

FORT ROUSSEAU CAUSEWAY STATE HISTORICAL PARK – MANAGEMENT PLAN

FINAL DRAFT – PLAN REVISION SUMMARY; SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS AND AGENCY RESPONSES



Overview

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 public comments and agency responses was issued on June 3, 2010.

A final draft of the plan was issued for public review on August 3, 2010. The comment period extended through September 2, 2010. A summary of public comments and agency responses is listed below. The final public review draft of the plan was revised based on public comments and internal discussions. A summary of the major changes to the final public review draft is listed below. Comments regarding editing, document organization, and non-management issues are not included in these summaries.

Summary of Changes between the Public Review Draft and Final Plan

Environmental (pgs. 28, 54)

Information was added regarding the site inspection report completed by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers in September 2010.

Language has been added to the final plan regarding the need to consult the Bureau of Land Management if work commences on any surrounding submerged lands, filled tidelands, or intertidal areas.

Implementation Priorities – Marine Access (pg. 84)

The proposal to improve marine access to the park by constructing a boat dock was added to the “Implementation Priorities” table in the Appendices (the proposal was unintentionally omitted from the table in the final public review draft.) The proposal was given a short-term priority rating.

Land Ownership (pgs. iv, 5, 17, 18, 31)

Language has been added to clarify the descriptions of current land ownership of the park and adjacent areas.

Land Use Designations (pg. 31)

The information in “Appendix B: Land-Use Zones—Guidelines for Activities/Facilities” was removed from the Appendices and included in the body of the text in the “Recommendations” section under “Land Use Designations.” Several activities were also deleted from the guidelines table because (1) it is not likely those activities would occur within the park and (2) we do not anticipate that permits would be requested for those activities.

Marine Access (pg. 31)

The proposal to enhance marine access to the park by “providing access for kayaks, small boats, and large crafts and barges” has been simplified to say that marine access will be enhanced by constructing one dock that would serve as the primary access point to the park. The change eliminates the list of vessel types and broadens the description to avoid unintentionally omitting a type of vessel.

Language has been added to the final plan regarding the need to consult the Bureau of Land Management if work commences on any surrounding submerged lands, filled tidelands, or intertidal areas.

Park Boundary Map (pg. 17)

Figure 3 in the final public review draft was missing the following portion of the park boundary, located off the east side of Sasedni Island:

Section 3: E1/2SE1/4NW1/4NE1/4NW1/4

6 E1/2NE1/4SW1/4NE1/4NW1/4

7 NW1/4SE1/4NE1/4NW1/4

8 SW1/4NE1/4NE1/4NW1/4

Figure 3 has been corrected.

Trails (pg. 34)

Language has been added to the final plan regarding the need to consult the Bureau of Land Management if work commences on any surrounding submerged lands, filled tidelands, or intertidal areas.

Use Restrictions and Limitations (pg. 44)

The “Use Restrictions and Limitations” table in the “Recommendations” section has been deleted in the final plan. The table discussed the following issues: pets in the park, large events, alcoholic beverages, and firewood. Since all of these issues are already outlined in the Alaska Administrative Code and since the division is not proposing any changes at this time, it was not necessary to list them in the plan.

Summary of Public Comments and Agency Responses

ISSUE	COMMENT	RESPONSE	RECOMMENDED REVISION
Access – Land	I would add... not just improved marine access (dock, etc.)..... I would add that a long-term goal would be land access...	The “Recommendation” section will only address marine access.	No change
Access – Marine	The recommendation for the dock at Whiting Harbor is missing from “Appendix D: Implementation Priorities.” Of course, we would love to see it prominently in the ‘immediate priorities’ but we know that is not likely. However, we surely would like to see it included in the ‘short-term priorities.’	This omission was a mistake.	The recommendation for constructing a dock at Whiting Harbor will be given a short-term priority listing in the final document. Immediate priorities such as environmental cleanup and preservation of some historic structures should be completed prior to improving access.
Access – Marine	Needs a boat float for access like those grounding floats at launch ramps	The exact location and design for the boat dock has not been determined at this time. Choosing the location, design, and materials will be dependent on funding and further inspection of the area by engineers and park managers. It is possible that additional items such as boat floats and/or mooring buoys could be included in the final design.	No change
Access – Marine	Why not something temporary, cheap and (well, lawyer proof – is that possible) and then, later the more elaborate, quality structure... Is this at all possible?	The boat dock will be designed as the primary access point for boats of all sizes and will be designed to meet safety, ADA, and environmental standards.	No change

Access – Marine - Permitting	Under Access, page 31 - Please keep in mind that the BLM maintains management of the tidal lands covered by the withdrawals that were in place at the time of statehood if they are in an area where the State of Alaska did not exercise its option to acquire the lands within the window of opportunity when the withdrawals were revoked. If any proposed access (like a boat dock) were to be within these lands a permit would be needed from the BLM if the action took place prior to the BLM issuing a Recreation and Public Purposes Act lease or other permit to the Park.	N/A	Language has been added to the final plan regarding the need to consult the Bureau of Land Management if work commences on any surrounding submerged lands, filled tidelands, or intertidal areas.
Environmental Cleanup	The information and recommendations that were included regarding environmental cleanup is accurate. In general, the plan is well-written, visually appealing, and contains interesting and useful information and recommendations. You all did a really good job on this.	Noted	N/A
Environmental Cleanup	As a Land manger the BLM needs to be brought into the loop in developing any proposed cleanup of sites affecting BLM managed lands. Please have the partners in this important effort begin to include the BLM Anchorage Field Office [in] any [of] their discussions.	N/A	Language has been added to the final plan regarding the need to consult the Bureau of Land Management if work commences on any surrounding submerged lands, filled tidelands, or intertidal areas.

Guns - Historic	<p>Somewhere in this document you need to state this as a long-term objective as a feasible alternative, as a short-term objective, as a possibility... Somehow, you wiggle the words around and fit in the wording that says we need a real gun. Preferably a 6" gun --- now that makes this park real. It tells some of the story without needing further explanation.</p>	<p>Under "Recommendations," page 49, the final draft stated that "the division is amendable to having historical guns in the park for display. A six-inch, 155mm, and/or 20mm gun would enhance the visitor experience by providing park users the ability to see the guns in person. Placement of these guns on Makhnati Island was the reason Fort Rousseau was built and established as the headquarters for harbor defense. In addition to guns on Makhnati Island, a 20mm gun could be displayed on the west side of Sasedni Island, near or on its historic footprint. On-site interpretive displays would show historic photographs and provide information on each gun's operation and technology."</p>	No change
Interpretive Panels – Makhnati Island	<p>As the visitor approaches Makhnati Island from the broken causeway --- or from the beach... there should be a top notch wayside exhibit and/or a good quality pamphlet with quality map attached. This should be done – even if Makhnati is going to be not utilized or emphasize[d] much in the overall interp[erpretive] plan.... This wayside exhibit should include a map and should be situated...at the entrance to that island</p>	<p>In Appendix D, page 87, the final draft stated that pursuing the acquisition of historical guns for the park is a long-term priority. Although listed as a long-term priority, Appendix D of the final draft also stated that the recommendation "can be implemented out of order if the situation and funding allows."</p> <p>Project #4, "Orientation Panel—Makhnati Island" in Appendix C (page 71) of the final draft described the recommendation for an orientation panel to be designed and installed on the north end of the island near the causeway entrance from Mogilnoi Island.</p>	No change

Interpretive Panels – Makhnati Island	<p>I recognize that you planned to give Makhnati Island rather second rate status (in my mind) and I fully understand your reasoning for doing this – the practical side of things, however, there will be some of us....Including guides, etc who will be out there and I do think that at least one wayside exhibit and even a bare bones pamphlet (one side map of Makhnati – other side info (that is just an idea of the moment)...For that jewel of a spot.</p>	<p>See response above.</p> <p>Also, in the final draft, Project #8, “Trailside/Historical Features Panels— Makhnati Island” in Appendix C (pages 80-82) described the recommendations for additional trailside interpretive exhibits on Makhnati Island.</p>	No change
On-Site Caretaker Facility	<p>How about making this structure vandalism proof by using the same concrete construction methods used in WWII by the Army?</p> <p>The other issue is having people there...I recognize that you stated volunteers, caretakers, etc. but all of this sounds very seasonal to me.... I would like to see a year-round presence... No, it is not impossible... Just build it adequate so someone can live there and maintain a presence there --- that is enough to deter much of the vandalism.</p>	<p>The final draft stated: “An on-site caretaker facility in the park is critical. The facility would provide housing for a volunteer or an employee and also storage space for maintenance equipment. The on-site caretaker would help to, not only deter vandalism, but also provide visitors the opportunity for personal connections. The on-site caretaker would survey the facilities, trails, on-site interpretation, and historical features year-round to ensure maintenance, preservation, and safety measures are being met. The location and the type of facility are to be determined; it is possible that an existing historic structure could be adapted for this use. A low-cost system for heat and power would be established during the design stage. Alternative energy sources will be researched.”</p>	No change
Trails	<p>Under Trails, page 34 and 35 - There are discussions of rehabilitating the connecting causeways between some of the islands - need to add into the discussion that no work on the causeways on lands under BLM management would be done without coordinating with the BLM and obtaining appropriate permits.</p>	N/A	<p>Language has been added to the final plan regarding the need to consult the Bureau of Land Management if work commences on any surrounding submerged lands, filled tidelands, or intertidal areas.</p>