

MINUTES
**WETLANDS REVIEW BOARD
REGULAR MEETING**

September 3, 2013, 5:15 p.m. Marine View 4th floor conference room

Meeting Summary

Board Members Present: Hal Geiger, Brenda Wright, Lisa Hoferkamp, Amy Sumner, Jerry Medina

Board Members Absent: Nina Horne, Dan Miller, Andrew Campbell

A quorum was present.

Staff Members Present: Teri Camery, Chrissy McNally CBJ Planners

Public Present: Ken Nichols, CBJ Airport Engineer; Dr. Paul Adamus, Adamus Resource Assessment; Matt Woolbright, Juneau Empire

Meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m.

II. July 18, 2013 Regular Meeting minutes approved without edits

III. **Agenda was approved with the addition of the airport tree cutting issue.**

IV. **Public Participation on Non-Agenda Items**

None

V. Board Comments.

None

VI. **Agenda Items**

Airport Tree Cutting

Ms. Camery explained the Board's advisory role and the long history of review and cooperation between the Board and Juneau airport management. She explained that the current proposed tree cutting is not within 50 feet of any anadromous streams and therefore does not require any type of permit or formal review process from CBJ. This issue is being brought to the Board as a courtesy and as follow-up to the Board's past reviews in this area.

Mr. Nichols showed the area where the trees are proposed to be cut, at the east end of the runway. He explained that the trees need to be cut to allow for installation of navigational aids,

to allow jets to land safely in poor weather conditions. There are three groups of trees in low-lying dredge islands that need to be cut. The trees are primarily spruce and cottonwood. The tree cutting requires an application to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Ms. Wright asked whether the proposed cutting included the trees closest to Lemon Creek. Mr. Nichols said no, and pointed to the dredge islands on the map. Mr. Nichols noted that the trees are within a navigation easement, and cutting was first proposed years ago during the EIS process. The airport has a bald eagle permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the activity. Ms. Sumner noted that ADFG timing windows might apply, and she would send the link to Mr. Nichols. The Board did not make a formal motion on the project, because one was not necessary.

Habitat Mapping and Analysis Project Update

Ms. Camery described the extensive work conducted this summer under the contract with Dr. Adamus to ensure that the wetland assessment method has scientific integrity and is repeatable. She said that the large board packet includes just a sampling of this work. She listed the following items as examples:

- Five Peer Review workshops have been conducted. Detailed notes for each workshop (except the last one on public use and recreation, which was just held today) have been included in the Board's packet. The workshops went through the assessment questions and rankings one by one with the local experts in each field. Additional peer review was conducted outside of the workshops on pollination and amphibians, since experts were not available at the time of the workshops. Additional review is also being conducted on bird habitat.
- Independent review has been conducted by two consultants. The board packet includes one example of the review conducted by a Sitka firm, Eco-Analysts. Additional independent review will be conducted immediately after the Board training.
- The Board packet includes Chapter Seven from the Oregon Rapid Wetland Assessment Method, which is the immediate precursor to the current WESPAK-SE methodology. Chapter Seven includes the repeatability assessment that Dr. Adamus referred to in his previous presentation to the Board, when he referred to a scoring confidence in the method of plus or minus one.
- The Board packet also includes one small example of the scientific review of the wetland method conducted in the previous two years through grants from the Southeast Alaska Land Trust. This review example is from Terry Brock, who was a wetland scientist with the U.S. Forest Service for many years until he moved. Mr. Brock was also on the Wetlands Review Board in the past.
- CBJ staff placed an ad in the Juneau Empire on 8/28/13 and 9/1/13 as follows: "CBJ is seeking volunteers who have academic training and career experience in the environmental sciences to volunteer to review scientific criteria for assessing Juneau wetlands...." The purpose is again to obtain as much detailed scientific review as possible to ensure that the method addresses Southeast Alaska conditions. Staff have not received any responses to the ad so far.

- The free 3-day wetland methodology training is scheduled for September 23-25, 2013. The maximum number of participants is 25 people, and we expect the training to fill up completely. So far one board member, Nina Horne, has signed up. The training includes 1 ½ days of field work at three different sites.

Ms. Camery stated that the Board will have the opportunity to meet with Dr. Adamus again at the September 26, 2013 meeting, immediately after the training. She emphasized that it's very important for the Board to feel comfortable and confident in the wetland methodology, because the grant requires formal support of the wetland methodology from both the Habitat Mapping Working Group and Wetlands Review Board, as the basis for the Juneau Wetlands Management Plan update. She urged the Board to ask Dr. Adamus lots of questions.

Dr. Adamus explained that he has been looking at wetland sites throughout Southeast Alaska (Prince of Wales Island, Wrangell, Ketchikan, and Petersburg) under his contract with the Southeast Alaska Land Trust. He has been adding to the site database and improving the wording of the questions to make them clearer.

Mr. Geiger asked about the repeatability assessment. Ms. Camery noted that it was included in the Board packet, and is the same study that Dr. Adamus referred to in his first meeting with the board. Dr. Adamus noted that we'll do a similar study in Juneau after the wetland training. Mr. Geiger noted that the method has many different dimensions, and asked Dr. Adamus if he had any plans to simplify it.

Dr. Adamus explained that the many dimensions allowed for modeling in specific wetlands. Manipulating scores in one category would allow assessors to see how that would affect other scores.

Mr. Medina asked about the sites used for the wetland training. Dr. Adamus said that he would include one tidal site and two freshwater wetland sites. He referred to a peatland bog on a slope on Douglas Island, and the restored dredge pond sites. He was considering visiting a heavily impacted site as well.

Ms. Hoferkamp asked about the repeatability assessment at the training sites. Dr. Adamus said the testing will be with five people after the training, not conducted during the training.

VII. Pending Permits and Updates

1. Board Vacancy

Ms. Camery reminded the Board that there is still a vacant seat, and the application process is on-going through the city's website.

VIII. Planning Commission Liaison Update.

No update.

IX. Next meeting: Thursday September 26, 5:15 p.m., Marine View Fourth Floor conference room

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:30 p.m.