

Seward State Parks Citizen Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

March 15, 2023 5:30-7:30 pm

AVTEC Culinary Academy, 809 Third Ave, east entrance, third floor

Also via TEAMS

I. Call to Order

- A. Call to Order@ 5:38 PM by Chair Griswold
- B. Minutes taker: Kat Sorensen
- C. Roll Call: Bob Barnwell, Carol Griswold, Nick Jordan, Mark Luttrell, Kat Sorensen, Mica Van Buskirk (arrived at 5:45), Tom Miller (arrived later, time unknown)
- D. Board members absent: Cliff Reid, Tess Tulley
- E. State Park Staff: Superintendent Jack Blackwell, District Ranger Jack Ransom, Park Specialist Michael Burmeister
- F. Public Present: none
- G. Minutes Approval for February 22, 2023 Luttrell motioned, Bob seconded to amend minutes to change wording. Motion and approval passed unanimously.
- H. Agenda Changes and Approval: Approved unanimously without change.

II. Public Comments: none

III. Board Contact and Correspondence with Public: none

IV. Reports:

A. Staff Report:

Jack Blackwell: is retiring at the end of March. He said it was a pleasure to see the Board evolve and thanked us for our dedication. He will continue to advocate for state parks in our community.

Funding in the capital budget is moving forward and includes funding to move the Tonsina Public-Use Cabin but the capital budget has not yet been approved.

Lowell Point parking and access is the biggest need.

Suggested inviting Legislators to visit area park units, and show strong grassroots support. Board noted a ribbon-cutting ceremony this summer would be a great opportunity for publicity.

Jack Ransom:

Tonsina Bridge project has not yet gone out to bid

Time has been blocked out for cabin maintenance this summer; Sierra Club will return to volunteer and re-stain Thumb Cove Public-Use Cabin.

Permitting Officer Pam Russell is changing the permitting process for school groups; JR will be in touch with schools and agencies. School groups and approved organizations need a free permit. Monetary gain and groups over 20 people pay a \$50 permit.

Jack R asked the Board to contact him if we see commercial operations such as the new guided hiking for Tonsina Trail, winter guides, tour buses, etc so that he can get operators up to date on permits to help assure accurate numbers and use of park resources.

A notice about permitting could be posted at the kiosks and on the website.

Discussion about need to clear brush by boat launch ramp: ACCer will do it this summer.

Michael Burmeister

RTP grant was approved for the Alpine Trail work; 4 crew will be hired.

Fort McGilvray – National Register of Historic Places listing opens up funding in the spring and fall for future projects and interpretation. **There are no restrictions; adhere to standards when reviewing Scout projects. (clarify)**

- Nomination will be posted on the web, but Board noted need for caution on how much information is to be shared in order to protect cultural resources from vandalism and theft.
- Board discussed a KMTA grant due soon for improved signage for the area; requires a match with non-federal dollars, Boy Scout and volunteer time at \$24/hour, boat and staff time. Kat and Mica volunteered to work on the grant with support from the state parks graphics department. The Office of Historic and Archaeology also has grant opportunities. **(Clarify Preserve Alaska grants?)**
- Mark suggested a request for funding for a usable dock at North Beach, can't argue with safety and sanitation needs.

B. Committee Reports

1. Local issues, except parking (Nick):

Things are picking up out at Lowell Point, Miller's Landing has opened a dining establishment. A lot of people on Tonsina Trail.

2. Mining (Cliff, Bob, Carol):

Carol sent an email to DMLW Shawana Guzinski requesting clarification on the ILMA for Tonsina (see C. 2. below)

3. Legislative Committee (Bob, Mica) Budget:

Mica is staying in touch with representatives and found two grants – CAPSIS (Capital Project Submission and Information System) and Community Assistance Grant that may be useful.

Mica will resend budget documents via email to Board

Jack B recommended sending a letter to Director Gease by May 1 annually, stating our park budget priorities, then work with local legislators over the summer to educate them and to get priorities into the Operations or Capital Budget. In the fall, again communicate our priorities to Director Gease. The Governor's budget is presented by December 15, then subject to Legislative approval the following year. We are the stewards of spectacular resources that are appreciated by so many.

C. Goals for 2023 Updates and discussion

1. Continue to pursue Lowell Point Parking plan funding:

- SCORP staff are reviewing comments; <https://www.alaskacorp.org/> and <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/scorp.htm> for updated information
- CAPSIS "Capital Project Submission and Information System" is a capital improvement appropriation that provides one-time funding for community assistance. Check out link on Capital Budget: <https://www.legfin.akleg.gov/AgencyInfo/capitalBudget.php>
- Jack R noted that CAPSIS has funded many parking lots; Jack B suggested advocating for full funding for both upper and lower parking lots including engineering in-house and preliminary design

- Director Gease is looking for Congressional earmark for Kenai Peninsula access/recreation including Lowell Point parking. Funding may be possible through **Kenai Peninsula Development District** as a normal state parks improvement (**clarify**)
- 2. Continue to pursue resolution of Tonsina Creek mining issue
 - On 3-2-23, Carol contacted Shawana Guzenski about this statement: "In 1988, a trail right-of-way and five-acre parcel were proposed for the Tonsina Point area with the Division of Land and Water Management. In 1995, an Interagency Land Management Assignment (ILMA) was approved for the trail right-of-way, the five acres and an additional 630 acres of the Tonsina drainage." 1997 Caines Head State Recreation Area Management Plan
- 3. Support funding for deferred maintenance for FY 25: Board letter? Motion, etc.
 - Mica is writing a budget priorities letter to the director to send by May 1
 - Senator Stevens responded to her email.
- 4. Support funding for relocation of Tonsina PUC
 - \$50k in Capital Budget, not yet approved
- 5. Support Friends Group, whether locally or statewide: in SCORP comments
 - Update from Bob Barnwell: The Alaska Trails Conference in Anchorage April 12 to 14, 2023 highlights a lot of grant opportunities. <https://www.alaska-trails.org/trails-conference>
 - A Seward Trails Group would allow us to get grants, be a presence, and focus on winter trails. Homer Trail Alliance raised \$40K.
 - The Seward Iditarod Trailblazers need an injection of new blood, a State Parks Friends group could potentially merge with them. Their next meeting is April 18 at 5 pm at the Seward Museum.
 - Invite Steve Cleary from Alaska Long Trail to Seward to speak
 - **USFS Martha Strong, grants for Cooper Landing**
 - **DNR Kathleen Tarr, offers a grant class for RTP, ALW, historic conservation inside city limits**
 - Bob talked to Seward Community Development Director Jason Bickling and Parks and Recreation Director Maggie Wilkins about the Jeep Trail, which is not claimed or managed by the city
- 6. Update Parks website: re high tides, stove fuel, slides, and other changes:
 - Document with changes sent, Mario at DNR is working on it
- 7. Maintain laminated tide charts at kiosks (Carol, Nick)
 - Second quarter will be posted by May 1
- 8. Support Mooring Buoy Plan
 - Eagle Scout Project rescinded on 2-19-23, but still keeping as a Board priority Mooring buoys were requested in SCORP comments
- 9. Request FY25 funding for deferred maintenance of existing public-use cabin by May 1, 2023. Board letter to Director and Legislature? Motion, etc.
 - \$2.4 million for 16 public use cabins in state, and anticipate \$2.8 million next year where we will be able to include maintenance and possible replacement if needed.
 - Mica will draft a letter

10. Explore new public-use cabin locations:

- 2-22-23 Board voted unanimously not to support this; area has enough, new locations are scarce, deferred maintenance and relocations of existing PUCs are expensive and difficult.
- 3-15-23 Mica requested conversation to continue since we might as well be on the list and shouldn't turn down funding opportunities – we could replace existing cabins with new ones. Carol requested Mica research new locations for review.

11. Support installation of tent platforms in park: determine locations and include in grants. 2-22-23 Board supported Eagle Scout project to provide tent platforms.

12. Support ASLC meeting with all Resurrection Bay stakeholders (Nick): nothing yet

13. Update of 1998 CHSRS Management Plan, especially with the addition of Fort McGilvray Historic District on December 22, 2022, and send letter of support. (See below)

V. New Business

A. Approval of draft letter in support of CHSRA Management Plan update (Carol):

- Jack Blackwell recommended a work session to evaluate plan since other advisory boards have found that their plans don't need much updating
- Carol recommended we request update because of Fort McGilvray's listing on National Register, and other reasons outlined in letter to Director.
- Motion to approve and send Carol's draft letter of support: Kat moved, seconded: Mark, unanimous.

Due to lack of time, remainder of New and VI. Old Business was postponed to the next meeting.

VII. Informational Items:

1. Eagle Scout Projects feedback emailed by Chair to Scout John V on 2-23-23
2. Tonsina website suggestions emailed by Chair to DPOR on 3-1-23
3. March 2023 Trail Condition Report suggested edits emailed by Chair to Michael on 3-1-23

VIII. Public Comments: none

IX. Adjournment

A. Board Comments:

- a. Carol commended Jack Blackwell's service, and Jack R and Mike's dedication.
- b. Mica asked about protection for Pinnacle Rock, more signs and no collecting.

B. Date/Location of next meeting: Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at 5:30 pm in person and TEAMS

C. 7:32 Tom moved for adjournment, Kat seconded, unanimous