

Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

*** Meeting Minutes***

Thursday, February 8th, 2018
5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center
514 Funny River Rd., Soldotna, AK

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. **Roll Call:** Joe Connors, Ted Wellman, Ricky Gease, Keith Baxter, Glen Arundell, Monte Roberts, Mike Frost, Andrew Carmichael, Brent Hibbert, and Jack Blackwell.
- B. **Minutes:** Before approval of minutes Keith Baxter asked for clarification and if the minutes reflected that the board would have the opportunity to review the letter that would be sent to ADEC regarding the 2014/2016 draft integrated water quality monitoring and assessment report. Brent Hibbert also believed that the letter would be sent to board members for review prior to sending it to ADEC. Glen Arundell commented that he understood that the letter would be sent to the board members and ADEC at the same time. Jack said that after listening to the audio it was clear that the comments generated at the committee meetings would be compiled in a letter drafted by Ted, Joe and others which would be sent to ADEC and shared with the board, but it was unclear if the board would see the letter before it was sent and that it could be interpreted either way. Minutes were approved as written.
- C. **Agenda:** Agenda was approved.
- D. **Public Comment/Presentation:** Dwight Kramer noted that the letter was dated January 22, 2018 and that it should have been sent to all board members for comment prior to submitting to ADEC. Dwight's concern is that the turbidity study does show exceedances for drinking water and recreational standards, but there were also times that the aquatic standard level was also exceeded but were not as long of duration to be included in the listed methodology. Dwight said that if you are the cause of a problem than you are obligated to fix the problem. The study shows that the users of the river are the cause of the turbidity and we should find a way to fix the problem. Several years ago, when the problem with turbidity was first brought to the boards attention it was recommended to have boats stay mid channel and be off step just idling the motor when fishing below Pillars. This would help with the turbidity and make the river a safer place.

Brandon Bormann supports Keith Baxter comment that the letter should have been sent to the board prior to being submitting to ADEC. He also recommends that the letter should have been sent to the Commissioner and Governor and not to ADEC. The board is an advisory board to the Commissioner. Brandon felt one statement in the letter is contradictory to over use on the river, "The KRSMA Board believes that current use patterns do not pose a threat to the health of the resource". Brandon would like to see the letter is retracted.

II. REPORTS

1. Agency and Government Reports:
 - a. State Parks-Jack Blackwell provided the board with the following report:
 - The State Park seasonal staff is starting to return to work and getting ready for summer operations.



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



- We are slowly starting to see an increase in park permits and guide registrations.
 - Construction work has started at the Eagle Rock boat launch.
 - The KRSMA Advisory Board recruitment is open until March 31st, 2018.
- b. DEC-Jeanne Swartz: No Report
 - c. ADF&G-Brian Marston: No Report
 - d. USF&WS-Andy Loranger No Report
 - e. USFS/Chugach National Forest –Marion Glaser: No Report
 - f. City of Kenai – No Report
 - g. City of Soldotna – Andrew Carmichael provided the board with the following report:
 - The winter ice that is forming on the Kenai River is causing some damage to infrastructure along the shoreline.
 - The work has started at Swiftwater on the additional stairways and platforms. There is also some additional funding available to fix an area that is sliding and eroding do to ground water. A french drain is currently the proposed fix for the area.
 - h. Kenai Peninsula Borough- Brent Hibbert provided the board with the following report:
 - The Borough Assembly is currently having work session with the Kenai Peninsula School district to determine the 2018/2019 budget.

2. Committee Reports

- a. President’s Report-Ted Wellman commented that he would like to apologize if there was any misunderstanding about the opportunity to review the letter that would be sent to ADEC regarding the 2014/2016 draft integrated water quality monitoring and assessment report. Ted stated that the time to write the letter and have it sent in by the deadline was short to have the board review the letter. If the board feels that a supplemental letter should be sent to ADEC clarifying anything is the current letter, Ted is happy to have that discussion.
- b. Guide Advisory –No Report
- c. Habitat -No Report
- d. River Use –No Report
- e. Legislative/Government Activities-No Report

III. OLD BUSINESS:

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

V. CORRESPONDENCE:

- a. Letter to DEC

Monte Roberts asked the board if there was any revision that the board would have made to the letter and Monte would like to have this discuss now. Monte felt the letter represents what was discussed and not worth revising the letter over.

Brent Hibbert commented that this letter was sent with the intent that everyone represented on the board supported the letter. Without having the opportunity to take it back to the KPB assembly he is unsure that the assembly would support such a letter. Brent does not agree with everything in the letter and he is more of the science than the opinion. Brent asked if the board was aware of this problem for ten years, why have there not been changes prior to getting to this stage of the process? Both Monte and Ricky gave Brent a brief history of the

process of ADEC. Brent does not want in any way reflect that the Kenai Peninsula Borough agrees of the contents of the letter.

Keith Baxter commented that the letter does reflect the comments that were discussed by the joint committee meeting on January 8th, but the group did not go into such detail as the letter does. Some of the words could have been selected better and the river should not be listed based on the age of the data. The research warrants a second look and Keith feels the letter states that the listing is ridiculous and not a valid concern. New research data needs to be obtained before listing the River. Keith stated that his views were tainted do to the fact that he thought they would have time to review the letter prior to it being sent to DEC.

Ricky commented that ADEC had a working report that was internal and the public had a chance to review until just before the public commented meeting in Anchorage. This report is available on the ADEC website.

Jack Blackwell commented that all the agencies that are represented on the board are in the position of possibly not agreeing with the letter. We try very hard to have an open process with the board and it was never the intent to exclude anyone in the process.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS;

Dwight Kramer commented that after listening to the board's discussion he has several concerns. Since 2010 we have had changes in boat size, motor restriction and days allowed to fish. During King fishing there are more boats and the dip netting is also adding additional use on the lower river. There is a problem that we need to act to resolve. Dwight asked if there was a PSA in the paper announcing the January 8th meeting regarding the Turbidity discussion? Dwight felt the board is taking this issue of turbidity to lightly and need to really look at the problem.

Jack commented that with budget cuts that State Parks no longer can put paid ads in the newspaper, however we issue public service announcements and the newspaper has been good about publishing them. Parks does have a fairly comprehensive list of board members and key stakeholders that receive the agenda and minutes by email. Pam checked to make sure that Dwight received the email for the committee and board meetings.

Ted stated that the standard put forward by the Alaska Water Quality Standards do not fit very well to every water body in Alaska. But with that said this is in no way a subject that the board will not continue to look at and to help in finding a solution.

Brandon Bornemann commented that the board is encouraged to use the resources on the board such as Fish and Game and Refuge staff.

VII. BOARD COMMENTS

Andrew Carmichael commented that the data viability was discussed at great lengths between EPA and DEC before they could come to a final decision. The data is 10 years old and the need for more current data is a must. Not everyone is in full agreement with the letter the advisory board drafted, weather in verbs or statement but with the time restriction it made it difficult to allow everyone to proof the letter before submitted to ADEC.

Keith Baxter hopes that even though there has been some discussion about the process of the advisory board, Keith hopes that this will not discourage public to continue to participate.

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Joe Connors commented that he believes that we have come to this point due to many factors along the way, and we need everyone to participate not only at the regular meetings but also at the committee meetings.

VIII. AJOURNMENT