



Northern Area Alaska State Parks Citizen Advisory Board

3700 Airport Way, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-4613 (907) 451-2695

Meeting Minutes Dec 7, 2023

The meeting came to order at 5:30PM

Attending: Bud Kuenzli, Dave Dean, Matt Sprau, Jeremy McGuire, Don Pendergrast, Gregory Corbett, Wendy Sailors

Not attending: Travis Brinzow, Ian Thomas, Darlene Masiak

Corrections to last minutes were made and adopted.

It was requested that the secretary include the dates and times of the next meeting in the minutes.

The minutes of Oct 19 were approved with the corrections suggested.

The agenda was discussed. It was noted that public testimony is rare but the option for public testimony is required and welcomed. We will look toward how to inform the public about our meetings more effectively to encourage public involvement. A time limit for public testimony was discussed. 3minutes was deemed reasonable. No specific motion or action was taken.

It was requested that we look to determine if the bylaws have a time limit noted. After checking the bylaws under III Meeting part C All Regular and Special Meetings ... there is no mention of a specific time limit for public testimony.

The agenda was adopted. There was no public testimony.

Our guest Jeremy McGuire introduced himself sitting in for Ian Thomas. A discussion of the Chena Recreation area ensued regarding the current equipment grant. It had been discussed by the board previously and Matt had created a letter of support for the Chena Rec Area maintenance equipment. A waiver and extension had been obtained for the waiver of equipment. It was noted the letter of support has certain requirements including postings and the proper signatures. The grant is an equipment procurement grant for roughly \$82,000 for 2 snowmachines, a side by side and other "meat wagon" equipment for use in the Chena Rec area maintenance over 73mi of trails. The funds come from federal dollars and are matched 10% on our side. The 10% match comes from the State DPOR budget. In the future a trail repair may come from the Northern Regional budget. The grant is for trail grooming equipment for both summer and winter seasons.

Resource crews and others including volunteers will be involved in the actual work. Some equipment will be staged at 33mi Chena Hot Springs. All the equipment can be used throughout the Northern Region Parks.

Most equipment will be purchased locally.

Jeremy would be the point of contact for volunteers and will ensure liability insurance and other needs are met.

Matt's letter of support for the grant was important in that it was a required "check off" in the application process. The CAB expressed their appreciation for Matt's letter of support.

The grant announcement will be sometime after a January meeting. Grant awards are given out in mid February.

The Friends of Kachemak State Park UAV and personal watercraft issue was discussed, There will be a zoom meeting Tues Dec 12 4 PM. Discussion ensued regarding the roles of watercraft and UAV in State Parks. A written letter is being asked for.

Action Item - It is requested that some comments be forwarded to Matt who will compose a letter to the Kachemak folks in response.

The structure of our meetings was discussed. Guest speakers were mentioned as something to encourage. Wendy was queried regarding how other CAB's operate. The Chugach meetings are posted online where more board members exist and are involved in quite a few projects including fund raising, grants (which require a non-profit "friends of" organization to be established). The Chugach CAB has made requests of the legislature in the past. The Kodiak advisory board has a friend's group for fund raising as a way to enhance the park.

It was noted we have no "friends" group. Darlene had looked at setting up a friend's group – a non-profit.

We discussed how other CABs are run. Wendy commented on first day hikes ...leading a hike for the public. First Sat of the year activities...Family to Parks program...kids to parks day...ambassadors that help out...fun things in the outdoors....a way to get new families out to the parks from new folks on our military bases. Kids to Parks is the 3rd Sat in May and is a national event. Partners ie businesses are typically involved...outdoors companies...snacks...a Ranger walk...a Trooper...Boating Safety typically attends.

Matt suggested it would be a great first project. Wendy would be involved along with Ian. The tourist industry would be a good match. REI brought snowshoes for a race.

Action Item – It was noted that we will follow up with email to begin planning.

Visitor use studies were discussed and what we know about recreational patterns was asked. Ian has mentioned it is hard to gain that information. Dr. Peter Fix at UAF was mentioned and the question was whether a grad student might take on a related project? How many people are using our parks, what uses of our parks are being made – jet skis, x-country skiing, 4 wheeling are all questions of interest. Don P. will pursue the idea of whether Dr. Fix might be able to work with a graduate student to learn some of our park's usages surveying people as they are using the park. It was agreed that the information would be useful and Don will investigate further with Dr. Fix to learn about the feasibility of gaining such information.

Action Item – Don P. will follow up with Dr. Fix regarding visitor use studies.

Wendy mentioned she has access to the existing data which includes monthly occupancy of our cabins by weekend and week and use by zip code and that data shows our Northern Region use is 80-90% in-state users. A survey could be created for use at the trail head with QR codes or provide a link or use social media posts.

It was mentioned by Wendy that a survey question could be added to the fee pay paperwork.

The Northern Region Director's Report was discussed.

For Fy 22 daily parking was under \$33,000 was raised. Annual Decal was \$28,000, \$61,00 total revenue which goes into the general fund and made available a year later. The money does not stay directly in the region; some can move from one region to another. This does not include boat launch fees.

Our CAB Alaska State Parks Facebook page was mentioned.

The Alaska State Parks Facebook page requests photos of the Fairbanks area.

Wendy mentioned that a CAB may often write a letter regarding UAV's , Watercraft or other issues regarding regulations. Regarding drones, it is becoming an issue for some in terms of privacy.

Old Business

Revision of bylaws will be tabled till the next meeting for input from Darleen. Volunteers will be discussed again.

We are down 2 or 3 board members. Matt has a person that has indicated an interested. Anyone with a potential candidate is encouraged to speak up.

Our next meeting should be posted to the web site to encourage involvement.

Potential changes to Parks names of places was mentioned as something that has happened in other places but the Northern Region has not yet been approached for any such requests.

Meeting Adjourned 7:05 PM.

Next meeting scheduled: Feb 1, 5:30PM