

FORT ROUSSEAU CAUSEWAY STATE HISTORICAL PARK – MANAGEMENT PLAN

Second Draft - Summary of Public Comments and Agency Responses



The Alaska Department of Natural Resources has been working to develop the *Fort Rousseau Causeway State Historical Park Management Plan* since June 2009. As part of this effort, a 50% draft of the plan was issued for review on December 2, 2009. The public comment period extended through January 15, 2010. A summary of public comments and agency responses was issued on March 23, 2010.

A second draft of the plan was issued for review on April 6, 2010. The public comment period extended through May 4, 2010. A summary of comments and agency responses is listed below. Comments regarding editing, document organization, and non-management issues are not included in this summary.

ISSUE	COMMENT	RESPONSE
Access – Airport Runway	The existing airport security fence does not “surround the airport runway.” It does extend the entire east side of the airport property, blocking all access to the aircraft operating area from the east, and across the causeway on the west.	The final draft will reflect this change.
Access – Land	I am pleased that you stated future possibilities for land access to the causeway park. I don’t believe in closing out future options based on current conditions. Situations change over time. Leave options open, even if they seem remote or remotely possible.	Noted
Access – Land	Make it clear in the plan that there was land access to the causeway in the past	Noted
Access - Land	The language in the previous draft of the plan was more appropriate than in the second. The issue of pedestrian access through or around the airport has been considered in the FAA’s recently completed EIS and in numerous meetings. The previous draft indicated that the division did not recommend reestablishment of access via the causeway. That position was in concert with our understanding of the division’s intentions and the remarks of the Sitka Trail Works Executive Director at the	The “Recommendations” section will only address marine access.

July 2009 public meeting. At that meeting, Ms. Lyons said, “We’re deliberately not improving the walking area back from Virublennoi, the improvements will end there. It’s a more passive way of discouraging people from heading back to the airport out of curiosity or accessibility.” Since the stated position of STW is that pedestrian access via the causeway should be discouraged, we fail to see why it should now be included as an objective of the management plan.

With regard to using the causeway for maintenance or construction needs, our estimate of the cost of making the causeway useable for that purpose—a cost that would have to be borne by the parks program—would likely be many times the cost of using a barge to move materials and equipment to the site. Additionally, use of the causeway for access would require an airport permit, a substantial safety plan, close coordination with the airport manager, limitations on times and numbers of trips, and potential disruption to airport operations; none of these would pertain to access by barge. As access via the causeway would be the most costly, most complicated approach, and would pose the greatest risk to airport safety and operational disruptions, it seems counterproductive to indicate that it is the ultimate goal of the management plan.

Finally, the federal agency concerned with these issues is the Federal Aviation Administration, not the Federal Highway Administration as stated in the draft.

Access - Land	<p>Our organization [STW] provided testimony to the FAA during public hearings on the Airport Runway Safety Improvements EIS that it was very important to our members and the community of Sitka at large to try to restore/accommodate the historical vehicular and pedestrian access through or around the Airport runway to the Causeway Islands. We appreciate recognition of the concept in the Management Plan. Currently STW is working with Carson Dorn Engineering and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation on a cleanup plan that will resolve some lingering contamination issues within the Park. Implementation of the clean up may require vehicular access to the asbestos laden Fuse House on Gold Island and the historical dumps in proximity to Reshimosti Island and on Virublennoi Island as the most cost effective method for abatement. It is important to anticipate repair of the Causeway Roadbed from the airport property to Sasedni Island to a minimum of width of 10 feet to provide a drivable surface for maintenance and for implementation of the required environmental cleanup. Recently STW testified to the State Legislature on HB 276 that clarification of the Airport runway Safety zone and modification of the Park Boundary was acceptable only if the FAA and AKDOT would work with the Park to accommodate occasional vehicular access for maintenance and safety within the Park.</p>	See above
Access – Land	<p>The landscape architect who came to Sitka for the tourist head tax sidewalks plan, from Jones and Jones, said that the DOT or whoever manages the airport may have an obligation to provide access to the NHL/state park. He told about a state highway in Montana? That had to provide big wildlife tunnels under it. So I wonder if there is a legal type who could look into whether there would be this type of obligation, in state statute? Or even federal law, since it's FAA and a NHL.</p>	See above
Access – Makhnati Island	<p>Unsure if statement that “...in general visitors arrive at Makhnati Island by boat is accurate [in “Existing Condition” section under “Facilities and Infrastructure,” “Historic Structures,” “Makhnati Island”]. Some people will access it by land via the breeched causeway</p>	<p>The second draft did say that the breeched causeway is passable at low to mid tide if navigated carefully. Language in the final draft will be improved to acknowledge this and also that visitors arrive at Makhnati Island by boat.</p>

Access – Marine	STW strongly supports identification and development of Marine access to the park for the general public as the most immediately available and most practical improvement. A 90 foot x 8 foot dock placed at the old seawater pumping station in Whiting Harbor should be studied for implementation. To avoid the winter ocean surge conditions, the gangway would be raised during the winter months and the dock stored on the uplands. Mooring buoys in Whiting Harbor and possibly other locations would assist the public by providing a safe place to fasten small vessels making day trips or camping in the park. A barge landing just southeast of the dock location should be studied for implementation. The slope and grade are conducive to landing a barge and off loading construction equipment and supplies at this location and the Whiting Harbor aspect offers protection from most ocean swells.	Noted. The location and design of the dock will be decided during future site planning when funding for the dock is available.
Access – Marine	Unsure if statement that “most park users access the park by boat at Whiting Harbor and disembark on Sasedni Island” is accurate [in “Existing Condition” section under “Access”]. Landing areas depend on the weather and the type of craft	The final draft will include general language describing that, while Whiting Harbor is a common access point, visitors do access the park from multiple locations depending on weather and craft.
Access – Marine	The best place to put the dock in Whiting Harbor is where the seawater pumping station was located. Is the Office of History and Archaeology going to have an issue with that?	The location of the dock will be decided during future site planning when funding for the dock is available. Appropriate agencies would be consulted during this stage.
Access – Marine	Mooring buoys could be placed at Makhnati Island to provide anchorage	The final draft will include general language describing that mooring buoys are a good option for providing access but require specific funding for maintenance and operation.
Access – Marine	Make language more descriptive in reference to recommendations for “additional landing areas” besides the dock in Whiting Harbor. Would these be developed facilities?	Aside from the proposed dock at Whiting Harbor, the park might recommend alternative landing areas for kayaks and small boats. These will not be developed facilities. The final draft will include this language.
Caretaker Facility	Insert language to either encourage two, six-month volunteer positions or one, twelve-month volunteer position in the caretaker facility to help deter vandalism	Language in the final draft will specify the desire for a year-round presence in the park.

Commercialization	<p>We have serious concerns about the planned commercialization of the park and its effects on subsistence uses of the marine mammals that inhabit the waters surrounding the park. Large scale commercialization of the area for the tourism trade should not be allowed. NMFS and the USFWS should be consulted on the impacts of that this type of activity could have on protected marine mammals</p>	<p>The plan is not recommending large-scale commercialization at Fort Rousseau. However, the division does support providing improved access to the park and development of visitor facilities. Permits are required for private groups of 20 or more and for commercial operators, which allows the division to manage potential impacts.</p>
Cultural and Historical Significance	<p>The SSPCAB urges all planning efforts to respect traditional uses of Fort Rousseau as a military installation and also to respect the memory of all persons who served during WWII by not pursuing uses of this historical park unrelated to the purpose of the park</p>	<p>The dominant management objective of a state historical park is to preserve and interpret historical resources for Alaskans and visitors to the state. The division will first and foremost consider the park's historical significance when making all management decisions; the development of a cultural zone in state historical park is managed to insure that the use levels do not diminish the historical, cultural or archaeological values for which the park was established.</p> <p>At the same time, the division also has a responsibility to provide safe, accessible recreational opportunities for visitors to the park. The statewide framework for cultural zones in state historical parks does allow for development, which is generally associated with the necessities of public access, safety and interpretation. Paved trails, interpretive centers, and toilets are examples of such allowable development. Recreation facilities, such as picnic sites, picnic shelters, camp sites, and public use cabins, will be separated from the sites of cultural resources by sufficient buffers.</p>
	<p>The cultural/historical lens used to define and justify the creation of the park should also be the lens which controls the sequence of project development</p>	
	<p>I think everything should be directed at the history, and the historical experience, and recreation should be second, basically rearranging the "vision" paragraph, to "will preserve and interpret, while also providing recreation." There are a lot of camping places in Sitka but only one public area with this wealth of ruins.</p>	

Day-Use Area	<p>I wholeheartedly support the idea of a shelter on Sasedni Island. My family and the other families we camp and hike with, would most definitely use a low-maintenance shelter to base a day camp that would allow for a small cook fire. We think this is a wonderful idea and we are confident it would get used from the public. The Fort Rousseau State Park has a lot of potential for day use by families such as ours. It is close to town and even in foul weather would be accessible by water. The shelters at Halibut Point Recreation site are booked for the entire summer so clearly there is a need for more picnic areas. I remember when I first came to Sitka and I heard the then-mayor (John Dapceovich) commend the community for supporting the construction of Pioneer Park (by Seamart). He said, "Sitkans love to picnic" and I remember thinking, "How can that be? it rains all the time?." Well, now after two decades, and raising two active children, I understand that with a covered shelter, and appropriate outdoor attire it is great fun to picnic in Sitka..... even in the rain.</p> <p>Please support this part of the project.</p>	Noted
Day-Use Area	<p>Strongly opposed to picnic sites and shelters on Sasedni Island. This area should be devoted to historical use by local Alaska Natives and WWII changes and uses with interpretive information.</p>	<p>Picnic and rest areas are needed for day-users, the anticipated principal user group. The exact location for these facilities has not been determined. Funding, site planning, and consultation with historians are needed before these facilities will be developed.</p>
Day-Use Area	<p>The Board has consistently recommended that Sasedni Island be maintained as the primary access point to the park due to its proximity to a good anchorage and future dock site. It should have good trail access to the other islands, interpretive signing, and a small toilet facility in addition to landing area and/or dock. The Board does not support a picnic shelter on Sasedni Island. This should be further out the causeway on Kirushkin or other island, per traditional use patterns. The plan should have a provision to see how uses of the park evolve over time and perhaps add a picnic site or other hardened area if use indicates it is needed in the future</p>	<p>See above.</p> <p>Since Sasedni Island is the proposed primary access point; visitor facilities, such as picnic sites and shelters, need to be accessible from the landing area.</p> <p>The implementation priorities in Appendix D of the final draft will show the division's recommendations for immediate, short-term, and long-term needs. Minimal facilities will be planned to start; use and demand will determine the other types of facilities needed in the future.</p>

Day-Use Area

STW has built a number of recreation infrastructure projects via the Sitka Trail Plan and can attest that recreational opportunities are limited in an island community with a 14 mile road system. The developed trail projects which we have installed at Thimbleberry –Heart Lake, Herring Cove and the Cross trail have been extremely popular. In addition to recreational hikers, the main user groups are: adults and youth walking and running for exercise; people walking with their dogs, and young families together for a weekend outing. Additional areas are needed for recreation and we believe recreational use of the Causeway will be popular and appreciated by the community. It is important that the community feels the Causeway is being improved for them as well as for the summer visitors on the cruise ships. While many residents will appreciate the historical and cultural values of the park, many will primarily relate to the area as a place to kayak, hike and enjoy. The recreational use of the Causeway by Sitka residents should not be underestimated. At this point in time (May) all the recreation shelters in the Halibut Point Recreation area have been reserved for all of the weekends throughout the summer! Surely this fact would indicate that more recreation shelters and picnic areas are needed by the community.

Noted

Sitka Trail Works has a number of member households with children that will be making day trips to the Causeway. We anticipate that families will be arriving at the park via the dock in Whiting Harbor and will be brining picnic supplies. Therefore the recreation shelters should be located in somewhat close proximity to the dock and the west side of Sasedni is suitable for its proximity. Covered shelters which could serve as a base for the family day exploring the Causeway should be provided to the public as a dry area to eat, visit and temporarily store coats etc while exploring the historic Causeway features, berry picking and hiking.

The western side of Sasedni Island has great afternoon and evening sun, access to the beach and a central location all recommending it for developed day use.

	Allen Marine has a portable toilet that could be located at the dock during the high use months as an alternative to a pit, composting, or propane toilet.	
Designated Camping Sites	May want to discourage camping since there are no toilet facilities	Language in the final draft will reflect that once a campsite is hardened, a latrine will also be added.
Designated Camping Sites, PUCs, Central Interpretive Shelter, On-Site Caretaker and Visitor Center Facility	STW concurs with the recommendations in the draft plan	Noted
Environmental Cleanup	STW recommends that the Management Plan clearly identify as the highest priority completion and implementation of a cleanup plan for the FRCSHP. In our communication with AKDOT they have identified completion of the Environmental Assessments as a prerequisite to transferring management to State Parks. Also the environmental work must be completed before the pathways can be built. On page 27 the correct terminology to describe the levels of contaminants indicated by test sampling would be to state recommended levels of the following contamination were exceed for sample of the following...Further sampling and analysis may very well indicate that the Chromium levels are more acceptable than the first round sampling might indicate and that arsenic levels although they exceed the recommendation may be typical for Southeast Alaska. STW recommends that AK DNR DPOR consult directly with Carson Dorn for recommendations for more concise language.	<p>The final draft will include stronger language in reference to implementing a cleanup plan for the park.</p> <p>Implementing a cleanup plan will be added to “Appendix D: Implementation Priorities” and be given an “immediate” priority listing.</p>

Fire Rings	<p>Won't establishing fire rings encourage cutting vegetation? Where will the fuel come from? "Use Restrictions and Limitations" table describes that "no firewood cutting allowed other than beach logs for campfires"</p>	<p>As per 11 AAC 12.180m (Fires), all fires in a state park must be in a portable camp stove or confined to a structure provided by the division for fires, except as authorized by the director under 11 AAC 18.010 (special park use permits) or otherwise provided by 11 AAC 20.</p> <p>There are multiple locations within the park where primitive fire rings have been established. In an effort to prevent the destruction of historic resources, and to curtail additional fire rings from being established in the park, the management plan will recommend that designated fire rings or barbeque pits be established in the day-use area and at improved campsites. As in other park units, visitors will be required to bring their own fuel; collecting driftwood from the beach is also permissible.</p>
Fuse House	<p>If you are keeping open the option for saving the fuse house then we need to get in there and prop it up or shore it up temporarily. I just looked at it yesterday and it looks like one more winter will do it in.</p>	<p>Noted. This issue will be addressed in the park's preservation plan being developed by the Office of History and Archaeology.</p>
Historic Structures	<p>In general STW concurs with the recommendations made on historic structures but we suggest that Ammo magazines 2&3 be included in the recommendation to remove the trash and debris. We also suggest that the door of the most accessible Ammo Magazine #1 be repaired so that it can be secured in the open position during the visitor season but closed and secured during the winter months so that it can be used for storage if needed during the early stages of park development. (Prior to construction of a Park storage facility). The wooden fuse house is a hazard to the public because it is in danger of collapse. STW recommends preserving the fencing, developing a construction plan for a replica building, and authorizing the abatement of the present structure. STW has obtained grant funding specifically dedicated to resolving the public safety issue presented by the current condition of this structure.</p>	<p>The final draft will include stronger language to show that having all trash and debris (non-historic) be removed from the park, including magazines 2 &3. This will be noted as an "immediate" priority.</p> <p>The accessible trail system is not recommended to extend to ammunition magazines 2 &3 on Virublennoi—that is why those features are not included in the historic structures recommendations table. The recommendation to repair the door on the first ammunition magazine on Virublennoi Island will be included in the final draft.</p> <p>Specific recommendations for how to treat the Fuse House will be addressed in the park's preservation plan being developed by the Office of History and Archaeology.</p>

Historic Structures	Tables in the “Recommendations” section describing recommendations for historic structures should include a “hazards” column to identify specific safety issues that need to be abated	Specific recommendations for mitigating safety hazards will be addressed in the park’s preservation plan being developed by the Office of History and Archaeology.
Guidelines for Activities within Land Use Designations (Appendix B) – Hunting, Discharge of Weapons	Locals have been using the bunkers for paint ball; this has not occurred in the past year to my knowledge, but it could be of concern once things are cleaned up	Noted
Guidelines for Activities within Land Use Designations (Appendix B) – Hunting, Discharge of Weapons	Thank you for keeping firearms out of the park	Noted
Guidelines for Activities within Land Use Designations (Appendix B) – Memorials	A memorial exists on Makhnati Island for Mount Edgecumbe High School students who fell in the water and were swept away in the 1950s or 1960s	The existing memorial will be left in place. All new proposals for memorials will be compatible only if they serve a recreational or historic preservation purpose and are part of a significant donation of facilities, and support the park’s purpose—all memorial authorizations will require a permit.
Guidelines for Activities within Land Use Designations (Appendix B) – Motorized Equipment	Would generators to power lights in the bunkers be compatible?	Yes
Guns - Historic	Since the purpose of the fort was to defend Sitka and the U.S. with the use of guns, we would be missing a huge piece of the story without having a couple guns on display in the park; ideally these guns would be located on Sasedni and Makhnati islands and would be the types of guns installed there. Ideally they would be real, but replicas are an option	The division is open to the idea of having period guns in the park and will include this language in the final draft.

Implementation Priorities – General Priorities, Access, and Picnic Sites	<p>The SSPCAB spent considerable time discussing Appendix D Implementation Priorities and does not agree with listing all these “proposals” as High, Medium, or Low priority. What may be a low priority could actually be a high priority goal, but may not be achievable in the short term. The Board recommends reworking this chart to list proposals as “Immediate,” “Short-Term,” and “Long-Term” needs. There are clearly immediate needs for safe public access to the uplands via landing or dock and safe trail access, as well as a toilet near the dock. Picnic sites are not a high priority—perhaps one should be a short-term need, with others developed as long-term needs depending on what use patterns developed.</p>	<p>The priorities in the final draft will be reorganized as “immediate,” “short-term,” and “long term.”</p>
Implementation Priorities – Camping	<p>There is already traditional camping use of the outer islands which should be allowed to continue and may not require extensive development. If anything, improve camp sites should be a mid-term need rather than a high priority. The Board recommends State Parks considers the “zone” proposal already developed by the Board which provides for outer more remote islands to continue to allow camping with more concentrated group uses for historical tours closer to the public access area.</p>	<p>Recommendations for improved camp sites will be listed as a “short-term” priority in the final draft.</p> <p>Traditional camp sites need to be authorized by hardening the platform surface and putting in latrines to protect park resources. Random camping will not be allowed.</p>
Implementation Priorities – Environmental Cleanup	<p>Implementing the environmental cleanup plan that Sitka Trail Works is developing with DEC should be a high priority</p>	<p>The recommendation to implement a cleanup plan will be given an “immediate” priority listing.</p>
Implementation Priorities – Interpretation	<p>The creation of orientation panels, trailside/historical features panels, and a park brochure that can be downloaded from the project website should be the initial focus of information for park users</p>	<p>Interpretation and a park brochure are “short-term” priorities.</p>

Implementation Priorities – On-site Caretaker Facility, Visitor Center Facility, and Central Interpretive Hub/Shelter	The Board agrees that some storage facility is needed but believes the need for an on-site caretaker facility has not been justified and may be a long-term need rather than a shorter term need. Actual development and management of the park should guide what staff, and facilities may be needed and when that would become a short-term need, especially since Sitka only has one Specialist and limited budget to manage all Sitka Parks. Likewise, a visitor center facility may become desirable but is to be determined and at present is a long-term need. The central interpretive hub/shelter on Sasedni should also be considered a long-term need until use patterns and visitor needs are well established	Once improvements are made in the park, including but not limited to trail improvements, environmental cleanup, historic preservation, and interpretation, an increased management presence is important for the safety and maintenance of the site, and to deter vandalism and inappropriate use. The division feels the need for a caretaker facility is justified. As stated in the plan, the division has not yet determined whether this would be a staffed or volunteer position or what type of facility it would be. Development of a caretaker facility depends a great deal on funding and visitor use patterns.
Implementation Priorities – On-site Caretaker Facility	Caretaker facility should be for the future—there are many more pressing issues and needs	The recommendation for a caretaker facility will be a short-term priority and dependent on funding and visitor use patterns.
Interpretation	STW is deeply appreciative of the excellent interpretation work done in conjunction with the management plan and concurs with the recommendations made by historical and interpretation experts in the draft plan	Noted
Interpretive Panels	Will the panels be easily removed during the off-season?	The panels could be removed in the off-season; however, the division would recommend they be fabricated on a weather-resistant material (high-pressure laminate) that can withstand water, snow, wind, etc. The decision to remove them in the off-season would be made by park managers based on staffing and storage facilities, or a marked increase in vandalism.
Interpretive Panels - Locations	Can you provide a map showing the location of proposed interpretive panels so we know more clearly where they are located?	The final draft will include a map showing the general location where proposed panels can be located. Some panels will need to be located adjacent to historic features; the placement of others will be more flexible based on a final site design.
Interpretive Panels – Makhnati Island	Interpretive panels proposed for Makhnati Island should be a higher priority because it has the richest resources—don't wait until trail improvements are implemented	On-site interpretive panels will be a short-term priority.

Interpretive Panels – Makhnati Island	There are possibly too many interpretive panels recommended for Makhnati Island	As the headquarters for harbor defense, Makhnati Island is considered to have some of the most significant historical features in the park. The eight panels proposed to interpret these features would be smaller than the Alaska State Parks’ standard size, low-profile, and designed to complement the natural environment and historic features. Too many interpretive panels in one area can detract from the visitor experience and the natural environment; however, for the reasons mentioned above, the division feels that the number of panels recommended for Makhnati Island is appropriate.
Interpretive Panels - Topics	Ensure that the topic of “cutting edge technology” is addressed in interpretive projects	In Appendix C, Project #1, Panel #3, additional language will be added specifically to address the fort’s cutting edge technology. The second draft stated that “the panel will describe the purpose of Fort Rousseau and its connection with other defense installations in Sitka Sound.” The project descriptions provide general guidelines for development; once funding is available for implementation, the topics will be better defined.
Interpretive Panels - Topics	Need an interpretive panel on one of the islands that has a good view of Makhnati in order to share stories with visitors who are unable to go out there; Virublennoi could be a good place	The final draft will include this recommendation. The recommended location will most likely be the south side of Virublennoi Island.

<p>Interpretive Panels - Topics</p>	<p>There is no mention of the original native inhabitants of the islands nor what they gave up for the war cause, nor any mention of the original use of the islands (burials) in the interpretive sign plans</p>	<p>In Appendix C, Project #7, Panel #8 is proposed for this purpose. The subtheme states “the causeway islands are a cultural and traditional use area for the Tlingit people” and the topic/description states the following: “This panel should describe what the islands may have been used for before the war, with an emphasis on Alaska Native use and culture. Use language to evoke feelings of what it might have been like on the islands before the war...Personal accounts of Alaska Natives visiting the islands should be included if available.”</p> <p>The panel description will be improved in the final draft by giving a new working title. The description will remain the same. The project descriptions provide general guidelines for development; once funding is available for implementation, the topics will be better defined.</p>
<p>Interpretive Panels - Topics</p>	<p>The Sitka Maritime Heritage Society plans a set of outdoor interpretive panels at the boathouse on the military installations, mainly on the Navy base but with an overview panel including the Army installations. It might be also a good site for State Parks overview sign, for people who can't make it out, about the causeway. It will be totally accessible. Related to that, I don't think there is a place in town you can get a view of the causeway, and most of the Alice and Charcoal islands are private property or the airport with restricted access.</p>	<p>The Japonski Island Boathouse could be an appropriate location for the on-shore panel (Project #9, Appendix C). As there are many possibilities, the final draft will say that the location is undetermined; the language suggesting the panel be placed where there is a view of the park will be removed.</p>
<p>Interpretive Themes</p>	<p>Themes are not specific enough to detail how the war affected Sitka after the war and today—there are dozens</p>	<p>The first bullet under Subtheme 5 reads as follows: “The population, infrastructure, and culture surrounding the naval and army installations changed the area dramatically, the effects of which are still seen today.” The division understands that there are many important and interesting stories for residents and visitors to learn about the park’s history; however, the purpose of the management plan is to provide general guidelines and we are unable to list all the possible storylines for interpretation in the document.</p>

Land-Use Designations	Description that Fort Rousseau does not currently have land-use designations in “Existing Conditions” section is confusing because it later explains, in the “Recommendations” section, that the park will be given a “cultural” land use designation.	Land-use designations will not be addressed in the “Existing Conditions” section in the final draft.
Land-Use Designations	STW recommends that the draft plan recommendation to identify the entire FRCSHP as cultural be re-evaluated and that some areas should be considered for a recreational designation. The recreational area designation should include the proposed day use area on Sasedni Island and the proposed designated camping sites and public use areas. Differentiation of Cultural and Recreational zones could help the SHPO allow for recreational structures and facilities on the historic property.	<p>The dominant management objective of a state historical park is to preserve and interpret historical resources for Alaskans and visitors to the state. The division will first and foremost consider the park’s historical significance when making all management decisions; the development of a state historical park is managed to ensure that use levels do not diminish the historical, cultural or archaeological values for which the park was established.</p> <p>At the same time, the division also has a responsibility to provide safe, accessible recreational opportunities for visitors to the park. The statewide framework for cultural zones in state historical parks does allow for development, which is generally associated with the necessities of public access, safety and interpretation. Paved trails, interpretive centers, and toilets are examples of such allowable development. Recreation facilities, such as picnic sites, picnic shelters, camp sites, and public use cabins, will be separated from the sites of cultural resources by sufficient buffers.</p> <p>Fort Rousseau is a relatively small park, with historical resources throughout. The division does not desire to establish recreational zones in the park; rather it feels that the recommendations for development are appropriate for a cultural zone. Recreational zones are established within park units to meet intensive recreational needs and high-intensity activities.</p>

Land Ownership	<p>STW agrees with Management Plan direction concerning the relationship of FRCSHP with AKDOT, the BLM and the Sitka Tribe of Alaska. Specifically we support transfer of the management authority from AK DOT to AK DNR DPOR. It is the feeling of our Board that the Park has long been a recreation area for Sitkans and has obvious cultural values due to its historical values. These community resources are best enhanced and preserved through management by an entity whose mission most closely matches those values. We support a Public Purpose lease between AK DNR DPOR and the BLM for the Causeway sections that link the islands. It is important that management authority be resolved so that STW can obtain the necessary permission from the land owners/managers that will allow for the expenditure of grant funds for capital improvements to the Park and for acquisition of the required permits for construction.</p>	<p>Noted. The division is working to establish a Public Purpose Lease for the causeway.</p>
Land Ownership	<p>In the second paragraph of this section ["Existing Conditions"], it would be more accurate to state that the park, "...lies within the Sitka Rocky Gutierrez Airport property boundary. The airport is owned and operated by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities under the regulatory oversight of the Federal Aviation Administration."</p>	<p>This change will be reflected in the final draft.</p>
Land Ownership	<p>Through what means will the division "...continue to foster a good working relationship with the Bureau of Land Management and the Sitka Tribe of Alaska regarding management and use of the causeway itself and the surrounding intertidal zone"? ("Recommendations" section, under "Land Ownership")</p>	<p>The division will continue to foster a good working relationship with its partners by keeping these agencies involved in planning processes and projects.</p>
Maintenance	<p>STW concurs with the draft plan section on maintenance</p>	<p>Noted</p>

New Structures	The SSPCAB feels that new structures unrelated to the purpose of the park should not be considered unless a real need is shown and adequate resources to construct and maintain them can be assured without adversely impacting Sitka State Parks facilities	The division will carefully consider the needs of the park, the recommendations of its citizens advisory board, and the overall mission of the division to provide “outdoor recreation opportunities and conserve and interpret natural, cultural, and historic resources for the use, enjoyment, and welfare of the people” before implementing new projects in the park.
New Structures	I am pleased that this document looks like it has some possibilities for improvement and some flexibility built in. I trust that bathrooms (even basic or primitive) facilities are possibility, that facilities for a volunteer work station or whatever you call it will be a possibility for caring for this park, in addition to part-time or full-time employee(s) to assist the visitor (perhaps in the future if no \$\$ now)	Noted
New Structures	If you need new structures, why not make replicas, or copy the style they used, and just label them as such. It would go a long way to giving visitors a sense of what it was like then. I think you really should avoid stock state parks type construction, which I think would make it much less special.	The style for new structures, such as picnic shelters, has not been designed. The management plan will recommend that all new facilities complement the historical characteristics of the site. If a replica were constructed, it would be labeled as such to avoid misrepresentation and confusion.
New Structures	Make recommendations for solar and wind energy for powering facilities	Alternative energy sources will be our first priority when looking at power sources.
Operations and Staffing, Partnerships	STW concurs with the recommendations in the draft plan. We hope to build the pathways and repair select causeway segments in a cost effective manner and dedicate remaining grant funds to interpretive features and recreational facilities adjacent to the pathways	The division greatly values its partnerships with local organizations and private citizens in supporting its parks. Partnerships, such as that with Sitka Trail Works, Inc., will enable the division to reach its goals and supports its overall mission statement to benefit the community.
Park Boundary	It would be useful to state the park does NOT include all 8 islands or all 11 islands of the entire causeway (it was 11 islands)... but that it is limited to – I believe it is six islands... Needs a better clarification of park boundaries	The final draft will include a map showing the park’s boundaries. The park includes more than the chain of islands connected by the causeway, including Signal Island, Nicholson Rocks, Smith Island, Stewart Island, and Nepovorotni Rocks. The map will also show the park’s boundary with the Sitka Rocky Gutierrez Airport property.

Pets	Do you even have to allow pets?	<p>State park regulations require leashing of pets in developed facilities such as campgrounds and picnic areas. Pets may be off leash on trails unless specifically restricted by special regulation. Pet owners will be tasked with being responsible for their animals when it comes to animal control, pet waste, and leash requirements. Park regulations currently prohibit any pets from harassing or chasing wildlife, or creating unsanitary conditions. The plan will allow discretion to park managers to implement park-wide leashing should conflicts or resource degradation occur.</p> <p>This policy should be periodically reviewed.</p>
	<p>STW is experienced with dog owners using trails for recreation and recommends that off leash areas and seasons be developed for the Park. Because there are no brown bears in the Park, the Park offers a uniquely safe area to allow dogs to run off leash. And there are no deer present that could be chased by dogs. Perhaps Kirushkin, Reshimosti, Nevski, Makhnati and Mogilnoi could be designated off-leash year-round, as well as the adjacent Causeway sections.</p>	
	Most Sitkans will want their dogs to roam free; you probably recognize the political problems with this statement	<p>Through a grant received from the Preserve America Program, the state Office of History and Archaeology is developing preservation plans for the four state historical parks/sites that are also designated as National Historic Landmarks. The plans will be written for Fort Abercrombie State Historical Park on Kodiak Island, and Old Sitka State Historical Park, Baranof Castle Hill State Historic Site, and Fort Rousseau Causeway State Historical Park in Sitka.</p>
Preservation Planning	The management plan needs more explanation regarding how the <i>preservation plan</i> being developed by the state Office of History and Archaeology relates to the management plan	
	<p>The SSPCAB found it difficult to evaluate the management plan with no reference to the preservation plan or even vegetation plan. These plans should all be interfaced and woven into the management plan, and historic preservation should lead rather than follow the management plan on what priorities should be funded in what order if resources are limited, as they always are. Protecting what is left of the historical resource in the park should be the centerpiece of management efforts</p>	<p>The preservation plan for Fort Rousseau will assist park managers, staff, and partners in making informed decisions regarding the day-to-day management of the park's historical resources. The preservation plan supports the management plan and does not replace Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act or the Alaska Historic Preservation Act. The preservation plan will not place mandates on park managers to act in a certain way.</p> <p>The preservation plan will recommend up to four "preservation zones" for the park, which will be supplementary to the park's land-use designations established in the management plan. Each preservation zone has a unique preservation objective related to the buildings, landscape, archaeology, and interpretation of</p>

		<p>the site. Preservation zones overlie land-use designations; an area designated through the management planning process as a “Cultural Zone” could potentially have four different recommended preservation zones.</p> <p>We have been working closely with the Office of History and Archaeology to ensure the recommendations in the management plan will not conflict with those in the preservation plan. It is appropriate, however, that the preservation plan is being developed after the management plan, as it will support the ideas outlined in the management plan.</p> <p>When park managers, staff, or partners are ready to implement a recommendation in the management plan, they can refer to the preservation plan for guidance on techniques and methods for preservation.</p> <p>The plan references vegetation management in the “Recommendations” section, under “Maintenance.”</p>
Public Use Cabins	Public use cabins have never been a traditional nor historical use of this area. The SSPCAB does not support public use cabins as part of this management plan.	Noted
Recreation	My husband and I have lived in Sitka more than 20 years and we have two girls. Our family does a lot of outdoor recreating on the water and in the woods. We are so appreciative of new trails and places where we can go to spend the day and we are grateful that State Parks is planning to improve this causeway area which is a fabulous place to bring kids for exploration and outdoor recreation. We regularly hike with a group of other families who all have children about the same age. And we often share our hikes with students in the exchange program and other high school kids.	Noted

Repairing the Causeway	I saw nothing about possible bridges over damaged sections of the causeway. Rather than spend endless money on repairing broken sections of causeway with fill, some metal bridges spanning all islands is important to me for interpreting and discovering and exploring this causeway. I know this is expensive and ambitious, but I think that an ambitious plan is better than a timid initial plan.... Even if it takes 30 years to implement, better to start with BIG IDEAS rather than limited small ideas.	Noted. Further consideration as to whether the breeched portions of the causeway will be bridged or repaired using fill will be given during the site planning process.
Repairing the Causeway	Could the causeway be repaired in coordination with airport reconstruction?	This recommendation could be looked into during the site planning process
Russian Influence	I am very glad to see plans for a panel on Russian influence.	Noted
Safety	It is our experience [STW] on Sasedni that the open manholes along the utility corridor should be covered as soon as possible.	Noted
Signs	Will orientation signs be consistent with orientation signs from the WWII era? I wonder if you could use a font in the signs that was used in WWII – like in old manuals. I know it's a state park, but I think you should make the signs and anything else as unobtrusive and minimal as possible, to try to the utmost to keep the park “fresh” and the entire thing an experience of time and history.	Information and interpretation signs will be designed to complement the park’s historical and natural landscape and will not be intrusive. The division does have a responsibility to provide signage for visitors’ safety and orientation. Using a font that was used in the 1940s is an option for signage.
Sitka Trails Plan 2003	I see that implementing the <i>Sitka Trails Plan 2003</i> is one of the objectives. I am generally in favor of this, however, I hope that this does not limit the development or inhibit the development of the causeway as a state park.	The management plan provides more specific detail to support the “WWII Causeway Cultural Interest Trail” project on Page 46 of the <i>Sitka Trail Plan 2003</i> . The management plan’s statement to support this project’s implementation will not inhibit park managers from managing and developing the park as a unit of the Alaska State Park system.
Staffing	Thank you for including this recommendation for future staffing	Noted
Trails	Improved trails should be at least eight feet wide to accommodate maintenance equipment and groups of people	The final draft will recommend that trails be developed to a maximum width of eight feet.

Trails

In general STW concurs with the description of where trails would be located on the Causeway Islands and concur that the appropriate historic structures are named that are to be linked by trails. We also agree with construction of a loop trail on Sasedni Island in addition to trails located on the Causeway roadbed. As the entity that will eventually be doing the trail construction with our grant funds, we do offer some comments from a construction stand point.

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Causeway roadbed portions built over submerged lands belonging to the BLM should be identified as a facility distinct from trails. Lots 75A between Sasedni and Gold Island, Lot 84A between Gold and Virublennoi Island, and Lot 85A between Virublennoi and Reshimosti Islands should be identified as candidates for near term Causeway repair. As stated in the Draft Management Plan the objective is not to recreate the road of the 1940's but to repair the Causeway to allow for construction and maintenance vehicles and walking paths in the most developed area of the Park.2. The Causeway, over a significant distance, is bounded by water on both sides with steep drop-offs to the beach. We recommend repairing the Causeway sections to 10 feet in width in order to provide for a greater degree of safety for the public. A gravel walking path 8 feet in width can be located on the Causeway road base.3. It is STW responsibility as grantee to expend the grant funds cost effectively and it has been our experience that it is actually less expensive to use a mini excavator and a tracked gravel carrier to install pathways 8 feet in width, than it is to build 4 ft. width pathways with hand tools.4. Because the pathways on Sasedni, Gold and Virublennoi Islands are planned for interpretation, we anticipate groups of people walking with a guide, or families with children alongside, and two-way traffic on the pathways. Therefore we suggest an 8 foot pathway width be considered optimal for the public use on these | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Noted2. Noted3. Noted4. Noted5. Noted6. Noted. Site planning will require funding.7. Noted8. Noted. Correction will be made. |
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	<p>islands. This is the same width as the pathways in the Sitka National Historical Park.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. STW does not anticipate constructing hardened pathways on Kirushkin, Mogilnoi or Makhnati Islands and the standard pathway width can be narrower and trails created without removing organic material and hardening the trial surfaces on these islands. Smaller volumes of visitors allow for a less-developed trail system on these islands. If visitation volumes increase over time future appropriate tread and width recommendations can resolve erosion problems that may develop. 6. STW hopes AK DNR DPOR will proceed with development of a site plan ASAP. The site plan will allow STW to complete the improvements to the Pathways and Causeway roadbed under the direction of DPOR as stated in the draft Plan. 7. STW recommends a gate installed at the old location on Nevski Island to define the beginning of the Park road and trail system and to control foot or vehicular traffic between the airport property and the park. 8. Correction on page 22 of the draft Plan. Sitka Trail Works has not constructed any trails within the Park. STW activities were limited to removing brush and picking up litter. The fencing around the Fuse House was placed with the approval of the SHPO's office. 	
Training for Commercial Operators	<p>Can't you strengthen the language on how much influence you can have on commercial operators? I recognize that there are severe limitations in operating this bare bones park, however, why not at least strengthen the language and make it imperative that all commercial operators who operate in the park have to receive training materials for their guides and that Sitka Trail Works or another designated historical group (perhaps even volunteers) be required to do basic historic training for commercial operators and their guides?</p>	<p>Language in the final draft will be strengthened to say that commercial operators will be required to undergo training before leading tours in the park. The type and extent of the training program will be influenced by available staffing and volunteer coordinators.</p>
Vegetation Management	A vegetation management plan is needed	Noted

Vegetation Management	Alders should be cut, but leave spruce trees until a structural engineer can take a look. Battery 292, especially, should have at least a few large trees left on top; they can't hurt the bomb-proof building and they will decrease the wind on top. Plus it won't look like a clear cut (there is one foot of fine gravel and then over two feet of additional rock backfill between the reinforced concrete and the dirt)	Noted
Visitation – Current Visitation and Recorded Data	Mount Edgecumbe High School students frequent the causeway with the recreation staff. Also, there have been field trips to the causeway—groups were dropped off by Allen Marine Catamaran vessels	A statement will be added to the final draft in “Visitor Profiles” section, under “Current Fort Rousseau Visitation” to describe current visitation by school groups.
Visitation – Potential	School groups are not only potential visitors, they are visitors. The park is very popular with kids.	
Visitor Experience	I am opposed to a purely discovery kind of park...I believe that this park should have a plan that incorporates future improvements that allow visitors access for a quality experience	Noted
Volunteers	Need a volunteer program and on-site presence to limit vandalism	The division feels that once improvements are made in the park, including but not limited to trail improvements, environmental cleanup, historic preservation, and interpretation, that an increased management presence is important for the safety and maintenance of the site, and to deter vandalism and inappropriate use. It is undetermined at this time whether that presence will be by volunteers, staff, or both.
Website	Will the proposed “Fort Rousseau Causeway State Historical Park” website be funded?	Each unit in the Alaska State Park system has a link on the division's website: http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/ . Information can be added to this website to provide more information to potential visitors and to enhance their experience.
Website	For your web links, remember the Sitka Convention and Visitors Bureau, and even the City of Sitka, anything people might find when looking into a Sitka visit	The final draft will list the Sitka CVB and City and Borough of Sitka in the “Recommendations” section under “Information and Orientation,” “websites,” “other.”