

CHUGACH STATE PARK CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD

(Microsoft Teams Electronic Meeting)

DRAFT--Minutes of the December 12, 2022 Meeting

REGULAR MEETING # 10

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Ryan Yelle called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

2. **Roll Call & Introductions:**

Present: Jeff Bidinger, Lauren Boldrick, Rob Clark, Tyndall Ellis, Dave Hart, Trond Jensen, Haley Johnston, Charlotte Levy, Dorn Van Dommelen, Nicole Schmitt, Matt Worden, Ryan Yelle.

Excused: Claire LeClair, Irene Turletes

Absent: Jacob Mendenhall

Staff: Ben Corwin, Park Superintendent

Public: None in attendance

3. **Changes to Agenda & Approval:** The agenda for the December 12, 2022 meeting was approved.

4. **Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:** Minutes of the November 14, 2022 meeting were approved.

5. **Public Comments:**

None

6. **Old Business:**

None

7. **New Business:**

- a. **CAB Nominations-** There are three upcoming vacancies on the CAB. The Nominations Committee has ranked the following applicants highest: Mark Miner, Ted Phelps, and Kate Haapala. Lauren Boldrick and Matt Worden would like to be considered for an appointment to a second term. Lauren moved/Jeff seconded for the CAB to recommend to the director that Mark, Ted, and Kate be appointed to the CAB and that Lauren and Matt be appointed to a second term on the CAB. The motion passed with no objection. Ben noted that Jacob Mendenhall has not attended any meetings since his appointment; the nominations committee has an additional applicant, Kyle Shed, who they recommend appointing if Jacob does not wish to serve on the CAB. Ben will draft a letter to the director with the CAB's recommendations.

8. **Staff Report:** Ben Corwin

- Two drawing hunts for moose, 466 and 467, closed 11/30 with four moose harvested in the Upper Campbell Creek area and two in the McHugh drainage. First time in a long while that there were no violations.
- Bird and Eklutna opened to snowmachine use. Staff evaluating Peters Creek, Ptarmigan, and Upper Huffman.

- The Eklutna Lakeside trail was brushed in November by a contractor, Alaska Hydro-Ax; they spent a couple of weeks on the job. The work was paid for by an RTP grant that Alaska Trails applied for and received.
- Ranger Jared Walter along with STA volunteers has been grooming trails on the Upper Hillside.
- Still have a ranger position vacant, the applicant who was offered a position turned it down because they got a better offer from a federal agency.
- The Potter Section House/Chugach State Park Headquarters was burglarized on November 22; an intruder broke into the downstairs and was found sleeping in the apartment there. Ben arrested him and also found out that the individual had broken into the Enstar facility across the railroad tracks and shut off gas service to a number of customers, including the Potter Section House.
- A Bird Creek resident was cited for dumping horse manure inside the park.
- Ben noted that division-wide, a quarter of the law enforcement staff positions are vacant; this gap in expertise and experience will take a long time for the division to recover from.
- Ben closed by thanking Ryan for his six years on the CAB, and especially for his leadership, tact, and competence as the chair of the CAB.

9. Committee Reports:

- **Access (Trond):** Committee met on 11/21 with Trails Committee and with Cory Hinds to discuss the Ram Valley access that Cory brought to the CAB's attention at the November 2022 meeting. The access route recommended by Cory is identified in the trail management plan as #209, a class 2 trail designed for hiking. The access point is about a mile from the nature center. The landowners in the vicinity are not supportive. One of the landowners recommended an alternative that is much further west and would require a long traverse to get to Ram Valley; none of the committee members supported further consideration of this alternative. Everyone who participated in the meeting was supportive of the project as long as developing this trail is feasible. Ben commented that the trail is consistent with the Trail Management Plan but that the challenge is how to build a sustainable trail within the narrow strip of parkland that provides access from the road to Ram Valley. The Access and Trails committees will consider this project further and bring any recommendations back to the CAB at the January meeting.
- **Budget (Tyndall):** Committee is working on a request to legislators for an increase in operating funds using the vehicle rental tax as a funding source; he and Claire will be working on a draft to bring to the CAB at the January meeting. If the CAB approves, the request would be sent to Anchorage area legislators as well as members of the Natural Resource and Finance Committees.
- **Nomination (Lauren):** Nothing further
- **Seward Highway Design (Dorn):** Ben mentioned that Mile 90-98 will have a resurfacing project in the next year; this will include resurfacing and other improvements to the bike path in this section. Also, the proposed changes to the Seward Highway/Alyeska Highway interchange will affect the end of the Bird to Gird bike trail.
- **Trails (Irene):** N/A
- **Chugach Park Fund (Haley and Claire):** The Fund has received donations from 110 individuals/families in 2022. The Chugiak/Eagle River Foundation donated \$5,000 for the South Fork project. Getting really close to making the match for the Rasmuson Foundation grant.
- **Wildlife (Charlotte):** Still working on a review of wildlife management proposals that include areas within Chugach State Park; planning to have recommendations for the full CAB to review at the January meeting.
- **Planning (Jeff):** Jeff met with Will Taygan (Chugiak Mountain Bike Riders) and Clark Saunders (Eagle River Nature Center board), they discussed mainly ideas for how the municipality, parks, and CMBR could work

cooperatively on multiuse/bike trails in the Eagle River area. Jeff will coordinate with the Trails Committee and Ben to see if there are ways that the CAB can facilitate the Swan Pond trail improvements as well as other projects the mountain bike group is looking at. Ben gave some background on the Swan Pond trail; it was built on the cheap ten years ago in order to address a trespass issue in that area.

- **Outreach (Matt):** N/A

Outgoing CAB members Dorn, Lauren, and Ryan all made comments, expressing gratitude for their fellow CAB members as well as for Ben and his staff. Ryan commented that one of the main reasons he and his wife choose to live in Anchorage, which is far from their families, is the presence of Chugach State Park.

Agenda items for the January meeting: Ram Valley access and BOG proposals.

10. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:07 PM