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Working Together for Healthy Watersheds on the Kenai Peninsula

Subject: Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership Steering Committee October Meeting

Date and Time: October 4th, 2021 2 pm – 4 pm

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

Completed by: Branden Bornemann, KPFHP Coordinator; Jack Buban, Kenai Watershed Forum

Completed for: KPFHP Steering Committee

Desired Meeting Outcomes:

- Discussion and update on FY22 and FY23 funding
- Update on partner activities
- Update on upcoming partnership activities

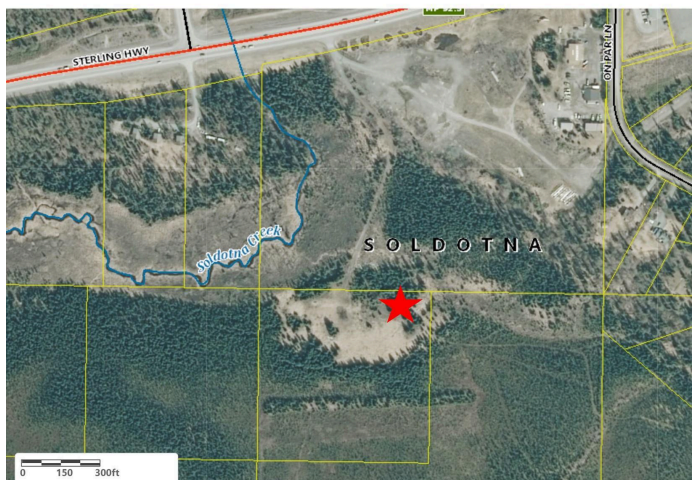
1. Call to Order- meeting commenced at 2:02 PM
2. Approve Agenda - agenda approved 2:04 PM
3. Minutes from Previous Meeting
4. Coordinator Report (see email attachments)
 - a. attachments included in the email prior
 - b. ACE Act recap and getting report done in time in the Spring
 - c. still not sure who is going to be managing the money coming or when it is coming in (lends itself to a hesitance to make guarantees about who will be receiving FY22 funding, USFWS traditionally manages it)
 - d. moving forwards: multi-state conservation grant with other AK fish habitat partnerships, received the money and the intent is to create a communications plan with other partnerships in AK and Pacific Lamprey Partnership and WNTI. have a draft in the next few days/week (\$25,000 total amount). get momentum going on shared themes to move habitat protections forward on a state-wide basis
 - e. North Fork Anchor River culvert replacement completed mid-August and approved by DOT inspection
 - f. NFHAP, BB attended 3 meetings since last KPFHP meeting, people are anxious to see when RFP's are going to be able to go out (RFP in November/December is what signs are pointing towards) report to NFHP in February and the hard deadline of July 1st of when all proposals need to be put before Congress
 - i. not rushing into the RFP process because they are setting national goals and priorities right now and want our projects and goals to align with theirs. anticipated higher focus on sport fishing and access issues (deadline is November for national partnership to set their priorities)

- ii. Hope to have a plan moving forward by the time we meet again

5. Partner Reports

a. Permanent Members:

- i. ADFG - Tony Munter - recently hired new habitat biologist (Kaitlynn Cafferty); North Fork Anchor River project site visits, pleased with it, 33 foot culvert;
- ii. NOAA - Erika Ammann - conservative travel policies, working with AK NFWF fund RFP (<https://www.nfwf.org/programs/alaska-fish-and-wildlife-fund/alaska-fish-and-wildlife-fund-2022-request-proposals>) (1:1 non-federal match), expected funding opportunity for NOAA Restoration Center in early Spring '22
- iii. USFWS - Kyle Graham - USFWS shut down field work, number of fish passage projects ongoing and stream bank activity took place in more of a normal field season at the beginning of the summer, infrastructure funding (what does it mean? will USFWS get some of it? would be looking at larger more complex problems with more funds than base allocation, estimated 50/50 (maybe less)); EvOS public advisory council got together and that effort is still moving forward with 4 or 5 proposals all geared at fish passage, members spoke to giving fish passage some of the highest priorities for it (October 13th); wetland violation development project in Soldotna, in a few weeks a landowner changed the functions of a wetland, make sure that our community presence can be used to prevent something like that in the future; **would like to explore this problem during a future meeting and what we can do about it**



1. tributary to Soldotna Creek
2. series of cold water seeps that pool into a single channel before confluence with Soldotna Creek
3. landowner from Anchorage started to bulldoze wetland region for

a building pad and add ditch

4. Soldotna opted out of KPB 21.18 50' ordinance so they don't have much jurisdiction here and it doesn't really fit anything in terms of other jurisdiction
5. ACOE escalated it to an EPA infraction and the AWC extent has since been extended beyond this site
6. How do we make the science that we are producing prevent things like this from happening in the future?
7. KPB gets quarterly announcements when someone buys property on wetlands or within the 50' setback and they sent pamphlets and information out to new landowners

b. Non Permanent Members:

- i. KBNERR - Coowe Walker
- ii. KPB River Center - Samantha Lopez - updating Borough's stream list for the first time since 2014; staffing update, Morgan Aldridge is lead habitat permitter; Brian Taylor is now planning and zoning; Sandra Fletcher is new assistant planner; RC is accepting an award from KWF to help with Adopt-A-Stream; increasing habitat outreach ordinance to educate public; land management section: still seeking 35 million grant to assess and mitigate bark beetle kills and last heard from grant coordinator they said they need a 1:1 match so the Borough is waiting while asking for reconsideration of match; attempting to amend regulations to allow resource agencies to cut beetle kill trees within 50' setback without having to go through the normal measures because they are inefficient and difficult on the scale of the beetle kill
 1. question from K. Graham: hoping to schedule meeting to discuss what happens to beetle kill trees on streambanks
 2. the AWC updates since 2014 are needing to get updated and voted on by the Borough Assembly so they can be added to the 50' setback rules
 3. If folks are agreeable, we can use a portion of the November meeting to gather feedback for any potential changes to 50' tree cutting, Ed Berg (vegetation expert from Refuge) and his perspective on changing vegetation along riverbanks and corridors. HSWCD has expertise they could loop in for this discussion then
- iii. TTCD - Christy Cincotta - members of their staff have expressed interest in filling this seat but don't know who yet from that organization will take it
- iv. USFS – Adam Cross - two projects: Res Creek Phase II (RCII) & Portage Curve Wetland Mitigation
 1. RCII- partner with TU and NFF, seeking out grant dollars and other funding streams to complete this restoration project, purchased temporary bridge and its components are on site now, working on permitting this winter and hope to have a contract for bridge installation this spring, the bridge allows access for stockpiling trees, restoration work will likely not occur till FY23,

1.2 of original 2.4 miles are the new plan for the immediate portion of phase II being worked on, looking for more grants and funding opportunities, infrastructure bill, hoping to reach implementation phase,

2. Portage Curve Wetland mitigation, some mitigation acres are coming from Res Creek and others are to reclaim some gravel pits,
 3. Cooper Creek, tier III or IV habitat assessment from Cooper Dam to the confluence with Kenai and will keep monitoring for the next few years, got a good dataset,
 4. Spruce Bark Beetle mitigation also on their plates
 5. Grant Lake Project - what role does USFS have with DNR wanting to revise the KRSMA plan? USFS interpreted it as notice of intent, they want to change some of the KRSMA land to belong to the Department of Land, Mining, and Water, DNR was not ready to identify which parcels of land they want, USFS is waiting until the parcels are identified. KRSMA would need to change the regulations regarding impoundments,
 6. USFS has not gotten national direction on what to do with COVID restrictions, local direction is suggesting telework but not enforcing it, masks inside and in vehicles
 7. K. Schake - white sweet clover at Portage Curve, wanting to make sure that the soil that is getting moved around correctly, will not move anything until receive approval from professionals (treatment estimated 12-18 months out), performed invasive surveys prior to excavation and since excavation on gravel piles
 8. Regional Advisory Committee: might be in a position to spend money? not much up-to-date information on the Kenai Peninsula because they don't have lots of members to do RFP's and look through proposals; probably going to be done after Prince William Sound funds allocated in upcoming weeks
- v. DEC – Sarah Apsens - hired a summer intern and kept through the winter; water quality monitoring project on the Kenai River to fill out gaps in dataset on dissolved metals, Zn and Cu , 13 sites, 8 times from May-September, still waiting data for final sampling event, posting raw data online and will upload it to EPA dataset and will produce a field report this winter, 2-year project so will go out next year with intent to do similar sampling events and trying to get out a little earlier to sample close to breakup season;
- Kenai Beach bacteria sampling cut to every other week because of funding, went out 6 times and had 2 exceedances of levels, field report out soon,
1. did some public outreach with social media and radio
 2. online program to model what the levels could be prior to going out to sites to provide more information
- RSA with Alaska Sea Grant - Tav is a Fellow working on Clean Vessels Funded project, updating a survey for community members, boaters, and

harbor masters in relation to sewage in harbors, Tav just put out some surveys that Sarah can share with the group if appropriate, working on Ninilchik Small Boat Harbor

Erika: Parallels the Alaska Clean Harbors Program and the Alaska Exchange

ACWA '24- is looking at late fall/winter of '22 will be looking at RFP's, is a 2-year project (3FY) cycle and they are about half way through right now, plan on sticking to this schedule

- vi. KWF – Ben Meyer - Vogel Lake Northern Pike project, 6 site visits talking hydrological documentation and modeling, ADFG are applying rotenone right now and will persist through the winter as we monitor degradation with hopes there will be no pike next year,
 - 1. Biological indicator to track across time in the Kenai River Baseline Water Quality Monitoring Program, looking at monitoring benthic invertebrates, looking at starting these next summer to collect these samples, wouldn't be able to understand or get a good idea for 5-10 years but is a step towards a goal of connecting physical parameters and biological life with water quality
 - 2. Starting on Bureau of Reclamation grant soon as well
 - vii. KP-CISMA – Katherine Schake - over 350 entries of herbicide sites this year up from 20 just three years ago (Branden finally learns how to use the clapping function in Zoom); CISMA is setting boundaries in response to DOT, CISMA is holding the line in rapid response (backpack sprayers and boom sprayers), large scale applications are getting above the capacity of what CISMA can do; assessing future work in new taxa (i.e., zebra mussels); in Homer have an opportunity with the city where the council just passed an Ordinance to walk the City through an IPM plan; Comment letter for the USFWS draft for EA regarding terrestrial invasive plants IPM for both proper and effective use of terrestrial herbicide; helping the Maritime Refuge in Homer in invasive plant prioritization workshop;
- c. Advisors
- i. State Legislature – Peter Micciche
 - ii. USFWS - Mike Daigneault, Emily Munter - NFHP advisors are not much a part of the conversation regarding national chapter direction; the national board is the one that is responsible for drafting much of the legislation; national USFWS is trying to honor and implement all the components of the ACE act, not much clarity on what is going on at the national level at the moment, the board has still yet to determine their priorities, they are forming and gelling and not complete yet because tribal representation has not yet gotten through the Department of the Interior; USFWS are working internally on various assessment and implementation plans to see how they can implement "America the Beautiful Conservation Initiative" in its large and undefined nature; infrastructure is huge right now with money set aside with a focus on fish passage work, potential in the next 5 fiscal years for lots of fish passage funds to come Alaska's way

- iii. ADFG - Jess Johnson - stream bank restoration, implemented 15 projects on the ground and held a workshop for 10 people (small crowd w/ COVID mitigation); were able to put together a classroom conference via Zoom with people from Southeast, Fairbanks, Mat-Su (this is recorded). Looking more in how to monitor past projects, looked at 9 past projects regarding channel width, bank height, etc.,
 - iv. set up some photo monitoring to create a map of these past projects and set up four of the projects that were completed this year with monitoring equipment; a good learning tool to assess how well the restoration goes in the years to follow, call for proposals just closed with 28 proposals in, not as many as typically see but could still be low because of COVID, week of October 18th in Kenai doing site visits;
 - v. put in 1400 feet of ELPs, 611 ft of cabled spruce trees, over 250 feet of debris removed, conserved and sustained 2,000 ft on the ground
- 6. Old Business
 - a. FY22 RFP / Funding - funding we recruited for in April 2021, looking at final list of project proponents; spoke with everyone who got a "yes" and a "no"; holding steady with no spending until signed contract
 - b. Conservation Action Planning, Jan. 10, 2022 - Jan. 13, 2022 - Rob Sutter is committing to these whether they are in person or in Zoom, a little more work if we are going to do it over Zoom; plan to remain nimble and flexible on this; we will reach out shortly with the list of participants for this effort (15 people focused on working together and trying to identify ways to move forward)
- 7. New Business
 - a. FY23 RFP / Funding / Priorities - massive gray area, we will have an RFP at some point in the next 4 months, November/December released, report submitted nationally February
 - b. Future meeting planning - adding some education, going after project proponents that are done to give update or final wrap up;
 - c. Call for guest speakers - KWF can have Stream Watch present given that it has been a funded KPFHP project since its inception, CISMA is a good candidate as well; Samantha and 50' setback with trees;
 - i. is it possible for TU to speak on Res Creek partnership and how that has come about and what we can do to replicate it?
 - 1. USFS would like to wait until they have the final design completed (sometime this winter), this would be a good group to be the guinea pig for materials and presentations and can talk about the partnership;
- 8. Action Items - 50' ordinance facilitation of people getting in touch to help have a robust meeting about this (1-2 hour long meeting/discussion), possible prep work CAP in between December and January meetings, will need to reach a point where we have to make a decision on in-person vs. Zoom in the upcoming weeks by the November meeting
- 9. Roundtable - Stream Table at KWF looking for places and people to give educational outreach events in Seward/Moose Pass/Girdwood
 - a. Adam - offered to put KWF in touch with schools on other side of the peninsula when curriculum for table is created

Meeting concludes at 3:58 PM

Future Meetings:

Monday, November 1st, 2021 @ 2PM - **Stream Watch - Galen Hecht**

Monday, December 6th, 2021 @ 2PM -

Monday January 3rd, 2022 @ 2PM

Monday, February 7th, 2022 @ 2PM

Monday, March 7th, 2022 @ 2PM

Monday, April 4th, 2022 @ 2PM

Zoom Information:

Topic: Kenai Watershed Forum's Meeting Room

Join KWF Zoom Meeting (computer access, video and/or audio)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6785578964?pwd=U3dqaGVrcTBoaERTdFJ4MDIPdzJiUT09>

Meeting ID: 678 557 8964

Password: 246419

Join KWF Zoom Meeting (phone access)

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