

## **Seward State Parks Citizen Advisory Board**

### Minutes

November 16, 2022 5:30-7:30 pm

AVTEC Culinary Academy, 809 Second Ave, east entrance, third floor

#### **I. Call to Order**

- A. Call to Order: 5:34 pm by Chair Griswold
- B. Minutes taker: Luttrell
- C. Roll Call: Bob Barnwell, Carol Griswold, Nick Jordan, Mark Luttrell, Cliff Reid (via phone), Mica Van Buskirk
- D. Board members absent: Tom Miller, Paul Paquette, Kat Sorensen, Tess Tulley. Paul has decided to resign from the board.
- E. State Park Staff: Superintendent Jack Blackwell, District Ranger Jack Ransom, Mike Burmeister
- F. Annual election of Chair and Vice-Chair
  - 1. Chair: call for nominations, discussion, vote. Griswold was nominated and she accepted. Unanimous.
  - 2. Vice-Chair: call for nominations, discussion, vote. Cliff Reid accepted role of Vice Chair. Unanimous.
  - 3. Newly elected officials assume roles
- G. Public Present: none
- H. Minutes Approval for September 21, 2022 (no quorum for October 19 meeting.)  
Luttrell moved, Van Buskirk seconded
- I. Agenda Changes and Approval:

#### **II. Public Comments:** none

**III. Board Contact and Correspondence with Public:** Van Buskirk mentioned that some public had inquired about an anchored barge SE of LPSRS. Jordan: maybe not within Parks authority. Blackwell agreed. Also Van Buskirk: public inquiry about erosion at Tonsina PUC. Ransom said Parks has plans to address the problem.

#### **IV. Reports:**

##### Staff Report

Blackwell: enjoys meeting in person. Governor's budget will be released on December 15. Seward Board interests are known. It might be valuable to resend our priorities. Van Buskirk advised that she has had trouble contacting the governor's office and said that contacting legislators after budget release may be more productive.

Blackwell had a meeting with KPB emergency management about the Lowell Point VFD emergency evacuation facility at Lowell Point VFD. Suggested the Board send a letter of support to state and borough. FEMA mitigation money may be used. Need to apply for funding. Application due end of December. Van Buskirk and Jordan described the existing facilities which are extensive, but there exists the need for additional toilets. During the last tsunami alert, the

upper LP parking lot and the VFD lot were full, even Jordan's nearby private residence had 20 vehicles. The value of partnerships emphasized.

Ransom: Introduced Burmeister's grant success and trail work.

Ransom: No money available for Tonsina PUC move though looking for funding; waiting to hear back from National Guard if possible to move the cabin with a Chinook helicopter. If not perhaps a landing craft can be used; \$25K remains for Callisto PUC move roughly 15-20 feet. During last flood event, floodwater touched the subfloor. Latrine inaccessible. Field work at Derby Cove PUC - trees cut, cut into rounds, boardwalk repaired. Sierra Club volunteers did a swell job this summer on the overland trail. Burmeister and Ransom winterized facilities.

Burmeister: Trails grant turned in on September 31 for Rainforest and Alpine trail improvements. Anticipate 4 months of work. Discussion of the value of providing a contact number for cabin residents to inform Parks of conditions.

Barnwell mentioned the need for a mooring buoy at North Beach. Blackwell said there is money for purchase, but none for maintenance which must occur every three years. Solution is to include maintenance costs in operating budget. Van Buskirk noted that a three year maintenance budget isn't addressed well with a state annual budget. There are no mooring buoys in SE or PWS.

## B. Committee Reports

1. Local issues (except parking): Discussion of effects of spring landslide. Jordan mentioned that the recently released tsunami assessment maps use lot lines rather than elevation to determine risk. Maps appear to address the most extreme possible tsunami event.

Discussion of wetlands designation at LSPSP lower parking area. Currently it is not designated wetlands but may need to be revisited by USACE.

2. Parking Access: Parking issues will be covered in SCORP discussion

3. Mining (Reid, Barnwell, Griswold): Tonsina Mineral Closure Option/Special Use Designation

Griswold communicated with Shawanna Guzenberg, Natural Resource Manager II for Division of Mining, Land and Water about the advantages of a Mineral Closure for Tonsina Creek vs a Special Use Designation (aka Special Use Area). Guzenberg suggested that Blackwell could initiate process toward a SUD. A Mineral Closure doesn't limit Generally Allowed Uses, whereas a SUD would. That's important because there is an advantage to restricting some mining techniques and equipment. Van Buskirk wondered what is a special use. Blackwell said special use areas are mostly focused on recreation and that the Kenai Area Plan suggests State Park designation. We discussed allowing gold panning but not suction dredges or gasoline motors and ATVs. Van Buskirk asked which claims had been a problem, and noted that there are terrible miners but some are

responsible. Van Buskirk wondered if we could retain existing mining techniques for responsible miners, citing historical uses. Ransom reported that he visited the miner's abandoned gear (near the waterfall) and said its less messy than in the past.

Luttrell asked about the difference between an ILMA (Interagency Land Management Agreement) and a SUD in terms of achieving our interests. ILMAs don't allow stacking additional ILMAs and the maximum size of an ILMA is 640 acres. Blackwell said he would research that and report at the December meeting.

Griswold listed the negative impacts of existing mining efforts.

Jordan wondered about a visitor use survey of the Tonsina drainage. Blackwell didn't think it would alter the issue. The board will wait for Blackwell to research the issue, including meeting with Guzenberg, before suggesting he advance the SUD. He said the Kenai Area Plan might need to be amended to accommodate a SUD.

Ransom said that he needs enforcement authority which he doesn't think a SUD would provide. He suggested a tight enforceable permit. Within the State there is a difference of opinion as to enforcement authority within a SUD (aka SUA). Griswold asked Blackwell to investigate Ransom's concern, contact Guzenberg. Ransom mentioned that Title 41 enforcement is a statewide concern. Griswold mentioned the existence of the Exit Glacier road SUA as an example of enforcement failure.

4. Legislative Committee (Barnwell, Van Buskirk) Budget: None

#### **V. New Business:**

1. SCORP public review <https://www.alaskacorp.org/>  
Appendix 1: <https://www.alaskacorp.org/appendix-1>  
Kenai Peninsula and Turnagain Arm Subregion:  
[https://www.alaskacorp.org/files/ugd/76c42e\\_0dc7e3e457794b38a4ec55ca560e5f6c.pdf](https://www.alaskacorp.org/files/ugd/76c42e_0dc7e3e457794b38a4ec55ca560e5f6c.pdf)

Discussion of SCORP. Blackwell conveniently provide copies for the board.

There was a discussion of the absence of representation within the SCORP by Seward area entities.

Griswold asked for clarification about what the SCORP is asking the public for. Blackwell said that the SCORP is required for the state to accept Land and Water Conservation Funding. Key in on the projects that have been through the process and are close to initiation.

Barnwell noted that the Seward area is different from the Homer area (which is well-represented in the plan). Seward doesn't have the broad geographic area plus Seward has an abundance of trails that are heavily used in the summer, but not in the winter. He would like to see the focus on accommodating winter use and maintaining year-

round assets but not focus on additional trails or cabins. Luttrell mentioned that the USFS has proposed several new cabins on the the Eastern Kenai Peninsula. Blackwell mentioned the possibility of a ski trail from Lowell Point to Tonsina Point.

Luttrell mentioned that it is assumed in Alaska that more is better when it comes to recreation but maintaining what we have is more important.

Barnwell said that our recreation infrastructure is a little bit shabby compared to the rest of the world. Maintain what we have rather than expand.

SCORP acknowledges the value of outdoor recreation but the state doesn't fund it. Blackwell said there used to be 12 rangers and staff on the west side of the Peninsula. Now it's 8 for the whole Peninsula, Resurrection Bay and PWS.

It was recognized that the Seward area is underrepresented by the SCORP. Blackwell said focus on priorities of the CAB for the SCORP. Griswold mentioned that trails are not well represented in SCORP. Easy to add "Seward area" to existing blurb about Kachemak Bay trails. Discussion of Lowell Point parking issue.

Griswold and Barnwell agreed that a state-wide umbrella Friend's group with local chapters is valuable. Blackwell mentioned a state parks foundation 25 years ago and it stalled because every group wanted to focus on their own area, which it was noted seems fine. Perhaps the Alaska Community Foundation could handle the account. Van Buskirk and Barnwell supported a local trails users advocacy group.

Discussion of existing local non profits that might play a Friends role. RBCA is understaffed, perhaps the Seward Nordic Ski Club or the Wilderness Collective.

Van Buskirk mentioned the fascinating history (WWII) of the Resurrection Bay Islands.

Griswold suggested that the board and individuals provide comments to the SCORP staff.

Blackwell said the SCORP will be used by advocates by referencing that a particular project is listed within it.

## **VI. Old Business: Postponed from May 18, 2022 meeting, see May minutes**

1. Explore creation of Friends of Seward Area State Parks (Barnwell, Tulley)
2. Tide-pool and collecting permit clarification (Griswold): see May minutes
3. Clarification on permits for collecting animals and seaweed (Griswold, Jack R)
4. Blackwell: provide plat or as-built showing LPSRS parking lot footprints

**VII. Informational Items:** Jordan posted laminated tide charts for October-December at kiosks. Griswold emailed SCORP recommendations and letter of support for CHSRA RTP grant. Blackwell emailed updated Board terms and contact information. Barnwell mentioned support for existing trails.

**VIII. Public Comments: none**

**IX. Adjournment**

A. Board Comments: Reid asked if there is an acreage size limit for SUDs. Blackwell said he'll research it.

B. Date/Location of next meeting: **Wednesday, December 21, 2022 at 5:30 pm, in person**

C. Van Buskirk moved for adjournment, Jordan seconded, unanimous at 7:32 pm