

Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

*** Meeting Minutes***

Thursday, November 9, 2017
5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center
514 Funny River Rd., Soldotna, AK

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. **Roll Call:** Joe Connors, Ricky Gease, Keith Baxter, William Tappan, Glenn Arundell, Monte Roberts (via tele-conference), Ted Wellman, Michael Frost, Andrew Carmichael, Brent Hibbert, Matt Connors, Brian Marston, Jack Blackwell and Jeanne Swartz.
- B. **Minutes:** Approved as written.
- C. **Agenda:** Approved as written.
- D. **Public Comment/Presentation:** Mandy Bernard gave a presentation pertaining to the Kenai Mountains to Sea project. This project aims to protect land and anadromous streams and is a partnership with Kachemak Heritage Land Trust, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Audubon Alaska, Kenai Watershed Forum and the Cook Inlet Keeper. The main objective is conservation and protection with assessment and prioritization. The group envisions a landscape of connected private and public lands. They are working with willing landowners, agencies and tribal entities, and strengthening longstanding and effective private-public partnerships dedicated to voluntarily conserving and enhancing fish and wildlife habitats for the continuing economic, recreational and cultural benefits to residents and visitors of the Kenai.

II. REPORTS

1. Agency and Government Reports:
 - a. State Parks-Jack Blackwell provided the board with the following report:
 - Jack welcomed Mike Frost to the board.
 - For the month of November staff has been busy pulling out all the walkways and docks out of the river in the state parks.
 - An update on the Spur Highway re-alignment project between Kenai and Soldotna – the project will occur in two phases. The first phase will start between Kenai and Eagle Rock in 2018. ADOT proposes to have the bid process begin in January 2018, award the contract and start clearing in April, move utilities in May or June and then begin working on the road. Once that portion is completed the second phase between Eagle Rock and Soldotna will begin.
 - Parks received an application from the City of Kenai/Kenai Chamber of Commerce for the 2018 Kenai Silver Salmon Derby. For 2018 the city is proposing that the derby fall on two consecutive weekends, Friday to Sunday on both weekends for a total of 6 days of Derby. The current proposed weekends are September 14th-15th-16th and 21st-22nd-23rd. The weekends were the most popular period during last year's Derby.
 - Ted Wellman asked the board to pass a motion to have Jack Blackwell to request a report from the City of Kenai for a report to providing information as to what the charitable purpose of the derby.



Joe Connors made a motion to have Jack Blackwell ask the City of Kenai to give a report as to the amount of money that was made and what the monies was going to be used for? The board requested this information before issuing a permit.

Bill Tappan second the motion.

The motion approved unanimously.

- The Eagle Rock project has been awarded to Peninsula Construction to complete the improvements at the boat launch. Work will begin sometime this winter with the dredging and pile driving. The work is scheduled to be completed by the first of July 2018.
- b.** DEC-Jeanne Swartz provided the board with the following report:
- The current 2014-2016 integrated report is on the Department of Environment Conservation (DEC) commissioners desk waiting for approval. Once the report has been signed the report will go out for public notice. The public notice is anticipated to be out for public notice for 30 to 45 days. There will be a public meeting in Anchorage by teleconference.
Ted asked if the board should write a letter requesting that a public meeting regarding the report be held in Kenai. Jeanne agreed that a request could be made.
 - DEC is currently working on the 2018 integrated report which is scheduled to be completed by April 2018. The process is different from the past report, as for the process is a little more automated.
- c.** ADF&G-Brian Marston provided the board with the following report:
- The Board of Fish work session will be held in Anchorage. It was determined at the meeting that board meetings will not be held in the Soldotna area.
 - The Department of Fish and Game Soldotna office will be issuing Fish and Game Sportfish Owner/Guide Licenses and logbooks.
- d.** USF&WS-Andy Loranger provided the board members with the following report:
- 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 approval. A final selection is not expected until late December. There will be 19 upper river fishing guides and 9 scenic raft trips.
 - The Refuge has removed all the staircases along the Kenai River on Refuge lands and 1 mile of fencing in the Moose Range Meadows area. This project was completed with help from the Kenai Watershed and volunteer help from inmates at the Wildwood Penitentiary.
 - In 2018 the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge will be staffing campgrounds with volunteer hosts. This will help in the monitor fee compliance and to curb any damage that may occur such as tree cutting.
- e.** USFS/Chugach National Forest –No report
- f.** City of Kenai – No Report
- g.** City of Soldotna – Andrew Carmichael provided the board with the following report:
- The City of Soldotna has removed all the boardwalks and stairways in the public park areas.

- The city has just completed a bid for proposals for a project at Swiftwater Park. The project included 2 sets of river access stairs and set of stairs to a fish walkway. The project was awarded to Polar North and is slated to begin sometime this winter.
- h. Kenai Peninsula Borough- Brent Hibbert provided the board with the following report:**
- Charlie Pierce is the new Mayor of the Kenai Peninsula Borough.
 - The Assembly is looking at a bed tax to be put into place within the borough.
 - The borough is facing a \$4 million deficit and the Assembly will be working on ways to help decrease that budget deficit.

2. Committee Reports

- a. President's Report-Ted Wellman provided the board with the following report.**
- Ted wrote a letter to the City of Kenai planning board to express the concerns that the KRSMA board has on developing two ponds close to the Kenai River Special Management Area.
 - Ted asked the board if they would like to have a meeting on December 14th, 2018 with the pending holidays. Monte commented he would not be able to attend in person but will participate telephonically. No other objections were stated by board members.
- b. Guide Advisory –No Report**
- c. Habitat –Keith Baxter provided the board with the following report:**
- The committee discussed the application that was received by the City of Kenai pertaining to the development of two ponds on private property within Kenai city limits. It was requested that the applicant provide additional information. That has not been submitted at this time. No progress has been made to approve this application.
 - Rob Massengill a Fisheries biologist gave a presentation regarding the northern pike. Pike is native to most of Alaska, but it does not naturally occur south and east of the Alaska Mountain Range except for a small, remnant population near Yakutat. Pike are top-level predators in aquatic food chains and are highly piscivorous (fish eating). Outside their native range, trout, salmon and other fish have not had time to adapt defenses against pike's predatory tactics. Pike prefer vegetated, low flow, shallow habitats where they can hide and ambush prey. Areas like these are plentiful throughout Southcentral, and pike tend to thrive in these locations, often to the detriment of native species. The Department of Fish and Game are currently working on eradicating Pike from the several lakes and streams on the Kenai Peninsula.
- d. River Use –William Tappan provided the board with the following report:**
- The committee discuss the presentation that was given by Don Reed at the November meeting regarding the 60/40 versus the straight 50 horsepower motor. Don Reed will present to the River Use committee meeting December 14th, 2018.
 - The committee developed a list of topics that the committee is interested in looking at for the 2017-2018 board session. This meeting prioritized the list into and A and B list. The A list included the anchor buoy regulation (it was recommended that the guide advisory and river use committees work together on this recommendation), mandatory PFD, and the comprehensive management plan for the Kenai River. The B list consisted of Eagle Rock overflow parking, Cooper Landing bypass, public access along the Kenai River, bank closures and possible rotating the closures and derbies on the Kenai River.
 - The committee is drafting a letter to the Director in regards as to the status of the PFD regulation.



- e. Legislative/Government Activities-Ricky Gease gave the following report to the board:
 - ADOT has revised the current Preliminary Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to reflect the Juneau Creek Alternative. Because of this change the Federal Highway Administration and ADOT will be revising the Preliminary Final EIS. This is currently in the draft form for the cooperating agencies to review and comments.
 - Ricky sent the information regarding the Kenai and Kasilof River subsistence nets reports for 2017. Those reports will be forwarded to all board members.
- f. Board Development-No Report
- g. Agenda/Board Structure/Housekeeping-No Report

III. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Letter to the commissioner regarding the comprehensive management plan revision. Ted Wellman provided to the board with a draft letter regarding the KRSMA plan. After board discussion, it was determined that Ted would make some changes and forward the letter to the Commissioner. A copy of the final letter will be presented to the board in December.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

V. CORRESPONDENCE-None

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT:

VII. BOARD MEMBERS COMMENT- Happy Thanksgiving!

VIII. AJOURNMENT