

Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board
***** Meeting Minutes*****

Thursday April 11, 2013, 2013
5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Roll Call:** Joe Connors, Ricky Gease, Brenda Trefon, Carol Padgett, George Heim, David Carey, Andrew Carmichael, Bruce King, Teri Carter, Brent Johnson, Janet Schmidt, Andy Loranger, Robert Begich, Jack Blackwell. Tim Stevens, Bobbi Jo Kolodziejski.
- B. Minutes Approval:** The minutes were amended under committee reports B, the space was removed between paragraphs Minutes were approved as amended.
- C. Agenda Changes and Approval:** Ricky Gease added an item under new business, the application to change the Big Eddy Day Use Area to the Harry Gaines day use Area. The agenda was approved as amended.

- II. Public Comments/Presentations** – Jim Richardson, past member and president of the Kenai River Special Management Board. Jim had been in contact with the board from the months of September to present in regards to the City of Kenai Comprehensive Management Plan. Jim was specifically concerned with the change in designation of Beaver Loop and the Angler Drive area to a multi use area which would significantly increase in commercial and high-density residential development. Jim and others feel this would have a significant adverse effect on the lower Kenai River and its Beaver Creek tributary. There has been opposition for this change and Jim was grateful that KRSMA was able to send a letter also stating its opposition to this change. At this time the City of Kenai has removed the Beaver Creek and Angler Drive area off the table to change the designation. Now the proposal is to rezone the area to residential. At this time there are no details to determine what impact this change may have on the area. Jim is very passionate about the lower Kenai area. Jim thanks the board for sending the letter and will keep the board informed on any future developments.

Ron Weilbacher spoke in opposition of changing the Big Eddy Day Use area to the Harry Gaines Day Use Area. RW would like to suggest that if we are going to rename it, select someone who has really done something significant for the river. Maybe it should be named Ted Steven or RL Parker.

REPORTS

A. Agency and Government Reports

- a. State Parks** - Jack Blackwell reported how the process for naming a state park will proceed. It uses the same criteria as that of the office of History and Archaeology uses for naming features in the state. The person must be deceased for 5 years. The person must have made a noteworthy contribution to Alaska and has had a long term association with the feature. Also the name needs to be approved by the neighborhood. The state attorney has stated that the park requires legislative action to change the name of this park.
The operating budget is currently being worked on by the legislature for the fiscal 2014 and there will be a gap in the personnel service funding for park staff. We have a 500,000 shortfall statewide. This will significantly affect the Kenai Area as the Natural Resource Specialist that works at the Gilman River Center assisting in permitting will not be filled. Also, the Seward Ranger II position which will currently become vacant will also not be filled. Also the seasonal ACC (Alaska Conservation Corp), which include three positions on the Kenai Peninsula will not be filled. The KRSMA board was very active in working with the Legislature and helping in restoring the Kenai River Ranger that was vacant approximately 2 years ago. At this current time that has been left in the proposed budget to be rehired as of July 1, 2013. Jack Blackwell thanked the board for all their effort in helping in restoring this position.
- b. DEC** - Tim Stevens reported as of April 11, 2013 the City of Kenai will receive a grant to look at bacteria in the water during the personal use fishery. This is a project that has been operating for the last three years.
- c. ADF&G** –The biggest change in the Kenai River drainage is the new sonar site at 13.7 for both early and late run Chinook salmon. The past sonar site at mile 8.6 site will be operating for the next few years to determine if the mile 13.7 site will become permanent. Flyers are available at the Fish and Game and State Park offices.
- d. USF&WS** – Janet Schmidt reported that the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge visitor center is still in the design phase. The Refuge is moving forward hiring seasonal folks, some of the personnel is professional volunteers that are coming in from the lower 48. They will be assisting in running the visitor center and campgrounds. Janet stated that the Refuge is looking at 5% cut in budget for the 2014 year.



Kenai Area Office, PO Box 1247, Soldotna, AK 99669, 907-262-5581
Kenai Peninsula Borough, 144 N. Binkley, Soldotna, AK 99669 907-262-4441
Gilman River Center 514 Funny River Road, Soldotna, AK 99669, 907-260-4882
Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the Kenai Peninsula Borough



- e. **USFS/Chugach** – Bobbie Jo Kolodziejski reported that the forest service is in the same budget situation. They will experience a 5% cut across the board. Fortunately the Chugach National Forest Service has approximately a 30% vacancy due to retirements. Bobbie Jo position and project has not been cut so they will have full staff out and about working in the Russian River Area. Travis Mosely is leaving the USFS for a position in Mexico. The 5 year Russian River action plan has been completed and is currently available on the web page.
- f. City of **Kenai** - Sean Wedemeyer/Rick Koch was not present.
- g. **City of Soldotna** – The City of Soldotna budget has added funding for 2 additional seasonal campground employees for the 2013 summer season. Twelve new additional vaults will be installing in Centennial Park. The city is currently working in obtaining 30 new bear proof garbage containers for the area and possible looking at sonar panel trash compactor. These compactors would help diminishing the pickup by approximately 75%. The final design for Soldotna Park will be completed and the contractor bid for construction should be awarded by May 23, 2013 with a deadline for the end of the 2013 summer. The master recreation plan for the City of Soldotna is currently in reviewed.
- h. **Kenai Peninsula Borough** - Brent Johnson reported about the anadromous stream habitat protection committee. There are a few streams along the Kenai that may be affected if this ordinance if passed. The public has voiced a strong opposition to the ordinance. There was a disconcerting meeting in Nikiski that all attendees spoke in opposition to the ordinance. Anchor River was also against it except for 4 people. The assembly will not take action until the task force has completed there report. Assemble member Kelly Wolf has submitted a request that the ordinance be completely thrown out. Brent recommended that KRSMA should resend the letter to the borough assembly supporting the ordinance.

B. Committee Reports

- a. **President's Report** – Joe commented that he attended there committee meeting with approximately 10 to 12 people at each committee. Joe thanked everyone for the participation. Joe also stated that he visited with each of the legislature that was in town about the Kenai River ranger position.
- b. **Guide Advisory** - Joe Connors reported that this was a well attended meeting. Four subjects were discussed.
 1. The renaming of the Big Eddy Day use area to the Harry Gaines Day use area. The committee discussed this thoroughly and the committee voted unanimously is support of the change.
 2. The new sonar site. Robert Begich talked about the concerns and all questions were responded to satisfaction.
 3. The subject of turbidity which will be discussed under new business.
 4. State wide guide bill and it is not being considered at this time.
- c. **Habitat** - Bruce King reported that the committee also discussed the subject of turbidity, which will be discussed further under ne business.
- d. **River Use** – Carol Padgett stated reported that the committee had discussion about the Bing's Landing Boat Launch design . Jack Blackwell stated that the design is still in draft form. The committee recommended that Parks should look developing a dual launch facility. The committee also discussed with Janet Schmidt from the Refuge about Jim's Landing and the problem with boat congestion. The committee would like to be included in the design phase and have an opportunity to submit comments. Carol discussed where we State Parks were at with the Kenai River baseline boat count. At this time it is believe that this will not happen for the 2013 year and will send a letter to Ben Ellis asking for funding in the 2014 season. They also discuss the human waste management on the upper and middle Kenai River. Looking at options of education and infracture and having what is know as a poop patrol. A presentation will given at May's meeting. Maps as to where there is a bathroom
The red salmon Stamp is still in discussion and some of the discussion is what the money would be used for. Draft up a concept and bringing it to board.
- e. **Legislative/Government Activities** – No report
- f. **Board Development** - No report
- g. **Agenda/Board Structure/Housekeeping** – No Report

III. OLD BUSINESS-Action Item:

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Discussion about the turbidity in the Kenai. Dec is currently being asked if they are going to list the Kenai River as impaired for Turbidity. Tim stated that the report was due back in April 2012 and the report was giving to EPA and they reported that they found far more exceedances then they like and would like to see DEC to list the Kenai River as impaired. There are four options to consider:
1. One is to go out with an integrated resort again listing the river as impaired. This process would involve going out for public comment.
 2. Don't list the river and run the risk of EPA overriding the decision and listing the Kenai River as impaired. EPA met with DEC and putting off the decision until 2014 to obtain more information which again would run the risk of EPA overriding DEC and listing the Kenai River as impaired.
 3. Don't submit and 2012 report and wait until 2014.
 4. If they do not submit a report this again would run the risk of EPA overriding DEC and listing the Kenai River as impaired for drinking water and recreational use. This would impact the science, economic and social values of the river. All users would be affected. There are certain times of the years and certain days that we exceed the standards.

Bruce commented that the Habitat committee has been looking at potential options. This would help to come up with a suite of options to look at the help the solution before the recommendation is imposed by regulations. Some recommendations are such as staggering start times, don't allow the personnel use fishery to run up the river to exit or enter the fishery and drift boat only.

Tim handed out the Kenai Watershed Report from the peer review which explains the statistical method.

If listed it would be listed for impaired drinking water standard and recreational standard would only be listed for the month of July from mile 12.5 to mile 5.

- b. The application for changing the name of Big Eddy Day Use area to the Harry Gaines Day Use Area. An application was submitted to Alaska State Parks. He was a resident in Alaska for 21 years, he is a pioneer fishing guide. He was known as quarter mile Harry because he never fished more than a quarter mile from his home which is located a quarter mile away from the Big Eddy Day Use Area. A two page summary was also submitted. They are currently in discussion on how to proceed with these processes. This process will have to go through the Borough Planning commission.

V. CORRESPONDENCE - None

- VI. **PUBLIC COMMENT-** Mel Kroseng lives on Big Eddy Road and she has owned her property since 1975. Mel Kroseng commented on the renaming of the Big Eddy Day Use Area. She is opposed to the renaming it is inappropriate and is a conflict of interest. Big Eddy is known by that name by many people and do not wish to have a name change. There is an area that is names the Harry Gaines Camp.

Bob Kroseng, thank Jim Richardson for all of his work on the City of Kenai Comprehensive plan and the designation from residential or multi-use. He also stated is that he is not in favor of renaming the Big Eddy Day Use Area. Name it for someone who love the River and has does a lot for the River, such as Ted Stevens.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

A. Board Comments-none

- B. Date/Agenda of Next Meeting May 9, 2013, 2012 at 5:30 p.m.

If you would like to tele-conference the meeting the number is 714-2471



Kenai Area Office, PO Box 1247, Soldotna, AK 99669, 907-262-5581
Kenai Peninsula Borough, 144 N. Binkley, Soldotna, AK 99669 907-262-4441
Gilman River Center 514 Funny River Road, Soldotna, AK 99669, 907-260-4882
Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the Kenai Peninsula Borough

