

Wrangell

VISITORS GUIDE

2023

Produced by the Wrangell Sentinel and
Wrangell Convention and Visitor Bureau

FREE



TRAVEL OUTSIDE THE LINES
WRANGELL

FOUNDED BY THE TLINGIT, AND THEN
RULED BY BRITAIN, RUSSIA AND U.S.

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STIKINE RIVER

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Wild berries are abundant, juicy and free for the picking

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Cover photo:

Award-winning Juneau photographer Mark Kelley first visited Wrangell more than 40 years ago as a judge in the Wrangell Sentinel photo contest. Later, he discovered Anan Creek and its bears, making 13 visits to the observatory and seeing some amazing scenes, including this tender moment of a black bear mom nuzzling her cub. Mark's Anan photos were the 2022 winner of the prestigious National Wildlife Federation portfolio award. See Mark's winning photos at <https://bit.ly/40Oz9Kt>, or check out his website and store at www.markkelley.com.



Back cover photo:

Robert E. Johnson is a well-known Alaska photographer/biologist/naturalist, and is passionate about sharing the undisturbed landscape and amazement of Southeast Alaska. Such as this photo at LeConte Glacier, a popular spot for charter tours out of Wrangell. Robert believes that seeing and learning about nature enables people to appreciate the incredible wonders of Southeast Alaska. Follow his adventures at <https://bit.ly/436udCt>.



The Wrangell Guide

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A small town that's big on services and friendliness

Wrangell, one of the most historic communities in Alaska, is the only town in the state to have been ruled by four nations: Tlingit, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. It has the reputation for being the "friendliest little town in Southeast Alaska."

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

Total job earnings are nearly \$50 million a year. The maritime industry is Wrangell's largest economic driver, generating more than 225 jobs and more than \$12 million in workforce earnings, depending on the commercial fishing catch and prices.

The town's Marine Service Center is a thriving boat works facility for commercial and recreational vessels. Its two boat lifts, at 150 tons and 300 tons, along with a 40-ton trailer, provide haul-out capabilities and skilled workers provide quality services known throughout Southeast Alaska.

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

More than 33,000 visitors are expected in town in 2023 by boat and airplane, spending an estimated \$7 million this summer alone.

Wrangell's 2-year-old, \$30 million medical center, owned and operated by the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, is a leading employer and active in promoting a healthy community.

The borough government – similar to a county in the rest of the country – provides the



Dungeness crab is just one of the many freshly caught seafood items visitors can indulge in while in Wrangell. (Photo by Ivan Simonek)

essential services for businesses and residents, including, electrical, water, sewage, trash and services. Power comes from a hydroelectric station across the channel on the mainland.

Located on the northern tip of 30-mile-long Wrangell Island, the community of about 2,100 people is set amid the forests and mountains of Alaska's Panhandle along the scenic Inside Passage.

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

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

Right next door is neighboring British Columbia, the westernmost province of Canada. On a clear day you can see the majestic, snow-capped mountains to the north and east of Wrangell Island, hugging the mainland coast. The border is only hours away by boat up the Stikine River or even closer by plane. Between here and there lie many lakes and rivers for camping, fishing and wildlife viewing.

Long after the Tlingit settled in the area, early white settlers developed a trading post, eventually leading to a formal community — Wrangell was incorporated in 1903.

The town's economy suffered a painful hit in the 1990s and next decade with constraints on the timber industry and eventual closure of the town's two sawmills. But people have worked hard to overcome that loss, and the region now focuses on sport, charter and commercial fishing; expansion of its tourism industry (in particular promoting the Anan

Wildlife Observatory and its world-famous bear viewing); and health care services provided by the new hospital.

Wrangell has a fleet of hand and power trollers, seiners and gillnet vessels. Salmon is the major seafood catch, along with halibut, shrimp, crab and herring. Seafood processors freeze and pack the catch for markets, and individual fishermen have been known to sell their catch to residents or visitors on the docks in the downtown harbor area. You can enjoy some of the freshest seafood you'll ever taste.

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

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

Wrangell history started thousands of years ago with arrival of Tlingits

British, Russian and U.S. control made for a busy 1800s

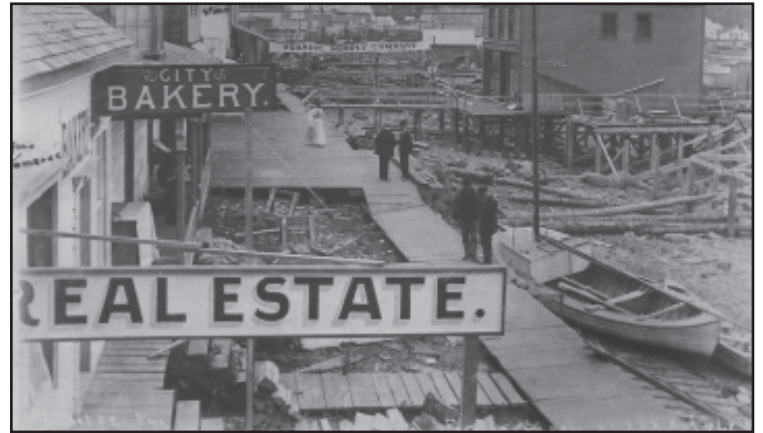
Thousands of years before fur, gold, salmon and timber brought settlers, adventurers and pioneers to work and live in Wrangell, the Tlingit people arrived in the region via the Stikine River, migrating from the Interior.

In Nora Marks and Richard Dauenhauer's 1987 book of Tlingit storytelling, "Haa Shuká, Our Ancestors," Robert Zuboff (Kak'weidí Clan, Kaakáakw Hít) recounted in a 1960s interview the story of how Indigenous people long ago discovered that the Stikine flowed under

a glacier. So, they tied a raft together and put two elderly women on the raft and pushed them under the glacier. "Having drifted under it and through to the other side, they started singing," Zuboff said.

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

Regardless of whether the first arrivals floated under the glacier, walked over it or paddled down the river when it was navigable, the Stikine has been the dominating force in Wrangell's story since before



People walk on wooden sidewalks in downtown Wrangell in 1898. (Photo courtesy of the Nolan Center)

recorded history. The town is proud of its name: Gateway to the Stikine.

In more recent history, Capt. George Vancouver, of the British Royal Navy, missed finding the mouth of the Stikine River in 1793 on his five-year voyage of exploration around the world aboard the sloop *Discovery*.

It was the Russian American Co., however, that decided to take a more serious look at the river, particularly its value as a direct trade route to the fur resources of the Interior.

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

But its hold was soon to be challenged by the British Hudson's Bay Co., and the showdown between the two commercial giants, each with a vast network of trade stretching

across entire hemispheres, was to be played out in a remote and obscure corner of the wild now known as Wrangell Island.

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

With an eye toward the Stikine fur trade, the British company in 1833 outfitted the brig *Dryad* to sail from Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River to the Stikine to establish a permanent trading post upriver. The company previously had explored the area, with the idea of building an outpost.

The Russians, however, had thoughts of their own on protecting the Stikine fur trade, and in 1833 Lt. Dionysius Zarembo and a band of men were sent from New Archangel

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Continued on page 6

Help is here if you're looking to set up shop in Wrangell

Just as Wrangell is welcoming and helpful to visitors, the community — particularly City Hall — is just as welcoming to businesses. The town is always looking for businesses that want to sell or produce their goods or services in the community.

The borough's Economic Development Department can answer zoning and land-use questions, provide statistics about the town's economy and workforce, give directions to state and federal resources, and assist with most of the questions business owners and prospective new residents may have.

The department can share its reports and numbers on

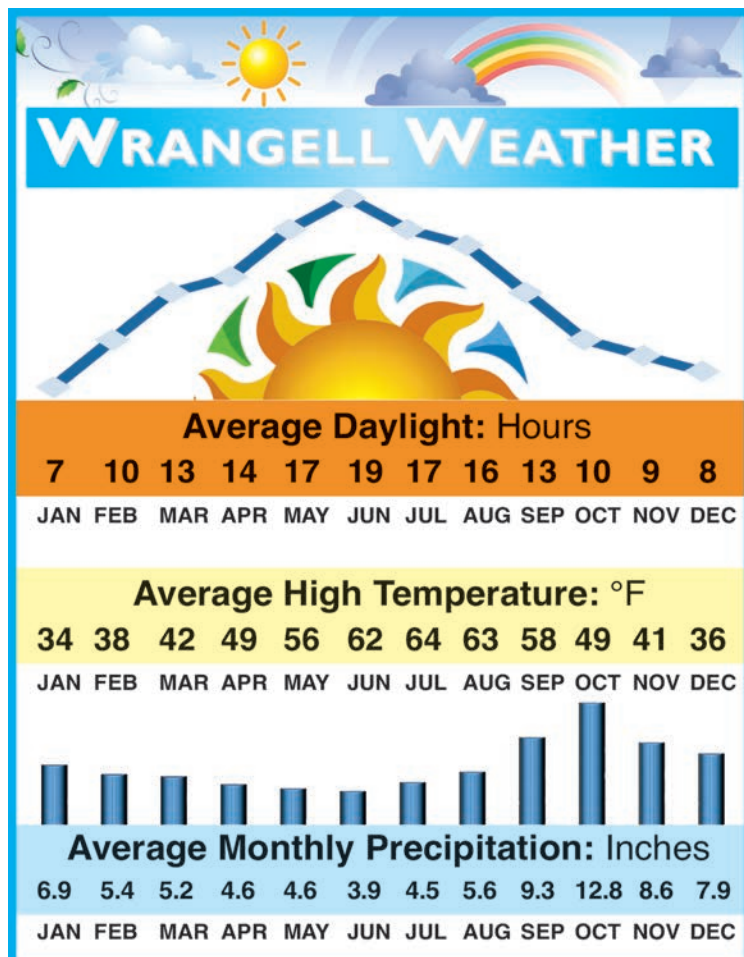
Wrangell's overall economic health, its tourism economy and much more.

Like much of Alaska, Wrangell has a high proportion of self-employed people, working a wide variety of skilled trades — and certainly welcomes new services to the community. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in Wrangell.

For questions about the town, its economy and opportunities, contact the borough's economic development team: Director Kate Thomas at kthomas@wrangell.com, or Marketing and Development Coordinator Matt Henson at mhenson@wrangell.com. Or call City Hall at 907-874-2381.

Questions about existing businesses in town can be directed to the Wrangell Chamber of Commerce, which has an office in the Stikine Inn. Or you can reach the chamber at info@wrangellchamber.com, or call 907-874-3901.

A visit to City Hall downtown, or a call to 907-874-2381, can help new residents with utility hook-up and rate questions. The borough operates the water, sewage, electrical and trash pickup services in town.



Annual events calendar

STIKINE RIVER BIRDING FESTIVAL USUALLY THE LAST WEEK OF APRIL

The Stikine River Birding Festival celebrates the arrival of spring and all the migrating birds that arrive, as well as fish, seals and sea lions. Enjoy the special events and speakers and spectacular bird viewing on the Stikine River and surrounding islands and shorelines.

www.wrangell.com/birdingfestival

WRANGELL SALMON DERBY LATE MAY OR JUNE

The 68th Wrangell Salmon Derby in 2023 is tentatively set for two weeks in May or June; it varies every year. The annual competition is sponsored by the chamber of commerce. Dates are determined in consultation with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Prizes for the largest and first catches, along with special prizes throughout the competition.

www.wrangellfishderby.com

FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION JULY 1-4

Wrangell's Fourth of July is one of the best small town celebrations you can experience. There is a wide range of events over the four-day period in 2023, including boat races, street games and lots of food. Events for kids, adults and families.

<https://bit.ly/3TDMbrr>

BEARFEST LAST WEEK OF JULY

Alaska BearFest is the last week of July, celebrating all things bears. Symposiums provide interesting discussions from experts in bear science and management. Multiple workshops are available, along with a special BearFest Community Market, kid games, golf tournament, and more.

www.alaskabearfest.org

History, from Page 4

to build a fort near the mouth of the Stikine. A spot was chosen near the north end of Wrangell Island, where the Marine Bar stands today, and the fort was completed in August 1834.

Fort St. Dionysius, or Redoubt St. Dionysius, was named for Zarembo's patron saint.

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

At least one historian claims Baron Ferdinand von Wrangel, manager of the Russian American Co. of New Archangel at the time, was hoping for a confrontation, eager for the treaty to be abandoned. The baron protested that the British were an unruly bunch of scoundrels, perhaps more a commentary on the advancing

Hudson's Bay trade empire than fact.

The baron got his confrontation in 1834 when the Dryad approached the mouth of the Stikine and was greeted by a volley from the fort and the Russian brig Chichagof, at anchor near the fort.

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

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

The British protested to the Russian government, and an agreement was reached in 1839 in which the British waived damages from the incident and obtained a 10-year lease of the coastline from the Russians for

an annual payment of 2,000 land otter skins.

The British flag was raised over the fort June 1, 1840, and Russia's Redoubt St. Dionysius was renamed Fort Stikine.

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

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

But with the onslaught came continuing problems for the Native community, sporadic incidents usually spurred by opportunism and exploitation, or varying combinations of all the above. During the Hudson's Bay era, as during the later American military occupation, the troops at Wrangell "were like a pestilence to the Stikines," as one historian put it.

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

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

the site of today's post office.

By 1873, only three white men remained in Wrangell, including the U.S. Customs officer, William King Lear. Their solitude was to be short-lived.

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

Capt. Moore and his sons and others built a thriving steamboat business to bring out the gold and bring in the supplies. The Army troops were withdrawn in 1877, but not before a young soldier, touched by the plight of the Alaska Native people living in the region, wrote a letter appealing for someone to help them.

Mrs. Amanda R. McFarland wrote back in response. A Presbyterian missionary from Portland, Oregon, she was brought to Wrangell in August by Sheldon Jackson — one of Alaska's foremost missionaries.

Her arrival marked the first permanent appointment to missionary in Wrangell. McFarland established the first school here, the McFarland Home for Native American Girls. She was joined in her efforts in 1878 by Rev. S. Hall Young, who founded the Presbyterian Church.

In 1879, the noted American naturalist John Muir arrived in Wrangell, which he called "the

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An Alaska Airlines 737 comes in for a landing. The airline has two flights in and out of Wrangell each day. (Photo by Ivan Simonek)

By air or sea, getting here is part of the fun

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

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

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

Sunrise Aviation, also located at the airport, offers charter flights and sightseeing services throughout Southeast Alaska.

Alaska Seaplanes offers scheduled flights between Sitka and Wrangell, along with serving much of Southeast out of Juneau and Sitka with scheduled and charter flights.

The Wrangell airport has a paved runway and taxi area, and navigational aids for when cloud cover gets heavy. It's located about 1.5 miles north of town, and taxis and rental cars are available.

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

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

The ferry schedule changes seasonally, and ticket prices can change too, so book early,

especially to reserve space for your vehicle or a stateroom – though staterooms are not required and travelers can spend their voyage on the deck or enjoying the indoor seating areas.

The state ferry terminal is on Stikine Avenue, one block north of the Stikine Inn downtown.



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History, from Page 6

most inhospitable place at first sight I had ever seen." Muir said the community was a rough place: "No mining hamlet in the placer gulches of California, nor any backwoods village I ever saw, approached it in picturesque, devil-may-care abandon. It was a lawless draggle of wooden huts and houses, built in crooked lines, wrangling around the boggy shore of the island) for a mile or so in the general form of the letter S, without the slightest subordination to the points of the compass or to building laws of any kind."

The hill behind Wrangell, known as Mount Dewey for many years, was called Muir Mountain after he climbed it on a stormy night and built a large campfire to better commune with nature.

By the time Young left Wrangell in 1888, although he was later



The Fourth of July parade on Front Street in Wrangell in 1920. (Photo courtesy of the Nolan Center)

to return, the Cassiar rush had all but died. The second boom was over. What was left was

peaceful. The Army was gone, but the churches stayed and a U.S. commissioner had been appointed. The Aberdeen salmon packing cannery at the mouth of the Stikine opened in 1887, the first in the Wrangell area.

Fishing, canneries and a lumber mill were to provide the town with the economic stability gold and furs could not provide. In the late 1880s, the Wilson & Sylvester sawmill, believed to be the first in Alaska, was founded by Capt. Thomas A. Wilson, Juneau's first Customs inspector, and

a retired fur trader, Rufus Sylvester. The mill, which later was to produce high-grade timber for airplane construction, produced packing boxes for the canneries and building lumber.

With the infancy of those industries came the last of the three gold rushes. The Stikine was tapped as a route — although a backdoor pathway — to the Klondike rush of the late 1890s. Miners would travel the Stikine to Telegraph Creek,

Continued on next page



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Wrangell as seen from atop Mount Dewey in 1914, left (Photo courtesy of the Nolan Center), and in 2022, right (Photo by Marc Lutz/Wrangell Sentinel).



British Columbia, then proceed 160 miles to Teslin Lake, and then follow the Hootlalinqua River to the headwaters of the Yukon River.

The Teslin route was more promising than profitable, however, and faded after several proposals backed by the Canadian government — including a railroad and steamboat service — fizzled. But while the boom was on, Wrangell was back in business as a rollicking, lawless gold rush town.

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

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

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

Its "lawless draggle" days behind, Wrangell was incorporated as a city on June 15, 1903. Almost three years

later, in March 1906, much of the downtown business district was destroyed in the first of two major fires the town has suffered in this century.

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

A second fire, in March 1952,

also destroyed much of the downtown area, specifically the water side of Front Street, which then was built on pilings over the water. That area was later rock-filled.

The town enjoyed several decades of timber prosperity, with logging camps on the island and around Southeast feeding timber into sawmills. But

economic and environmental restraints later closed down the mills and most of the logging in Southeast, including pulp mills in Ketchikan and Sitka in the 1990s.

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

Wrangell Museum

Presenting the Culture, Heritage & People of Wrangell, Alaska

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Get immersed in bear habits at Anan Wildlife Observatory

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

The salmon draw brown and black bears, creating a viewing opportunity at Anan Creek that is unique in Southeast.

Both species of bear work the salmon stream together, which is atypical of areas where the two species' habitats overlap. For example, Baranof, Chichagof and Kruzof islands are the exclusive domain of brown bears, according to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

The bears get along because they are more concerned about the food than each other, said Dee Galla, recreation planner at the



A bear absconds with a salmon at the Anan Wildlife Observatory, located across from Wrangell on the mainland. (Photo by Marc Lutz/Wrangell Sentinel)

U.S. Forest Service Wrangell Ranger District.

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

The fish bounty also means the bears at Anan are unusually tolerant of humans, often ambling by within feet of observers.

"It's not because they like people," Galla said. "It's just that they have to be less

reactive if they want to eat."

In addition to a strong showing of bears, there are a lot of human visitors to the observatory, which had a new, expanded platform built in 2022 ahead of the season, complete with a restroom. Galla said they reach the cap of 60 people per day nearly every day between July 5 and Aug. 25.

Although the observatory is open outside of the permit season, the best time for seeing

Continued on next page

St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church



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A black bear scans the creek below for a salmon snack across from the Anan Wildlife Observatory. (Marc Lutz/Wrangell Sentinel)

the most bears at the dinner table falls between the July and August dates. Permits are required during those weeks.

Visitors to the observatory can expect to see bears working the streams, but a nearby hiking trail also provides opportunities for bear encounters. U.S. Forest Service statistics suggest a visitor to the observatory can see at least two bears in just 10 minutes.

A regular roster of resident bears has earned names based on their appearance.

Crack, a black bear so named because he has a favorite fishing spot in a crack in the rocks across the creek from the observatory, and was often spotted there during the 2019 season.

Volverine, seen with her cub during the 2019 season, is a black bear named for her prominent V-shaped chest patch. Her name is a spin on her mother's name, Wolverine. Mom had a W-shaped chest patch.

Several Wrangell-based charter boat services provide guided trips to Anan during the season. Look them up on the

chart on Page 32 of this guide. Or check anancalendar.com to see which guides are providing service on days you'd like to visit.

Individuals who can get to Anan on their own and don't need a guide can go online at recreation.gov to register.



Bears come to Anan for the salmon, and visitors come from all over the world to watch the bears. (Photo by Rich E Rich Photography)

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BearFest educates, entertains and enlightens

Event draws hundreds to talks, games, music and food competitions every July

Bear with Wrangell if you're in town the last full week of July.

That's when BearFest dominates the landscape like a big brown bull chasing a salmon upstream.

From Wednesday through Sunday, residents and visitors alike can attend symposiums, listen to live music, test their baking skills, play games and even run a marathon.

BearFest is in its 14th year and is meant to promote the environment, specifically bears, and how important the animals are to the ecosystem.

"We want to showcase our environment, our culture, our resources," said Sylvia Ettefagh, chairperson for

BearFest in a 2022 interview, "we want to showcase how it all comes together."

Each BearFest event is free, except the dinner and auction typically held Friday night at the Stikine Inn Restaurant. A gourmet dinner is prepared by a renowned chef, while participants can bid on a bevy of items. Live music is performed throughout the dinner. One of the most popular events held in Wrangell every year, tickets to the dinner sell fast, so check www.alaskabearfest.org to find out when they go on sale.

There are also plenty of events for kids, like Read with a Ranger at the Irene Ingle Public Library, where U.S. Forest



Local ingredients are used in the BearFest "Beary" pie contest. (Photo by Marc Lutz/Wrangell Sentinel)

Service staff read to children with the help of Smokey Bear. Children's games are played on the lawn of the Nolan Center downtown, where many of the events are held.

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

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

the smoked salmon contest. A cooking demonstration is usually held as well, all of which take place at the Nolan Center.

Live music and a music workshop are part of the fun, and there are also bear-related informative talks to satisfy a thirst for knowledge. A hands-on bear safety class is also taught by an expert. Topics such as what to do and what not to do if you come upon a bear are covered.

To find out more about BearFest, visit the website alaskabearfest.org or call 907-874-2998.

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

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Stikine is for the birds, and the people who enjoy them

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

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

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

Each spring, the community celebrates its annual influx of avian life with the Stikine River Birding Festival. "The festival is really highlighting the Stikine River and the migratory aspect of thousands of shorebirds, like sandpipers, that utilize the mudflats," said Corree Delabrué of the U.S. Forest Service. "You get huge numbers of shorebirds that stop on the delta."

The 2023 event will feature a bird walk, a birdhouse building workshop, lecture by wildlife science professor and author John Marzluff, a bird-banding activity to track the flights of migratory songbirds and more. It usually takes place during the last week of April – in 2023, it will last from April 21 to May 6.

Visitors who aren't in town for the festival can still appreciate Wrangell's birds. Peak birdwatching season starts around April and peters out in August.

Early in April, when the eulachon (pronounced

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

"A couple months is the opportune time," said local birding enthusiast Bonnie Demerjian.

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

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

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

Each year, Delabrué welcomes the return of spring and the burst of songbird activity that comes with it. "I love hearing them in the mornings," she said. "There are so many more songs in the air."

For her, birding is also a reminder of the



This photo of a snipe was the first-place winner in the 2018 Stikine River Birding Festival photo contest. (Photo by Kaylauna Churchill)

interconnectedness of the natural world. The olive-sided flycatcher, for example, breeds in Alaska but winters in the tropics. A young bar-tailed godwit may have recently made a record-breaking nonstop transpacific flight from Alaska to Tasmania. "They're world travelers," she said. "They're connected, they fly around everywhere."

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

Details about the Stikine River Birding Festival are available at stikinebirding.org. An area birding guide is also available in pdf form on the website.



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Start your Stikine River adventures from Wrangell

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

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

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

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

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



A Summit Charters boat cruises among ice chunks at the outlet from Shakes Glacier in 2014. (Photo by Mark Kelley)

them making a ruckus all the way from town.

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

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

Roaring rapids and unique landscapes are among the many attractions found by following

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

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

Brown bear, caribou, moose and mountain goat roam the tranquil rolling tableland in

this area, surrounded by vast mountains. The alpine tundra along the upper reaches of the Stikine gradually give way to a thick spruce forest farther downstream. One of the most spectacular features of the river is the 45-mile long Grand Canyon of the Stikine, about 200 miles upstream from Wrangell. Canyon walls soar as high as 1,000 feet.

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

Continued on next page

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Stikine River provides multiple attractions

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Located about 28 water miles from the Wrangell downtown harbor up the Stikine River, this is one of the more popular recreational destinations for local residents. One covered and one open-air redwood tub provide comfortable places for a hot soak. There are dressing rooms, benches and outhouses, but no overnight accommodations. Expect large crowds on weekends, holidays and sunny days throughout the summer.

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

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

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

TWIN LAKES

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

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

Reservations available online at www.recreation.gov.

GARNET LEDGE

At the edge of the river delta, about

eight miles from Wrangell and near a U.S. Forest Service public-use recreation cabin, a trail leads to a 38-acre garnet mine where children can collect garnets for themselves or for sale to visitors. The mine was deeded to the Boy Scouts of America and the Presbyterian Church in 1962, and "children of Wrangell" (see story on page 25) are the only ones allowed to remove garnets, using only hand tools.

The Scouts transferred the deed to the church in the early 2000s. Permission is required before setting foot on or around the ledge, which is the private property of the church. Call 907-874-3534 for permission and more information.

TELEGRAPH CREEK, BRITISH COLUMBIA

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

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

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



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Stikine River, from Page 14

histories of Native clans.

At the west end of the Grand Canyon is Telegraph Creek, population around 300, the only town along the Stikine. Most of the residents are Tahltan, the Indigenous people who settled the Interior region.

Rafters, kayakers and canoeists use the town as a starting point for

exciting, scenic trips downriver to Wrangell.

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

country where visitors enjoy camping, fishing, hunting, and exploring.

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

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

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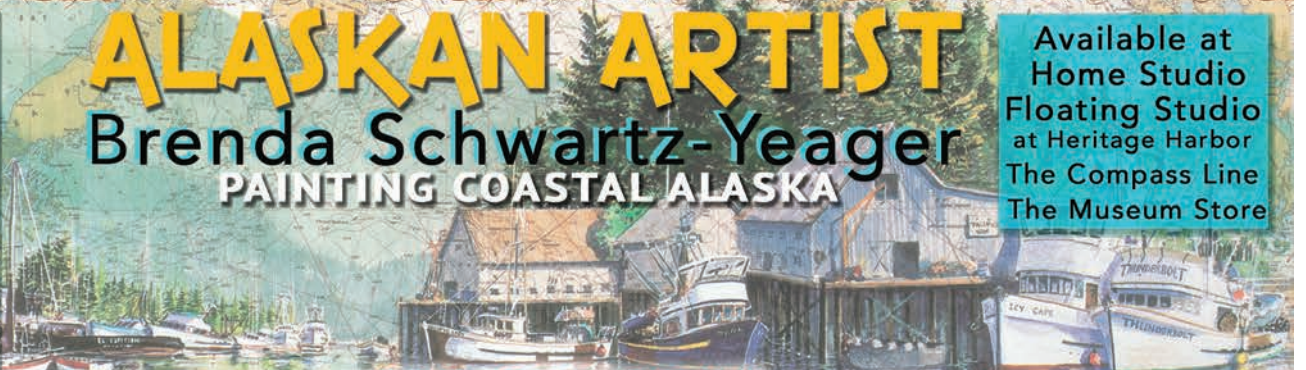
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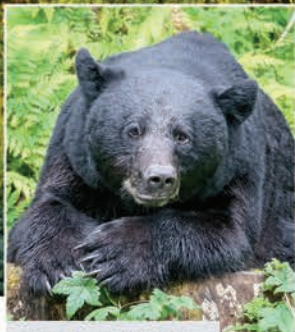


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Please visit the Wrangell Visitor Center located inside the Nolan Center

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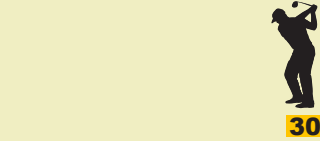


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- 3. Alaska Charters & Adventures:** 1003 Case Ave., 907-874-4157, alaskaupclose.com
- 4. Alaska Seaplanes:** 1300 Airport Loop Rd., 907-874-3800, flyalaskaseaplanes.com
- 5. Alaska Vistas:** 103 Front St., 907-874-3006, alaskavistas.com
- 6. Alaska Waters:** 5 Front St., Unit 1, 907-305-0495, alaskawaters.com
- 7. Alaskan Artist:** 1003 Case Ave., 907-874-3508, marineartist.com
- 8. Alaska Marine Highway System:** 301 McCormick St., 907-874-3711, dot.alaska.gov/amhs/
 - * **Anchor Properties:** 907-470-0085, apalaska.com
 - * **Anchor Properties Nightly Rentals:** 907-470-0085, apalaska.com
- 9. Angerman's Inc.:** 2 Front St., 907-874-3640, Facebook: @Angerman's Inc.
- 10. Arctic Chiropractic and Massage:** 109 Lynch St., 907-874-3361, arcticchiropractic.com
- 11. Breakaway Adventures:** 106 Lynch St., 907-874-2488, breakawayadventures.com
- 12. Bunes Bros Inc.:** 18 Front St., 907-874-3811, Facebook: @Bunes Bros Inc.
- 13. Canoe Lagoon Oysters:** 106 Lynch Street, 928-301-7087, freshalaskaoysters.com
- 14. City Hall:** 205 Brueger, 907-874-2381, wrangell.com
- 15. City Market:** 423 Front St., 907-874-3333, Facebook: @City Market, Inc.
 - * **Cooper's Corner:** 907-305-1026, etsy.com/shop/CoopersCornerAlaska
- 16. Drive Thru Brew:** 113 3rd St., 907-305-0299
- 17. First Bank:** 224 Brueger St., 907-874-3363, firstbankak.com
- 18. Forget Me Not Lodging:** 203 Weber St., 208-818-6925, forgetmenotlodging.com
- 19. Grand View Bed & Breakfast:** 1.9 Zimovia Hwy., 907-874-3225, grandviewbnb.com
- 20. Harbor View Self Storage:** 1068 Zimovia Hwy., 907-796-9007 harborviewstorage.net
- 21. Heritage Harbor Boathouse:** 238 Berger Street, 360-393-7354, airbnb.com/rooms/14789513
 - * **Homeport Electronics:** 907-772-3100, homeportelectronics.com
- 22. Hungry Beaver Pizza & Marine Bar:** 604 Shakes St., 907-874-3005, Facebook: @ Marine Bar
- 23. Island Escape Rental Cars:** 1450 Airport Loop Rd., 907-874-3975, wrgislandescape.com
- 24. Island of Faith Lutheran Church:** 211 Second St., 907-874-2743, islandoffaith.weebly.com
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- 29. Michelle's Taste of Asia:** 214 Front St., 907-660-7579, Facebook: @Michelle's Taste of Asia
- * **Muddy Water:** 907-305-0206, muddywateradventures.com
- 30. Muskeg Meadows:** ½ mile Ishiyama Dr., 907-874-4653, muskegmeadows.com
- 31. Nic's Place Pizza:** 302 Front St., 907-660-7269, Facebook: @Nic's Place.
- 32. Nolan Center/Wrangell Visitor Center/Museum:** 296 Campbell Dr., 907-874-3699, nolancenter.org
- 33. Ottesen's Ace Hardware:** 104 Front St., 907-874-3377, Facebook: @Ottesen's Ace Hardware
- 34. Rayme's Bar:** 532 Front St., 907-874-3442, Facebook: @Rayme's Bar
- 35. Reeves Guest House:** 3.75 mile Zimovia Hwy., 907-305-0657 airbnb.com/rooms/42153824
- 36. Reliance Rentals:** 1214 Peninsula St., 907-305-1211, airbnb.com/rooms/17815042
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- 37. River's Mouth Resale:** 321 Front St. Back Hall, 907-874-4095, Facebook: @River's Mouth Resale
- 38. River's Mouth Trading Company:** 321 Front St., 833-518-0027, riversmouth.com
- 39. Salvation Army:** 611 Zimovia Hwy., 907-874-3753, wrangell.salvationarmy.org
- 40. Sentry Hardware & Marine:** 408 Front St., 907-874-3336, Facebook: @Sentry Hardware & Marine
- 41. St. Philip's Episcopal Church:** 446 Church St., 907-874-3047, stphilipswrangell.com
- 42. St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church:** 120 Church St., 907-874-3771, stroseoflimawrangell.com
- 43. Stikine Drug Store:** 202 Front St., 907-874-3422, stikinedrug.com
- 44. Stikine Inn and Restaurant:** 105 Stikine Ave., 907-874-3388, stikineinn.com
 - * **Summit Charters:** 907-305-0416, summitcharters.com
- 45. Sunrise Aviation:** 1600 Airport Loop Road, 907-874-2319, Facebook: @Sunrise Aviation Inc.
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 - * **Tight Line River Tours:** 907-388-8137, Facebook: @Tight Line River Tours
 - * **Trish Neal, Author:** TrishaNeal@hotmail.com
- 48. Wrangell Chamber of Commerce:** 107 Stikine Ave., 907-874-3901, wrangellchamberofcommerce.wildapricot.org/
- 49. Wrangell Convention and Visitor Bureau:** 296 Campbell Dr., 907-874-2829, travelwrangell.com
- 50. Wrangell Elks Lodge 1595:** 103 Front St., 907-874-3716, Facebook: @B.P.O.E #1595 - Wrangell Elks Lodge
- 51. Wrangell Extended Stay:** 312 Stikine Ave., 907-305-1117, wrangellextendedstay.com
- 52. Wrangell IGA:** 223 Brueger St., 907-874-2341, wrangelliga.com
- 53. Wrangell Parks & Recreation:** 320 Church St., 907-874-2444, wrangellrec.com
 - * **Wrangell Real Estate:** 907-874-4445, movetowrangell.com
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18

27

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D

41



34

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39

G

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Chief Shakes grave

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Shakes Street

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28

Cassiar Street

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

Nolan Center: Home to Wrangell's unique culture

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

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

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

Starting last year, live musical theater was reintroduced with a community production of "The Sound of Music." A new production will be held every spring and winter, said Cyni Crary, Nolan Center director.



The Nolan Center museum displays many different artifacts like this wooden formline sculpture of a seabird using animal fur and hair in its design. (Photo by Marc Lutz/Wrangell Sentinel)

The museum provides an interactive walk through Wrangell's rich history. The

exhibits provide a narrative of the culture, heritage and peoples of Wrangell, from the time of the Tlingit through the fur trade of the Russian-American Co., British Hudson Bay Co., Wrangell's role in gold rushes, and Alaska's incorporation into a U.S. territory and transition to statehood.

Entering the facility, it's hard to miss the ornate Chief Shakes house posts. These house posts were created between 1775 and 1790 and are accredited to the famous master carver Kadjisdu.a'xch II. They are thought to be the oldest still in existence

today. Further into the lobby are the two totems overlooking a replica of the Stikine River Delta inlaid on the floor.

The museum gallery is a stimulating walk through time, beginning with a view of natural history, then a reverent walk through the land of the Native people who thrived in the area for many years.

Here you will see a replica of the petroglyphs that are located at Petroglyph Beach, thought to be thousands of years old. Around

Continued on next page

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Photo courtesy of Marc Lutz Photography



Every stage of Wrangell's history is explored within the Nolan Center museum's exhibits. (Photo by Marc Lutz/Wrangell Sentinel)

the corner, enter the Russian period and the fur trade (filled with furs to touch and feel). Next, visit the Gold Rush section when Wrangell was a major trade center for three gold rushes. Wrangell was even well known by a few famous faces including Wyatt Earp, who served as temporary town marshal, and John Muir, who wrote about his many adventures.

Finally, your journey winds into the 20th century – this area is packed full of Wrangell's more recent history, including many families that still reside on the island. You may even be inclined to take another stroll through the gallery in order to take it all in.

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

when a cruise ship is in town.

Everything from weddings to BearFest (see Page 12), board meetings to symposiums are held at the center.

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

NOLAN CENTER SUMMER HOURS

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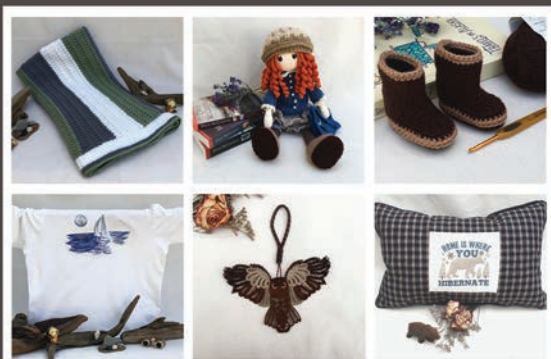
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Don't miss a chance to buy Wrangell's special garnets

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

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

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

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

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

In 2002, the Scouts transferred their portion of the deed, putting the property under the full ownership of the Presbyterian Church of Wrangell, which holds title today.

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

For example, a couple from



From left: Carol Murkowski Sturgulewski and her sister, Alaska's senior U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski, visited the garnet stand operated by Bella Ritchie and her mom, Bonnie Ritchie, at Wrangell's City Dock

Wyoming accompanied by their geologically enthusiastic son were allowed to mine garnets from the ledge, since he was counted as “a child of Wrangell,” Privett said.

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

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

The garnets have been mined industrially in the past. In 1907, two sisters incorporated the Alaska Garnet Mining & Manufacturing Co. It was the first all-female-owned company incorporated in the United States.

Part of the manufacturing process involved crushing the garnets for use in sandpaper. The company remained active until 1936, when Hanford purchased it.

Because the area is located in a federal wilderness area, no power tools are permitted. Kids and their families take hand tools and buckets to look for garnets in the rocks and streams.

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

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

“We don't want to be garnet cops,” Privett said. “We want to be garnet shepherds.” No industrial or commercial harvests allowed by adults are allowed.

Children are allowed to sell the stones of their labor to

visitors and wholesale them to gift shops, giving them an up-close learning experience with business and commerce.

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

Permission to mine garnets can be obtained by calling 907-874-3534 or 907-874-2203.

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



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Wrangell's totem poles tell stories of rich Native culture

The intricately carved totem poles that dot Wrangell are a reminder that the town is built on the land of the Shtax'heen Kwaan, or Stikine Tlingit – the Alaska Native people of this area. Most of the totems you'll find around Wrangell are duplicates of poles that were commissioned in the 1800s, when totem carving first flourished.

To view these artworks, visit Totem Park just off Front Street, the Nolan Center or the tribal house on Shakes Island, which is accessible from a bridge near the harbor office. Some of the poles that used to stand in front of the tribal house are in need of repair, so be sure to walk to the far end of the island where they are resting under a rainproof shelter.

When totem carving started about 200 years ago, poles were put up for a wide variety of



The late Marge Byrd (Shaawat Shoo'goo and Teey Tix' Tl'aa) of the Kiks.adi Clan inside of the Chief Shakes Clan House. (Photo by Mark Kelley)

reasons — to signal social status, to mark a special occasion such as a potlatch, to record a story

or to hold the ashes of deceased relatives. Poles might even be erected to shame people, usually

community members of high standing who had failed to meet their obligations.

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

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

Some white settlers incorrectly assumed that the poles were objects of religious worship or that they were intended to guard a house or village. This is not the case; poles reflect the unique identity, history and values of the groups that commission them. The carvings may tell stories or display signs of family lineage.

For example, the Bear up a Mountain pole that used to stand outside the tribal house tells the story of a brown bear that saved the Naanyaa.aayí clan from a



Continued on next page



Totem Park, on Front Street, commemorates a restoration project of the Wrangell Cultural Heritage Committee. (Photo by Marc Lutz)

flood by leading them to higher ground. A bear rests on top of the pole and footprints lead up its side.

Walking around Wrangell, almost all the poles you'll encounter are replicas of older carvings, since the heavy rainfall and moisture in Southeast can easily rot wooden artwork. In the 19th and late 18th centuries, when many of the original poles were created, it wasn't common practice to repair, repaint or reconstruct existing totems. It was usually easier — and more socially advantageous — to erect a new pole. Tlingit society was intricately organized by rank, so the ability to commission multiple expensive poles over a lifetime could bump someone up the social ladder.

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

The project, which was led by the U.S. Forest Service, has received both criticism and praise from historians and community members alike. Instead of only

hiring young men like it usually did, the Conservation Corps included elders in the project, allowing knowledge about totem carving to be passed down to the rising generation. Three Southeast clan houses, in Wrangell, Kasaan and Totem Bight, and 121

Continued on page 29

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Petroglyph Beach a puzzle from the past

No visit to Wrangell is complete without seeing the ancient stone carvings on Petroglyph Beach, a State Historic Site a short walk from downtown.

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

Wrangell's Petroglyph Beach has the highest concentration of petroglyphs in Southeast and is easily accessible for exploration. The carvings are some of the best surviving examples of Native



Dozens of petroglyphs have been found in Wrangell. Petroglyph Beach is a State Historic Site where visitors can stroll at low tide to discover a large number of the ancient carvings. (Top photo by Mark Kelley. Photo at right by Marc Lutz/Wrangell Sentinel)

artistic expression found in Southeast. The picturesque beach is about a 20-minute

walk from the state ferry terminal. Facing the ferry terminal, turn right on Evergreen

Avenue, walk north about a mile, then look for a sign and a small parking area. A gravel road to the left of the parking area leads down to the beach.

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

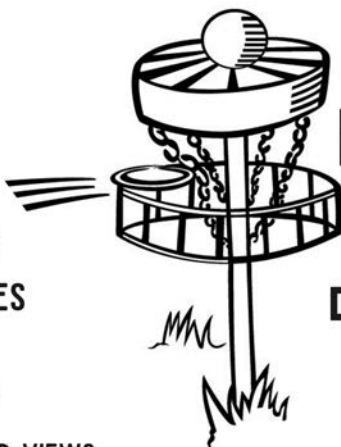
There are steps leading down to the beach for closer inspection of the ancient designs. They are best viewed at low tide. Access is available directly from the deck overlook.

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

During construction of the interpretive facility, two new petroglyphs were unearthed, buried in the sand. One of these petroglyphs was long thought lost and its rediscovery was a delight to the Tlingit



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Natives and other Wrangell residents.

Another option is to stay in town — some of the petroglyphs have been removed to the museum and the library and can be viewed there.

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

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

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



Totems, from Page 27

totems were restored under this massive preservation effort.

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

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

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

The designs on totem poles are closely related to Tlingit social life. The community is divided into two "moieties," or complementary descent groups — raven and eagle. Traditionally, ravens would only marry eagles and vice versa, but this system has relaxed in the last century. Moieties are divided into clans, clans are divided into houses, and each group has unique crests that might appear on their regalia or totem poles.

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

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Across from the Boatyard Haul Out

Muskeg Meadows much more than par for the course

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

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

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

Wrangell Golf Club hosts multiple tournaments each summer, drawing contestants from around Southeast Alaska

and the rest of the country.

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

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

Located on Ishiyama Drive off the road to the airport, the course is entirely the work of volunteers, with much of the equipment materials donated by Alaska Pulp Corp., Ketchikan Pulp Corp. and Silver Bay Logging.

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



Muskeg Meadows is Southeast Alaska's first regulation nine-hole golf course. (Photo by Mark Kelley)

provided you have a witness.

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

Golfers can pay their by-the-day green fees at the Pro Shop or after hours in

the orange lock box. Season passes are also available, as are memberships.

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

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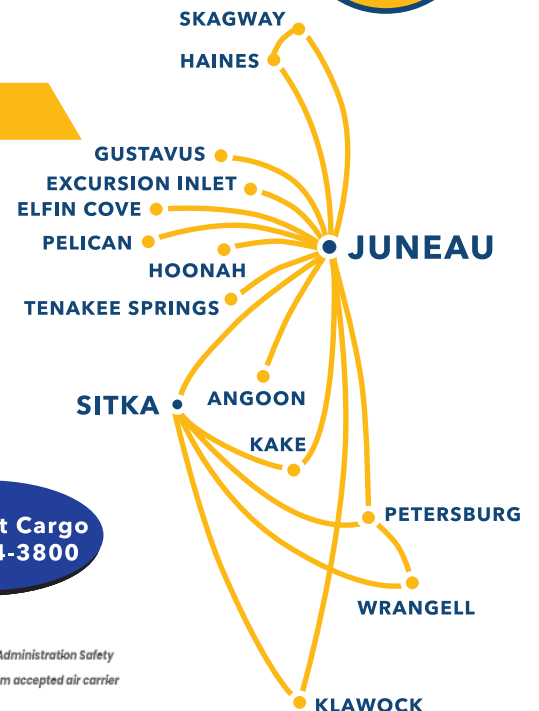
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The fish are there — just remember your license

Salmon and halibut are the area's top draws for sportfishing enthusiasts — and first-timers. The effort is fun and exciting, and the seafood is unbelievable. Just be sure to remember to get your fishing license, follow the rules and stay safe while out on the water.

The town has several charter boat operators eager to help with all your arrangements, while sharing their expert knowledge toward a successful fishing trip. They also can offer assistance in packing and shipping your seafood to arrive safely back home. Be sure to use an airline-approved fish box or tote to check in your catch.

A state license is required for sportfishing.

A non-resident single-day sport fishing license costs \$15 and a three-day license \$30; a seven-day license is \$45; 14-day license is \$75; and an annual license is \$100.

Fishing licenses do not include a king salmon stamp, which is needed to go fishing for the largest of the salmon in Southeast. One-day non-resident king salmon stamps go for \$15 each, a three-day stamp is \$30, seven-day stamps \$45, and

an annual stamp costs \$100.

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

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

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

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

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

Sportsmen who catch a king with a clipped adipose fin are encouraged to turn in the head to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Data compiled from such marked salmon help fisheries managers determine the success of hatchery-release programs like Earl West Cove.

King salmon, also called chinook, are available beginning in early May and into

July. Coho, or silver, start in July and run into September. Pinks, or humpies, run in July and August to freshwater spawning grounds, as do chums, though there are some fall chum runs in Southeast.

Steelhead and Dolly Varden fishing is open year-round, al-

though the best steelhead fishing is in April and May. The best season for Dollies starts in June and continues through September.

Halibut can be caught year-round. However, they can more easily be found in inside waters during the summer months.

Continued on page 33



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Eric Halstead was the winner of the 2022 king salmon fishing derby in Wrangell. (Photo courtesy of the chamber of commerce)

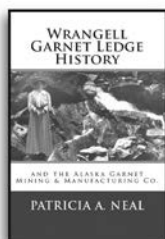
Fishing, from Page 31

For the best places to catch your favorite species, local anglers — and charter boat operators — are invaluable sources of information. Popular saltwater spots include the outlet of Babler Creek, the Stikine River delta and Elephant's Nose.

Some of the best freshwater

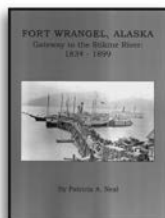
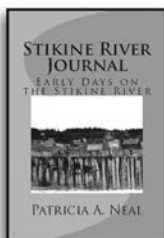
spots are a short drive away. They include Thoms Lake, Pats Lake, Pats Creek, Virginia Lake, Mill Creek, Salamander Creek and Institute Creek. Mill Creek, Institute Creek and Pats Creek are accessible off Zimovia Highway. Virginia Lake, Highbrush Lake, Thoms Lake and Pats Lake are all accessible only via U.S. Forest Service roads.

A look back at Wrangell history by author and historian Patricia A. Neal



Wrangell Garnet Ledge History and the Alaska Garnet Mining & Manufacturing Co. offers a look into the mining history of the garnet ledge and the women who mined the garnets. Almost 40 years of research went into this book.

Stikine River Journal is a compilation of historical articles written for the Wrangell Sentinel about the early days of the Stikine River which includes some of the people who were the early day movers and shakers of Fort Wrangell.



Fort Wrangell, Alaska: Gateway to the Stikine River 1834-1899 covers the early history of Wrangell during the time of Four Nations and Three Flags.

Purchase *Wrangell Garnet Ledge History* and *Stikine River Journal* at Angerman's, Stikine Drug, Parnassus Books & Gifts - 105 Stedman St., Ketchikan, AK. *The Fort Wrangell, Alaska* history book is available at the Wrangell Museum.

If out of stock or unable to purchase in Wrangell, send an email for information on how to order to: TrishaNeal@hotmail.com

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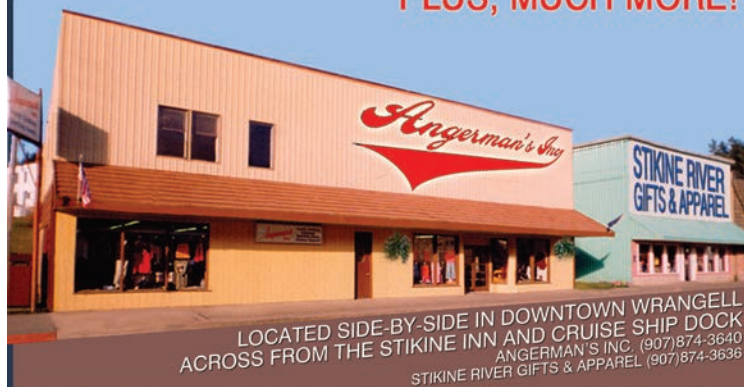
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Wrangell praised for harbors, Marine Service Center

From 18-foot skiffs to 100-foot yachts to 950-foot cruise ships, Wrangell's port and harbors can accommodate boats of all shapes, sizes and functions. The facilities welcome travelers from Europe, the Lower 48 states and from our Southeast Alaska neighborhood.

Cruise ships tie up at City Dock, a deepwater dock at the north end of town near the Stikine Inn. Wrangell's cruise tourism industry has grown steadily since 2014, with the exception of the pandemic seasons of 2020 and 2021. The community in 2023 could receive as many as 30,000 guests aboard cruise ships and tour boats large and small.

Wrangell also has three borough-operated harbors with reserved and transient moorage options, two Travelifts for haul-out (up to 300 tons) and a Marine Service Center where skilled services are available for boat repairs and most anything else a mariner



Heritage Harbor is Wrangell's newest harbor, accommodating a myriad of vessels. (Photo by Marc Lutz/Wrangell Sentinel)

could need.

Heritage Harbor — a popular spot for visiting vessels — is located about a mile from the downtown shops, restaurants and grocery and hardware stores. In the experience of Port and Harbors Director Steve Miller, people don't usually mind the distance. "Most of them are looking to stretch their legs since they've been on a boat," he said.

Heritage is the newest of Wrangell's harbors, with electricity

and potable water on the docks, a well-maintained restroom, an all-tides boat launch and plenty of turning space to accommodate large vessels.

The harbor is also the site of the Wrangell Mariners' Memorial, an open-air gazebo and metal sculptures honoring lives lost at sea. The project, which was decades in the making, was completed late last year.

Located downtown near Shakes Island, the Inner Harbor

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

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

Wrangell's harbors have an excellent reputation throughout Southeast. "Probably 85% to 95% of our guests are returning guests," Miller said. People who stop in town often spread the word about the community's affordable moorage rates and high-quality service to their friends.

"We're cheaper than most other stops," Miller added. "We've got new facilities with our Heritage Harbor ... and outstanding staff as far as bringing visitors in and telling them where they need to tie up."

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

The summer season — especially around the Fourth of July — is particularly busy. Even then, "we do a pretty good job of making sure that we can accommodate everyone," Miller said. "We tend to be able to put them all away."

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

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

Mount Dewey Trail

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

Volunteer Trail

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

City Park

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

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



Rainbow Falls Trail is a moderate-to-difficult hiking trail featuring winding paths, a bridge and the falls. (Photo by Marc Lutz)

prohibited.

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

Shoemaker Bay

Shoemaker Bay RV Park is about five miles south of town, along Zimovia Highway. The park offers 25 sites open exclusively to RV and trailer campers – 15

with electricity, 10 without. All sites have excellent views of Zimovia Strait and neighboring Woronkofski Island. A freshwater pump is located near the entrance to the Shoemaker Harbor parking lot. Facilities are on a first-come, first-served basis; no reservations taken. A holding tank dumpsite for RVs has been installed in the harbor parking lot. There are also

restrooms and a dumpster. A tent camping area is located in a wooded spot near a creek. South of the creek is a tennis court, restrooms and picnic shelter. Tent campers should use the designated camping area only. Inquire at City Hall at 907-874-2381 or Parks and Recreation at 907-874-2444 for rules.

Rainbow Falls Trail

Moderate to difficult

Just across Zimovia Highway from the Shoemaker Bay camping area is the Rainbow Falls Trail, which offers a self-guided hike through the pristine Southeast Alaska rainforest. A little less than a mile up the trail is a beautiful view of Rainbow Falls; a tenth of a mile later, the trail ends above the waterfall and provides spectacular views of Chichagof Pass, Zimovia Strait

Continued on page 39



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Forest Service cabins offer off-the-grid getaways



The Forest Service cabin at Mount Rynda is one of 21 available for public use within the Wrangell Ranger District. (Photo courtesy of U.S. Forest Service)

Looking to truly get away from it all? A rustic cabin in the Alaska wilderness might be just the ticket.

The U.S. Forest Service has 144 public-use cabins throughout the Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska, with 21 in the Wrangell Ranger District.

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

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

Continued on next page



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CAMPING TIPS

- Camping tips
- Travel with a companion
- Wear appropriate clothing for the trail conditions and season
- Be weather-wise
- Pack a first-aid kit
- Make a camp before dark
- Think before you drink
- Bring emergency supplies
- Arrive early
- Build fires only in safe areas
- Pitch your tent in a safe spot
- Dispose of trash properly
- Beware of wildlife
- Beware of poisonous plants
- Tell somebody where you're going

The Wrangell Ranger District has a road-accessible cabin on Middle Ridge, near, as you might expect from the name, the middle of Wrangell Island. While the road is accessible during the summer months for vehicles, potential cabin users should consider carefully the abilities of their cars before heading out.

The cabin is about 10.5 miles south of Wrangell, inland from Zimovia Highway. The route turns down several roads that are rough and steep with sharp switchbacks and few turnouts. RVs and vehicles towing trailers aren't a good idea.

"Middle Ridge is really popular, so you want to get that one in advance," said Tory Houser, Ranger for the Wrangell Forest Service District. However, cabins can only be booked six months in advance.

A popular Wrangell-area cabin

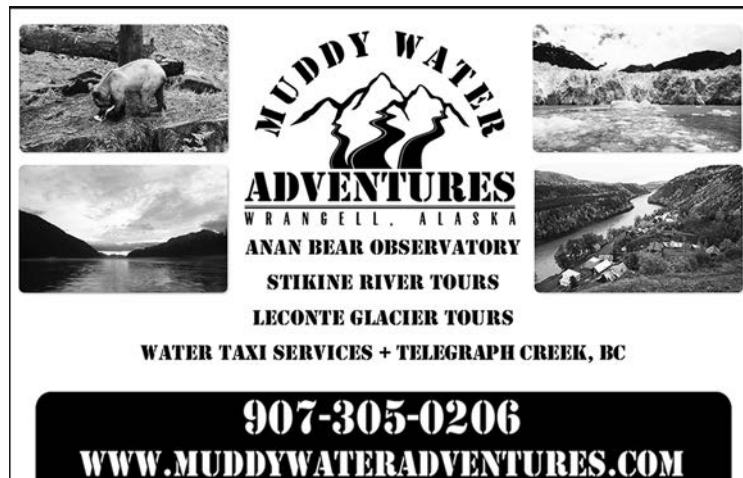
at Anan Bay was destroyed in February by a fallen tree, so it will not be available to reserve in 2023. Plans are underway to rebuild it.

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

A variety of open-air campsites are also available without a reservation on a first-come, first-served basis.

A 16-foot by 20-foot picnic shelter is available at Yunshookuh Loop Campground on Nemo Point Road, almost halfway down the island from Wrangell, including a wheelchair-accessible tent platform.

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



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Edible Alaska – the berries are free for the taking

Which of Southeast Alaska's natural resources is abundant, juicy and free to pick?

The answer — found along almost any roadside in late summer — is wild berries.

More than 25 varieties of edible wild berries are found in Southeast, many of them growing on Wrangell Island.

They may be eaten fresh or frozen and may also be used to make juice, sauce, syrup, wine, salad, bread, pie and other foods.

Berries may be picked on public lands on Wrangell Island, but be respectful of private property. It's a good idea to stay away from roads, to avoid dust and oil kicked up by passing cars.

Veteran berry pickers frequent the logging roads south of Pats Creek and areas where former logging roads are overgrown. But berries can be found on



Salmonberries are among the edible berries found throughout the island. (Photo by Marc Lutz/Wrangell Sentinel)

practically any roadside, hillside or muskeg (the wet, spongy land all over the island).

The best-known berries on the island are blueberries and red huckleberries. They are part of the same plant family, and some people say certain varieties of the blueberries are actually "blue huckleberries."

Blueberries growing in the muskeg, known as bog blueberries, ripen as early as late July, and can be picked until they fall on the ground. Berries on plants in the sun usually fall around mid-August but those on plants in the shade may stay on a few weeks longer.

Because bears also enjoy

blueberries, it's a good idea to go picking with a group if you are foraging in isolated spots. The noise from humans usually drives bears to another patch.

Berry pickers should also be aware that worms are occasionally found in blueberries and in a few other types of berries.

The picking season for red huckleberries is a little later, usually beginning in early or mid-August. These brightly colored berries have a distinct, tart flavor.

Other varieties of berries growing on Wrangell Island and elsewhere in Southeast include salmonberry, raspberry, thimbleberry, highbush cranberry and rose hips.

Only a few types of berries found in Southeast are inedible. The baneberry, also known as the mooseberry or snakeberry, is poisonous. The plant grows about two feet tall and has large leaves and flowers in white clusters. Its berries are bright red, white or pink and fairly large. They form in bunches above the leaves.

It's a good idea to consult a local forager before eating wild berries. If you aren't positive of what you're picking, it's safest to leave it behind.

Berry pickers are advised to take along some good insect repellent. Mosquitoes and other biting insects are often found in the best locations for berries.

More information on wild berries is available in "Alaska Wildberry Trails," a book by Helen White, and "Picking Berries," by Hannah Lindoff, which teaches the names for berries in Lingít (the Tlingit language), Xaad Kil (Haida language) and Sm'alg̱ayx (Tsimshian language). Both publications can be found in Wrangell at the Irene Ingle Public Library.



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Hiking, from Page 35

and surrounding islands. Viewing platforms and bench seating make this a great place for a picnic. The trail intersects with Institute Creek Trail.

Institute Creek Trail

Difficult to most difficult

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

Shoemaker Bay Overlook Shelter

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

North Wrangell Trail

Difficult to most difficult

This trail begins 2.2 miles from the Rainbow Falls Trailhead via the Rainbow Falls and Institute Creek trails. The trail leads 1.3 miles to the High Country Shelter and continues another 1 mile to the Pond Shelter. Shelters are three-sided with a picnic table and an outhouse.

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

Pats Lake

Pats Lake recreation area is 11 miles south of downtown

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

creek. The creek also has a fall salmon run.

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



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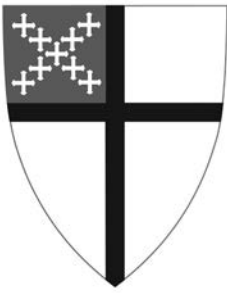
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