

Seward State Parks Citizen Advisory Board
Minutes
Wednesday, December 15, 2021 5:30-7:30 pm
Teleconference

I. Call to Order

- A. Call to Order: 5:30 pm
- B. Minutes taker: Mark Luttrell
- C. Roll Call: Bob Barnwell, Carol Griswold, Nick Jordan, Mark Luttrell, Paul Paquette, Kat Sorensen, Tess Tulley, Mica Van Buskirk
- D. Board members absent (excused): Cliff Reid
- E. State Park Staff: Superintendent Jack Blackwell, District Ranger Jack Ransom
- F. Public Present: None
- G. Minutes Approval for November 17, 2021: Motion, Paul; second, Tess; unanimous
- H. Agenda Changes and Approval: Motion, Paul; second, Mica; Unanimous

II. Public Comments: None

III. Board Contact and Correspondence: None

IV. Reports:

- A. Staff Reports: Jack Ransom and Jack Blackwell
 - Jack Ransom hired 3 of the 4 2022 trail crew. CHRSA will receive the most attention, especially the Alpine Trail and Fort Trail. He is confident that the crew will meet the goals of the grant.
 - Jack R is reviewing LPSRS host applications.
 - Some cabin cancellation this fall due to weather but still consistent use of west side PUCs. Problems reported with accessing the Tonsina PUC.
 - Trying to contact a BLM wetlands specialist about the parking issue at LPSRS.
 - Jack R thanked Carol for sending out a recent newsletter from the Resurrection Bay Historical Society which included a 1992 story about the Fort and a defender, Jack Turnbull. Jack R has been working on his WWII donations with Mark L. and RBHS.
 - The draft National Historic Register nomination for Fort McGilvray was approved by the Seward Historic Preservation Commission. This has been a big goal for decades. Big effort over the years by Tom Kain, Jack R, Michael Burmeister, NPS, and others. Jack R has known the Turnbull family for years and it's a personal achievement to have this step of Jack Turnbull's "cause" completed. We are waiting for the official nomination, then the plaque, and ceremony.
 - Jack Blackwell thanked Jack R and Michael Burmeister for their hard work on the Fort McGilvray NHR nomination.

- Jack B recognized that this year's tsunami alert exposed the need for a public shelter in the upper LPSRS parking lot tsunami safe zone. He is working with KPB Emergency Management Director Brenda Ahlberg to see if FEMA money could be used to build a public evacuation shelter next to the host site with a secure workshop and storage area for boats and equipment.

Next step is to reach out to the Lowell Point Community Council (LPCC). Mica, president of the LPCC, reported that the LP Community Hall is an evacuation facility with supplies for the entire winter community, equipped with 100 cots, kitchen, shower, laundry, generator, extra fuel, blankets, food and a 20,000 gallon underground water reservoir. It even has a helicopter landing zone, but only 2 toilets and 1 shower. In the summer, the area is clogged with cars and RVs and exceeds the shelter capacity.

Jack B asked Mica if LPCC would support the Park emergency shelter. Mica answered she would support a second facility if it didn't jeopardize the LP Community Hall, and not be called "the" community evacuation center. Nick asked Jack B who would staff the park shelter, and if it would have showers and toilets. It would be staffed by Park employees but need a backup staffing plan, keyless locks, etc. Yes, to showers and toilets.

Jack B thought a front-end loader might be purchased to assist with evacuation and plowing. Carol mentioned that new updated tsunami inundation maps are still in draft form and that the tsunami runup extent might be higher than we thought.

- Budget 2022 included \$300,000 for Tonsina bridge abutment work. Initial FY 2023 report from governor looks good for state parks: \$882,000 for parks, which is a 6% increase over last year, but between 2014-2022, there was a 70% decrease in Parks funding.
- Capital budget for the Kenai Peninsula authorized \$4.3 million in EVOS funding for KP parks including money to relocate the Callisto PUC.

B. Committee reports

1. Local issues (except parking) (Nick): No report; thanks for plowing.
2. Mining (Cliff): Cliff was absent so Bob reported.
 - Miner Luck may have been illegal last year as no permit was filed with DNR. The annual fee was not paid so his claims were considered abandoned. A new miner from Tok, Jamie Fritz, filed for the two former Goreson, then Luck claims, plus four more parcels for a total of six. Bob has an email in to David Sharron to inform him of our concerns. No information on federal claim sign that was posted on one of the claims.
 - Luck's six-wheeler and junk remains at the Tonsina beach, and without a permit indicating an active mine, are considered abandoned. What about the mooring lines?
 - Carol asked if the permit that Jack R created specifically for Luck applied to Fritz? Jack R said so far Fritz isn't a park issue, but if the miner sets up a camp in the park, and needs to access his mines through state park land, Jack would pursue a permit.
 - Jack R will contact the Division of Mining Land and Water (MLW) for more information.

- Discussion of the merits and process of creating an Interagency Land Management Agreement (ILMA) and pay DMLW to manage it. The ILMA can't exceed 640 acres. The Kenai Area Plan should be consulted, is it designated for recreation?

The application costs \$3000 per ILMA. Mark thought that cost was cheap to eliminate the constant problems for the watershed. No more staff would be needed and the staff cost of dealing with miners, their abandoned equipment and trash, is high. Jack B said he would do some research on the feasibility and process of adding an ILMA, and ask the Director if he supports it.

As arguments in favor of a management change from mining to recreation, Bob noted that one, Tonsina Creek is adjacent to Parks and the public access to the upper Tonsina is through Park managed land. Two, how much money are miners making off of the public resources. Is it worth it? Three, we've endured decades of misuse from the miners. We have a solid case. Carol noted that Tonsina Creek is anadromous. Jack R noted the continuing management headaches and conflicts. Mica mentioned that if Parks staff is constantly cleaning up after the miners, that cost should be covered in the budget. Carol noted the lack of a bond requirement for mine cleanup.

Nick asked if we should be gathering usage data on Tonsina Creek and Cathedral Fall. Carol suggested asking on Facebook Seward Daily Trail Report.

Jack R noted MLW has a different mindset than Parks and that the "traditional" use of Tonsina Creek has been mining even though there was no activity between the Goreson and Luck claims, and none for decades before that. Miners have the right to mine on general state land; a person paying fees has legal rights. Mica asked about active mining claims; an example occurred in Cooper Landing where the claims attached to the property. But more junk is appearing requiring staff time to administer the claims.

DMLW has no enforcement capability and has only 3 offices in the state. Maybe one DNR enforcement branch could be created so state parks staff wouldn't have to manage and clean up mining claims. The Kasilof dipnet fishery is not managed by DMLW and state parks has no funding so response is left to state troopers as a major public safety issue.

- Jack R: CABs have power that he does not. The Board could lobby for this at a grassroots level. Jack B said DMLW might have a larger public discussion if we changed management direction. Could be a slow process.

3. Legislative/Political Action Committee (Bob, Mica):

- Bob said he called Kachemak State Park CAB Chair Robert Archibald of Homer about funding for our local Parks. He suggested forming a 5019(c)(3) charitable "Friends of Seward Area State Parks" organization. Maybe we could use the IRS status of the Resurrection Bay Conservation Alliance. Jack B likes the idea of a Friends group. As an example, there is the [PWS Stewardship Foundation](#) that has applied for federal funds to work on PWS campsites.
- Carol asked how SCAB could get involved with the budget. Jack B said the Director wants to work with CABs. State Park staff have to support the governor's budget and staff can't ask the legislature to add to the budget, but SCAB can.

- Mica suggested we explain our concerns to representatives, over lunch maybe, and form relationships. SCAB can be an intermediary between legislators and Parks. Jack B said drop the “political action” name of the committee and just use legislative committee.
- Jack B suggested sending recommendations/ list of priorities to Director by May to present to governor’s budget by December 15 or go through legislature. Mica noted plowing/sanding, deferred maintenance, mining cleanup, mooring buoys, and capital improvement projects. CAB needs information on state park priorities and talking points so we can educate legislators and advocate for funding. Jack B will pull the Resurrection Bay items from the state parks deferred maintenance list and facility replacement and provide that to us. Mica requested budget information. Jack B. said that would be released soon.
- Carol suggested inviting the Seward mayor/port director to discuss carrying capacity, cruise ship tourism impacts on LPSRS. Tim Dillon, executive director of the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District was recommended as well. We need a comprehensive Seward area plan.

4. Bylaws Committee (Carol):

- Kachemak Bay State Park CAB met 12-8-21 to discuss changes in bylaws and will meet again online and in January. Carol commented via Google Docs. Carol reported that the Bylaws Committee will meet in January.

V. Old Business:

1. ADFG Advisory Board No Salmon Fishing signs for N and S Fork bridges (Cliff): no update
2. Parking issue update:
 - Jack B wondered if BLM would even consider expansion of the LPSRS parking site.
 - Paul suggested enhancing, not adding to the parking lot in the wetlands, and take care of what we have. A a wooden boardwalk with rails from the lot to the beach would protect the beach ryegrass; it would look more attractive and maybe encourage people who don’t want to walk on gravel and dirt. Jack B said he would share comments.

VI. New Business:

1. Donated latrine for South Beach (Cliff): Moved to next agenda
2. Fort McGilvray Historic Register Nomination comments.
 - Carol would appreciate if the appropriate state staff would see her comments.

VII. Public Comments: none

VIII. Adjournment

A. Board Comments:

- Nick said he likes the Friends group idea.
- Carol thanked Jack B for participating.

- Mica said Carol is very good at proof reading!

C. Date/Location of next meeting: Wednesday, January 19, 2022 at 5:30 pm. TBA

D. Motion to Adjourn: Moved, Mica; second, Kat, unanimous. 7:29 pm.