



St. Paul Fur Seal Observation Platforms and Walkways

Client: Livingston Slone, Inc.

Location: St. Paul Island, Alaska

Key Features:

- Specific designs to minimize impact on sensitive rookery sites
- Design of modern, low-maintenance walkways and platforms



St. Paul Island has 12 northern fur seal rookeries—most containing approximately two miles of aging elevated observation walkways and towers. The walkways and towers comprise the basic research and monitoring infrastructure for access by fur seal research scientists and resource managers into dense aggregations of breeding and resting northern fur seals.

NOAA Fisheries recognized the existing walkways didn't allow for reliable safety upgrades consistent with current code. Railings, fall arrest systems, stable foundations and slip resistance walkways are not practical modifications to the current design. NOAA had spent on average \$100,000 per year over the previous few years on modest repairs to the aging system of wood walkways. They needed to replace the walkways with modern construction to meet modern safety requirements with appropriate safety factors to resist forces from animals as well as snow and wind loads.

Project challenges included the necessity for difficult winter construction (the only time the fur seals don't occupy the beach), and the complication of virtually no vehicular access to the sites.