

**SUSITNA BASIN
RECREATION RIVERS MANAGEMENT PLAN
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, November 1, 2023
10:00am-12:00pm**

MINUTES

The recording for this meeting is available [online](#).

I. Call to Order

- A. The regular meeting of the Susitna Basin Recreation Rivers Advisory Board was called to order at approximately 10:03 AM on November 1, 2023, online via Microsoft Teams.
- B. Roll Call – Board Members Present: Hans Rodvik, Mike DeMaria, Emma Pokon, Nancy Conklin, Deantha Skibinski, Mel Grove, Joe Wright (joined late due to technical issues), & Stephanie Nowers (Vice-Chair).
- C. Board Members Absent: Greg Bell (excused) & Curt Scoggin.
- D. Hans Rodvik MOVED to approve the meeting Agenda. Deantha Skibinski SECONDED. PASSED without objection.
- E. Hans Rodvik MOVED to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes from 5/17/2023. Deantha Skibinski SECONDED. PASSED without objection.

II. Old Business

- A. Board Member Vacancies and Term Expirations – New Board Member Introductions
 - a. The Governor recently removed two Board members (Chair Israel Mahay and Mike Overcast). Stephanie Nowers, Vice Chair, will be serving as Chair until a new one is elected by the board.
 - b. Two new Board members were appointed. Hans Rodvik will be filling the Commercial Fishing seat and Deantha Skibinski will represent Mining. Board members took turns doing short introductions.
 - c. Board terms expire July 1, 2024, for Hans Rodvik and Mike DeMaria. They will need to reapply if they want to remain on the Board.
- B. Plan Process Update
 - a. Monica Alvarez gave a brief update on the plan process. Monica described the series of board workshops that the board used to learn about the plan and develop their formal

recommendations. These recommendations were then forwarded to DNR to consider when revising the plan. DNR has been incorporating many of these recommendations while developing the Public Review Draft (PRD) of the plan which will be released at the end of the year or early in 2024. The PRD provides an opportunity for everyone (including the board) to weigh in on that version of the plan. DNR will also host several public meetings associated with the draft plan. The public comment period is a minimum of 30 days but will likely be longer. The Board recommendations can be found on the Board webpage: <https://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/susitna-advisory-board/>.

- b. Stephanie Nowers (Vice Chair) asked if Monica Alvarez could give a brief background of the planning process to date for the benefit of the new board members. Monica Alvarez stated that the Governor reconstituted the Board in November 2021 and the Board held their first meeting in December 2021. DNR then initiated a scoping period soon after as a means to gather information from the public on issues, changes to the rivers, how they believed the rivers are being managed and what they think should remain or be changed in the plan. The Board and DNR considered the input received from the public during scoping at a series of advisory board workshops.
- c. Emma Pokon asked if the draft will be reviewed by other agencies before going out to the public. Monica Alvarez responded that DNR plans to send a draft to state agencies in the next few days. Agencies include DEC, ADFG, DOT and other divisions of DNR such as Agriculture, Oil & Gas, Geological & Geophysical Surveys, Forestry & Fire Protection, Parks & Outdoor Recreation, and other sections in Mining, Land & Water.
- d. Stephanie Nowers (Vice Chair) provided a brief summary of the boards role and how they developed their recommendations through lengthy workshops where they went through the entire plan and considered input received from the public as well as their own board member knowledge of these rivers. She stated the Board as a whole thought the plan held up really well although there were some updates that were needed. She also acknowledged the need for the plan to be able to adapt as conditions and use levels may change in the rivers. She also wanted to state that the Board's charge is to provide diverse advisory input from multiple viewpoints to DNR, however DNR will have the final say on what is included in the plan.

III. New Business

A. Election of New Advisory Board Chair

- a. Mike DeMaria nominated Joseph Wright for Board Chair. Stephanie Nowers (Vice

Chair) MOVED to elect Joseph Wright for Chair. Nancy Conklin SECONDED. Joseph Wright accepted, and the motion PASSED without objection.

B. Mike DeMaria inquired whether DNR had followed up on funding for informational kiosks. He requested DNR come up with an estimate on cost and information on where the kiosks should be placed. The Board requested DNR provide this information at the next meeting.

a. Monica Alvarez stated that DNR can get information on approximate cost and variety of funding sources. This proposal is part of the Board Recommendations and is something that will likely be included in the draft plan.

C. Discussion of Fall & Winter Meeting Schedule

a. After discussion, Joseph Wright MOVED to set the next meeting for Wednesday, January 10, 2024 from 10am to 12pm on Microsoft Teams. Vice-Chair Nowers SECONDED. Passed without objection.

b. The Board would like to meet after the Public Review Draft was released and early in the public comment period to allow them time to discuss the plan and provide comment. It was requested that DNR present highlights of the draft at this meeting as well.

c. Mike DeMaria requested that Board members receive a reminder the day before the meeting date to confirm their attendance so as to increase the likelihood that quorum will be reached.

IV. Comments from Members of the Public (Maximum 3 minutes/person)

a. Neil DeWitt (Matanuska Valley Advisory Committee - Fish and Game) called in to provide public comment. He noted that the Mat-Su Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission meets once a month which might help inform this process.

V. Comments from Board Members

a. Several Board members provided thanks to DNR and the other board members and offered good holiday wishes.

b. Nancy Conklin asked if anything was being done to fill the three vacant Board seats (Sport Fishing, Powerboats Users, and Private Property Owners in the Recreation River Corridors). Monica Alvarez stated that DNR has not received any new information on these seats but will reach out to Boards and Commissions and update the Board at the next meeting. Stephanie Nowers encouraged the other Board members to get the word out about these positions.

VI. Adjournment

- a. Vice-Chair Nowers MOVED to adjourn the meeting. Mel Grove SECONDED. PASSED without objection. The Board adjourned at 11:04 PM.