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Working Together for Healthy Watersheds on the Kenai Peninsula

**Subject: Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee
September 2022 Meeting**

Date and Time: 2:00 PM September 12th, 2022

Where: Virtual Meeting (see end of document for Zoom link)

Completed by: Benjamin Meyer, Interim KPFHP Coordinator; Kenai Watershed Forum

Completed for: KPFHP Steering Committee

1. Call to Order
 - a. **In attendance: Benjamin Meyer, Katherine Schake, Kyle Graham, Erika Ammann, Mitch Michaud, Samantha Lopez, Jess Johnson, Sarah Apsens, Mike Daigneault, Coowe Walker, Peter Micciche**
2. Approve Agenda
3. Minutes from Previous Meeting
4. Coordinator Report
 - a. Finalizing the Conservation Action Plan
 - i. See published version at <https://www.kenaifishpartnership.org/cap>
 - ii. Future 2-page summary document?
 - b. Job search for Partnership Coordinator position
 - i. See draft job announcement and job description at the following links:
 1. [KPFHP Coordinator Draft Job Announcement](#)
 2. [KPFHP Coordinator Draft Full Job Description](#)
 - a. **Steering committee approved job announcement and description drafts**
 - ii. Participants for interview/hiring committee
 1. **Hiring/interviews committee will include: Samantha Lopez, Benjamin Meyer, and one KWF board member TBD. Katherine, Peter, and Kyle offered to help “peripherally”, e.g. maybe reviewing resumes**
 - iii. Determine schedule for opening, interviews, and start date
 1. **Announcement will open ASAP for 21 days. Interviews begin ASAP afterwards.**
 - c. Introduce Mitch Michaud, KWF Interim Executive Director
5. Partner Reports
 - a. Permanent Members:
 - i. NOAA - Erika Ammann
 1. **Infrastructure act funding**

2. Plan for new similar opportunities annually each spring in the future.
- ii. USFWS - Kyle Graham
 1. USFWS community presence, manages 4 programs, one is the KPFHP, funded again this year. Projects selected for funding have agreements in place now
 2. Infrastructure bill continues to have ripples statewide. Most actual construction work will begin in future years
 3. Project w/ Hilcorp in KNWR, they have funded many culvert improvements. USFWS also working in Ninilchik area.
 4. Port Graham to Rocky lake project; partnership w/ USFWS and several other local/federal entities, is progressing
 5. In general: lots of activity!
- b. Non-Permanent Members:
- i. KBNERR - Coowe Walker
 1. Visiting scientists studying groundwater this summer
 2. Observation that human habitat and salmon habitat may be competing for groundwater resources
 3. Peatland studies in lower KP region also continuing; had some field trips w/ land owners too
 4. Ways of Knowing project w/ Ninilchik Traditional Council
 5. IJA funds – lands near beluga lake purchase, may become part of green infrastructure plan/project
 6. Project mention in Smithsonian magazine:
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/earth-optimism/2022/08/30/exploring-the-social-side-of-conservation/>
 7. Extended discussion on European Green Crab observation in SE Alaska; update of monitoring & outreach plans
 - a. Question from Mike D to Peter M: what needs to happen next? Is there a way to advance changes in state law to address the issue?
 8. Note: statewide Invasive Species Workshop Nov 1-3
 - ii. KPB River Center - Samantha Lopez
 1. Left steering committee with written notes, see Appendix A of this document
 - iii. USFS – Adam Cross
 1. Absent, on annual leave
 - iv. DEC – Sarah Apsens
 1. ACWA grant – no match requirements this time! Announcements to come. Estimated open/close date: Sept 26th – Nov 9th
 2. WHADA project ongoing
 3. Preliminary water quality monitoring results online on DEC website
 - v. KWF – Benjamin Meyer

1. Ongoing projects include: anadromous waters nominations, water quality data from baseline project, and seeking new grant opportunities
2. Very interested in commissioning new GIS layer for stream network, current one is insufficiently detailed to represent a LOT of fish habitat.
- vi. KP-CISMA – Katherine Schake
 1. AKISP coordinator role potential
 2. Observation of terrestrial invasives
 3. 1 out of 10 landowners concerned about herbicide use; 9 out of 10 “begging” for managers to come eliminate terrestrial invasives
 4. A few species of recent consideration: white sweet clover, thistle, choke cherry
 5. Consent from a few local municipalities to eliminate choke cherry
 6. KP-CISMA outreach coordinator Jen Chauvet in classrooms
- c. Advisors
 - i. State Legislature – Peter Micciche
 1. Not running for re-election in legislature, will continue to sit on steering committee in future role
 2. Sits on bycatch committee, seeking scientific expertise, reach out if able to provide perspective.
 - ii. USFWS - Mike Daigneault
 1. Working to maximize impact of federal dollars on fish habitat work state wide
 2. Funding incoming in various capacities; especially IJA
 3. National FHP board beginning to “gel” more, anticipate review of projects that were submitted in March 2022
 4. Next KPFHP COORDINATOR: MAKE SURE TO ENGAGE AT NATIONAL LEVEL
 - iii. ADFG - Jess Johnson
 1. Some recent turnover at ADFG
 2. Mike Mazzacavallo is now new fish passage staff member at ADFG
 3. Recent site inspections in Kenai Region
6. Old Business
7. New Business
 - a. Scheduling the next grant RFP
8. Action Items
 - a. Peter: can we have the November KPFHP meeting be in-person? Would be nice to meet everyone.

Future Meetings:

Monday, October 3, 2022 @ 2PM

Monday, November 7th, 2022 @ 2PM

Monday, December 5th, 2022 @ 2PM

Zoom Information:

Benjamin Meyer is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: KPFHP Monthly Steering Committee Meeting

Time: Sep 12, 2022 02:00 PM Alaska

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89602613040>

Meeting ID: 896 0261 3040

One tap mobile

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Meeting ID: 896 0261 3040

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kdUxdgeaZw>

Appendix A: Written notes from Samantha Lopez, Kenai River Center director

Updates for the River Center: we had a week-long audit with FEMA going over the Kenai Peninsula Borough's floodplain management program.

Some of you may recall two years ago there were some issues when FEMA rescinded a fish habitat structure policy. The policy allowed for bank restoration projects to be installed without requiring some very expensive engineering calculations.

During the audit, we were able to come to an understanding, effectively closing the case on this. We will be able to continue permitting habitat protection projects across the peninsula without requiring that engineering analysis. Its a little bit more in depth than that, but that's essentially the takeaway.

Happy to answer any questions, feel free to call or email!