

Legislative Briefing

December 6, 2018 – 10:45 am at the Legislative Office in Fairbanks

Start at 10:50

Brooks Ludwig welcomed everyone to the 26th annual legislative briefing from Citizens Advisory Board

Tawnia Butorac gave the presentation. Following notes from slide show~

The board represents multiple user-groups, introduced members that were present, and went over the agenda of the meeting. The presentation is in three groups: goals, revenue strategies, and comments & discussion.

Northern Area overview – 5 management units, 2 of which are under contract (Tok & Delta)

FY 18 - Northern Region issued 97 Special Park Use Permits to user groups generating \$10,090, up 41% over FY17. Increase associated with the state resuming management of the Chena River State Recreation Site in Fairbanks

Program receipts dropped by \$60,000 in FY18 due to privatization of the Delta Park units. Resuming management of the Chena River State Recreation Site halfway through FY18 resulted in adding \$50,800 back into program receipts. State parks predicts a 12% increase in program receipts for FY19.

Revenues are up 48% over the previous summer (July – September). This increase reflects the camping revenues from CRSRS and increased day use sites.

During 2018, 59 commercial use permits were issued for the northern region, an increase of 28% over FY17.

Economic Impacts in the interior account for \$648 million dollars in tourist spending and represents 10% of the job market. 14% of folks visiting the interior stay at campgrounds.

In 2017, over 700,000 people visited the Northern Region's state parks. With the build-up at Eielson those numbers will increase.

State Parks received a \$200,000- capital budget in 2018 to purchase electronic fee stations. Funding came from park program receipts. The electronic fee stations are part of a strategic plan to implement technologies that provide a more efficient and user-friendly fee collection system.

An additional \$300,000 in capital funds from past parks program receipts were used to purchase public use cabins. State Parks is leveraging that money in a 50:50 Land and Water Conservation Fund to build 10 cabins statewide. @ will be built here in the northern region. One at miles 41.6 and the second at 48-mile Chena Hot Springs road in the CRSRA.

Budget reductions closed the Delta Area Parks on July 1st, 2017. The parks were put out to private management. Three businesses bid on the commercial use permit. 2018 was the first full season of operation. Many complaints were received over passive management at Fielding Lake. The outhouse was vandalized, along with the accumulation of garbage creating unsanitary conditions. This park will be

put under private management in 2019 adding the site to the existing commercial use permit managing the other Delta park units.

State Parks received generous donations from the Helen B. Snedden Foundation. The Chena Pump State Recreation Site received a new picnic shelter roof and several large group use fire rings.

Another improvement at the Chena Pump SRS is a 100+ year old historic cabin donated by the Moody Estate. The cabin will be re-constructed on-site with the help of historic preservation funding.

Using Federal Trail Program money four projects were completed in the Fairbanks Area. Work was done on Mastodon, Angel Rocks, Granite tors, and the new Olnes Pond ATV Trail system.

State Parks is pursuing numerous federal grant programs to build and maintain state parks. These grants require a state match in capital dollars. A 2-million-dollar grant from the Pittman Robertson Fund completed three new trailheads in Chena River State Recreation Area. Dingell Johnson funding was used at Birch Lake State Recreation Site to replace a boat launch and outhouse.

Four Recreational Trail Grants have been submitted for 2019 funding. They include two more public use cabins and finishing the Granite tors boardwalk and Olnes Pond ATV trail.

Following the Legislature's mandate to reduce dependence on state funding, increase fees, and increase the number of park facilities where fees are charged. The northern region instituted day use fees at 25 locations. Day use fees are up 127% from July through September compared to last year. The northern region's goal is to increase northern region revenues by 15% in Fiscal year 19.

COMMENTS & DISCUSSIONS

END 11:50

In attendance:

Darleen Masiak, CAB

Don Kiely, CAB

Lambert Hazelaar, CAB

Ashely Strawch, Rep. Wool

Anne Rittgers, Rep. Guttenberg

Tawnia Butorac, CAB

Jacob Gerrish, Rep. Kawasaki

Sen. John Coghill

Reinhard Neuhauser, CAB

Barbara Barnes, Rep. Wilson

Gail Davidson, CAB

Scott Bothwell, CAB

Brooks Ludwig, ASP

Ethan Tyler, ASP