

Seward State Parks Citizen Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2014
Seward Library-Community Room

- I. **Call to Order:** 17:00
- II. **Board members present:** Mark Lutrell, Carol Griswold, Terry Rude, Denise Plush, Mark Dalpes
Board members absent: Pat O’leary, Benjamin Pister, John Eavis, Dan Walker, (approved absences)
- III. **Parks Staff:** Jack Blackwell, Jack Ransom, Tom Kain
- IV. **Public attendance:** 0
- V. **Approval of minutes:** Jack Blackwell ~~as~~ WAS nominated by the board to serve as the meeting officio with the absence of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. There was a motion to approve the February 11th meeting minutes by Kent Berklund. Mark Dalpes seconded the motion. The board approved the minutes unanimously.
- VI. **Public comments:** none
- VII. **Park status update:** Jack Blackwell shared a few updates with the Alaska State Parks. The final paperwork will be signed tomorrow (3/7/14) with the Forest Service for a lease agreement providing office space in the downtown area. Tom Kain will move into the office space on Monday. The space will function as an office more so than a visitor center, however, information will be shared between the two agencies. Jack Ransom shared that the Forest Service would provide space for Park brochures and trail information. Jack Ransom then updated the board on the new brochure that is being created for the Seward area park units. Jack encouraged the board to think about what they thought should be included in the brochure. The new brochure will include all of the park units in Resurrection Bay and Day Harbor. A roundtable discussion for a name for the brochure produced the following: Seward Area State Parks, Seward State Marine Parks, Resurrection Bay State Marine Parks, and Seward State Park Units. Mark Dalpes suggested to change “Welcome to..” to “A guide to...” Carol Griswold suggested a link to the weather be added to the brochure. Terry Rude suggested adding a link for the Seward tide table. There was discussion on the Alaska State Parks producing tide books.

An orientation panel for the Seward Area State Parks is also in progress. The present interpretative panel in the harbor area/NPS is outdated and in need of replacement. There was discussion of moving the panel to a more strategic location. Kent Berklund stated that he would look into the harbor orientation panel possibilities.

Jack Blackwell mentioned that he would be doing a presentation of the Alaska State Parks operations in the Seward area for the Chamber of Commerce monthly membership meeting tomorrow.

Jack Ransom will be moving over to the Seward office by the end of the summer.

- VIII. **Operations update:** Tom Kain presented a recap of the Seward Area operations. Updates included the Recreational Trails grant alterations, submission of an application for the Anniversary Grant (offered by the Alaska Historical Commission), completion of annual hazard inspections, and continued renovations on the Lowell Point Bunkhouse.
- IX. **New Seward area park brochure/Kachemak Bay example:** This topic was discussed in Park status update.
- X. **Board goals/different ways to communicate CAB ideas:** Jack Blackwell encouraged the advisory board to work with the parks staff to meet their goals. The members of the board made some corrections and minor alterations to the draft letter that will be sent to the state parks Director. The letter will be posted once it is finalized.

There was discussion about the Quonset and an A frame public use cabin. Kent Berklund suggested an A frame might be more cost effective, however, the Quonset ties in the historical component in the Caines Head State SRA. Mark Dalpes asked how the new Quonset proposal would affect the Eshamey Bay Public Use Cabin project. Jack Blackwell explained that the construction of the Eshamey Bay Public Use Cabin is scheduled to be built in the summer of 2015 and would not be affected by the funding request for a Quonset public use cabin. Jack explained some history of the project and land acquisition. Eshamey Bay (16,000 acres) is one of several EVOS land acquisitions and within the land conservation easement it allows for up to five public use cabins on it. Presently, there is cabin and a large amount of garbage on site. The Alaska State Parks received partial funding from the Forest Service to clean up the site and construct a new public use cabin. The remaining funding needed has been supported by the Governor's budget.

Jack Blackwell shared some of the economic benefits that the public use cabins provide for the local communities and importance of the revenue that is generated for the state parks. Mark Lutrell responded with concern regarding the overuse in Resurrection Bay and spoke of the need for a "carrying capacity" in Resurrection Bay. Mark acknowledged the economic benefit of cabins but did not want to support them at the expense of the quality of the experience for park visitors. Mark posed the question to the board if cabin development was a priority for them? Denise Plush expressed support of additional public use cabins and saw it as an opportunity to increase stewardship by PUC users. Mark Dalpes & Terry Rude were also supportive of the cabin/Quonset remaining on the list of future goals.

Jack Blackwell explained there is a need for increased revenue to assist with the current budget shortfall. Jack stated that about 1/3 of the State Parks budget is funded through park fees.

Terry Rude suggested finding a spot that was closer and more accessible than the proposed South Beach Trail Quonset providing a year round rental opportunity. Tom Kain mentioned there is a potential cabin location on the southern end of Tonsina Point before the trail becomes tidally influenced.

Jack Blackwell discussed options for the advisory board as a means of the next step. He recommended the advisory board work with parks staff to reach their desired goals. Jack mentioned the advisory board has the ability to meet with their local legislators to discuss project funding requests. Other advisory boards have been successful with this process throughout the state.

Mark Dalpes asked how the advisory board could obtain some cost estimates for some of the main action goals. Jack Blackwell said that parks staff could provide that information upon request.

Mark Lutrell suggested adding the “carrying capacity” concept to the list of goals.

- XI. **Board member comments:** Carol Griswold shared that she had visited the abandoned mining cabin up the Tonsina Creek drainage and expressed concern with the affects it is having on the watershed. Jack Ransom agreed and discussed a few options for mitigating the hazardous materials.
- XII. **Public Comment:** none
- XIII. **Next Meeting:** Kent Berklund made a motion to adjourn. Mark Dalpes seconded the motion. Next regular meeting is scheduled for April 8th at 5:00-7:00pm at the Seward Community Library.