase a park permit. They are now required to pay \$6 a head (up from \$4) for every client, which adds to already complicated accounting issues, and unfortunately when paid to the Park, does not go to KBSP but into the general fund.

He would also like to see jet skis out of the Park, though they have been coming in. Jet skis take away from his clients Park experiences.

He reports that the Glacier Lake Trail is overrun. Decisions need to be made to protect the area from demise; perhaps a limited number of reservations or permits could be allocated, though it would add to his business' bookwork.

Glad to see the Conservation Fund did purchase the Saddle Trail property to turn over to the Park but money still needs to be raised to reimburse them for it. Discussion regarding the purchase followed. \$180 thousand still out, Friends of KBSP may be contributing. The trailhead will be rerouted to the beach over the next 3 years, depending on grant

funding. Considerations include limiting # of people using the trail, consider competitive commercial use permits (100 people a day?). Could have Park headquarters issue permits, could do permits online. There is an old cabin on the land that may need to go. It was suggested that users would not bat an eye at raising the client fee to \$10 a head. Money would go to the general fund. Many more users in Chugach and on the Kenai River actually help pay for KBSP. Developing Cottonwood/ Eastland would eventually add to our Park numbers but requires outlay of initial money (we don't have) for our area, before numbers increase. Debt loss unless user fee, or cabin fees. The question to all of us, do we want more users in KBSP? World class hiking trails, bike trails, horse trails would bring in so many more people... With resource damage or harm, we could limit use. We get low user numbers compared to other state parks. Do those users pay a user fee? Approximately \$100 - \$140 round trip per person (including water taxi tip) is what it takes currently to commercially get into the park. Approximately 40% of the commercial users are out of state visitors, 60% Alaskans. State Parks are funded by a car rental company tax, 1/2 of the money we receive. There was a bill that was going to cover this without the car companies being taxed. Director of Parks, Rickie Gees recently spoke to the legislature, but no one was sure what he had presented regarding the tax. The tax change was possibly postponed so businesses could better prepare and perhaps be able to reflect the fees in the upcoming seasons. User fees discussed.

Upcoming weeklong Science Symposium beginning 3/17, including a presentation by Dr. Bretwood Higman on Earthquakes, Tsunamis and Climate Change. The UAA Tutka Lagoon Research findings will also be presented. Sea Duck Survey, and Conservation Society meeting dates and times were announced.

5. Parks Superintendent Report:
Hans Rinke - is on vacation.

6. Operations Report:

Jason Okuly - Operations report included review of new hires, including VIP crew. Eric is back and hard at it. Tiffany, and 2 employees, out of Sterling Office have been down getting to know KBSP and will help down here as needed. Our Rangers will reciprocate, if needed. Park infrastructure is being investigated. RTP grant extension was improperly dated so hopefully funding will not run out, and we will not be required to pay back money we have already spent. The University bought Young's hotel. Plans are being developed with lots of input. Possibly a conference center, housing, NOAA programs... There is a possibility that KBSP might have a permanent space there and face in downtown Homer, which would be helpful. Spreading the word to commercial outfitters providing hunter trips to the outer coast, there is a \$300 fee per person guided. Nancy Hillstrand said Native Corporations bill users different amounts for different uses.

7. Committee Reports:

Trail Committee – Cameale Johnson -Very productive meeting. Interior Trails attended. Eric Clark is back, providing guidance. Next steps are to get together Interior Trails, Ptarmigan Trails, representatives from each trail user group to coordinate the trail layout process.

Ptarmigan Trail will be up to discuss where the trails will go first 2 weeks of June, specific guidelines of where the bike trails need to go. Sounds like equestrian issues worked out. 20+ people attended. Concerns include: No IMLA still. How will enforcement be handled? Bikers, equestrians, hikers, skiers, lots of interest now...

Interior Trails have concerns there is too much too fast, we need to move with a phase approach.

What is needed for public notice? As the plan continues, it will be presented here in the CAB. The Board is updated every meeting. Each trail is very separate. The trails will be developed in accordance with the Park Management Plan. It is important to begin working on and have a Master plan for Cottonwood/Eastland, trails, public use cabins... so when money becomes available, the plans can move forward.

Friends of Kachemak Bay – Mako Haggerty:

Grace Ridge Social May 7th Kids across the Bay - 4 guided hikes, 1 kinder kid hikes, sorting out details Alpine Ridge subcommittee has met. Looking at next steps for trail reroute. So can apply for RPT grant. First phase would be rerouting the upper tundra area because that area is at most risk.

Eric's Trail - China Poot Lakes, Mekong Delta. Trails Day June 1st.

'100 Men Who Care' funding the Kids Across the Bay. Big thanks.

Shorebird Festival Pancake Breakfast not happening this year. Need more people and energy. It was a good event, Rangers in uniform serving, volunteers cooking, recruited lots of volunteers, and sold swag. Could get Legislators to help us instead, name trails after them.

Water Trail Report - Dave Brann

Doing a presentation for REI in April/May. May 7th Water trail Social at Grace Ridge. No charge, Give away oysters, shrimp...fun potluck gathering before upcoming kayaking season. Kayaking class with Randi Keeler in May (18,19th?). Water Trail Group usually works at adopted sites for Trails Day Projects at Cottonwood Creek, Chugachik Island, Kayak Beach, preseason work. June 4th is Water Trail's 10th Birthday. There will be a cake and ice cream party out on the Spit. Lisa and another assistant from 'Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance have been invited. They provided crucial initial support.

3-4 years ago, Dave met a young couple from Sweden (he is a woodworker). They had kayaks and tents on the spit and ended up going to Tutka Lagoon Sea Star Cabin with Dave and Molly. He is coming from Sweden to volunteer for the Park this summer. There is also a March 17th work party at the Water Trail Pavilion planned at the pavilion on the Spit.

Glen Seaman - suggests a 1-page flier, for users to learn about the Park, events. It could also elicit members for the Board. Timeline for Board Applications supposed to happen by the end of March. Term is up the end of June. Newly appointed Board Members come onboard July 1, according to CAB Bylaws. September is the first meeting of the year. Ad is currently in the paper soliciting Board Members. Get an application if you want to stay on the Board. Make recommendations to the Director by May. We may want to amend bylaws at the next meeting.

Cottonwood/Eastland – Aron Peterson:

2600 acres, winter wonderland, amazing hiking, skiing...Cottonwood / Eastland - just incredible park. All we need is a snowplow. Need to put it in place for next year. There is access by the beach if you walk down the end of East End Road and walk up to Eastland Creek. There are decades of historic use by many user groups but over the last few years the neighbors have made it impossible to access the Park from East End Road. Borough land at 17.4 mile East End is our parking lot. A social trail to the park leaves from that parking lot, but it gets burned in by the State snowplow that goes whizzing by so is essentially unusable. Need to set up snow plowing there for next year. It is not a big area. Might the Friends fund the plowing? They paid for the \$2500 IMLA application. ¼ mile away is the IMLA land that we have been requesting for the Park for many years. We were told the first IMLA the Park requested (by Mako many years ago) has expired. First Park management plan for Eastland/Cottonwood was 1977. Movement with the IMLA lost with Jack retiring. Borough Mayor Mike Navarre and Jack understood what was being attempted and put effort into moving it forward. Micciche and Hans may not yet be on board. Will allocate time at the next meeting to discuss IMLA parking lot at mile 17. Currently doesn't meet up to our existing trail system. In 2001 we applied for 96 acres between East End Road and Raton. The Borough secured 67 of those acres; unsure of what the Borough intends to do with the land. Might it still be available to us? We have applied for the remaining 36 acres. DNR has designated municipal land selection across the road. Robert initially learned about the land from Snow Mads. No matter what, we still have to have a trailhead. Robert thinks possibly equestrian people might be willing to assist with obtaining it.

Eveline – Cameale Johnson:

Nordic Ski Club asked Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park to co-manage Eveline in the summertime. The Friends declined. They will put out volunteer requests for us and visa versa in the winter.

There are 2 people that want to co-manage maintenance this summer and they have set up a budget they are presenting to the Nordic Ski Club. Louie will be volunteering.

Habitat Committee – Nancy Hillstrand:

Waiting for the Board of Fisheries to cool down after meeting 2 days ago. Nancy is working on a project with the Habitat Committee of the Board of Fisheries. Over 50 years Kachemak Bay has been designated a Critical Habitat, status of management decisions and have they been consistent with the actual statutes, to perpetuate fish. It is a Report Card on how the wild fish in Kachemak Bay are doing. She is working with Marine Science Centers, National Estuary Reserve, NOAA, and Coastal Studies (has 40 years of Data). It will not be a report, but will be in the form of charts and tables, easier to

read and review.

8. Old Business: No old business

9. New Business:

Update on personal watercraft lawsuit - Robert Archibald:

State has appealed the judge's decision to rescind the ban.

State requested reconsideration on the decision. Judge Zeaman denied that request.

Now they are going to appeal decision to the Supreme Court and asked for a Stay which would allow PWC use until a decision made by the State Supreme Court. This was denied and the PWC ban will stay in place.

Time line - probably we will know within the next month.

State is asking for accelerated decisions. When the final decision is made (Supreme Court), the winner gets money back. Good case scenario - will need another \$20 thousand, could be more. Will wait to see what the judge says. The Judge may have been swayed by the public process, critical habitat established by regulation. You can establish a regulation but it cannot change the founding statute (protection). Additional discussion on process, recent comments review on what the public thinks...Cook Inlet Keeper, Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park and Quiet Rights are in the Law Suit. Commissioner is fighting them tooth and nail.

Recruitment for Board Members: We need to recruit some new members. Discussion of process. Please review bylaws before the May meeting. Robert will send them out. Mission, objectives of the CAB, founding park statues reviewed and discussed at length.

10. Comments of the Public:

Jennie Roche: Wished the excellent Trails Committee IMLA discussion would have been presented and documented in this meeting.

11. Comments of Park Staff:

Jason: Been working with Mining, Land and Water regarding the IMLA. Could go through a free permit process, in order to build a parking lot. They said they would do it through an IMLA. If it doesn't work, Jason or the working public group will apply for the permit and it should go through. Robert will write a letter. Division of Mining Land & Water said if HB 52 did not pass, the IMLA would be put on the top of their list.

12. Comments of Board Members:

Nancy: It is an amazing park, so important this work we are doing.

Robert: Reminds us of the oil spill that occurred in March 1989. Many changes, including Citizen Advisory Councils, for the good have occurred since that time as a result of people working hard. Hold on to our vision. There is power in people.

13. Meeting adjourned at 7:16pm

Next KBSP – CAB Meeting May 8th at 5:30 pm in the I & O Seminar Room
Trails Meeting at 4:00pm