

Kachemak Bay Research Reserve
Community Council
Minutes – September 1, 2016

Session 16-03. The fifty-# meeting of the Kachemak Bay Community Council was called to order at 12:05 p.m. by George Matz at the Reserve Headquarters, Homer, Alaska.

Staff members present: Jessica Shepherd, Angie Doroff, Syverine Abrahamson, Steve Baird, Jim Schloemer, Rose Robinson, Catie Bursch and Liz Villarreal

Council members present: Ralph Broshes, Michael Opheim, George Matz, Laurie Daniel, Jim Hornaday, and Donna Aderhold

Agency members present: Tom Dearlove, Willy Dunne, Ginny, Litchfield

Guests present: Will Files

1. Welcome & introductions
 - a. Agenda

2. Approval of minutes
 - a. Approve minutes from last meeting Ralph motion, Donna second

3. Manager Report:
 - a. Fiscal Report: Jessica Shepherd
 - i. Yearly Budget –
 1. 10 core staff fully funded
 2. Carry forward is looking good
 3. BOEM & EPSCoR are still pending
 4. SWG (USFWS funding through State) is still stuck in State, but UAA has assumed liability for funding up to \$25K per project
 5. The City of Homer has provided \$8k in funding for updates to the 2002 erosion maps that Steve will be updating this fall
 - ii. UAA Budget report
 1. Jessica Reported
 - a. Funding to UA System has gone down every year for last 4 years
 - b. Funding to CAS has been reduced 50% in the last 4 years
 - c. UAA academic programs are a bit more protected because they generate revenue from student credit hours, so UAA is overall more protected than UAF or UAS, but it puts additional pressures on the non-academic programs to “pay for themselves”
 2. Council can be proactive in reminding UAA of their Commitment and the importance of KBNERR; Dean John Stalvey

- a. Jim H.– would like bullet points ASAP
 - b. Laurie – would one letter from council be enough, or from each member
 - c. Jim H. – council should meet in person with people to follow up with letters, both with staff, as well as UAA
 - 3. Matt may come down soon, staff will get information to council about date & time
 - a. George – as many council as possible should try to meet in person
- b. Angie – Research Fiscal Update
 - i. EVOS
 - a. Jim H. – David rogers said there is a recent development causing him to not be optimistic about EVOS project being funded, though staff has said it has been funded for some time. Wrote letter to Sam Cotton (AK F&G Trustee) in support of on behalf of council.
 - 2. Donna – it is the science panel that is making the decision, trustee council has decided that the funding is within the framework budget.
 - 3. Ginny – Wondering timing of this (January will be final decision) Donna – call next week; NOAA is fully on board to make funding recommendation.
 - 4. Ginny – makes sure that KBNERR importance is stressed in communications with decision makes.
 - 5. George – would like more information to stress importance to Cook Inlet Trustee.
 - 6. Syverine – when is the public comment period?
 - 7. Donna – there must be an RCAC public comment period
 - 8. Laurie – is cover letter most important? Donna – seems to be, yes
 - 9. Liz – council letters of support should consider including a photo of full council to show how many people are in support, need a photo of full council, hopefully next meeting
 - 10. George – to come up with an action plan to present to them
 - 11. Laurie – would like to see as many nudges as possible from council
- c. Mud Bay Gate Project: Laurie
 - i. KBNERR has a vision to create an educations landscape below our 2181 Kachemak Drive Building now known as the “Field Station.” Including interpretive trails, some sort of pavilion, and a citizen science-based restoration project to plant the area that’s now a mud wallow and have

students document changes over time. This area could be a study site for shorebirds and Baltic macoma populations.

- ii. Project hinges on closing vehicular access (as written into city code) interpretive trail, KBNERR estuary hikes, & interpretive area for class & family use. DNR owns the road, DOT leases & has been resistant due to 'emergency accesses by local airport services people, though originally approved by higher ups. Solution would be a lock box with access to emergency services, police etc.
- iii. Jess – police supportive because they keep getting calls & it stresses their resources, would like to see the gate.
- iv. Ginny – is the parking situation causing local resistance.
- v. Laurie – meeting this next week to promote the program Tuesday 2:15
- d. Jim H. – need good talking points because historically cutting off beach access is not popular & will meet major resistance

4. Committee Reports:

- a. Education: Jessica for Paul –
 - i. Purpose of Education Committee
 - 1. Defining educational programming and how it differs from outreach
 - a. Outreach is website, PR, community volunteers
 - b. Ed programs are learning opportunities provided for K-Adult audiences
 - 2. From previous Ed committee work:
 - a. Recommend Priority education and interpretive needs, including those relevant to local issues of concern
 - b. Identify opportunities for collaborations
 - c. Advise on education facilities
 - d. Review programs
 - 3. Recent educational programs and near future programming (see quarterly report)
 - 4. Strategic planning report: where to in the future? Proposed programs, collaborations & facilities
 - a. Numerous collaborators and networking (K-Bay Environmental Education Alliance -KBEEA-, Park Service, CACS); looking for more opportunities to collaborate
 - b. Need new ed program facility
 - i. Islands & Oceans has issues for after-hours use, etc
 - c. Looking at Oyster Co-Op building on Spit

- d. Caucasian 40-60+; K-12 Homer school demographics well covered by ed programs & involvement, need to make improvements to diversify & expand our ed reach.
 - e. Opportunity to develop the Mud Bay area near office into a great educational area, provided it becomes a safer spot for children.
 - 5. What KBNERR staff wants and needs from committee: how can we help and support?
 - a. Provide insights from our respective backgrounds, networks, and knowledge
 - b. Meet regularly and as needed to support staff in developing programs and opportunities
 - 6. Next Meeting – meeting quarterly prior to Community Council meetings.
- b. Research Committee: Donna
 - i. Discussed projections & planning on achieving successful 5-year plan actions. KBay Science Conference should be part of research plan. Getting out information to general public, already easier under UAA umbrella. Hoping to bring Graduate Fellowship program back. New directions – blue carbon.
 - 1. Willy – hoping to get more local research biologists from fish & game representation on research committee
 - a. Donna – with budget cuts, very hard to get those positions as involved on committee historically.
- c. Outreach & Legislative Committee: will meet soon
 - i. Council members to act as ambassadors
 - 1. Jim H. – was very helpful for KBNERR Manager to come report to city council meetings quarterly. The Manager should be there as a visitor – 10 minute reports
 - 2. Willy – same at borough meeting: presentation with prior notice
 - 3. Jim H. – erosion project should most definitely be reported at both
 - ii. Syverine – how should we reach out to agency members to get them to attend & participate in committees
 - 1. Laurie – 1 page bulleted reports to people being invited, updates with personal notes of encouragement from Council Members after each meeting
 - 2. Ginny Litchfield – may help to get folks involved that can't make it to meeting

5. Quarterly Updates – KBNERR Staff

a. CTP:

- i. Blue Carbon workshop was a success; our collaborators from SERC are very excited about sampling in Kachemak bay and continuing to help Coowe develop ideas for research and conservation of these important habitats.
- ii. We have an upcoming workshop the first week in October to explore the next steps in determining local efforts to prepare for, adapt to, and work together towards a climate-resilient future.

b. Education:

- i. We had great participation numbers for Education this summer (over 1500 participants)
- ii. Our school programming registration day resulted in over 60 program signups for the fall, we are transitioning into doing more in the classroom programs to make up for limited facilities.
- iii. New programs that Dana has developed include Sea Squirts- a preschool program with Girassol Learning Center, and Barley and OATS (Outdoor Adventure talks) to expand the age range of our audiences.
- iv. Undergrad position funded for 10-20 hrs having to do with George's research

c. Research

- i. Watershed: For SWG habitat projects, we have wrapped up AR estuary project (thanks to all our students). Catie will be joining Coowe in sampling for downstream effects of headwaters productivity. We have been scoping other estuaries on the Southern KP to identify and model fish communities. This fall we are also focusing field work on anadromous waters sampling.
- ii. We have rekindled interest in Fox River Flats projects from a recent trip out with the Pratt Museum. We found some shifts in channel morphology, and note that juvenile salmon are now using side channels on the north side, where there are potentially more human impacts to consider in the Critical Habitat Area.
- iii. Nearshore: Just returned from a Gulf Watch Kachemak Bay & Lower Cook Inlet survey, the boat and weather cooperated for the team to sample all sites.

- iv. Angie gave a well-received Brown Bag presentation on the Ocean Circulation mapping, and received good feedback from the audience on utility for tools once complete.
- d. SWMP:
- i. The water in Kachemak Bay is continuing the trend of being warmer than the long term average, and that the average March Homer Deep water temperature was about 5.5 degrees F (3 degrees C) warmer than the long-term average for March.
 - ii. We have updated the surface sondes in Seldovia and Homer harbors with the new equipment and are planning on transitioning the rest of the sites over the next 6 months.
- e. Harmful Species:
- i. This is the first time since our HAB program started that the state has released a PSA - "PSP alert". It has been a learning process and has kept us busy.
 - ii. We are also seeing high levels of Dinophysis which produce okadaic acid which causes diarrhetic shellfish poisoning. We have sent samples off to a NOAA lab and are awaiting results now.
 - iii. Of interest in invasive species, a mystery tunicate was observed at low tide at Outside Beach which looked similar to invasive D.Vex. Samples were collected at the next low tide series and taxonomists confirmed it was NOT and invasive, but a species in the genus Polysyncranton.
- f. Questions from the quarterly Report:
- i. Jim H. – what is going on with ballast work – big concerns from CIRCAC when he was on the board. Catie – her hands are tied because of regulatory agencies.
 - ii. Michael: Check out APDS (Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) from DEC, talk to corporations and companies to see what would be helpful for compliance. Also Cook Inlet Risk Assessment and Nuka Research.
 - iii. City and Borough council would value Catie providing a 10-minute visitor report on harmful species. Jim moves that community council moves, Michael seconds that staff produce information (report, with one-page summary, & power point by next council meeting) regarding problems of potential invasive species for their independent working towards regulations to prevent such. Council votes to approve unanimously.

6. Council Success Stories - George
 - a. National Geographic cover story
 - i. Author originally contacted Catie due to her collaboration with Monterey Bay HAB programs.
 - b. National Estuaries Week Proclamation
 - i. Potentially signed by Gov Walker;
 - ii. Kenai Peninsula Borough signed & received. Good press & great outreach creating awareness about ecological & economic importance of estuary.
 - iii. Homer City Council will be voting on soon.
 - iv. George - great tool for council to show support to legislature, UAA system & more.

7. Weathering the State Financial Storm – Jessica Shepherd
 - a. Successful Tour for NOAA budget director, Gary Reisner, and Appropriations staff, who visited 8/30
 - i. Catie & Rosie introduced & involved them in HAB monitoring
 - ii. Catie will send them the results from their samples.
 - iii. They seemed to be impressed by collaborative efforts & good public impressions that KBNERR has given NOAA
 - b. Potential of Friends’ group, UAA donation link, Crowdsourcing funding, Bunkhouse & building use charges. Better information needed from UAA in regards to match funding, above sources, & how that process works.
 - i. Jess will proceed to find out more.

8. Open Comments for Council & Public
 - a. Public:
 - i. Will Files, visitor, council alum – great survival story from ADF&G, keep up the great work
 - b. Tom Dearlove:
 - i. Borough Floodplain Ordinance, FEMA maps need to be approved updating process in the works.
 - ii. Erosion – ‘seawall’ on the Kenai river brought up important points
 1. Would be helpful if KBNERR could help in finding out what eroded rivers mean to communities & property owners. There is void of information Nationwide for regulators & what restoration means to the fish & the habitat, & follow up evaluation of, scientific proof that it works.
 - a. Donna – City of Anchorage put in root wads; any research on that?

- b. Tom – Anchor River also did this, but not a ton of follow up, no evaluation. Restoration is hard because having to prove no change to water levels is very expensive.
- c. Ginny Litchfield:
 - i. Update of Kachemak Bay & Fox River Critical Habitat Plan, she will send a timeline if/when she gets one. Public scoping meeting announcement comes out soon- potentially end of September.
 - ii. CIRCAC Annual Board Meeting coming up next week- good if Reserve participated

9. Closing Remarks - None

Meeting Adjourns at 3:00 pm