

CHUGACH STATE PARK CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD

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

DRAFT--Minutes of the November 11, 2024 Meeting

REGULAR MEETING # 9

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Haley Johnston called the meeting to order at 6:01PM
2. **Roll Call & Introductions:**
 - Present:** Haley Johnston, Claire LeClair, Gus Gustafson, Mark Miner, Kyle Shedd, Tyndall Ellis, Rob Clark, Bill Britt, Irene Turletes, Gabrielle Jordan, Marcella Dent, Joe Hackenmuller
 - Excused:** Dave Hart, Stephanie Rice
 - Absent:** Ted Phelps
 - Staff:** Wendy Sailors, DPOR Director's Office
 - Public:**
3. **Changes to Agenda & Approval:** Agenda was approved as written on motion made/seconded by Britt/Miner.
4. **Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes:** Minutes of the October 14, 2024 meeting were approved as written on motion made/seconded by Turletes/Britt.
5. **Public Comments:** None
6. **Old Business:**
 - a. **CASA Project Discussion** – Tyndall Ellis attended his community council meeting, asked assembly members about CASA projects; Zalatel has made a motion to have the city administration include CASA projects in their annual capital plan; this will mean that the projects would go through a more robust planning process. Assembly member Zach Johnson is involved in developing a planning process to identify and vet projects. CASA projects will go into the Muni Public Works Department; no project list yet. Concurrently LRSAs are starting to put together their project priority lists. Haley suggests it would be valuable for the CAB and/or park staff to develop a project list or at least formally advocate for a project or projects. Discussion about whether the CAB will support a project for the next bond (2025 election) and if so, what. Britt/Turletes made/seconded a motion to draft a letter of support for the Basher trailhead project that was on the project/bond list last year. Motion passes with no objection.
 - b. **CSP Management Plan & Trail Management Plan Revision-** This item came up in relation to the question of whether to add trails that are in use within the park and not recognized as 'official'

park trails in order to address current resource damage occurring. Tyndall mentioned the unofficial trail to Near Point from the Stuckagain Heights neighborhood as an example of a trail that perhaps should be identified as an official trail so that it can be managed/maintained to address ongoing resource damage occurring from public use. He also mentioned other possible updates/revisions, such as for the proposed trail up Ship Creek which is currently classified as Class 2/Pack & Saddle in the current TMP but if it was developed it would likely receive use close to what the Crow Pass Trail sees. In the park's management plan, the Crow Pass trail corridor was classified as a recreational development zone surrounded entirely by wilderness zone in order to address the potential need for facility development along the trail corridor to accommodate increased public use. This discussion topic will be added to a future agenda after Ben is able to schedule a time for DNR planner Monica Alvarez to attend a CAB meeting. Questions for Monica would include where the tipping point is for minor vs. major plan revisions to either the management plan or trail management plan.

- c. **Homicide Peak Renaming**-Ad-hoc committee has been established and includes Irene Turletes (chair), Bill Britt, Rob Clark and Ted Phelps. They will meet before the next CAB meeting. Marcella mentioned that the Muni has stood up a committee to address name changes within the municipality, specifically to re-name features to reflect traditional Dena'ina place names.

7. New Business: No new business

8. Staff Report: Wendy Sailors

Updates:

- Eklutna ATV expansion project is complete
- Bird Valley parking lot improvements are still in progress. Latrine installation is remaining, construction will resume in the spring. This will be a new fee area.
- The new PUCs are still under construction and are closed in, however, the contractor & D&C are postponing construction closeout until the spring.
- Interior Trails has submitted Phase 1, a detailed trail prescription and costing report for the Crow Pass trail, which is being reviewed by staff and will be presented at the December CAB meeting.
- Indigenous Place Names Wayfinding marker presentation will also be in December. Aaron Leggett was unable to make the November meeting date.

Staff:

- Ella Fitzwater has been hired as our new Natural Resource Specialist II. She started on 10/28 and jumped right into interviewing for our third Park Specialist position.
- Park Specialist interviews went well. Solid applicant pool. The selected candidate has been forwarded to HR for approval.
- New Front-Country ACC hired for janitorial work.
- Mary Gianotti will be joining our team again this season as our Avalanche Forecast Specialist ACC. She will resume weekly forecast for the CSP front-range.

Law Enforcement:

- Misconduct Involving Controlled Substance (5th deg) arrest 10/15, near Eagle River maintenance facility
- Abandoned property dump, Briggs Bridge 10/23, cleaned up, under investigation
- Rangers visited JBER 10/23 to present to service members on recreational opportunities in Chugach State Park
- Rangers conducted hunting patrols on foot at:
 - Hunter Pass/Ship Creek for Registration Moose Hunt RM435
 - Middle Fork Loop trail for Drawing Moose Hunt DM466Multiple hunter contacts; including one good opportunity for educating a young and inexperienced moose hunter on salvage requirements on Middle Fork
- APD assists: possible stabbing report; multiple vehicles in ditch after first snow
- Suspicious individual with an axe contacted near Bird Ridge Trail, no crime 10/27
- 10/30 meeting with AFD re Search and Rescue coordination
- Some ongoing nuisance issues: household trash left in latrines, high school parties near North Fork Eagle River
- Peters Creek sublegal bull case continues to work its way through court
- Albert Loop trail patrolled and recommended to Director's Office to reopen
- Search and Rescue late Saturday afternoon 11/2: wet and cold hikers assisted back to Prospect Heights trailhead after calling 911 from Campbell Gorge/South Fork Rim area

Wildlife incidents of note:

- McHugh black and brown bear hunts closed at the end of October. No harvests were made.
- DM466/467 Upper Campbell and McHugh *antlerless* moose hunts opened on 11/1. As of 11/7 one harvest has been made in the Upper Campbell area.
- 1 antlered bull was harvested in McHugh. Hunter was in violation of hunt conditions and had to surrender his moose.
- RM435 Ship Creek moose hunt: 6 bulls harvested. Open until 11/30

Additional Discussion Items:

Upcoming legislative briefing presentation on November 18, initiated by Division Director. Objectives for the meeting are to provide an overview of recent staff-reorganization; to update Legislators on staffing and overall operations for the state park system with focus on Chugach State Park, and to highlight Chugach State Park projects supported by the Legislature including status of FY2023 Capital Improvement Projects.

Committee assignments:

Joe: Planning, Budget, Ram Valley

Gabrielle: Access, Trails & Wildlife

Marcella: Outreach, Access and Planning

9. Committee Reports:

- **Access (Dave):** N/A
- **Budget (Tyndal):** He and Claire met with Parks Director Ricky Gease to discuss budget items (both operating and capital) the CAB can advocate for in the next legislative session. Ricky advised to wait until the Governor's budget is released in Mid-December.
- **Nomination (Dave):** There are five active applications, two leftover from the last round. Gus will contact all the applicants to confirm their continued interest. Committee will meet before the next CAB meeting to come up with recommendations for appointments for the three seats that will be open as of the end of the year.
- **Seward Highway Design (Stephanie):** Draft EA will be submitted to DOT by end of year. Likely February when public review of the EA will begin.
- **Trails (Irene):** Trails committee will be meeting soon to prioritize trail projects.
- **Chugach Park Fund (Haley/Claire):** Met with Ben Corwin to go over priorities for volunteer events in 2025; met with Alaska Trails to start planning for the 2025 season, planning to work on about 1.5 miles of the Williwaw Lakes trail in addition to the six volunteer events. Received grants from Athletic Brewing and Conoco-Phillips.
- **Wildlife (Gus):** Drawing hunt application period opened; results posted 2/25/25. Beavers still at work at the viewing decks at ERNC.
- **Planning (Rob):** N/A
- **Outreach (Rob):** N/A
- **Ram Valley (Haley):** Haley going to the Eagle River Valley Community Council this next week along with Joe and Gus. Work continues on the project but at a slower rate since construction funding was vetoed last session. Will be getting access point surveyed to determine exactly where the legal access currently exists. Work to begin on a list of potential parcels to purchase for future access to Ram Valley as LWCF replacement for the Seward Highway project. Outreach will continue through the winter.

Next CAB meeting December 9.

10. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn made/seconded (Britt/Miner) and approved with no objection 7:37PM.