

Copper Basin Land and Resource Managers Meeting

October 5, 2016

Next meeting - March 1st @ 1 pm

Bureau of Land Management – Dennis Tietzel

- Staffing:
 - Associate Field Manager – Marnie Graham
 - Assistant Field Manager – Valerie Lenhartzen
 - Arrive Wednesday
 - Partnership & Outreach Coordinator – Robben Taylor
 - Recreation – Nick Weber
 - Recreation Technician – Kenny Steck
 - Summer Seasonal Hires:
 - 13
 - Combination of local hires, returning hires, SCAs, GS and Wage Grade hires.
 - 2 Interns through PWSC Agreement
 - Open Positions – hiring through this winter
 - Maintenance – WG 5
 - GIS Specialist
 - Resources Technician
 - Mining Compliance Technician
- Subsistence:
 - Moose
 - Season closed September 20th, reports due by October 5th
 - 1378 permits issued
 - 95 harvested – up since last year (85)
 - Caribou
 - Season closed September 30th. Will reopen October 21st-March 31st
 - 2907 permits issued
 - 86 harvested currently– way down since last year (595 – a majority of which were harvested in 1st season)
 - 73 males
 - 13 females
 - In discussion with Federal Subsistence Board to gain authority to open second season early if caribou migrate across public lands.
- BLM NEPA Actions:
 - Signed 32 NEPA documents – primarily in Lands and Recreation (SRP)
 - Have 9 projects that are being actively worked on
 - Public scoping period will begin soon to discuss wood cutting in the Tietzel area.
 - Talkeetna Village Airport Lease

- Talkeetna Airman’s Association, INC has applied for 20 year lease with option for renewal.
 - Completed 30 day scoping period
 - CVEA Herbicide – herbicide treatment along right-of-ways
- Lands and Reality
 - SEND
 - Completed a 210 acre Recreation and Public Purpose Act reversionary interest sale to SEND North International and completed an additional 2.5 acre reversionary interest conveyance of a sewage lagoon.
- Slana Land Sales
 - Should be completed in October possibly early November
- Recreation: 196,000 visitors
 - Campgrounds
 - Total of 6427 User Nights
 - Tangles – 3481 Nights
 - Sourdough – 489 Nights
 - Paxson – 1446 Nights
 - Brushkana – 1011 Nights
 - Trails
 - Visited 46 monitoring points spread across field office trails to identify adaptive management needs and survey for bare ground, erosion, and vegetation stripping.
 - Performed repairs to 3 separate Geoblock installations along South Landmark Gap trail
 - SCA Young Adult crew was utilized over a period of 21 days.
 - Performed maintenance work and brushing along the historic Kimball pass and Tielkel Road Grade trail
 - Installed 400 feet of boardwalk on June and Nita foot trail
 - Brushed and hardened half dozen sites in the Paxson campground walk in area.
 - Cleaned and stained wood siding and log buildings at the GFO Campground.
 - Rivers
 - Made improvements to Gulkana River Portage
 - Replaced sections of board walk to stabilize
- Resources:
 - Forestry
 - Issued over 100 subsistence firewood cutting permits since last October.
 - Tim Skiba is current in Valdez issuing permits to local residents
 - We currently have a couple (2) of commercial operators under permit also.
 - Small crew working in Tielkel to outline additional harvest areas
 - Fisheries/Hydrology
 - Aquatic Inventory and Monitoring (AIM) sites – sampled and established 30 sites (double our goal).
 - Measures impacts of development, climate change, use in area, etc.
 - Gulkana Water Rights
 - Working with State of Alaska to adjudicate the water rights on the Gulkana River
 - Archeology
 - Conducted surveys in a largely unexamined portion of the TLAD and the Delta WSR.

- Located 20 newly located prehistoric sites and 5 previously located but poorly documented sites within the river corridor.
 - Noted impacts from erosion, recreation, etc.
- Partnerships:
 - CB300:
 - January 14th
 - Checkpoint at Sourdough
 - Youth Hikes:
 - Great partnerships within the Copper Basin continue. Especially want to thank WISE, the Copper River Watershed, the School District, Ahtna, and NPS.
 - Many youth programs such as hikes, science camps, and outdoor explorations that help students improve outdoor skills, build knowledge in science, and mentor students in land and resource management careers.
 - Takshanuk Watershed in Haines – new partnership this year
 - Successful Events:
 - Project Healing Waters Partnership with NPS, WISE, at Tangle Lakes.
 - Weed Smackdown with NPS, Copper River Watershed Project, WISE, and community.
 - Copper River Stewardship Program – with Copper River Watershed Project, NPS, WISE, Prince William Sound Science Center, and now PWSC, to provide 10 day exploration of watershed for high school youth on.
- Law Enforcement
 - 2 detailers to help with subsistence hunt in September
- Rural Youth Initiative Grant
 - Intended to target villages
 - No applications from Native villages or corporations
 - CRWP and Takshanuk Watershed (Haines) both applied and received grant
- Upgraded Building Access
 - New accessibility ramp
 - Automatic doors

NPS - Barbara Cellarius

- New Superintendent – Ben Bobowski (arrived in early August)
- Greg Biddle is acting Chief of Resources
- Visitor services are wrapping up for the year
 - Visitor contact stations in Slana, Chitina, and Kennecott are closed for the season.
 - Copper Center Visitor Center is open 5 days a week through the end of October.
 - After November 1st, visitor services will depend on staff availability .
- Visitor and resource protection is struggling to manage grouse hunting on McCarthy and Nabesna roads in a way that reduces user conflict between local residents and sport hunters.
- Work continues on backcountry and wilderness stewardship plan
 - Working on draft Environmental Assessment which should be out for public review in in late spring
 - Plan on putting out a newsletter to the mailing list summarizing the comments received and next steps
 - Tribal and ANCSA Corp consultation on the plan is ongoing.
- Planning/NEPA staff are working on a couple of mining plan of operations for the Gold Hill area and a couple of proposed land exchanges.

- The Wrangell-St. Elias National Park Subsistence Resource Commission is meeting next Tuesday and Wednesday at the visitor's center in Copper Center.
- Hiring for next summer:
 - Expect to see some national job announcement for park rangers mid-November to mid-December.
 - Local hire positions will be announced mid- January to coordinate with local job fair
- Work at Kennecott is finishing up for the year
 - Mill building phase II (alarms/fire protection)will be completed next year Phase III (upper structure) will probably start in 2018.
 - Blackburn school is redone to serve as main visitor contact station
 - Store and the stacking shed will house exhibits
 - Most buildings are transitioning from rebuild to maintenance
- Trail work was done on:
 - Copper Lake Trail was major project for the season and work will continue through the end of October, weather permitting.
 - Crystalline Hills
 - Dixie pass
 - Kotsina
 - Nugget Creek
 - Soda Lake Re-route
 - Caribou Creek
- Starting working Copper River Watershed Project on an elodea outreach project.

WISE – Robin Mayo

- Currently in 2nd of 5 year agreement with the BLM
 - Lead youth hikes and camps
- Had a busy summer – more staff than ever. WISE had up to 4 staff at a time.
- Tomorrow is the last day of 3 year vista program
- Will be hiring a program specialist next summer
- Currently working on Winter plan
 - Lectures
 - Looking for anyone who has knowledge to share
 - In class science
- There is a new strategic plan that will be in place until 2020
- Always looking for new partners
- In next 5 years will increase focus on mentorship and new leadership
- Looking to expand use of public lands
 - Looking for more trails, camping, etc.

DNR - State Office of History and Archeology - Tom Gllispie

- 2015 - completed monitoring and inventory of Tangle Lakes Archeological District
 - Surveyed 13.7 miles of authorized trails
- Performed a pre-construction planning survey on 6.6 miles of planned trails
- Clearwater Creek Mining District
 - Monitored existing trail system of Valdez Creek and Clearwater Creek
- Did monitoring of Alpine Creek area
 - Trail system has intersected at least 5 prehistoric sites
 - Including 1 site that has not be surveyed in the past

- Monitored permanent ice patches
 - Over the years, these ice patches have yielded many historical artifacts
 - This year recovered three pieces of rural Burch bark
 - Believed to be prehistoric
- Non-field activity
 - Project Archeology
 - National program for archeology in primary school and freshman year of high school
 - Designed to meet common core curriculum standards
 - Fall – Have full funding to develop new curriculum of Ahtna housing
 - Beginning work on outreach this month

Ahtna, Inc. – Sarah Daszkiewicz

- Tolsona Oil and Gas
 - Started drilling
 - Currently at 1000 feet
 - Plan on drilling down to 4500 feet
 - Expect to be completed at beginning of November – Joe Bovey contact at Ahtna
- Carbon Mitigation Project
 - 429 plots across forest area that have been inventorying
 - Completed in next couple weeks
 - Hoping to do carbon treating and be qualified carbon project through California Resource Board by the middle of next year.
- Working on historic Gulkana village land trade
 - Need to build up parking area
- Working on NRCS projects
 - Klutina Road
 - Cleared 28, 20 acre units to regenerate moose habitat
- Working on creating a fire line around the office
- Copper River Inter Tribal Resource Commission (CRITR) is working with villages to create firelines around them.
- Hiring
 - Lead Resource Technician
 - Land and Reality Specialist

BLM Branch of Pipeline Monitoring - Kevin Kearney

- BLM Branch of Pipeline Monitoring Valdez Field Office moved to the historic Dock building on Hazlett Avenue from its former Airport location.
 - Consolidated Valdez and Fairbanks Supervisor into one, located in Anchorage
- Completed several integrity digs along TAPS ROW this summer
 - Looking for indication of anomalies in underground pipeline
 - Examine and do nondestructive testing (NDT)
 - Put reinforcement sleeve around any issue points
- Had two summer interns from Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) program.
 - www.hacu.net/hacu/HNIP.asp
 - One intern studied maintenance issues associated with TAPS Vertical Support Members and annual pipeline loading balancing.
 - The second intern conducted surveys of invasive species along the TAPS based on AKNDR survey done 2 years ago. Also examined negative aspects of Beaver Dams in drainage and fish

passage culverts along the pipeline and modern technology to encourage Beavers to build elsewhere.

- Valdez Marine Terminal
 - Upgraded secondary containment
 - Performed tests on underground piping
 - Employed new pipe integrity examination technology
- Conducted permitting work with BLM real estate specialist in areas where gravel mining gets done along the TAPS.
- For ROW Issues Contact: Rhonda Williams – 907-835-8652

State Pipeline - Jodi Delgado - Plikat

- AKLNG project is using the Valdez route as an alternative for the EIS but it's not a viable route because it's too steep and costly.
- The Alyeska Pipeline System Company TAPS 2017 Project review meeting is on October 13th.
 - Many projects for 2017 are in the planning process, but APSC will be continuing the 2016 line-wide Cathodic Protection Improvement Project, which includes conducting integrity investigations.
- The Guidebank Extension Project at the Tsina River (near Pipeline Milepost 767) was completed at the end of Jul 2016. An inspection will be conducted by State Pipeline Coordinator's Section the week of October 17th.

National Parks Conservation Association - Lynn Grams

- NPCA made comments on NPS Backcountry Wilderness Stewardship Plan Proposed Action
- Adopted Caribou Creek Trail on Nabesna road
 - Got grant money for gravel and Geoblock material
 - NPCA helped coordinate 3 SCA crews to do trail work
- Staff of 4 in this state, nonprofit advocate for the Park Service

Copper River Watershed Project - Don Hofstetter

- Completed surveys of 193.9 acres of land
 - Found 11.48 acres of infested area
 - Not all data has been submitted
- Partnered with NPS to apply herbicide to white sweet clover
 - 5 acres on Richardson HWY, MP 126-129
 - 3 acres on Tok cutoff, MP 59-61
- CRWP employees manually and mechanically controlled over 6 acres of white sweet clover, bird vetch, and narrowleaf hawksbeard throughout the Copper Basin
- Worked with NPS to survey new location at Tok cutoff, farm fields in Kenny Lake and the Lower Tonsina Gravel pit (total of 123.6) acres.
 - White sweet clover, narrowleaf hawksbear, and quackgrass were found at new survey points and treated mechanically or chemically.
- CRWP employees continue to monitor Copper Basin gravel pits for invasive weeds
 - Currently working with Alaska DOT to confirm ownership of gravel pits in order to wrk towards creating certified weed free gravel.
- Copper Basin CWMA organized the 4th annual Copper Basin Weed Smackdown.
 - July 9th in Glennallen
 - 21 volunteers pulled 570 lbs of white sweet clover from Glenn HWY near MP 187.
- CRWP has partnered with the Copper Basin 300 and pledged to work with local groups in order to provide certified weed free straw for the 2017 race.

- Danielle attended the Valdez fly in where she was able to distribute Elodea information including: potential impacts of Elodea, how it spreads, actions pilots can take to decrease spread, and documented locations of Elodea populations.

Copper River Watershed Project - Kristen Carpenter

- Education
 - Copper River Stewardship Program – June 27 – July 8
 - Field-based education program run in partnership with NPS, BLM, WISE, PWS Science Center, and US Forest Service.
 - 13 high school students from Cordova and Coper Basin
 - Rafted from Chitina to Cordova, assessing fish habitat in tributaries along the way.
 - Salmon Blitz
 - Citizen science program designed to engage volunteers in collecting fish habitat data to help update ADF&G’s Anadromous Waters Catalog, focused primarily on juvenile rearing habitat.
 - Coordinated a visit to the Klawasi River with the Native Village of Kluti-Kaah and NPS.
 - Waters were too high to complete survey, but incorporated educational programming instead.
 - Surveyed 2 tributaries on the Tulsona, on Tok cut-off.
 - No Salmon
 - Surveyed Flat Creek, tributary of Ahtell Ck.
 - King Salmon rearing
 - Worked with Mentasta Traditional Council to survey Fish Creek, Bone Creek, Lost and Jack creek.
 - King rearing in Bone Creek (not new data, but life stage designation).
 - Dolly Varden in Bone and Lost Creeks.
 - Surveyed Porcupine Creek (by campground)
 - King salmon rearing
 - Surveyed Coleman and Poplar Grove Creek while based at Sourdough.
 - Salmonids found in both – have ADF&G doing genetic analysis to determine whether they are king or silber.
- Culvert Prioritization
 - Working with US Fish and Wildlife Service and ADFG to prioritize culverts and identify poorly functioning culverts located on higher quality fish habitat and focus limited restoration dollars to these sites.
 - Data is available at www.copperriver.org , through a custom “mapper”.
 - Conducted surveys this fall on the Glenn HWY, Denali HWY, Richardson HWY, and in Copper Center.
 - CRWP will host fall check-in of culvert partners to provide updates on restoration work already in motion (currently all in Cordova).
 - Date from fall surveys will be updated on mapping tool by Spring Check-in
- Tourism Effort
 - CRWP is working with Copper Basin tourism partners on a story-telling project called “Traveling by Story Through Copper River Country”.
 - Held a story-gathering workshop in April
 - Continuing to work with tourism businesses to develop an interpretive plan for how to make stories more accessible to the traveling public and tie stories in to sites on the ground.
 - Will help point visitors to local businesses and sites of interest.

DNR Planning – Brandon McCutchin, Tyler Fanning, Chuck Pinkney – DNR

- Cooper River Basin Area Planning process
 - Conducted meetings in 8 places across the basin
 - Mentasta Lake, Glennallen, Gulkana, Kenny Lake, Copper Center, Chitina, Valdez, Anchorage
 - Received 86 comments written and submitted during public scoping period
 - 4 million acres of state selected lands in Cooper River Basin
 - Over 12 million acres in the planning boundary
- In process of planning how to reach out to BLM, NPS, etc.
 - Done some preliminary outreach
- crbaprevision@alaska.gov – email

DNR Denali Block Manager - Candice Snow

- Maclaren Summit Trail extended fully to west end of 7 mile lake
 - Potential for ATV trail to connect Glacier Gap Trail to Maclaren Summit Trail at 7 Mile Lake
- Two summers ago Rusty Lake Trail beavers dammed up trails
 - This summer, scouted two potential locations to reroute trails
 - Non-motorized trail
 - Both reroutes will add length
- Developing partnerships
 - Partnered with WISE this summer
 - Hoping to partner with youth program to brush, maintain, possibly extend Tangle Lakes Campground foot trail.
- Land Mark Gap North
 - Looking at upgrading trailhead and trail
- Glacier Gap
 - Looking to improve trailhead next summer
- Wants to talk with BLM about partnering to create trail head at Maclaren Summit Trail
- New webpage
 - Specific for Tangle Lakes Archeological District (TLAD) Special Use Area
 - Should be up and running by end of month
- TLAD Brochure
 - Specific to TLAD Special Use Area
 - No ETA for final design
- Contract with DNR State Parks to do trailhead kiosks at state sites in Tangle Lakes
 - Will hopefully go in next summer

DNR - Thompson Pass Special Use Area – Jess Meybin

- Public and users are frustrated because we have designation but no special rules so still under generally allowed use
 - Under beginning stages to create rules
 - Received 81 comments from the public meeting survey
 - Creating new map for the special use area to be distributed to public and used for planning
- Issuing permits for flood impact prevention activities on Lowe River

ADF&G - Mark Somerville

- Dip netting
 - Issued almost 12,000 permits for Chitina

- Slightly lower than last year but once all data is entered, should be higher than last year
 - Will know in January
 - Sockeye numbers were low/average
 - About 800,000 in Copper River compared to 1.2 or 1.3 million last year
- Subsistence Fish
 - Issued almost 13,000 permits
 - Record number of permits issued
 - Most were issued for dip netting
 - Harvest will drop compared to last year
- Sport Harvest
 - Sockeye was down
 - Klutina had poor run
 - Sport fishery is expected to drop substantially this year
 - In 2015 had almost 17,000 angler days on Klutina.
 - King Salmon was worst return ever
 - Expect about 13,000 kinds for escapement
 - Goal is 24,000 or better
 - Most likely something in the ocean that is causing issues
 - Was poor from here all through southeast Alaska.
- Projects
 - Chitina Sampling Project
 - 2 or 3 technicians sample Sockeye
 - Funding for this project ended last year and we have been unable to secure reliable funding for upcoming year.
 - Good chance we will not have samplers in Chitina this coming summer.
 - Gulkana King Salmon counting Tour has operated since 2002 – joint funding with BLM
 - Funding is through this next year
 - Will apply for future funding
 - This year was lowest ever passage of salmon in this project
 - Copper River Smolt Program
 - King Salmon initiative money from governor
 - Tag king salmon smolts and fry and look at return numbers
 - Extremely extensive project
 - Tag 16,000 outgoing smolt in 2 week period
 - Got just over 15,000 smolt and 30,000 fry this year
 - Looking at productivity in copper river
 - Returns
 - Hoping to get 1% recapture rate of tagged fish
 - Funding is still unsecured to search for returning tags
 - 100 radio tags out on arctic grayling in Gulkana River – Partnered with BLM
 - Utilized left over radio tags from ambler road project