

Introduced by: Popp, Brown, Navarre  
Date: 02/16/99  
Action: Adopted  
Vote: 8 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent

**KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH  
RESOLUTION 99-016**

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PUBLIC  
ACCESS TO STATE LANDS ON THE WEST SIDE OF COOK INLET**

**WHEREAS,** the Kenai Peninsula Borough's West Side Development Task Force completed a conceptual strategic plan in April 1998 which concluded that the West Side of Cook Inlet holds great recreational and tourism opportunities, and that these opportunities are currently unrealized due to the lack of public access to the state lands on the West Side; and

**WHEREAS,** the task force's conceptual strategic plan recommended establishing public access to the 280,000 acres of state-owned uplands in the Trading Bay State Game Refuge and Redoubt Bay Critical Habitat Area on the West Side of Cook Inlet, as well as the additional 180,000 acres of surrounding state lands; and

**WHEREAS,** the primary goals and policies listed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in its Trading Bay Game Refuge and Redoubt Bay Critical Habitat Area Management Plan, completed in July 1994, include maintaining and allowing development of new public access to the refuge and critical habitat area; and

**WHEREAS,** the statewide visitor industry organization, the Alaska Visitors Association, has adopted as one of its 1999 legislative priorities increasing access to public lands for tourism activities; and

**WHEREAS,** the City of Kenai is the designated gateway city for tourism development on the West Side of Cook Inlet, including the state-owned lands along the Kustatan Ridge and federal lands in Lake Clark national Park and Preserve; and

**WHEREAS,** establishing increased public access to state lands on the West Side of Cook Inlet will result in the following economic benefits:

1. Increased tourism for the State of Alaska through promotion of, and access to, remote state lands that are not currently accessible, yet could potentially offer visitors an experience comparable to Denali National Park;
2. Increased regional tourism similar to that experienced by the City of Seward once access to Kenai Fjords National Park was expanded;

3. Increased private sector opportunities for tourism-related businesses located in the Central Peninsula;
4. Increased revenues to the Kenai Peninsula Borough through the generation of additional sales taxes from new tourist-related activities; and
5. A potential increase in the value of the Kustatan Ridge property which, if selected for borough disposal, is estimated to result in annual undeveloped property tax revenues of up to \$425,000.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH:**

**SECTION 1.** That the Assembly supports establishing access to the state lands on the West Side of Cook Inlet as an eco-tourism and recreational destination.

**SECTION 2.** That, the State of Alaska is urged to work in concert with businesses and private landowners on the West Forelands and the Kenai Peninsula Borough to establish all necessary rights of way and easements to access the state lands and the Kustatan Ridge area.

**SECTION 3.** That the administration is urged to proceed with the process necessary to select the Kustatan Ridge, Unit 169 in the Kenai Area Plan, from the State of Alaska in the event that application for legal access along Kustatan Ridge is rejected.

**SECTION 4.** That the Alaska State Legislature is urged to make \$3 Million available to the Kenai Peninsula Borough for the construction of public access to include, but not be limited to:

1. The establishment of public use dock facilities at tidelands on the West Forelands;
2. Upgrade to paved status the existing gravel airstrip now partially located on Salamatof land and leased to Marathon;
3. The construction of a gravel road from the airstrip to the Marathon-maintained road; and
4. A five-mile road from the Marathon-maintained road to the Kustatan Ridge;

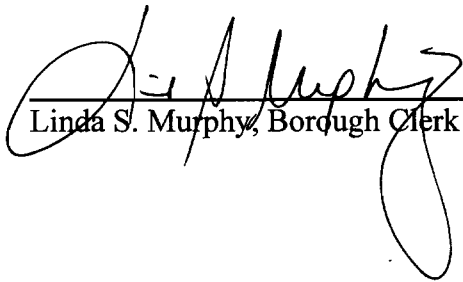
all of which are required to provide access to approximately 70,000 acres of state lands on the West Side of Cook Inlet.

**SECTION 5.** This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

**ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH THIS 16TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1999.**

  
Ronald Wm. Drathman, Assembly President

ATTEST:

  
Linda S. Murphy, Borough Clerk

