

**Mat-Su State Parks  
Citizens Advisory Board  
Minutes  
February 19, 2013**

- I. The Meeting was called to order by Greg at 7:07 PM

A quorum of the Citizens Advisory Board was present and due notice had been published.

II. **MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Greg Ronnback	Nicole Troyer
Doug Bourne	Neil Fox
Barbara Russell	Jim Von Bose

**MEMBERS ABSENT AND EXCUSED**

Dennis Mobley  
Larry Smith

**STATE PARK STAFF PRESENT**

Wayne Biessel, Superintendent

III. **APPROVAL OF JANUARY MINUTES**

Barb made a motion to accept the January 8, 2012 minutes as submitted. Nicole seconds the motion. All vote in favor. Minutes accepted as submitted. Doug volunteered to take meeting minutes since Teri Zell was on vacation.

IV. **CORRESPONDENCE**

None

V. **PERSONS TO BE HEARD**

None

VI. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

- Good snow this past month. Many visitors recreated in all areas of the region including Nancy Lakes and Denali State Park. Few incidents to report.
- Jan. 20<sup>th</sup> began the implementation of new Hatcher Pass snowmachine/ski regulations. Jim and other volunteers helped educate visitors.
- Groomers were active. Program was running smoothly.
- Unfortunately, Ranger Amy O'Connor responded to 3 suicides this last weekend.
- Director Ellis will lecture on the budget tomorrow. Teleconferencing available at 800-315-6338 caller code 8700#.
- Jim asked about the new snowmachine boundary along the Gold Mint Trail. Wayne and Neil answered the question.

VII. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- a) Starkey Committee (Doug & Dennis)

- Doug described the first step for creating a landmark for Starkey Wilson will be to select a landmark. Many suggestions were given to create a list of options: contact his friends, define a criteria, and/or contact Ranger Dan Amyot. The committee will meet with Ranger Amyot before the next meeting.
- b) Budget Committee (Greg, Nicole, Jim, Barb)
- Greg mentioned that he wanted to attend committee meetings but didn't want to feel like he also ran a committee. Nicole appreciated his ability to attend to Budget Committee things in person and to relate those things to the Board.
  - Greg reported that proceeding with budget issues should be for operating funds, needs—not investing in capital funds, wants, which is contrary to typical legislative process. Funds are low everywhere, not just State Parks. There might be sympathetic ears from local legislature. Speaking directly with legislature, in particular with someone on the Finance Committee, would be the best route. Enforcement/ACC are major needs.
  - Jim reiterated the need for enforcement to do their jobs, not distribute toilet paper.
  - Barb stated that to prevent no response from legislature, sending a letter before face-to-face or telephone contact might be the best practice for contact.
  - Jim raised the issue—what happens if the Parks force the toilet issue and doesn't clean? Wayne answered and compounded the issue by describing that when Rangers clean toilets, who protects visitors in campgrounds and patrols the parks? Barb suggested photo evidence. Wayne mentioned he had photos in the records from previous budget cuts.
- c) Nancy Lakes Committee (Doug, Barb, and Larry)
- Doug reported the final draft of the management plan won't be out until next month. Wayne described how the plan has been delayed in the legal office, but he also described how everything was coming together with few obstructions.
  - In order to use our CAB meeting time wisely, the Board decided to reschedule March's CAB meeting until after the release of the final management plan. CAB meeting rescheduled to March 19<sup>th</sup>.
  - Doug will contact Brandon McCutcheon from the Division of Mining, Lands, & Water about the new date.

#### VIII. OLD BUSINESS

- Barb asked about board member Johnson who was appointed a few months ago. The Board clarified that Johnson resigned a month after being appointed.
- Members discussed possible new Board members.

#### IX. NEW BUSINESS

- Wayne asked for input on Underground Tunnel Tours. He showed slides of the mine tunnel. He described the tour and how the entry to the mine and nearby buildings were deteriorating.
  - During the years 2005-2007 Friends of State Parks Mat-Su had a 1 day insurance policy for underground tours. Tour guides/miners served as expert guides. Tickets sold out immediately. In 2008, there were collapses in the portals.
  - In the late 90s there was an effort to stabilize areas. Currently, the portal suffers—300’ needs stabilization. Expected \$600,000 in basic stabilization cost. CIP funds of \$350,000 are currently available.
  - Engineers reported—expect more than \$2 million costs for long-term stabilization.
- Wayne asked the Board—should the park ask for funds for the water tunnel or use the existing funds for other needed building repairs (painting, foundation, trestle survey, etc)?
  - Jim asked—could the emergency exits be used as new tunnel entrances? Wayne described their distance from other visitor services. Neil described other visitor activities—is \$100 appropriate price for such a tour? Wayne explained how with regular tourism the ticket price could easily drop to \$50 for the tourist/tour bus season.
  - Neil wondered about Federal dollars for the project. Wayne described how it is on the Federal Register of Historic Places, but funding is drying up for historic preservation projects nationally.
  - Barb asked about the open season for the mine. The season runs from June 15 to the day after Labor Day.
  - Neil described how there could possibly be winter tours using snow cats.
  - Jim suggested maintaining buildings and mapping the trestle. Barb asked about cost of bunkhouse repairs. Wayne indicated a price for fire safety repairs at \$1 million. Doug mentioned the conflict between the Board suggesting capital projects when the discussion earlier led to the need for operational funding. He also asked about other underground mines in the state. Wayne said there might be one in Juneau. Jim said, as for the funding, use it appropriately, like his earlier comment—maintaining buildings and mapping the trestle. Nicole suggested asking the tourist industries or the school of mines for funding or help. Wayne mentioned that the Kenai School of Mines helped a few years ago.
  - Wayne thanked the Board for their comments and suggestions.

X. NOTICES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next CAB meeting 7:00 pm., March 19, 2013, Palmer State Forestry Office

XI. ADJOURN

Nicole motioned to adjourn. Barb seconded. All vote in favor. Adjourned at 8:45 pm.