

Kachemak Bay State Parks Board Meeting
Advisory Board Minutes
September 14, 2016
5:30 pm

1. **Members Present:** Beaver Nelson, Stan Lefton, Willy Dunne, Steve Schultz, Aron Peterson and Nancy Hilstrand

Staff Present: Park Ranger Brad Garasky, Superintendent Jack Blackwell, Natural Resource Technician Eric Clark.

Jack Blackwell introduces Park Ranger Brad Garasky as the Ranger I in the Kachemak Bay State and Wilderness Park. Brad came to Alaska in 2010 and worked in Homer in the private sector. Started with State Parks in 2015 as a park ranger in the Fairbanks area and transferred to Homer in August 2016. He is originally from Idaho and worked for the state parks system there.

Visitors: Dave Braun, Janet Klein, Jeff Lee, Toby Wheeler.

Dave Brann gave a report on the Eveline State Recreation Site. The Kachemak Bay Nordic Ski Club managed the Eveline State Recreation Site in cooperation with Alaska State Parks. Volunteers logged a total of 364 hours with a total of 1,836 visitors that signed the trail register as of September 7, 2016. The visitors came from 20 countries and 43 states with California logging the most visitors with 31. The Friends of Kachemak Bay led a First Hike on the first day of the year. It was a hike, snowshoe with a couple of skiers, 20 people participated. Other information included Eveline State Recreation Site is listed in the Homer's Visitor Guide and a kiosk which consist of a note pad with pencil and pen in a water resistant box. A full report is available upon request.

2. **Agenda Changes:** Approved as written.
3. **Minutes Approval:** Under Agenda changes, Aron Peterson changed access and development to State Park lands on the South side of Kachemak Bay, should be North. Under the operation report it was changed from Eric Clarke went on a scouting trip for the Sea to Sea trail with Hig and Aron, to Hig and Erin. Under New Business # 2, East End Road that has approximately 640 acres should be 2406 acres.
4. Minutes were approved as amended.
5. **Correspondence:** Jack reported that the State of Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF), in partnership with DOWL and Alta Planning + Design, are working to create a plan to improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure across the state.
The goal of the project is to improve safety, increase accessibility, and promote healthy lifestyles in our communities.
The project team will work with communities across the state through 2018 to hear concerns and better understand community needs in order to develop achievable solutions that will increase access to bicycle and pedestrian facilities and improve safety across Alaska.
Below is a listing of upcoming meetings regarding this project: **Anchorage Public Meeting - September 20, 2016; Anchorage Steering Committee - September 22, 2016; Wasilla/Palmer Public Meeting - September 21, 2016; Soldotna Public Meeting - November, 2016.**

6. Committee Reports:

- a. **Operations Report:** Natural Resource Technician Eric Clarke provided board members with the following operations report.

Some of the highlights of the report included:

- The new Kachemak Bay State and Wilderness Park management plan is still moving forward. The team is hoping to have a draft ready in approximately two months.
- Volunteer events included a China Poot volunteer work party. The early season training for the Friends of Kachemak Bay to run power equipment resulted in a volunteer leading a group of volunteers to clear trails.
- Sierra Club provided two weeks of 10 to 18 volunteers to help install a composting outhouse in Halibut Cove Lagoon, re-route the Estuary trail with constructing retaining wall, puncheon and trail steps on the trail.
- Volunteers help brush the Saddle and South Grace trail.
- State Park staff with staff from Homer Electric flew over several of the landing zones that HEA are currently using. Parks is working with HEA staff to develop a plan that will work for both Parks and HEA.
- Currently the HEA powerline at the WOZ is under water. It appears the water of the Woz is flowing down the HEA right of way.
- Chugachik Island has a trail from one side of the island to the other.
- Diamond Creek this year has been plagued with lots of pallet fires and trash.
- Bears and Human interaction has been higher this year throughout the park for the 2016 season.

A full report is available upon request.

- Jack Blackwell explained that we are currently operating in fiscal year 2017. The commodity budget for the Kenai Area was cut by 70%. This is part of the budget that allows us to purchase lumber, gravel, paint and like items to help maintain our parks. No deferred maintenance funding in the budget for the last several years. The state park deferred maintenance capital improvement budget was typically funded from \$1-3 million annually and this has been eliminated from the state budget.

- b. **Friends Report-** No Report

7. Old Business:

- a. Dark Sky Park Proposal- Nancy Hilstrand stated that the City of Homer boat harbor is currently looking into what lights will work the best to meet the Dark Sky standards. Some of the current plan includes using the same light poles but determine which lightbulbs will give the best illumination but meet the requirements.
- b. CIAA permits application- There are no updates at this time. Beaver Nelson did comment that the new approach to the fresh water egg take worked very well this year. There was 98 to 100% fertilization on the eggs when in the past the salt water was 85 to 95% fertilization. The fish were also very large this year than in the past.
- c. New Management Plan update-Still in the development phase. The team is hoping to have a draft plan in late winter.
Willy asked what is the process once the draft has completed and available to the public. Jack Blackwell stated that public comments will be accepted and there will probably be several public meetings scheduled during that time.
- d. Vacating Diamond Creek ROW (tabled)
- e. Composting toilets (tabled), Jeff Lee asked if non-toxic glycol could be used to add some heat the compost during the winter months. This would help increase the heat, especially during low use times. Nancy Hilstrand also recommended that is in a sunny location that maybe painting the structure a darker color to absorb the heat.
Jack commented that there is no smell from these toilets.
- f. Sea to Sea Trail- Willy Dunn stated that we have been referring to this as the Sea to Sea trail and Ground Truth organization has been calling it the Tutka Backdoor trail. This should be discussed at the October meeting to clarify the name.

8. New Business:

1. Officer Election-The board agreed to have this postponed until the October meeting.
2. Composting toilet requirement for commercial operators-tabled
3. Art/benches in the Park-tabled?
4. Revision of Critical Habitat Management Plan- Jack Blackwell reported that there are public scoping meeting for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Kachemak Bay and Fox River Flats Critical Habitat Area Management Plan. The scoping period will begin September 26 with public meetings in Homer at the Islands and Oceans Visitor Center from 6 to 8 pm, Seldovia, and Anchorage. Please follow the link to ADF&G's scoping webpage for more details.
http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=habitatoversight.kbfr_planrevision

9. Comments and Discussion by Visitors

- Jeff Lee commented that he believes that the use of Bear spray for a human to bear encounter is more effective than the use of rubber bullets. Jeff also commented that he believes that there has been an increase of helicopters use in the State Park.
- Christina Whiting is Taz Tally's partner. Taz is currently working on his third book, Backroads and Byways of Alaska and was unable to be present at the meeting. Christina brought it to Mako's attention the idea of a memorial bench in Kachemak Bay State Park. Taz and his dog Zip had hiked the trails at least three different times and Zip passed away this last summer. Kristina would like to propose a memorial bench in the park in honor of Zip. It would be up to Taz as to the location of the bench.

- Janet would like to be added to the agenda for October meeting to give a report about the helicopter trip to the rock wall.
- Mark Roth represents the City of Homer on the Cook Inlet Aquaculture boards spent some time over at the hatchery during the egg take. He stated that the egg take from the Tutka Creek worked great with a few modifications and it also took a lot of pressure off the lagoon.
- Toby Wheeler comments that she who? Toby is male, so you must be talking about someone else here? was a coordinator of volunteers not a volunteer coordinator. She worked closely with HOWL and did a great job and it was a pleasure to work with her.
- Aron Peterson commented that there is a fire ring and picnic table at Cottonwood Creek. This is something that occurred sometime early this summer. Nice improvement to the area.
- Willy Dunne asked about the helicopter use on Grewingk Glacier. Was one of the stipulations is that the helicopter was to stay at least 1500 feet away from the face of the glacier?
Pam reported that only one company is currently registered to land at the glacier and the end of season report is not due until December 1, 2016. Need to check stipulations and send map of glacier points.
- Beaver asked about airplane use at upper Hazel Lake and the Port Dick Area? Port Dick area lakes are closed. One permit was issued for Upper Hazel Lake to 2016.

11. Adjournment – Next meeting is October 12, 2016.