

**Talkeetna Parks Advisory Committee  
Minutes of August 31, 2015 Meeting**

A regular meeting of the Talkeetna Parks Advisory Committee (“Committee” or “TPAC”) was held at the Talkeetna Library on August 31, 2015. Core members John Strassenburgh, Chris Mannix, Ellen Wolf, Roger Robinson, Billy FitzGerald, Iris Vandenharn, and Mark Wildermuth were present. Community members Jill Adamson, Dan Adamson, Paul Roderick, Ruth Wood, Pam Robinson, Dan Harrell, Brian Okonek, Arthur Mannix, Karen Mannix, Alice Sullivan, Lisa Roderick, Ed O’Conner, and Jack West also attended. In addition, Whitney Wolff, chair of the Talkeetna Community Council (TCC), and Mark Goetsch of the Mat-Su Borough were also present.

- I. Seven core members were in attendance, establishing a quorum. Chair Iris Vandenharn called the meeting to order at 7:04.
- II. The agenda was approved.
- III. The minutes of the April 29, 2015 were approved as corrected.
- IV. Persons to be Heard:

Margaret Salmon, a landowner on the south shore of Fish Lake, explained the issues and problems associated with the potential use by a float plane operator of the section line bordering her property for access to a proposed new commercial float plane base to be located immediately off-shore from her property. She expressed her opposition to the proposed development and also advocated for developing a Lake Management Plan for Fish Lake.

John Strassenburgh, raised three issues associated to Talkeetna Lakes Park: the presence of the invasive plant orange hawkweed at several locations in the Park; safety issues related to bicycle riders sometimes traveling at a rate that exceeds their ability to stop within their sight distance, and the dilapidated condition of the Camp and Canoe tent cabins. Moved to New Business.

Ed O’Conner pointed out that low water levels on X Lake made diving off the dock at the north west end unsafe. He suggested warning signage be installed. Moved to New Business.

- V. Mat-Su Borough Update

Mark Goetsch reported that the Whigmi Parking area at the south end of Talkeetna Lakes Park should be completed this fall.

Mark also reported that approximately \$4,000 remained from a Borough grant for use on Talkeetna area parks. He suggested that the money be used primarily for the Village Park, including planting trees and flowers and Talkeetna Lakes Park access from Comsat Road. He further proposed removing the old outhouse from the Village Park and installing some directional signage at Talkeetna Lakes

Park. There was no objection from anyone present to removing the outhouse. Otherwise, with respect to the Village Park, TPAC recommended that the Village Park group (chaired by Howard Carbone), with participation of the Chamber of Commerce and TCC, have a meeting and provide Mark with guidance on how to spend the money.

Finally, Mark reported that he had plans for removing from Talkeetna Lakes Park the old dump's chain link fence. Note, fence posts to be removed by the Mat-Su Public Works Department.

## VI. Sub-Committee Reports

A. Comsat Talkeetna Lakes Park Access: Arthur Mannix reported that no progress had yet been made on this issue. He explained that there are public safety problems associated with an unofficial but long standing access point to Y Lake, located near the intersection of Comsat and Christiansen Lake Road. The location is at a busy intersection, and that the access down to the lake is very eroded, steep, and can be slippery. After some discussion of the issue, it was concluded that Roger, Howard, Mark W, and Arthur would meet and discuss possible options on how best to address this, and report back at the next TPAC meeting.

B. Talkeetna Lakes Park signage: Chris and Howard have not met since last spring. However, Mark reported that he has received new trail direction signs, but they have not yet been installed. He also reported that in the near future he would be color-marking some of the trails to correspond to the trail maps as well as printing brochures.

## VII. Unfinished Business

A. Christiansen Lake Boat Storage: Billy described a problem with haphazard boat storage at Christiansen Lake Park, and resulting social trails that damage vegetation and cause erosion problems. He and Mark G. will contact local users with their proposal of off-water storage, where the boats land at a designated spot on the shore to then be carried up to a storage area on land, where they can be secured. Billy will report back. Iris asked whether this system would also work at Talkeetna Lakes. Further discussion is needed on this question.

B. Mat-Su Recreational Trails Plan language: Emerson Krueger of the Borough has asked TPAC to suggest changes to the trail narrative language of the Trails Plan to reflect current circumstances. Iris asked that a committee develop draft language to present at the next TPAC meeting. John, Iris and Chris volunteered to prepare a draft.

C. Meeting with CIRI: Jack West reported on his recent contact with management at Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge to open a discussion for creating a mutually beneficial trail system that connects with trails on their property. Not much progress was made because CIRI mostly used this meeting to complain

about litter and spray paint left on their property by trail users. There is a need to mend fences.

## VIII. New Business

Aa. Mat-Su Aviation Advisory Board (AAB) Resolution 15-06: Resolution 15-06 has to do with establishing commercial float plane base in Talkeetna, covering three options: a float plane ditch at the Talkeetna Airport, a float plane base on the south side of Fish lake, and a base on the north side of Fish Lake, or some combination of the three. John and Billy reported on the August 13, 2015 AAB meeting when 15-06 was considered. Much discussion ensued. Although the issue is very broad, TPAC's purview is limited to the Fish Lake Recreation Plan and the fact that a commercial float plane base would be contrary to stipulations of the Plan. Chris moved and Ellen seconded that TPAC write a letter to the TCC recommending that the TCC write a letter to the AAB pointing out the factual errors in 15-06, establishing the strong community support for the Fish Lake Recreation Management Plan, and reaffirming its continuing support of the Plan, in particular with respect to (among other things) prohibiting commercial development. The motion passed unanimously. Chris will write the letter.

Ab. Fish Lake area-wide planning and land use: There was discussion of the nature and scope of potential broad planning and/or land use regulation for the Fish Lake area should a process be initiated in the future. Ellen moved and Roger seconded that TPAC write a letter to the TCC requesting that TPAC be noticed and meaningfully involved in any potential SPUD or Lake Management Planning involving the Fish Lake area, should such a process be initiated. The motion passed unanimously. Ellen will write the letter.

B. Discussion of access to Fish Lake Recreation Area: The question here is whether it was time to initiate the north west access provisions stipulated in the Fish Lake Recreation Management Plan. Chris moved that TPAC recommend to the TCC that it write a letter to the Borough to, in conjunction with TPAC and the TCC, look at developing preliminary access to Fish Lake Recreation Area per the Fish Lake Recreation Management Plan. The motion passed unanimously. Chris will write the letter.

C. Illegal camping in and around Talkeetna: Billy explained a growing problem of illegal camping, particularly along and at the ends of Comsat and Christiansen Lake Roads. Discussion followed about the extent and location of illegal camping, enforcement problems, and various options. It was determined that this problem is outside TPAC's purview and best brought up before the TCC.

D. Deteriorating condition of the Ridge Trail: Billy described how heavy ATV use has caused significant rutting of the Ridge Trail and ruined the trail for other users. Discussion ensued about options that might be effective in managing the situation. Iris volunteered to contact the Borough for land classification and other basic information about the parcels in question. It was agreed to arrange a site visit by a borough staff person.

E. Development of a Loop Trail: The Loop trail, starting in East Talkeetna and including the Ridge Trail, Comsat, and the Christiansen Road area was discussed. TPAC decided to focus on the Ridge Trail and to gather information from the Borough (see also D. immediately above) as a first step towards developing a management plan for the area.

F. Orange Hawkweed in Talkeetna Lakes Park: John described several areas where invasive plant Orange Hawkweed was cropping up. John will contact Laura Hoffman of USSWCD about the problem.

G. Camp and Canoe tent cabins in Talkeetna Lakes Park: John explained the deteriorating and unstable conditions of the tent cabins. The status of a potential future lease (or land use permit) between Camp and Canoe and the borough was not known. After discussion, Chris moved and Billy seconded that TPAC write a letter to the TCC to recommend that any lease or permit require use of bear proof containers for garbage and trash, orderly canoe storage (including removal from the Park at the end of the season), proper maintenance of the facilities (including replacing the rotting foundations and porch boards), and addressing the outhouse problems. Passed unanimously. Billy will write the letter.

H. Safety issues in Talkeetna Lakes Park: John explained that some bicycle riders on the Talkeetna Lakes Park hiking trail were traveling at speeds that exceeded their ability to stop within their sight distance. This put other trail users at risk. Discussion followed about possible ways to mitigate the risk, including signage and obstacles. Chris and Mark G. volunteered to research this problem and come back at the next TPAC meeting with more information on possible ways to address this.

Ed's concern over the shallow water at the end of the X Lake dock and the risk that might pose to folks diving off the dock was discussed. TPAC felt that the shallowness of the water was apparent to anyone using the dock. Ed had left the meeting by this time so could offer no further explanation. No action was taken.

IX. The meeting was adjourned at 9:55.

Respectfully submitted,

John Strassenburgh