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Working Together for Healthy Watersheds on the Kenai Peninsula

**Subject: Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee
January, 2023 Meeting**

Date and Time: 1:00 PM January 9th, 2023

Where: Donald E. Gilam River Center/Virtual Meeting (see end of document for Zoom link)

Completed by: Melissa Smith, KPFHP Coordinator

Completed for: KPFHP Steering Committee

1. Call to Order
2. Approve Agenda
3. Minutes from Previous Meeting
4. Coordinator Report
 - a. 2023 Science Symposium update
5. Partner Reports
 - a. Permanent Members:
 - i. NOAA - Erika Ammann
 - ii. USFWS - Kyle Graham
 1. There is a lot of activity with the Fish Passage Program and Infrastructure Bill. There will be a meeting on Jan 18th for USFWS to select projects. Two projects are on Oilwell Rd in the Silver Salmon drainage and have connections to subsistence use.
 2. There is a need for a Cooper Creek restoration project
 3. Nichole Swenson was hired for a Port Graham position
 - iii. ADFG - Jess Johnson
 1. We reopened our Habitat Biologist position 2 just before Christmas because several of the applicants from the first round turned down the position once it was offered. The closing date for the position is Friday January 13, 2023, at 5 p.m.
 2. Emily and I have reached out to the funded 2023 landowners already. This is earlier than normal since some of you know that Emily's last day with Fish and Wildlife Service will be January 13. Due to Emily's departure and the rising cost of projects we only selected 5 projects to fund in 2023.
 3. I'm trying to close out the AKSSF grant that has funded streambank rehabilitation projects on the Kenai Peninsula for the last two years. As with any grant close out there is lots of QA/QC of data and the information collect so that it can be presented the granters.
 - b. Non-Permanent Members:
 - i. KBNERR - Coowe Walker
 1. We have a new Research Coordinator: Dr. Lauren Sutton, a marine

- ecologist with expertise in benthic marine organisms and data analysis.
2. New study: Effects of aquaculture on Our Davidson Fellow, Jonah Jossart, MS student with Amanda Kelley at UAF, is focusing on the effects of aquaculture on benthic organisms. He will be deploying sensors/loggers in a transect from Tutka Bay lagoon to the Bay to look at oxygen, temp and pH.
 3. ongoing groundwater studies (KBNERR and USF): groundwater monitoring at a watershed scale to look at variability and vulnerability. Monthly sampling of shallow and deep aquifers through wells from headwaters to estuary of the Anchor River, plus quarterly sampling of all five Kenai Lowland watersheds.
 4. Groundwater decision-support tools: presentation to KPB material site extraction committee on 1/3. Proposed amendments to code include using groundwater flow path modeling for decision-making.
 5. New study: effects of beavers on peatland hydrology (partnering with Alaska Wildlife Alliance and USF). Looking at effects of beavers and beaver dam analogs on peatland hydrology.
 6. ongoing work- Different Ways of Knowing stewardship of the Nignalchitnu (Ninilchik) River (partnering with Ninilchik Traditional Council and KHLT) Work is focusing on connections with NNA for stewardship learning opportunities.
 7. Ongoing studies on developing a peatland carbon project (partnering with Sylvestrum Climate Associates): developing pilot business plans for large land owners as proof of concept. Presentation on 1/3 to KPB Assembly, one of the likely land owners.
 8. New funding-IIIJA capacity building: funding to develop priorities for land acquisition projects that can be acquired through the Reserve. Current project under consideration is to purchase peatlands between Beluga Lake and Northern Enterprises boat yard to be used by the City as conservation and green infrastructure (stormwater control)- should hear this month.'
 9. Harmful Species- European Green Crab monitoring continues, working with UAA Journalism, Marketing and Communications students to develop outreach materials. Group coming in March for immersive community science communication.
 10. Salmon Watershed Stewardship project: Engagement and monitoring across Cook Inlet. presentation to get feedback.
- ii. **KPB River Center - Samantha Lopez**
1. KPB left FEMA's voluntary Community Rating System (CRS) program. The program was available to communities that participated in the National Flood Insurance Program, and provided a 5% discount to flood insurance policy holders across the borough. During a cost-benefit analysis, we found that the efforts KPB were putting into the program far exceeded its benefits and discounts. Leaving the CRS does not affect our ability to obtain flood insurance or disaster assistance.
 2. The River Center is looking to host an "agency/permitting" day this spring. Very rudimentary at the moment, but we will start checking with

other agencies to see if they would be interested in joining for a day with the public.

- iii. **USFS – Adam Cross – Absent**
 - 1. Hiring – received referral list for two hydrologist positions on the Kenai zone; Fish Bio (John Lang) is retiring at the end of April hoping to have a replacement for a smooth transition
 - 2. Resurrection Creek – 2023 contract awarded, permitting in progress, scheduling coordination meetings with Hope Mining Co; awaiting the results of grant applications for future funding
 - 3. Working on out-year (2024-2026) program of work for the Kenai Aquatics program which includes coordination with the Supervisor’s office and the AOP working group for the Chugach. Anticipate prioritizing AOP replacement projects on the Chugach to occur over the next couple of months.
- iv. **DEC – Sarah Apsens**
 - 1. Recipients of 2023-2025 ACWA grants will be announced early next week. More details to follow.
 - 2. The call for data for the 2024 Integrated Report is open <https://dec.alaska.gov/water/water-quality/integrated-report/>. The deadline for submittal is February 1st, 2023. Organizations can submit water quality data (see instructions in the announcement) that has been collected in the previous 3-5 years. The Integrate Report summarizes the condition of waterbodies in Alaska and is submitted to the EPA every two years.
 - 3. Working on data submittal and report writing for the DEC led 2021-2022 Kenai River water quality monitoring project. Data will be available through the EPA Water Quality Portal (eta. late spring 2023). Raw data is available on the DEC website here.
- v. **ADFG – Tony Munter**
 - 1. Phase 2 of the Resurrection Creek restoration projects will include 2.3 miles of creek restored, which includes floodplain. Tony suggested this as a possible site for our KPFHP field trip this summer.
- vi. **KWF – Benjamin Meyer**
 - 1. Part of Ben’s master’s thesis will be published in the next few weeks.
 - 2. Working on a stream bank restoration project on the Mullen Property just upstream of Soldotna Creek on the Kenai River. Funded by AKSSF. Partnering with the Streamwatch program to complete the work.
- vii. **KP-CISMA – Katherine Schake**
 - 1. Presenting to KRSMA Board Thurs. night re: Inv.Spp. & boat launches; Maura Schumacher (KWF) is on the agenda for Kenai River Guide Academy (2 presentations on aquatic invasive species)
 - 2. AKEPIC data submitted
 - 3. Grant reporting/ Proposal writing
 - 4. Hiring two positions: intern & seasonal tech & will be jointly advertising w/ KWF (<https://www.homerswcd.org/employment.htm>). Applications due Feb. 3rd.
 - 5. Symposium planning, evening event focus on invasives

6. Next KP-CISMA mtg is Feb 8th at 1pm. Contact katherine@homerswcd.org if want to attend
 7. AKISP: Board submitted letter to Gov. requesting creation of Inv.Spp.Council, and evaluating the value of AKISP newsletter
- c. Advisors
 - i. State Legislature – Peter Micciche
 - ii. USFWS - Mike Daigneault
 6. Old Business
 7. New Business
 - a. In-person meetings
 8. Action Items
 - a. Symposium topics for sessions and roundtable discussions

Zoom Information:

Kenai Watershed Forum is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: January 2023 KPFHP Steering Committee Meeting

Time: Jan 9, 2023 01:00 PM Alaska

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/95361783204?pwd=eEhNSjJ2WDRwODZKaTh6WVp0RHhidz09>

Meeting ID: 953 6178 3204

Passcode: 202397

One tap mobile

+12532050468,,95361783204#,,,,*202397# US

+12532158782,,95361783204#,,,,*202397# US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 953 6178 3204

Passcode: 202397

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/aoFT0uCup>

Future Meetings:

Monday, February 6th, 2023 at 1:00PM

Location: River Center/Virtual

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6609924238>

Addendum A: Timeline for FY24 RFP

- Sept 29th, 2022 - NFHP board approves [FY 2024 National Conservation Priorities \(link\)](#)
- December 5th, 2022 – KPFHP announces FY24 RFP to wide audience

- February 15th, 2023 – Closing date to receive proposals from applicants
- February 17th, 2023 – Steering committee members receive proposals to score
- March 6th, 2023 – Coordinator receives all proposal scores from steering committee members
- March 31st, 2023 - Due date for the Coordinator to submit projects to the NFHP board

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