

**WOOD-TIKCHIK STATE PARK
MANAGEMENT COUNCIL MEETING
Friday March 21, 2024 at 9:00 am at
Bristol Bay Native Association or by
Teleconference with Microsoft Teams
Dillingham, Alaska**



Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order 10:02

II. Roll Call/Establish Quorum

Cody Larson - BBNA
Lee Borden - ADFG
Ali Eskelin - ADNR
Delores Larson – Koliganek
Wassilie Andrews – New Stuyahok

Absent
Bruce Ilutsik- Aleknagik
Dillingham seat vacant

III. Introductions

Dan Boyd – commercial operator W
Andy Angstman - TNL
Bill Sherwonit – Wildlife/wildlands advocate
Laib Allensworth – Rep Bryce Edgmon’s office
Gail Sorenson – resident,
Jill Gates – Anchorage resident
Pat Vermillion – Royal Coachmen Lodge
Todd Rinaldi – ADFG Region Management Coordinator
Scott Schumacher – Royal Coachmen Lodge
Ben Shryock- Superintendent SW Region
Jo Gotshalk – Eagle River resident
Sue Flensburg – Dillingham resident, previous council member
Rick Grant – Tikchik Airventures
Kazandra Johnson – BBNA
Bud Hodson
Tim Troll
Tim Peltier ADFG

IV. Review and Adopt Agenda

Lee Borden - motion to adopt agenda
Delores – second - approved

V. Approve meeting minutes (12/7/23, 1/12/24, 2/1/24)

Lee Borden provided edits for 12.7.23- section 9 page 9 ADFG agency change creek to creel, update 2023 EOs - update – Nush Creel surveys
EO 2023 – increase in EO frequency in last few years – keeps people from coming to river. Cody edit change agenda to minutes – 12.7.23

Mic issues – Cody asked to mic in when speaking for the record.
Lee motion to approve
Delores – second - approval

VI. Executive Order 126

Cody Larson discussed EO 126, introduced by Governor. Legislative body passed joint resolution that cancelled the dissolution of the management council. The council will persist beyond June 30, 2024. Appreciate input and efforts to help legislature determine the council is important.

Delores Larson thanked UTBB board and commercial fishermen for Bristol Bay, who went to Juneau to provide legislators info. Provided recognition that the board is functioning and not ineffective. Recommended efforts to get the Dillingham seat filled, possible letter.

Cody Larson summarized process for council seat appointments, nominations from entities for appointment by Governor. Important to have a full council. Discussed potential letter to the Dillingham City Council.

Delores motion to support one of three nominations from City of Dillingham

Cody Larson amend motion for Dillingham City Council in renominating 3 candidates for their seat. Draft a letter to the city council for their support. Wassillie second.

Cody noted appreciation for agency staff efforts and staff time for council, additionally noted the discussion of inefficiencies in the time for appointment process were outside of council purview, encourage organizations to consider forming an independent board to take up inefficiencies if council is dissolved in the future.

VII. Lake Aleknagik SRS Management (LASRS)

- a. Public Safety Concerns
- b. Regulation proposals

Cody Larson discussed the LASRS history and area of management. High traffic area and point of entry for WTSP with potential for user conflict. Acknowledge letter from the city to the Management Council and thank city for taking up safety concerns.

Ali Eskelin provided history of LASRS Interagency Land Management Agreement with Division of Mining Land and Water and further discussed boundaries of LASRS. Provided 4 recommendations from the city's letter including:

1. Establish hours of operation for aircraft takeoff and landing within the LASRS to address community impacts.
2. Adopt other restrictions on aircraft to address noise impacts within the community, including potential noise abatement procedures for arriving and departing aircraft.
3. Expand the areas where aircraft are currently restricted from takeoff and landing under 11 AAC 20.983(c) to address public safety concerns and conflicts among user groups.
4. Adopt additional regulations on the surface operations applicable to aircraft, boats and other watercraft to address public safety concerns related to increased traffic and congestion within certain portions of Lake Aleknagik.

City proposal to create a working group with city, state and stakeholders to address these safety issues.

Cody Larson stated council is in a position to join the conversation and create a working group. Creating regulations will take considerable effort and well spoken effort by the city council. There are some regulations that do restrict operations of watercraft and aircraft and outlined by the FAA supplement. Address these issues to ensure there are less conflict and greater safety in the future.

Lee Borden and Cody Larson discussed the steps and potential results from working group. Develop language from users for potential regulations would come back through the council. Working group formed through the management council which can include members of the public. comes up with regulations, and regulations would come back through the council for additional review. Lee volunteered for working group to represent the states position for access.

Ali Eskelin and Scott Shumacher requested to be on working group and discuss issues with users prior to regs being adopted with Jill Gates contacting Scott for her public comment.

Ali Eskelin- Motion to form Lake Aleknagik State Rec Site Management Working Group to address public safety concerns and develop regulatory language for further review by the management council.

Lee second- formed a working group convened at any time through secretary of the council.

5 min break

VIII. Public Use Cabin (PUC)

Cody Larson discussed Boundary Island where a PUC allowable through management plan and funding mechanisms.

Ali Eskelin recapped potential timeline for grant funding and detailed letter of support from management council funding. Provided map of Boundary Island and surrounding lands including, ANL conservation easement and private properties. Noted thorough environmental review for each location chosen and detailed not much impact at hardened sites, some tree cutting and litter, latrine facilities at the Pak and at the site.

Dan Boyd asked for info about reservation system and approved of location.

Ben Shryock detailed PUC facilities and costs in other areas, and Reserve America vendor for reservations. Public use cabins very popular, provide intermediate access, and allows more shoulder season access. Qualified supporting letter not advised. Appropriate for council to gauge concerns of local landowners and gauge that against community interests for a full support letter. Detailed costs of PUC rental.

Will Chaney asked about hardened campsites, latrine facilities, and impacts.

Delores Larson institute good neighbor practices. Support taking that action to be good neighbors with local, to not infringe on private properties. Asked if fees were affordable to stay there. Asked about heating methods.

Cody Larson thanked Delores for discussing consultation with property owners, allottees, potential to update bylaws to require consultation, recommend Director consult with landowners to ensure that nearby landowners are aware of building, planning schedule, and noise and aesthetics during construction. Maybe come back to amend bylaws for director determinations include consultation. Motion to support pursuing funding at Boundary Island PUC which is compatible by regulation and recommend director consult with landowners. and motion on the table to draft letter for support, ensure access is equitable and fees are reasonable, development shouldn't compete with other businesses. Ensure consultation prior to the letter of support.

Wassillie – second motion.

Discussion between Lee and Cody about PUC clientele not overlapping with businesses. Additional use from the cabin wouldn't affect aquatic resources, species in the park thriving except king salmon maintain current levels of use.

Discussion between Delores, Ben and Cody about cabin heating options- oil drip, wood stove, propane, pros and cons to each. Wood stove user friendly.

Ali Eskelin noted lands surrounding Boundary Island are ANL, State and private and should be consulted for potential impacts.

Will and Cody discussed Elbow Point location, safety aspect for Boundary Island, this site isn't within the legislative management, plan doesn't recommend increasing visitation, this may be the only compatible site.

IX. ADFG Updates

Lee- Use trends stable around pre Covid levels. Uptick of number and size through the system. Warmer weather, earlier ice out, more plankton in the water trickles to higher end predators. No projects in the park, focus on king salmon for 2024.

Ben Shryock - Point of order, no vote for PUC support letter.

Ali and Delores noted can't support letter of support for PUC without prior Cody - withdraw motion. Ben, Delores, Cody, Ali discussed potential special meeting in one- two months and consultation prior to.

Todd Rinaldi - ADFG regional management coordinator - provided update on Department activities, collaring moose and caribou, detailed IM activities for wolf and bear. BOG directed IM activities will continue, mid-April wolf removal, May-June bear removal, dictated by weather and calving areas, helicopters most effective and efficient method for captures and collaring animals and most humane for removing these animals, provided info about salvage practices, animal parts use in schools. Provided data available to public is on ADFG website. Improvement in survival and calf-cow ratio over summer.

Discussion between Jill Gates, Bill Sherwonit and Todd Rinaldi. Some questioned IM program use of helicopters, salvage. BOG and state instruments are not based on humane practices available in the field. Todd provide update on past IM activities negligible harvest. Effects positive for 2023, possibly two more years.

Discussion between Cody Larson and Todd Rinaldi. Cody asked if 70% of bear population was removed from that area. Todd provided extrapolated data on bear population estimate 100 bears per 1000mi².

Discussion between Bill Sherwonit and Todd Rinaldi regarding park lands and IM activities, helicopter use in wilderness within park established to protect fish and wildlife and habitats. Kill site locations not public, regulations prevent ADFG from releasing some information to the public. No bear population estimate, no indication population is lower than modeling. Bears killed higher than ADFG estimate, bears taken stalking caribou, caribou in stomachs or were within sight of caribou.

Delores noted hope to not trade one resources for another, provided perspective of past plentiful caribou subsistence hunting and current subsistence needs not being

met, noted current high bear population around villages, safety concerns, support actions to preserve caribou and improved safety in area.

Will Chaney thanked ADFG for efforts, IM a necessary move, safety concerns in villages, and hope we're headed in the right direction for ungulate population, asked ADFG and board to include private effort to take some of the burden off the state, ADFG efforts appreciated.

Jo Gotschalk provided personal history and Bristol Bay background, appreciate ADFG overall work and provided perspective on wildlife management and wildlife management plans, feels non-hunting public has been ignored in Alaska wildlife management and conservation matters. Further addressed changing climate and relationships between moose, caribou and predator species and summarized a lack of data in management.

Jill Gates appreciated Jo's input, summarized data lacking in management. ADFG following BOG orders, orders flawed.

Todd Rinaldi summarized BOG process, transparent process in the country with public input on proposals and comments to proposals.

Bill Sherwonit summarized ADFG data, predation and other factors in the herd's decline, questioned if IM would help long term MCH recovery, population crash not caused by predators, bears may help the limit spread of brucellosis, BOG process is rigged, stacked with hunters, trappers and guides. Open and not balanced.

X. Public Comments

Jill Gates appreciate ability to comment.

Bill Sherwonit appreciate opportunity to comment and for everyone's patience.

XI. Board Comments

Wassillie Andrews – good information passed on, important for understanding issues. We're managers of park and glad for discussion on issues, helped me to gain a sense of our beliefs on Wood-Tikchik board, look forward to review future comments to manage the area.

Lee Borden noted a lot of passionate people who care about the park, differing opinions and thank everyone for attendance and comments.

Ali Eskelin open door policy for public comment about park management.

Cody Larson looking forward to working group with city of Aleknagik to minimize safety issues, looking at support for PUC within 6 weeks, MC very active and thanked members for efforts.

Delores Larson thanked all for efforts to restore the council, appreciate effort to fully vet PUC and ensure development in the park is supported by local people, appreciate public comments on Intensive Management program and hope to ensure we're not trading one resource for another.

XII. Adjournment 12:33

DRAFT