

Copper Basin Land and Resource Managers Meeting

April 3, 2019

Next Meeting – October 2, 2019

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Pipeline Monitoring and Environmental Compliance Section - Rhonda Williams and Paul Degner

- Projects for this summer –
 - Wrapping up integrity investigation north of SD
 - Start integrity investigation around Black Rapids
 - Cathodic protection project will be occurring about 40 miles north of Valdez
 - Continue to monitor the river and flood plain to prevent riverbanks from receding.
- Pump station 10 has been dismantled; building should be coming down soon.
- Alyeska plans to do oil spill response training this July.
- Changes in the structure, now under Pipeline Monitoring and Environmental Compliance Section.

Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) - Bill Hand

- Looking to help and encourage tribes to submit Tribal hazard mitigation plans with FEMA within the next 2 years for all hazards with a focus on fire/fuels mitigation protection.
- Working to try to identify where people live and label street/house numbers for first emergency services. Starting in Kluti-Kaah and looking to expand.
- LEPC is looking for a database to be able to track for emergency purposes but looking to be able to work with electric/telephone, etc.

The Native Village of Kluti-Kaah - Bill Hand

- Applied for 4 grant and will hear in May for most
 - Looking at some fire and fuels reduction projects. Projects to include cutting protective fire lines and making homes fire safe.
 - Applying for a feasibility and cost analysis for a seismic and clean air retrofit to the Kluti-Kaah Memorial Hall/Emergency shelter. Also a feasibility study and cost analysis for a bank stabilization along the Copper River to protect sacred sites.
- Looking to hire 15 seasonal staff for this summer.

Copper River Watershed Project (CRWP) - Chantel Adelfio

- Invasive weeds
 - Trying to stay on top of bird vetch and keeping them from going to seed
 - Looking to have this year's weed smack down at the gravel bars around the Gulkana River

- There have been sightings of a bunch of sweet clover on Terrace Drive in Glennallen.
- Salmon Jam is the weekend of July 13.
- Kate will be up May 12-22 to lead salmon and watershed-themed programming with students in the region. Programs will include aquatic ecology field trips where students don chest waders to study local fish, inverts, and water quality.
 - If anyone is interested/available to help out, we'd love the assistance leading kids safely in the field.
 - This year we are especially excited because we have donated salmon fillets from PWS gillnet fishermen to bring up for students. We will be coordinating salmon luncheons at various locations and will be inviting you and other community members to come in and connect with students about your job and lifestyle and how it is connected to salmon--it will be an exciting opportunity to share local job opportunities with students, as well as help them better understand the way salmon is tied to the economies and lifestyles of the watershed
- Fish Passage, Little Tonsina culvert replacement: CRWP staff and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) staff met for a kick-off meeting to plan for replacing two undersized, “temporary” culverts. USACE will be doing a federal interest determination first, expects to have results that warrant moving on to a feasibility analysis. CRWP is working on raising matching funds; total project cost is anticipated to be about \$3.5 million, ideally for a single lane bridge. ADOT did geotechnical drilling last fall, and a topographic survey will be completed this spring. Tim Sundlov from BLM/Glennallen Field Office is helping with data collection for the federal interest determination.
- Copper River Watershed Project is working on getting some Copper Basin tourism information added to the Alaska App, can view Alaska App contents at alaska.org online. CRWP has contributed three audio recordings, they're like mini-podcasts, to the App under a section called Guide to the Copper River Watershed. Other listings in this section include the eight interpretive signs we produced, and other local points of interest.
- Copper Basin Symposium: received a small grant from NFWF to help implement a Copper Basin Symposium in early 2020. We are currently working with WISE, Wrangell Mountains Center, and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, if you organization is interested in being involved please contact us! The Symposium will be a 2-day conference covering all areas of study including terrestrial, freshwater, traditional ecological knowledge, and of course salmon habitat.
- Kotsina River clean up: CRWP applied for funding to excavate abandoned vehicles that are embedded in the Kotsina River floodplain just above the Chitina Bridge. We won't hear about that funding until July, but we are moving ahead with plans for a public education campaign around the message of “Leave it the way you found it” and organizing a volunteer clean-up day for that area, probably for August. Partners on this project include the State of Alaska (ADF&G and DNR), Ahtna Corporation, Chitina Corporation, Chitina Village Council, and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park.
- Wild Food Feast on April 14, at the American Legion Hall in Glennallen — bring a dish!

Copper Country Alliance (CCA) - Ruth McHenry and Cliff Eamer

- See attached report

State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) - Candy Snow

- Kiosks are going up this spring
 - Maclaren Summit Trail
 - Glacier Lake Trail
 - Landmark Gap Trail.
- Rusty Lake
 - Trail is currently underwater
 - Trying to get trail realigned.

Ahtna Incorporated - John Leonhart

- Carbon Credits Program is in place. It is a long-term program and will be looking at 75 sites this summer.
- Carnivore Stewardship program is a year in!
 - They are continuing work on the bear population density project and should be receiving the data soon on the collected hair samples from last year
 - Last year looked at the Tazlina area, this year it will be in the Mentasta area.
- Continuing to work with BLM and NPS on 17b easement this summer.
- Starting a spruce bark beetle project in Chitna this summer with about 20 traps to set out.
- The engineering for a bridge over the Kotsina River is complete but the construction likely will not happen until 2020.
- Continuing establishing the moose habitat improvement project. Mowing and planning of select grasses to help make a healthier moose population.
- Keep an eye out for a new app that has all Ahtna, federal and state land. Will eventually expand to add trails.
- Ahtna will be looking for a partner in an upcoming project.
- Purchased a couple drones and have been using in for monitoring riverbanks.

Native Village of Tazlina - Heide Lingenfelter

- A hazard mitigation plan has been submitted to FEMA. When it is approved, a copy will be located at the Tazlina Village Council Office and Copper Valley Library.
 - The bike path planning phase is almost complete.
- The Dry Creek work and safety plan is being reviewed by AK DEC. They have 30 days to submit comments.

Copper River Native Association - Paul Rude

- Seeing just over 1000 people per week at their facility.
- CRNA now owns the gravel pit to Copperville Road.

- Planning to break ground on a new building this summer for child development center and administration. September 2020 should be opening doors.
- Access in and out of parking lot continue to be a safety concern. Looking for Alaska Department of Transportation to put in a turn lane on the Richardson Hwy. The speed limit was reduced a few years ago from 65 to 55 mph.
- There are about 40 staff kids that use the current child development center along with being a bus stop for both Head Start and Glennallen School.
- Air/Water quality are of interest.

National Park Service - Joshua Scott

- With the recent court decision (Sturgeon v. Frost) NPS's official answer is "We thank the Supreme Court for their ruling. NPS is reviewing the decision to determine what changes will be necessary to bring existing policy in line with today's ruling."
- Restoration funding to fund staff interim housing.
- WRST will be brining on 40 seasonals this summer.
- Kennecott: Scaling down but will be increasing awareness of contaminants in the area.
- Nabesna: Continue awareness of the contaminants in the area.
- Contract for people to do Hunting Guided Concessions within the Park was due this year (once every 10 years) most have been guiding since before the park was the park!
- Continuing partnership with Princess to allow park employees to give interpretive talks to visitors.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Glennallen Field Office – Brenda Becker & Nora Berner

- BLM National/State level updates:
 - New DOI Secretary David Bernhardt
 - New Acting BLM National Director, Brian Steed
 - New BLM State Director, Chad Padgett
 - BLM Alaska continues to be a focal point for administration priorities
 - Discussion with NPS for joint seasonal housing replacement on hill behind BLM 30 person occupancy.
- Staffing:
 - Manager Positions Update
 - Field Manager - Marnie Graham
 - Associate FM - Valerie Lenhartzen
 - Assistant FM for Rec, Lands, GIS: interviews are being conducted
 - Seasonal Hires:
 - Combination of local hires, returning hires, SCAs, PWSC Interns, and GS hires.
 - Other Position Update:
 - Environmental Protection Specialist – may have a new person coming this spring
 - Recreation Planner (Campgrounds/Facilities) vacant
 - GIS vacant

- Maintenance WG 7/9 (Update: open for application, closes May 7)
 - Archaeology/Anthropology Tech GS 7/9: subsistence, Archaeology and resource program support
 - Public Outreach Coordinator: housed within the GFO recreation program (POC Kenny Steck), along with the Campbell Creek Science Center as a statewide resource. Public affairs duties are assigned to District PAO, Maureen Clark, based in Anchorage.
- Subsistence: (As reported 4/3).
 - Moose : 98% have reported, 1357 permits issued, 61 harvested
 - Caribou : 43% have reported, 3,082 permits issued, 356 harvested
- BLM NEPA Actions:
 - Haines Amendment – workload
 - Haines casefile work is high and high profile
 - Due to large workloads, applications need to be turned in earlier rather than later.
- Lands and Reality
 - D1 withdrawal review statewide to lift these withdrawals and help with State conveyances. Bering Glacier area withdrawals that were supported in the planning effort under EARMP and Cantwell area withdrawals (EARMP).
 - New legislation for Native Vietnam veterans to be eligible to apply for Native Allotments – no direction on process yet.
- Recreation:
 - Trails- working with SoA F&G Access Division to better sign some 17 (b) easements in GMU 13. Planned rehabilitation to portions of Middle Fork trail. Working with SoA ADFG Delta office to rehabilitate Coal Mine Road as sections are in disrepair and continue to receive high use.
 - Campgrounds- A 6-person Student Conservation Association crew will be at GFO for the entire month of June. Their focus will be on completing needed maintenance actions in the campgrounds. Hosts will be placed in Sourdough, Paxson, and Tangles. Host still needed at Brushkana.
 - Rivers- Water rights application for the Gulkana River. Application is being developed for water rights pursuant to recreational activities/interests.
- Resources:
 - Fisheries/Hydrology: Gulkana Water Rights Applications were submitted to DNR in late November. Working with partners on culvert replacement issues at Lower Tonsina.
 - Mining: Valdez Creek ongoing monitoring. Yakataga beach mining plan of operations is expected soon.
 - Forestry: Continue to work with commercial operators in Tiekel area. Continue to issue Personal Use Wood Cutting Permits.
 - Fuels Program: GFO will be getting a Fuels Specialist full-time position to announce this year. Expect to see more funding to the area for fuels projects in the next several years.

- Cultural/paleontology: Pollen core sampling project and camp in tangles area this spring/summer for UAF students.
- Community Partnerships:
 - Events: CB300 Checkpoint at Sourdough success, despite furlough. Upcoming youth events, weather permitting: family ice fishing, Earth Discovery Day, YES, and then go into Youth Hikes and summer events.
 - Agreements: ADF&G- Wildlife for moose and caribou populations and fisheries for population monitoring to hire staff to cover the Gulkana fish tower; CRWP for invasive weeds, youth, and stream restoration on middle fork trail; WISE for youth initiatives; PWSC for intern(s) and SCA for a crew.