



## KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH

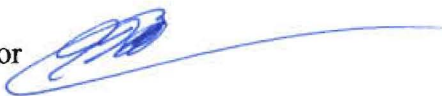
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JOHN J. WILLIAMS  
MAYOR

### AGENDA ITEM P.2.d., page 159

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Grace Merkes, Assembly President  
Members of the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

**THRU:** John J. Williams, Borough Mayor 

**FROM:** Bonnie L. Golden, Grants Manager *bg*

**DATE:** December 4, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Ordinance No. 2007-19-034: Accepting and Appropriating a State grant for \$100,000 to provide recreational fishing opportunities for disabled veterans

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For your information, I am providing you a copy of an article from Access Alaska regarding the operations of The Last Frontiersman Guide Service and Outfitter. It describes the company's dedication to providing outdoor sports activities for disabled persons since 1999.

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Committee Finance

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# KENAI guy

by P.J. Perea

Wheelin' Sportsmen member Dan McDowell is a fourth-generation Alaskan who truly has a passion for the outdoors. His earliest memories include his father taking him moose hunting and running beaver-trap lines when Dan was only 3 years old.

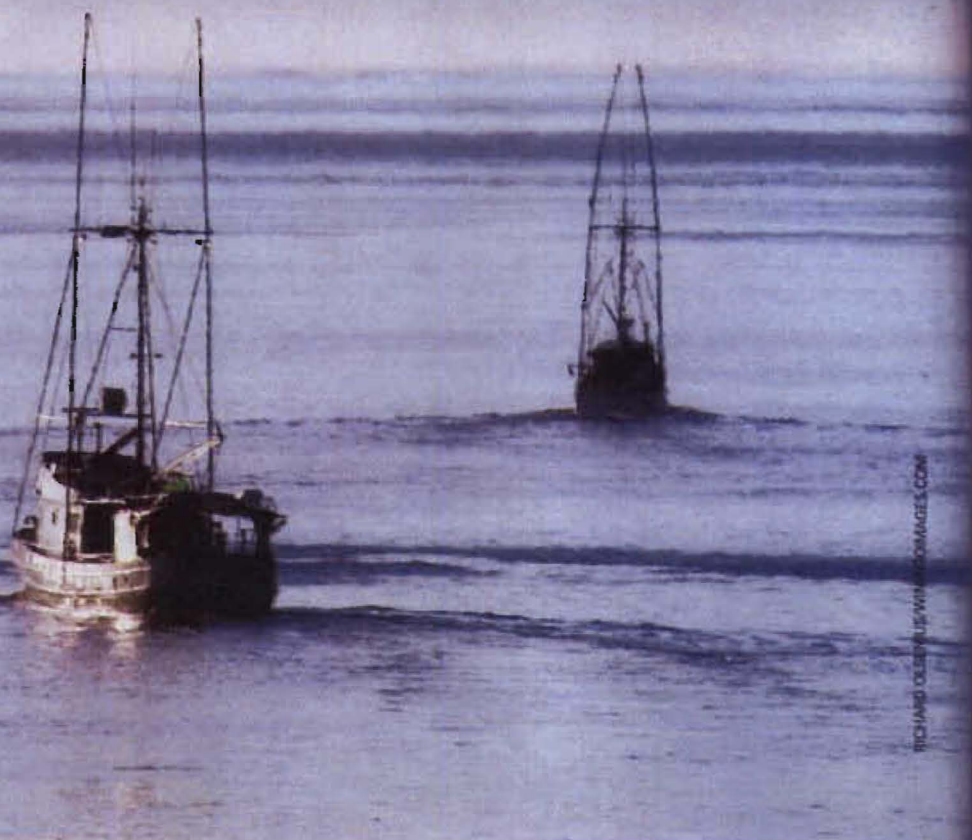
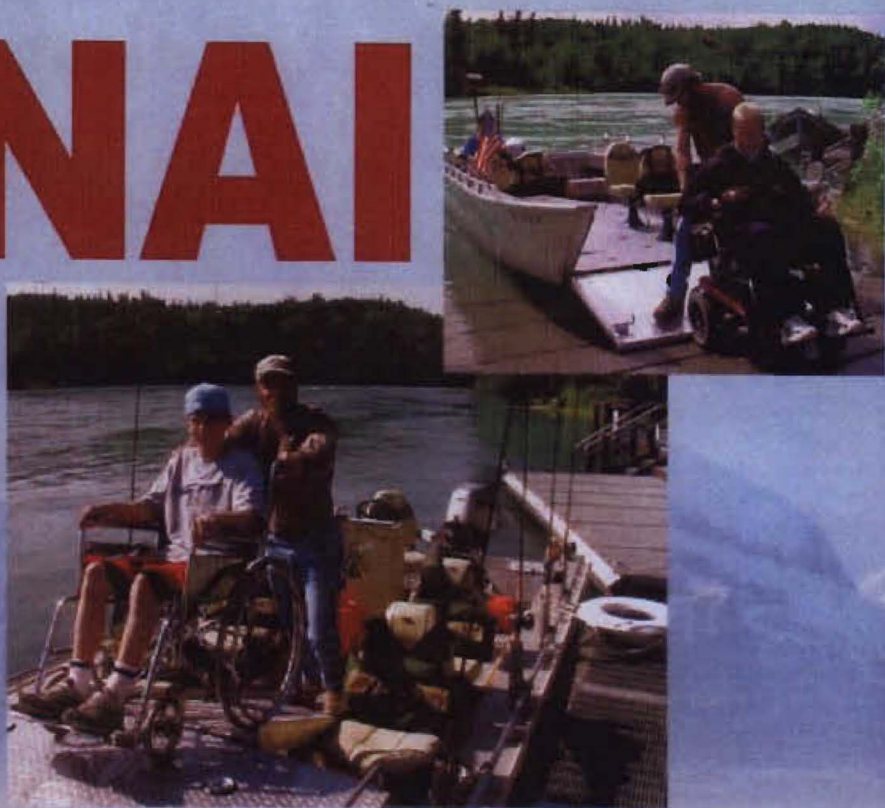
His dad's willingness to share the outdoors with him and others left a profound impression on McDowell. Now, he, along with his sons, Skyler and Sean, run three customized, accessible fishing boats on the fabled Kenai River in south-central Alaska. The family business, The Last Frontiersman Guide Service and Outfitter, specializes in salmon fishing during the spring and summer runs.

While on board anglers also can challenge the awesome swimming strength of the Kenai's mighty king salmon that grow to nearly 100 pounds, as well as sockeye and silver salmon.

## A grand idea

McDowell takes pride in his company's dedication to disabled sportsmen and women.

In 1999, McDowell, a river guide by trade, spent an entire winter



designing and building a boat that would allow his elderly friends and disabled tourists to sightsee and fish Alaska. His inspiration came from Sean whose job in the U.S. Navy is to ferry people by small boat to Pearl Harbor's Arizona Memorial. Many of Sean's passengers are elderly and disabled war veterans.

"I wanted to honor wounded veterans, as well as other disabled individuals, and give them a dignified and enjoyable experience," McDowell said. "The specially-designed bow doors allow wheeling sportsmen to get on and off as fast as any able-bodied person."

The specialized boats are roomy enough for three anglers in non-motorized wheelchairs or one power chair along with two in non-powered chairs. Because of a 50-horsepower motor restriction on the river, McDowell's boat can safely handle only one power chair at a time.

"I'm working with the state to create an exemption to allow larger motors for disabled anglers," he said. "There's a great opportunity for other guides to share this great experience with those with special needs. I don't want to be the only outfitter doing this."

### His mind still spinning

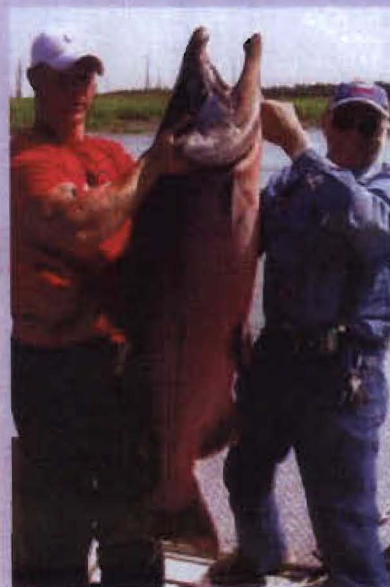
Not one to rest on his laurels, McDowell is busy designing an accessible drift boat so the disabled

can experience the upper Kenai River's incredible rainbow trout fishery. He's also working with veteran's groups and other non-profit organizations to open areas for hunting bear, deer and moose.

"I would like it if any disabled person could pick up the phone and easily find a place to hunt or fish in Alaska," he said. "I've gotten such positive responses to what I'm doing. I've spent my life savings providing access for veterans and the disabled on the river. Seeing the fun they have is the greatest reward for me."

### In the know

Dan McDowell has introduced many disabled outdoors enthusiasts to the rugged beauty of Alaska. His innovative thinking has won him a number of awards, including the Outstanding Business in Tourism award from the Soldotna Chamber of Commerce in 2001, as well as the state-sponsored Barrier-Free Design Award given to a builder or architect for innovative accessibility ideas.



### For more info

Contact Dan McDowell through his guide service, The Last Frontiersman, at (907) 232-8057 or dan@lastfrontiersman.com. Or visit [www.lastfrontiersman.com](http://www.lastfrontiersman.com).

The salmon fishing season on the Kenai River generally starts in mid-May and runs into late-October.

## For land lubbers

For those who prefer solid ground beneath them when angling, there are many great places to fish Alaska from shore. Here are a few on the Kenai Peninsula:

### Russian River

An accessible fishing area adjacent to the ferry dock

### Kenai River

Centennial Park in Soldotna

An accessible campground with two accessible fishing walks on site [www.ci.soldotna.ak.us/centennial.html](http://www.ci.soldotna.ak.us/centennial.html)

### Anchor River

The public campground has a gravel fishing platform.

[www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/anchoriv.htm](http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/anchoriv.htm)

### Bird Creek

At Chugach State Park near Anchorage. Accessible fishing available from a pier over the river with paved access to the river [www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/chugach](http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/chugach)

### Homer Spit Fishing Lagoon

The lagoon features a hard surface walkway and great salmon fishing.

[www.homer.alaska.com](http://www.homer.alaska.com)

## Kenai Peninsula, Alaska

