

Conservation Lands Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes – April 18, 2025
APPROVED

Meeting convened: present Mike Taylor, Chair; John Barry, Tanner Horst, Colleen Stansbury, Kathy Streveler, Susan Warner; absent: Larry Landry; Others: Southeast Alaska Lands Trust (SEALT) members participating on OWL: Stephanie Lawlor, Conservation Manager; Dan Hysell, Stewardship Specialist; and Bailey Williams, Outreach & Development Specialist; Shelley Owens (non-member Secretary)

Approval of Minutes: February 7, 2025 meeting minutes approved

Southeast Alaska Lands Trust Conservation Easement (CE) Project (Warner)

- Stephanie: the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant process opened and RFPs have been sent out. A temporary CE is planned until the NAWCA grant can provide a long term solution. SEALT will need letters of support for the grant application from the community and individuals. Mike will seek a resolution from the city council.
- Dan: will be in Gustavus April 29th-30 to survey existing structures, trails and boundary markers in order to prepare a baseline property report. He'll be joined by Mike, Susan, Colleen and David Love, SEALT volunteer. The NAWCA grant will be managed by the USF&W service and a recommendation was made that Nat Drumheller review the proposal and join Dan in the site visit.
- Mike asked about an MOU with SEALT and Stephanie said the existing resolution is ok for now.
- Kathy asked if there will be an opportunity to review the temporary CE as a template for a permanent CE, and to memorialize our interest in the process.
- Susan described the photo contest and exhibit at the GCC which opens on May 2nd. An award night will follow 2 weeks of voting. It has been a positive strategy for community involvement (20 contributors). Thanks to SEALT for its involvement. And thanks to Susan!

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Status (Streveler, Horst & Landry)

- Larry submitted questions from the subcommittee to Hank to forward to Julia Nave at TNC, eg. process regarding accreted lands; and if TNC policy specifies procedure it follows in land transfer.
- Kathy described planning for the TNC 21st anniversary. TNC will provide funding. Dates suggested include September before moose season when ADF&G in town, or in conjunction with the July 17-20th Streveler Symposium at which TNC will be attending.
- There was discussion about planning for worst case scenarios; reviewing and updating the management plan; assessing changes in biology with accreted lands and possible new threats.

Beach tracts (Taylor & Barry)

Mike: the Gustavus Forelands tracts along the upper Good River and land east of the airport are held in fee simple by TNC without a conservation easement. The four beach tracts have a CE with the state. Should we seek additional CEs for the parcels on Good River and East of the airport? Stephanie: we'll need to include TNC as the landowner to initiate the CE. Other cross-protective measures may be available to ensure protection. Stephanie: SEALT doesn't encumber its parcels because it doesn't transfer its holdings. SEALT has

some USFS lands in trust and don't include a CE because they are already encumbered. TNC considers its lands encumbered by its mission and values. Divestiture/long-term planning need to be discussed with TNC. Dan: deed restriction on the upper SEALT lands could provide a degree of protection. John: restrictions aren't included in the TNC quitclaim deed, although included with USF&W parcels.

Map development (Barry)

The upper Good River tract was under an agreement between State DCCED and Gustavus Land Legacy (Gustavus Community Assn.) Hank has been unable to find it, and it's not on line in the State Recorder's office. Mike suggested John talk to Kaitlyn Raffier, SE Regional Manager, AK DNR. Hank checked on conservation policy at airport but only received a verbal acknowledgment that DOT policy is to minimize development on runway approaches.; John: Mix of DNR, School Trust, and DOT ownership.

John: has submitted maps to post on the website with a set of notes to go with each map; reference documents; and deeds & easements. He emailed the files to committee members to add to their thumb drives. John asked for a review and comments from committee members before the maps and notes are given to Liesl to post. The new files is labeled "city website". Colleen thanked John and told him his report is one of the highlights of the meeting.

Discussion about vulnerability of parcels with CEs that DNR holding. TNC transfer would require compensation to ADF&G and USF&WS. The sale price is cheap and there is no requirement for public access. The relationship of trust with existing staff at TNC a huge asset but of concern due to the change in leadership. We don't want to alienate the new director and need to communicate with TNC about how we can work together as partners.

Dude Creek Critical Habitat Area

Mike: nothing new to report. Kathy concerned about Dude Creek parcels, timing is important. Mike: Sen. Kiehl waiting for the right vehicle to add them to the DCCHA. Mike will talk with ADF&G.

Web page development

Susan: Once map inventory determined she'll work to get it posted.

Other issues

- Kathy submitted a trail grant application (separately from the Committee) but the \$50 million Federal funding was withdrawn.
- Recommendations on trails on conservation lands: Hank suggested Nagoonberry connection, but concern about motorized vehicles; joint trail project with TNC on their lands; Mike: a way to get the MOU started.
- John: Mental Health (MH) lands at Rink Creek with link to Homestead Creek is listed as available for disposal, important to look at. TNC would have first dibs as adjoining property owner. It was part of land accreted to state but not surveyed. Island View is platted to the section line: not developed but provides public access. Mike suggests he talk to SEALT. John will talk with MH and will give us a recommendation next meeting.

Next meeting: Friday, May 23rd 3:00-4:30 at City Hall; note Dan Hysell SEALT site visit: April 29, 2025

Adjournment

Shelley