

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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REPRESENTATIVE PEGGY WILSON  
HOUSE DISTRICT 2

## House Bill 276

**“An Act amending the description of parcels within the Fort Rousseau Causeway State Historical Park; and providing for an effective date.”**

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## **HB 176 – Create Fort Rousseau Causeway Park (2007)**

### *Excerpts of Committee Minutes*

House Resources Committee  
House Finance Committee  
Senate Resources Committee  
Senate Finance Committee

1:20:12 PM

CO-CHAIR JOHNSON inquired whether there is public access to the area by any other means besides the water.

MR. STONE said the water is the only accessible point because airport development resulted in closing the [land] access to the causeway.

MR. STONE, in response to Co-Chair Gatto, said the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers built the causeway.

1:21:07 PM

CO-CHAIR GATTO observed that the airport runway is over a mile long and close to Sitka. He asked whether a car could be driven to the causeway.

MR. STONE explained that there is no longer access by car due to the installation of security fencing, but that the causeway did have car access long ago. In further response to Co-Chair Gatto, Mr. Stone confirmed that permission for access would not be granted by airport authorities. In response to Representative Guttenberg, Mr. Stone stated that the main access to the causeway is by boat. Sitka Trail Works also makes a skiff available to the public, he said. The area gets heavy use during the summer months by local residents who skiff to the causeway to picnic and visit the site.

HOUSE BILL NO. 176

April 19, 2007 testimony in H FIN

An Act creating the Fort Rousseau Causeway State  
Historical Park.

C2:07:01 PM

DEBORAH LYONS, (TESTIFIED VIA TELECONFERENCE), EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SITKA TRAIL WORKS, SITKA, testified in favor of HB 176, an Act creating the Fort Rousseau Causeway Historical State Park. Sitka Trail Works has over 300 member-households and is in a partnership Memorandum of Agreement with the City and Borough of Sitka.

of the causeway road.

## SENATE RESOURCES

May 09, 2007

### HB 176--CREATE FORT ROUSSEAU CAUSEWAY PARK

CHAIR HUGGINS announced HB 176 to be up for consideration. [CSHB 176(RES) was before the committee.] He asked Representative Wilson to give them a brief background on the park.

4:08:40 PM

REPRESENTATIVE PEGGY WILSON, sponsor of HB 176, replied that during World War II the Army wanted to have a defense across Sitka in case the Japanese came back. So, they connected 800 ft. of causeway from one island to another and to this day many historical artifacts are still there - like an anti-aircraft gun, bunkers and ammo magazine structures. This causeway has already been added to the National Registry of Historical Places and has been designated as a landmark by the National Park Service. This bill makes sure that it becomes the Fort Rousseau Causeway State Historical Park.

SENATOR STEVENS asked who Rousseau was. When no one knew the answer, he added that he was the commander of the American troops when Sitka became a part of the United States in 1867.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON said Alaska doesn't have many areas that go back to WWII and this bill is trying to preserve this history. She explained that Sitka Trail Works was awarded a federal grant of \$140,700 to begin work on renovating the Fort Rousseau Causeway and \$60,000 of the grant money was given to the State's Historical Preservation Office in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to pay for site mapping, culture survey and inventory work; another \$14,000 was used for a phase 1 environmental assessment. Another federal trails grant is pending for this project in the federal transportation legislation for 2008 and 2009.

She said the causeway business plan shows modest tourism dollars of around \$12,000 per year at first. As the program grows, the budget will be about \$16,800 per year which would eventually be supplanted by tourism dollars with an additional \$20,000 going into the general fund to be used for other parks. She explained further that the idea is to take tourists back and forth and there is no way to get to the island except on a boat.

CHAIR HUGGINS asked if that was what the "boat charter costs

Co-Chair Stedman asked how the Park is accessed.  
Representative Wilson said the area is accessible by boat.

Co-Chair Stedman asked why the area is not accessible by car.  
Representative Wilson explained that the area is closed off to traffic due to its proximity to the airport.

Co-Chair Hoffman MOVED to REPORT CSHB 176 (RES) out of Committee with individual recommendations and the attached fiscal notes.

There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

CSHB 176(RES) was REPORTED out of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and fiscal note #2 by the Department of Natural Resources.

AT EASE: 9:37:45 AM  
RECONVEINE: 9:42:36 AM