

Free Kenai River Boat Launch

Yes, you read it right FREE. Earlier this spring the Kenai City Council approved a resolution granting free boat launch benefits to senior citizens age 60 years and older. This benefit is available for the entire boating season except during the personal use dip-net fishery July 10 – July 31.

In recent years the City was forced to increase its boat launch fees to 20.00 to help cover some of the costs associated with accommodating the large influx of boat use during the dip-net fishery. This increase affected the ability of some of our local seniors, on a fixed income, to participate in the lower river early King and late Coho fisheries as they had been accustomed to doing in the past. With the increased costs of gasoline, outboard oil and boat launch fees their ability to participate in local fisheries is one of the areas some have had to cut back on.

At the urging of some of our senior members, Kenai Area Fisherman's Coalition (KAFC), a local private angler group, met with City Manager, Rick Koch, to discuss options to reduce these costs for seniors. He was very appreciative of our concerns and began working on the issue. Soon Mr. Koch, along with assistance from councilmen Bob Molloy and Brian Gabriel, formulated a resolution to grant the free boat launch benefit for all seniors age 60 and older. First, the Harbor Commission voted unanimously in support and then Mayor Porter and the entire City Council voted to support it as well. Their discussion comments were focused on their interest in trying to do more for local seniors who have helped build this community.

Obviously, this benefit came at some expense to the City, therefore, we should all appreciate and offer our thanks to all of these City officials for their commitment to making life easier for our local seniors. Remember, seniors take kids and grandkids on the water too so the benefit is well appreciated by entire families.

Some may be wondering why these benefits are for all seniors and not just local seniors. It is because the City's legal department concluded that since the City received some Federal funding for boat launch area construction and maintenance that it would be prudent to avoid any conflict to offer it to all seniors without caveat. It was also felt that mostly local seniors would be around during these fringe times to participate anyway.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank one of our members, Bob Stockdale, for working on this issue with Mayor Porter and several of the council members as well.

Hope your fall fishing is successful.

Dwight Kramer
Chairman, KAFC