

Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

*** Meeting Minutes***

Thursday, October 12, 2017

5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center

514 Funny River Rd., Soldotna, AK

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. **Roll Call:** Keith Baxter, William Tappan, Joe Connors, Ted Wellman, Lisa Gabriel, Joel Todd, Andy Loranger, Glenn Arundell, Monte Roberts, Brian Marston, Brent Hibbert, Jack Blackwell and Ethan Tyler.
- B. **Minutes:** Approved as written.
- C. **Agenda:** Approved as written
- D. **Public Comment/Presentation:** Dan Reed gave a presentation pertaining to the Kenai River boat motor regulation 11 AAC 20.860. Dan would like to see the wording of the regulation changed. It was recommended by the chair, Ted Wellman, that Dan work with the River Use Committee. Once the committee has time to review the regulations it will be determined if a recommendation will be presented to the full board.

II. REPORTS

1. Agency and Government Reports:

a. State Parks

Jack Blackwell provided the board with the following report:

- Jack welcomed Ethan Tyler to the board meeting. Ethan has been in the State Park Director's position since July 2017.
- State Park staff is currently working on the 2017 Kenai River guide suspensions. One of the recommendation from the KRSMA board was to have State Parks issue the suspensions in a more timely manner. These will be available two months earlier than from previous years.
- All the State Park docks along the Kenai River are still in the water and available for public use. These will be removed toward the last week of October.

Ethan Tyler shared the following with the board. He is a 17 year Alaskan and his background is in tourism. He currently lives in Girdwood and is married with one daughter. His experience also includes public relations, working with non-profits, and recently with the state's Department of Economic Development. He is an outdoors person and is an avid user of the State Park system, including spending a lot of time on the Kenai River. Tyler has done a lot of research concerning the Kenai River and some of the issue that are happening. Ethan thank both Ted Wellman and Joe Connors for meeting with him early in his tenure and discussing some of the issues and concerns facing the Kenai River Special Management Area. One of Ethan's goals is to be as accessible as possible and to make it to a least one advisory board meeting a year in each of the state park areas each year.

b. DEC-Jeanne Swartz-No Report

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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-Brian Marston provided the board with the following report:
 - Salmon fisheries are winding down, Coho salmon is the last one still happening.
 - The department is moving forward with a Coho assessment. There is staff currently on the river collecting genetic samples. This will help in determining which stocks are being harvested for next. Next year's study will also include abundance harvest number estimates.
 - The department is currently looking at coming up with funding for log books to be issued out of the Kenai River Center.

- d. USF&WS-Andy Loranger provided the board members with the following report:
 - The Refuge held a public meeting for the proposed Ski Hill Road Trail. The trail would be between Ski Hill Road and the Sterling Highway which is funded through the Federal Highways Administration. This trail would help connect with Tsalteshi Trails.
 - The Refuge staff is currently working on the competitive commercial operator application for guided sport fishing and scenic tours on the upper Kenai River. The ranking panel is about to convene and make sure the application process is complete. Once the ranking is completed the panel will send this on for final approve to Andy within in approximately two weeks. A final selection is not expected until late December.

- e. USFS/Chugach National Forest – Marion Glaser-No report

- f. City of Kenai – Lisa Gabriel provided the board with the following report:
 - Total entries for the Silver Salmon derby were 266 fish. The magic weight method appeared to work very well.

- g. City of Soldotna – Joel Todd provided the board with the following report:
 - Rotary Park is now closed but Centennial and Swiftwater parks will remain open until the end of October. All stairs and walkways are also still in due to high water levels. Once the water goes down all the stairs will be removed.
 - Visitor use counts for the summer are consistent with pass years.

- h. Kenai Peninsula Borough- Brent Hibbert provided the board with the following report:
 - The runoff election for Borough Mayor is on Tuesday October 24, 2017.
 - There are some new Borough Assembly members, so the board is waiting to see what the new administration direction will be to determine what business the board will be looking at.

2. Committee Reports

- a. President's Report-Ted Wellman- No Report
- b. Guide Advisory –Monte Roberts provided the board with the following report:
 - The committee reviewed the Kenai River fishing stipulations and determined that there were no changes to be made for the 2018 season.
 - The committee also discussed the regulation about boat anchoring on the Kenai River during Silver Salmon season. The committee is going to continue to work on this and have the River Use committee take a look at it.

- Communications with State Parks staff when the guides were on the river was also discussed. Sometimes they had trouble getting in touch with staff by calling individual call Rangers. It was also mentioned that Soldotna Dispatch does handle State Parks dispatch and that the guides could call the dispatch center to determine which Park Ranger is on duty.
 - The committee also discussed helping inform people about fishing with legally registered guides and possibly installing signs at boat launches.
- c. Habitat –Keith Baxter provided the board with the following report:
- The committee discussed the Kenai Peninsula Borough conditional use permit process and to determine if the committee is interested in reviewing these applications. It was determined that Pam will send permit application that may be of special interest to committee members for comments.
 - The committee also reviewed an application that was submitted to the City of Kenai planning and zoning commission. The applicant was requesting for the extraction of approximately 500,000 cubic yards of gravel material over three years to create two ponds, which would be 20 feet deep on his private property adjacent to the Kenai River. The ponds would then be allowed to fill with natural ground water thereby creating two small private lakes. Currently the City of Kenai planning and zoning commission has determined the application to be incomplete and requested additional items from the applicant.
Keith Baxter made a motion that the KRSMA board send a letter of recommendation expressing the KRSMA boards concerns to the City of Kenai planning and zoning commission. Joe Connors second the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- d. River Use –William Tappan provided the board with the following report:
- The committee developed a list of topics that committee is interested in looking at for the 2017-2018 board session. This list includes: anchor buoy regulation, mandatory PFD, comprehensive management plan for the Kenai River, Eagle Rock overflow parking, Cooper Landing bypass, in river subsistence set nets, public access along the Kenai River, Kasilof/Kenai, integrating the two rivers into one plan, upper Kenai River overcrowding, bank closures and derbies on the Kenai River.
- e. Legislative/Government Activities-No Report
- f. Board Development-No Report
- g. Agenda/Board Structure/Housekeeping-No Report

III. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Letter supporting the revision of the Kenai River Comprehensive Management Plan-Ted Wellman reported to the board. The board would like to send a letter to the Commissioner of DNR to strongly encourage to expedite the review and update of the Kenai River Special Management Area Plan. Ted made a motion to draft a letter to the Commissioner and present the letter to the board for approval in November. Joe Connors seconds the motion and it passed unanimously.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Elections of Officers-The board voted unanimously to keep Ted Wellman as the president and Joe Connors as the co-president.



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- b. Eagle Rock Boat Launch Update-Jack Blackwell reported to the board about the final design of the Eagle Rock facility. Construction may start as early as fall of 2017. One concern that Parks has heard from the public is that during the construction on the Spur Highway that the overflow parking in the HEA easement that is currently being used by Kenai River users will no longer be available. One idea that State Parks is considering is to issue a request for proposals for someone to offer parking off-site with some type of shuttle system to the boat launch. . Ted Wellman asked the board if they would support State Parks to open a proposal for bid to offer offsite parking for the overflow at Eagle Rock SRA? Monte made a motion that State Parks pursue a proposal for bid for a shuttle service at Eagle Rock SRA for a one year trial bases. Bill Tappan seconds the motion. The motion based unanimously.

V. CORRESPONDENCE-None

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT:

- VII. BOARD MEMBERS COMMENT-**Ted Wellman thanked everyone for electing him back into office. Keith thanked Ethan Tyler for attending the committee meeting. Monte thanked Parks for reappointment to the board. He said that he sign at Bing's Landing light is out and that more signs for vehicle /trailer parking only. Joe Connors commented that there is a lot of enthusiasm by the board and it is encouraging.

VIII. AJOURNMENT