



City and Borough of Wrangell
Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau
AGENDA

Tuesday, April 16, 2024
12:00 PM

Location: Assembly Chambers

WORKSHOP

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

3. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Approval of the Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau regular meeting minutes from February 20, 2024.

5. PERSON'S TO BE HEARD

6. CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Economic Development Department Report for March 2024.
- b. Marketing and Community Development Coordinator Report for March 2024.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Review of new creative content for the Travel Alaska website for Wrangell.
- b. Presentation of the 2024/2025 Travel Guide
- c. Review and input on 2024 Visitor Survey.

8. NEW BUSINESS

9. ADJOURNMENT

**Minutes of Wrangell Convention & Visitors Bureau Meeting
Held on February 20, 2024**

1. CALL TO ORDER: Call to order at 12:08 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Chair Erin Galla, Vice Chair Brenda Schwartz-Yeager Caitlin Cardinell, Chris Bunes,

ABSENT: Mya Delong

STAFF: Kate Thomas, Matt Henson

3. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA: NONE

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Approval of the Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau regular meeting minutes from January 16th, 2024

M/S CB/BS move to approve the regular meeting minutes of the Wrangell CVB from January 16th, 2024.

5. PERSON'S TO BE HEARD: NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Economic Development Department 2023 Annual Highlights

Director Thomas provided a report.

- b. February Coordinator Report on Marketing

Henson provided a report.

Schwartz asked that occasional work sessions be scheduled for specific topics. Mentioned that future travel or trade show opportunities or partner content review. Schwartz also stated that she would like to see a smaller formatted visitor survey for in-person responses. Schwartz suggested an alternate mechanism than a QR code. She stated that the Tongass management plan is currently open for review and made available. Stated that its importance to the board surrounds the recreational opportunities and our ability to conduct visitor industry business and make sure that the USFS implements our needs to their plan. Stated that JEDC is currently tasked with providing comments on this plan. Director Thomas stated that she will forward correspondence from Economic Development Board Chair Bob Dalrymple that was drafted on behalf of the borough providing input on activities happening on the Tongass as well as feedback on SASS-FM.

- c. Rain Coast Data Wrangell Visitor Industry Report (covering 2023 season's data)

Bunes asked after looking at the reports, how would the CVB be able to increase the number of yachters. Continued discussion will be had on the angles for retaining and growing that population of visitors.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Wrangell Tourism Management Plan public engagement and consulting services discussion

Thomas provided another update on the Tourism Management Plan. Stated that staff has identified the steps needing to be taken to drive the plan as shown in the previous discussion item at the last meeting. Thomas had discussions with staff from the McKinley Research group on how the plan could be structured. Thomas stated that while the department could develop this plan on its own, it may be a better option to have a consultant take on part or all of the development of the tourism management plan. A third-party agency could manage all parts of outreach. McKinley stated that it would be best practice to educate the public before the tour season, allow the season to pass, and then poll the public after the season. Thomas also stated that staff is beginning the development of "bite-sized" packages of information to begin to inform the public about the industry. This would then lead to a comprehensive presentation and then general public outreach. Schwartz stated that she likes the approach, and it is important to make the topic palatable. She asked if CPV funds could be used for industry research. Thomas stated that she will confirm with the State Department of Commerce about fund usage but can confirm that other communities have utilized these funds to conduct industry research. Schwartz stated that she would prefer to see CPV funds be used for this industry research, preserving transient tax funds for marketing. Thomas stated that she would not recommend researching if CPV funds were not accessible. Thomas detailed a summary of the current events in southeast Alaska and the procedures of neighboring communities.

Cardinell stated that she was present in the conversations with Thomas. She stated that the collection of data is critical and recommends staff find a contractor to assist in the development process of the tourism management plan. Bunes agreed. Stated that ensuring community awareness of our plans is critical and that the CVB can work to help alleviate staff pressure by helping communicate the plan and process to the public. Schwartz stated that she would like to see the community go through another season before making changes due to the dynamic landscape.

Galla stated that she fully supports hiring a contractor and allowing another season to pass but collecting data this season.

Thomas stated that she will begin to prepare an RFQ and ask for an aggregate cost summary for us to ala-cart needed items or services.

Cardinell states that she would like to see the infomercial idea be developed from now to the peak season of next summer.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Review and discussion of the methods and execution for the 2024 Wrangell Visitors Survey

Members of the CVB have been asked to review and provide comments on the draft visitor survey. Any feedback should be provided in writing to staff so adjustments may be made before the start of the season. Thomas emphasized the importance of deploying proven methodology for surveying visitors to ensure the at outcomes meet the objectives of good quality data. Staff expressed concerns about who and how those surveys will be conducted because they cannot dedicate that time.

b. Discussion on FY25 Transient Tax and CPV Budgets

CVB members were provided with past year's approved budgets for comparison. A work session has been set for February 27th, 2024, to review and discuss the FY25 budget for transient tax, Marian Glenz, and commercial passenger vessel tax.

c. Review and audit of the Travel Alaska Website creative content for Wrangell

A summary of the process was shared with CVB members. A work session to review the Travel Guide draft design, media, and content has been set for March 7th, 2024.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 1:31 PM.

The next scheduled regular meeting is March 19th, 2024.

The next scheduled work session will be held on March 7th, 2024, at 12:00 PM pertaining to the Wrangell Visitor Guide, and February 27th, 2024, at 12:00 PM pertaining to the WCVB FY25 budget.

Chair

ATTEST: _____
Secretary

CITY & BOROUGH OF WRANGELL

Economic Development Report

April 9, 2024



MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE
ASSEMBLY OF CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL

CC: MASON VILLARMA, BOROUGH MANAGER
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD
WRANGELL CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

FROM: KATE THOMAS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: MONTHLY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

DATE: APRIL 9TH, 2024

IMPORTANT DATES

- Please note that staff from the economic development were out of town between March 21 and April 3, reducing the scope of accomplishments for March 2024.
- April 5, Completion of the new design for Travel Guide 2024-2025
- April 9, Assembly appointment of two new WCVB members
- April 11, Kid's Don't Float event
- April 11, Planning and Zoning Meeting
- April 12, Denali Commission grant deadline
- April 12, Branding Project Kick-Off meeting
- April 16, Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau Meeting
- April 19, Street Banner Ceremony (tentative/weather dependent)
- April 20, Community Clean Up Day
- April 22, Tongass Forest Plan revision community drop-in meeting (public)
- April 23, Tongass Forest Plan cooperating agency meeting (USFS/CBW)
- April 24, Mass Emergency training
- April 25, Bi-Annual tourism stakeholder meeting
- April 25-28, Annual Bird fest

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Conducted a one-year performance evaluation for Matt Henson, Marketing and Community Development Coordinator
- Reconciled credit card reports for January and February
- Reviewed budget details for year-end of FY24
- Submitted draft budgets for Transient Tax and Economic Development divisions
- Published recruitment information for EDB and WCVB board positions
- Met with potential board candidates

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Held and facilitated March 5th, Economic Development Board Meeting
- Coordinated and attended a meeting with the Alaska Department of Commerce
- Researched publications for promoting development opportunities at the Deep-Water Port
- Met with RAIB and TCP team about the June site visit under the Thriving Communities grant program
- Met with an interested party regarding Hospital purchase
- Completed several deliverables of the PIDP grant Title VI requirements
- Worked with Amber, Lucy, and Mason to prioritize and submit funding requests for recreation appropriations package through the Alaska Outdoor Alliance Group

PLANNING AND ZONING

- Held and facilitated March 14th, Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting
- Met with GIS consultant about year deliverables and transition to the new mapping program
- Researched and began draft for Alder Top Village protective covenants
- Established stakeholders and set initial meetings for the Community Addressing program
- Reviewed and finalized planning and zoning fee revisions
- Reviewed, finalized and published new planning and zoning forms/applications
- Began draft FAQ sheet for Alder Top promotional webpage
- Contacted agencies about the Comprehensive Plan process and associated costs (150k-300k)
- Studied survey determinations for Entitlement Lands
- Read the Denali Commission notice of funding in preparation for the upcoming grant application

TOURISM MANAGEMENT

- Spoke to Cruise Lines Agency of Alaska regarding schedule opportunities to recover lost revenues from canceled sailings
- Researched cultural tourism marketing policies for internal development
- Scheduled and began planning for Street Banner Ceremony

- Spoke with operators and state agencies about Petroglyph Beach permitting

MARKETING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Participated in a financial planning seminar with High School
- Established branding committee, project deliverables and timelines
- Reached the \$15,000 fundraising benchmark for the fall recreation conference
- Continued planning efforts for the annual Bird Festival scheduled for April 26-28
- Coordinated planning session for recreation conference
- Met with the Port Director regarding the Seattle Boat Show and other trade show attendance
- Developed and designed the 2024-2025 Travel Guide
- Began implementation of the Customer Relationship Management software

Sincerely,

Kate Thomas
Economic Development Director

Coordinator Report on Marketing – 04/11/2024

Past and Present Placements/Buys

- Current placement in Travel Alaska Travel Guide
- Placement in Meet Alaska Directory
- Placement in National Fisherman (Ports and Harbors)
- Cornell’s Living Bird Magazine
- Banner Ad Placements (ATIA)
 - Untamed Trails (Fig 1) Ran 2/5 - 3/6
 - Find your Wild Side (Fig 2) Ran 2/1 - 4/2
 - Ancestral History (Fig 3) Ran 3/7 - 4/5
- Related/Editorial Content (ATIA)
 - Anan – Close By! (Fig 4) Runs 2/1 - 4/30

Upcoming Placements/Buys

- Will be placed in Travel Guide, Breath of the Bear, Fly Alaska 2024 publications.
- Will be placed in USA Today Go Escape West Coast
- Meta Business Ads (Dates and Time TBD)
 - Ads will feature bears, glaciers. Click will lead back to landing page and call to action will be to sign up for newsletter. (CRM)
- LinkedIn Business Ads (Dates and Times TBD)
 - Ads will feature Nolan Center as meeting convention space and its closeness to Seattle. Click will lead to landing page which has email sign up and direct link to Nolan Center booking webpage.) Nolan Center booking page coming soon.
- Travel Guide
 - Travel Guide has been completed. Delivery by April 30.

Existing Systems

- TravelWrangell.com
 - Content will begin to be audited, updated or replaced as needed.
 - Local imagery will be use throughout site.
 - CRM Training has been completed and access gained.
 - Will begin segmentation of current contacts and build partner portal.
 - Interactive content (video, images, blog style posts) will begin to be developed.
- Social Media
 - As more video content becomes available, more reels highlighting areas of town will be developed.
 - Human Interest stories around Wrangell will begin to be developed over next year.

General Highlights

- Staff has established a small design group. Purpose of group is to increase staff's capacity to develop campaigns, materials and collateral, and to assist with idea generation. Group will consist of Marketing Coordinator, two other creative based community members, and two rotating students. The Design Group is not a committee and is not charged with any official business rather a think tank meeting on an as needed basis.
- Staff has completed the design and layout of the 2024-2025 Travel Guide in partnership with the Wrangell Sentinel. The document was sent off for printing on April 11 and is due back in Wrangell by April 30. An official proof is available for review with staff.
- BirdFest planning has completed the final stage and announcement was made Friday, April 12th. Programming is light this year, last minute changes with partners are the cause.
- Borough Brand Identity project began Friday, April 12. Mood Board Workshop with seven local community members has been completed. Total package is estimated to be completed by June 7.

Agenda Item A Unfinished Business

Travel Alaska (ATIA) Website Audit & Creative Content Discussion

Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau
AGENDA ITEM
April 16th, 2024

Information: Staff outsourced creative writing to Angela Flickinger to update the Travel Alaska website with more accurate and robust information about Wrangell and all its offerings. The WCVB is being asked to review the previous content, along with the new proposed content with the intent of providing feedback to Ms. Flickinger for final revisions before proposing the changes to the Alaska Travel Industry Association creative staff.

Attachments: 1. New Proposed Narrative. 2. Old Narrative.

NEW COPY

[Travel Alaska – Wrangell feature page](#)

ABOUT WRANGELL (TLINGIT: SHTAX'HÉEN)

Perched at the northern tip of Wrangell Island where the wild Stikine River meets the ocean, the close-knit community of Wrangell offers a truly authentic small-town Alaska experience.

Wrangell's vibrant downtown waterfront welcomes you in to experience the community's rich culture and history, while its picturesque surroundings awaken a sense of adventure and beckon you to explore the Stikine River wilderness, miles of coastline, ocean passages, and forested mountains with hiking and biking trails, a wealth of wildlife viewing, fishing, paddling, and so much more.

HISTORY OF WRANGELL

Wrangell is the third oldest community in Alaska, and the only city in the state to be ruled by four different nations: Tlingit, Russian, Britain, and the United States. The area is the traditional homeland of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian Peoples, who have lived here for thousands of years.

The town of Wrangell was settled by Russian traders in 1834. The discovery of gold on the Stikine River in 1861 led to three major gold rushes in the area, with Wrangell at the center of trade. After the 1867 purchase of Alaska by the United States, a new fort was built at the current town site. During this era Wrangell saw famous Arizona lawman Wyatt Earp fill in as volunteer marshal for 10 days, as well as visits from famed naturalist John Muir.

The early 1900s creation of the Tongass National Forest led to the establishment of timber and fishing as the community's primary economic base, with the first sawmill in Alaska located in Wrangell.

THINGS TO DO IN WRANGELL

DOWNTOWN WRANGELL'S WORKING WATERFRONT

Wrangell's walkable downtown area features a vibrant blend of locally owned shops and restaurants tucked in alongside a working shipyard and bustling harbor, where visitors get a taste of daily life in small town Alaska.

Start with the picturesque views of the Stikine River flats from the north end of town, and wander through unique gift shops stocked with local artisan goods and restaurants featuring delicious local seafood as you make your way toward the Wrangell Museum to uncover the community's rich cultural history.

Toward the south end of town visitors can explore Totem Park before viewing Chief Shake's Island and Tribal House, nestled in the heart of the town's main harbor where all manner of fishing boats, recreational vessels, and tour boats come and go throughout the day.

TLINGIT CULTURE AND HISTORY

Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian people have been living in the area for thousands of years and examples of their culture and history are prevalent throughout Wrangell. The town is home to an impressive collection of totems with more than a dozen scattered throughout town.

Kiks. ádi Totem Park, located downtown on the way to Chief Shakes Tribal House, features hand-carved totems raised to honor *Kiks.ádi* clan leader Chief *Kahlteen*.

The historic Chief Shakes Tribal House is located on a small islet in the harbor at the southern end of town. Chief Shakes Tribal House is a replica of the traditional Tlingit clan house of the Naanyaa.aayi Clan that underwent an important restoration effort in 2013. Every plank in the House was carved using traditional Tlingit carving methods by Master Carvers assisted by trained local apprentices. The intricate house posts in the interior of the house are replicas of the originals, which are on view at the Wrangell Museum. The island is accessible for viewing, with cultural tours of the tribal house, totem park, and other cultural sites available through Wrangell's tribe, the Wrangell Cooperative Association.

Just north of town is **Petroglyph Beach State Historic Park**, where you can find the region's highest concentration of primitive rock carvings believed to be 8,000 years old. Half a mile from the ferry terminal, a boardwalk leads you past a series of interpretive displays that explain the history of the carvings and then descends to the beach. From there you can explore the beach and tidal zone, looking for the near 50 petroglyph carvings on large rocks, resembling spirals, birds, fish, whales, and faces. Check a tide book before you arrive because most of these carvings are submerged at high tide.

Wrangell's interesting Tlingit, Russian, and gold mining history can be experienced through a collection of artifacts and detailed storytelling at the **Wrangell Museum**. Located in the Nolan Center downtown, the museum is home to four of the finest hand-carved Tlingit houseposts, carved in the late 1700s and thought to be the oldest known houseposts still in existence today. The museum also has an enviable collection of spruceroot and cedarbark baskets from the turn of the century on display. Take a self-guided tour through Wrangell's history from the stories of

the first Tlingit peoples through first European contact and settlement, to Wrangell's gold rush days, and the rise of the fishing and timber industries with the museum's unique and varied collection of images and artifacts.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

WILDLIFE VIEWING

From world-class bear viewing to abundant marine wildlife, Wrangell is a paradise for animal enthusiasts and photographers.

Anan Wildlife Observatory offers the truly unique opportunity to watch both brown and black bears fishing and feasting on one of Southeast Alaska's largest pink salmon runs. From an observatory and photography platform, you can watch eagles, harbor seals, and bears gathering around Anan Creek and Bay to feed on the spawning humpies. This is one of the few places in Alaska where black and brown bears coexist at the same run – or at the very least put up with each other. Anan Creek is a 20-minute floatplane flight or an hour boat ride from Wrangell and many tour operators in town offer full-day tours to the observatory. The more adventurous will book a stay at the **U.S. Forest Service's Anan Bay Cabin**, which is only a mile hike from the observation platform.

Wrangell celebrates Alaska's bears in late July with **Alaska Bearfest**, a five-day festival of events including informative wildlife symposiums, cultural events, art and photography workshops, fine dining, a marathon, and so much more.

For those interested in viewing wildlife on the water, the waters surrounding Wrangell are rich with marine wildlife including humpback whales, orcas, Steller sea lions, sea otters, and harbor seals. Local tour operators offer whale watching and marine wildlife tours during the summer.

Wrangell is also a top destination for birders, welcoming the largest concentration of bald eagles in the **Inside Passage** in spring and hundreds of thousands of migrating birds to the Stikine River Delta in May and June. To celebrate spring and the return of the migrating birds, Wrangell hosts the **Stikine River Birding Festival** in late April, with days of workshops, activities and events.

STIKINE RIVER TOURS

Wrangell is the Gateway to the Stikine River, or Stik-heen, which means 'Great River' in Tlingit. The beautiful, wild Stikine River begins in the high peaks of interior British Columbia and meets the ocean some 400 miles later just north of Wrangell on the Stikine River delta. It is the fastest navigable free-flowing river in North America and is characterized by a rugged shoreline, craggy

mountains, glaciers, and wildlife including bears, moose, and wolves. Local jet boat charters offer immediate access to the glaciers, lakes, and sidewaters of the Stikine River. One of the most popular stops is Shakes Glacier with its icebergs spilling into Shakes Lake. Or, see the river and its glaciers and valleys by air, flying through the spectacular coastal mountains. The Stikine River offers up a backcountry paddler's paradise; with a handful of US Forest Service wilderness cabins available throughout the area, and access to Chief Shakes Hot Springs – a developed natural hot springs site featuring two cedar soaking tubs with breathtaking views of the pristine surrounding wilderness.

LECONTE GLACIER

If you're looking for the iconic Alaskan experience of watching massive pieces of ice calving off the face of a glacier, LeConte Glacier will not disappoint. Navigating through LeConte Bay towards the glacier is a spectacle in itself, as the bay is a constantly changing museum of ice sculptures carved by weather, tides, and time. One of the best things about LeConte is that it is not frequented by large ships and hordes of visitors, so you're likely to see more seals than people on your visit. Local jet boat operators offer regular tours to visit this incredible place.

LeConte Bay is home to many bird species, mountain goats, and hundreds of harbor seals in their pupping season from late May to mid-June. They birth and rear their pups on the icebergs in the bay to provide protection, though the cycle of life continues and they are often preyed on by eagles and the occasional Orca.

HIKING AND CAMPING

Hikers and campers will find plenty of choices for exploring the lush coastal rainforest both on Wrangell Island and in the surrounding area.

For those staying close to town, the [Mt. Dewey Trail](#) is a popular half-mile hike retracing the footsteps of famous naturalist John Muir and leading to a view overlooking the town and oceanfront. The [Volunteer Park Loop](#) (locally known as the Nature Trail) is also easily accessible from town and offers an easy stroll through muskeg, marsh and rainforest environments.

[City Park](#), one mile from the ferry terminal, offers tent camping close to town. [Shoemaker Bay Recreation Area](#) is located five miles from town, offering both free tent camping areas and 16 RV sites with or without hookups for a fee. The adjacent marina parking area provides a dump station, water spigot, and restrooms.

Also at the Shoemaker Bay Recreation Area, is the trailhead for the [Rainbow Falls](#) trail system. Whether you stop at the platform one mile from the trailhead to view a scenic 100-foot waterfall or continue on for a longer, more strenuous hike to the top of the mountain, you're in for spectacular views and lush forest. Backpackers may choose to spend the night at one of the three-sided Forest Service shelters at the top of the trail.

Visitors with their own vehicle can access numerous additional Forest Service campsites and trails on the island. Maps of the trails and roads can be found at the Visitor Center located in the Nolan Center or at the Forest Service office.

Local outfitters offer canoe and kayak rentals, jetboat charters, or flights providing access to remote Forest Service cabins and trails that can only be reached by boat or floatplane. There are 23 cabins located in the Wrangell area. These rustic cabins include heating stoves, plywood bunks, tables, benches, and outhouses. Information and reservations for these cabins can be found online at www.recreation.gov.

BIKING

Wrangell's near-100 miles of paved and gravel roads offer cyclists a unique opportunity to explore the island and community up close. A paved bike path follows Zimovia Highway 5 miles out to the Shoemaker Bay recreation area, making exploration on two wheels more accessible.

Local outfitters offer hourly and daily e-bike rentals for visitors to cruise at their own pace closer to town; while gravel bikers and bike-packers may enjoy venturing further out to explore the many rolling miles of gravel logging roads transecting the more remote national forest areas of the island.

PADDLING

With ready access to the wild Stikine River, miles of ocean passages between remote islands, public access beaches, and inland lakes, Wrangell offers world class paddling opportunities for all levels of paddler and all types of paddle craft.

Whether you're seeking a multi-day backcountry canoe or sea kayaking trip or an afternoon stand-up paddleboarding, Wrangell's wealth of water access makes it easy to immerse yourself in the natural beauty of this water-carved landscape.

Kayaks, canoes, and standup paddleboards are available for rent from local guides and outfitters.

FISHING

Wrangell's calm, protected waters and proximity to abundant streams and rivers make for excellent fishing opportunities. Experienced anglers and novice first-time fishers will find the perfect setting for angling adventures among Wrangell's surrounding bountiful ocean waters and easily accessible sheltered passages. Depending on the season, you may fish for all five species of salmon, halibut, shrimp, crab, and an array of bottom fish.

Bring your favorite spinning or fly rod and fish Wrangell's idyllic streams and shoreline on your own or hire a local charter company or professional guide for the day or even a multi-day sport fishing adventure.

GOLF

Golf in the wilds of Alaska, between snow capped mountains & in the middle of the rainforest.

Muskeg Meadows golf course is a USGA regulation 9-hole course with a 250-yard driving range that also boasts an 18-basket disc golf course with tournament class baskets for a fun group activity. Clubs, carts, apparel, logo discs, beverages, and snacks are available on site at the pro shop. Open tournaments are held most every weekend during the summer.

The course winds through rainforest and meadows with abundant berry bushes, streams, and scenic ocean views against a backdrop of snow-capped mountains. Accompanying the vistas, sightings of Sitka black tailed deer and bald eagles are common, as well as the occasional black bear. It is truly a memorable experience to play golf surrounded by the natural beauty of Southeast Alaska.

[Things to do > Wildlife Viewing > Bear Viewing](#)

(Copy to add to the current page):

Some of the most popular bear viewing tours depart from communities such as [Anchorage](#), [Kodiak](#), [Homer](#), [Juneau](#), and [Wrangell](#) visiting top bear viewing destinations like Brooks Falls at [Katmai National Park](#), [Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge](#), [Lake Clark National Park](#), [Denali National Park](#), [Pack Creek Bear Viewing Area](#), and [Anan Wildlife Observatory](#).

Commented [AF1]: Could create a new page on travel Alaska for Anan; text below.

(Copy for a feature page):

Anan Wildlife Observatory

This wildlife observatory near [Wrangell](#) is renowned for viewing both black and brown bear at Anan Creek.

Located 30 miles south of Wrangell on the mainland, Anan Creek is home to the largest run of pink salmon in Southeast Alaska, which attracts both brown and black bears fishing and feasting on spawning humpies. A well-maintained trail and viewing platform makes this site one of the best bear viewing sites in the state.

THINGS TO DO

Both black and brown bears can be seen feeding at Anan creek and are certainly the stars of the show, but Bald Eagles, Stellar sea lions, seals, otters, mink, and the occasional wolf may also be spotted in the area. The creek and its tidally-influenced bay teem with salmon during the run, and visitors can often spot huge masses of fish waiting their turn to try jumping the falls to reach their spawning grounds. Occasionally, orcas and humpback whales can be seen offshore.

The Forest Service maintains the observatory to provide an opportunity to watch the bears feeding up close. A covered viewing shelter, observation platform, and a photo blind all overlook the cascading falls, where salmon make their way upstream to spawn and the bears try their luck at fishing. The observatory is reached by walking a scenic half-mile trail. During July and August, the trailhead and observation platform are monitored by the Forest Service.

Anan is located thirty miles south of Wrangell on the remote Alaskan mainland and is only accessible by water or air. The peak season for bear viewing is July 5th through August 25th, and all visitors are required to have a permit to visit during that time. Most visitors choose a local charter boat or float plane operator for a fully guided tour with permits included. If traveling on your own boat, you can obtain private permits from the US Forest Service. Visiting

Anan outside of the peak season does not require a permit, but all posted regulations at the trailhead are still in effect for safety.

FACILITIES AND CAMPING

The Anan Observatory platform features an outhouse for visitor use. More adventurous visitors can also reserve the Anan Bay Recreation Cabin, which includes up to four permits each day of your stay. The ocean front cabin is about a mile hike from the viewing platform, and includes a heating stove, plywood bunks, benches, and outhouse. You must arrange transportation to and from the cabin. Information and reservations for these cabins can be found online at www.recreation.gov.

GETTING HERE

The Anan Wildlife Observatory is accessible only by boat or plane. Most visitors arrange tours and transportation with local guides and outfitters.

[Things to do > Wildlife Viewing > Birding](#)

BIRDING FESTIVALS IN ALASKA

Birding is such a hot commodity in Alaska that the state actually hosts a number of birding festivals throughout the year. In late April Wrangell hosts the [Stikine River Birding Festival](#), with workshops and events celebrating the return hundreds of thousands of migrating birds to the Stikine River Delta.

In early May, [Cordova](#) hosts the [Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival](#) where the tidal flats of the Delta are bombarded with nearly 5 million shorebirds. The festival celebrates the significance of their migration with scavenger hunts, art exhibits, and group viewings.

Similarly, because of the need for shorebirds to make a pitstop along tidal areas and wetlands, the [Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival](#) takes place in early May in [Homer](#), Alaska. With at least 134 bird species spotted in 2022, this is Alaska's largest wildlife viewing event. And in April, [Ketchikan](#) celebrates the return of the rufous hummingbirds to the [Tongass National Forest](#) at the annual Ketchikan Hummingbird Festival. The [Southeast Alaska Discovery Center](#) hosts a series of events for the festival including educational and creative events, as well as art exhibits and family activities.

Experience the largest gathering of bald eagles in the country at the [Haines Bald Eagle Festival](#) where more than 3,000 bald eagles can be spotted over a 4-mile stretch of the Chilkat River. Be sure to note this event in November, located at the [Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve](#), as it as a rare wildlife phenomenon worth seeing. Celebrate the beginning of the fall migration of the sandhill crane at the [Tanana Valley Sandhill Crane Festival](#) in [Fairbanks](#). Held the third week of August, this festival hosts speakers, artists, and guides, and features a number of activities and workshops for all ages.

[Things to do > Alaska Native Culture > Tlingit, Haida, Eyak & Tsimshian Culture](#)

You can visit the Totem Heritage Center in [Ketchikan](#) to learn about traditional and modern carving techniques, and to see the craftsmanship of totems hundreds of years old. In [Sitka](#), experience the drumming and hear traditional stories shared by the Sheet'ka Kwaan Naa Kahidi Dancers at the Sheet'ka Kwaan Naa Kahidi Community House. The Sealaska Heritage Institute in [Juneau](#) continues the arts, cultural, and language traditions of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples through workshops, classes, monumental art, and collections. Experience a traditional Tlingit clan house at Chief Shakes Tribal House in [Wrangell](#), where every plank of the house was carved by Master Carvers using traditional methods.

[Things to do > Museums, Arts, & History](#)

(Add a feature under "Plan Your Trip" section):

Wrangell Museum

Explore Wrangell's long and colorful past from the early Tlingit peoples to first European contact and Russian settlement, to Wrangell's gold rush days and the rise of the timber and fishing industries. The Wrangell Museum features an impressive collection of images and artifacts including four Tlingit houseposts hand-carved in the late 1700s and thought to be the oldest known houseposts in existence today. Located inside the Nolan Center in the heart of downtown Wrangell.

[Visit Website](#)

ORIGINAL CONTENT

Travel Alaska

- Link to tour operators from River Boat tours, does not bring you to any Wrangell specific businesses.
- Same for fishing

<https://www.travelalaska.com/Destinations/Cities-Towns/Wrangell>

Wrangell

Strategically located near the mouth of the Stikine River, Wrangell is one of the oldest towns in Alaska. Now home to about 2,500 residents, Wrangell is the only town in Alaska to have existed under three flags and be ruled by four nations: Tlingit, Russia, England, and the United States.

ABOUT WRANGELL (TLINGIT: SHTAX'HÉEN)

Wrangell is located on the northwest tip of Wrangell Island, 155 miles south of Juneau and 89 miles northwest of Ketchikan. The picturesque harbor town in the Inside Passage – not to be confused with Wrangell-St. Elias National Park in Southcentral Alaska – is known for its Tlingit culture, wildlife viewing, and exploration on the beautiful Stikine River.

THINGS TO DO

TLINGIT CULTURE AND HISTORY

Tlingit people have been living in the area for thousands of years and examples of their culture and history are prevalent in Wrangell. The town is home to an impressive collection of totems with more than a dozen scattered throughout town that can make for a pleasant walk. One of the most popular totems is the killer whale totem that adorns Chief Shakes Grave.

One of the most enchanting spots is also the location of the best collection of totems: Chief Shakes Island, a grassy islet in the middle of the boat harbor that is reached by a pedestrian bridge. The tiny island with its totems, tall cottonwoods, and eagles usually perched in the branches is a quiet oasis compared to the hum of the fishing fleet that surrounds it. In the middle is Shakes Community House, an excellent example of a Tlingit tribal house that contains tools, blankets, and other cultural items. Just as impressive are the six totems surrounding the tribal house, all duplicates of originals carved in the late 1930s.

Just north of town is this Petroglyph Beach State Historic Park, where you can see primitive rock carvings believed to be 8,000 years old. From Evergreen Avenue, less than a mile from the ferry terminal, a boardwalk leads you past a series of interpretive displays that explain the history of the carvings and then descends to the beach. From there you turn right and walk north about 50 yards and - with your back to the water - look for the carvings on large rocks, resembling spirals, birds, fish, whales, and faces. Check a tide book before you arrive because there are almost 50 petroglyphs in the area, but most are submerged at high tide.

Wrangell's interesting Tlingit, Russian, and gold mining history can be experienced at the Wrangell Museum. The museum is home to a collection of over 3,000 photos and negatives depicting the area's history, beginning with the gold rush, and an exhibit on early exploration by

Russian and English settlers. Also on display are a four hand-carved Tlingit houseposts dating back to the late 1700s and a collection of spruce and cedar bark baskets.

WILDLIFE VIEWING

In late June through August, one of Southeast Alaska's largest pink salmon runs enters Anan Bay and heads up Anan Creek, located 30 miles southeast of Wrangell on the mainland. From an observatory and photography platform at Anan Wildlife Observatory, you can safely watch eagles, harbor seals, black bears, and brown bears feasting on the spawning humpies. This is one of the few places in Alaska where black and brown bears coexist at the same run – or at the very least put up with each other.

Anan Creek is a 20-minute floatplane flight or an hour boat ride from Wrangell and many tour operators in town offers full-day tours to the observatory. The more adventurous will book the U.S. Forest Service's Anan Bay Cabin, which is only a mile hike from the observation platform.

Wrangell celebrates Alaska's bears in late July at Alaska Bearfest, a five-day festival with events including a symposium on bear management and interaction, photography workshops, music and art events, and boat trips to Anan Wildlife Observatory to see and photograph the black and brown bears.

For those interested in viewing wildlife on the water, the waters surrounding Wrangell are rich with marine wildlife including humpback whales, orcas, Steller sea lions, sea otters, and harbor seals. Local tour operators offer whale watching and marine wildlife tours during the summer. Tour operators also lead trips out to LeConte Glacier, North America's southernmost tidewater glacier.

Wrangell is also a top destination for birders, welcoming the largest concentration of bald eagles in the Inside Passage in spring and hundreds of thousands of migrating birds to the Stikine River Delta in May and June. To celebrate spring and the return of the migrating birds, Wrangell hosts the Stikine River Birding Festival in late April/early May.

RIVER BOAT TOURS

The beautiful, wild Stikine River begins in the high peaks of interior British Columbia and ends some 400 miles later just north of Wrangell in the Stikine River delta. It is the fastest navigable river in North American and is characterized by a narrow, rugged shoreline, craggy mountains, and glaciers. Several charter boat operators offer trips on the Stikine, often using a jet boat to spend a day traveling up the river. One of the most popular stops is Shakes Glacier with its icebergs spilling into Shakes Lake.

KAYAKING

One look at a nautical chart of Wrangell will have sea kayakers dreaming of its islands and protected waterways. Experienced kayakers can paddle across the vast Stikine River flats while beginners can enjoy paddling around the harbor, over to Petroglyph Beach, or to Dead Man's Island. Outfitters in town rent kayaks and offer guided trips.

FISHING

The waters surrounding Wrangell are a fisherman's paradise and the town is well equipped with charter fishing operators who offer day trips and multi-day fishing adventures. The action often begins in late April or May when king salmon are the first to begin spawning. Along with salmon, anglers fish for trophy halibut that can weigh more than 100 pounds along with red snapper, ling cod, and sea bass.

MUSKET MEADOWS GOLF COURSE

Wrangell's golf course may be a USGA-certified nine-hole, par 36 course, but it is uniquely Alaskan. It was carved from a rainforest and is surrounded by the natural beauty of the ocean and snow-capped mountains. Players are rarely alarmed when a bear comes bounding across a fairway, and then there is the club's Raven Rule: if a raven steals your ball you may replace it with no penalty provided you have a witness. The course also features a 250-yard driving range.

STAYING IN WRANGELL

Several accommodation options are available in Wrangell including an inn, B&Bs, guest houses, and vacation rentals.

GETTING TO WRANGELL

Non-stop air service on Alaska Airlines connects Wrangell to Anchorage, Juneau, Petersburg, Ketchikan, and Seattle, and air taxi service is also available for connections to other Inside Passage communities. The Alaska Marine Highway ferry provides regular service to Wrangell from other coastal communities. Small and medium-sized cruise ships also stop in Wrangell during the summer.

HISTORY

The Tlingit people have lived in the area for thousands of years. The town of Wrangell, one of Alaska's oldest settlements, was settled by Russian traders in 1834. Wrangell's heyday was as a jumping-off point for three major gold rushes up the Stikine River from 1861 to the late 1890s. Back then, Wrangell was as lawless and ruthless as Skagway and at one point Wyatt Earp, the famous Arizona lawman, filled in as a volunteer marshal for 10 days before moving on to Nome. Wrangell's most famous visitor, however, was John Muir, who came in 1879 and again in 1880.

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<https://www.travelalaska.com/wrangell/wildlife-viewing/bear-viewing/travel-wrangell>

Not only is Wrangell a great location to enjoy your dream Alaska vacation, but Wrangell is the gateway to one of the **top 5 places** in Alaska to view bears! Anan Bear and Wildlife Observatory, a boat ride south of Wrangell, hosts one of the largest pink salmon runs in the State which draws bears, eagles, seals, sealions and wolves to the feast during July and August. Enroute, a myriad of wildlife and scenic vistas enchants the visitor. A very unique aspect of this US Forest Service managed site is that both black and brown bears may be fishing for salmon side by side. A special photo blind allows close photography of bears without disturbing their environment! Join us in late July for "Bearfest", celebrating Alaska Bears with workshops, music, food and a marathon!

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https://www.travelalaska.com/Explore-Alaska/Itineraries/Birding_from_Ketchikan_to_Wrangell

Birding from Ketchikan to Wrangell

Mid-March marks an influx of migratory birds to Alaska, intent on reaching their summer breeding grounds. The first region to welcome them is the Inside Passage, where birders can delight in this six-day spring tour that'll bring them up close and personal with thousands of migrating birds.

DAY 1: KETCHIKAN

Take an early morning flight from Seattle to Ketchikan, Alaska's "First City," where you can catch the Alaska Hummingbird Festival throughout the entire month of April. Tailor the rest of your trip around festival events, including guided birding hikes, art shows, and other festivities. Amongst your birding adventures, consider adding in a visit to Totem Bight State Historical Park to see a breathtaking collection of Tlingit totem poles, or even a snorkeling tour to check out the stunning variety of life in the intertidal zone right offshore.

DAY 2: KETCHIKAN

Spend the afternoon exploring downtown Ketchikan, where local galleries host art shows associated with the Alaska Hummingbird Festival. Make sure you also visit Creek Street, a historical district of boardwalks built on pilings over Ketchikan Creek, which runs straight through the middle of town. Enjoy a delicious seafood lunch at one of Ketchikan's many downtown eateries before you board the afternoon Inter-Island Ferry for a three-hour sailing to the port town of Hollis on nearby Prince of Wales Island, the fourth-largest island in the United States. You'll spend the night in Hollis.

DAY 3: PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND

Grab your binoculars, rent a car, and head out for one of the best days of bird watching in your life. Prince of Wales Island is criss-crossed with old logging roads that you can drive or hike, or hire one of the local tour operators to take you out in search of birds, other wildlife, or fishing. At the end of your day, make the hour-long drive west through the Tlingit cultural center of Klawock, where you can see masterfully carved totem poles in Klawock Totem Park, and on to Craig, the island's largest community, where you'll spend the night.

DAY 4: PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND

Greet the day by strolling Craig's bayside cemetery trail, which offers great bird watching opportunities. You'll have just enough time to squeeze in another day hike in Tongass National Forest or a quick kayak paddle along the island's shoreline before you hop a regional flight back to Ketchikan, where you'll spend the night before flying on to Wrangell. Or, if the ferry schedules line up, you can take a six-hour Alaska Marine Highway ferry sailing from Ketchikan to Wrangell.

DAY 5: WRANGELL

Hop the morning flight from Ketchikan to Wrangell. Be sure to time your arrival in this historical community to catch some or all of the Stikine River Birding Festival, which takes place at the end of April each year. The annual festival celebrates the largest springtime concentration of bald eagles in North America, but eagles are just the beginning. You'll also have opportunities to spot dozens of other bird species and attend lectures, art classes, and other fun birding-themed

events. Before you turn in for the night, consider taking the mile-long stroll to Petroglyph Beach State Historic Park, where you can see ancient petroglyphs carved into the rocks strewn along the beach.

DAY 6: WRANGELL

Amongst all the fun birding activities available this weekend, consider adding something unexpected to your itinerary: Golf! The Stikine River Birding Festival features a tournament at the local Muskeg Meadows Golf Course, a USGA regulation nine-hole course, but you can also just play a round on your own. All equipment, including clubs and carts, is available for rent, and it's a fun and active way to spend some more time outdoors appreciating the local scenery. If golf isn't your thing, visit Chief Shakes Island, where a replica Tlingit tribal house sits on a small island in Wrangell Harbor. When you're ready, daily afternoon jet service from Wrangell to Seattle and beyond will get you home.

THE ABOVE NARRATIVE HAS WRANGELL IN A BIRDING DESTINATION BUT IT IS NOT EXPLICITLY LISTED IN BIRDING DESTINATIONS. ALSO NOT LISTED AS A FESTIVAL IN MAIN PAGE.

<https://www.travelalaska.com/Destinations/Parks-Public-Lands/Tongass-National-Forest>

Tongass National Forest

The scenic beauty and recreation opportunities inside the United States' largest national forest are vibrant and abundant.

Dense green forests, dramatic coastline dotted with islands and waterfalls, and tidewater glaciers spilling down from the mountains make up the varied landscapes of Tongass National Forest, spanning 500 miles across Alaska's Inside Passage region. Treasured by visitors and locals alike, the Tongass is the largest intact temperate rainforest in the world and the largest national forest in the United States.

The national forest received its name from the Tongass Clan of the Tlingit Peoples, who, along with the Haida and Tsimshian Peoples, have lived in this area for thousands of years. More than 80 percent of Southeast Alaska is in Tongass, spanning 11,000 miles of coastline, and home to over 70,000 people living in 32 communities, including Alaska's state capital, Juneau.

THINGS TO DO

The Tongass contains 19 wilderness areas, including the 545-sq-mile Russell Fjord Wilderness, as well as Admiralty Island National Monument and Misty Fjords National Monument.

Recreation opportunities here are abundant, including hiking, camping, public use cabins, fishing, kayaking, wildlife viewing, glacier viewing, and more.

Visitors can hike miles of maintained trails through dense forests, alpine meadows, or on boardwalks through peat bogs called muskegs. In the Juneau area, the U.S. Forest Service maintains more than 20 trails including five that end at a glacier. West Glacier Trail to Mendenhall Glacier is known as one of the most spectacular hikes in the Inside Passage. Other activities include ranger-led tours of El Capitan Cave on Prince of Wales Island, kayaking in Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness, and canoeing and portaging a chain of lakes across Admiralty Island.

Bear viewing is also very popular in Tongass. During the salmon spawning season, visitors gather at bear viewing sites at Fish Creek near Hyder, Anan Creek near Wrangell, Pack Creek Bear Viewing Area on Admiralty Island (home to over 1,500 bears), and Steep Creek at Juneau's Mendenhall Glacier. Equally popular are whale watching tours to view migrating humpback whales. Charter boat operators in Juneau, Sitka, and Petersburg offer such tours while Forest Service staff on the Alaska Marine Highway help passengers spot wildlife, including whales.

Scattered throughout the forest, usually on remote lakes or bays, are 150 Forest Service cabins that can be reserved in advance. The vast majority are accessed by float plane, but five in Juneau and one in Petersburg can be reached on foot. Many communities in the Inside Passage have one if not several Forest Service campgrounds set in scenic locations in the Tongass.

WILDLIFE

Wildlife is abundant throughout the Tongass National Forest. Sitka blacktail deer and its two main predators, wolves and brown bears, inhabit this area. Black bears are common as well as mountain goats and moose. Marine mammals found along the coastal waters include Dall's and harbor porpoises, harbor seals, sea otters, orcas, and humpback and minke whales. The waters teem with fish including halibut and all five species of Pacific salmon. More bald eagles live in this region than in any other place in the world.

LANDSCAPE

The Tongass is bordered by the Pacific Ocean and the Coast Mountains, which extend across the Canadian border into British Columbia. The vast coastal terrain is the world's largest temperate rainforest, and its canopy consists of towering hemlock, Sitka spruce, and red and yellow cedar, and alder. Moss and ferns cover the ground, and lichens drape many trees.

Though home to the world's largest temperate rainforest, almost half of Tongass is covered by ice, water, wetlands, and rock. Its most famous ice floe is the Mendenhall Glacier, Alaska's famous "drive-in glacier," because it is only 13 miles from downtown Juneau along a paved road.

A boat ride from Petersburg or Wrangell brings you near the face of LeConte Glacier, the southernmost tidewater glacier on the continent. Just 30 miles north of Yakutat is the 76-mile-long Hubbard Glacier, the longest tidewater glacier in the world and easily one of Alaska's most active. The rip tides and currents that flow in front of the 8-mile-wide glacier are so strong they cause Hubbard to calve almost continuously.

HISTORY

The area is the traditional homeland of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian Peoples, who have lived here for thousands of years. The forest was designated in 1902 as the Alexander Archipelago Forest Reserve by President Theodore Roosevelt. In 1908 the forest was renamed and expanded, and today the 16.9 million-acre Tongass National Forest stretches from the Pacific Ocean to the vast inland ice fields that border British Columbia, and from the southern tip of Prince of Wales Island to Malaspina Glacier 500 miles to the north.

FACILITIES AND CAMPING

Tongass National Forest offers outstanding recreation opportunities and facilities. Scattered throughout the forest are 150 Forest Service cabins that can be reserved in advance. There are also 20 designating campgrounds or camping areas within the forest, plus endless opportunities for dispersed and backcountry camping.

There are three visitor centers with displays, exhibits, and information on exploring the vast area: Southeast Alaska Discovery Center in Ketchikan, Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center in Juneau, and the Petersburg Visitor Information Center in Petersburg. There are also additional Ranger District offices located in Craig, Hoonah, Sitka, Thorne Bay, Wrangell, and Yakutat.

GETTING HERE

Because of its vast size, Tongass National Forest is accessible from several communities in the Inside Passage. Visitors can explore these areas independently, join a guided trip, or explore as part of an excursion that can be added to cruise itineraries.

There is no mainland road access to most of Alaska's Inside Passage. There is daily flight service from Seattle and Anchorage to Sitka, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Wrangell, and Juneau, while scheduled air taxi service is available to many other smaller Inside Passage communities. Year-round Alaska Marine Highway service connects many communities to Bellingham, WA, and Prince Rupert, B.C., Canada.

For more information, visit the Tongass National Forest website.

THE ABOVE NARRATIVE IS SPECIFIC TO TONGASS. REVIEW AND SPICE UP WRANGELL

https://www.travelalaska.com/Explore-Alaska/Itineraries/A_Quick_Tour_of_Inside_Passage

A Quick Tour of the Inside Passage

Sample the best sights and experiences along Alaska's Inside Passage with this quick five-day itinerary, which includes everything from bear viewing to whale watching, spectacular glaciers, and a chance to learn about the Alaska Native culture and history of Southeast Alaska.

DAY 1: KETCHIKAN

Arrive in Ketchikan, which is a little more than an hour from Seattle by jet. Ketchikan is known for its impressive collection of totem poles, and two of the best places to see them — Saxman Native Village and Totem Bight State Historical Park — are within a short bus ride of town. Also be sure to visit historic Creek Street, a boardwalk-lined pedestrian area featuring a number of gift shops, restaurants, galleries, and even a small museum. In the afternoon, take a boat tour or fly-in sightseeing trip to the 2.3-million-acre Misty Fjords National Monument, a singular tour through some of Alaska's most dramatic glacier-carved fjords. If you prefer to explore the area by foot, Ketchikan offers a wide variety of hiking trails that take you into the massive, 17-million-acre Tongass National Forest.

DAY 2: WRANGELL

Take a six-hour ride on one of the Alaska Marine Highway ferries to the **tiny village** of Wrangell, located at the mouth of the mighty Stikine River. Don't miss a chance to visit nearby bear viewing areas, where you can see black bears and sometimes brown bears in close proximity

as they fish salmon out of a rushing creek. Stay the night in Wrangell. **WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE ON THE FIRST DAY?**

DAY 3: WRANGELL TO PETERSBURG

Depending on when your ferry to Petersburg departs, you may have up to half a day to explore. Like Ketchikan, Wrangell is known for its collection of totem poles, with more than a dozen scattered throughout town. Just north of Wrangell, Petroglyph Beach State Historic Park is a popular beach-combing location full of prehistoric rock carvings. Wrangell is also home to several excellent day hikes with views of waterfalls or nearby Shoemaker Bay, although you'll need a rental car to access the trailheads. Once your ferry arrives, settle in for a three-hour ride to Petersburg, where you'll spend the night.

DAY 4: PETERSBURG

Also known as "Little Norway," Petersburg is a classic fishing town founded by Norwegian fishermen who realized icebergs from a nearby glacier would help preserve their catch. Petersburg's main downtown street overlooks the small boat harbor, and the town contains many examples of Norwegian-style street art, painted on the buildings or embedded in the sidewalks. Downtown Petersburg also contains a fisherman's memorial, a scaled-down dragonboat, and a small but excellent museum. But the biggest adventures here are day cruises and fishing charters, seeing the icebergs of the LeConte Glacier (the southernmost tidewater glacier in the Northern Hemisphere), or observing the breaching humpback whales of Frederick Sound. Spend the night at one of Petersburg's charming bed and breakfasts or hotels.

DAY 5: JUNEAU

From Petersburg, hop a short flight to Juneau, Alaska's capital city. Here, you have your choice of many short adventures that take only an hour or two each: you can take the aerial Goldbelt Tram to the top of Mount Roberts for an eagle's eye view of the surrounding area, visit one of the city's excellent museums, see world-class Alaska Native artwork at the Walter Soboleff Building, make the pilgrimage to see the blue ice of the Mendenhall Glacier, or hop on a helicopter for a quick flightseeing trip that can include glacier trekking or a dog-sled tour on glacier snow and ice. When you're ready to head home, Juneau is less than three hours from Seattle by jet.

OPTIONAL ADD-ONS

Juneau places dozens of adventures at your fingertips, so you might want to stick around a few extra days to enjoy the the fishing, whale watching, ziplining, bear viewing, or a day trip to historic Skagway. Or, if you can spare a few more days, consider adding a trip to Anchorage and Fairbanks, where Alaska's best inland adventures make the perfect complement to the water-based experiences you just enjoyed in the Inside Passage.

<https://www.travelalaska.com/Things-To-Do/Wildlife-Viewing/Bear-Viewing>

Bear Viewing

Alaska's wild landscapes provide healthy habitat for bears. In fact, there are so many bears in Alaska, the odds are good you'll be able to catch a glimpse — especially when the salmon are running! The easiest (and safest) way to view bears in the wild is on a guided tour by small plane or boat that lands you and your expert guides near an isolated camp. Human behavior in

these bear viewing camps is strictly controlled, with the goal of making you part of the scenery and letting the bears go about their business undisturbed.

Many tour options are available to view Alaska's brown bears and black bears in the Inside Passage, Southcentral, Interior, and Southwest regions of Alaska. Some of the most popular bear viewing tours depart from communities such as Anchorage, Kodiak, Homer, and Juneau, visiting top bear viewing destinations like [Brooks Falls at Katmai National Park, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, Lake Clark National Park, Denali National Park, and Pack Creek Bear Viewing Area](#). If you're looking for an even bigger adventure, multi-day polar bear viewing trips are available in Alaska's Arctic region.

Embark on a half-day or full-day bear viewing trip where you will travel by plane, boat, or bus to top bear viewing destinations with experienced guides. Or, spend a night in bear country at a bear viewing lodge and go on personalized, guided bear viewing treks by day. Overnight bear viewing packages typically include lodging, meals, guide fees, and transportation.

<https://www.travelalaska.com/Things-To-Do/Wildlife-Viewing/Birding>

Birding in Alaska

From magnificent bald eagles to tiny hummingbirds, nearly 500 species of birds can be found in Alaska. Spring migration brings millions of birds north, ready to take advantage of the long summer days to mate and raise their young while food is plentiful before flying back south for the winter. April, May, and June are the best months to see these travelers passing through or laying claim to summer territories.

Many Alaska communities host birding festivals to celebrate their migratory visitors, or you can take a guided tour with a professional guide who will help you identify rare species to add to your birding bucket list. Watch for raptors soaring in the mountains, shorebirds wading along the coasts, and songbirds calling from the trees. Don't forget about the seabirds: species like cormorants, murres, auklets, kittiwakes, and the clownish, colorful puffin nest in sheer cliffside colonies along Alaska's southern and western coastline. Here's everything you need to know about birding in Alaska.

GOOD PLACES TO BIRD WATCH IN ALASKA

There's no shortage of stunning locations to catch a glimpse of Alaska's birds. Glacier Bay National Park and Kenai Fjords National Park are must-visits for any bird enthusiast. Glacier Bay has roughly 240 different species and Kenai Fjords has about 190, many of which are easily found from early May to mid-September. Meanwhile, the Pribilof Islands have been formally recognized as part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge due to their prominence as seabird nesting sites. More than three million seabirds nest on the islands and over 220 species have been reported here, with some coming from as far as South America.

Another prime spot is Denali National Park and Preserve, which boasts 167 species of birds. Although birding dips in the winter months, ptarmigan, gyrfalcon, and goshawks remain in the park when the temperatures drop. Elsewhere, Gambell sits on the northwest of St. Lawrence Island and is home to loons, auklets, murres, and puffins at the start of June. The emperor goose, ruff, cuckoo, and ivory gull have also been spotted here. Nome and the Bering Sea coast is also a popular nesting spot for birds like North American waterfowl. During the summer, the area welcomes roughly 200 migratory bird species to its shores.

Kodiak Island welcomes birds from both land and sea to its rocky terrain. From sparrows, winter wrens, bank swallows, and golden-crowned kinglets, more than 240 bird species visit the archipelago. Eagles are also in the area, alongside seasonal appearances from puffins, kittiwakes, geese, and swans. Adak Island, located in the Aleutian Islands and part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, is also an excellent spot for birding, attracting rare bird species that aren't viewable anywhere else in the United States due to its remote location in the Bering Sea.

BEST TIMES TO BIRD

Generally speaking, the best time to bird in Alaska is from late April until mid-September. These summer months are when many birds migrate through to the area or settle here for the season. In the fall, birds tend to leave, however, local birds become more active—which can be a nice surprise for birders who aren't familiar with Alaska's native bird species. For rare birds that migrate to western Alaska from Asia, June is ideal to visit. For seabird colonies in the northwest, July is best. Naturally, different species of birds have different seasonal patterns, so if there's a particular bird you're hoping to see, check beforehand to confirm when they're due to be active in Alaska.

If you're visiting during winter when bird activity is quieter, head to the Alaska Zoo, Alaska Sealife Center, Alaska Raptor Center, the American Bald Eagle Foundation, or Bird Learning and Treatment Center for a guaranteed peek at the feathered beauties.

TYPES OF BIRDS FOUND IN ALASKA

Alaska is home to an impressive and extensive array of birds including the American robin, chickadees, crossbills, dark-eyed junco, fox sparrow, jays, pine siskin, red-breasted nuthatch, redpolls, and the rufous hummingbird, to name a few. Not to mention, the downy woodpecker, song sparrow, and the European starling are some of the most commonly spotted by birders.

More exotic birds found in Alaska include murre, puffins, dovebies, and black guillemot. Alaska also boasts some of the most elusive species of bird, like the McKay's bunting, that has remained an enigma to scientists until recently because of their isolated home on the islands in the Bering Strait. Ornithologists and dedicated bird watchers alike can find species of birds they have never seen before if they know the right places to look.

BIRDING FESTIVALS IN ALASKA

Birding is such a hot commodity in Alaska that the state actually hosts a number of birding festivals throughout the year. In early May, Cordova hosts the Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival where the tidal flats of the Delta are bombarded with nearly 5 million shorebirds. The festival celebrates the significance of their migration with scavenger hunts, art exhibits, and group viewings.

Similarly, because of the need for shorebirds to make a pitstop along tidal areas and wetlands, the Kachemak Bay Shorebird Festival takes place in early May in Homer, Alaska. With at least 134 bird species spotted in 2022, this is Alaska's largest wildlife viewing event. And in April, Ketchikan celebrates the return of the rufous hummingbirds to the Tongass National Forest at the annual Ketchikan Hummingbird Festival. The Southeast Alaska Discovery Center hosts a series of events for the festival including educational and creative events, as well as art exhibits and family activities.

Experience the largest gathering of bald eagles in the country at the Haines Bald Eagle Festival where more than 3,000 bald eagles can be spotted over a 4-mile stretch of the Chilkat River. Be sure to note this event in November, located at the Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve, as it is a rare wildlife phenomenon worth seeing. Celebrate the beginning of the fall migration of the sandhill crane at the Tanana Valley Sandhill Crane Festival in Fairbanks. Held the third week of August, this festival hosts speakers, artists, and guides, and features a number of activities and workshops for all ages.

WHERE TO FIND A GUIDE

While independent birding can be fun, there are a number of organizations and tour operators that provide local guides who can offer in-depth explanations about birds' behaviors and movements, as well as show visitors less accessible locations to see birds. Guides are typically long-time Alaskans that are accustomed to bird patterns and can offer tailored tours according to group size and preferences.

<https://www.travelalaska.com/Destinations/Regions/Inside-Passage>

Inside Passage Region

Shaped by the staggering force of massive glaciers millions of years ago, Alaska's Inside Passage stretches 500 miles along the Pacific Ocean and boasts wildlife-filled fjords, tidewater glaciers, and lush island scenery. The Tongass National Forest — the largest national forest in the United States and the largest intact temperate rainforest in the world — covers the vast majority of the Inside Passage.

The Inside Passage is home to Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian Alaska Native peoples whose history is reflected in towering totem poles and whose vibrant culture can be seen today through art, song, and dance. Russian settlers left their legacy through onion-domed churches gleaming with icons.

Today, the Inside Passage is the most popular route for large and small cruise ships departing from the Seattle, Los Angeles, and Vancouver, B.C. from May through September. For those that want to travel at their own pace, the Inside Passage is also accessible on the state ferry along the Alaska Marine Highway System, which stops in 35 ports of call from Bellingham, WA to Dutch Harbor in Alaska's Aleutian Islands.

Both cruisers and independent travelers are awed by the lush beauty of top Inside Passage destinations including Juneau, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Sitka, Skagway, Wrangell, and Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve. There's no shortage of adventures to be had, including kayaking, hiking, fishing, experiencing Alaska Native culture, glacier viewing, and searching for wildlife including whales, bears, and eagles.

<https://www.travelalaska.com/Things-To-Do/Museums-Arts-History/Museums>

Museums

Discover treasures and one-of-a-kind exhibitions at Alaska's museums. From natural history to modern art, transportation, science, and Alaska Native culture, explore Alaska's museums and cultural centers to discover what life is like in the Alaska. Wander the galleries at the Anchorage Museum to see how modern Alaska Native artists interpret cultural traditions through modern design, learn about Alaska geology and natural history at the Museum of the North in Fairbanks,

or learn traditional dances at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage — just to name a few. From quirky collections to interactive media, dive deeper into Alaska's artistic, cultural, and historic traditions at one of Alaska's many cultural institutions.

<https://www.travelalaska.com/Things-To-Do/Museums-Arts-History/Arts-Cultural-Historic-Tours>

Arts, Cultural, & Historic Tours

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Learn more about Alaska Native Cultural Centers, Tours, & Demonstrations.

<https://www.travelalaska.com/Explore-Alaska/Locals-Tips>

Most times, the best travel advice you can get comes from the locals. We've asked locals from around the state to give us their tips on top places to visit, eat, shop, and adventure in Alaska.

From the wonders of Whittier, top reasons to make the trek to Unalaska, secrets of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve, "wild" things about Girdwood and Portage, best fishing on the Kenai Peninsula, secret spots in Sitka, best spots for hiking in Kodiak or Fairbanks, and much more, find out what the people who call Alaska home love about their state—and what they think will make you just as enchanted.

Explore all locals tips below.

Agenda Item B New Business

Presentation of the 2024/2025 Travel Guide

Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau
AGENDA ITEM
April 16th, 2024

Information: Presentation of the new travel guide. All edits are final.

Attachments: 1. 2024/2025 Travel Guide

TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE LINES

WRANGELL

ALASKA

Item b.



THE 2024-25 OFFICIAL TRAVEL GUIDE

WELCOME TO WRANGELL

The homeland of the Shtax'héen Kwáan Tlingit of Southeast Alaska. We are able to share Wrangell's wonders with you because of the stewardship of the Tlingit people, who have lived here since time immemorial. It is important to us to pay our respect while offering to build mutual understanding across cultures. The Tlingit are guided by four ancient values that remain central today:

- **Haa Aaní** (protecting and honoring the land): The Tlingit believe that everything has a spirit, including the animals and trees. In utilizing resources, the Tlingit acknowledge the spirits of the land, sea, and air.
- **Haa Latseení** (strength of body, mind, and spirit): Young Tlingit men and women are taught to achieve physical and inner strength, protect and care for their community, seek truth and knowledge, and adapt to changing times while maintaining the integrity of ancient values.
- **Haa Shuká** (honoring ancestors and future generations): The Tlingit maintain strong bonds with their ancestors, whom they honor in their daily lives and ceremonies. They also protect their land and culture for their children and grandchildren and those who follow them.
- **Wooch Yáx** (maintaining social and spiritual balance and harmony): This value guides relationships with others and includes kaa yáa awuné (respect for others) and at yáa awuné (respect for all things).



Item b.

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THE JAMES & ELSIE NOLAN CENTER

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Cover Photo: Mike K Photography (@klawst





DISCOVER WHAT LIES *OUTSIDE THE LINES*

Wrangell, one of the most historic communities in Alaska, is the only town in the state to have been ruled by four nations: Tlingit, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

It has the reputation for being the “friendliest little town in Southeast Alaska.”

It’s also one of the hardest-working towns in the state.

The maritime industry is Wrangell’s largest economic driver, which includes commercial fishing. The Marine Service Center is a thriving boat works facility for commercial and recreational vessels. Its boat lifts provide haul-out capabilities and skilled workers provide quality services known throughout Southeast Alaska.

The second-largest private-sector industry in the town of about 2,000 people is tourism, which is gaining in strength as more people discover the region’s attractions and smaller, higher-end cruise ships add Wrangell to their itineraries.

About 30,000 visitors are expected in town in 2024 by boat and airplane.

Wrangell’s \$30 million medical center, owned and operated by the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, opened in 2021 and is a leading employer and active in promoting a healthy community.

The borough government - similar to a county in the rest of the country - provides electrical, water, sewage and trash services. Power comes from a hydroelectric station across the channel on the mainland.

Located in the middle of the Tongass National Forest, Wrangell has a mild climate with temperatures infrequently dipping into a hard freeze in the winter. Rain is more common than snow, and summer temperatures range anywhere from the mid-50s to the mid-70s.

Wrangell is 750 air miles north of Seattle, 85 miles north of Ketchikan and 150 miles south of Juneau, the state capital. It sits near the delta of the Stikine River, an important resource in the lives of those who live here for recreation, commerce and subsistence.

Next door is neighboring British Columbia, the westernmost province of Canada. On a clear day you can see the majestic, snow-capped mountains to the north and east of Wrangell Island. The border is only hours away by boat up the Stikine River or even closer by plane.

The town’s economy suffered a painful hit in the 1990s and the next decade with constraints on the timber industry and eventual closure of the town’s two sawmills. But people have worked hard to overcome that loss, and the region now focuses on sport, charter and commercial

(Continued on Page 8)







Item b.

fishing; expansion of its tourism industry (in particular promoting the Anan Wildlife Observatory and its world-famous bear viewing); and health care services.

Salmon is the major catch for the town's commercial fishing fleet, along with halibut, shrimp and crab. Seafood processors freeze and pack the catch for markets, and fishermen have been known to sell their catch to residents or visitors on the docks. You can enjoy some of the freshest seafood you'll ever taste!

Wrangell shrimp are famous for their delectable flavor. From large, luscious prawns to the small salad variety, the shrimp are a treat no one should miss. Local restaurants feature shrimp in dinners and salads. Shrimp are also sold by local fishermen and processors and packaged for shipping.

Everyone in town is an unofficial greeter. Don't hesitate to ask if you need help.

Wrangell Museum

Presenting the Culture, Heritage & People of Wrangell, Alaska

Summer Hours:
April 1 - Sept. 30
Monday - Saturday,
9am - 5pm

Movie Theater

Video theater showing recent box office hits

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SCAN HERE

WRANGELL WEATHER

Average Daylight: Hours

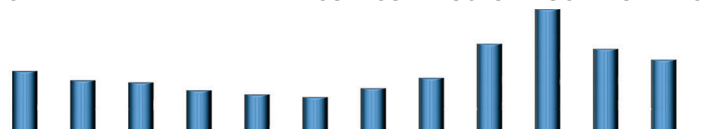
7 10 13 14 17 19 17 16 13 10 9 8

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

Average High Temperature: °F

34 38 42 49 56 62 64 63 58 49 41 36

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC



Average Monthly Precipitation: Inches

6.9 5.4 5.2 4.6 4.6 3.9 4.5 5.6 9.3 12.8 8.6 7.9

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

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HOW TO GET HERE

Even though there are no roads to Wrangell, it's easy to get here.

The town is served by daily jet service and state ferries on regular schedules, and also by charter flights and charter boats for travelers who want to set their own schedules.

Alaska Airlines flies a Boeing 737 north from Seattle via Ketchikan seven days a week, arriving in Wrangell mid- to late-morning on its way to Petersburg, Juneau and then Anchorage. Another Alaska Airlines flight repeats the same routing southbound in the afternoon, also seven days a week.

Sunrise Aviation offers charter flights and sightseeing services throughout Southeast Alaska to match the passengers' schedules to almost any destination.

The Wrangell airport, about 1.5 miles north of town, has modern navigational aids for when cloud cover gets heavy. Rental cars are available across from the Alaska Airlines terminal, and taxis are only a phone call away.

The state ferries of the Alaska Marine Highway System serve Wrangell northbound on a weekly run from Bellingham, Washington, via Ketchikan. The ferries stop back in Wrangell on a weekly southbound run from Skagway, Haines, Juneau and Petersburg, on their way back to Bellingham.

The ferry run to Haines and Skagway gives travelers a connection to the Alaska Highway in and out of the state through Canada, rather than getting on the road out of Bellingham, north of Seattle.

The ferry schedule changes seasonally, and ticket prices can change too, so book early, especially to reserve space for your vehicle or a stateroom - though staterooms are not required and travelers can spend their voyage on the deck or enjoying the indoor seating areas.

The state ferry terminal is about a block north of the Stikine Inn downtown.



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WRANGELL'S HISTORY

A BRIEF OVERVIEW



Front Street in Downtown Wrangell circa 1930.



RUSSIAN, BRITISH AND U.S. CONTROL MADE FOR A BUSY 1800S

Thousands of years before fur, gold, salmon and timber brought settlers, adventurers and pioneers to work and live in Wrangell, the Tlingit people arrived in the region via the Stikine River, migrating from the Interior.

In Nora Marks and Richard Dauenhauer's 1987 book of Tlingit storytelling, "Haa Shuká, Our Ancestors," Robert Zuboff (Kak'weidí Clan, Kaakáakw Hít) recounted in a 1960s interview the story of how Indigenous people long ago discovered that the Stikine flowed under a glacier. So, they tied a raft together and put two elderly women on the raft and pushed them under the glacier.

The story goes on to say that others were afraid to float under the glacier, so they traveled over it.

Regardless of whether the first arrivals floated under the glacier, walked over it or paddled down the river when it was navigable, the Stikine has been the dominating force in Wrangell's story since before recorded history. The town is proud of its name: Gateway to the Stikine.

The Russian American Co. decided 200 years ago to take a serious look at the river, particularly its value as a direct trade route to the fur resources of the Canadian Interior.

Coastal Alaska Natives had long been trading with the Interior tribes, and in about 1811 the Russians began trading with the Stikine Tlingit near the site of present-day Wrangell. With its New World headquarters at Sitka, the Russian American Co. ruled the fur trade of Alaska.

But its hold was soon challenged by the British Hudson's Bay Co., and the showdown between the two commercial giants, each with a vast network of trade stretching across entire hemispheres, was to be played out in a remote and obscure corner of the wild now known as Wrangell Island.

A treaty signed between the two nations in 1824-25 granted the British the right to use navigable streams along the coast crossing Russian territory on their way from the Interior to the sea, providing no Russian settlement stood in the way.

With an eye toward the Stikine fur trade, the British company in 1833 outfitted the brig Dryad to sail from Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River to the Stikine to establish a permanent trading post upriver.

The Russians, however, had thoughts of their own on protecting the Stikine fur trade, and in 1833 Lt. Dionysius Zarembo and a band of men were sent to build a fort near the mouth of the Stikine. A spot was chosen near the north end of Wrangell Island, where the Marine Bar stands today, and the fort was completed in 1834.

The Tlingit village at that time was about 13 miles south, at a site now known as Old Wrangell. The village was moved to the harbor area in the 1860s.

Baron Ferdinand von Wrangel, manager of the Russian American Co. in Sitka at the time, got his confrontation in 1834 when the British brig approached the mouth of the Stikine and was greeted by a volley from the fort and the Russian brig Chichagof, at anchor near the fort.

Zarembo then boarded the British ship, protesting the entry of a British vessel into a river in Russian territory.

It appears no one asked the Stikine Tlingit, who protested against any new party going up the river to trade with the Interior tribes – an ancient trade right they fiercely maintained.

The British protested to the Russian government, and an agreement was reached in 1839 in which the British waived damages from the incident and obtained a 10-year lease of the coastline from the Russians for an annual payment of 2,000 land otter skins.

The British flag was raised over the fort June 1, 1840, renaming it Fort Stikine.

The lease with the British was renewed until the United States purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867, making Wrangell the only city in Alaska to have been ruled under three flags.

But fur, which had attracted Hudson's Bay, was to face competition with the discovery in 1861 of gold on the Stikine. With the arrival of hundreds of gold seekers, Wrangell began the first of its three lives as a gold boom town.

(Continued on next page)





With the onslaught came continuing problems for the Native community, sporadic incidents usually spurred by opportunism and exploitation.

The introduction of steamship service up the Stikine further strained relations. Capt. William Moore took a steamer Flying Dutchman upriver, pushing a barge bringing miners and provisions to the camps. The Stikine Tlingit rioted, claiming the boisterous craft would upset moose and salmon, and finally were paid with Hudson's Bay blankets to restore order.

The 1861 rush was over only a few years after it began, when the gold deposit was found to be of limited extent. With the lowering of the Russian flag in 1867, Fort Stikine and the rest of Alaska became a possession of the United States. A new fort, named Fort Wrangell, after the baron, was built from 1868-70 at the site of today's post office.

In 1872, two prospectors returned from Dease Lake in the Cassiar region of the Canadian Interior after finding gold. They left for the winter, seeking reinforcements and returned in the spring with an entire party of hopefuls, including Capt. Moore. The Cassiar gold rush was on, marking the second boom for Wrangell and bringing thousands of miners and everything thousands of miners needed, or at least wanted. Gambling, women and dance halls flourished.

By 1888, the Cassiar rush had all but died. The second boom was over.

Fishing, canneries and a lumber mill were to provide the town with the economic stability gold and furs could not provide. In the late 1880s, the Wilson & Sylvester sawmill, believed to be the first in Alaska, was founded by Capt. Thomas A. Wilson, Juneau's first Customs inspector, and a retired fur trader, Rufus Sylvester. The mill, which later was to produce high-grade timber for airplane construction, produced packing boxes for the canneries and building lumber.

With the infancy of those industries came the last of the three gold rushes. The Stikine was tapped as a route – although a backdoor pathway – to the Klondike rush of the late 1890s. Miners would travel the Stikine to Telegraph Creek, British Columbia, proceed 160 miles to Teslin Lake and then follow the Hootlalinqua River to the headwaters of the Yukon River.

The Teslin route was more promising than profitable, however, and by



the turn of the century the miners were gone and Wrangell was again a quiet town of about 1,500 persons.

More salmon canneries would open, in addition to shrimp and crab operations. The canneries brought the arrival of great sailing ships and, later, the steamers, making their runs between Seattle and San Francisco and the ports of Southeast, including Wrangell.

Before the arrival of air service, steamships were the town's sole lifeline, and at one time more than 35 ships a week stopped at Wrangell.

Throughout it all, the Stikine continued its role as a major transportation corridor, with riverboat service until that ended about 1970.

The town enjoyed several decades of timber prosperity, with logging camps on the island and around Southeast feeding the sawmills. But economic and environmental restraints later closed down the mills and most of the logging in Southeast, including pulp mills in Ketchikan and Sitka in the 1990s.

Today, the Stikine River continues to serve as a favorite recreation area for Wrangell residents and visitors, keeping with the name: Gateway to the Stikine.

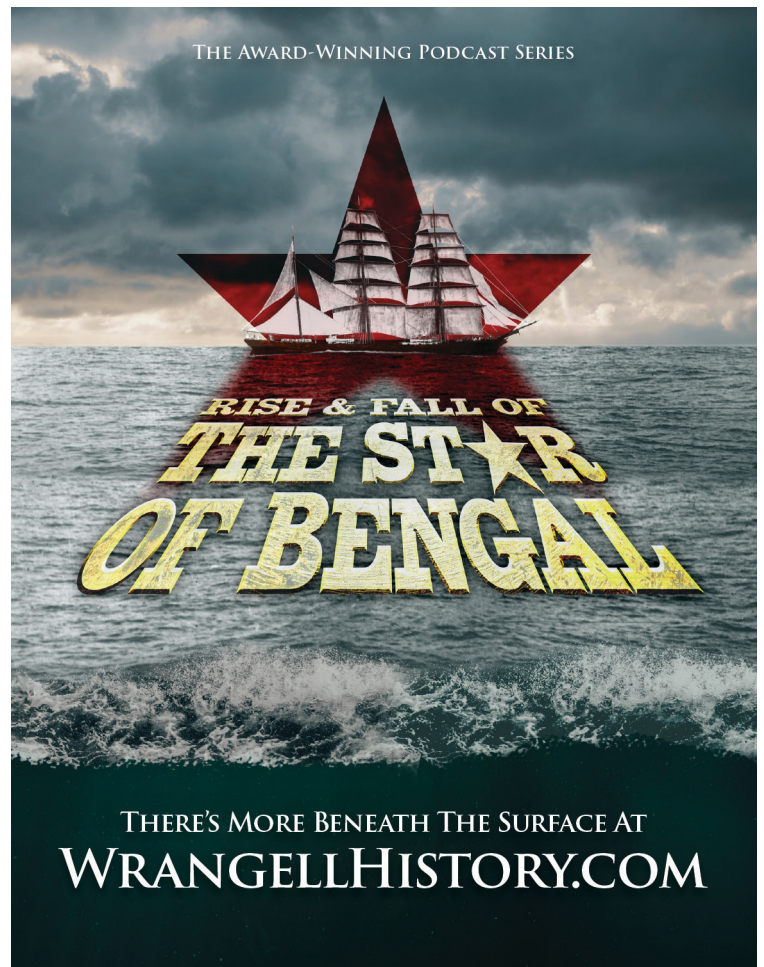
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View looking north at downtown Wrangell



Hotel billed itself as big-game hunting headquarters

Men lined up at the bar at the Grant Hotel, also known as the Wrangell Hotel, in this photo from 1898. In addition to drinks and whatever games were allowed in the adjacent Club Room, men could get a haircut in the barber chair to the left of the bar. The hotel burned down in the March 1906 fire that leveled downtown – but was quickly rebuilt and reopened in about five months. The hotel, on the water side of the main street, was badly damaged in a 1918 fire and repaired again. By 1924, the hotel was advertised as “headquarters for tourists and big-game hunters ... located at a pivotal point in the heart of the greatest hunting and fishing region in Alaska.” It burned down in the 1952 blaze that destroyed much of downtown and was not rebuilt.



Washington State Historical Society photo collection, Catalog ID 1969.8.27



THE STIKINE RIVER

Start Your River Adventures From Wrangell

The fastest-flowing navigable river in North America, and one of the few remaining free-flowing rivers, the Stikine (pronounced 'Stick-EEN,' meaning "Great River") runs 330 miles through British Columbia, the Coast Mountains and Alaska to its delta, just a few miles north of Wrangell.

A favorite camping, fishing, hunting and boating area for residents and visitors alike, the Stikine offers magnificent scenery with unparalleled views of glaciers, ice fields and mountains.

Many Wrangell residents pilot their boats across the river delta – not an easy feat, since the delta is laced with tricky sandbars – to explore the side sloughs of the river, picnic on sandy beaches or visit other favorite spots.

The river is truly a photographer's dream. The delta is a haven for more than 120 species of migrating birds in the spring and fall, including tundra (whistling) swans, Canadian geese, sandhill cranes, mergansers, waterfowl and shorebirds.

There is other wildlife such as otter, beaver, bear and moose. There is also a large sea lion haul-out site at the mouth of the Stikine River during March and April, when you can hear them making a ruckus all the way from town.

Several Wrangell charter boat and jet boat operators offer trips on the Stikine, including roundtrips to Telegraph Creek, British Columbia. Another option is to take an air charter flight to see the spectacular scenery from above.

In 1980, Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, creating the 449,951-acre Stikine-LeConte Wilderness, surrounding the Alaska portion of the river.

Roaring rapids and unique landscapes are among the many attractions found by following the Stikine River into interior British Columbia. Though the spectacular mountains, canyons, glaciers, forests and wildlife of the area are not as well known as easier-to-access attractions, a river trip is well worth the time and customs clearances to and from Canada.

Those who wish to experience

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Neal Alfano (@nealalfano)



this beauty should come prepared for a real wilderness adventure. The river begins its journey deep inside British Columbia at peaceful headwaters in the Spatsizi Wilderness Park.

Brown bear, caribou, moose and mountain goat roam the tranquil rolling tableland in this area, surrounded by vast mountains. The alpine tundra along the upper reaches of the Stikine gradually gives way to a thick spruce forest farther downstream. One of the most spectacular features of the river is the 45-mile-long Grand Canyon of the Stikine, about 200 miles upstream from Wrangell. Canyon walls soar as high as 1,000 feet.

Just south of the Grand Canyon is Mount Edziza Provincial Park and Recreation Area, a significant volcanic area in Canada. No eruptions have been officially recorded, apart from in the oral histories of Native clans.

At the west end of the Grand Canyon is Telegraph Creek, population around 400, the only town along the Stikine. Most of the residents are

Tahltan, the Indigenous people who settled the Interior region.

Rafters, kayakers and canoeists use the town as a starting point for exciting, scenic trips downriver to Wrangell.

The high peaks of the Coast Mountains tower up to 10,000 feet over the river. Glaciers hang from high mountain valleys. The river snakes between forested shores and wide expanses of sand and log deposits past connecting river outlets and cascading waterfalls, through untamed country where visitors enjoy camping, fishing, hunting, and exploring.

The Stikine crosses the border into Alaska for the last 30 miles of its run.

More information is available at the Wrangell Chamber of Commerce, from boat and air charter operators in town, or from staff at the visitor desk in the Nolan Center downtown.



STIKINE RIVER PROVIDES MULTIPLE ATTRACTIONS

CHIEF SHAKES HOT SPRINGS

Located about 28 water miles from the Wrangell downtown harbor up the Stikine River, the hot spring is one of the more popular recreational destinations for local residents – and visitors too.

One covered and one open-air redwood tub provide comfortable places for a hot soak. There are dressing rooms, benches and outhouses, but no overnight accommodations. Expect large crowds on weekends, holidays and sunny days throughout the summer.

A high-river level at Ketili Slough is required for easiest water access to the hot springs, though a 0.3-mile trail off Hot Springs Slough provides access at lower water levels.

There is no fee to use the hot tubs, which are maintained by the U.S. Forest Service.

Water is available from a nearby stream, but treat the water before drinking it.

TWIN LAKES

When the water is high enough to allow access from the Stikine River, this is a favorite summer recreation spot for water skiing, jet skiing, picnicking and swimming.

At the entrance to Twin Lakes Slough, the U.S. Forest Service has a public recreation cabin available for rent. The 16-by-16-foot A-frame cabin has a sleeping loft, with a pit toilet nearby. A trail leads from the cabin to the lakes.

Reservations available online at www.recreation.gov.

TELEGRAPH CREEK, BRITISH COLUMBIA

Wrangell also provides an opportunity for an excursion up the Stikine River to Telegraph Creek, 160 miles from Wrangell into the Canadian interior. Telegraph Creek is accessible by either plane or boat. Visitors get a first-hand look at a gold rush town, replete with historic buildings, including the former Hudson's Bay Co. (a Canadian Heritage Building).

The area surrounding the town provides opportunities for walking, hiking, fishing and camping.

Telegraph Creek also offers a road link to Canada. Just 70 miles to the northeast is Dease Lake and the Cassiar Highway, which bridges the Grand Canyon of the Stikine. The 45-mile-long canyon at its deepest points has rock walls towering almost 1,000 feet above the river.







MUSKEG MEADOWS MUCH MORE THAN PAR FOR A GOLF COURSE

The fairways at Muskeg Meadows are long and wide, with spectacular views all around, particularly looking toward the mainland across the Back Channel from the course on the east side of Wrangell Island.

Muskeg Meadows is Southeast Alaska's first U.S. Golf Association regulation 9-hole course. It opened in 1998 and now also includes an 18-basket disc golf course.

On sunny days, there's no nicer place for a walk – and few prettier courses. Visible over and between the trees are spectacular water views, with forested and snow-capped mountains beyond.

Keep an eye out for bald eagles overhead and be aware that bears occasionally wander the course.

There is a driving range (covered at the tees to protect golfers from the rain) and a practice putting green available for free use.

Wrangell Golf Club hosts multiple tournaments each summer, drawing contestants from around Southeast Alaska and the rest of the country.

Located on Ishiyama Drive (also known as the Spur Road) on the way to the airport, the course is entirely the work of volunteers, with much of the equipment and materials donated by Alaska Pulp Corp., Ketchikan Pulp Corp. and Silver Bay Logging.

The club has established a "Raven Rule" that stipulates if a raven steals your ball, you may replace it with no penalty, provided you have a witness.

There are golf clubs, pull and power carts and discs available for rent at the course, along with snacks and beverages at the pro shop.

Golfers can pay their by-the-day green fees at the shop or after hours in the orange lock box. Season passes are also available, as are memberships.

Course hours vary, so call to check in for the schedule. Find out more by calling 907-874-GOLF or check out the website at muskegmeadows.com.



Photo: Vincent Balansag

Wrangell

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STIKINE IS FOR THE BIRDS, AND THE PEOPLE WHO ENJOY THEM

Southeast Alaska is home to hundreds of species of birds and though they may be small and delicate looking, many of them perform awesome feats of stamina to survive.

The common murre, found around Wrangell Island, is one of the avian world's most accomplished divers, easily reaching 100-foot depths in search of fish to eat and capable of diving to almost 600 feet.

Western sandpipers fly thousands of miles to the Wrangell area from their winter homes in Mexico and Peru.

Visitors who aren't in town for the annual Stikine Birding Festival – planned for April 24-28, 2024 – can still appreciate Wrangell's birds. Peak birdwatching season starts around April and tapers out in August.

Early in April, when the eulachon (pronounced "hooligan") spawn – also known as candlefish, for their high-oil content – a wave of eagles descends on the Stikine River delta to feed. Then in early May, the same area is covered with sandhill cranes, snow geese and others.

Exploring the Stikine requires a boat ride out of town, but local guide services offer jet boat tours and kayak rentals.

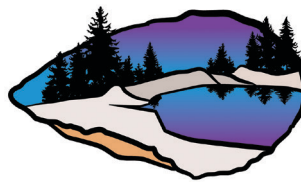
However, visitors don't need to go as far as the Stikine River flats to see birds – plenty of fascinating species congregate downtown, particularly ravens. The Muskeg Meadows golf course and the nature trail near Evergreen Elementary are also great places to look for birds nearer to central Wrangell.

Local birding enthusiast Bonnie Demerjian recommends that new

birders purchase a pair of binoculars and start learning to identify birds one by one, by their calls and plumage. "It's an intellectual activity," she said. "It's kind of like a puzzle. If you see a bird, try to figure out what it is from appearance or the sound that it makes. Birds are beautiful creatures. It's a really good way to connect people with their environments."

The olive-sided flycatcher, for example, breeds in Alaska but winters in the tropics. A young bar-tailed godwit may have recently made a record-breaking nonstop transpacific flight from Alaska to Tasmania, south of the Australian mainland. "They're world travelers," said Corree Delabrué, of the U.S. Forest Service.

Demerjian encourages people to practice ethical birding when observing area wildlife. Using bird sounds to attract birds can interfere with their feeding, and birders should avoid disturbing habitat by staying on trails. They should also avoid walking in residents' yards.



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Photo: Rick Rivard





ANAN WILDLIFE OBSERVATORY

As the salmon gather up Anan Creek to spawn, so too the bears gather to feast upon the moving mass of tasty fish.

Anan is a world-class bear viewing site, just 30 miles southeast of Wrangell. Travelers can take off from the Seattle airport in the morning and be at Anan in the afternoon.

Home to one of the largest pink salmon runs in Southeast, the creek draws brown and black bears, creating a viewing opportunity that is unique in Southeast. Both species of bear work the salmon stream together, which is atypical of areas

where the two species' habitats overlap.

The Anan bears get along because they are more concerned about the food than each other, Dee Galla, a recreation planner at the U.S. Forest Service Wrangell Ranger District, explained.

"The food source is so rich that the bears will tolerate one another," she said. "It's all about the salmon. They're going to go where they're going to get the most food. To come here, they have to tolerate each other."

The fish bounty also means the Anan bears are unusually tolerant of humans. "It's not because they like people," Galla said. "It's just that they have to be less reactive if they want to eat."

A new, expanded observation platform was built in 2022. The facilities include a covered viewing shelter, decks, photo blind and outhouses.

The U.S. Forest Service limits the visitor count to 60 per day on guided trips during the peak bear season of July 5 to Aug. 25. Most Anan visitors use an authorized guiding company, of which there are several in Wrangell.

The Forest Service staffs the site 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day during the permit season.

For individuals who have their own boat or floatplane to reach Anan, there are 12 private permits available for purchase for each day on [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov).

Visitors to the observatory can expect to see bears working the streams, but a nearby hiking trail also provides opportunities to see bears going about their routines.

Several Wrangell-based charter boat services provide guided trips to Anan during the season. Look them up on the chart on Page 47 of this guide. Or check anancalendar.com to see which guides are providing trips on days you'd like to visit.

Although the observatory is open outside of the permit season, the best time for seeing the most bears at the dinner table is between the July and August dates.



Frazer Leal (@frazerlealphotography)



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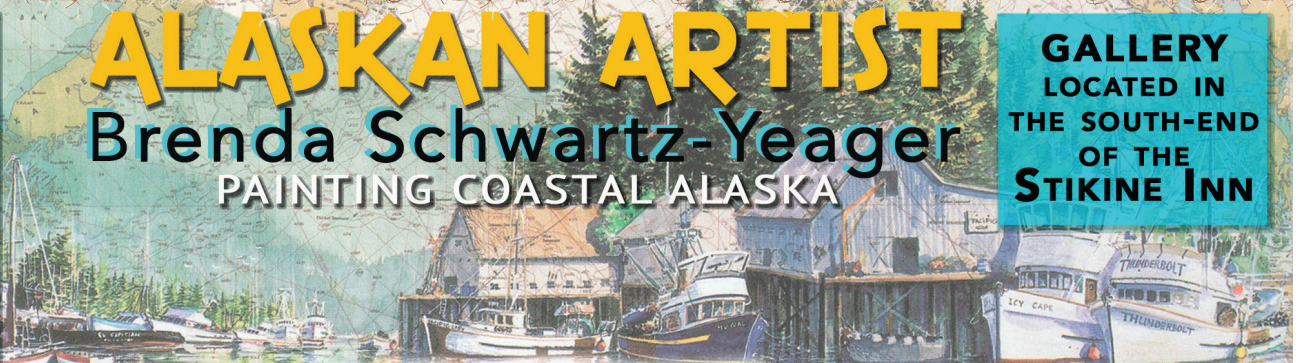


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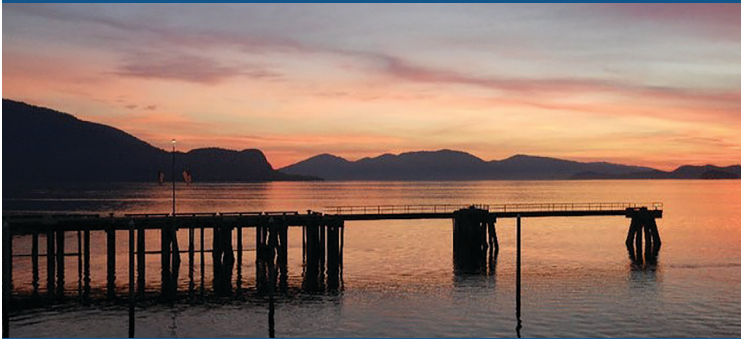
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HIKING, CAMPING & SIGHTSEEING

Wrangell offers many scenic spots for picnicking and camping, from easily reachable City Park and Shoemaker Bay to the more remote Nemo Point and Salamander Creek campsites.

MOUNT DEWEY TRAIL

Located right behind downtown, this large, tree-covered hill is a quick hike for a fine view of Wrangell and Zimovia Strait. A trail leads up the hill from downtown. Go up to Third Street behind the high school, or from Front Street take McKinnon Street heading away from the water to the set of stairs leading up past Reid Street, veer left at the top of the staircase and follow Mt. Dewey Lane until it hits Third Street. A sign pointing right shows the way to the trail.

VOLUNTEER TRAIL

For a short but pleasant walk near town, head for Evergreen Elementary School and the baseball fields behind it. Taking either the route between the two fields or north past the tennis courts, you will find a gravel trail that meanders through the muskeg with interpretative signs pointing out particular flora and fauna, as well as occasional benches to rest on, courtesy of the U.S. Forest Service.




Item b.

Neal Alfano (@nealalfano)


CITY PARK

Located about a mile south of town on Zimovia Highway, the waterfront park is adjacent to a historic cemetery and an old baseball field now used as the community garden.

The park contains picnic tables, shelters and restrooms. Tent camping is restricted to 24 hours. Camping is not allowed inside shelters. Overnight parking is prohibited.

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Avid cyclists may want to take advantage of the paved bike trail along the highway – it starts near the Public Safety Building and runs past Shoemaker Bay Park.

SHOEMAKER BAY

Shoemaker Bay RV Park is about five miles south of town, along Zimovia Highway. The park offers 25 sites open exclusively to RV and trailer campers - 15 with electricity, 10 without. All sites have excellent views of Zimovia Strait and neighboring Woronkofski Island. A freshwater pump is located near the entrance to the Shoemaker Harbor parking lot.

Facilities are on a first-come, first-served basis; no reservations taken.

There is a holding tank dumpsite for RVs in the harbor parking lot. There are also restrooms and a dumpster. A tent camping area is located in a wooded spot near a creek. South of the creek is a tennis court, restrooms and picnic shelter. Tent campers should use the designated camping area only.

Inquire at City Hall at 907-874-2381 or Parks and Recreation at 907-874-2444 for rules.

RAINBOW FALLS TRAIL

(moderate to difficult)

Just across Zimovia Highway from the Shoemaker Bay camping area is the Rainbow



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TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE LINES

WRANGELL

Item b.







Item b.

(Continued on Page 28)

Falls Trail, which offers a self-guided hike through the pristine Southeast Alaska rainforest. A little less than a mile up the trail is a beautiful view of Rainbow Falls; a tenth of a mile later, the trail ends above the waterfall and provides spectacular views of Chichagof Pass, Zimovia Strait and surrounding islands. Viewing platforms and bench seating make this a great place for a picnic. The trail intersects with InSTITUTE Creek Trail.

INSTITUTE CREEK TRAIL *(difficult to most difficult)*

If you choose to continue from the Rainbow Falls Trail, this trek offers many scenic views for an additional 2.7 miles (and a total 1,500-foot elevation gain) on the way to the Shoemaker Bay Overlook Shelter.

SHOEMAKER BAY OVERLOOK SHELTER

There's a three-sided shelter, picnic table, fire grill and outhouse, as well as an excellent view of Shoemaker Bay Harbor, Zimovia Strait and surrounding islands.

NORTH WRANGELL TRAIL DIFFICULT *(most difficult)*

This trail begins 2.2 miles from the Rainbow Falls Trailhead via the Rainbow Falls and Institute Creek trails. The trail leads 1.3 miles to the High Country Shelter and continues another mile to the Pond Shelter. Shelters are three-sided with a picnic table and an outhouse.

Hikers can also start on the opposite side of the island and travel over the mountain toward Shoemaker. This hike starts at the North Wrangell trail and ends at the Rainbow Falls trail. The trail, which is surfaced with boardwalk, begins about 3.6 miles down Ishiyama Drive, which locals often refer to as Spur Road.

PATS LAKE

Pats Lake recreation area is 11 miles south of downtown Wrangell, at a crossroads where dirt roads branch off Zimovia Highway. The first road to the left goes by Pats Lake, while the second turnoff leads to Pats Creek. There's pleasant hiking along an easy mile-long trail from Pats Lake, which follows Pats Creek as it empties into the sea. Several varieties of trout are found in the lake and creek. The creek also has a fall salmon run.

The turnoff to the right leads down to the water. A short walk north – and back across Zimovia Highway – leads to the mouth of Pats Creek to a sandy point, which is good for picnicking or a little seaside relaxation as well as an occasional haunt of local saltwater fly fishermen.

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Salmon and halibut are the area's top draws for sportfishing. The town has several charter boat operators eager to help with all your arrangements, while sharing their expert knowledge toward a successful fishing trip.

They also can offer assistance in packing and shipping your seafood to arrive safely back home. Be sure to use an airline-approved fish box or sturdy tote to check in your catch.

A state license is required for sportfishing. In addition, sport anglers need a king salmon stamp to go after the largest of the salmon in Southeast.

Locally, all the licenses and stamps are available from Angerman's, Bunes Bros. and Sentry Hardware, all located on Front Street downtown. And all carry sportfishing gear, along with friendly advice.

The state licenses also are available online at <https://store.adfg.alaska.gov/>.

Non-residents under the age of 16 do not need a sportfishing license or king salmon stamp.

The rules for daily catch and seasonal limits are important to maintain the health of salmon stocks. Charter fishing operators and license vendors are a good source of information.

Anglers also can call the state's 24-hour automated information line to check on fishing results and any changes in the rules. The recorded line operates April 15 to Sept. 15, at 907-465-4116.

Salmon runs start in early May and extend into fall. Steelhead and Dolly Varden fishing is open year-round, although the best steelhead fishing is in April and May. The best season for Dollies starts in June and continues through September.

Halibut can be caught year-round, though they can more easily be found during the summer months.

For freshwater fishing enthusiasts, some of the best spots are a short drive away. They include Thoms Lake, Pats Lake, Pats Creek, Salamander Creek and Institute Creek. Institute Creek and Pats Creek are accessible off Zimovia Highway. Highbrush Lake, Thoms Lake and Pats Lake are all accessible via U.S. Forest Service roads.



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Item b.



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The U.S. Forest Service has close to 150 public-use cabins throughout the Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska, with more than 20 in the Wrangell Ranger District.

Most of the cabins are in remote areas and are primarily used for hunting, fishing and recreation. They come with sleeping bunks, tables and benches.

Inland cabins are usually accessible only by air, while those on saltwater beaches can be reached by boat or floatplane, depending on the tides.

The Forest Service also has several campsites in the area, mostly on former logging roads and with an outhouse on site.

Reservations are not required for the campsites, but they are for the public-use cabins. The cabins can be booked six months in advance.

Cabin fees are charged per night, regardless of the number of occupants. The fee must be paid in advance at the time of the reservation. There's a cap on the number of consecutive days you can rent a cabin.

Cabin rentals are available at recreation.gov.

One of the area's most popular cabins is Middle Ridge, pretty much in the middle of Wrangell Island. But a landslide in November 2023 has cut off access to the cabin.

Another popular cabin at Anan Bay, near the world-famous Anan Wildlife Observatory bear viewing site, was damaged by a fallen tree in a 2023 wind storm, though work is underway to rebuild the structure – and it could be open later this year.

More information can be found at the Forest Service website or by calling the office on Bennett Street at 907-874-2323 or by visiting recreation.gov.

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WRANGELL'S TOTEM POLES TELL STORIES OF RICH AND IMPORTANT NATIVE CULTURE

The intricately carved totem poles around Wrangell are a reminder that the town is built on the land of the Shtax'heen Kwaan, or Stikine Tlingit - the Alaska Native people of this area.

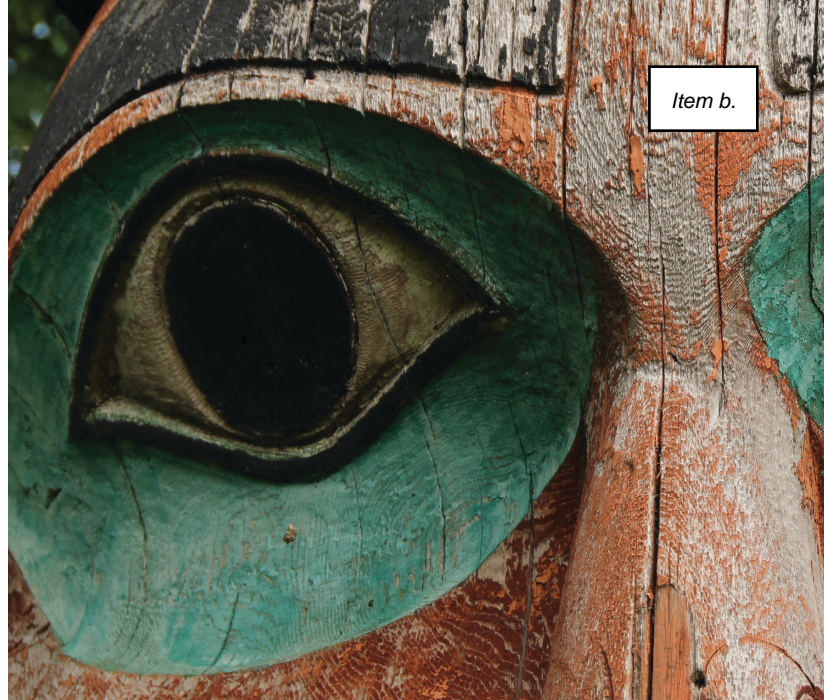
Most of the totems you'll find around Wrangell are duplicates of poles that were commissioned in the 1800s, when totem carving first flourished.

To view these artworks, visit Totem Park just off Front Street, the Nolan Center or the Chief Shakes tribal house on Shakes Island, which is accessible from a bridge near the harbor office.

When totem carving started about 200 years ago, poles were put up for a wide variety of reasons - to signal social status, to mark a special occasion such as a potlatch, to record a story or to hold the ashes of deceased relatives. Poles might even be erected to shame people, usually community members of high standing who had failed to meet their obligations.

But this isn't just a tradition of the past - totems are still being carved today by master carvers who continue to innovate on the form.

Not all North American Indigenous groups carve totems. These works are specific to the Alaska Natives and First Nations people of the



Pacific Northwest. Poles reflect the unique identity, history and values of the groups that commission them. The carvings may tell stories or display signs of family lineage.

For example, the Bear up a Mountain pole that used to stand outside the tribal house tells the story of a brown bear that saved the Naanyaa. aayí clan from a flood by leading them to higher ground. A bear rests on top of the pole and footprints lead up its side.

In the 19th and late 18th centuries, when many of the original poles were created, it wasn't common practice to repair, repaint or reconstruct existing totems damaged by rain and rot. It was usually easier - and more socially advantageous - to erect a new pole. Tlingit society was intricately organized by rank, so the ability to commission multiple expensive poles over a lifetime could bump someone up the social ladder.

This all changed during the Great Depression of the 1930s, when a large-scale federal restoration project began. Hoping to create jobs and preserve artistic heritage, the Civilian Conservation Corps hired more than 200 Tlingit and Haida men to restore or replicate totems.

The project, which was led by the U.S. Forest Service, has received both criticism and praise from historians and community members alike. Instead of only hiring young men like it usually did, the Conservation Corps



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included elders in the project, allowing knowledge about totem carving to be passed down to the rising generation. Three Southeast clan houses, in Wrangell, Kasaan and Totem Bight near Ketchikan, and 121 totems were restored under this massive preservation effort.

However, the Forest Service often removed totems from their original locations and concentrated them in centralized "totem parks" to attract tourists to the state.

Regardless, this collaboration between Alaska Native carvers and the federal government produced many noteworthy works of art that can be found around Wrangell today.

When looking at Wrangell totems, keep an eye out for recurring motifs like ravens, eagles, frogs, killer whales, beavers, bears, the Gunaakadéit (sea monster) and heroes from Tlingit oral histories. Look closely; some figures might even have smaller figures embedded inside them.

The designs on totem poles are closely related to Tlingit social life. The community is divided into two "moieties," or complementary descent groups – raven and eagle.

Traditionally, ravens would only marry eagles and vice versa, but this system has relaxed in the last century. Moieties are divided into clans, clans are divided into houses, and each group has unique crests that might appear on their regalia or totem poles.

Moiety, clan and house crests, along with certain stories and dances, belong exclusively to members of that family group. The fact that not all totem's stories are publicly documented does not necessarily represent a lapse in the historical record. Instead, it may be a conscious effort to keep certain stories private.



Marc Lütz (@marc.lutz.photography)



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PETROGLYPH BEACH

A ROCK PUZZLE FROM THE PAST

No visit to Wrangell is complete without seeing the ancient stone carvings at Petroglyph Beach State Historic Site, a short walk from downtown and one of the community's most popular visitor attractions.

Former U.S. Forest Service archaeologist Larry Roberts believes the petroglyphs were probably carved by early Stikine Tlingit, possibly 1,000 years ago. However, archaeological finds elsewhere in Southeast Alaska show that humans have been present here for more than 8,000 years – so the rock carvings could be far older.

Wrangell's Petroglyph Beach has the highest concentration of petroglyphs in Southeast and is easily accessible for exploration.

The beach is about a 20-minute walk from the state ferry terminal. Facing the terminal, turn right on Evergreen Avenue, walk north about a mile, then look for a sign and a small parking area. A gravel road to the left of the parking area leads down to the beach.

There is an accessible boardwalk to a deck overlooking the beach, the Stikine River and Zimovia Strait. Replicas of several designs are displayed on the deck for visitors to make rubbings on – but only from the replicas. Rubbings made on the original beach rocks are not allowed, as years of erosion and abrasion have taken their toll. Visitors

are asked to help preserve the original carvings for future generations.

There are steps leading down to the beach for closer inspection of the ancient designs. They are best viewed at low tide.

Most of the iconic symbols are to the right, toward a tidal outcropping as you step onto the sand. Visitors enjoy searching for the more than 40 petroglyphs on the beach. The whale petroglyph, unique to Wrangell, is located along the grass line in front of a house – don't hesitate to go look for it. But please, document your experience with photographs only.

Another option is to stay in town – three original petroglyphs are on display at the Irene Ingle Public Library in town, and a replica is on display at the museum in the Nolan Center.

No one knows the true intent or motivation of the artists, nor what the designs meant to their makers and users. Based on archaeological records and cultural stories, petroglyphs may be a form of writing, a method of communication or a way to record events.



Item b.

Killer Whale Petroglyph on the viewing platform at Petroglyph Beach





m at Petroglyph beach. Photo: @nealalfano

There are a variety of interpretations. The designs could have been carved to commemorate victories in war, document the transfer of wealth or territory in settlement of a feud, record important potlatches, or perform a religious function. They could also be simply the work of visiting Tsimshian or of the Tlingit themselves.

The carvings are treasured landmarks and are protected from loss, desecration and destruction under the Alaska Historic Preservation Act.



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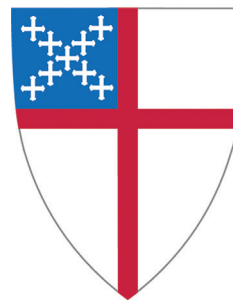


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The James and Elsie Nolan Center has been a community gathering place since its opening in 2004, preserving Wrangell's diverse culture and history and providing a multipurpose facility for events.

Housed within the Nolan Center are the Wrangell Museum, art gallery, civic center, visitor center, gift shop and theater. The building also has a great view along the downtown waterfront.

The main hall can transform into a theater for movies and events, including banquet seating,

The museum provides an interactive walk through Wrangell's rich history. The exhibits provide a narrative of the culture, heritage and peoples of Wrangell, from the time of the Tlingits through the fur trade of the Russian American Co., British Hudson Bay Co., Wrangell's role in gold rushes, and Alaska's incorporation into a U.S. territory and transition to statehood.

Entering the facility, it's hard to miss the ornate Chief Shakes house posts. They were created between 1775 and 1790 and are accredited to the famous master carver Kadjisdu.a'xch II. They are thought to be the oldest still in existence today. Further into the lobby are the two totems overlooking a replica of the Stikine River Delta inlaid on the floor.

The museum gallery is a stimulating passage through time, beginning

with a view of natural history, then a reverent walk through the land of the Native people who thrived in the area for many years.

There is a replica of the stone carvings located at Petroglyph Beach, thought to be thousands of years old. Around the corner, enter the Russian period and the fur trade (filled with furs to touch and feel). Next, visit the era when Wrangell was a major trade center for three gold rushes. Wrangell was even well known by a few famous faces including Wyatt Earp, who served as temporary town marshal, and

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John Muir, who wrote about his many adventures.

Finally, your journey winds into the 20th century. This area is packed full of Wrangell's more recent history, exhibiting stories of the people and their businesses.

The visitor center houses an interactive map of the island and Stikine River Delta, one of the most popular features in the Nolan Center. Visitors can find printed maps, brochures and photos. Representatives from the U.S. Forest Service are available to answer questions and share information on days when a cruise ship is in town.

More information is available from the Nolan Center at 907-874-3770.

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GARNETS HELD IN TRUST FOR WRANGELL CHILDREN

Among the heirlooms of Wrangell's long history, one shines particularly brightly.

The Garnet Ledge – a bedrock outcropping flecked with garnet crystals – is located on the mainland near the mouth of the Stikine River, about seven miles and a quick boat ride from Wrangell.

The garnets are available for purchase at local gift shops and from children and their family businesses. The garnets can also be dug directly out of the ledge, but there's a catch – only children of Wrangell are allowed to do the digging.

In 1962, area businessman Fred Hanford gave the Garnet Ledge to the Boy Scouts of America and the Presbyterian Church “for only so long as the said grantee ... shall use the land for Scouting purposes and shall permit the children of Wrangell to take garnets therefrom in reasonable quantities.”

Hanford's gift was the birth of a multigenerational youth trade, which continues today in retail and wholesale forms, though not on an industrial scale. Kim Covalt, the facilities manager for the church, is tasked with overseeing access.

In 2006, the Scouts transferred their portion of the deed, putting the property under the full ownership of the Presbyterian Church of Wrangell, which holds title today.

Because of the conditions of Hanford's gift, the church insists that any adults wishing to dig garnets out of the shelf of rock must be accompanied by a child of Wrangell. The church interprets the conditions to allow for children even very recently “of Wrangell” to collect garnets.

Garnets are semi-precious gemstones forged in the heat of metamorphic rock. The Wrangell garnet is of the type known as the almandine or carbuncle. They are comprised of iron, aluminum and silica.

Awareness of the stones dates back to the early gold miners of the 1860s. In 1892, J.D. Dana published his “Analysis of Garnet from Wrangell,” the earliest known scientific record of the crystals.



Wrangell garnets can vary in size and are generally ruby red. They are not gemstone quality, however, and cannot be cut or polished without difficulty. A nearby U.S. Forest Service cabin is available for those wishing for some extra time to mine, though permission is still required from the church in order to access the property.

No power tools are permitted. Kids and their families take hand tools and buckets to look for garnets in the rocks and streams.

The cabin is on federal land, but the ledge and its deep scarlet prizes are on private property.

“We don't want to be garnet cops,” the Presbyterian Church says. “We want to be garnet shepherds.” No industrial or commercial harvests by adults are allowed.

Children are allowed to sell the stones of their labor to visitors and wholesale them to gift shops, giving them an up-close learning experience with business and commerce.

“The church holds this in trust on behalf of the children of Wrangell in perpetuity,” the church explains. “If people act responsibly, this 39 acres, unique to Wrangell, is going to exist long after we're dead and gone, and long after our grandchildren are dead and gone.”

Requests to mine garnets or questions can be directed to Covalt at 907-305-0505.

Tourists can find Wrangell garnets from entrepreneurs down by the ferry terminal or City Dock when ships are in port, at the Wrangell Museum gift shop, and sometimes at other shops.



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Photo: Vincent Balansag



GARNET LEDGE HISTORY GOES BACK TO 19TH CENTURY

By Patricia Neal

Wrangell's Garnet Ledge is noted for two things: Its garnets are sold by Wrangell children to visitors, and the ledge was mined by the first all-woman corporation in an era when women were just beginning to be accepted into the business world.

The Garnet Ledge has a long history that goes way beyond entrepreneurship by women and children. While mining for gold on the Stikine River was active in the 1800s, there were at least 28 claims to the area (the majority by Alaska Garnet Mining & Manufacturing Co.) and at least two leases to the site beginning in 1881. Most claims were short-lived. It was hard work mining garnets and then you had to figure out what to do with them!

Between the late 1800s and 1905, activity at the ledge was mainly day trips to dig for garnets and to have a picnic by the locals. But, in 1905 there were three separate claims filed on the area.

A group of businessmen from the Chicago area visited Wrangell in 1905. They were looking for investment property, and the Garnet Ledge looked like the perfect opportunity. The Alaskan Ruby Mining & Development Co. was formed. The company leased the property from Alex Vreatt and William Taylor. Shares in the corporation were offered at \$4 each. An "Alaskan Ruby" was added to sweeten the deal. About

two tons of garnets were shipped out, but the company was never heard from again.

The most active and most profitable claim to the ledge was owned by the Alaska Garnet Mining & Manufacturing Co., of Minneapolis. The company was formed in late 1906, with Anna E. Durkee the controlling stockholder, secretary and general manager. She heard about the property while in Wrangell earlier that year while visiting with her friend Mary Elmer. They were scoping out a copper mine located not too far from Wrangell.

Durkee purchased the property from Vreatt and Taylor. She returned to Minneapolis with plenty of garnets to show to her friends. Armed with tales of Alaska and the deep burgundy-colored garnets, she convinced 15 of her women friends to invest in the company.

News of the corporation made the front page of the Alaska Sentinel in Wrangell, but only an inside page of the Minneapolis Journal. Durkee indicated to reporters that men would be hired to work the mine but would not be involved in the corporation.

The women participated in the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition held in Seattle, and they were at the 1915 for the Pan Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. Several tons of garnets were shipped from the mine to Wrangell and then down to Seattle and on to San Francisco.

Mention was made in the newspapers across the country that the women were manufacturing jewelry and that sales were going well in England because the gems were from Alaska. To date, none of the jewelry that the women manufactured has been identified.

After the 1920s, work at the mine ceased and the buildings at the mine and the equipment fell into disrepair. By that time Durkee had moved on to mine in Arizona.

Wrangell businessman Fred G. Hanford acquired the ledge in 1962. He deeded the property to the Southeast Council of Boy Scouts. It allowed the council to retain ownership of the ledge as long as the children of Wrangell were allowed to dig for garnets and the ledge remained open. The ledge was transferred to the First Presbyterian Church of Wrangell in 2006 when the Scouts could no longer manage the site.

Patricia Neal is the author of "Wrangell Garnet Ledge History" available at local retailers or contact her directly at TrishaNeal@hotmail.com.



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BEARFEST EDUCATES, ENTERTAINS & ENLIGHTENS ATTENDEES EVERY JULY

Bear with Wrangell if you're in town July 24-28 this year.

It's BearFest week.

Residents and visitors alike can attend symposiums, listen to live music, test their baking skills, play games and even run a marathon.

BearFest is in its 15th year and is meant to promote the environment, specifically bears, and how important the animals are to the ecosystem.

"We want to showcase our environment, our culture, our resources," said Sylvia Ettefagh, chairperson for BearFest in a 2022 interview.

Each BearFest event is free, except for the dinner and auction typically held Friday night at the Stikine Inn Restaurant. A gourmet dinner is prepared by a renowned chef, while participants can bid on a bevy of items. Live music is performed throughout the dinner.

It's one of the most popular events held in Wrangell every year, and tickets to the dinner sell fast, so check www.alaskabearfest.org to find out when they go on sale.

There are also plenty of events for kids, like book readings and children's games.

Those who like to challenge themselves can play in the golf tournament at Muskeg Meadows or enter a 5K walk or run, half marathon or full marathon.

If you're a foodie and you aren't able to attend the dinner and auction, there's still a chance to taste the local cuisine, like the "Beary" pie contest made with local ingredients and judged by discerning local tastebuds, and the smoked salmon contest offered in past years.

A cooking demonstration is usually held as well, all of which usually takes place at the Nolan Center.

Live music and a music workshop are part of the fun, and there are also bear-related informative talks.

To find out more about BearFest, visit the website alaskabearfest.org or email fun@alaskabearfest.org.

"It's a celebration of bears," Ettefagh said. "That's the short of it."



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ANNUAL EVENTS

The Town's Biggest Events



Wrangell enjoys its holidays, especially the Fourth of July. It's several days of food, street games, old-time logging competition, paddle and motorboat races, fishing contests for children, golf, a traditional parade, fireworks – and a lot more food.

Most of the events are held downtown, making it easy for people to wander between the games and activities.

The community pays for its celebration with proceeds from a monthlong fundraising effort, in which Wrangell teens sell raffle tickets for a July 4 drawing. You can buy the tickets straight up, or get them with your lunch sold at downtown food booths throughout June.

The community also turns out in large numbers for a Christmas tree lighting, school concerts and holiday displays and, yes, more food.

Though not an official holiday, the annual salmon derby is a highlight of Wrangell's calendar. Prizes are awarded for the first salmon, the largest salmon caught and other categories in the derby, usually held over several days in May and/or early June.

The chamber of commerce runs the derby, the exact dates and limits set in consultation with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The details are available at wrangellfishderby.com

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From 18-foot skiffs to 100-foot yachts to large cruise ships, Wrangell’s port and harbors can accommodate boats of all sizes, welcoming travelers from across the country and overseas – and certainly from our Southeast Alaska neighborhood.

Cruise ships tie up at City Dock, a deepwater dock at the north end of town near the Stikine Inn. Wrangell’s cruise tourism industry has grown steadily since 2014, with the exception of the pandemic seasons of 2020 and 2021. The community this summer could receive as many as 25,000 guests aboard cruise ships and tour boats large and small.

Wrangell also has three borough-operated harbors with reserved and transient moorage options, two Travelifts for haul-out and a Marine Service Center where skilled services are available for boat repairs and most anything else a mariner could need.

Heritage Harbor – a popular spot for visiting vessels – is located about a mile from the downtown shops, restaurants and grocery and hardware stores. Heritage is the newest of Wrangell’s harbors, with electricity and potable water on the docks, a well-maintained restroom, an all-tides boat launch and plenty of turning space to accommodate large vessels.

The harbor is also the site of the Wrangell Mariners’ Memorial, an open-

air gazebo and metal sculptures honoring lives lost at sea.

Located downtown near Shakes Island, the Inner Harbor primarily serves smaller, local vessels, under 40 feet. Like Heritage Harbor, the Reliance Float at Inner Harbor also offers transient moorage for visiting vessels.

Though it is five miles from town, Shoemaker Harbor is surrounded by amenities and recreational opportunities. A park, picnic shelter, restroom, playground and RV camping area are nearby. The harbor offers power, water, waste oil collection and garbage collection.

Before arriving in town, Harbormaster Steve Miller recommends calling the department in advance to touch base with staff and ensure that there is space available.

The summer season – especially around the Fourth of July – is particularly busy. Even then, “we do a pretty good job of making sure that we can accommodate everyone,” Miller said.

For more information, visit wrangell.com or call the Harbor Department at 907-874-3736. The Harbormaster also monitors VHF Channel 16.

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HOW TO PICK A CHARTER OPERATOR

Item b.

PLAN EARLY:

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CONSIDER THE SIZE OF YOUR PARTY:

Some operators can accommodate larger parties, while others prefer to focus on smaller groups.

CONSIDER THE ABILITIES OF YOUR PARTY:

Find out if trips can be paced for elderly or handicapped persons, and what ages of children are welcome.

ASK WHAT TO WEAR:

Some operators furnish gear that others don't.

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Item b.



WRANGELL BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Item b.

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44 Sunrise Aviation

29

To the airport

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44 Sunrise Aviation

Mt Dewey Trail Extension

Mt. Dewey Trail Head

27

49

7 Ferry Terminal

To Petroglyph Beach & Airport

To Shooting Range & Kayak & Canoe Ramp

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Baseball Diamonds

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Pine Street

Zimovia Avenue

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Weber Street

St. Michaels

Church Street

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Shakes Street

Harbormaster's Office

DOWNTOWN HARBORS

Marine Service Center

Seaplane float

City Dock



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High School	Public Restrooms	Churches (See right)
Hospital	Nolan Center & Museum	
Library	Totem Poles	

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- B. St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church
- C. First Presbyterian Church
- D. St. Philip's Episcopal Church
- E. TouchPoint Alaska Ministries
- F. Wrangell Seventh-day Adventist Church
- G. The Salvation Army
- H. Harbor Light Assembly of God
- I. Bible Baptist Church
- J. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE LINES

WRANGELL

Item b.

WRANGELL CONVENTION
& VISITOR BUREAU
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Agenda Item C Unfinished Business

Visitor Survey

Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau

AGENDA ITEM

April 16th, 2024

Information: In May of 2023 staff worked with the CVB to deploy a visitor survey. Efforts included development of questions, online survey portal and QR codes to promote the survey. Limited surveys were collected in 2023, providing no valuable data to staff or the WCVB for decision making. Staff are bringing the survey contents back to the CVB for review and discussion.

There are many ways to deploy visitor surveys, however there is a certain scope of methodology that should be engaged to obtain meaningful data samples for decision-making. Below are two (2) links that will direct CVB members to resources that provide further explanation on the range of methodology that may be utilized.

- [New Zealand International Visitor Survey methodology](#)
- [British Columbia Research Guide for Tourism Operators](#)

Staff would like to discuss the concept of including total household income and visitor spending in the survey and what resources can be drawn up to assist in executing a productive visitor survey this season. This includes discussion of hiring consulting services to assist in the process along with the Tourism Management Plan.

Attachments: Wrangell Visitor Survey (preview)

Wrangell Visitor's Survey

* Required

1. If you live in the United States, please select the region where you live. *

- US Northeast
- US Southwest
- US West
- US Southeast
- US Southwest

2. If you live outside of the United States, please select the region where you live. *

- Asia
- Asia- Pacific
- Europe
- North America
- Central America
- South America

Africa

3. How did you get here? *

Airplane

Cruise Ship

Ferry

Yacht or other Luxury Boat

Fishing Vessel

Other

4. What was the duration of your stay? *

Less than 24 hours

1-3 Days

4-7 Days

More than a week.

5. How did you hear about Wrangell? *

Internet Search

Social Media

Word of Mouth

- Print Travel Publication
- Travel Agency
- Other

6. What is the primary purpose of your trip? *

- Leisure
- Recreation
- Business
- Special Event
- Family Visit
- Other

7. What do you plan to visit while you are here? (You can select places you have already visited) *

- Petroglyph Beach
- The Wrangell Museum
- Chief Shakes House
- Totem Park
- Downtown Businesses
- Le Conte Glacier
- Shakes Glacier

Anan Observatory

Mount Dewey

Rainbow Falls

Other

8. How would you rate your overall experience in Wrangell? (5 being the best) *



9. Is there anything that would make your Wrangell experience better? Was there anything that made your experience particularly difficult?

Enter your answer

10. If you would like to be included in future publications from Wrangell please provide your email.

Enter your answer



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Item c.