

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

Thursday December 12, 2013

5:30 p.m.

Gilman River Center  
Soldotna, AK

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**A. Roll Call:** Joe Connors, Ricky Gease, Brenda Trefon, Carol Padgett, Clayton Holland, Andrew Szczesny, Brent Johnson, Keith Baxter, Andrew Carmichael, Terry Eubanks, Jack Blackwell, Tim Stevens and Ted Wellman (telephonically).

Each board member introduced themselves.

**B. Minutes Approval:** The minutes were approved as presented.

**C. Agenda Changes and Approval-**Brent Johnson added under New Business a discussion about the nominating procedure for new members of the Kenai River Special Management Area Board. The agenda was approved as amended.

**II. Public Comments/Presentations-**Dennis Randa commented that the past few times he has given public comment was mostly that State Parks is failing at its legislative mandate to protect and perpetuate the fishery of the Kenai River. Dennis said that he participated in the early meetings when the legislature established KRSMA and the advisory board and suggested that parks and the board revisit history to better understand the purpose of establishing KRSMA and issues that have faced this board.

**III. REPORTS**

**A. Agency and Government Reports:**

**a. State Parks** –Jack Blackwell provided board members with the following report:

- 1) Jack welcomed all the new members and encouraged all the board members to participate in the working committees.
- 2) Today Governor Parnell announced his 2015 proposed budget. The Parks budget did see some relief in the personal services shortfall. This will not fully restore all position within the state park system, but Parks did see an increase. This was positive because a number of departments faced reductions to their personal services funding.
- 3) The Governor's capital budget for the Kenai River and Prince William Sound Area includes approximately \$570,000 for deferred maintenance. This includes two KRSMA projects for replacing the walkway at the Funny River and the water well at Izaak Walton. The state park system has approximately \$60 million dollars of deferred maintenance with approximately \$19 million in the Kenai/Prince William Sound Area.
- 4) The proposed capital budget also includes \$1 million for Kenai River park facilities and access improvements (phase 1). Funding will help with planning improvements at Eagle Rock boat launch and installing two new restrooms on the Kenai River (one in the middle river upstream from Bing's and one on the lower river). Parks will work with the Guide Advisory and River use committees to explore locations for the restrooms along with facility planning.
- 5) State Parks will hold a joint meeting of the Guide Advisory and River Use committees at the January 9, 2014 meeting to review the site concept plans for the Bing's Landing boat launch, parking and access projects. This joint committee meeting is open to the public and will be a good opportunity to provide comments and input on the Bing's Landing improvements.

**b. DEC** – Tim Stevens provided board members with following report:

- 1) The Director of the Division of Water is meeting today with the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Department of Environmental Conservation regarding the 2012 integrated report. Part of the discussion will be to decide whether to list the Kenai River for impaired turbidity.



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Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the Kenai Peninsula Borough



- c. **ADF&G** –Not present
- d. **USF&WS** –Not Present
- e. **USFS/Chugach**- Not Present
- f. **City of Kenai** –Terry Eubanks provided board members with the following report:
  - 1) A copy of the 2013 Kenai River Dipnet Fishery report. He also announced that a work session to discuss the 2013 Fishery and Personal Use Fishery will be on January 6, 2014 from 6pm –8pm, in Council Chambers at City Hall.
- g. **City of Soldotna** –Andrew Carmichael provided board members with following report:
  - 1) The City of Soldotna is working with Parks and ADF&G to develop memorandum of understanding to connect Centennial Park with the Soldotna Visitor Center. The land between Centennial Park and the Soldotna Visitor Center is co-managed by Parks and Alaska Department of Fish and Game. This foot trail would be used year round and also connect Centennial Park with the Soldotna Sport Center.
  - 2) The City of Soldotna is also working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Kenai Watershed Forum developing a restoration projects to minimize continuing erosion issues at Swiftwater Park.
- h. **Kenai Peninsula Borough**-Brent Johnson provided board members with the following report:
  - 1) The Kenai Peninsula Borough passed a resolution to supporting set netting at the meeting.

## B. Committee Reports

- a. **President's Report** – Joe Connors reported on the philosophy of the KRSMA advisory board. He also welcomed the four new members to the board and the one reappointed. Joe really wanted to instill on the members that participating in the board and committees is really important. The board has eight meetings a years and on that same day we have committee meetings. The meetings start at 10 a.m. for the Habitat committee, 1 p.m. for the Guide Use committee and 3 p.m. for the River Use committee. Anyone on the board can sit on any committee. The board is currently seeking a chair for the Habitat committee and a co-chair for the River Use committee and board member support with the committees is very important. Joe explained that the board is advisory to Parks. When the board has a regulation proposal or change there is a process that is followed. The committee works on the initial proposal, which is than sent to the full board for approval, which is than sent to the superintendent and on to the director and commissioner. This process can take as long as a year or more. The Board has had success with such proposals as the guide academy, the hydro carbon listing that change the boat motor horse power and the boat size, funding of \$2 million dollars for the Bing's Landing boat launch project and requesting funding for a fourth Ranger on the Kenai River. The committees cannot win all the battles, but the board continues to work on several projects such as mandatory life jackets and boating safety education. As members, please participate anyway you can such as serving on a committee.
 

Brent asked how the members are appointed to the committees. Joe said that members volunteer and the chair of the board appoints them, according to the bylaws page 5 of 6, section E.

Ricky is the chair of the legislative committee and Carol is the co-chair of the river use committee. Brent volunteered to chair the habitat committee and Andy Szczesny volunteered to co-chair the river use committee.
- b. **Guide Advisory** – Joe Connors provided board members with the following report:
  - 1) The committee discussed code of conduct for guides on the Kenai River.
  - 2) Jack Blackwell gave the committee information about the revenue of the various parks in the Kenai Area. The report showed a decline at the Pillars boat launch and an increase at Bing's Landing State Recreation Area. The displacement was explained as more use in the upper river than the lower.
  - 3) The committee reviewed the Kenai River Guide statistics for the 2013 season. This report reflected that guide numbers were at the lowest they have been in many years.
  - 4) The committee had a brief look at citations and boating accidents.
  - 5) The committee did not have time to look at goals and objectives.
- c. **Habitat** – Ricky Gease reported that the Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat partnership had just finished a Conservation Assessment Program. The results are available on line. It was determined that there is a medium threat for issues on the Kenai River. They specifically look at the residential and business growth along the continuing and road access along the Kenai River. Ricky would like the Habitat Committee to look at emergency response system that is high risk along the upper portion along the Kenai River.

d. **River Use-** Carol Padgett provided board members with the following report:

- 1) The committee worked on the priority list for this year. The committee will work with Jack on the location of the restrooms, one on the upper river and one on the lower river.
- 2) Boat Counts: The committee would like to start counting boat use on the Kenai River, They would like to look at real time data, such as fly over or cameras at boat launches. Jack is going to put some data together and bring it back to the board. The committee will put a proposal together for additional funds for the boats counts and bring this proposal back to the board.
- 3) Volunteer Boating Safety Education: A possible solution is on line training or having educational boards at boat launches with techniques on how to be safe.
- 4) Fish Carcass Management: It appears that many agencies are having difficulty with this issue. The committee would like to evaluate more ways to address this issue to see if there are ways to manage this.
- 5) Sockeye Salmon Stamps: A possible method for generating revenue to support the river, such as management and facilities.
- 6) Boat Traffic and the Personnel Use Fishery: The committee is concerned about the amount of boat traffic that has resulted on the lower river from the PU fishery. There appears to be a trend of people launching upstream to access the fishery on the lower river.
- 7) Next month the Americorp members will work on the human waste issue on the upper river. The board will draft a letter for the January KRSMA board meeting in support of their efforts.

e. **Legislative/Government Activities** –Ricky Gease provided board members with the following report:

- 1) The committee sent a letter to the Governor to support full funding for Alaska State Parks. The board received a letter back thanking them for the request.

f. **Board Development** - No Report

g. **Agenda/Board Structure/Housekeeping** – The board was asked to look at the membership list to see if it had the correct information.

#### IV. **OLD BUSINESS:**

V. **NEW BUSINESS:** Brent Johnson asked about the process for appointing board members. Jack Blackwell explained that the board is set up of members from public, agencies and municipalities. The public and municipality members are voting members and the agencies are not. When terms expire or are vacant ads are placed in the newspaper and media releases are posted on the state's web page. Applications are then reviewed internally and applicants interviewed. Last year Ben Ellis and Jack interviewed applicants and this year Joe Connors and Jack interviewed the applicants. Jack then submitted their recommendations to the Director who then submitted his recommendations to the Commissioner for approval. This year we received six applications for four seats. The Commissioner approved four new positions with one new alternate for the City of Soldotna.

Brent Johnson referred to the bylaws page 3 of 6 section four, section C. Brent objected that the applicants were never discussion the application with the board as it is in the bylaws and this is how the process should work.

Joe Connors explained in the past that the board was not interested in participating in that part of the process and over the years the process has not been consistent.

Brent explained that the board needs to follow the Bylaws in the future. Also asked is there a nominating committee, which can also be found on page 5 of 6 of the bylaws.

Jack Blackwell asked when the board last reviewed applications.

Carol Padgett and Tim Stevens believed it was the for the 2012-2013 board session.

Andy Szczesny talked about the process when he was considered for the board. Andy believes that board applicants are vetted more now then in previous years and supports the process that currently working. If we are not following the bylaws we should.

Ricky thought that Board Development and Nominating Committee should be combined.



Andy said that we should just nominate and vote. Brenda suggesting writing names on paper.

Ted Wellman asked why we need to vote this month. All new members do not know each of the board members. Ted suggested that we nominate then vote; keep it simple.

The bylaws page 5 of 6 recommends that the voting be put on the January Agenda and that they vote separate for President than Vice President. This will be included on the January agenda.

**VI. CORRESPONDENCE**

**VII. PUBLIC COMMENT-**Ricky recommended that the February meeting be moved because the Board of Fish meeting last day falls on February 13, 2014 and many board members will not be available. This will be discussed at the January meeting.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**A. Board Comments**

**B. Date/Agenda of Next Meeting: January 9, 2014 at 5:30 p.m.**