

**Seward State Parks Citizen Advisory Board**  
Meeting Minutes  
October 18, 2023 6:00-7:30 pm  
Penny Hardy Community Center at Lowell Point

**I. Call to Order**

- A. Call to Order: 6 pm by Chair Griswold
- B. Volunteer minutes-taker: Bob Barnwell
- C. Roll Call: Bob Barnwell, Carol Griswold, Nick Jordan, Mark Luttrell, Tom Miller (phone), Mica Van Buskirk
- D. Board members absent: Cliff Reid
- E. State Park Staff: District Ranger Jack Ransom, Park Specialist Michael Burmeister  
Staff not present due to Alaska Day state holiday
- F. Public Present: none
- G. Minutes Approval for April 19, 2023: (no meeting in September) Mica moved, Nick second, unanimous
- H. Agenda Changes and Approval: Add Eagle Scout presentations to agenda. Mark moved to approve, Mica second, unanimous

**II. Public Comments:** none

**III. Board Contact and Correspondence with Public:** Carol received a report from recent Spruce Glacier PUC visitors that the boardwalk was very slippery, perhaps fish netting could be added to help. Cabin and latrine were very clean. Carol wondered why PUC is named Spruce Glacier PUC as the Thumb Cove glaciers are Prospect, Spoon, and Porcupine? Carol suggested renaming PUC to a more geographically appropriate name like Prospect PUC.

Nick: Lowell Point Community special meeting with KPB Mayor Micciche and KPB Emergency Manager Brenda Ahlberg. Lowell Point Community chose the parking lot expansion as number one capital improvements priority. Number 2 was safety improvements and bathrooms for the fire hall in case of a major emergency. Also trying to expand the firehall, including shower, and 72 hours of food, cots, generators. The Firehall has blankets, etc. The borough, State Park, and community are communicating about preparing for emergency events.

Parking lots are really rough with potholes. Nick thinks they have gravel staged for this work now in upper parking lot. Calisto Canyon PUC is still closed due to extensive flooding; there are salmon under tilted cabin and lots of erosion. Local company Andrews and Sons won the bid for the bridge abutment project on the north end of Tonsina Creek North Fork bridge.

**IV. Reports: Please be brief**

- A1. Staff Report: Jack Ransom, Michael Burmeister: deferred to November meeting
- A2. Other updates: deferred to November meeting
  - i. SCORP and Lowell Point parking situation and other local projects

- ii. Tonsina Cabin relocation approved? Callisto Cabin relocation plans
- iii. PNZ Construction marine mammal observation platform at Lowell Point
- iv. Plan to widen access at boat launch (clear tree and alders)
- v. Metco contract to plow lower parking lot this winter
- vi. Borough contract to plow and sand upper parking lot this winter
- viii. Evaluation of lower parking lot credit card machine (not working in Sept)
- ix. Could interesting Trail Reports be shared with CAB and Park website?

#### B. Eagle Scout Project reports

1. Nick Ambrosiani: Improve Visitor Safety at Fort McGilvray, based on a list from Ranger Ransom. In two Sunday trips, Nick, Scout Master Karl Van Buskirk, and other Scouts installed missing manhole covers; installed safety railings with hog wire netting around a large excavation where a fuel tank was removed; and covered holes in walkway inside Fort with planking. Second fuel tank railings were not finished. State Parks helped deliver supplies from North Beach with four-wheeler and trailer.

2. John Van Buskirk: Caines Head Tent Platforms. Built two 12 x 12' treated wood tent platforms large enough for two tents near North Beach Pavilion. One platform is close to the beach and one is a bit farther back. Scout Master Karl transported supplies including six concrete pier pads and 6,000 pounds of lumber by workboat, then by skiff to shore. Also, ridge poles and side rails for a tarp over tents. John thinks there's more room and a need for platforms. Total cost about \$1500. John raised money from American Legion, Seward Community Foundation and Seward Prevention Coalition. Carol suggested making a manual on how to make these well-designed tent platforms for future use, maybe at Thumb Cove.

3. Ben Ambrosiani is working on Kids Don't Float life jacket loaner boards. Casey Bryden is building an outhouse at South Beach this fall 23. This Scout group has spent a lot of time volunteering and camping at CHSRA.

#### C. Committee Reports

1. Local issues (except parking) (Nick at LP/Tonsina, Tom at Marine Parks):

Nick: good summer, recent topping on Lowell Point Road, tsunami evacuation in August: 30 plus vehicles, most in upper parking lot. Nick was there as a fire official to reassure nervous visitors; need a new tsunami escape route sign as Beach Road is no longer a through street on the north end.

Tom: great year for water taxi, used the Lowell Point south beach launch just a few times, resulting in less impact. Callisto PUC beach is very dynamic and changes each year; landed on very south side instead of north this summer.

2. Mining (Cliff, Bob, Carol): see Goals. Cliff visited the falls upper Tonsina this summer and reported them as gorgeous. No mining activity noted but all refuse still there awaiting cleanup.

3. Legislative Committee and Budget (Bob, Mica): Mica reported that State Park Director Gease is briefing the governor now. The budget will be released soon. We should have our priorities for funding nailed down by the November meeting.

4. Friends of State Parks: Bob: had a good work session with Alaska Trails, and with the Seward Iditarod Trail Blazers. 30 plus people volunteered in August to work on the

Nash Road section of the Iditarod Trail. Also had a good discussion with a local bike group about possibly taking on role as Seward Trails organizers.

5. Board Recruitment Committee (Mark): two vacancies for 9-member Board. Chair emailed Director Gease on August 18 and requested to start recruitment process; no reply and no action. Mark contacted 7 people; four expressed interest. Discussion about possible day change, but decided it was too difficult to change.

#### D. Goals for 2023-24 Updates and discussion

1. Continue to pursue Lowell Point Parking plan: SCORP draft still awaiting final approval as of October 1. <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/scorp.htm>

2. Continue to pursue resolution of Tonsina Creek mining issue: Case file so convoluted, may be best to start over.

3. Support funding for deferred maintenance for FY25 in November.

4. Support funding for relocation of Tonsina PUC: Approved in July?

5. Mica suggested adding emergency funding for moving Callisto PUC ASAP. Nick concurred as the cabin in in rough shape. Tom noted the Bering Sea gold dredge barge was hired to haul the North Fork Tonsina Bridge supplies. It might be available to move the cabin before it's destroyed; just drive a loader right up there and pick it up. Carol asked Tom to speak with staff about this possibility.

6. Support Friends Group, whether locally or statewide: in SCORP comments

7. Update Parks website: re high tides, stove fuel, slides, and other changes: Tonsina PUC section was moved and approved on 02-22-23, sent 3-2-23; in progress.

8. Maintain laminated tide charts at kiosks: Carol and Nick; continuing

9. Explore new public-use cabin locations: Board voted unanimously 2-22-23 not to support this; area has enough, locations are difficult, deferred maintenance and relocations of existing PUCs are expensive and difficult. Mica later proposed new locations at Thumb Cove north end, Fox Island Spit, South Beach CHSRA, North Beach south side, Tonsina Point between bridges or near the campground pavilion.

10. Support installation of tent platforms in park: determine locations and include in grants. 2-22-23 Board supported Eagle Scout project to provide tent platforms. 2023 two new tent platforms built at North Beach.

11. Support ASLC meeting with all Resurrection Bay stakeholders: Nick, pending

12. Update of 1998 CHSRS Management Plan, especially with the addition of Fort McGilvray Historic District on December 22, 2022, and send letter of support. Draft letter by Chair 3-15-23, Chair emailed Board-approved letter to Director Gease on 3-17-23, no reply.

13. Support a Fort McGilvray Historic Preservation Master Plan and Interpretive Plan, and alternate funding opportunities as recommended by DPOR Shawna Popovici. Carol will draft a letter in support of this plan. We have more options for funding because of historic designation.

14. Support mooring buoys in the Park. Mica and Bob supported this and it was added back to list.

#### V. New Business:

a. Discuss possible ribbon-cutting ceremony for Fort McGilvray Historic District in mid-May, possibly during the Harbor Opening: Tom noted his water taxi starts mid-April, but there

may be a lot of snow on the trail depending on the winter conditions.

## **VI. Old Business: none**

## **VII. Informational Items:**

1. A draft of the Alaska Traverse Workbook is available at <https://www.alaska-trails.org/alaska-traverse> Note that AKT starts at Mile 0, Seward, and still does not include Lowell Point, Resurrection Bay Marine Trail, or CHSRA trails. Alaska State Parks, represented by Stuart Leidner and Ben Corwin, is part of the ALT Coalition. Chair sent email advocating for inclusion; no reply. AKT contact: [xlopez1818@gmail.com](mailto:xlopez1818@gmail.com).

<https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/units/resbaymarinetrail.pdf>

2. Hans Rinke is the new Kenai/Prince William Sound Region Superintendent

3. “Chugach State Park Access Service Area approved in April, a way to levy new taxes on property owners in the bowl.”

[https://library.municode.com/ak/anchorage/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=TIT27SEAR\\_C\\_H27.30SEAR\\_27.30.085CHSTPAACSEAR](https://library.municode.com/ak/anchorage/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT27SEAR_C_H27.30SEAR_27.30.085CHSTPAACSEAR)

“Anchorage Assembly preparing \$10M ballot question to improve access to Chugach State Park”. <https://alaskapublic.org/2023/10/02/anchorage-assembly-preparing-10m-ballot-question-to-improve-access-to-chugach-state-park/>

## **VIII. Public Comments: none**

## **IX. Adjournment**

A. Board Comments: Mica noted Lowell Point parking was less stressful this year due to the rainy weather.

B. Date/Location of next meeting: Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 5:30 pm, AVTEC Culinary Academy.

C. Mark moved for adjournment, Nick seconded, unanimous at 7:30 pm.

