

Legislative Briefing

December 12, 2017 – 10:00 am at the Legislative Office in Fairbanks

Start at 10:04

Brooks welcomed everyone to the 26th annual legislative briefing from Citizens Advisory Board

Tawnia gave the presentation.

The board represents multiple user-groups, introduced members that were present, and went over the agenda of the meeting. The presentation is in three groups: goals, revenue strategies, and comments & discussion.

Northern Area overview – 5 management units, 2 of which are under contract (Tok & Delta)

GOALS

1. Park sustainability
2. Reduce use of general funds
3. Keep parks open

Northern revenue has increased \$103K since FY14 due to new fees and additional cabins

FY 18 revenue down due to loss of the Delta sites

BY18 budget reduced by 10% also due to the loss of Delta area and 2 perm seasonal & 1 perm year-round employee

Delta area parks have been contracted to the private sector as of July 1, 2017. On July 1, the Delta area parks were all passive management until the contracts could be awarded. Delta area citizens rallied together to clean the outhouses themselves until the contracts were in place in August.

Goal – to develop partnerships with local groups – listed the groups who have had special use permits this last year. Develop partnerships with private and public groups, 9 commercial use permits in Northern

Goal – to promote state park use, 765,418 visitors to Northern Area parks last year. Gain more military support.

Parks are economic engines and contribute to our quality of life. Economic impact study showed that parks contribute \$648M in tourist spending. 14% of tourists stay in campgrounds

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) contributed \$200K to the Northern Area, which is our only additional source of funding now. This program helped create Olnes ATV trail, the first ATV campground in Alaska. It is an easily accessible trail, well suited for beginners. RTP also funded a grant for \$50K (Phase 1 of 3) for replacing the boardwalk on the Granite Tors trail. Approximately 8K people hike this trail every year, plus there are races being held on it every year.

REVENUE STRATEGIES

1. Add more Day Use fee sites, in FY 15 there were 5 in Northern, now there are 25
2. Add more Public Use Cabins (PUCs), in FY15 there were 11, now there are 18
3. Resume management of the Chena River State Recreation Site here in Fairbanks. Previously under private contract, that facility grossed over \$90K in revenues.

COMMENTS & DISCUSSIONS

Thanks for coming.

Rep. Thomas - Discussion about Fielding Lake boat launch. Now that it is in passive management how will it ever get fixed. Suggestion was brought forward to see if BLM will take over management of it since it is closer to the Summit/Paxson area.

Board Member Scott – he has been involved with trails and volunteer programs on the east coast. With the potential for increase in Asian tourists, is there a way to get them involved. Need to involve more local users to volunteer, Scouts as volunteers, military outreach? Adopt a campsite or adopt a trail program? Group is meeting to start an endowment program for trails, it is in its infancy now, but it is a multi-user group looking for ways to fund trail maintenance and building. Superintendent mentioned not having staff to manage volunteers.

Discussion about how in Sweden’s education system, it includes getting children into the outdoors. Are there programs that Parks is doing to partner with schools to get children into the parks at an early age, to get them to help take care of the land, etc.... Are Natives using the parks for events such as pow wows or other ceremonies? There is a need to develop stronger partnerships with the school system and outreach to other groups.

Board Member Dave – is there a way to assess the impact of Canadian tourist on places such as Rika’s Roadhouse? They are an underrated group of tourists that have a large impact as a tourist group.

Is there a way to pay day use fees online? Ethan – no, but we are looking into getting more electronic fee stations so that customers can pay with credit cards at the sites.

Watched the 5-minute video about the Chena Rec Area that was produced by a volunteer.

Ethan – closing comments. Brooks is a great advocate for Parks and a good resource for local contact. He is also available for legislators to contact for info. Thank a ranger.... Thanks for coming to both the legislators, aids and CAB members.

END 11:20

In attendance:

Dave Klein, CAB

Don Kiely, CAB

Lambert Hazelaar, CAB

Ashely Strawch, Rep. Wool

Seth White, Rep. Guttenberg

Lelanea Fulton

Lynette Bergh, Rep. Thompson

Joe Byrnes, Sen. Kelly

Rep. Steve Thompson

Sen. John Coghill

Reinhard Neuhauser, CAB

Michaella Anderson, Rep. Talerico

Scott Bothwell, CAB

Jacob Gerrish, Rep Kawasaki

Tawnia Buturce, CAB

Lona Boyarsky, ASP

Brooks Ludwig, ASP

Ethan Tyler, ASP