

## Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Board

### \*\*\* Meeting Minutes\*\*\*

Thursday, April 12, 2018

5:30 p.m. Gilman River Center

514 Funny River Rd., Soldotna, AK

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. **Roll Call:** Joe Connors, Ricky Gease, William Tappan, Glen Arundell, Monte Roberts, Monte Roberts, Michael Frost, Andrew Carmichael, Lisa Gabriel, Brent Hibbert, Andy Loranger, Brian Marston, Jack Blackwell and Marion Glaser (on the phone).
- B. **Minutes:** Minutes were approved as written.
- C. **Agenda:** Agenda was approved.
- D. **Public Comment/Presentation:** None.

#### II. REPORTS

1. Agency and Government Reports:
  - a. State Parks-Jack Blackwell provided the board with the following report:
    - The Eagle Rock boat launch and parking area improvement project is underway. Improvements include a new double wide boat launch, dock, access along the shore, and modifications to traffic circulation/parking. It is schedule to be completed and ready to open in early July.
    - The board received 6 applications for the 3-vacant position that are open. The interviews are scheduled for May 21, 2018. Times will be determined once the applicants have been notified.
    - Ricky Gease asked about the offsite parking at Eagle Rock. Jack Blackwell stated the Spur Highway realignment project will begin this summer and the first phase will improve the highway between Kenai and the Eagle Rock boat launch. This was going to initially impact the right-of-way (ROW) near the Eagle Rock boat launch and displace people that would be parking in the area. DOT has informed Parks that a small section of the ROW will not be affected in the first phase of construction. Because of this, State Parks will not be issuing a Request for Proposals to provide off-site parking.
    - Pillars boat launch will open when all the river ice has gone out and the area is dry enough for traffic.
  - b. DEC-No Report
  - c. ADF&G- Brian Marston provided the board with the following report:
    - Brian introduced Jenny Gates as the new assistant Area Manager for Fish and Game Sportfish Division.
  - d. USF&WS-Andy Loranger provided the board with the following report:



- Work is being completed on the Moose Range Meadow platforms. The work includes half repair and half replace of the fishing platforms. Work is slated to be completed by June.
- e. USFS/Chugach National Forest –Marion Glaser provided the board with the following report:
- The Forest Service has completed all the hiring seasonal staff for the summer. Some of the staff started this week and some will begin next week. They will be completing the Wilderness First Responder Course in Seward.
  - The construction work at the Russian River Campground entrance is going as schedule with phase one. They have created a new overflow parking area and a new contact station.
  - There will also be some new Russian River maps available to the public.
- f. City of Kenai – Lisa Gabriel provided the board with the following report:
- The City of Kenai’s new planner, Elizabeth Appleby, has been hired.
  - Five new summer temporary enforcement positions will be hired this year. The city is also currently hiring all the other summer position and approximately 50 applications have been received.
  - The Harbor commission is proposing a new no wake zone for the dip net fishery at the mouth of the Kenai River. The area is at the entrance where all the beach fisherman is located. They are currently discussing signage and the length of the area and when the tide may have effects on when a boat needs to come in on step do to water levels.
- g. City of Soldotna – Andrew Carmichael provided the board with the following report:
- The Swiftwater campground improvements are moving forward. This includes repairs to the currently platforms, installing a French area on the shore where there is a seep area, adding additional platforms, and installing spruce tree revetment along the existing walkway.
  - The City is moving forward with their summer hiring process in which they received over 70 applications.
  - An affluent testing will begin this summer, which is a benchmark protocol that is being spearheaded by the water department, DEC and EPA. This will be one of the first testing sites in the state. This will help in establishing the protocols for this type of testing.
  - The city campgrounds and boat launch areas will open once the roads can handle the traffic and the ice is off the launches.
  - An application will be submitted for the trimming of the willows along Soldotna Creek Park.
- h. Kenai Peninsula Borough- Brent Hibbert provided the board with the following report:
- The next Borough assembly meeting will be held in Seward on Tuesday. This is something that is done once a year in the spring.
  - The budget work session will begin April 30<sup>th</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup> will be the first session.

## 2. Committee Reports

- a. President’s Report-No report

- b. Guide Advisory –Monte Roberts provided the board with the following report: t
- The committee reviewed the new proposed educational panel that will be developed by State Parks with some funding that was available from the Eagle Rock project. This poster’s topic is how do you now an illegal guide versus a legal guide. The committee offered a few suggestions and anyone from the board is welcome to add any other recommendations. The idea behind the panel is to educate the public when they are out on the river with an operator and what to look for to make sure they are registered with all state and federal agencies. A revised draft will be available at the May meeting. This can be reproduced and available for display at all boat launches and campgrounds along the Kenai River. Some of the recommendations are to put it on various websites and to also have a brochure available to the public.
  - The committee also discussed that the proposed anchor buoy regulations would not be passed in time for the 2018 season.
  - The committee is going to collect the information as to where State Parks has AEDs on the river. The Guide association has several AEDs that are not currently in working order. They would like to start working on a plan as to where these should be places along the river to give the best opportunity to help someone.
- c. Habitat -No Report
- d. River Use –Bill Tappan reported that there was a joint meeting with the Guide Advisory committee.
- The two committees first discussed bank closures and the potential of opening two sites currently closed. The first one is the powerline just upstream of the end of East Redoubt road and the second one across from the upper river by the Kiley River. Monte Roberts suggested more signage along the river especially across from Stewarts Landing and the one above Sunken Island. The idea is to change the signs from red and white no fishing (ADFG) to green and white habitat closure (DNR)..
  - There was also some discussion about some new fishing platforms that would be placed in areas along the river and possibly be available for rent by the public.
  - Camping and human waste removal below Skilak Lake. There are no designated camp sites on that stretch in that river. Some of the committee’s recommendation include posting the “poopster posters” encouraging the public to pack out waste and offering free wag bags to users as they come into the area. There are other problems such as fish cleaning and just removal of trash from the site. It was recommended to have a trip of the various agencies to identify the sites that are problem areas. The idea is to create a plan to address these areas. Stream Watch was a major player and they are part of the solutions such as visiting these site during the summer and working with users to educate them on waste management.
- e. Legislative/Government Activities-Ricky Gease reported to the board the legislature will not pass two bills, HB 129 and HB 260 which both address having your fishing license on your phone and it to be a legal document to show law enforcement. This is mainly because there is no process in place now to electronically sign the license. They are currently working on how to establish this process for electronically signing.

**III. OLD BUSINESS:**

**IV. NEW BUSINESS:**

**V. CORRESPONDENCE:**

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Jeff King asked where the State is with the one case of illegal guiding that was identified last year? Will the individual be on the Kenai River this year? Jack replied that the current case date has been postpone several times and has not gone to trial as this time.



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 Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the Kenai Peninsula Borough



Ricky Gease commented that illegal guiding or a guide who walks away from clients that book a trip, stiffing the clients of any fees that have been paid, and there are no systems in place to punish these offenders. Someone that has such a violation can still register to guide the following years. He believes the solution is to have a professional guiding board that has the resources to follow these violations and prevent the person from registering the following year.

Larry Opperman- if you are going to get something in place to address the illegal guides have contract with these operators. If they are sited for a violation it should be the person and not the company that will not be allowed to get a guide license on the Kenai.

**VII. BOARD COMMENTS-**Andy Loranger commended the two committees for working on the human waste issue on the river. This is a river wide problem and it going to take work and education in the long term to get a handle on this problem.

Ricky Gease said the Kenai River Sportfishing Association has moved to a new building next to Sweeney's on the Spur Highway.

Glen Arundell looked up how much AEDs cost and they range from \$700 to \$1000 apiece. These could be a lifesaving instrument and we need to look at raising money to have one at each landing.

Jack Blackwell welcomed Jenny Gates to her new position and commended the two committees and the work they do.

Joe Connors reminded the board about the interviews for the board members on May 21<sup>st</sup> and everyone should participate.

Monte Roberts would like to add Derby's to the agenda for next month's committee meetings.

Bill Tappan stated that Trout Unlimited will be having a film festival on Saturday April 21<sup>st</sup> at the visitor center. It is fun and will sell out.

Andrew Carmichael attended a webinar that was championed on what they had done on the Clinch River. Andrew felt they were 20 years behind what we have done on the river, such as the advisory board, the agency coordination for permits, and techniques.

We went around the table to ask each board member what they would like to contribute to the end of the season board meeting/barbeque on May 10<sup>th</sup>.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**