

Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

*** Meeting Minutes***

Thursday, September 8, 2016
5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center
Soldotna, AK

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. **Roll Call:** Keith Baxter, William Tappan, Dwight Kramer, Monte Roberts, Ted Wellman, Andrew Carmichael, Matt Kelly, Andy Loranger, Jack Blackwell and Jeanne Swartz.
- B. **Minutes:** Andy Loranger had several corrections to the May 12, 2016 minutes under the USF&WS section. The minutes were approved as amended. The changes will be made prior to final minutes are made available to the public.
- C. **Agenda:** Approved as written.

II. Public Comments: No Comments

III. REPORTS

1. Agency and Government Reports:

a. State Parks

Jack Blackwell provided the board with the following report:

- Jack Blackwell welcomed William Tappan as a new member to the Kenai River Special Management Board Ted Wellman and Keith Baxter were reappointed to the board.
- Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Andy Mack was provided an orientation of the Kenai and Kasilof Area State Parks. Commissioner Mack was able to visit most of the Kenai area units during his visit. Jack Blackwell and Jacques Kosto were able to get Commissioner Mack out on a boat. They launched from Bing's Landing and went to Skilak Lake.
- This year there are 265 commercial operators registered on the Kenai River, which is 9 more than 2015.
- We are currently operating in fiscal year 2017. The commodity budget for the Kenai Area was cut by 70%. This is part of the budget that allows us to purchase lumber, gravel, paint and like items to help maintain our parks. No deferred maintenance funding in the budget for the last several years. The state park deferred maintenance capital improvement budget was typically funded from \$1-3 million annually and this has been eliminated from the state budget. .
- State Park is attempting to become self-sufficient through program receipts. State Parks is currently working with the University of Alaska Anchorage to evaluate if it is possible to be more self-sufficient.
- Six boat accidents were reported to State Park on the Kenai River. There were no major injuries.
- During the last legislative session a bill was passed that gives Parks the authority to sell merchandise and make a profit.. The bill was recently signed by the Governor and will take effect at the end of September.
- In the spring State Parks finalized the agreement to have the Soldotna Public Safety Communications Center provide dispatch services for state park rangers. This is a borough and state communication center that provides dispatching for law enforcement and public safety agencies on the Kenai Peninsula.



- Bing's Landing access project started in the spring of 2016. The project provides additional parking at Bing's Landing and trail access to the backline and is currently slated for completion this fall.
 - State Parks Design and Construction is currently working on the permitting phase for the new 60 foot floating dock at Bing's Landing. Construction should begin in spring 2017.
 - The design phase for Eagle Rock boat launch areas will resume this winter. This project will improve the existing ramp and parking area. State Parks is hoping to secure funding for this project with Fish and Game and the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council.
 - The Federal Subsistence Board issued a permit to the Ninilchik Traditional Council for a subsistence gill net on the Kenai River.
 - The board previously requested information from the Department of Law regarding limiting use on the Kenai River. Anne Nelson with the Department of Law and Ben Ellis are scheduled to join the October meeting.
- b.** DEC-Jeanne Swartz provided the board member's with the following report:
- Last May a draft of the Turbidity Listing Methodology went out for public comment, the division is currently addressing these comments.
 - The final listing methodology will be available on the Department of Environmental Conservation website by October 1, 2016.
 - DEC is currently working on the turbidity determination on Kenai River.
 - No turbidity monitoring was conducted this summer.
- c.** ADF&G –No report:
- d.** USF&WS- Andy Loranger provided the board members with the following report:
- Contractors are starting the bank restoration project of revegetation and stairways at the Russian River on September 12. This project is estimated to be completed by spring 2017.
 - The Refuge is celebrating its 75th anniversary with a photography display on October 8th, 2016.
- e.** USFS/Chugach National Forest - No Report
- f.** City of Kenai – Matt Kelley provided the board with the following report:
- The 2016 dip netting season at the mouth of the Kenai River was successful this year. The city is currently looking at extending the no wake zone another 5 mile. There were a few boats that were swamp and the Kenai Fire department responded to.
 - The only complaint the city received was the drop off fee.
- g.** City of Soldotna- Andrew Carmichael provided the board members with the following report.
- The trail from the Soldotna Visitor Center to Centennial Park to the back of the Sport Center. Another back loop is going to be added that includes approximately 600 feet of ELP from the back loop of the campground to the day use area. This will keep people off the main road.
 - Andrew is currently in the process of putting in new informational sign for Soldotna City parks.
 - The city is currently completing a Focus Economic Impact study at Swiftwater and Centennial Campground areas. Interviews were conducted with park users.
 - The city is currently working on completing a project that includes stairways and trails to the lower portion of Swiftwater.
- h.** Kenai Peninsula Borough- No Report

2. Committee Reports

- a. President's Report-Ted Wellman just reported that we will be electing officer at the October meeting.
- b. Guide Advisory –No report
- c. Habitat –No report.
- d. River Use –Dwight Kramer provided the board members with the following report:
 - The River Use committee discussed the five questions that were forwarded on to the Department of Law. They are awaiting a response before moving forward.
 - ADOT is proposing construction on the Kenai Spur Highway in the Eagle Rock area next year.
 - The mandatory PFD recommendation was forwarded to Department of Natural Resources to be inserted in the new regulation packet. This would make PFD mandatory on the Kenai River.
- e. Legislative/Government Activities- No Report

IV. OLD BUSINESS

V. NEW BUSINESS: None

VI. CORRESPONDENCE: None

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

VIII. **AJOURNMENT**-Board comments-Monte commented that many of the guides that he reached out to be on the committee are still busy guiding on the river. Monte also asks for clarification on the policy of the committee and the criteria for the membership. He also stated that many Kenai River guides are feeling the board is anti-guide and they are willing to participate.

Keith Baxter said that the Habitat Committee worked this summer to keep an eye out for potential property for EVOS purchase. There are two parcels that are in the area of Slikok Creek area that would be good options for EVOS purchase in the future.

Dwight Kramer read the resolution about the mandatory Personnel Flotation Device. Bill Tappan just thought that it was mandatory already to wear the PFD if you were a commercial operator. It was explained that it is only in the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge that PFD are required.

Jack Blackwell recommended that the Habitat Committee should have more discussion about the identified properties at the November meeting.

Jack Blackwell suggested that the guide committee and the KRSMA board support the current guide academy. Jack would like to present the board with a resolution supporting this concept in November.

