

# CHUGACH STATE PARK CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD

(Hybrid-With in person at Potter Section House/Microsoft Teams Electronic Meeting)

**DRAFT--Minutes of the May 8, 2023 Meeting**

**REGULAR MEETING # 5**

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Trond Jensen called the meeting to order at 6:00PM
2. **Roll Call & Introductions:**
  - Present:** Lauren Boldrick, Rob Clark, Tyndall Ellis, Dave Hart, Claire LeClair, Haley Johnston, Trond Jensen, Kate Happala, Matt Worden, Mark Miner, Irene Turletes, Charlotte Levy, Kyle Shedd, Ted Phelps
  - Excused:** Jeff Bidinger
  - Absent:**
  - Staff:** Ben Corwin, Park Superintendent
  - Public:** Tim Stallard, Katie Conner, Casey Durand, Cory Hinds, Mark Spano, Amanda (no last name provided)
3. **Changes to Agenda & Approval:** The agenda for the May 8, 2023 meeting was approved with no objection on motion made by Boldrick/Hart.
4. **Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:** Minutes of the April 10, 2023 meeting were approved with one correction to note that Katie Conner was present; no objection on motion made by Miner/Boldrick.
5. **Public Comments:**
  - Mark Spano-comments regarding the proposed glamping at Eklutna, which he also emailed. Noted that one of the legislative purposes for the park is to protect watershed for public use; any proposal for development at Eklutna needs to evaluate any potential impacts to water quality. Wanted to remind the CAB and staff about a cooperative agreement between the state and AWWU regarding management of the Eklutna and Ship Creek watersheds with watershed protection as the highest resource management goal. Under this agreement state will consult with AWWU before conducting any significant land use activities. He stressed that his main purpose in commenting is to remind the CAB and staff that there is a Coop Agreement with AWWU and that Eklutna has become the city's main water source since the management plan was adopted.
  - Casey Durand-commented regarding his proposal to develop a glamping site at Eklutna. He pointed out that his proposal for development includes adding latrine facilities which will protect and improve water quality in the Eklutna watershed.
6. **Old Business:**
  - a. **Proposed modifications to Lower Eagle River Trail (Irene)**-Trails committee met with Will Taygan (Chugach Mountain Bike Riders); Will reported on attending a meeting of the Eagle River Valley Community Council and that he has received a letter of support for the project from them. Trails committee has drafted a letter of support that has language to request that the CMBR continue to work with and communicate with the CAB as the project unfolds and also language that addresses the project's consistency with the trail management plan. Irene will distribute the letter by email and the CAB will consider whether to approve ahead of the June meeting.
7. **New Business:**

- a. **Invasive plant control update (Tim Stallard, Alien Species Control, LLC and contractor for Anchorage Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area)**- Noted the top species of concern in the park which include hawkweed, bird vetch and mayday trees. Uses IPM (Integrated Pest Management) to evaluate and consider what options will be effective and can be used in the park. His company considers mechanical means of removal first (hand pulling and mowing) before using chemicals to eradicate the invasives. Recognizes that the public is often quite concerned about the use of "Roundup" applied to invasives and said that the most hazard to humans is for the people who do the application and that the treatment is very specifically targeted. Alaska Center for Conservation Science (at UAA) has ranked all the invasive species in Alaska, anything over 80 is extremely invasive and scores in the 70s are very invasive. Ben reports that the park has issued a special use permit to Alien Species Control to use chemicals for the purpose of removing invasive species. Per their permit they will post a sign at every location that they use chemical means for eradicating invasive plant species. Question about berry pickers, Tim notes that they do not spray in berry patches and that in addition, if herbicides have been applied, the plants in that area will appear stressed for instance with damaged foliage. Park visitors can help with detection by reporting the location of invasive species if you see them in the park (include GPS location and photo) and send that info to Tim Stallard ([weeds.free.ak@gmail.com](mailto:weeds.free.ak@gmail.com)) Or use the Alaska Invasives ID app (<https://apps.bugwood.org/apps/alaska/>). Funds for the work done in the park come mainly through federal grants through the USFS for work on non-federal land.

#### 8. Staff Report: Ben Corwin

- All snow mobile areas closed;
- All Turnagain arm day use sites plus Bird Creek campground and overflow camping area are now open;
- Eagle River and Eklutna to open May 19;
- Fat bike season extension has ended;
- Turnagain Arm trail is really wet; the Trail Run scheduled for Thursday, but it may have to be postponed for a couple weeks to allow trail to get drier;
- Eklutna watershed hydro project; alternatives have been developed; CSP will be more favorable to those alternatives that have the least impact on park resources and public use;
- Ranger Levi back to work from paternity leave and will be participating in a wildlife attack response training;
- Ben will go back on leave after Memorial Day weekend; Keith will be acting during that time;
- Division still down six park ranger positions throughout the state, including one in Chugach State Park;
- Acting trail specialist has recruited 5 ACCs, they will start work the third week of May;
- New Glen Alps host; has previously volunteered at Bird Overflow and Eklutna (winter ops);
- Several other hosts are returning, still need hosts at McHugh and Bird Point;
- Ranger Walter assisted with rescue of injured hiker on Flattop, Alaska Mountain Rescue Group also involved;
- Permits: Kanoya Ridge Run-only a few hundred yards of the route goes through the park, Tim Stallard, others including permits for motorized use and research in the park;
- Trail projects in the park this summer: State sponsored ones: brushing along Peter Creek and Bird Valley; Sponsored by Chugach Park Fund with work by Alaska Trails: South Fork Eagle River plus six volunteer work events;
- Comment on avalanche exposure in cottonwoods on the Mile High trail.

#### 9. Committee Reports:

- **Access (Dave and Jeff):** Committee met with Alaska Glamping's Casey Durand and Katie Conner to discuss their proposal to develop glamping sites at Eklutna. Committee's focus as they consider the proposal is to protect park resources and insure compatibility with the park's management plan. Thinks there will need to be stipulations that support these goals and to also include a performance bond. Areas of glamping development would be the Canyon Group Site (no latrine on site) and the Alex and Kanchee camping sites at the far end of the lake (these two

sites have old pit latrines). Concerns with development at Bold Ridge. Recommend a staged approach. Positives: opportunity to upgrade existing infrastructure, partnering with the park. Concerns: visibility, latrines are a must but port-a-potties not visually compatible, bears, use of ATVs on non-ATV days. (Ben)-this operation would be authorized under both a commercial use permit (for the glamping) and under a special use permit (for the work to improve public facilities). Access committee ready to review and vet any written proposal or permit application that includes more detail.

- **Budget (Tyndall):** Nothing new on the operating increase for Chugach State Park which was included in the budget approved by House; capital budget looks to be very slim this year.
- **Nomination (Lauren):** N/A
- **Seward Highway Design (Irene):** Would like to meet with Ben to get ideas for what to request that DOT include in their project plan in terms of public facilities in the park.
- **Trails (Irene):** Two volunteer trail events sponsored by Alaska Trails coming up—encourages the CAB members to come out and participate.
- **Chugach Park Fund (Haley and Claire):** Recent donations from Continental Subaru and Athletic Brewing. The Fund will be sponsoring six volunteer work projects throughout the summer. Helicopter work in support of the South Fork Eagle River trail project will occur on about three days: June 5, a day in mid-July and sometime the week of August 14 for about 60 loads total.
- **Wildlife (Charlotte):** Ben gave summary of the proposals that passed in the last cycle and that change hunt areas/bag limits/methods within the park. The proposals that the CAB objected to were not approved. The proposals that did pass that are within the park include: the addition of bow & arrow as legal method of take for the black bear hunt in McHugh drainage, and a new hunt for brown bear in McHugh drainage with the same stipulations as the current black bear hunt and up to five permits.
- **Planning (Jeff):** N/A
- **Outreach (Matt):** On April 12, Matt joined Keith Wilson and Cory Hinds to attend a meeting of the Eagle River Community Council to discuss proposed trail improvement projects in the area (Lower Eagle River trail and Ram Valley). Assembly representative who was present expressed support as did most of the council members.
- **Ram Valley (Haley):** Two main updates: 1) state's capital budget will be very slim, so unlikely that the state will fund a feasibility study for Ram Valley (which Alaska Trails made a CAPSIS request for) and 2) Greatland Trust has met with the committee and they are interested in pursuing Chugach State Park access projects, including Ram Valley.

Sidebar conversation about storing CAB documents in one place or at the very least, have the new chairs for each committee be briefed by the outgoing chairs on what issues have been taken up and any documents that go with. The Administrative Officer will be tasked to facilitate this process.

Kyle attended the JBER public meeting where he learned that the new commander is interested in considering public access issues; area closures typically happen when the firing range(s) open and the criteria used by JBER to determine risk to the public is very conservative. Kyle shared example of when the 50 caliber range near the Glen Highway is open, the first part of the Arctic-Indian traverse is closed to public use. New road that goes towards Snow Hawk valley will be open to public access in the future; the road goes to a small bench/pass the other side of which is Snow Hawk valley.

Kyle wants to join Access, Ram Valley, Trails, and Budget Committees—Ben will send out the most updated version.

**10.** Adjournment: Motion made and seconded (Hart/Miner) Meeting adjourned at 8:03PM.