Land Management on the Alaska State Parks

Alaska State Parks

Jason Okuly

March 7th, 2017
What I Do
Mission

• The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation provides outdoor recreation opportunities and conserves and interprets natural, cultural, and historic resources for the use, enjoyment, and welfare of the people.
Planning Process

- Why do a management plan?
  - Legislatively mandated
    - AS 41.21.020
      - “…develop a continuing plan for the conservation and maximum use…”
      - Update management plans every 20 years.
      - The commissioner shall designate by regulation incompatible uses within the boundaries of the Kachemak Bay State Park in accordance with the requirements of AS 41.21.130 - 41.21.142, and those incompatible uses designated shall be prohibited or restricted, as provided by regulation.

- Funding
  - Employees, trails, public use cabins, campgrounds, etc.

- Provide guidance to managers
    - (a) The presently state-owned land and water, and all that acquired in the future by the state, lying within the parcels described in this section are designated as the Kachemak Bay State Wilderness Park. In order to protect and preserve this land and water for its unique and exceptional wilderness value, the park is established and shall be managed as a wilderness park. The land and water lying within the following described parcels is reserved from all uses incompatible with its primary function as a wilderness park and is assigned to the department for control and maintenance:

    - (a) The presently state-owned land and water, and all that acquired in the future by the state, lying within the parcels described in this section are designated as the Kachemak Bay State Park. In order to protect and preserve this land and water for its unique and exceptional scenic value, the park is established and shall be managed as a scenic park. The land and water lying within the following described parcels is reserved from all uses incompatible with its primary function as a scenic park and is assigned to the department for control, development, and maintenance:

    - In this chapter,
      - (1) “scenic park” means relatively spacious areas of outstanding natural significance, where major values are in their natural geological, faunal or floral characteristics, the purpose of which is directed primarily toward the preservation of its outstanding natural features and where development is minimal and only for the purpose of making the areas available for public enjoyment in a manner consistent with the preservation of the natural values such as camping, picnicking, sightseeing, nature study, hiking, riding and related activities which involve no major modification of the land, forests or waters, and without extensive introduction of artificial features or forms of recreational development that are primarily of urban character;

      - (2) “wilderness park” means an area whose predominant character is the result of the interplay of natural processes, large enough and so situated as to be unaffected, except in minor ways, by what takes place in the nonwilderness around it, a physical condition which activates the innermost emotions of the observer and where development of man-made objects will be strictly limited and depend entirely on good taste and judgment so that the wilderness values are not lost.
Planning Process

STEP 1: Identify Issues - Identify issues and concerns through a public involvement process. - Spring/Summer 2014

STEP 2: Gather Information - Throughout the planning process collect information about natural resources, present and past land use, land ownership, and the local economy. - Ongoing

STEP 3: Prepare and Evaluate Land Use Alternatives - Describe possible choices for management based on public interests, local resources, and state policies. Describe the effects of each choice on goals for the management of an area. – Winter 2014

STEP 4: Prepare Draft Plan - The planning team and advisory board create a draft plan that reflects resource values and public and agency goals. The agencies review the first draft and settle any land use conflicts that remain, or propose the best alternatives for public review. - 2016

STEP 5: Public Review of Draft Plan - Hold public meetings to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the draft plan and to identify parts that need to be changed. – 2016

STEP 6: Prepare Final Plan - Review agency and public comments and revise the plan as needed. - 2016

STEP 7: Approve Plan - The Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources approves and signs the plan. - 2017

STEP 8: Adopt and Implement Plan - Plan guides management decisions for state lands in the planning area. - 2017
STEP 1: Identify Issues - Identify issues and concerns through a public involvement process. - Spring/Summer 2014

Initial Scoping Open House
Recreational Use and Facility Suggestions

Between November 2013 and May 2014, the Department of Natural Resources held open houses in Homer, Anchorage, Soldotna, Port Graham, and Nanwalek as part of the initial scoping phase for the Kachemak Bay State Park and State Wilderness Park management plan revision process. The planning team was on site to discuss issues, gather information, and learn more from the public about current or future goals and uses related to the management plan revision. Additionally, the planning team supplied maps of the parks and encouraged the public to put their ideas regarding recreation directly onto the maps.

The planning team would like to thank those that took the time to attend the open houses, as they are a summary of what we learned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homer Open House – November 13, 2013</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inland Bear Cove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Bear Cove, above SP boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Along SP boundary slightly below Portlock Glacier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inland Mallard Bay, near Humpry Creek</td>
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<tr>
<td>In K-Bay between Mallard Bay and Glacier Spit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Between Humpry Creek and Grewink Lake</td>
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<td>Between Humpry Creek and Grewink Lake</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grewink Lake area</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grewink Lake area, diagonal to Glacier Spit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lower Glacier Spit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaches below Glacier Spit, within Halibut Cove</td>
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<tr>
<td>Halibut Cove</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beginning of Halibut Cove (upper side)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entire State Wilderness Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below and slightly to the left of Section 15 marker in area by Halibut Cove</td>
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Kachemak Bay State Park and Kachemak Bay State Wilderness Park Planning Update

In November 2013, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) released a questionnaire seeking public input regarding recreational use, access and facilities for the Kachemak Bay State Park and Kachemak Bay State Wilderness Park (KBSP and KBSWP respectively). The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part A consisted of ten questions related to recreation and facilities in KBSP and KBSWP. Respondents were asked to make selections from a list that was provided and were given the option fill in any additional information on the line listed as “Other”. Part B consisted of six questions that were specific to those who own land within or adjacent to the park. The purpose of the landowner specific questions was to better understand where private property is located, how it is being used, and how it is being accessed. One hundred twenty two completed questionnaires were received by the January 31, 2014 deadline.

Summary

Nearly all of the respondents indicated they had visited KBSP and the majority of respondents indicated they had visited KBSWP. Issues related to accessibility, including distance and cost, were the main reasons listed for not visiting KBSWP. Question three asked respondents to indicate why they chose to visit KBSP. Respondents were given a list of twelve options, including an “Other” line where they could write any additional information, and encouraged to select as many options as applied. Top selections for why respondents chose to visit KBSP were scenic beauty, established trails, and nearby and accessible. Towards the end of the questionnaire respondents were given the option to fill in any additional comments.
Suggested Facilities and Recreational Uses Based on Homer, Anchorage, Seldovia, Port Graham, and Nanwalek Open House Public Comments
STEP 3: Prepare and Evaluate Land Use Alternatives - Describe possible choices for management based on public interests, local resources, and state policies. Describe the effects of each choice on goals for the management of an area. – Winter 2014

Alaska State Park System: Statewide Framework

Guidelines for Activities

1995 Management Plan Land Use

Who are the Stakeholders

- Lodge operators
- Commercial helicopter and airplane operators
- Kachemak Bay Conservation Society
- Homer Electric Association
- Kachemak Bay Water Trail and Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park
- Homer Cycling Club
- Water Taxi Operators
- Jet ski Advocates
- Cook Inlet Keeper
- CIAA
- Fish and Game
Challenges

Access

Moorage/docks

Water rights

Helicopters

Trail Maintenance

HEA

CIAA

Moorage/docks
Needs

• Are there information needs that could be addressed through shared inventorying and monitoring?
  – YES!!!!!!

• 11AAC18.025

c) The director may, upon proper application, issue a permit for activities described in 11 AAC 18.010(2) - (11) if he or she determines that (1) park facilities and natural and cultural resources will not be adversely affected; (2) the state park is protected from pollution; (3) public use values of the state park will be maintained and protected; (4) the public safety, health, and welfare will not be adversely affected; and (5) the activity is consistent with the Alaska Coastal Management Program (AS 46.40), if applicable.
Contact Information

• Jason Okuly
  – 226-4688
  – Jason.Okuly@Alaska.gov
• Alaska State Parks
  – http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/
• Link to planning process or document
  – http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/plans/kbay/kbayplan.htm
• Google it!
  – Kachemak Bay Management Plan