

Anan improvements to target outhouses and trailhead

By DAN RUDY
Sentinel writer

For visitors this summer to Anan Wildlife Observatory, trips to the restroom will become a bit less hectic.

Up to the present, the oft-visited outdoor attraction's outhouse is sited apart from the main observation area – and its protective barriers – making run-ins with Anan's bears en route to the toilet an occasional risk. At least a few people have had to wait out a passing bear from inside, which can be unpleasant in addition to an unnerving experience.

The Forest Service (USFS) Wrangell Ranger District, which manages Anan, will make the problem a thing of the past, and work slated for this spring will rearrange the existing facility.

"The whole point is to bring it closer to the observation area," explained Dee Galla, the district's outdoor recreation planner.

The new facility will become accessible from within the observatory's railed-off confines. As part of the work, the entrance to the deck will also be readjusted, allowing visitors immediate access to the upper area by graded pathway instead

of navigating a set of stairs.

Design of the commode itself will also be improved upon, with the units more self-contained using a vault unit system. This should help limit the number of curious brown bears, which can be drawn in by the scent of trayed waste during the season. "Once they do, it becomes a problem that year," said Galla.

She explained the vaults will be changed out more frequently through the season, with waste transported down the pathway toward the tidal area for proper disposal. The facilities located at the creek's trailhead can be pumped out by boat, so these will also be redesigned, but with a larger volume in mind.

The project coincides with work on the trailhead itself, set to start later this month. The privy at the trailhead will be expanded to a double outhouse, with access improved and surrounding area given a gravel pad. The toilets there will not quite meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) levels of accessibility, but will nonetheless be barrier-free.

Work will see a widened welcome area with gravel padding added, which will



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Ready for springtime?

A pair of bona fide Alaska girls, Kayla Meissner and Clara Waddington, are ready for summer despite Sunday's snowfall over Wrangell. Half an inch of precipitation – amounting to several inches of snow – left the island looking white overnight, with snow flurries turning into rain through the evening. The weather was accompanied by moderate winds from the southeast, leading to several small craft advisory warnings over the weekend.

remain obscured from view by boats and floatplanes coming into Anan Bay. Other gravel work will improve access by visi-

tors during the disembarkation process.

Petersburg-based firm Rainforest Contracting has been assigned the contract, and will be starting the project as soon as the weather permits. Inspecting the site last month, conditions had been deceptively springlike and work was scheduled to start this week. The subsequent return of snow and rough water the past couple of weeks has since delayed them.

"They're eager to get going," Galla commented.

The project has a targeted deadline of June 15, before the summer season begins to pick up. Any work remaining by that time will be put off till the fall. The contractors will complete their work in two phases, laying gravel first and finishing with improvements to facilities and decking.

Funding for the project comes from the district's capital improvement budget. Its design began two years ago during a site master planning session, which identified various needs at Anan. The detached outhouse has been a problem for years, Galla explained, and improvements to the trail network have been a work in progress.

In the next five years, one of two priorities will be reassessment of the trail design itself. Further boardwalk portions may be replaced with graded gravel, with the latter's easier navigability proving popular with visitors.

"Where the terrain allows it, we will be doing gravel replacement," said Galla.

The other aim will be to replace the observatory's decking itself. Engineers looking at the site last year observed the wooden structure only has about five or so year's worth of life left to it anyway.

Continued on page 8

P&Z moves forward with preliminary plats

By DAN RUDY
Sentinel writer

Planning and Zoning approved review of a trio of preliminary plats zoned for waterfront development.

The first was Lot 5 at the Woodbury Tidelands Subdivision II, in Inner Harbor. Sale of tidelands at the site to owner Brett Woodbury was approved by the Borough Assembly last month at the recommendation of both the Planning and Zoning and the Port commissions.

In his application packet, Woodbury is requesting to purchase the additional tidelands in front of his property in order to reconstruct the existing float. This would allow him deeper water access, as well as square up the tidal limits of the property he owns in the area.

One member of the public appeared to speak on the matter, Petersburg resident Dave Ellis, who has property in the harbor two doors down. He advised the commission to look at other options in future, rather than selling off tidal properties individually.

"Doing this piecemeal like this probably isn't the best," he said. Eventually when Inner Harbor's float network gets replaced, he said the city may find it difficult to work around. "You're going to wish you had it back someday, sure as the devil."

If depth and access were at issue, Ellis suggested dredging could help there. As the process can be cost-prohibitive for the city to undertake, he recommended it help facilitate private efforts to do so by providing a location to dispose of dredged-up material.

If the city was intent on selling those tidelands, however, Ellis expressed interest in purchasing some for his property. Commissioner Rolland Howell said the property owners were free to apply too if they wanted.

Commissioners approved preliminary review of the plat, but will additionally recommend to the Port Commission looking

into provision of a dump site for dredging projects.

They approved a plat review put forward by Sea Level Seafoods, which requested to lease additional tidelands adjacent to its new building near Heritage Harbor's north entrance.

The request was reviewed by Ports and Zoning back in February 2016, with both commissions recommending to the Assembly the tidelands disposal. Planning and Zoning had further recommended that the area be used for parking and surface storage only rather than a building, which the Assembly also approved as part of the tideland lease modifications.

Finally, preliminary plat review was approved for the Larsson-Buhler Replat, creating three new lots at the request of Diane Larsson. Vacation of a 10-foot utility easement centered on existing lot lines at the Mitchell-Buhler Replat was also requested. The items move next to the Assembly to approve its vacation.

The commission will also take up discussion of the accommodation of yurts, stick-built trailers and "tiny homes" in zoning code. Currently these dwelling types are not addressed by ordinance, and are only approved on a conditional basis by the commission.

"That's why we do need to address it," said Rushmore. A workshop on the topic will be scheduled for May.

In another ongoing matter, no progress has been made on the zoning of remote entitlement lands received by the state. The 8,931 acres of land is spread out among nine different areas within the borough. Parcel B on Zarembo Island is the only such property to have yet been surveyed, as the other areas need to be before zoning and eventual development can be undertaken.

"That will take a lot of money," said Rushmore.

The commission had previously reviewed the lands during a series of meetings last year, prioritizing potential uses for the acquired acreages. Taking desirability and accessibility into account, commissioners also prioritized the order in which surveying and zoning should be undertaken, with the 1,600 acres on Zarembo high on the list.

Birthdays & Anniversaries



The Sentinel extends its best wishes to the persons listed on the Wrangell Chamber of Commerce Community Scholarship Birthday Calendar.

Thursday, March 16: Anatoly Shashkov, Billy Martinez, Linnea Brooks, Theresa Elmer, Ira Samson, Wanda Ingram, Paula Rak, *Anniversary:* Dan and Paula Wickman, Wes and Wanda Ingram. **Friday, March 17:** Benjamin Paulsen, Tim Hunt, Jack Craven, Silas Mork, *Anniversary:* Dennis and Charolette Neff. **Saturday, March 18:** Walter Maehout, Jacoby Hunt. **Sunday, March 19:** Ryan Soeteber, Deborah Glass, Presley Skye, Michelle Brock, Frank Warfel Jr., Patsy Barton, *Anniversary:* Gale and Deborah Glass. **Monday, March 20:** Ariel Haunschuld, Jeannie Easterly, Becky Thomas, Joe Rugo, *Anniversary:* Bill and Pat Bushnell, Matt and Edna Nore. **Tuesday, March 21:** *Anniversary:* Vern and Nancy Cummings. **Wednesday, March 22:** Tyra Meissner, McKinley Ward, Linda Churchill, Rick Dailey, Rachel Stough, Kendra Wittwer. **Thursday, March 23:** Vickie Winslow, D.J. Bakeberg.

If you would like to add a birthday or anniversary at no charge please call the Sentinel at 874-2301.

Senior Center Menu

Thursday, March 16:

Baked ham, sweet potatoes, pasta salad, hot roll.

Friday, March 17:

Corned beef and cabbage with potato, carrots, celery, onion, roll, fruit in jello.

Monday, March 20:

Half a ham sandwich, potato soup, danish salad.

Tuesday, March 21:

Pork baked with apples, rice veggie pilaf, green beans, cauliflower and broccoli salad.

Wednesday, March 22:

Moose roast, mashed potatoes with gravy, peas, carrot pineapple salad.

Thursday, March 23:

Cabbage rolls, carrots, cucumber and onion salad, hot roll.

Please call Wrangell Senior Center at 874-2066 by 10 a.m. for reservations. Milk, tea and coffee will be served with meals.

FERRY SCHEDULE

Departures

Northbound

Saturday, March 18

Matanuska 1:15 a.m.

Sunday, March 19

Malaspina 4:45 p.m.

Tuesday, March 21

Matanuska 10:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 25

Matanuska 12:30 a.m.

Southbound

Friday, March 17

Matanuska 10:30 a.m.

Monday, March 20

Matanuska 6:15

Wednesday, March 22

Malaspina 8:00 a.m.

Friday, March 24

Matanuska 10:00 a.m.

Arrival times may vary. Call 874-2021 for verification or call 874-3711 for recorded information.



TIDES TABLE March 16 - March 23

| High Tides | | | | Low Tides | | | | |
|------------|-------|------|-------|-----------|-------|------|-------|------|
| AM | | PM | | AM | | PM | | |
| Time | Ft | Time | Ft | Time | Ft | Time | Ft | |
| Mar. 16 | 3:51 | 16.2 | 4:14 | 14.7 | 9:53 | 0.7 | 9:59 | 2.0 |
| Mar. 17 | 4:21 | 15.5 | 4:50 | 13.5 | 10:29 | 1.3 | 10:32 | 3.1 |
| Mar. 18 | 4:54 | 14.6 | 5:34 | 12.4 | 11:09 | 2.0 | 11:11 | 4.2 |
| Mar. 19 | 5:33 | 13.7 | 6:32 | 11.4 | 11:58 | 2.7 | | |
| Mar. 20 | 6:28 | 12.9 | 7:56 | 10.8 | 0:00 | 5.2 | 1:00 | 3.3 |
| Mar. 21 | 7:48 | 12.4 | 9:22 | 11.2 | 1:05 | 6.0 | 2:16 | 3.5 |
| Mar. 22 | 9:12 | 12.7 | 10:28 | 12.2 | 2:29 | 6.2 | 3:36 | 3.0 |
| Mar. 23 | 10:19 | 13.6 | 11:18 | 13.4 | 3:53 | 5.5 | 4:41 | 2.0 |

Wrangell Roundup: Special Events

Thursday, March 16

Story Time: 10 a.m. Public Library. Join us for stories, crafts and snacks.

SAIL Class: 10 a.m. Senior Apartments Atrium. Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) free class is a strength, balance and fitness class for adults 65+. For more info call 874-3375.

Healthy Eating Demo on Healthy Food Preparation: 11:30 a.m. Senior Apartments Atrium. Free class. Learn how easy it is to prepare healthy and delicious food. Samples will be available. For more info call 874-3375.

Yoga: 5:30 p.m. AICS Medical Clinic. Yoga for everybody, please come and join.

Wrangell Chautauqua: Moths with Susan Wise Eagle.

Monday, March 20

Yoga: 5:30 p.m. AICS Medical Clinic. Yoga for everybody, please come and join.

Tuesday, March 21

SAIL Class: 10 a.m. Senior Apartments Atrium. Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) free class is a strength, balance and fitness class for adults.

Is the attendance at your meeting or event low? Call Adrienne at the Sentinel to have it placed here.

Continuing Events

PARKS & REC ACTIVITIES: **Lap Swim:** M, W, F 6:00-7:30 a.m. & 5:00-6:00 p.m., M-F 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., S 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.; **Arthritis Foundation Exercise Class:** at the Pool: M, W, F, 9:00-10:00 a.m.; **Water Aerobics:** M, W, F 10:00-11:00 a.m.; **Family Swim:** F 6:00-7:00 p.m.; **General Swim:** M & W 6:00-7:00 p.m., F 7:00-8:00 p.m., S 1:00-2:00 p.m.; **Weight Room:** M-TH 6:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 3:30-7:30 p.m., F 6:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 3:30-8:30 p.m., S 10:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m. **Extra 2 Lane Lap Swim:** M-W-F 10:00-11:00 a.m.

OTHER MEETINGS/ACTIVITIES/EVENTS: **AA Meetings:** Tu. 7 p.m., Toss Off Th. 7 p.m., Smoked Fish F 8 p.m., Step Study Sat. 7 p.m. at the Episcopal Church Parish Hall, Study Materials provided. Wed. M & M 12 p.m. at the Catholic Parish Hall, use back entrance.

NA Meeting: Wednesday, We Do Recover, 8 p.m. at the Episcopal Church Parish Hall.

Bridge Social: F, 1 p.m. at th Island of Faith Lutheran Church 874-3440, 874-3507.

Salvation Army Food Bank: Tuesday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. For information or questions please call Major Michael Bates at 874-3753.

The Way We Were

In the Sentinel 100, 75, 50 and 25 years ago.

March 15, 1917: Forty years ago last Saturday Judge Wm. G. Thomas arrived in Wrangell. When asked if any of the buildings that were here then are still standing Judge Thomas said: "The only buildings standing now which were here when I landed on March 10, 1877, are the buildings of the old garrison. The building now occupied by F.D. Bronson, the customs collector, was the Captain's quarters. The big log building which is now used as a jail was then the barracks proper, while the small log building used as an office for the United States commissioner was the military wardrobe." Asked if he had lived here continually for the past forty years Judge Thomas said: "I have regarded Wrangell as my headquarters ever since I first came to Alaska. During the first six years that I was in the North I spent most of the time up the Stikine River, but since 1884 I have called Wrangell my home, and I have lived here continuously since 1884 except when away in the customs service, or serving as a U.S. Deputy marshal. I have held a commission for a subordinate federal office of some kind under every president since Cleveland's first administration."

March 13, 1942: Lew M. Williams, Jr., Wrangell High School senior, has been notified by Delegate Anthony J. Dimond of his appointment as first alternate candidate for the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis. The principal candidate is Roy Madsen, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Madsen, widely known resident of Kodiak. Young Williams has been ordered to report at Ketchikan for qualifying examination on April 15. Alternates are selected, providing they qualify, only if the principal candidate fails to meet the requirements.

March 10, 1967: Exploratory talks involving mutual power and transportation problems were held

here between Premier W.A.C. Bennet of British Columbia and Alaska Gov. Walter Hickel. Gov. Hickel said after the 90-minute meeting that plans will be made to set up a formal meeting in September so the two leaders can further the discussions. He said his state is interested in purchase of B.C. power for Southeastern Alaska where costs range between 14-16 mills. "A complete loop system through Alaska and B.C. was discussed informally as well as joint power development," Gov. Hickel said. A road access through the Alaska Panhandle was also discussed "but not a corridor as such" because this would involve deeding Alaska territory to British Columbia, he said. One proposal was to link Telegraph Creek in Northwestern B.C. with Wrangell, Alaska, by following the Stikine River to Sumner Strait. The road would provide sea route for B.C.'s Stewart-Cassiar Highway. They also discussed linking the B.C. and Alaska ferry systems in freight and passenger

service. This is contrary to the U.S. Jones act which is outdated and shouldn't apply to Alaska." Paving of the Alaska Highway was also included in the talks and both leaders agreed this is the responsibility of their respective federal governments.

March 12, 1992: The Alaska Marine Highway System has announced an incentive for ferry passengers to travel with their vehicles during March. "From March 16 through March 31, customers booking reservations for drivable vehicles to or from Bellingham, Prince Rupert, or Stewart/Hyder for Travel during this coming May will be allowed a free, licensed driver for that sailing," explained George Foster, traffic manager for the system. Some restrictions will apply for this promotion. Information regarding reservations, payments, and cancellation policies were available beginning Tuesday, however, bookings for the free adult fare will not be available until March 16.



Wrangell Weather

| Date | High | Low |
|----------|------|-----|
| March 5 | 26 | 21 |
| March 6 | 26 | 21 |
| March 7 | 24 | 21 |
| March 8 | 26 | 21 |
| March 9 | 26 | 23 |
| March 10 | 24 | 19 |
| March 11 | 28 | 19 |
| March 12 | 41 | 26 |



Daylight Hours

| Date | Sunrise | Sunset | Daylight |
|----------|---------|--------|----------|
| March 16 | 7:09a | 6:47p | 11:38h |
| March 17 | 7:01a | 6:53p | 11:52h |
| March 18 | 6:58a | 6:56p | 11:58h |
| March 19 | 6:56a | 6:58p | 12:02h |
| March 20 | 6:53a | 7:00p | 12:07h |
| March 21 | 6:53a | 7:02p | 12:12h |
| March 22 | 6:48a | 7:04p | 12:16h |
| March 23 | 6:45a | 7:06p | 12:12h |

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School budget growing, despite cuts

By DAN RUDY
Sentinel writer

Wrangell's Public School Board approved a second draft for the upcoming year's budget, which begins in July.

The addition of \$375,000 in funds from the school's capital improvement fund approved in January helped balance out the proposed budget, which assumes a five-percent reduction in the state's Base Student Allocation.

Over this year's budget — revised as of this month — revenues will be down in several areas for FY18. Foundation support will drop by around \$240,000 to \$3.12M, while retirement fund contributions have been revised down by around \$30,000 since the last draft was reviewed in January. The eRate reimbursement is also expected to drop by \$16,000 as the rate of reimbursement dropped from 80 percent to 70 percent.

On the other side, expenditures were adjusted upward overall by under \$19,000 for the second draft. Adjustments to aide and support staff salaries reflect the resumption of a full-time middle school secretary position, which initially was to be cut for next year.

"We're not completely done with the restructuring of the classified staff," explained school superintendent Patrick Mayer. "What we do know at this point is we're going to get somebody into

the middle school office full-time."

Among the item looked at by the board was a draft of the classified staff pay schedule, which Mayer proposed should be adjusted. "Periodically we have to compare ourselves and make adjustments," he explained.

In particular, he recommended taking a closer look at the 10- to 12-month and 9-month schedules, which he found not to be competitive with other districts in the state. Figures were obtained by information available through the Association of Alaska School Boards. "There were some that were right spot-on, and some that did not pass that litmus test."

The teacher's line item in the budget was increased by \$29,926, reflecting addition of a counselor with a higher pay grade, and two more classes for Spanish II and zero-hour physical education. The latter program would help the district meet unfunded state mandates for increased phys-ed opportunities. \$12,000 has also been allotted to the maintenance and facilities budget for the rekeying of district buildings. Mayer explained that course is long overdue.

In all, budget expenditures will have risen by about three percent since the current year, to \$5.96M. The increase reflects step-and-column advances in faculty and staff salaries. End operating capital gives the district a \$10,943 buffer for the year's contingencies.

"Even with flat funding, we're losing every year," Mayer noted.

The meeting Monday evening was preceded by a "charette" session, allowing parents and community members opportunity to ask questions and provide input



PHOTO BY DAN RUDY

People participate in a charette at the elementary school gym Monday. The format encourages participants to migrate to different tables, each dedicated to particular subjects.

on the school's budget items and programming. Four stations were set up, pertaining to academic achievement, career and technical education, technology, and school safety. These subdivisions of school activities are related to the district's strategic plan, put together using a similar rotational charette back in 2015.

About 30 people participated, and though pressed for time at 10 minutes per section, were able to have discussions with key staff and inquire about the budget. The meeting also gave board members a chance to meet one-on-one with parents and faculty.

"It was just nice to hear about the different things that are going on," said board member Tammy Groshong afterward.

In other board business, member Rinda Howell had submitted her resignation from the board. The decision leaves one empty seat to be filled on the five-member body.

Police report

Monday, March 6

Nothing to Report.

Tuesday, March 7

Safety Concern.

Citizen Assist.

Agency Assist

Wednesday, March 8

Disturbance.

Thursday, March 9

Citizen Assist.

Friday, March 10

Agency Assist.

Agency Assist: 911 smoke alarm going off.

Saturday, March 11

Citizen Assist: Caller needed help getting into residence.

Citizen Assist: Unlock Vehicle.

Sunday, March 12

Agency Assist: Officer delivered message.

Agency Assist: Report of alarm going off. Fire Department dispatched.

There were two ambulance calls and two dog complaints during this week.

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Land exchange bills introduced in House and Senate

By DAN RUDY
Sentinel writer

A pair of bills were submitted to the State Legislature which would help move forward a proposed land exchange between the United States Forest Service and the state Mental Health Trust Authority.

House Bill 155 was introduced by Rep. Dan Ortiz (I-District 36) earlier last week, with Sen. Bert Stedman (R-District R) submitting Senate Bill 88 shortly after.

An agreement to initiate the swap was signed by both services in June 2015, which followed approximately eight years of

negotiations that included input from a wide collection of communities, tribal organizations and environmental groups. Parcels to be transferred to the USFS in Wrangell would total 1,071 acres, including 308 acres of upland parallel to Zimovia Highway, between Heritage and Shoemaker Bay harbors; 63 acres of land near Shoemaker; and 700 acres around Pats Lake.

Larger sections would be traded around Petersburg and Ketchikan, with Mental Health Trust lands amounting to around 17,341 acres. In exchange, the USFS would transfer over 20,500 acres of federal lands it manages in the Tongass National Forest. The exchange will be based on appraised value for value, rather than for acreage. The federal exchange process includes environmental and cultural review, title and survey work, public notice and appraisal procedures as outlined by statute.

Stedman and Ortiz's bills would approve the transfer from the state's end, as outlined in federal legislation put forward by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) last fall. Additional legislation was introduced by the senator,

colleague Sen. Dan Sullivan, and Rep. Don Young in January.

"Basically it allows them to exchange some of the land they have with Forest Service land," Ortiz explained. "In order for that land exchange to go forward it has to happen both at the federal level and the state level."

The two state-level bills would take effect if the Alaska Mental Health Trust Land Exchange Act of 2017 was passed with similar terms by the 115th United States Congress and enacted, and that the heads of both resource management agencies approve the transfer on or before January 1, 2024.

Ortiz and Stedman have been in communication on the issue since the start of the session, he said, and the exchange should help assuage concerns from constituents about logging projects a little too close to home.

"The Forest Service land is land that would be better for the Mental Health Trust to log," Ortiz said. "Right now they (AMHTA) own land in proximity to Deer Mountain in Ketchikan and they own land in proximity to the Petersburg community. And there's been a huge concern put

forward in our different communities about the potential of the Mental Health Trust logging those lands. The land exchange bill would make it so they wouldn't have to log in those lands."

He explained the exchange, while preserving forested lands valued by those communities, would allow Mental Health to continue supporting its primary mission to develop timber and mineral resources. Founded by Congress in 1956, AMHTA is a state corporation set up to assist the state in funding its mental health program. The trust manages lands for revenue generation that support these mental health services, and its assets include timber, coal, oil, gas and minerals.

Support for the sale has come from other entities. The Wrangell Borough Assembly also approved a resolution last September offering conditional support for the Alaska Mental Health Land Exchange Act of 2016 put forward by Murkowski. The city's resolution requested that 115 acres of developable parcels near Pats Lake and Pats Creek be considered for alternative use.

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Wolves season ends after tightly-played bracket

By DAN RUDY
Sentinel writer

Wrangell High School's boys finished up in third place during last week's Region V tournament, after losing in the final round to second-place Metlakatla.

Heading to hosts Juneau-Douglas High School, on March 8 the team started their week against next-door rivals and eventual champs Petersburg.

"The kids gave a good showing," said coach Ray Stokes. His boys had played a close game against the Vikings just the previous weekend during Petersburg's homecoming, and the tournament rematch was similarly tight.

Petersburg started off with a 12-4 lead in the first quarter, and Wrangell pushed back in the next to trail 15-18 at the half. Vikings coach Rick Brock said the two teams had had trouble moving the ball, with both employing an effective half-court defense.

Into the second half the score remained within a few points' difference. "We kind of had 'em right where we wanted them. It came down right to the last second," said Stokes. By the final buzzer the Vikings maintained its lead, 38-35.

"We came awfully close," Stokes said. Petersburg would go on to take first place in Region V, and the close game against such competition was heartening. "It was nice to be in a position to actually have a chance at it."

Relegated to the secondary bracket, the next morning Wrangell eliminated Haines in a 51-33 win.

"The kids did a decent job of withstanding the pressure they put on," Stokes commented. Wrangell benefitted early on from a 12-point lead in the first quarter, and the Glacier Bears kept about apace from there.

"We got to live another day," the coach said.

Playing Craig on Friday turned into another victory for Wrangell. The Wolves set the pace throughout, and the Panthers were able to make up some of the distance in the closing minutes. Wrangell won 58-50.

"I thought they gave a good effort," said Stokes. "Everybody got a chance to play in that ballgame."

Trent Stokes put in 21 points during the game, and the coach pointed out senior Sam Prysunka likewise had a good second quarter with eight points.

Teammate Trevor Miller had a good showing the following game, playing Metlakatla for second place.

"I thought he was going to get some opportunities, and sure enough he did," said Stokes.

Metlakatla's offense opened up with a lead Wrangell was unable to surmount. The Chiefs also had a good game for free throws, tucking away 16 of 21 attempts.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TAYLOR BALKOM/KETCHIKAN DAILY NEWS

Metlakatla's Danny Marsden shoots the ball under pressure from Wrangell's Riley Blatchley (12) on Saturday, during the Region V 2A second-place game in Juneau.

They ended up with a 45-33 win and second place.

Overall, Stokes said the week went well. "We fell a little short of what we were hoping for," he said, season over. "I was pleased with the boys. They tried hard."

The tournament is the last for the team's coach, who will be hanging up his whistle and clipboard after 30 years. "I'd like to thank all the people over the years who have helped us out," he said afterward. "It's been fun."

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

When it comes to a program that collects solid scientific data, and provides resources that lead to more sustainable approaches, look no further than Wrangell IGAP, administered by the Wrangell Cooperative

Association. IGAP provides our community with services such as gill net recycling, and E-waste collection, which take a big bite out of our solid waste burden.

The program networks with other tribes in Southeast, collaborates with the City and USFS, and

presents to science classes in our schools. Wrangell IGAP works to provide essential data such as baseline water quality samples from the Stikine River, monitoring of plankton that can cause paralytic shellfish poisoning, as well as sending in shellfish tissue samples for testing.

I am concerned about proposed budget cuts at the federal level which could threaten the future of IGAP here in Wrangell and throughout Southeast Alaska. I will be contacting Senators Murkowski and Sullivan, and Representative Young and letting them know about the good work that IGAP does here, and ask them to not allow funding cuts to this community focused program. I encourage you to do the same.

Stephen Haddad

Obituary: Marion St. Clair, 96

Marion St. Clair, 96, died on Feb. 17, 2017 in Wrangell, Alaska.

She was born on May 20, 1920 in Meanook, Alberta, Canada to John E. and Lillian Peterson.

Mom loved all of her caretakers and friends at long-term care. She cracked everyone up with her funny comments and stories at lunch time.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Frank (Bud) St. Clair; sisters, Ilah King, Grace Fletcher; brothers, Joe, John, and Frank Peterson and son, Scott D. St. Clair.

She is survived by; brothers, Bob Peterson of Junction City, Oregon, Guy (Barbara) Peterson of Deming, New Mexico; sons, Frank (Kathy) St. Clair of Riddle, Oregon, and Myron St. Clair of Wrangell; daughter, Nancy St. Clair of Wrangell; daughter-in-law, Kathy St. Clair of Wrangell and numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Per her wishes there will be no service. Her ashes will be spread at Back Channel in the spring or summer.



Marion St. Clair

POSTED FUEL PRICES

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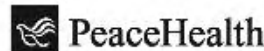
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Girls finish third in regional tournament

By DAN RUDY
Sentinel writer

Wrangell's high school girls basketball team finished up its season with a hard-fought third place finish at last week's Region V in Juneau.

The girls started on good footing against Haines on Wednesday, winning 58-43. They moved on to first-seeded team Metlakatla the following day.

"We had a really strong game against them," said Wrangell coach Laurie Brown. The girls kept pace with the Miss Chiefs throughout the game. Fouls played a factor in the game, earning extra points; sophomore Helen Decker ended up landing 13 for 15 of her attempts.

The game ended in a close 46-50 loss, sending the team to the secondary bracket. First against them was Petersburg, who the girls had just split with the previous weekend. The game was strongly defensive, with points kept particularly low through the first half. Wrangell pulled off a 30-19 win by the final buzzer, eliminating the Lady Vikings from play.

For their final game on Saturday, the Lady Wolves were up again against Metlakatla, who had been beaten in a surprise upset by Craig High School. Wrangell held the lead heading into the second quarter, but Metlakatla bounced back before the half, leading 24-20. Into the second half the Miss Chiefs defense dogged their opponents, with Wrangell outscored to a 31-43 defeat.

"We had a really good tournament," Brown said afterward. "They came ready to play."

It had been a tiring four-game week, but her players had persevered throughout she said.

The girls were noted for their achievements in the season as well. Anna Allen was named to the All-Conference Team, and Abby Armstrong and Charley Seddon awarded for their sportsmanship. Grace Cano and manager Josephine Lewis each made the All-Academic Team for their high grade point averages.

Brown thought it was a good end to a successful season, one where the team coalesced and improved as it went on. "I think it was a really growing season," she explained.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TAYLOR BALKOM/KETCHIKAN DAILY NEWS

Kaylyn Easterly (25) drives between Metlakatla defenders Thursday during the Lady Wolves' 50-46 loss in the Region V 2A semifinal in Juneau.

SEAPA revisits line maintenance contract award

By DAN RUDY
Sentinel writer

At a special meeting held last week, the governing board for Southeast Alaska Power Agency reconfirmed its approval of a contract for transmission line maintenance through 2019.

The bid was awarded at the board's regularly scheduled February 8 meeting. The scope

of work includes bucket truck inspections and guy thimble installations.

SEAPA chief executive Trey Acteson explained there were three bidders on the project. Two packets came in comparably, while a third had come in "really high," he said. The lowest bid was submitted by Electric Power Constructors of Anchorage, at around

\$1,937,125 when including the line item for truck inspections.

The next highest bid was from Juneau-based Chatham Electric, at \$2,146,440. Additional bids put in for the guy thimble installations widened the difference between the two, with EPC's \$202,106 item bid coming in considerably lower than Chatham's \$833,000 offer. Wilson Utility Construction of Canby, Oregon, had submitted a bid for \$4,267,322 that did not include this project.

At the previous meeting in February, Wrangell board member Stephen Prysunka had sought to amend the bid to award the contract instead to Chatham. "Possibly because of inaudibility and/or additional discussion that followed, the amended motion was inadvertently withdrawn by Mr. Prysunka," the board packet notes, as the motion appeared to lack a second. Examination of the meeting's recording later confirmed there had been a second, by Ketchikan representative Judy Zenge. Regardless, in the voting the contract was awarded to EPC as initially proposed.

To clarify the board's final decision, on March 8 a special meeting was called to revisit the award. SEAPA staff recommended proceeding with EPC as first contracted.

Ralph Kibby of Chatham

Electric phoned in to appeal the decision.

"The low bid is not always necessarily the best bid, and this is particularly true in this situation," he explained, noting logistical costs involved in maintaining the lines.

"As I went through the (appeals) process I was not able to get the documentation of the other bids for me to look at and see if they were reasonable and responsible," Kibby went on to say. "It's pretty hard to protest something if you don't have these things in front of you."

He advised the board to consider greater transparency with its bid numbers in future projects, though he can also see disadvantages to individual contractors in that approach. SEAPA is under no obligation to provide that information for such projects.

After considering his comments, the board still decided to proceed with the project as originally awarded.

The board also awarded additional funding to a bid for the debris boom assembly and installation at the Swan Lake hydroelectric dam. A raising of the dam was completed late last fall, increasing total capacity by a quarter. Finishing the project, a new debris boom will be added to support the structure.

Two bids were received by February 24, with Marble Island LLC in Ketchikan the

low bid at \$227,000. BAM LLC, also of Ketchikan, submitted a packet for \$248,000.

In his staff report, SEAPA power system specialist Ed Schofield recommended going with Marble Island as the low bidder. However, he recommended that the board allow for an additional \$150,000 over the \$102,000 in unencumbered funds available for the project.

An original \$284,000 was authorized last September. Independent reviews of the project design found the original anchors for the boom would have to be more robust, and the extra funding would cover that adjustment and the related contingency. The board awarded the bid to Marble Island as proposed, with the additional funding and contingency bringing the contract to a not-to-exceed value of \$252,000.

In one final item, SEAPA approved the leasing of additional office space at the Ketchikan Borough Office Building. It currently makes use of two suites on the third floor, and an additional office nearby would provide more room for storage.

"We're getting bundled up in here," said Acteson.

The monthly rent for the 338 square foot office would come to \$561.08 a month next year, the same as that for its Suite 318. The board approved the measure in a unanimous vote.

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LONG TERM CARE NIGHT NURSE: Wrangell Medical Center is seeking candidates for

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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE STATE OF ALASKA AT WRANGELL

In the Matter of the Estate of:)
)
Jimmy Boyd Wright)
Date of Birth: 7/01/1944)
) CASE NO. 1WR-17-05PR

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

You are notified that the court appointed JASON D. WRIGHT as personal representative of this estate. All persons having claims against the person who died are required to present their claims within four months after the date of the first publication of this notice or the claims will be forever barred.

Date: 03/01/2017 Jason D. Wright,
PO Box 671, Wrangell, AK 99929

Publish: March 9, 16 and 23, 2017

CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL JOB ADVERTISEMENT Temporary Laborers/Brush Cutters Light Department

The City and Borough of Wrangell will accept applications to establish a pool of **Temporary Laborers/Brush Cutters** for the Light Department. You must have a valid Alaska Drivers license. The Light Department will begin to accept applications on 03/06/2017 to establish an open pool of applicants for temporary help.

Applicants can submit an application anytime through December 31, 2017. Employees will be selected from applications in the pool at the time employees are needed throughout the year. Those who have applied previously will need to re-apply.

The work is temporary help working with Light Department employees on various projects as needed. Applicants must be able to work in all weather conditions. These positions will be filled on a temporary as needed basis.

Applications may be obtained and returned to City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929.

The City and Borough of Wrangell is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.

Jeff Jabusch
Borough Manager

Publish: March 9 and 16, 2017

ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE POSITIONS OF Temporary Workers Harbor Department

The City and Borough of Wrangell will accept applications to establish a pool from which to hire Temporary Workers for the Harbor Department at City Hall beginning March 10, 2017 to establish an open pool of applicants for temporary help. Applicants can submit an application anytime through December 31, 2017. Employees will be selected from applications in the pool at the time employees are needed throughout the year. Those who have applied previously will need to re-apply. You must have a valid Alaska Driver's license. A CDL license is preferred but not required.

This position will require someone with experience in carpentry and the ability to work independently in a marine environment. Work will include but not be limited to replacement of bull rails, fascia boards, decking, plumbing, pile hoops and concrete patching. Duties will also include painting, pressure washing, cutting brush and grass, and working in the boat yard. Boat yard duties will include carrying blocking, boat stands, and doing all kinds of cleanup. Must be able to lift and carry 50 pounds. Successful applicant must be able to work in all weather conditions and weekends.

Applications and job descriptions may be obtained and returned to Wrangell City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929. Pay for this position starts at \$15.34 per hour DOE.

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Publish: March 9 and 16, 2017

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CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL Temporary Water Treatment Plant Light Maintenance Wrangell Water Department

The City and Borough of Wrangell will accept applications for the position of Temporary Water Treatment Plant Light Maintenance from March 16, 2016 through April 7, 2016.

The Water Department is currently seeking an applicant to fill the position of Temporary Water Treatment Plant Light Maintenance, to assist in the day-to-day maintenance at the water treatment plant.

The position is full-time, temporary/seasonal that will work forty (40) hours per week.

Applicants must have a valid driver's license and have knowledge of light vehicle maintenance.

For a complete list of duties and responsibilities a job application may be obtained and returned to City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929. Rate of pay depends on experience.

The City and Borough of Wrangell is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.

Jeff Jabusch
Borough Manager

Publish: March 16, 23 and 30, 2017

City of Wrangell In-House and Public Announcement ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE POSITION LIFEGUARD PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Wrangell Parks and Recreation Department will begin to accept applications for the position of Lifeguard to establish an open pool of applicants for temporary help. Applications will be accepted beginning March 6, 2017 through December 31, 2017, at 5:00 p.m. The work is temporary help with Lifeguarding, facility custodial and clerical duties. Applicants must be sixteen years old or older and hold a current Lifeguard Certificate and CPR/AED Certificate.

The Parks and Recreation Department will be hiring from these applications, as needed, throughout the year. At the end of this open enrollment period applicants would need to file a new application.

Applications and detailed job descriptions may be obtained and returned to Wrangell City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929. For more information contact Kate Thomas at 907-874-2444.

The City of Wrangell is an equal opportunity employer.

Jeff Jabusch
Wrangell Borough Manager

Publish: March 16 and 23, 2017

CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL WRANGELL PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT SEASONAL JOB POSTING

The Wrangell Parks and Recreation Department will accept applications for the positions of **Park Maintenance I** until March 29 2017 at 5:00 p.m. Applicants must be at least 18 years old, hold a valid Alaska Driver's License and have knowledge of power tools and be familiar with grounds maintenance and repairs. Position is full time, temporary.

Duties include both skilled and semi-skilled work in landscape, mowing, weed-eating, grounds maintenance, repairs and construction of parks, playgrounds, ball fields and cemeteries. Pay range \$11.79/hr. - \$15.57/hr.

Applications and full job description may be obtained at and returned to Wrangell City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929.

The City and Borough of Wrangell is an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer.

Jeff Jabusch
Borough Manager

Publish: March 9, 16 and 23, 2017

CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL WRANGELL PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT SEASONAL JOB POSTING

The Wrangell Parks and Recreation Department will accept applications for the position of **Park Maintenance II** until March 31, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. Applicants must be at least 18 years old, hold a valid Alaska Driver's License and have knowledge of power tools and be familiar with grounds maintenance and repairs. Both positions are full time, temporary.

Duties include both skilled and semi-skilled work in landscape, mowing, weed-eating, grounds maintenance, repairs and construction of parks, playgrounds, ball fields and cemeteries. Pay range \$11.79/hr. - \$14.95/hr.

Applications and full job descriptions may be obtained at and returned to Wrangell City Hall, 205 Brueger Street (P.O. Box 531), Wrangell, AK 99929.

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Jeff Jabusch
Borough Manager

Publish: March 9,16 and 23, 2017

Fish Factor

by Laine Welch

Massive cuts could be in store for the agencies and people who provide the science and stewardship to preserve and protect our planet.

The budget proposed by Donald Trump that starts in October puts on the chopping block the agencies and staff in charge of fisheries research and management, weather forecasting, satellite data tracking and the U.S. Coast Guard.

Trump called the cuts a trade-off to “prioritize rebuilding the military” and to help fund the border wall with Mexico.

The Washington Post broke down a White House memo to the Office of Management and Budget last week that showed the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) would lose 26 percent of its budget; its satellite data division would lose 22 percent of its current funding. The National Marine Fisheries Service and the National Weather Service would each face a five percent cut.

The biggest budget hit goes to the Coast Guard which stands to lose \$1.3 Billion. Trump’s plan also eliminates the Sea Grant program, a network of 33 training and research programs nationwide.

“Why would you cut a program that has a major return on investment when you’re trying to grow the economy? It just doesn’t make sense,” said Carol Kaynor, Alaska Sea Grant communications specialist at the University of Alaska/Fairbanks, who found out about the cuts via Facebook.

The Sea Grant program has been operating in Alaska for nearly 50 years. Director Paula Cullenberg also was shocked to learn about the funding cut.

“Maybe this was an easy mark and something on a spreadsheet that looked available. As far as I know there wasn’t any in-depth analysis around that,” she told Alaska’s Energy Desk in Juneau.

Slow down and take a deep breath, advised U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan (R-AK), who chairs the Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard.

“The President’s Budget request is simply that—a request. Congress holds the power of the

purse, and will ultimately fund the federal government,” Sullivan said in an email.

“I have spoken with both OMB Director Mulvaney and Secretary of Commerce Ross about the importance of Alaska’s fishing industry and the necessary federal research and investment that goes into making our fisheries and coastal communities thrive,” he added.

Sullivan said he will continue to advocate and prioritize funding for NOAA and the Coast Guard, “two agencies that are disproportionately important for Alaska.” He said the Sea Grant College Program “also is critical to coastal states.”

Senator Sullivan said he took the lead on a letter to OMB Director Mulvaney stating that “the reported proposed cuts to the USCG would contradict the stated goals of the President and undermine the ability of the USCG to perform vital missions.”

Fish sticks make the grade - Fish sticks made from Alaska pollock coated with crispy whole grain crusts are set to hit school lunch trays this spring.

It’s a new product offering from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture which has purchased pollock in frozen, 50 pound blocks of fillets since 2009. School cafeterias can use the fish in many ways, a system that works well for states or large districts able to buy half or whole truckloads. The new ready-made fish sticks open the door for purchases by smaller schools or districts with fewer resources.

“This gives many more schools the opportunity to serve Alaska pollock,” said Pat Shanahan, program director for the trade group Genuine Alaska Pollock Producers.

GAPP and the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute have been working for several years with the USDA to add the fish sticks to its food list, which it finally did in January.

They also are doing outreach to inform schools that U.S. dietary guidelines recommend eating seafood twice a week, while studies show that 80 percent of Americans do not.

Schools are an excellent means to address this diet deficit, Shanahan said, and they are

showing dieticians to think beyond fish sticks in dipping sauces.

“We’ve come up with a number of recipes that put them in wraps, salads and slider sandwiches. Kids are eating foods they see in restaurants and they are very sophisticated eaters,” she added.

For many kids, school might be the only place where they get to eat fish so it better be good, Shanahan said. Ultimately, the goal is to make America’s kids become life-long fish eaters.

“This opens up long-term potential to sell more Alaska pollock on a consistent basis to schools,” she added. “With 30 million school lunches served every day, if even a small portion are Alaska pollock, it’s a big win for the industry.”

“It’s fantastic,” said Bruce Schactler of Kodiak, ASMI’s global food aid director who helped broker the total January buy of 554 thousand pounds of pollock at \$1.13-\$1.16 for a value topping \$640,000.

“Our focus now is on getting more people to eat more Alaska pollock in more product forms more often,” Schactler said. “We’re working with all parts of the industry at retail, wholesale, food service and everyone in between to support Alaska’s efforts, whether it be in Washington D.C. or at Subway headquarters.”

Bay Bounce - A three-month project that promoted Bristol Bay sockeye salmon in Boulder, Colorado boosted sales and is already expanding.

The \$700,000 “Wild Taste, Amazing Place” campaign was spawned last September by the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association, funded by 1,800 driftnet fishermen who pay a one percent tax on their catches.

“We developed a brand and a new look for Bristol Bay Alaska sockeye salmon, and a new consumer facing website,” said Becky Martello, executive director of the association. “Then we developed partnerships with retailers, processors and distributors to make sure everyone was on board.”

In partnership with Rising Tide

During Friday morning’s hearing, commissioner of the Revenue Department Randy Hoffbeck was called on to testify to the bill’s financial impact.

The bill would set up how the ERA would be tapped, and would set the POMV limit at an aggressive 5.25-percent withdraw rate from the Fund. In the event of state surplus through mineral and petroleum royalties above \$1.2B, the proportion withdrawn for agency operations would be reduced by match.

“What this does is actually just prioritizes which money gets spent at a time when you have excess revenues. Oil and gas tax revenues would get spent first beforehand, and you would stop spending the earnings from the permanent fund for government services,” Hoffbeck explained.

When compared to similar bills, such as Sen. Bert Stedman’s SB 21, SB 26 would call

for a higher rate of POMV draw, at 5.25 percent rather than a cap of 4.5 percent. The proportion of that going into dividend payments would also be considerably lower, at 20 percent rather than Stedman’s 50 percent. Drawing \$2.5B from the ERA in all, this would allot \$693M to the dividend for FY18, with the other \$1.8B going to fund government expenses.

This would still ensure a \$1,000 dividend for state residents, while bringing down the state deficit to \$819M, to be covered by other revenue sources and cuts. Under Stedman’s proposal, the individual dividend would be kept at \$1,585, with \$1.6B to make up. Another comparable bill, SB 70, would make the allotment a 25-75 split between dividends and government expenditure, at a 5.25-percent draw.

Members of the seven-person standing



DAN RUDY / WRANGELL SENTINEL

Jamie Early is presented an award and certificate Monday for second place in the statewide Elks Hoop Shoot by Wrangell manager Jeff Jabusch.

Local youth takes second in statewide free-throw competition

By DAN RUDY
Sentinel writer

A Wrangell girl has taken second place in the state for the 2016-17 Elk’s Hoop Shoot.

Jamie Early sank 18 of 25 baskets during the Wrangell Lodge’s shoot in December, taking first among the girls 12 to 13 age group. Local-level winners have their scores weighed against those from around the state, with awards distributed via various Elks lodges. Those taking first place by category can compete on the regional level, going on from there to the national competition in Chicago on April 22.

Now a seventh grader, Early has been participating in the annual test of free-throw skills since she was eight years old. This is the first time she has received an award at the state level. Her score was one basket shy of tying the Wrangell girls 12-13 record set in 2014 by Kaylyn Easterly, a previous winner.

Though this was the last Hoop Shoot Early will be eligible to participate in, she plans to continue on with basketball in the future. Her mother, Penny Early, cites the community’s various programs, including the Amateur Athletic Union team for middle school age students, the Parks and Recreation Department, and the 10,000 Shot Club put on by high school girls coach Laurie Brown for helping her daughter.

“It really made a big difference,” she said.

Communications of Anchorage, the group also collaborated with food stylists and photographers to create snazzy point of sale items, in-ice signs, posters, recipe cards, digital ads and social media support, down to wrapping paper and stickers adorned with the Bristol Bay label.

A big part of the program, Martello said, was training people behind the seafood counters at three retailers to be champions of the brand.

“That went really well,” she said. “We educated them about Bristol Bay and the sheer size of the sockeye run, the unique habi-

tat, and that by selecting Bristol Bay salmon, consumers are supporting individual, small family businesses. That message really resonated with our primary market of millennials and the secondary market of boomers who have that connection to their food.”

The project also hosted workshops and dinners for 40 chefs; 17 Boulder restaurants also featured sockeye salmon for a week.

The branding program was designed to be measurable and replicable. The results, made available this month, were very positive.

“Sales increased 8-14 percent during the promotion period, looking at year over year sales. That was a big win for us. The retailers were really pleased and we’re taking that to the bank,” Martello said.

One retailer plans to expand the sockeye promotion to 30 stores in several locations, and the next phase of the program will grow the program in Colorado and other regions.

“The feedback that we’ve been getting from processors has been really positive, and the fleet seems really happy. Ultimately, that is who we are working to help. If they’re happy, I’m happy,” Martello added.

The sockeye marketing materials are now available to fishermen, retailers and others who are interested. Order them at www.bristolbaysockeye.org

Senate PFD restructure could repurpose portion of ERA

By DAN RUDY
Sentinel writer

The Senate Finance Committee reviewed a bill which could end up reshaping the future of the state’s finances last week.

As with two other bills under consideration, the Permanent Fund Protection Act (Senate Bill 26) would arrange the Permanent Fund’s Earnings Reserve Account – from which the state’s annual dividends are paid out – so that the amount of money drawn from the earnings would be tied to an historical average of percent of market value (POMV).

Proposed by Gov. Bill Walker, a percentage of the ERA under this new regime would then be split between dividends and agency spending, helping to cover a portion of the state’s ongoing budget deficits. The Office of Management and Budget is currently looking at a \$2.7B budget deficit for Fiscal Year 2018, if this year’s budget is retained unchanged.

Continued on page 8

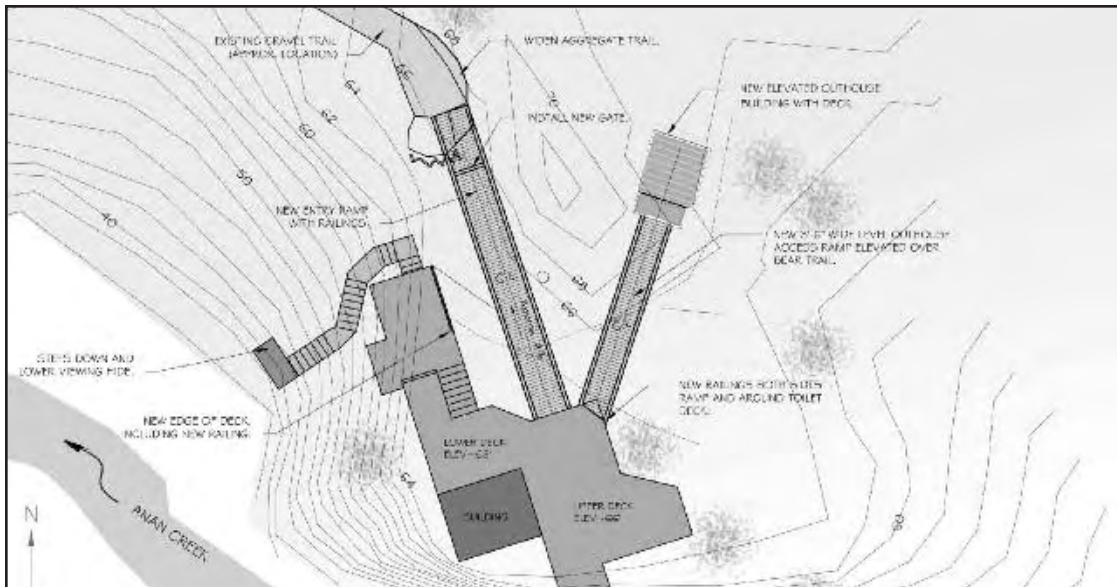
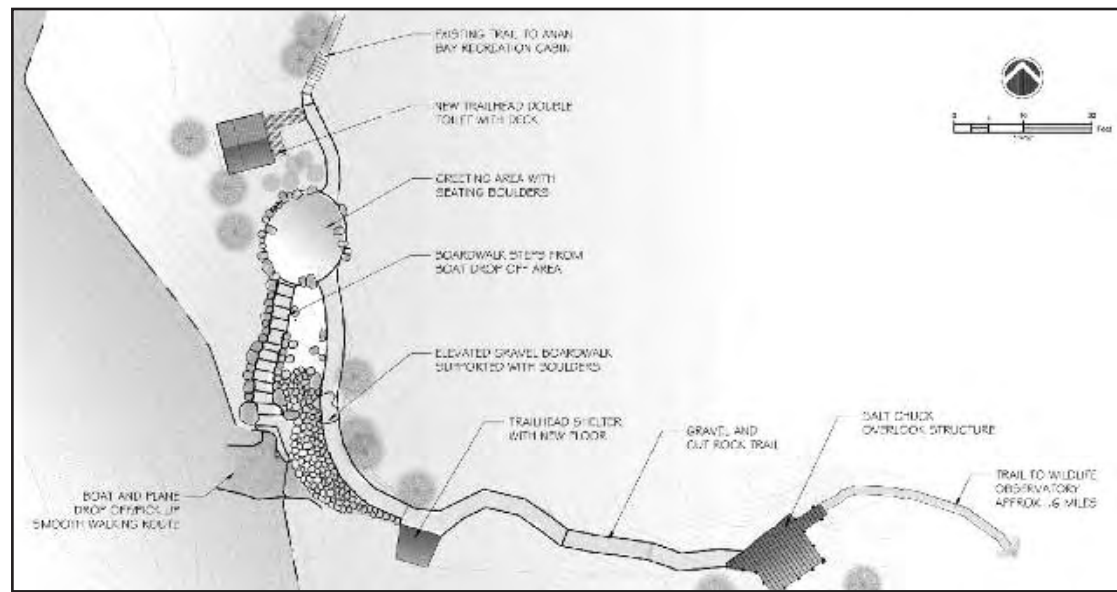


PHOTO SUBMITTED BY USDA

Upgrades will be made to the Anan Wildlife Observatory between now and mid-June. Improvements at the trailhead (top drawing) include: safer access to the trail from the beach landing area, replacement of the trailhead outhouse, replacement of an elevated boardwalk overlooking the Anan Lagoon, and gravel surfacing of walkways and gathering areas. Improvements at the observatory deck (lower drawing) include: the relocation and replacement of the observatory deck outhouse to provide access for visitors without having to leave the relative safety of the deck, along with other necessary maintenance to lengthen the life of the facility. Drawings courtesy of USDA

Anan

Continued from page 1

“The long-term plan is to redesign it,” Galla pointed out.

The structure’s layout can be improved on, such as moving the current deck shelter further inland to allow more viewing space and other measures to better visitors’ experiences. A newly designed site would likely maintain the same scale, which currently accommodates up to 40 visitors.

The work will at points

require closure of parts of the Anan Creek trail leading up to the observatory. The observatory deck itself will also be closed later on in the project when construction occurs there. Warning and closure signs will be posted when necessary.

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Senate PFD

Continued from page 7

committee debated at length the wisdom of the proposed bill. Sen. Natasha von Imhof (R-Anchorage) felt the 5.25-percent draw rate would be excessive.

“I understand the reasons for it but I believe it’s on the high side,” she commented, suggesting a 4.75-percent rate more in line with recommendations by Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation Trustees for protecting the fund’s principal at a five-percent level.

An outspoken proponent of further cuts and caps to the operational budget, Sen. Mike Dunleavy (R-Wasilla) was reluctantly acceptant of the bill. He stated that the ERA has remained separated from government appropriation since its inception.

“That decades-old understanding ended this year,” he commented. “I don’t think these statutes are going to protect the Permanent Fund. The only way you’re going to protect this fund is if you constitutionalize it.”

Hoffbeck opined that that process would be too lengthy, given the state of Alaska’s current budget reserves. Those will be exhausted at the current rate after the coming year. Time notwithstanding, he thought the issue would also be contentious to put before voters.

“We believe the decision needs to be made now,” he advised.

Committee co-chair Sen. MacKinnon (R-Eagle River) agreed that time was of the essence, and that the decision would have to fall upon themselves.

“This year it will be the sixth year to draw from our savings,” she noted. “And we’ve lost the opportunity to let those savings generate revenue that could have benefitted Alaska. ... We could wait but there is a cost to waiting, and we have been waiting for five years.”

While noting that her constituents have been adamant for further reductions in government rather than reductions to dividends or additional taxes, MacKinnon pointed out Alaska’s geographic diversity made that a challenge.

She cited an estimate that one in every three

dollars spent by local governments has come from the State of Alaska, and that cuts would merely be passed on to municipalities.

“Some people across our state believe they don’t need these services. They may forget that they travel on roads that cost a large amount of money to clear and maintain. We travel on airports that are maintained with some level of state funding. Ports, ferries, emergency services, fire-fighting, emergency evacuation: We’re a large state, we don’t have counties, and the state has been the holder of those responsibilities for years,” she said. “If we were just one individual we could probably cut more.”

MacKinnon added that 26 percent of reoccurring expenses has been cut from operating budget over the past several years, or 44 percent when including capital cuts.

Sen. Lyman Hoffman (D-Bethel) echoed his co-chair: “We are the elected officials. This is a very difficult vote, but it is part of a fiscal solution – probably the biggest piece of that solution,” he said. “Inaction is not a solution, is not an option. We need to take the next step... Unless we do so, we’re not only putting the dividend but also the future of Alaska at risk.”

Sen. Peter Micciche (R-Soldotna) agreed the choice before their committee was not an easy one, but was important. Speaking with constituents in 32 different public meetings, he said about 60 percent had been in favor of using part of the Permanent Fund earnings until the state got through its fiscal troubles. Of the different proposals before the session, income tax was the least favored among them. Their biggest complaint, he said, was the lack of State Troopers on hand to deal with a growing opioid crisis, due to agency-related cutbacks.

“We’ve worked hard to streamline our government,” Micciche said, while still be able to provide public services. “These are basic, constitutionally-required services,” he added.

With no further objections, the committee consented to SB 26 unanimously. It was to head from there to the Rules Committee, with a chance at reaching the Senate floor for further debate.

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