

## Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

### \*\*\* Meeting Minutes\*\*\*

Thursday, September 13, 2018  
5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center  
514 Funny River Rd., Soldotna, AK

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. **Roll Call:** Joe Connors, William Tappan, Glenn Arundell, Ted Wellman, Ricky Gease, Lisa Gabriel, Ron Rogalsky, Marion Glaser, Monte Roberts, Jeanne Swartz and Jack Blackwell. Special Guest Deputy Parks Director Matt Wedeking.
- B. **Minutes:** Minutes were approved as written.
- C. **Agenda:** Agenda was approved.
- D. **Public Comment/Presentation:**
1. Agency and Government Reports:
    - a. State Parks-Jack Blackwell provided the board with the following report:
      - Jack welcomed everyone back from the summer break.
      - State Park staff is starting to remove our public docks along the Kenai River. Currently Ciechanski, Big Eddy, Funny River and Pillars floating dock. Bing and Eagle Rock floating docks will be removed in the next several weeks.
      - There was a boating accident fatality on the Kenai River. A boat with three occupants hit a rock and all three occupants ended up in the river. Two people made it to shore and the third is still missing. Parks assisted with the search for the missing boater.
      - In the summer of 2017 there was a case of an illegal fishing guide on the Kenai River. The illegal guide was convicted of seven charges and five were Class A Misdemeanors. Charges ranged from operating an unpermitted guide vessel, sport fishing without an Alaska Department of Fish and Game license, guiding without a State Park Commercial Operator permit and aiding of three individual clients. Sentencing is scheduled for later this month and Joe asked that the board be notified when it is scheduled. Ricky Gease added that the Kenai Sport Fishing Association and Kenai River Professional Guide Association paid out an award of \$5000.00 dollars to the two people that testified in the case against illegal guide. This two people that did testify was from out of state so this help in some of the expensive for them to come to Alaska.
      - State Parks has had some discussions with Chugach National Forest about restoring some of the area along Cooper Creek near Copper Landing that was impacted from large scale mining back in the 1990's. The creek current alignment is straight which allows the water to flow at high rates of speed and does not have any habitat value for fish. The Forest Service would like to do a potential project to restore the area and put the creek back into its nature creek bed. It is complicated because of the land ownership in the area. This summer Chugach Forest Service and State Park staff had a great site visit to get a firsthand look of the area.



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- State Parks is continuing to talk with the Corr family about purchasing some of their property along the Kenai Riverfront habitat purposes. This would be funded through the Exxon Valdez Trustee Council.
  - The Eagle Rock restoration project was completed this year and there has been some positive feedback from users.
- b.** DEC-Jeanne Swartz provided the board with the following report:
- DEC continues to work on integrated water report. DEC is hoping to have the 2014/2016 report completed and is waiting for the final approval from the commissioner. Once that is completed, DEC will put out the 2018 integrated report out for public review and then there will be a request sent out for data for the 2020 report. If this happens as planned, DEC can get back to the schedule cycle for reports.
  - This past summer DEC continued to monitor the lower Kenai River beaches in the dipnet area. Elevated levels of fecal coliform and enterococci bacteria can be found at some beaches like City of Kenai beaches near the mouth the Kenai River in July. Enterococci are an indicator that disease-causing bacteria may be present that can cause stomach aches, diarrhea, and/or ear, eye and skin infections. The greatest exposure risk comes from ingesting/swallowing water with elevated bacteria levels. The full report can be found at: <https://dec.alaska.gov/water/water-quality/beach-program/kenai-river-beaches-dipnetting-safety>. The levels do appear to be lower than those that were recording in the 2010/2014 report. This indicates that the City of Kenai best management practice of removing fish carcasses has been successful to help with lowering the levels. DEC is currently planning on one more year of beach monitoring in 2019. The goal is to establish a natural background level for bacteria and to determine that the natural bacteria levels have been address.
  - The Alaska Clean Water Actions (ACWA) grants solicitation is up and going. You can find it at: <http://dec.alaska.gov/water/water-actions/acwa-application> . There are waterbody-specific actions for the Kenai River and a Kenai River Beach monitoring solicitation listed for this cycle. Also, some of the Stewardship grant opportunities may be applied to waters in and around the Kenai River. If anyone has questions about the solicitations or the process, please let me know. There will be a statewide ACWA grants informational webinar presented on October 16 at 2 PM to answer questions about the ACWA grants process. Information about how to participate in the webinar is available at the above link. All non-beach grants require a 40% non-federal funds match.
  - DEC is continuing the second year of Anchor River stream bank rehabilitation. The first year was planting and in 2019 they will implement the project.
  - Turbidity monitoring with a boat count on the Kenai River continued for the 2018 summer season for the last two weeks of July. The data has been reviewed and a recommendation has been sent to the DEC commissioner.
- c.** ADFG- No report
- d.** USFWS-No Report
- e.** USFS/Chugach National Forest –Marion Glaser provided the board with the following report:

- On September 18, 2018 from 5:30 to 7:00 pm the Forest Service will be at the Soldotna Regional Sport Complex to present the draft Land Management Plan and draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Chugach National Forest. The draft documents reflect years of analyses and extensive public participation. Review the documents on the Land Management Plan revision webpage and then submit your comments within the 90-day comment period.
  - A new Kenai/Russian River confluence map is available to the public. The map contains current hunting and fishing regulations, information on the Stream Watch program, bear safety basics and cultural heritage information and much more. These are available to the public.
  - The Russian River interagency coordination meeting is scheduled for September 21, 2018. This meeting will include information about visitor counts and fish in the area through Stream Watch program.
  - The construction work at the Russian River Campground entrance is on schedule. A new overflow parking area and contact station has been built. The project should be completed by June 8<sup>th</sup>.
- f. City of Kenai – Lisa Gabriel provided the board with the following report:
- The Kenai River Silver Salmon Derby is scheduled for the next two weekends. The derby is scheduled Friday through Sunday and the minimum prize is \$1000.00 dollars for the mystery weight fish and may be up to \$2000.00 dollars depending on participation.
  - Dipnet revenue for the 2018 season was down about \$200,000 dollars. This was due in part to the early closure of the dipnet season and the low number of fish coming into the river.
  - The City of Kenai Planning and Zoning Commission met on June 27<sup>th</sup> and voted to deny the permit request by Mr. Davidhazer to build two ponds on his property along the Kenai River. This process was not appealed by the applicant.
- g. City of Soldotna – No report
- h. Kenai Peninsula Borough- No Report

## 2. Committee Reports

- a. President’s Report-Ted Wellman provided the board with the following report:
- Ted is glad to see everyone back from the summer break and in October will be when the board will be electing new officers for the board and appointment for committee chairs including the habitat committee.
- b. Guide Advisory-Monte Roberts provided the board with the following report:
- State Parks is currently working on a Go with a Guide informational panel. The panel will help the public to recognize that they are going out fishing with a currently registered Kenai River Guide and not an illegal guide.
  - The guide advisory board is working on a cooperative agreement between guides and State Parks. The importance being able to have an agreement with the advisory committee and sticking to the agreement.



The current agreement is that guide are responsible:

1. Informing the clients, they need a license.
2. Verifying that the clients have the proper fishing license in their possession.
3. Inform them that they need a valid a King stamp during King season.
4. Logging all the information into the logbooks

Monte asked if that was the current standing with stand Parks and Jack Blackwell agreed.

- The Anchor Buoy regulation is still going through the legal process. Currently a guide may leave a buoy up to 20 minutes, but not to change clients. In 2018 there were no problems with this process.
- c. River Use – Bill Tappan provided the board with the following report:
- The 2018/2019 priorities by developing an A and B list.  
The A list: additional access on the Kenai River, KRSMA comprehensive management plan, Salmon Stamp and middle river crowding from Skilak Lake outlet to Bing SRA.  
The B list: Mandatory PFD, Boater Safety Education and Upper River from Kenai Lake outlet to Jim’s.
- d. Legislative/Government Activities-Ricky Gease provided the board with the following report:
- The committee will work on the Salmon Stamp recommendation.
  - There is a Professional Guide Service Board idea being proposed. This board would help in resolving illegal guide issues when registering with the State.
  - The Kenai River Sports Fishing Association worked with sponsors for several events to provide PFDs to the participants of the Classic events. This is to help in promoting the wearing of mandatory PFD on the Kenai River.
  - The committee would like to look at the Funny River Road State Recreation area property and the property adjacent to it. Currently the property has two land owners, Fish and Game Habitat and Alaska State Parks. A land transfer from Fish and Game Habitat to Alaska State Parks to consolidate the management of the area.
  - The record of decision was finalized and sign for the Cooper Landing bypass. The bypass highway will move forward once CIRI and the Refuge complete the land transfer.

**II. OLD BUSINESS:**

**III. NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. Committee chairs for the upcoming year: President Ted Wellman stated that the new board members will be recruited to serve on one of the four committees. Bill Tappan stated that he was recruiting for the River Use Committee and Ron agreed to attend the River Use committee meetings. Currently all the current chairs will remain in place and at the next meeting the board will be looking for a Habitat Committee chair.
- b. Update on new KRSMA members: Jack Blackwell welcomed the new board members Ron Rogalsky and Jeff Dolifka and returning board member Joe Connors.

**IV. CORRESPONDENCE**

**V. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**VI. BOARD COMMENTS:**

- Lisa Gabriel stated that the Silver Salmon derby ticket are \$25.00 dollars apiece and only available in Kenai at Three Bears and the Visitor center.
- Ricky Gease commented that it was an interesting year with the low number of fish returning to the Kenai.
- Marion Glaser reminded everyone that the new Chugach Forest Service Management Plan's public comment period is open for 90 days. Please take the time to review the plan and submit your comments. The Forest service starting to look for the 2019 seasonal technician, the recruit has been moved to the end of September into October.

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**



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