



City and Borough of Wrangell  
Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau  
AGENDA

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Tuesday, February 20, 2024  
12:00 PM

Location: Assembly Chambers

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**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 January 16th, 2024

**5. PERSON'S TO BE HEARD**

**6. CORRESPONDENCE**

- a. Economic Development Department 2023 Annual Highlights
- b. February Coordinator Report on Marketing
- c. Rain Coast Data Wrangell Visitor Industry Report (covering 2023 seasons data)

**7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

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

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Review and discussion of the methods and execution for the 2024 Wrangell Visitors Survey
- b. Discussion on FY25 Transient Tax and CPV Budgets
- c. Review and audit of the Travel Alaska Website creative content for Wrangell

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

**Minutes of Wrangell Convention & Visitors Bureau Meeting  
Held on January 16, 2024**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Call to order at 12:03pm.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:** Caitlin Cardinell, Mya Delong, Chris Bunes, Chair Erin Galla

**ABSENT:** Vice Chair Brenda Schwartz-Yeager

**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 November 15th, 2023.

*M/S Bunes/Delong move to approve the regular meeting minutes of the WCVB from November 15th, 2023, meeting.*

*Approved unanimously.*

**5. PERSON'S TO BE HEARD:** NONE.

**6. CORRESPONDENCE**

In her absence, Board Member Schwartz-Yeager submitted comments on the meetings items.

**7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** NONE

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. Review and approval of the Customer Relationship Management System Proposal and Annual Licensing Agreement.

*M/S: Bunes/Delong move to approve the Master Service Agreement with Tempest for a Customer Relationship Management system.*

Thomas corrected the expense statement on the agenda statement to state \$3,000 in on-boarding fees and \$6,000 billed annually. Henson provided staff report and summary of system. Thomas read board member Schwartz's email to board.

*Approved unanimously by polled vote.*

- b. Review and discussion on the design concepts for the 2024 Travel Guide (a partnered publication with the Wrangell Sentinel).

Henson provided a report and summary of the mockup. He stated that staff will continue their current partnership with the Wrangell Sentinel where the Sentinel will provide content and staff will handle layout for future publications. All board members stated that they liked the design and are happy with the partnership.

- c. WCVB Review and discussion of the Tourism Management Plan development and public process.

Thomas provided an update to the Tourism Management Plan process. She detailed more information on the public process that will take place. She also stated that the fall tour operator meeting led to the Westerdam cancellation but that may not have been the consensus. The GSTC standards would allow for more handrails around the cruise industry. She reiterated what the desire of the borough would be for the cruise industry. Asked that if board members receive community feedback that that be shared with staff. Stated that staff wants to give a public tourism presentation and detailed topics that would be covered. Stated that the education of the public is crucial before asking for the public's opinion. After education, a public survey would be conducted that would inform the development of the tourism plan. A plan would be workshopped with the CVB and then a public presentation of the draft plan. She stated that the current public process will likely take upwards of six months and that the plan will be implemented for the 2025 season with majority of the plan refinement taking place in September and October.

Galla stated that the majority of people she was spoken to stated that they are happy with the cancellation of the Westerdam. Thomas stated that she has and will meet with stakeholders in person. Bunes stated that she has continually heard that the public does not want to see the six-mile mill property used for tourism or the cruise industry. Galla stated that she likes the approach staff will take as it will likely get more information and educated people more than the past. Thomas stated that a community member had concern that the borough was meeting with agency partners to develop the mill property as a cruise industry area. She stated that there is an extensive public process for selling the land if there was a proposal submitted for that property and it would require a vote of the people. There are built in handrails to avoid unwanted development.

Delong stated that the proposed timeline is a good timeframe. The public process and education will be critical in the development of the plan. Local stakeholders see the positive effects of increased tourism. Cardinell stated that she too likes the timeline but suggests consulting with other local boroughs to understand how it went for them and how the engagement process took place. Thomas stated her biggest concern is not workload but the trust and transparency and making sure that materials from meetings are publicly available. Stated that she would like members of the CVB to be apart of the public presentation to show a unified front. Also stated that she has met with Alix Pierce to discuss plan process.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

Adjourned at 1:21pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for February 20th, 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

## BOARD AND COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS

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### ❖ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD

- Held meetings in January, March, April, May, June, September, November and December.
- Hosted Governor Frank Murkowski (Mill Property and Tourism)
- Hosted Julie Decker (Mariculture)
- Hosted PhD Student Raylor Naylor (Tourism Research Project)
- Hosted the US Forest Service (update on projects and programs)
- Reviewed one proposal and presentation for the hospital property
- Codified the Economic Development Board
- Approved the Board's workplan
- Attended parliamentary procedures training
- Conducted a public survey on developments at the Six-Mile-Deep Water Port
- Expressed support for the Saint Frances Animal Shelter lease agreement
- Reviewed and approved a funding package in support of the Wrangell Chamber of Commerce
- Conducted two public surveys on the methods of sale for Alder Top Village
- Planned and facilitated a public workshop on the methods of Sale for Alder Top Village
- Approved the methods of Sale for Alder Top Village
- Bid farewell to Anne Morrison
- Welcomed new member Jillian Privett

### ❖ WRANGELL CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

- Held meetings in April, May, September, and November.
- Supported design development of the new street banners for downtown
- Sought support from native elders on utilization of art for design
- Approved final design of street banners
- Approved funding and implementation of digital mapping software
- Review and approved budget for the Transient Tax and Commercial Passenger Vessel funds
- Review prompts and provided input on visitor survey
- Reviewed and provided feedback for revisions of the Tourism Marketing Plan and Design Standards
- Approved 2024 Marketing Plan, Projects and Media outlets
- Reviewed the Global Sustainable Tourism Council criteria for tourism management
- Began planning for the development of the Tourism Management Plan and public engagement
- Reviewed the Cruise Ship and discussed logistics and planning issues
- Review and approval of the Tourism Best Management Practices

### ❖ PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

- Held meetings for all months except November.
- Reviewed and acted upon 33 planning and zoning issues ranging from new plats and subdivisions to variances and conditional use permits to code development and petitions to rezone an area of land.
- Developed and approved code for Accessory Dwelling Units.
- Reviewed one proposal and presentation for the hospital property

## DEPARTMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS BY DIVISION

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### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- ❖ Media development for deep water port with video package
- ❖ Attended the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation annual meeting
- ❖ Attended Symposium with the Department of Transportation in Washington DC
- ❖ Director facilitated over 100 logged public inquiries that required mild to considerable follow up
- ❖ Attended open house with Stik Built Homes
- ❖ Began planning for the Home Builders and Financial Literacy symposium
- ❖ Attended semi monthly meeting with the Wrangell Cooperative Association
- ❖ Planning, facilitation and implementation of Alder Top Land Sale
- ❖ Peltola, Murkowski and Dunleavy meeting preparation and participation
- ❖ Participation in the criteria rating for the Hospital Contract for Broker Services
- ❖ Facilitated presentation on Deep Water Port at the Pentagon

### PLANNING AND ZONING

- ❖ Review of the Hazard Mitigation Plan and developed plans for annual and 5-year renewal
- ❖ Issued 3 apparent code violations and resolved 2 of them. One is still pending.
- ❖ Study of the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code
- ❖ Saint Frances Animal Shelter lease negotiation, development and implementation
- ❖ Wrangell Airport and Muskeg Meadows prime and sublease negotiations, development and implementation
- ❖ Assisted with EMS and SAR during Landslide
- ❖ Manager support during Landslide
- ❖ Cooperation with Geologist during and after landslide
- ❖ Update of Permit Forms, and Online submission
- ❖ Revision, review, approval and implementation of the Accessory Dwelling Unit code
- ❖ State follow up and management of Borough Entitlement Lands patents status

### TOURISM MANAGEMENT

- ❖ Welcome new cruise line to Wrangell in 2024 and 2025
- ❖ Began negotiations and terms on scheduling cruise vessels
- ❖ Implementation of Tourism Best Management Practices
- ❖ Managed the planning and site furnishings for the Downtown Bathroom installation
- ❖ Coordination of the Visitor Industry Economic Report
- ❖ Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska Meeting
- ❖ Cruise Line International Association Meeting
- ❖ Regional Destination Managers meeting
- ❖ Petroglyph Beach Site Agreement review and planning for renewal
- ❖ Alaska Waters trip to Anan and Bus tour in town
- ❖ Plaque exchange with Seabourn Venture
- ❖ Two Operator Meetings
- ❖ Consistent face to face time with tourism throughout the season
- ❖ Community Collaborations

### MARKETING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- ❖ Planned and executed industry conference for the Alaska Recreation & Parks Association conference
- ❖ Planning for 2024 Bird Fest
- ❖ Facilitate and management of Bearfest photo contest
- ❖ Assisted with Public Information publication during Landslide

- ❖ Planned the City Holiday Party
- ❖ Facilitated staff work anniversary cards for all Borough staff
- ❖ Initiated a Chugach Ranger Boat project review and partner meeting with CBW and USFS staff
- ❖ Drafted, approved and began implementation of the Marketing Plan
- ❖ Street banners design
- ❖ Developed promotional Parks and Rec Video
- ❖ Miles Partnership Media Day and associative assets gained
- ❖ Frazer Leal assets
- ❖ GA4 Transition
- ❖ Marine Expo haul out data collection raffle
- ❖ Ports and Harbors Expo design and materials
- ❖ New Travel Wrangell website
- ❖ Onboard digital software with Wander Maps
- ❖ Established QR codes for everything
- ❖ Travel Wrangell brand deployment (expo backdrop)
- ❖ Digital Asset acquisition (new camera)
- ❖ Implement Lobby Monitors for Borough departments with front facing public services
- ❖ Worked with Upward Bound Students (Nikolai)

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

- ❖ Southeast Conference
- ❖ DMA West Tech Summit
- ❖ DMA Leadership Training
- ❖ ESRI ArcGIS Pro Workflow Essentials training
- ❖ ESRI ArcGIS Pro Online training
- ❖ Market Research Trip throughout SE

#### GRANT MANAGEMENT

- ❖ Bird Fest Reports for 2022 and 2023 Grants
- ❖ Thriving Communities Grant
- ❖ PIDP Grant award
- ❖ RAISE Grant application preparation for 2024 application
- ❖ SHSP Grant award and obligation

## Coordinator Report on Marketing – 02/16/2024

### 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) Run 2/5 - 3/6
  - Find your Wild Side (Fig 2) Run 2/1 - 4/2
  - Ancestral History (Fig 3) Run 3/7 - 4/5
- Related/Editorial Content (ATIA)
  - Anan – Close By! (Fig 4) Run 2/1 - 4/30

### Upcoming Placements/Buys

- Will be placed in Travel Guide, Breath of the Bear, Fly Alaska 2024 publications.
- 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.)
- Travel Guide
  - Travel guide content review took place Tuesday February 20<sup>th</sup>. More info to come
  - Design and Layout begins week of the February 18<sup>th</sup>.

### Existing Systems

- TravelWrangell.com now has a comprehensive privacy policy. Attorney approved.
  - Content will begin to be audited, updated or replaced as needed.
    - Local imagery will be use throughout site.
  - CRM will be integrated with webpage and tourism communication can begin to be routed through this system.
  - Interactive content (video, images, blog style posts) will begin to be developed.
  - Seattle Boat Show trip giveaway landing page developed and utilized.
- 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.
- Tools
  - Staff now has drone flying capacity and in addition to camera, will be able to capture a diverse range of media more consistently without the need to license as much.



Fig 1. ATIA Ad highlighting Wrangell's sense of adventure and scenic views



Fig 2. ATIA Ad highlighting the Anan Bear Observatory



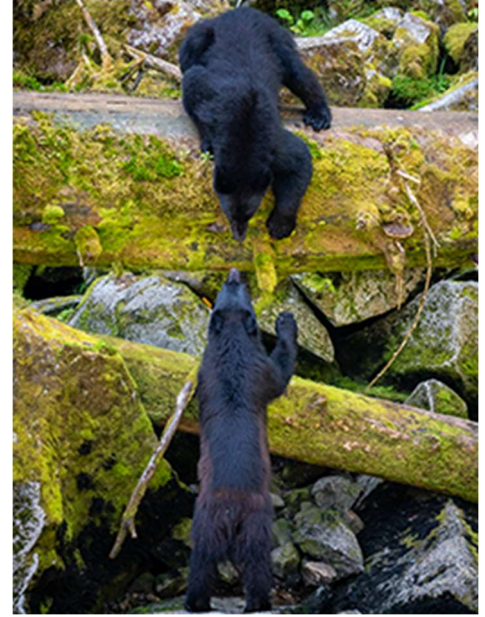
Fig 3. ATIA Ad highlighting Petroglyph Beach







Fig 4. ATIA Integrated Ads highlighting the Anan Bear Observatory. These ads have no copy or logo as these are meant to look like native content to the sight and look less like an ad. The headline states: “*Bears Closer than Thought!*”. The body copy states: “*The bear viewing you’ve dreamed of is closer than you think...*”. Copy for these ads are limited in characters.





# Wrangell Visitor Economy 2024

Prepared for

City and Borough of  
Wrangell



February 2024



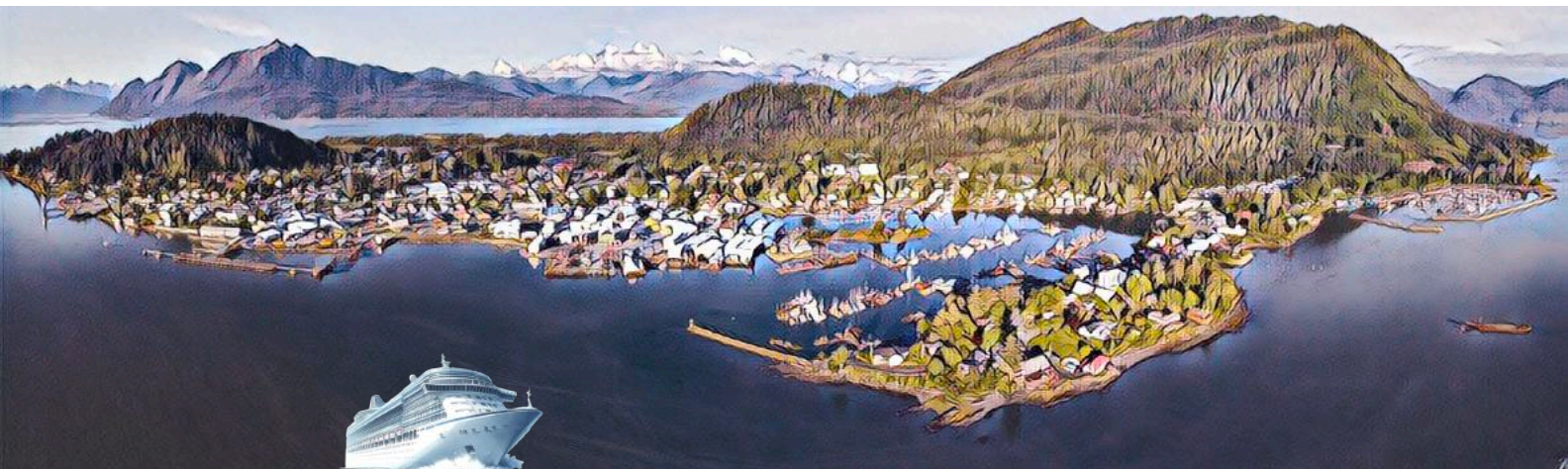
Prepared by  
Rain Coast Data



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## Wrangell Visitor Economy Summary

Wrangell's tourism sector has fully recovered from the pandemic. The 2023 tourism season looked a lot like 2019. Wrangell's 2024 season is expected to be its biggest in terms of visitor volume since 2005 as large cruise ships return to the community. The community is expected to attract 27,800 to 34,700 air, cruise, yacht, and ferry tourists, depending on how full the cruises ships are.

**Tourism Employment and Earnings Trends:** Despite changes to the number and types of annual tourists, the Wrangell visitor sector has a relatively stable average just over of 100 annualized jobs. On an annual basis, the visitor sector is responsible for 10% of all local jobs, and 7% of workforce earnings. In 2022, the sector accounted for 105 annual average jobs with associated workforce earnings of \$3.3 million. Early projections indicate a small amount of job growth in 2023.

**105**  
Annual average  
Wrangell tourism  
jobs

**Cruise Projections:** In 2024, Wrangell is scheduled to receive 122 port calls from 21 ships. This year's schedule, for the first time in 19 years, includes large cruise ships. If ships run at full capacity, 31,427 cruise ship passengers would visit the community, a 6% capacity increase from 2023. However, in 2023 ships ran at 78% full, on average, and it is difficult to project how that might change in 2024. Wrangell welcomed just under 23,000 cruise passengers in 2023. Cruise passengers are expected to make up 90% of the community's tourists in 2024.

**6%**  
Projected  
increase in cruise  
ship passenger  
capacity in  
2024

**Total Tourist Arrival and Spending:** In 2023, based on an analysis of city sales tax reports and passenger data, visitors spent \$5.1 to \$5.2 million in Wrangell. Current projections are for 34,700 Wrangell tourists in 2024; however if ships do not run full, those numbers could be smaller. Visitors are likely to spend between \$5.5 and \$6.5 million in Wrangell during the summer of 2024, depending on ship passenger capacity levels.

**\$5.2  
million**  
tourist spending  
in Wrangell in  
2023

**Visitors by Ferry:** The number of ferry passengers traveling to Wrangell has been on the decline since the 1990s, but service cuts have been remarkably steep in the past decade, from more than 7,000 disembarking passengers in 2013 to just over 1,200 in 2022. While once a focus of Wrangell's tourism sector, ferry traffic is no longer a significant part of the local visitor economy. While some support may be on its way through the federal infrastructure bill, the Alaska Marine Highway System currently lacks sufficient crew and vessels to provide more service to Wrangell. Passenger service dropped an additional 19% in 2023, and is expected to account for 0.6% of all tourists in 2024.

**-19%**  
Decrease in ferry  
passengers in  
2022-2023

## Overview of Tourism in Wrangell

In the summer of 2023, more than 26,000 tourists visited Wrangell. In 2024, large cruise ships will be part of the Wrangell's tourism economy for the first time since 2005, with nearly 35,000 tourists expected if the ships are full. Wrangell is scheduled to receive four visits from large cruise ships (ships with 1,300 passengers or more) in 2024.

Wrangell is a distinct and attractive visitor destination. Its unique “working waterfront” district sets Wrangell apart from the souvenir and diamond-centric shops found elsewhere in the region. Nestled at the edge of Wrangell Island, near the Stikine River's mouth, the community is steeped in rich wildlife, cultural heritage, and historical significance.

In the early 2000s, Wrangell experienced a brief surge in large cruise ship visits. However, in the last two decades the Wrangell tourism sector has focused on accommodating ferry passengers, smaller cruise ships, and other more independent tourists. This model is changing. Large cruise ships are returning to the community, while deep cuts to Wrangell's ferry service reduced ferry-based independent tourism by 89% over the last decade.

In addition to its working waterfront, Wrangell has unique opportunities for nature-based tours and wildlife viewing. The most popular visitor destination is Anan Creek, known for its world-class bear viewing. However, admission to the site is carefully managed by the Forest Service, and the number of visitors is limited, with prime bear viewing limited to July and August. Other unique visitor activities in Wrangell include visits to the Stikine-Leconte Wilderness, Chief Shakes Island, and Petroglyph Beach State Historic Park, which has the highest concentration of rock engravings in Southeast Alaska.

In order to fully capture the economic benefits of Wrangell's changing visitor composition,

Wrangell's focus on higher-end, limited-entry boutique tourism would need to shift. Development of new types of shore



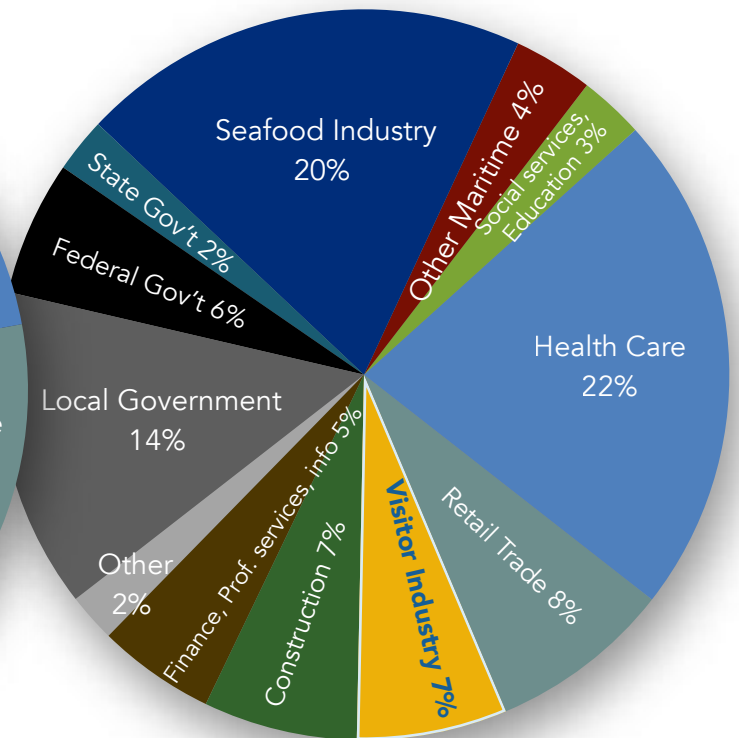
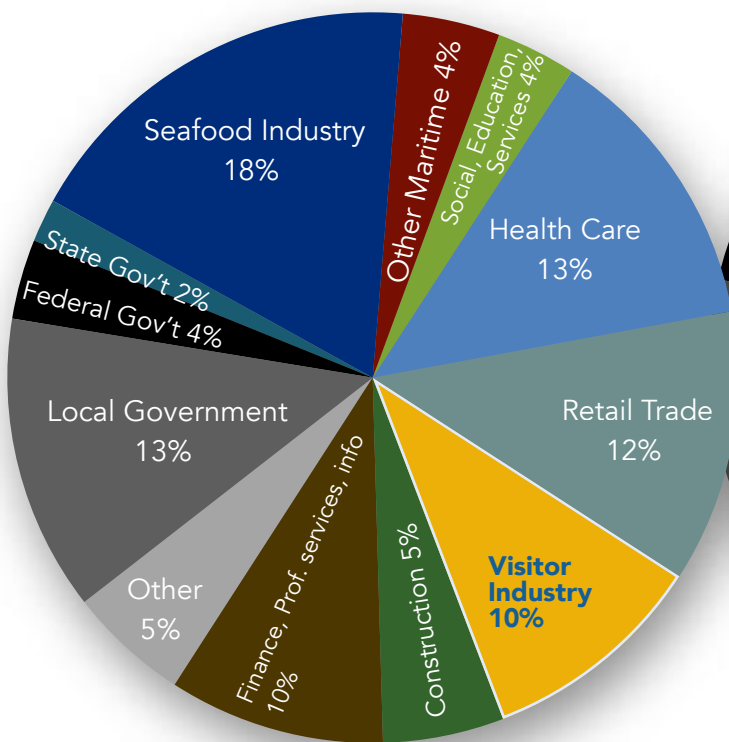
excursions that can be marketed to ships with higher passenger numbers represents both a challenge and an opportunity for Wrangell in 2024.

## Visitor Employment

Wrangell had 1,045 year-round equivalent jobs and nearly \$50 million in workforce earnings in 2022. All four quarters of 2023 data is not yet available. In 2022, visitor industry employment made up 10% of all private sector employment in Wrangell, accounting for 105 annual average jobs with associated workforce earnings of \$3.3 million.<sup>1</sup> The visitor industry accounted for 7% of total Wrangell workforce earnings in 2022. Early data shows that Wrangell’s tourism sector grew in 2023.

Annualized **Jobs**  
**1,045 Total Jobs**  
**105 Visitor Sector Jobs**

Employment **Earnings**  
**Total Earnings \$50 million**  
**Visitor Sector \$3.3 million**



Wrangell’s visitor sector is smaller than the region as a whole; the Southeast Alaska visitor industry represented 15% of all jobs and 9% of all employment earnings in 2022.

<sup>1</sup> **Sources:** Alaska Department of Labor Employment & Wage data; US Census Nonemployer (self-employment) Statistics. **Notes:** Due to data confidentiality, some figures are estimates by Rain Coast Data, based on all available inputs. Since annual average employment measures monthly jobs on an annual basis, a visitor industry job that lasts three months counts as one-quarter of an annual average job. Therefore total people employed by the visitor industry last year is a much higher number. 2022 data is not yet fully available.

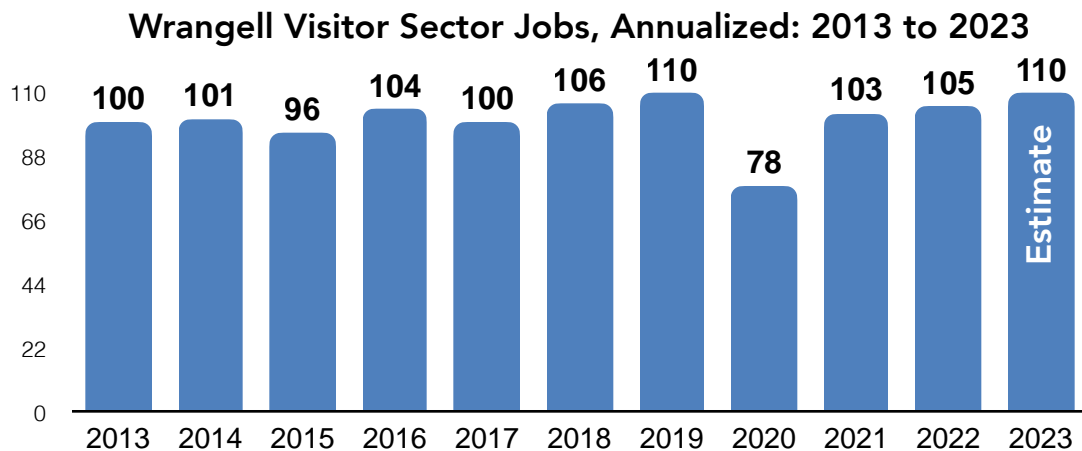


## Annual Visitor Industry Employment 2013-2022

Visitor sector employment in Wrangell has been remarkably steady (with the exception of pandemic year 2020) at just over 100 annualized jobs since 2013. While peak worker count is significantly higher, using an annualized count (year-round equivalent job analysis) allows tourism jobs to be compared across sectors, and is a better way of making annual comparisons. Although 2023 data is not yet available, it is expected to be the highest employment year for tourism on record, with a handful of more jobs than in 2022.

Total workforce earnings have increased over time. The average visitor sector wage increased by 41% between 2014 and 2022, while total workforce earnings in that sector increased by 47%.

	Year 2014	Year 2017	Year 2018	Year 2019	Year 2021	Year 2022	% Change 2014-2022
Average Visitor Industry Wage	\$22,227	\$24,066	\$27,259	\$31,955	\$30,961	\$31,293	41%
Total Visitor Industry Employment	101	100	106	110	103	105	4%
Total Visitor Industry Workforce Earnings	\$2.24 million	\$2.40 million	\$2.89 million	\$3.52 million	\$3.19 million	\$3.29 million	47%

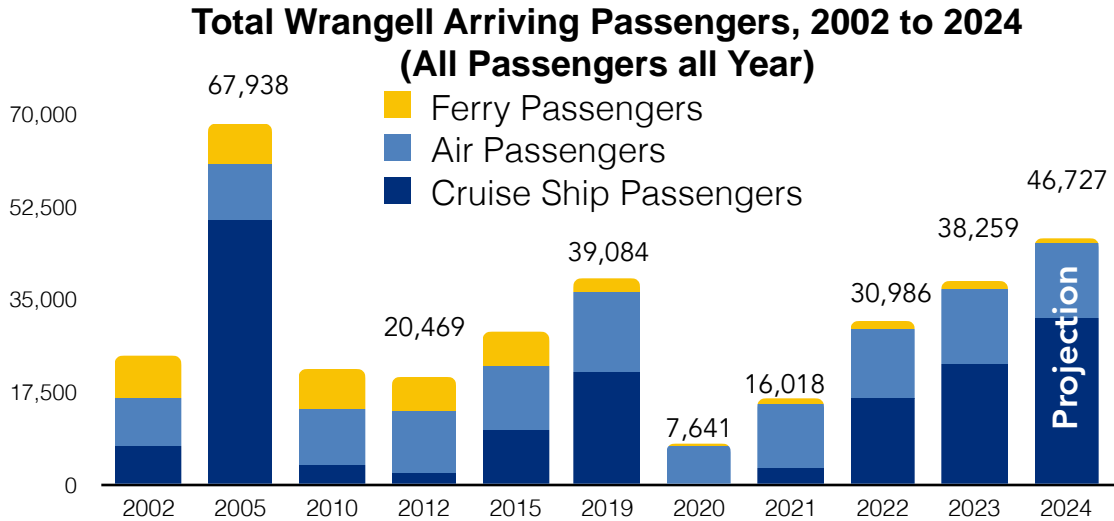


**Note:** Annualized employment (or year-round employment) tracks total workers each month of the year, sums the monthly total, and divides that number by twelve. **Source:** Alaska Department of Labor and US Census Nonemployer (self-employment). **Note:** 2023 data is only currently available through June.

# Change in the Visitor Industry

## Total Passenger Arrivals

In 2024, 46,727 passengers of all types — including locals returning home from travel, and those visiting for work — are expected to arrive in Wrangell. Approximately 69% of these were traditional tourists in 2023. But while the visitor sector primarily serves tourists, it also serves all travelers, and thus encompasses all hotel, restaurants, travel industry workers, and all arriving passengers.



In 2023, arriving passenger numbers were 23% higher than 2022 numbers, but remained just under 2019 levels. 2024 is expected to be Wrangell’s biggest visitor year since 2005. Passenger arrivals peaked in 2005 with nearly 68,000 passenger arrivals when large cruise ships visited the community. Between 2013 and 2019, total visitation gradually increased, before dropping to less than 8,000 total arriving passengers due to the pandemic.

## Wrangell Passenger Arrivals

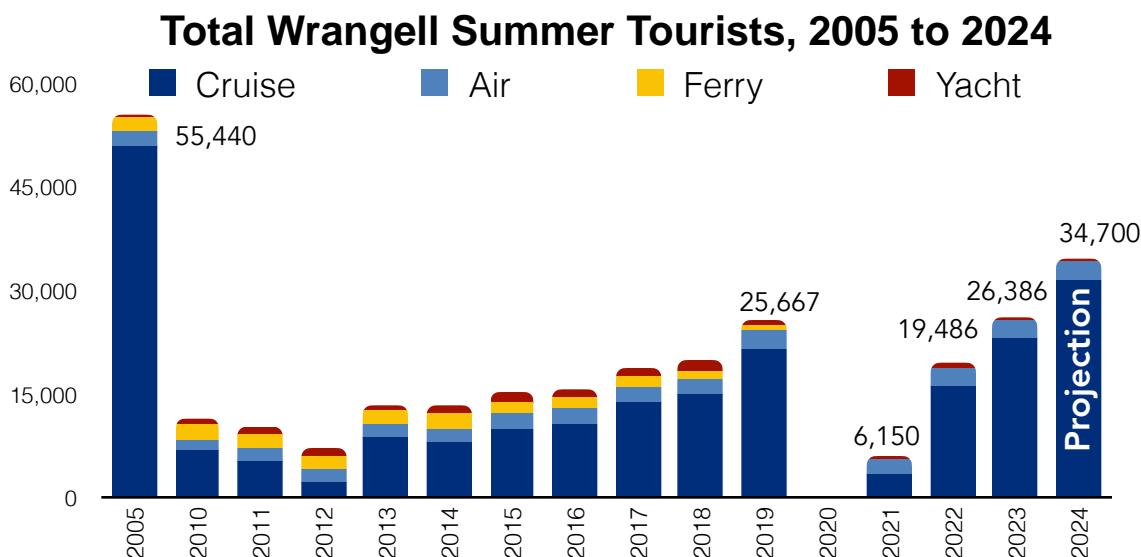
Total Air, Cruise, Ferry Passenger Arrivals	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 Projection	Change 2022-2023
Cruise Ship Passengers	21,540	-	3,350	16,126	22,966	31,427	42%
Air Passengers	14,637	7,367	11,897	13,347	14,060	14,100	5%
Alaska Marine Highway System	2,907	274	771	1,513	1,233	1,200	-19%
<b>Total Passenger Arrivals in Wrangell (via Air, Cruise, Ferry)</b>	<b>39,084</b>	<b>7,641</b>	<b>16,018</b>	<b>30,986</b>	<b>38,259</b>	<b>46,727</b>	<b>23%</b>

**Note:** Cruise passenger 2024 estimate is based on 100% capacity, despite 2023 ships coming in at an average 78% full. Assuming a lower capacity figure would decrease the 2024 cruise projections to 24,500 expected cruise passengers.



## Total Tourist Arrivals (as a subset of passenger arrivals)

The previous section analyzed all arriving passengers (tourists, workers, locals) in Wrangell - in this section we look at tourist arrivals only.



In 2024, Wrangell is projected to host 34,700 tourists in the community (assuming ships are at full capacity). It will be Wrangell's biggest tourism year since since 2005, and is the first time large cruise ships have been scheduled to visit Wrangell since that time.<sup>2</sup> Wrangell receives tourists from cruise ships, airplanes, ferries, and yachts.<sup>3</sup>

Wrangell has developed a boutique visitors sector, supporting approximately 100 annualized jobs - a number that does not change much over time. Tourism industry in Wrangell has long focused on Anan. Because the number of people allowed to visit Anan each year is capped by Forest Service permits, and the season for Anan is quite limited, tourism growth in Wrangell has been partially capped as well. The community had focused on ferry tourism—visitors who would spend multiple days and nights in the community, taking several high-end tours—but reduced and unattractive ferry schedules due to budget cuts have all but eliminated ferry tourism. Wrangell's current challenge is how to monetize growth once the boutique tours are fully booked.

<sup>2</sup> In September 2022 the 1,918-passenger Holland America Noordam made a single visit to Wrangell. It was not on the original schedule.

<sup>3</sup> Due to non-uniform counting, a more in-depth yacht analysis was excluded from this edition of the Wrangell Visitor Economy.

## Estimate Summer Tourists to Wrangell 2010-2024

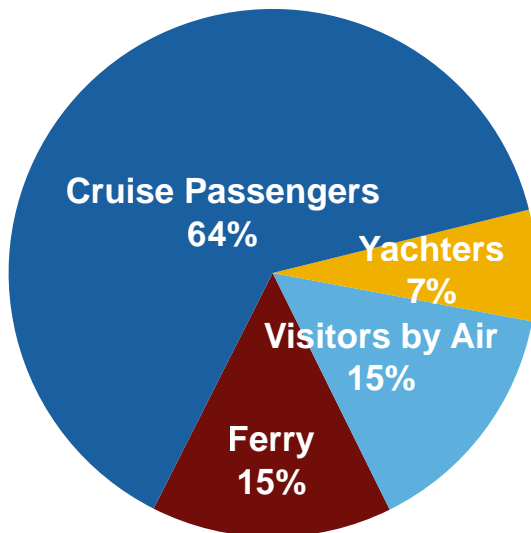
Summer Visitors to Wrangell	2010	2014	2022	2023	2024 est.	% Change 2010-2023	% Change 2022-2023
<b>Total Visitors</b>	<b>11,907</b>	<b>13,256</b>	<b>19,486</b>	<b>26,231</b>	<b>34,702</b>	<b>128%</b>	<b>35%</b>
Cruise	6,779	8,096	16,126	22,966	31,427	239%	42%
Yachters*	960	1,052	462	375	400	-61%	-19%
Air	1,768	2,008	2,618	2,670	2,650	51%	2%
Ferry	2,000	2,100	280	220	225	-89%	-21%

**Air:** US Bureau of Transportation Statistics RITA arriving passengers. **Cruise Passengers:** Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska. Small cruise ship schedules with research regarding total capacity. **Alaska Marine Highway System:** Annual Traffic Volume Reports and direct data request. **\*Yacht** counts provided by City and Borough of Wrangell. Due to a change in the counting process, these figures are no longer comparable to past years. "Summer tourists" are calculated in a variety of ways. All yacht and cruise passengers are considered "tourists." Air and ferry passengers are calculated by subtracting October to April average passenger arrivals from monthly summer passenger arrivals. From this number total seafood processing workers in Wrangell per summer is subtracted.

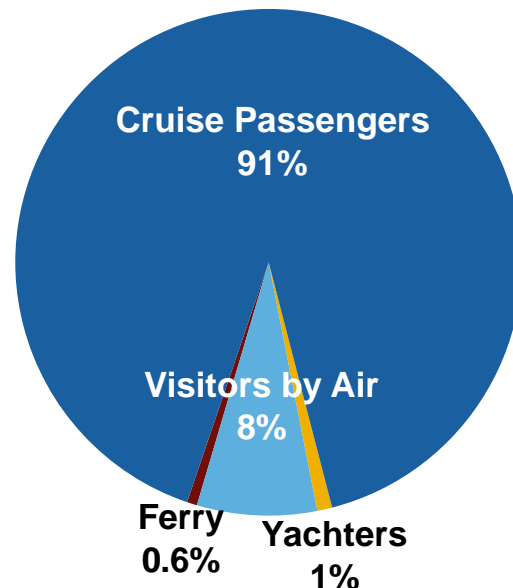
### Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival

In 2024, 90% of all tourists are expected to arrive via cruise ship, while 8% will arrive by air. Yacht arrivals may be higher than the 1% projected, due to data limitations. Based on current ferry schedules, less than 1% of all tourists will arrive via ferry. In 2013, two-thirds of all tourists were from cruise ships.

Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival in Wrangell 2013



Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival in Wrangell 2024



## Summer Visitation and Spending Analysis

In 2023, summer tourists spent just over \$5 million in the Wrangell economy. Visitor spending analysis was conducted two ways for 2023. First, a full accounting of visitor spending was conducted using City and Borough of Wrangell sales tax receipts for businesses serving visitors. Total sales tax receipts for winter months were subtracted from summer months to determine “visitor spending.” Using this analysis, Wrangell’s summer visitors spent \$5.1 million in 2023.

### Total Summer Tourist Spending, 2023

Summer Spending by Visitors by Category	2023
<b>Total estimated summer tourist spending</b>	<b>\$5,116,591</b>
Excursions and Transportation	\$1,763,176
Food, Beverages	\$2,029,268
Retail Spending	\$737,667
Hotel (includes hotel restaurants)	\$1,901,754

Note that Wrangell has a sales tax cap of \$3,000 that applies both to goods and services, so that some sales may have been missed by this analysis if they were over \$3,000.

A secondary analysis was conducted using estimates of how many days each type of visitor stayed, depending on mode, and how much spending per person occurred per spending category. Using this version, Wrangell tourists spent an estimated \$5.2 million in the summer of 2023.

### Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival and Expenditures in Wrangell 2023 Estimates

	2023	Total Estimated Summer Visitor Spending 2023	Total Estimated Spending Per Passenger
<b>Total Tourists</b>	<b>26,231</b>	<b>\$5,236,472</b>	<b>\$200</b>
Cruise Passengers	22,966	\$3,490,832	\$152
Visitors by Air	2,670	\$1,516,560	\$568
Yachters	375	\$138,000	\$368
Ferry	220	\$91,080	\$414

Note that actual spending is lower than the original projections for two reasons: 1) Ships overall numbers were 78% of expected passenger capacity; and 2) Spending per cruise ship passenger was reduced from the previous model, as there was less access to high end excursions per passenger.

If this secondary analysis is applied to 2024 projections, it is estimated that tourists will spend approximately \$6.5 million in the Wrangell economy this year, based on 100% capacity of cruise ships.

### Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival and Expenditures in Wrangell 2024 Projections

	2024	Total Estimated Summer Visitor Spending 2024	Total Estimated Spending Per Passenger
<b>Total Tourist Projections</b>	<b>34,702</b>	<b>\$6,522,454</b>	<b>\$188</b>
Cruise Passengers	31,427	\$4,776,904	\$152
Visitors by Air	2,650	\$1,505,200	\$568
Yachters	400	\$147,200	\$368
Ferry	225	\$93,150	\$414

Using a more conservative analysis, based on 78% cruise capacity, estimates that tourists will spend approximately \$5.5 million in Wrangell in 2024.

### Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival and Expenditures in Wrangell 2024 Projections 78% Cruise Capacity

	2024	Total Estimated Summer Visitor Spending 2024	Total Estimated Spending Per Passenger
<b>Total Tourist Projections</b>	<b>27,788</b>	<b>\$5,471,535</b>	<b>\$197</b>
Cruise Passengers	24,513	\$3,725,985	\$152
Visitors by Air	2,650	\$1,505,200	\$568
Yachters	400	\$147,200	\$368
Ferry	225	\$93,150	\$414

Note: Analysis assumes fewer cruise ship passengers than the 100% capacity figures.

## Cruise Passengers

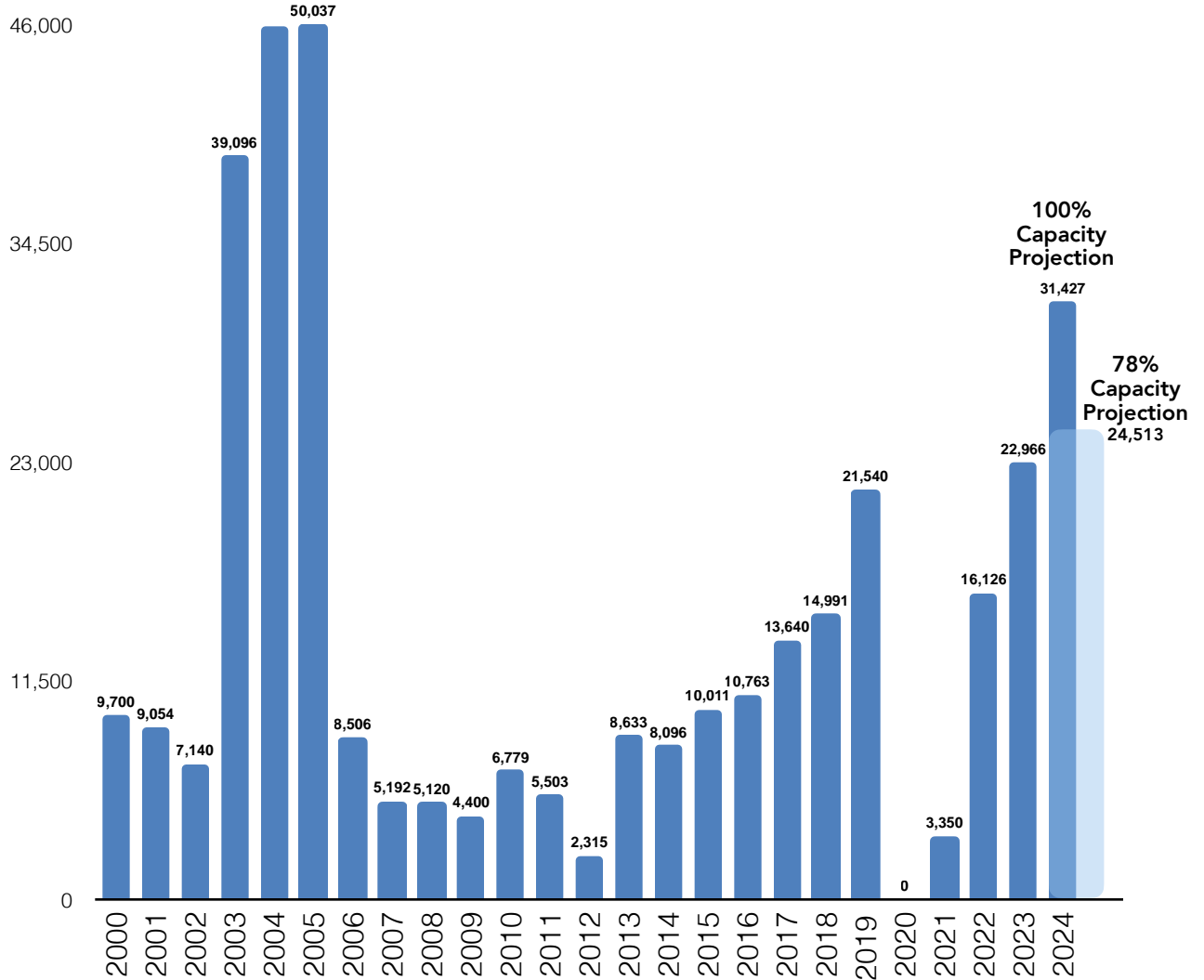
Southeast Alaska cruise passenger arrivals hit a new regional record in 2023 of 1.65 million cruise passengers, surpassing the previous 2019 record by 24%. Wrangell's cruise numbers, which had been steadily climbing pre pandemic, saw a similar number of cruise passengers in 2023 compared to 2019. Despite a forecast of nearly 30,000 cruise ship passengers in 2023, Wrangell received 22,966 cruise ship visitors due to ships running at 78% average passenger capacity for the season. Despite not being at full capacity, 2023 was Wrangell's biggest cruise passenger year since 2005.

### Cruise Ship Passengers 2023

2023 Ships	Passenger Capacity	Total Visitors	% Capacity
<b>Small Ships</b>	<b>4,879</b>	<b>4,237</b>	<b>87%</b>
Alaskan Dream ships	1,831	1,831	assumed 100%
NG Sea Bird	558	486	87%
NG Sea Lion	620	540	87%
American Constellation	1,870	1,380	assume 74%
<b>Mid-Sized Ships</b>	<b>24,631</b>	<b>18,729</b>	<b>76%</b>
Ocean Victory	2,800	1,688	60%
Seabourn Odyssey	5,400	4,620	86%
Silver Whisper	3,056	2,694	88%
Star Breeze	2,496	1,946	78%
Roald Amundsen	3,710	1,676	45%
Regatta	4,104	3,824	93%
Hanseatic Nature	1,060	782	assume 74%
Viking Orion	930	901	97%
Fridtjof Nansen	530	301	57%
Scenic Eclipse	228	112	49%
Seabourn Venture	317	185	58%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>29,510</b>	<b>22,966</b>	<b>78%</b>

**Source:** Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska; McKinley Research Group, LLC; City and Borough of Wrangell. **Note:** Arriving passenger numbers were not available for Alaskan Dream, American Constellation, or Hanseatic Nature. A 100% capacity number was used in place of actual data for Alaskan Dream ships, while 74% was used for American Constellation and Hanseatic Nature.

### Total Cruise Passengers in Wrangell 2000-2024



Source: Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska; City and Borough of Wrangell. Projections are for 100% capacity. Ships in Southeast Alaska in 2021 and 2022 were not full, and vacancy percentages were applied to estimates for arriving vessels in Wrangell during those years for mid-sized vessels. Photo below by Cyni Crary.



In 2024, Wrangell is expected to have 122 port calls from 31,427 passengers, if all ships are entirely full. This represents a 6% capacity increase over 2023. If ships are at 78% capacity, as they were in 2023, the community would host just over 24,500 cruise passengers.

### Cruise Ship Projections 2024

2024 Ships	Port Calls	Passenger Capacity	Total Visitors
<b>Small Ships</b>	<b>76</b>		<b>5,543</b>
Alaskan Dream	17	40	680
Baranof Dream	15	49	735
NG Sea Bird	10	62	620
NG Sea Lion	6	62	372
Kruzof Explorer	6	12	72
Admiralty Dream	5	54	270
Chichagof Dream	1	74	74
American Constellation	16	170	2,720
<b>Mid-Sized Ships</b>	<b>42</b>		<b>17,598</b>
Ocean Victory	14	200	2,800
Seabourn Odyssey	8	450	3,600
Silver Shadow	1	382	382
Silver Muse	4	596	2,384
Roald Amundsen	7	530	3,710
Regatta	3	684	2,052
Hanseatic Spirit	2	230	460
Viking Orion	1	930	930
Fridtjof Nansen	1	530	530
Seven Seas Explorer	1	750	750
<b>Large-Ships</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>8,286</b>
Nieuw Amsterdam	1	2,160	2,160
Queen Elizabeth	2	2,081	4,162
Westerdam	1	1,964	1,964
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>122</b>		<b>31,427</b>

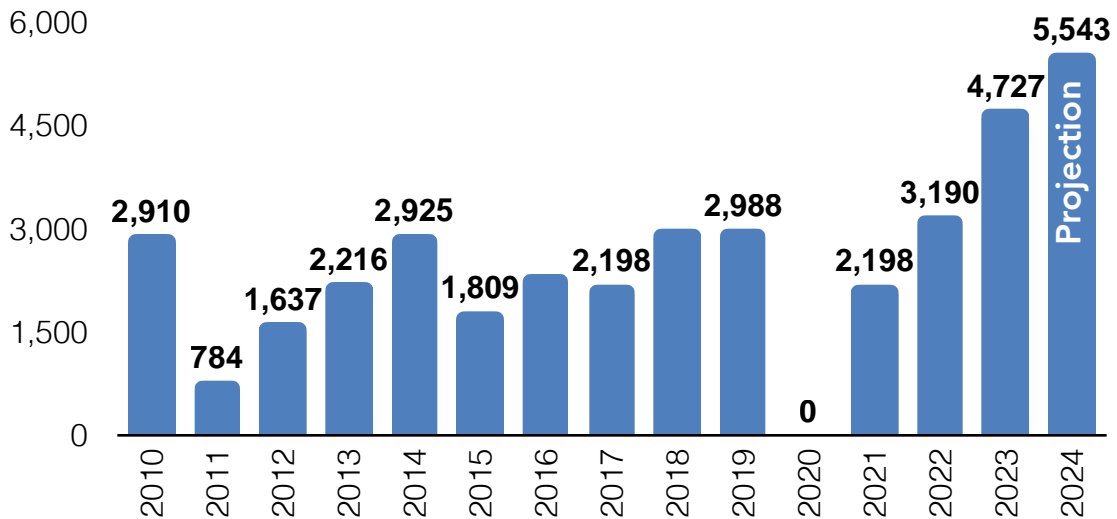
Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska; City and Borough of Wrangell.

For the purpose of this analysis, small cruise ships include those with 30 to 199 passengers per vessel; mid-sized cruise ships includes those with 200 to 1,299 passengers per vessel; and large ships have 1,300 passengers or more.

### Small Cruise Ships

In 2024, 8 small cruise ships with an average capacity of 65 passengers are expected to make 76 port calls, potentially bringing 5,543 passengers to Wrangell if the ships are full. This represents a 17% increase in the total number of visitors on small cruise ships compared to 2023.

Wrangell Small Cruise Capacity 2010 to 2024



**Note:** For consistency, 2021 capacity numbers are included for small cruise ships, although actual travelers were likely lower. For the purposes of this analysis, small cruise ships are defined as those with 30 to 199 passengers per vessel.

Wrangell's small cruise ship sector experienced disruptions in 2010 when Cruise West ceased operations at the end of the summer season, and again during the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021.

### Mid-Sized Cruise Ships

In 2024, 10 mid-sized cruise ships with an average capacity of 500 passengers are expected to make 42 port calls, potentially bringing 17,598 passengers to Wrangell if the ships are full.

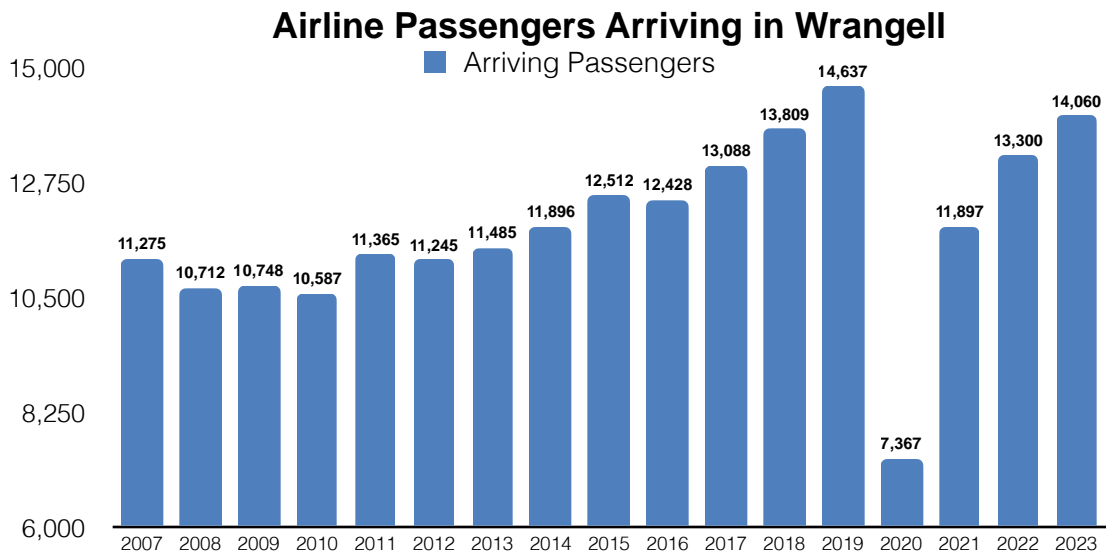
### Large Cruise Ships

The first large cruise ships since 2005 are on the cruise schedule for Wrangell in 2024. Three ships, Nieuw Amsterdam, Queen Elizabeth, and Westerdam are scheduled to make 4 combined port calls. At full capacity, they would bring a combined 8,286 visitors. Norwegian Cruise Line made stops in Wrangell starting in 2003, but ceased operations after 2005. At the time they said that the community did not have sufficient capacity to provide visitor programming for a 2,000-passenger vessel. The large cruise ship Noordam made an unscheduled visit to Wrangell in September 2022.



## Air Passengers<sup>4</sup>

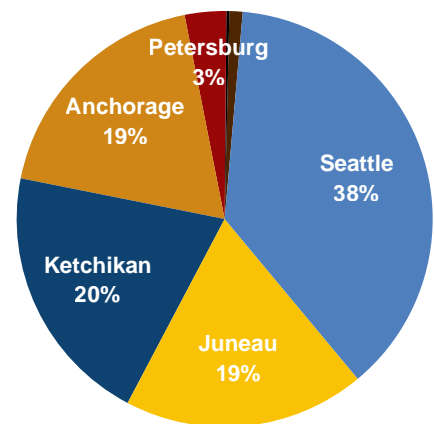
The number of air passengers arriving in Wrangell gradually increased through 2019. Passenger traffic fell steeply, and then rebounded strongly following the 2020 pandemic. Further growth occurred in 2023 as Trident Seafoods restarted local operations. In 2023, an estimated 14,060 air passengers arrived in Wrangell, a 6% increase over 2022 levels.



To estimate how many of these summer travelers were tourists (rather than locals traveling home or people traveling to work in Wrangell), average off-season monthly travel numbers were subtracted from high-season monthly travel numbers, along with summer labor estimates. Approximately 2,700 summer air travelers are estimated to have visited Wrangell for the purpose of recreation in 2023.

Looking at a full year of passenger data, the greatest percentage of passengers arrived in Wrangell via Seattle (38%), while a fifth of passengers arrived from each of the following locations: Ketchikan, Juneau, and Anchorage.

Passengers Disembarkments in Wrangell by City 2022

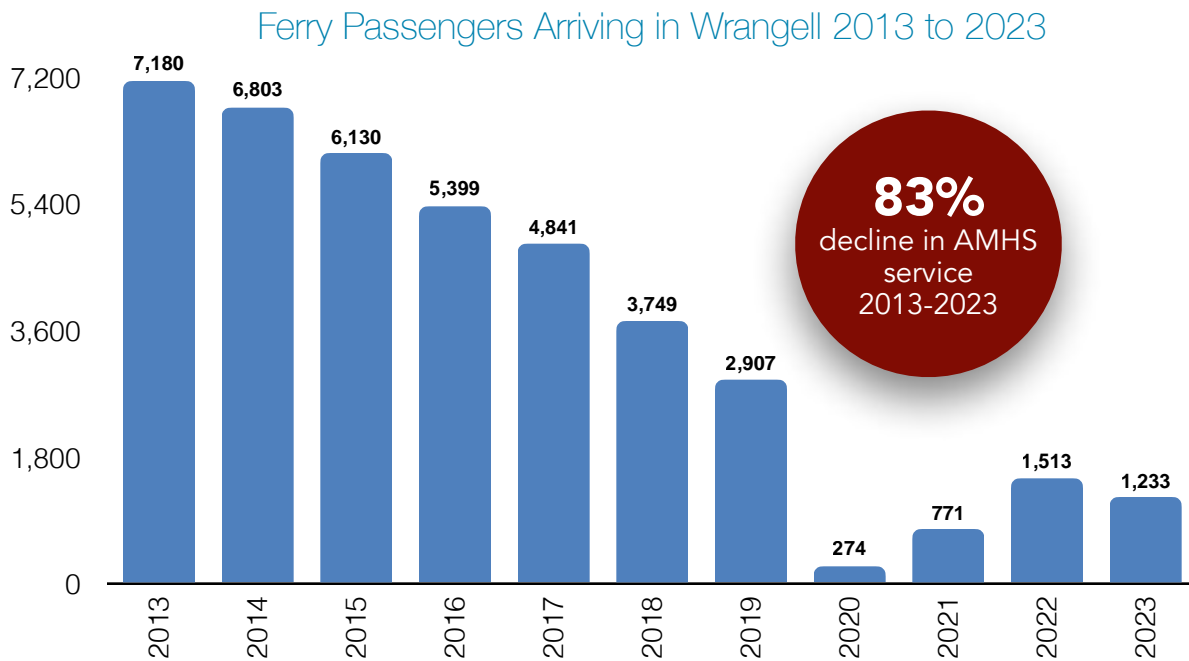


<sup>4</sup> Bureau of Transportation Statistics T-100 Market data. Photo of jet leaving Wrangell by Carol Rushmore.

## Ferry Passengers<sup>5</sup>

In 2023, just over 1,200 Alaska Marine Highway (AMHS) ferry passengers arrived in Wrangell. Just over half of these arrived during the summer (May through September).

Since 2013, the number of passengers disembarking in Wrangell has decreased by 83%: a nearly six-fold decrease. In 2023, the number of passengers disembarking decreased by an additional 19% from the already very low 2022 numbers — due to service cuts and reduced sailings.



AMHS has been hit hard by state budget reductions, yet Wrangell has been disproportionately impacted by service and port call cuts. Visitor-focused businesses built around serving ferry passengers have been further impacted by the unreliability of ferry services.

The pandemic decimated already diminished ferry service, yet Wrangell service levels fell again in 2023. In 2024, the state reports that it lacks the crew needed to operate the Kennicott, while the Matanuska remains indefinitely out of service due to disrepair, leaving Wrangell with summer weekly service from a single vessel - again. For Wrangell this meant 87 port calls in 2023, down from more than four times as many port calls in 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Alaska Marine Highway System Annual Traffic Volume Reports. Direct data requests.

## Ferry Passenger Arrivals

Year	Total Arriving Ferry Passengers	Summer Tourist Passengers (Estimated)
2023	1,233	225
2022	1,513	280
2021	771	143
2020	274	NA
2019	2,907	815
2018	3,749	961
2017	4,841	1,364
2016	5,399	1,365
2013	7,180	2,010
<b>Change 2013-2023</b>	<b>-83%</b>	<b>-89%</b>

While the full schedule for 2024 will not be published until April, currently it appears that the service level for Wrangell for 2024 will be similar to 2023.

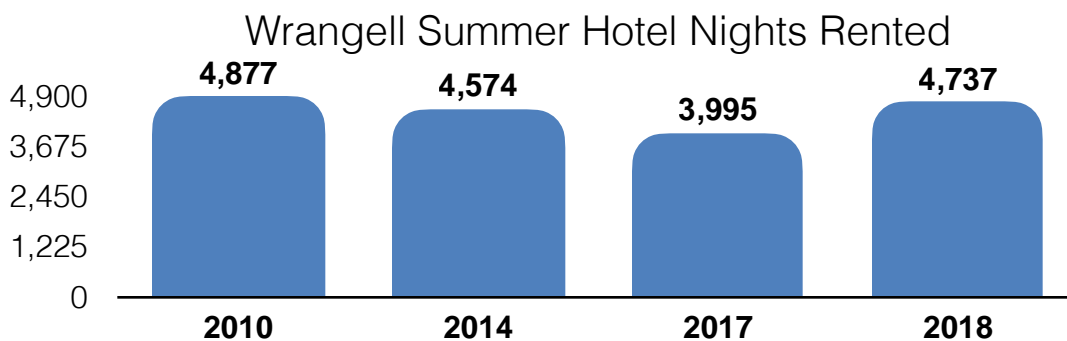


The MV Malaspina leaving Wrangell for the last time, in the Wrangell Narrows

## Hotels and Bed and Breakfasts

Previous analysis has shown that Wrangell summer visitors use an average of 4,500 hotel room nights, although room tracking is currently unavailable.

In 2023, Wrangell had 13 overnight accommodation businesses, with 69 total rooms.<sup>6</sup>



### Traditional Wrangell Overnight Rentals Inventory by Rooms/Units

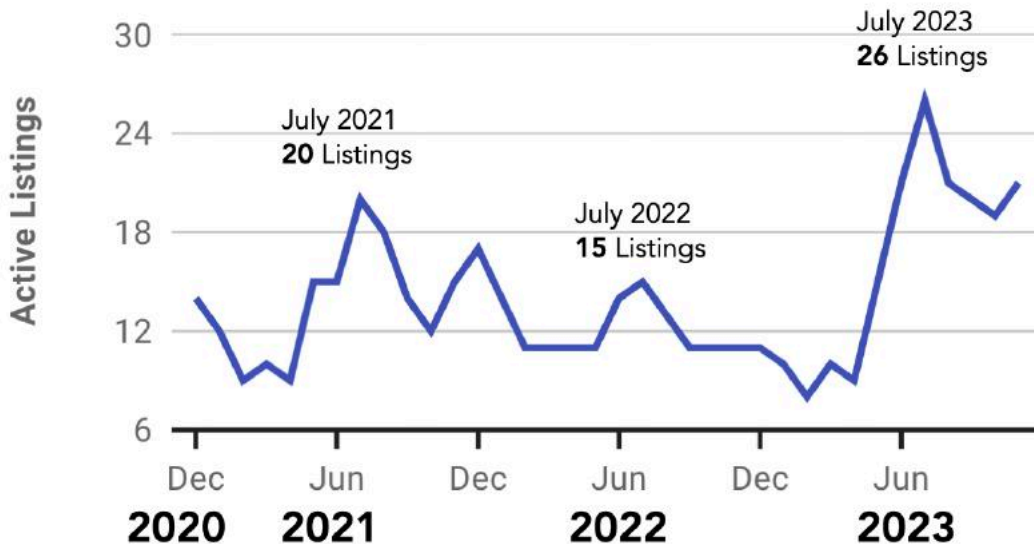
	2012		2018		2023
Ava's B & B	1	Ava's B & B	1	Apartment in Wrangell	3
Alaskan Sourdough Lodge	16	Armstrong Rents	3	A Suite Spot	5
Beaver Connections	2	Dockside Wrangell	1	ARED LLC	2
Benitz B&B	2	Grand View B & B	3	Forget Me Not	3
Diamond C Hotel/Thunderbird	6	Hertiage Harbor	3	Grand View B&B	3
Fennimore's B & B	6	Little Bitty Getaway,	1	Heritage Harbor	3
Grand View B & B	3	Off the Hook	2	Mt. Dewey Sunset B&B	2
John Taylor	1	H14	2	Northstar Reflections	1
Mt. Dewey Guesthouse	1	Rooney's Roost B & B	6	Reeves Guesthouse	2
Rooney's Roost B & B	6	Stikine Inn	34	Reliance Harbor Front	2
Stikine Inn	34	Tans Place	1	Stikine Inn	34
Zimovia B & B	2	Squawking Raven	2	Vacation Rental	1
<b>Total Rooms</b>	<b>80</b>	Extended Stay	8	Extended Stay	8
		Zimovia B & B	2	<b>Total Rooms</b>	<b>69</b>
		<b>Total Rooms</b>	<b>69</b>		

<sup>6</sup> Despite ten 2018 accommodation establishments closing by 2023, Wrangell had the same number of available rooms as in 2018 as in 2023. The 2018 businesses that closed include Ava's B&B, Armstrong Rents, Little Bitty, Off the Hook, H14, Rooney's Roost, Tans Place, the Squawking Raven, and Zimovia B&B. The Cedar House Inn, formerly known as Alaskan Sourdough Lodge, both opened and closed in 2023. It is an 18-room facility, although just a portion of those had been available for rent. It has been reopened as the Alaska Sourdough Lodge in 2023, and will be operating at a higher room count in 2024.

### Short-Term Airbnb and Vrbo Rentals

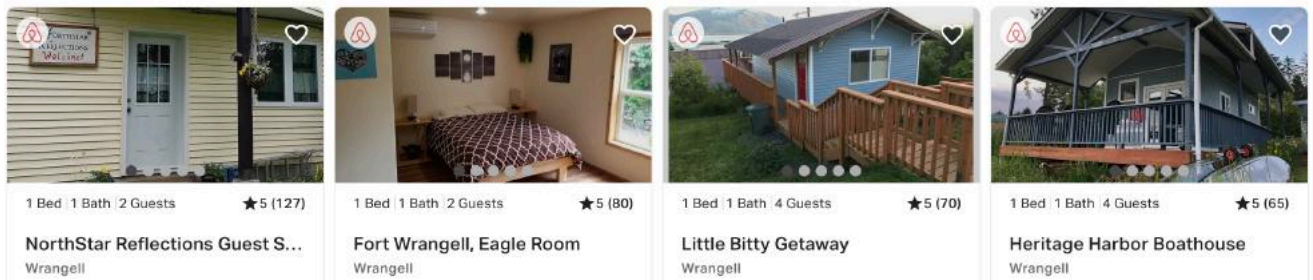
Additional rooms from non-traditional establishment are also available in Wrangell. Using data from AirDNA, a company that tracks Vrbo and Airbnb data, it is clear that short-term rental usage has become more popular. Use of short-term rentals, like Airbnb and Vrbo, have risen from 20 peak listing in the summer of 2021 to 26 active listings in the summer of 2023. The average price per night in 2023 was \$192 per night - a number that increased to \$347 per night in July, although properties range from \$81 to \$1,200 per night (prices include cleaning fees, local taxes, and agency fees). The listings included 14 rooms which are likely already part of Wrangell’s traditional room rental inventory, along with 12 “entire homes.” The average occupancy rate of these short-term rentals was 80% in July and 19% in October, for an annual average occupancy rate of 39%.

#### Wrangell Short-Term Rentals, 2020-2023



Source: AirDNA, Wrangell market analysis

The majority of Wrangell’s short-term housing listings offered availability on a seasonal basis only. The listings include everything from boats, traditional inns, to luxury homes. The average length of stay in 2023 was 3 days.





## Anan, Stikine, LeConte Tours Analysis

### Anan Wildlife Observatory

The most important visitor attraction in Wrangell is Anan. Anan Creek is a historic Tlingit Native fishing site located on the mainland on the south end of Wrangell Island. The area has the largest pink salmon run in Southeast Alaska, attracting large numbers of black and brown bears during July and August. The



The Anan Wildlife Observatory is managed by the Wrangell District of the US Forest Service, Tongass National Forest and is only accessible by boat or plane. There is a half-mile trail leading to a new observation deck, strategically allowing visitors to view bears while they fish for salmon in cascading waterfalls. During peak season, which is July 5 through August 25, visitors can only visit with a US Forest Service permit. There is a high demand for the daily passes. A significant allotment change means more Wrangell tourists can visit Anna than in previous years. Admission to the site is managed by the Forest Service. The number of visitors is limited to 60 commercially guided and 12 independent visitors a day. Passes are not required outside of the peak season. In 2023, 2,905 visitors went to Anan, including 2,357 that were commercially guided and 548 were independent or unguided visitors — a record number. A new permit system — aimed at better allocating under-utilized permits while maintaining the overall allowable number visitor permits — along with good weather and new infrastructure were credited for the increase. Not all visitors access Anan via Wrangell.

Combining the total spending by independent visitors to Anan, as well as cruise visitors who partake in Anan bear viewing, the total estimated economic impact of Anan bear viewing in Wrangell was \$1.9 million in the summer of 2017, meaning that more than a third (36%) of all summer tourism-related spending in Wrangell was made by travelers who visited Anan on a guided trip. 84% of the total economic impact of Anan visitors in Wrangell was due to independent travelers, while cruise passengers contributed 16% of the larger economic value realized by the attraction.



### **Stikine River, LeConte Glacier Tour Analysis**

There are two additional water-based tours that are very popular in Wrangell. These are the Stikine River and the LeConte Glacier.

**Stikine River:** Wrangell is known for being the gateway to the Stikine River, a name that translates to “the great river” in Tlingit. The Stikine extends 400 miles from headwaters in British Columbia to its mouth near Wrangell and encompasses 27,200 acres of delta flats. Local operators provide jet boat tours, which are the most popular way to access the Stikine River. There is a wealth of history and unique geological elements, as well as spectacular scenery and wildlife opportunities. The Stikine River and tributaries comprise the Stikine-Leconte Wilderness area. For the more advanced adventurer, canoes, kayaks, and rafts are available locally.

**LeConte Glacier:** The LeConte Glacier is North America’s southernmost tidewater glacier and is part of a massive glacial system that stretches 120 miles. It resides in a 12-mile-long fjord at the head of LeConte Bay, approximately 20 miles from the mouth of the Stikine River. It is an active, advancing glacier with frequent calving. Shakes Glacier on the Stikine River is part of the same glacial icefield. Tours are generally via jet boat and take about four hours.

## 2023 Business Climate Survey

### Wrangell Tourism Leaders

Each year Southeast Conference conducts a regional business climate survey in order to track Southeast Alaska business confidence. In the spring of 2023 a total of 16 Wrangell business owners and operators responded to the survey, representing a total workforce of 74. (A new survey will be conducted in March of 2024).

In the spring of 2023, Wrangell tourism business leaders were asked to describe their economic outlooks in their own words. These comments were primarily regarding their expectations of the 2023 season:

- *Increased visitation by ships is achieved by **extending the season**, adding in stops in April, May, September and October. The **revenue from those months is minimal and we often operate at a loss**. Staffing is difficult at best with most seasonal staff back in school. Given the lack of ferry service, the number of independent visitors is down. This affects not only us, but our entire community. Those visitors that do come have a difficult time finding lodging, but that issue will sort itself out by private industry. We could expand our job base and opportunities by having better transportation access to our community. We could also expand if there were more accessible recreation opportunities for both visitors and staff. For example, more hiking trails with camping opportunities, or even maintaining the current trails. Better USFS or State cabins that are accessible without needing specialized equipment or knowledge.*
- *Concerns over raising costs to operate. **AMHS** not being upgraded. Feeling fearful of the economy and potential travelers.*
- ***Fishing guides** have to contend with less fish, more rules, and less reason to want to fish under these conditions.*
- ***King salmon closures** means that we can't fish close to Wrangell for kings. Guides have to run more than 50 miles. There used to be 5 charters, but now there are two left. We were famous for our kings, which is why people came here for fishing charters, so the lack of kings has changed the visitor season.*
- ***Fuel costs** including electricity and the cost of shipping has impacted businesses in a substantial manner. The cost of food rises every month. We are being squeezed to death by State and Federal rules and policies.*



- **High shipping costs** and **little ferry service** is driving me out of business.
- I think that despite all the spin, the overall outlook will be stable. More ships but on **the shoulder seasons actually create less of a margin; expense without revenue.**
- **Longer-term rentals are in high demand**, especially among new hospital staff with either temporary or with longer contracts.
- Tourism in 2023 shows **signs of growth** for this season, primarily in the increase in the number of small to mid sized cruise ship stops. The number of **independent travelers decreased significantly** in 2017 with the break down & de-funding of the Alaska Marine Highway System. It came to a halt during COVID. It has not seemed to return to the strength independent visitor travel was in 2015. Other industries seem to be struggling in various areas from a good workforce base to hire from, cost of material to produce a product, cost of good sold, shipping costs, consumers having enough cashflow & income to create strong customer demand.
- **Very much a growth sector** however I am concerned about too many ships spoiling what makes Alaska so special. As I have generally been a proponent of industry regulating itself I am mixed in my feelings on how to manage this for the good of businesses that rely on ship passengers AND passenger and non ship passenger experience, including non industry locals. **Disgruntled non tourism industry locals need to be heard** because if ignored it only makes the situation worse. We must protect ourselves from becoming a "theme park", fake, atmosphere. How to do that is far beyond my skill set.
- We expect to see **increased cruise ship stops.**
- Although the number of visitors, based on increased cruise ship activity, is predicted to increase, these are **based on capacity** of each ship multiplied by the number of visits.

# Agenda Item A Unfinished Business

## Tourism Management Plan

Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau

AGENDA ITEM

February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Information:** The first step identified by the CVB and staff for the Tourism Management Plan is to provide the public with good objective information about the industry and what the intent of a Tourism Management Plan is for the community. More recently staff have been working to establish individual meetings with tourism stakeholders to better understand their interests and services within the industry. Importantly though, staff have been seeking feedback from those meetings on the methods for public engagement throughout the planning process.

From those discussions, staff would like to begin the public engagement process by recording and broadcasting a series of mini-informational videos developed by staff. The videos may feature different members of leadership, CVB, industry partners and/or businesses. The information seeks to provide residents with a better understanding of the local and industry players, 2024 seasonal forecast, economics, opportunities, and drawbacks of the Tourism Industry. The purpose of this is to provide bite size bits of information to folks leading up to the season, with the intent of conducting a community meeting where all the information shared in the videos will be compiled into one comprehensive presentation. Staff are seeking input from the CVB on the subjects and details they feel would be most pertinent to provide to the community.

Staff are proposing that resident surveys intended to understand the community's sentiment around tourism be delayed until the end of the season, at the recommendation of research consultant, "McKinley Research" who has been studying tourism in Alaska for nearly 50 years. At the Pacific Northwest Cruise Symposium, McKinley staff suggested the importance of getting information from the public when their experiences both positive and negative are fresh on their minds, thus the recommendation to perform a resident survey post season.

As a preliminary discussion to the FY25 budget review, staff would like to propose that the CVB consider spending funds from the Commercial Passenger Vessel tax account for the purposes of hiring consulting services to assist with visitor survey prompts and methodology, resident surveys, and industry data collection to ensure that Wrangell has exceptional outcomes in the final product of the Tourism Management Plan. Discussion should include the scope of services, threshold of spending and the value of utilizing outside services for this initiative.

Previously determined benchmarks for developing the plan are listed in this agenda statement. The above proposal falls in line with the sequence of actions discussed at the January meeting.

**Tourism presentation (recorded and published online for those at home)** This presentation will be open to the public. It would be beneficial to present to high school and middle school students if appropriate. Below are the bullet points of the presentation.

1. Introduction
  - a. Staff and WCVB
  - b. Purpose of WCVB
  - c. Goals and objectives of the department
2. What is the current situational analysis of tourism
  - a. Types of tourism
  - b. Wrangell Visitors Statistics
  - c. Benefits of tourism
    - i. General and local
  - d. Drawbacks and/or consequences of a poorly managed industry
3. What systems are in place for industry management
  - a. Tourism Best Management Practices
  - b. Travel Wrangell Marketing plan
  - c. What else is needed? Why?
    - i. Tourism management plan
    - ii. Industry best practices/ criteria for sustainable tourism

#### **Public survey**

1. Gauge the public's opinion on the benefits and drawbacks of tourism
2. Gauge the public's tolerances for growth

#### **Plan development**

1. Establish a draft plan that aligns with the vision of the community based on recent input.
2. CVB review and input

#### **Plan presentation and public engagement**

1. Host a public meeting to present the plan.
  - a. Include a public hearing.
  - b. Public comment/secondary survey
    - i. Launch a public survey to vet the contents of the plan

#### **Revisions to plan**

1. Modify plan based on valuable feedback and majority interests.
  - a. Work Session with CVB

#### **Approval of plan**

1. Presentation to CVB
2. Approval

#### **Plan implementation and education**

1. Publish plan
2. Educate stakeholders
3. Share plan with industry agencies
4. Drive the industry to meet the goals of the plan

# Agenda Item A New Business

## Visitor Survey

Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau  
AGENDA ITEM  
February 20<sup>th</sup>, 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) \*

- Petroglpyh 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 a.

# Agenda Item B New Business

## FY25 Transient Tax and CVB Budget

Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau  
AGENDA ITEM  
February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Information:** Staff have provided copies of past budgets from FY18, FY19, FY23 and FY24. Budgets from FY20-FY22 have been excluded as they were off years due to COVID. Also included is a list of the Marketing Plan listed media outlets and projects that the CVB approved in CY2023. Additional reporting can be provided to the CVB upon request that may provide for more detail online item expenditures throughout the past budget cycle.

Staff would like to have an initial discussion with the CVB about priorities for the upcoming year. Discussion points include:

- Marketing priorities
- In-market infrastructure
- Travel, trade, and boat show participation
- Contract and consulting services
- Travel writing and creative content development

The budget discussion will be carried out through March and April meetings before it is presented to the Assembly for review and approval. This is intended to be an introduction to the process.

**Attachments:** 1. Previous Years Budget 2. Marketing Plan Projects



## SPECIAL REVENUE FUND: TRANSIENT TAX

### PURPOSE:

To increase a healthy mix of independent travelers, cruise ship passengers, business travelers and destination visitors to Wrangell, while maintaining the small-town quality of life for residents.

### KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Collaborated with Borough Departments to develop a new bathroom site downtown.
- Completed and approved the Tourism Best Management Practices.
- Partnered with Parks and Recreation to promote stewardship through the Community Collaborations event.
- Began first steps of implementing the Travel Wrangell brand into socials and printed media.
- Collaborated with the Wrangell Sentinel to craft the 2023 Wrangell Travel Guide.

### LEVEL OF SERVICE AND BUDGET IMPACT:

An increased funding package has been requested to build Wrangell's digital marketing plan and modernize systems, enabling staff to meet the goals and objectives set by the departments workplan.

### GOALS AND NEW INITIATIVES:

- Build an online presence to reflect the Travel Wrangell brand and encourage more foot passengers.
- Increase community and stakeholder engagement to ensure industry growth in a manner that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.
- Launch the Tourism Best Management Practices and manage relationships with participants in an intentional and routine manner.
- Increase digital marketing promotions and advertisements through the efforts of the coordinator position.
- Develop an industry strategic plan that can be used as a catalyst for community economic growth.

### TRENDS AND FUTURE ISSUES:

Statewide trends are showing that Alaska's tourism industry is stable and on the trajectory of growth following the pandemic. Local trends in travel and tourism are very promising. Sufficient and sustainable services, excursions and amenities are critical to the vitality of the industry.

- Tourism is the second largest employer in the state of Alaska
- Air travel passenger traffic is up from 2021
- Local growth in available beds to support independent travelers
- Wrangell's tourism industry is increasing following the pandemic
- State investment in Outdoor Recreation Plans

- Federal investment in the Alaska Marine Highway System
- Local need to enhance hospitality services and excursions to sufficiently serve visitors

**PERFORMANCE METRICS:**

- To ensure a successful Tourism Management program, the department will track participation, deploy regular communication with stakeholders and seek end of the season feedback to drive improvements for the following year.
- To ensure growth in non-cruise related travel to Wrangell, the department staff will build its digital media presence and monitor travel data trends drawn from mobile application services and google analytics.
- To ensure a strategic plan is developed specific to the industry, the department will work with regional Destination Marketing Organizations to better understand how other communities are combating the challenges typical of industry growth.



**PERSONNEL**

- Kate Thomas, Economic Development Director (FTE)
- Matt Henson, Marketing and Community Development Coordinator (FTE)
  - The department’s coordinator position was approved in January 2023. The position was filled in March. Previously there was only one employee in the Economic Development department.
- \*Same staff as Economic Development



**CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL**  
**2024 ANNUAL BUDGET**  
*Fund 28000*

**SPECIAL REVENUE TYPE**  
**TRANSIENT TAX FUND**  
**SUMMARY OF REVENUES & EXPENDITURES**

		FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2023	FY 2024
		ACTUAL	ACTUAL	ESTIMATED	ADOPTED	APPROVED
<b>TRANSIENT TAX REVENUES</b>					<b>BUDGET</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
28000 000 4080	Bed (Transient) Tax	\$ 30,661	\$ 61,261	\$ 62,000	\$ 55,000	\$ 57,500
28000 000 4085	Bed Tax Penalties & Interest	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000	\$ -
28000 000 4550	Interest Income	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 8,184	\$ -	\$ 10,912
28000 000 4606	Ad Revenue	\$ 6,561	\$ 125	\$ -	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000
<b>TOTAL TRANSIENT TAX REVENUES</b>		<b>\$ 37,222</b>	<b>\$ 61,386</b>	<b>\$ 70,184</b>	<b>\$ 62,000</b>	<b>\$ 74,412</b>
<b>TRANSIENT TAX EXPENDITURES</b>						
28000 000 7001	Materials & Supplies	\$ 92	\$ 130	\$ 18	\$ 720	\$ 1,500
28000 000 7004	Postage & Shipping	\$ 196	\$ 2,174	\$ 100	\$ 5,200	\$ 7,000
28000 000 7502	Phone/Internet	\$ 753	\$ 696	\$ 528	\$ 1,430	\$ 759
28000 000 7503	Information Technology	\$ 512	\$ 1,311	\$ 1,082	\$ 1,590	\$ 3,350
28000 000 7505	Travel & Training	\$ -	\$ 9,873	\$ 5,673	\$ 13,585	\$ 24,000
28000 000 7506	Publications & Advertising	\$ 7,093	\$ 8,022	\$ 3,192	\$ 14,000	\$ 42,500
28000 000 7507	Memberships & Dues	\$ 2,050	\$ 1,175	\$ 175	\$ 3,650	\$ 3,900
28000 000 7519	Professional Services Contractual	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 13,000
28000 000 7576	Promotional	\$ 18,073	\$ 9,144	\$ 6,780	\$ 20,150	\$ 26,450
28000 000 8921	Transfer to Nolan Center	\$ -	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000
<b>TOTAL TRANSIENT TAX EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>\$ 28,769</b>	<b>\$ 44,525</b>	<b>\$ 32,548</b>	<b>\$ 75,325</b>	<b>\$ 134,459</b>
TOTAL REVENUES		\$ 37,222	\$ 61,386	\$ 70,184	\$ 62,000	\$ 74,412
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$ (28,769)	\$ (44,525)	\$ (32,548)	\$ (75,325)	\$ (134,459)
<b>CHANGE IN NET POSITION</b>		<b>\$ 8,452</b>	<b>\$ 16,861</b>	<b>\$ 37,636</b>	<b>\$ (13,325)</b>	<b>\$ (60,047)</b>
BEGINNING RESERVE BALANCE (7/1/20XX)		\$ 130,313	\$ 138,765	\$ 155,627	\$ 167,798	\$ 193,262
CHANGE IN NET POSITION		\$ 8,452	\$ 16,861	\$ 37,636	\$ (13,325)	\$ (60,047)
<b>ENDING RESERVE BALANCE (6/30/20XX)</b>		<b>\$ 138,765</b>	<b>\$ 155,627</b>	<b>\$ 193,262</b>	<b>\$ 154,473</b>	<b>\$ 133,215</b>

**JUSTIFICATION & EXPLANATION**  
*TRANSIENT TAX*

ACCT NO.	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION
4080	<b>BED (TRANSIENT) TAX</b> - REVENUE FROM TRANSIENT TAX REMITTANCE
4085	<b>BED TAX PENALTIES &amp; INTEREST</b> - REVENUE FROM DELINQUENT TRANSIENT TAX REMITTANCE FEES
4606	<b>AD REVENUE</b> - ALL REVENUE RECEIVED FROM TRAVEL/TOURIST ADVERTISEMENTS
7001	<b>MATERIALS &amp; SUPPLIES</b> - COSTS FOR OFFICE SUPPLIES, SUCH AS PRINTER INK & MISC. PAPER, CARDS, & FOLDERS
7004	<b>POSTAGE &amp; SHIPPING</b> - COST OF POSTAGE FOR TRAVEL PLANNERS AND SHIPMENT OF BOAT SHOW MATERIALS TO SEATTLE
7502	<b>PHONE/INTERNET</b> - ANNUAL ALLOTMENT FOR VISITOR CENTER PHONE, 1-800- LINE, AND TBMP MESSAGE MACHINE
7503	<b>INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY</b> - COSTS INCLUDE CANVA, HOOTSUITE, DROPBOX, AND WEBSITE DOMAIN REGISTRATIONS
7505	<b>TRAVEL &amp; TRAINING</b> - ALLOTMENT FOR SEATTLE BOAT SHOW, ALASKA MEDIA ROADSHOW, DMA WEST TECH SUMMIT, ATIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
7506	<b>PUBLICATIONS &amp; ADVERTISING</b> - ALLOTMENT FOR VARIOUS ADVERTISING OUTLETS, SUCH AS ATIA TRAVEL PLANNER, TRAVEL GUIDE BREATH OF BEAR, ALASKA MAGAZINE, FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, & MORE
7507	<b>MEMBERSHIP &amp; DUES</b> - INCLUDES MEMBERSHIP & SUBSCRIPTION COSTS FOR SATC, JCVB, ATIA, DMA WEST, ANCHORAGE, & KTN
7519	<b>PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACTUAL</b> - COST OF AD DESIGN SERVICES
7576	<b>PROMOTIONAL</b> - ALL EXPENSES INCURRED RELATED TO THE PROMOTION OF ACTIVITES AND EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH TOURISM AND VISITING WRANGELL
8921	<b>TRANSFER TO NOLAN CENTER</b> - ANNUAL ALLOTMENT TRANSFERRED TO NOLAN CENTER FUND



## SPECIAL REVENUE FUND: COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSEL (CPV) FUND

### PURPOSE:

Commercial Passenger Vessel (CPV) Excise Tax funds are received annually from the State of Alaska's Department of Revenue. The CPV excise tax was formally adopted by the state in December of 2006. The tax is imposed on passengers traveling on commercial passenger vessels providing overnight accommodations that anchor or moor on the state's marine waters with the intent to allow passengers to embark or disembark. The tax is only imposed on voyages in excess of 72 hours in State of Alaska waters. The current rate of CPV excise tax is \$34.50 for each passenger and the total tax is distributed to municipalities based the Department of Revenue's formula for allocation.



### KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Engaged Cruise agencies in the Tourism Best Management Practices program.
- Developed additional downtown amenities to support the visitor industry.
- Coordinated pre and post season meetings with Charter operators.

### LEVEL OF SERVICE AND BUDGET IMPACT:

Budgeted resources are adequate to meet the current level of service. Capital funds from the CPV account have been earmarked to address maintenance needs of Petroglyph Beach viewing platform. The cultural site is a popular attraction for visitors and critical to operator operations and excursions.

### GOALS AND NEW INITIATIVES:

- Support local business expansion to meet the demands of increased cruise ship port calls.
- Ensure all visiting cruise agencies are participants of the Wrangell Tourism Best Management Practices.
- Increase community and stakeholder engagement to ensure industry growth in a manner that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

### TRENDS AND FUTURE ISSUES:

- Increase in mid to large ship port calls.
- Cruise passengers are predicted to account for 90% of Wrangell's overall visitor population.
- Need to enhance local hospitality services and excursions to sufficiently serve visitors.



**PERFORMANCE METRICS:**

- To ensure a successful Tourism Management program, department staff will track participation, deploy regular communication with stakeholders and seek end of the season feedback to drive improvements for the following year.
- To ensure sustainable growth in the cruise sector of the travel industry, staff will develop long range strategic plans to support Wrangell’s authenticity and visitor thresholds.

**PERSONNEL:**

- Kate Thomas, Economic Development Director (FTE)
- Matt Henson, Marketing and Community Development Coordinator (FTE)
  - The department’s coordinator position was approved in January 2023. The position was filled in March. Previously there was only one employee in the Economic Development department.
- \*Same staff as Economic Development

Economic Development  
Director, Kate Thomas  
**1.0 FTE**

Marketing & Community  
Development Coordinator,  
Matthew Henson  
**1.0 FTE**

**CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL**  
**2024 ANNUAL BUDGET**  
*Fund 28010*

**SPECIAL REVENUE TYPE**  
**COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSELS (CPV) FUND**  
**SUMMARY OF REVENUES & EXPENDITURES**

CPV FUND REVENUES		FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2023 ADOPTED	FY 2024 APPROVED
		ACTUAL	ACTUAL	ESTIMATED	BUDGET	BUDGET
28010 000 4180	CPV Excise Share Revenue	\$ 58,660	\$ 58,660	\$ 36,695	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
28010 000 4550	Interest Income	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,354	\$ -	\$ 19,139
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>		<b>\$ 58,660</b>	<b>\$ 58,660</b>	<b>\$ 51,049</b>	<b>\$ 50,000</b>	<b>\$ 69,139</b>
CPV FUND EXPENDITURES						
28010 000 7001	Materials & Supplies	\$ 4,421	\$ 1,238	\$ -	\$ 3,500	\$ 4,500
28010 000 7519	Professional/Contractual Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
28010 000 7900	Capital Expenditures	\$ 1,046	\$ -	\$ 20,756	\$ 100,000	\$ 50,000
28010 000 8990	Transfer to Parks and Recreation CIP Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,000	\$ 113,002
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>\$ 5,467</b>	<b>\$ 1,238</b>	<b>\$ 20,756</b>	<b>\$ 203,500</b>	<b>\$ 167,502</b>
<b>TOTAL CHANGE IN NET POSITION</b>		<b>\$ 53,193</b>	<b>\$ 57,422</b>	<b>\$ 30,294</b>	<b>\$ (53,500)</b>	<b>\$ (98,363)</b>
BEGINNING RESERVE BALANCE (7/1/20XX)		\$ 200,307	\$ 253,500	\$ 310,922	\$ 310,922	\$ 341,216
CHANGE IN NET POSITION		\$ 53,193	\$ 57,422	\$ 30,294	\$ (53,500)	\$ (98,363)
<b>ENDING RESERVE BALANCE (6/30/20XX)</b>		<b>\$ 253,500</b>	<b>\$ 310,922</b>	<b>\$ 341,216</b>	<b>\$ 258,660</b>	<b>\$ 242,853</b>

**JUSTIFICATION & EXPLANATION**  
*COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSEL FUND*

**ACCT NO. ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION**

- 4180 **CPV EXCISE SHARE REVENUE** - ALL REVENUES DERIVED FROM THE IMPOSITION OF AN EXCISE TAX ON COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSELS. PASSENGERS TRAVELING ON QUALIFIED COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSELS ARE LIABLE FOR THE TAX. THE ALASKA STATE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE DEPOSITS ALL PROCEEDS FROM THE TAX AND THE LEGISLATURE MAKES APPROPRIATIONS TO MUNICIPALITIES ON ANNUAL BASIS (I.E. THE MUNICIPAL SHARE).
- 7001 **MATERIALS & SUPPLIES** - FLOWERS, MULCH, PLANTERS AND OTHER LANDSCAPING MATERIALS TO CLEAN THE DOWN TOWN FLOWER BEDS AND LANDSCAPING (I.E. BULB-OUTS)
- 7519 **PROFESSIONAL/CONTRACTUAL SERVICES** - THOSE SERVICE EXPENDITURES THAT ARE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY ASSOCIATED WITH TRAVEL AND TOURISM FROM COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSELS
- 7900 **CAPITAL EXPENDITURES** - EXPENDITURES ABOVE \$5,000 THAT ARE CAPITALIZABLE AND ARE ASSOCIATED WITH TRAVEL AND TOURISM FROM COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSELS
- 8924 **TRANSFER TO PARKS AND RECREATION** - TRANSFER TO PARKS AND RECREATION IN ORDER TO SUPPLEMENT THE MT. DEWEY TRAIL EXTENSION PROJECT.



**CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL**  
**2024 ANNUAL BUDGET**  
*Fund 28020*

**SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS**  
**MARIAN GLENZ FUND**  
 SUMMARY OF REVENUES & EXPENDITURES

	FY 2021 ACTUAL	FY 2022 ACTUAL	FY 2023 ESTIMATED	FY 2023 ADOPTED BUDGET	FY 2024 APPROVED BUDGET
<b>MARIAN GLENZ FUND REVENUES</b>					
28020 000 4690 Marian Glenz Donation	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>MARIAN GLENZ FUND EXPENDITURES</b>					
28020 000 7590 Grant Expenditures	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET POSITION</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ (10,000)</b>	<b>\$ (10,000)</b>	<b>\$ (10,000)</b>
BEGINNING RESERVE BALANCE (7/1/20XX)	\$ 31,832	\$ 31,832	\$ 31,832	\$ 31,832	\$ 21,832
CHANGE IN NET POSITION	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (10,000)	\$ (10,000)	\$ (10,000)
<b>ENDING RESERVE BALANCE (6/30/XXXX)</b>	<b>\$ 31,832</b>	<b>\$ 31,832</b>	<b>\$ 21,832</b>	<b>\$ 21,832</b>	<b>\$ 11,832</b>

**CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL**  
**2024 ANNUAL BUDGET**  
*Fund 28030*

**SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS**  
**BIRDFEST FUND**  
 SUMMARY OF REVENUES & EXPENDITURES

	FY 2021 ACTUAL	FY 2022 ACTUAL	FY 2023 ESTIMATED	FY 2023 ADOPTED BUDGET	FY 2024 APPROVED BUDGET
<b>BIRDFEST FUND REVENUES</b>					
28030 000 4592 Birdfest Revenue	\$ 9,565	\$ 6,127	\$ 2,591	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$ 9,565</b>	<b>\$ 6,127</b>	<b>\$ 2,591</b>	<b>\$ 8,000</b>	<b>\$ 8,000</b>
<b>BIRDFEST FUND EXPENDITURES</b>					
28030 000 7590 Grant Expenditures	\$ 3,273	\$ 6,127	\$ 2,591	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$ 3,273</b>	<b>\$ 6,127</b>	<b>\$ 2,591</b>	<b>\$ 8,000</b>	<b>\$ 8,000</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET POSITION</b>	<b>\$ 6,292</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
BEGINNING RESERVE BALANCE (7/1/20XX)	\$ (4,315)	\$ 1,977	\$ 1,977	\$ 1,977	\$ 1,977
CHANGE IN NET POSITION	\$ 6,292	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>ENDING RESERVE BALANCE (6/30/XXXX)</b>	<b>\$ 1,977</b>	<b>\$ 1,977</b>	<b>\$ 1,977</b>	<b>\$ 1,977</b>	<b>\$ 1,977</b>

# TRANSIENT TAX

## Mission Statement:

To increase a healthy mix of independent travelers, cruise ship passengers, business travelers and destination visitors to Wrangell, while maintaining the small-town quality of life for residents.



## Transient Tax Department Staff:

Carol Rushmore, *Director*

## Department Objectives:

- Encourage community involvement.
- Promote Wrangell to enable the industry to grow in a manner that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable
- Build brand awareness
- Develop an industry strategic plan that can be used as a catalyst for community economic growth.

**CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL**  
**2023 ANNUAL BUDGET**  
 Fund 28000

**SPECIAL REVENUE TYPE**  
**TRANSIENT TAX FUND**  
 SUMMARY OF REVENUES & EXPENDITURES

		FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2022	FY 2023
		ACTUAL	ACTUAL	ESTIMATED	ADOPTED	DRAFT BUDGET
<b>TRANSIENT TAX REVENUES</b>						
28000 000 4080	Bed (Transient) Tax	\$ 54,666	\$ 30,661	\$ 55,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 55,000
28000 000 4085	Bed Tax Penalties & Interest	\$ 395	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,000
28000 000 4606	Ad Revenue	\$ 5,172	\$ 6,561	\$ 125	\$ 2,000	\$ 6,000
<b>TOTAL TRANSIENT TAX REVENUES</b>		<b>\$ 60,233</b>	<b>\$ 37,222</b>	<b>\$ 55,125</b>	<b>\$ 32,000</b>	<b>\$ 62,000</b>
<b>TRANSIENT TAX EXPENDITURES</b>						
28000 000 7001	Materials & Supplies	\$ 187	\$ 92	\$ 123	\$ 720	\$ 720
28000 000 7004	Postage & Shipping	\$ 299	\$ 196	\$ 1,669	\$ 2,840	\$ 5,200
28000 000 7502	Phone/Internet	\$ 923	\$ 753	\$ 650	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,430
28000 000 7503	Information Technology	\$ 2,170	\$ 512	\$ 1,291	\$ 7,200	\$ 1,590
28000 000 7505	Travel & Training	\$ 10,697	\$ -	\$ 8,814	\$ 14,055	\$ 13,585
28000 000 7506	Publications & Advertising	\$ 15,018	\$ 7,093	\$ 3,699	\$ 21,650	\$ 14,000
28000 000 7507	Memberships & Dues	\$ 5,525	\$ 2,050	\$ 219	\$ 2,650	\$ 3,650
28000 000 7519	Professional Services Contractual	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
28000 000 7576	Promotional	\$ 2,292	\$ 18,073	\$ 8,793	\$ 950	\$ 20,150
28000 000 8921	Transfer to Nolan Center	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000
<b>TOTAL TRANSIENT TAX EXPENITURES</b>		<b>\$ 37,111</b>	<b>\$ 28,769</b>	<b>\$ 37,258</b>	<b>\$ 66,315</b>	<b>\$ 75,325</b>
TOTAL REVENUES		\$ 60,233	\$ 37,222	\$ 55,125	\$ 32,000	\$ 62,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$ (37,111)	\$ (28,769)	\$ (37,258)	\$ (66,315)	\$ (75,325)
<b>CHANGE IN NET POSITION</b>		<b>\$ 23,123</b>	<b>\$ 8,452</b>	<b>\$ 17,867</b>	<b>\$ (34,315)</b>	<b>\$ (13,325)</b>
BEGINNING RESERVE BALANCE (7/1/20XX)		\$ 118,356	\$ 141,479	\$ 149,931	\$ 167,798	\$ 167,798
CHANGE IN NET POSITION		\$ 23,123	\$ 8,452	\$ 17,867	\$ (34,315)	\$ (13,325)
<b>ENDING RESERVE BALANCE (6/30/20XX)</b>		<b>\$ 141,479</b>	<b>\$ 149,931</b>	<b>\$ 167,798</b>	<b>\$ 133,483</b>	<b>\$ 154,473</b>

**JUSTIFICATION & EXPLANATION**  
 TRANSIENT TAX

ACCT NO.	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION
4080	<b>BED (TRANSIENT) TAX</b> - REVENUE FROM TRANSIENT TAX REMITTANCE
4085	<b>BED TAX PENALTIES &amp; INTEREST</b> - REVENUE FROM DELINQUENT TRANSIENT TAX REMITTANCE FEES
4606	<b>AD REVENUE</b> - ALL REVENUE RECEIVED FROM TRAVEL/TOURIST ADVERTISEMENTS
7001	<b>MATERIALS &amp; SUPPLIES</b> - COSTS FOR OFFICE SUPPLIES, SUCH AS PRINTER INK & MISC. PAPER, CARDS, & FOLDERS
7004	<b>POSTAGE &amp; SHIPPING</b> - COST OF POSTAGE FOR TRAVEL PLANNERS AND SHIPMENT OF BOAT SHOW MATERIALS TO SEATTLE
7502	<b>PHONE/INTERNET</b> - ANNUAL ALLOTMENT FOR VISITOR CENTER PHONE, 1-800- LINE, AND TBMP MESSAGE MACHINE
7503	<b>INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY</b> - COSTS INCLUDE CANVA, HOOTSUITE, DROPBOX, AND WEBSITE DOMAIN REGISTRATIONS
7505	<b>TRAVEL &amp; TRAINING</b> - ALLOTMENT FOR SEATTLE BOAT SHOW, ALASKA MEDIA ROADSHOW, DMA WEST TECH SUMMIT, ATIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
7506	<b>PUBLICATIONS &amp; ADVERTISING</b> - ALLOTMENT FOR VARIOUS ADVERTISING OUTLETS, SUCH AS ATIA TRAVEL PLANNER, TRAVEL GUIDE BREATH OF BEAR, ALASKA MAGAZINE, FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, & MORE
7507	<b>MEMBERSHIP &amp; DUES</b> - INCLUDES MEMBERSHIP & SUBSCRIPTION COSTS FOR SATC, JCVB, ATIA, DMA WEST, ANCHORAGE, & KTN
7519	<b>PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACTUAL</b> - COST OF AD DESIGN SERVICES
7576	<b>PROMOTIONAL</b> - ALL EXPENSES INCURRED RELATED TO THE PROMOTION OF ACTIVITES AND EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH TOURISM AND VISITING WRANGELL
8921	<b>TRANSFER TO NOLAN CENTER</b> - ANNUAL ALLOTMENT TRANSFERRED TO NOLAN CENTER FUND

# COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSEL EXCISE TAX FUND



## Commercial Passenger Vessel Fund Overview:

Commercial Passenger Vessel (CPV) Excise Tax funds are received annually from the State of Alaska's Department of Revenue.

The CPV excise tax was formally adopted by the state in December of 2006. The tax is imposed on passengers traveling on commercial passenger vessels providing overnight accommodations that anchor or moor on the state's marine waters with the intent to allow passengers to embark or disembark. The tax is only imposed on voyages in excess of 72 hours in State of Alaska waters.

The current rate of CPV excise tax is \$34.50 for each passenger and the total tax is distributed to municipalities based on the Department of Revenue's formula for allocation.

CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
2023 ANNUAL BUDGET  
Fund 28010

SPECIAL REVENUE TYPE  
COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSELS (CPV) FUND  
SUMMARY OF REVENUES & EXPENDITURES

		FY 2020 ACTUAL	FY 2021 ACTUAL	FY 2022 ESTIMATED	FY 2022 ADOPTED	FY 2023 DRAFT BUDGET
<b>CPV FUND REVENUES</b>						
28010 000 4180	CPV Excise Share Revenue	\$ 58,660	\$ 58,660	\$ 58,660	\$ 65,000	\$ 50,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>		<b>\$ 58,660</b>	<b>\$ 58,660</b>	<b>\$ 58,660</b>	<b>\$ 65,000</b>	<b>\$ 50,000</b>
<b>CPV FUND EXPENDITURES</b>						
28010 000 7001	Materials & Supplies	\$ 156	\$ 4,421	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,500
28010 000 7519	Professional/Contractual Services	\$ 21,400	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
28010 000 7900	Capital Expenditures	\$ 67,024	\$ 1,046	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100,000
28010 000 8990	Transfer to Parks and Recreation CIP Fund	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000	\$ 100,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<b>\$ 88,580</b>	<b>\$ 5,467</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 50,000</b>	<b>\$ 203,500</b>
<b>TOTAL CHANGE IN NET POSITION</b>		<b>\$ (29,920)</b>	<b>\$ 53,193</b>	<b>\$ 58,660</b>	<b>\$ 15,000</b>	<b>\$ (153,500)</b>
BEGINNING RESERVE BALANCE (7/1/20XX)		\$ 230,227	\$ 200,307	\$ 253,500	\$ 312,160	\$ 312,160
CHANGE IN NET POSITION		\$ (29,920)	\$ 53,193	\$ 58,660	\$ 15,000	\$ (153,500)
<b>ENDING RESERVE BALANCE (6/30/20XX)</b>		<b>\$ 200,307</b>	<b>\$ 253,500</b>	<b>\$ 312,160</b>	<b>\$ 327,160</b>	<b>\$ 158,660</b>

**JUSTIFICATION & EXPLANATION**  
COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSEL FUND

**ACCT NO. ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION**

- 4180 **CPV EXCISE SHARE REVENUE** - ALL REVENUES DERIVED FROM THE IMPOSITION OF AN EXCISE TAX ON COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSELS. PASSENGERS TRAVELING ON QUALIFIED COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSELS ARE LIABLE FOR THE TAX. THE ALASKA STATE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE DEPOSITS ALL PROCEEDS FROM THE TAX AND THE LEGISLATURE MAKES APPROPRIATIONS TO MUNICIPALITIES ON ANNUAL BASIS (I.E. THE MUNICIPAL SHARE).
- 7001 **MATERIALS & SUPPLIES** - FLOWERS, MULCH, PLANTERS AND OTHER LANDSCAPING MATERIALS TO CLEAN THE DOWN TOWN FLOWER BEDS AND LANSCAPING (I.E. BULB-OUTS)
- 7519 **PROFESSIONAL/CONTRACTUAL SERVICES** - THOSE SERVICE EXPENDITURES THAT ARE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY ASSOCIATED WITH TRAVEL AND TOURISM FROM COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSELS
- 7900 **CAPITAL EXPENDITURES** - EXPENDITURES ABOVE \$5,000 THAT ARE CAPITALIZABLE AND ARE ASSOCIATED WITH TRAVEL AND TOURISM FROM COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSELS. THE \$100,000 IS SOLEY FOR BATHROOMS AT CITY DOCK FOR VISITORS
- 8924 **TRANSFER TO PARKS AND RECREATION** - TRANSFER TO PARKS AND RECREATION IN ORDER TO SUPPLEMENT THE MT. DEWEY TRAIL EXTENSION PROJECT.

# **BIRDFEST FUND & MARIAN GLENZ FUND**





**CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL**  
**2023 ANNUAL BUDGET**  
*Fund 28020*

**SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS**  
**MARIAN GLENZ FUND**  
 SUMMARY OF REVENUES & EXPENDITURES

	FY 2020 ACTUAL	FY 2021 ACTUAL	FY 2022 ESTIMATED	FY 2022 ADOPTED	FY 2023 DRAFT BUDGET
<b>MARIAN GLENZ FUND REVENUES</b>					
28020 000 4690 Marian Glenz Donation	-	-	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>MARIAN GLENZ FUND EXPENDITURES</b>					
28020 000 7590 Grant Expenditures	\$ 13,626	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$ 13,626</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 10,000</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET POSITION</b>	<b>\$ (13,626)</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ (10,000)</b>
BEGINNING RESERVE BALANCE (7/1/20XX)	\$ 45,458	\$ 31,832	\$ 31,832	\$ 31,832	\$ 31,832
CHANGE IN NET POSITION	\$ (13,626)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ (10,000)
<b>ENDING RESERVE BALANCE (6/30/XXXX)</b>	<b>\$ 31,832</b>	<b>\$ 31,832</b>	<b>\$ 31,832</b>	<b>\$ 31,832</b>	<b>\$ 21,832</b>

**CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL**  
**2023 ANNUAL BUDGET**  
*Fund 28030*

**SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS**  
**BIRDFEST FUND**  
 SUMMARY OF REVENUES & EXPENDITURES

	FY 2020 ACTUAL	FY 2021 ACTUAL	FY 2022 ESTIMATED	FY 2022 ADOPTED	FY 2023 DRAFT BUDGET
<b>BIRDFEST FUND REVENUES</b>					
28030 000 4592 Birdfest Revenue	\$ 5,251	\$ 9,565	\$ 8,000	\$ -	\$ 8,000
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$ 5,251</b>	<b>\$ 9,565</b>	<b>\$ 8,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 8,000</b>
<b>BIRDFEST FUND EXPENDITURES</b>					
28030 000 7590 Grant Expenditures	\$ 9,566	\$ 3,273	\$ 8,000	\$ -	\$ 8,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$ 9,566</b>	<b>\$ 3,273</b>	<b>\$ 8,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 8,000</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET POSITION</b>	<b>\$ (4,315)</b>	<b>\$ 6,292</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
BEGINNING RESERVE BALANCE (7/1/20XX)	\$ -	\$ (4,315)	\$ 1,977	\$ 1,977	\$ 1,977
CHANGE IN NET POSITION	\$ (4,315)	\$ 6,292	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>ENDING RESERVE BALANCE (6/30/XXXX)</b>	<b>\$ (4,315)</b>	<b>\$ 1,977</b>	<b>\$ 1,977</b>	<b>\$ 1,977</b>	<b>\$ 1,977</b>

**TRANSIENT TAX FUND & CONVENTION & VISITOR'S BUREAU  
CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
2018-2019 BUDGET**

	2016-2017 ACTUAL	2017-2018 APPROVED	2017-2018 ESTIMATED	2018-2019 REQUESTED
<b>CVB RESERVES, BEGINNING</b>	<b>93,585</b>	<b>108,748</b>	<b>87,598</b>	<b>76,448</b>
<b>TRANSIENT TAX &amp; CVB REVENUE</b>				
28000 000 4080 Transient Tax Revenue	53,533	40,000	50,000	52,500
28000 000 4085 Penalty And Interest	662	1,000	1,000	1,000
28000 000 4550 Interest Income	(58)	250	250	250
28000 000 4606 Advertising	2,778	3,000	3,000	3,000
	<b>56,915</b>	<b>44,250</b>	<b>54,250</b>	<b>56,750</b>
<b>TRANSIENT TAX &amp; CVB EXPENDITURES</b>				
28000 000 7505 Travel	9,080	8,000	8,000	10,000
28000 000 7502 Telephone Expense	764	1,000	1,000	1,000
28000 000 7004 Postage Expense	1,182	1,500	1,500	1,700
28000 000 7576 Promotional	8,281	20,000	20,000	32,000
28000 000 7504 Web Hosting	970	1,400	1,400	1,500
28000 000 7507 Dues	1,975	5,500	5,500	5,500
28000 000 7506 Advertising Expense	9,500	18,000	18,000	18,000
28000 000 7821 Contribution To Nolan Ctr	10,000	10,000	10,000	12,000
	<b>41,752</b>	<b>65,400</b>	<b>65,400</b>	<b>81,700</b>
<b>CVB RESERVES, ENDING</b>	<b>108,748</b>	<b>87,598</b>	<b>76,448</b>	<b>51,498</b>

**COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSEL EXCISE TAX FUND  
2018-2019 BUDGET**

	2016-2017 ACTUAL	2017-2018 APPROVED	2017-2018 ESTIMATED	2018-2019 REQUESTED
<b>CPV TAX SHARE FUND, BEGINNING</b>	<b>98,018</b>	<b>131,184</b>	<b>163,684</b>	<b>215,099</b>
28010 000 4180 CPV Revenue Sharing	39,630	35,000	51,415	35,000
28010 000 7900 Mount Dewey Trail Extension	6,464	2,500	-	50,000
28010 000 7900 Petroglyph Beach Improvements	-	-	-	35,000
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>6,464</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>85,000</b>
<b>CPV TAX SHARE FUND, ENDING</b>	<b>131,184</b>	<b>163,684</b>	<b>215,099</b>	<b>165,099</b>

**MARIAN GLENZ MEMORIAL FUND  
2018-2019 BUDGET**

	2016-2017 ACTUAL	2017-2018 APPROVED	2017-2018 ESTIMATED	2018-2019 REQUESTED
<b>FUND BALANCE, BEGINNING</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50,000</b>
28020 000 4690 Marian Glenz Donation	-	-	50,000	-
28020 000 7000 Marketing	-	-	-	(50,000)
<b>FUND BALANCE, ENDING</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES &amp; RESERVES</b>	<b>288,148</b>	<b>319,182</b>	<b>356,947</b>	<b>433,297</b>



**TRANSIENT TAX FUND & CONVENTION & VISITOR'S BUREAU  
CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
2017-2018 APPROVED BUDGET**

	2015-2016 ACTUAL	2016-2017 APPROVED	2016-2017 REVISED	2017-2018 DEPT.	
<b>CVB RESERVES, BEGINNING</b>	<b>91,839</b>	<b>114,735</b>	<b>93,585</b>	<b>72,085</b>	
<b>TRANSIENT TAX &amp; CVB REVENUE</b>					
28000 000 4085	PENALTY AND INTEREST	1,216	1,000	650	1,000
28000 000 4080	TRANSIENT TAX REVENUE	51,578	40,000	40,000	40,000
28000 000 4550	INTEREST INCOME	1,119	250	250	250
28000 000 4606	ADVERTISING	4,529	3,000	3,000	3,000
		<b>58,442</b>	<b>44,250</b>	<b>43,900</b>	<b>44,250</b>
<b>TRANSIENT TAX &amp; CVB EXPENDITURES</b>					
28000 000 7505	TRAVEL	2,750	8,000	8,000	8,000
28000 000 7502	TELEPHONE EXPENSE	954	1,000	1,000	1,000
28000 000 7004	POSTAGE EXPENSE	1,546	1,500	1,500	1,500
28000 000 7576	PROMOTIONAL	5,744	20,000	20,000	20,000
28000 000 7504	WEB HOSTING	1,197	1,400	1,400	1,400
28000 000 7507	DUES	5,445	5,500	5,500	5,500
28000 000 7506	ADVERTISING EXPENSE	7,479	18,000	18,000	18,000
28000 000 7821	CONTRIBUTION TO NOLAN CTR	10,431	10,000	10,000	10,000
		<b>35,546</b>	<b>65,400</b>	<b>65,400</b>	<b>65,400</b>
<b>CVB RESERVES, ENDING</b>	<b>114,735</b>	<b>93,585</b>	<b>72,085</b>	<b>50,935</b>	

**COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VESSEL EXCISE TAX FUND  
CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL  
2017-2018 APPROVED BUDGET**

<b>CPV TAX SHARE FUND, BEGINNING</b>	<b>68,340</b>	<b>98,018</b>	<b>98,018</b>	<b>135,148</b>	
	<b>2015-2016 ACTUAL</b>	<b>2016-2017 APPROVED</b>	<b>2016-2017 REVISED</b>	<b>2017-2018 DEPT.</b>	
28010 000 4180 10	CPV REVENUE SHARING	38,845	-	39,630	35,000
28010 000 XXXX	CPV EXPENDITURES	(9,167)	-	(2,500)	(2,500)
<b>CPV TAX SHARE FUND, ENDING</b>	<b>98,018</b>	<b>98,018</b>	<b>135,148</b>	<b>167,648</b>	

# Agenda Item C New Business

## Travel Alaska (ATIA) Website Audit & Creative Content Discussion

Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau  
AGENDA ITEM  
February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Information:** Staff will be working with ATIA to update their web information about Southeast Alaska and more specifically Wrangell. The WCVB is being asked to review the content provided in the attached word document. The document has references to where that narrative can be found on the Travel Alaska website. There are yellow sections within the document that highlight where Wrangell is omitted from the story. For example, there is an itinerary for Birding that includes a stop in Wrangell, however Wrangell is not listed under the destinations for birding page.

As members read through the narrative consider the following:

- What do you like about the narrative.
- What is missing?
- Should Wrangell be listed as a birding destination?
- Anan is not listed under the bear watching destinations around the state, whereas the following destinations are listed under this section: Brooks Falls at Katmai National Park, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, Lake Clark National Park, Denali National Park, and Pack Creek Bear Viewing Area
- Wrangell museum is not listed.
- Wrangell is not listed under Cultural destinations.
- What imagery is missing to best tell our story.

**Attachments:** Travel Alaska narrative and website references.

## Travel Alaska

<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.

<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!

[https://www.travelalaska.com/Explore-Alaska/Itineraries/Birding\\_from\\_Ketchikan\\_to\\_Wrangell](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.

<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.

[https://www.travelalaska.com/Explore-Alaska/Itineraries/A Quick Tour of Inside Passage](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.

#### 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, murrelets, 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, murrelets, 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, dovekie, 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

Alaska's rich culture awaits you. Alaska's inhabitants and explorers have influenced the landscape for more than 10,000 years. Explore Alaska Native arts and traditions, immerse



yourself in gold rush history, or hike across historic military forts with expert guides. By boat, rail, or land, let Alaska's cultural and historic explorations connect you to Alaska's stories and traditions.

Alaska is an artistic inspiration. From the dancing greens of the northern lights to the brilliant reds of blueberry bushes in the fall or the spectacular pastels in the late evening summer sky, the Land of the Midnight Sun stimulates creativity. Sign up with one of the local art studios to create your own memorable piece of art. Break out the paintbrushes, cameras, potter's wheels, or carving tools to celebrate Alaska's beauty and capture your own vision of what Alaska means to you.

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.