

*Master Interpretive Plan* for the  
Alaska Marine Highway, Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment



June 2009

# *Master Interpretive Plan*

— *for the* —

## *Alaska Marine Highway, Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment*

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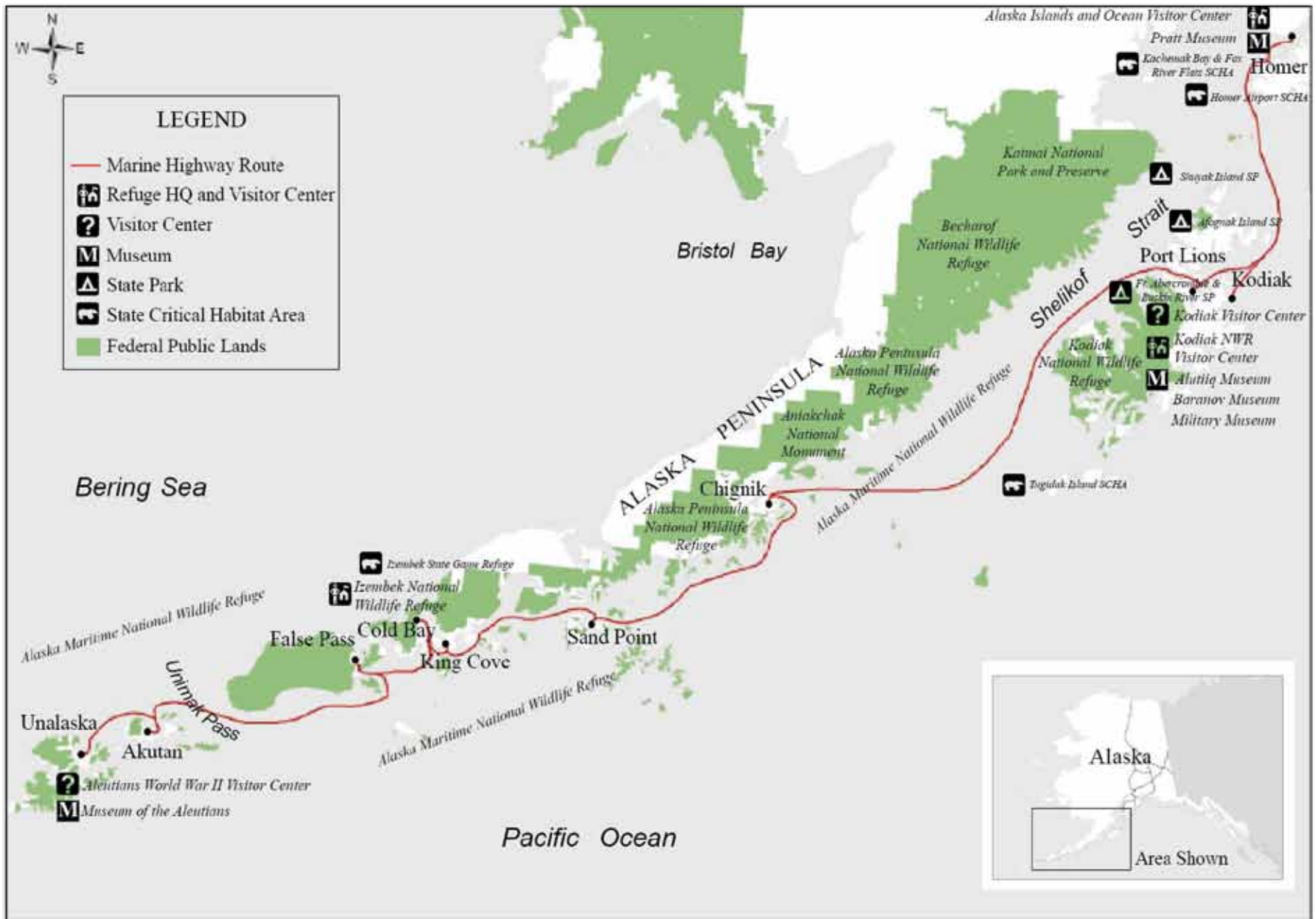


Figure 1. The Alaska Marine Highway, Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment

# 1.

## INTRODUCTION

### The Alaska Marine Highway System

Alaska's Marine Highway System (AMHS) is a ferry service operated by the State of Alaska since 1963. It operates along the Inside Passage of British Columbia, Canada and Alaska, the southcentral coast of Alaska, and the eastern Aleutian Islands. Stretching over 3,500 miles, the AMHS has historical significance as the main transportation link between many of the route's small, isolated coastal communities. In many of these towns, there is no road in or out and the only way to get there is by boat or airplane.

In September 2005, the AMHS was named an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration. Under this program, the United States Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain outstanding roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads. Designation as a National Scenic Byway indicates that the route possesses distinctive qualities that are unique to the region. Designation as an All-American Road, the higher designation of the two, indicates that the route has not only regional but also national significance.<sup>1</sup> Alaska's Marine Highway System expands America's Byways collection by offering byway travelers the unusual experience of seeing and experiencing a state via water. There are three main AMHS segments: Southeast Alaska (the Inside Passage), Southcentral Alaska (Prince William Sound and Kenai Peninsula), and Southwest Alaska (Kodiak and the Aleutians).

### The Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment

This interpretive plan is concerned with only one AMHS segment, Kodiak and the Aleutians, which extends from the tip of the Kenai Peninsula in Homer to Kodiak Island, then along the Alaska Peninsula to Unalaska in the Aleutian Islands. The Kodiak and the Aleutians segment features valleys

<sup>1</sup> Federal Highway Administration National Scenic Byways Program. 1999. *Byway Beginnings: Understanding, Inventorying, and Evaluating a Byway's Intrinsic Qualities*. Washington D.C.: Whiteman & Taintor with the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program.



and windswept tundra slopes accentuated by active volcanoes and miles of rugged sea cliffs. The region reveals its violent origins in the rugged landscape: mountainous terrain, precipitous coastlines, and black sand beaches. Yet, this dramatic environment supports the largest concentration of marine mammals in the world and a nesting seabird population greater than that found in the rest of the United States combined. Countless songbirds weave their nests and songs throughout the alder and willow-covered slopes. Along the coast, millions of seabirds swirl, cry, and balance on precarious cliff nests. On the Alaska Peninsula and Kodiak Island, brown bears feast on a summer bounty of salmon. Such proliferation of wildlife drew humans to the region as early as 8,000 years ago. By 4,000 years ago a great maritime nation had arisen, one adapted to exploit a single subsistence resource: the sea.

The people of this region have bonded with the sea for centuries, venturing out to harvest the bounty of neighboring waters. Armed with sophisticated fishing gear, modern vessels have long replaced the simple kayaks and high-masted sailing ships of the past. But the sea remains constant—its towering waves await boats intent on catching a variety of creatures hidden deep within. In this part of the world, the perils of the land occasionally rival those of the sea. The grinding Pacific and American plates yield tremors, earthquakes, and tsunamis, reminding residents of the precarious nature of their communities. So why do the people live and work in such a challenging place? It's the sea—an ancient passion for life on the open ocean.

### Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this interpretive plan is to enhance the visitor experience in the region. This project is a recommendation of the Alaska's Marine Highway, Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment Corridor Plan:

“Travelers should have easy access to information; this will make their trip planning more efficient and encourage lengthier stays. . . there is a great need for an interpretive plan that looks at the entire region, its communities, and the ships servicing the area and pulls all of this together into an effective, integrated strategy.”<sup>2</sup>

This plan will identify opportunities to connect travelers' interests with the cultural and natural resources of the area, including Native cultures, world class birding, marine mammal viewing, World War II history, access to public lands, recreational opportunities, and rural Alaskan communities. This project will provide recommendations for safety and orientation information, allowing the

<sup>2</sup> ADOT&PF. 2005. Alaska's Marine Highway, Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment Corridor Plan. Juneau, AK: Jensen Yorba and Lott, Inc.

*“One learns that the world,  
though made, is yet being made.”*

—John Muir



traveler to take full advantage of the opportunities available along the route and in the public lands and communities along the way.

Interpretation can be defined as “a communication process that forges intellectual and emotional connections between the interests of the visitor and the meanings inherent in the resource.”<sup>3</sup> With this goal in mind, interpretation on the ferry and in port communities will be creative, enjoyable, and educational, benefiting the traveler by identifying opportunities to connect their interests with the resources of the route. Interpretation will not only communicate what is interesting about the region, but also aim to foster an appreciation of the ferry system and the communities it serves.

The Master Interpretive Plan for the Alaska Marine Highway, Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment:

- Supports the mission of the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC).
- Complements and supports interpretation in the Alaska Islands & Ocean Visitor Center in Homer (headquarters for the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge).
- Provides relevant background information.
- Incorporates the needs of current and potential visitors.
- Provides an overview of the region’s scenic, natural, historic, cultural, recreational, and archaeological resources and existing interpretive opportunities.
- Outlines interpretive goals, objectives, and themes.
- Recommends prioritized interpretive and informational media, programs, and site improvements for ferry, port communities, and Internet sites.
- Provides orientation recommendations for port communities.
- Suggests ways to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of interpretive products.



*The "Tusty" at Kodiak with Aleutians in background*

<sup>3</sup> Brochu, L. 2003. Interpretive Planning: The 5-M Model for Successful Planning Projects. Fort Collins, CO: Interpress.



# 2.



Harbor at Kodiak

## BACKGROUND

### Access and Ship Services

Access to Kodiak and the Aleutians is typically from the Homer ferry terminal or via air from Anchorage to Kodiak or Unalaska. Scheduled commercial air service is available year-round to all ten port communities. Kodiak and Unalaska have daily service to Anchorage, while the other communities have frequent service via local airlines and charters.

The M/VTustumena, fondly called the “Tusty,” is the smallest mainline ship in the AMHS, with a capacity of 196 passengers. Built to handle the legendary storms of this remote region, the Tusty serves Kodiak and the Aleutians by providing sailings year-round between Homer and Kodiak and monthly sailings April through October to the nine port communities between Kodiak and Unalaska. The ferry calls at remote ports for up to two hours, making stop-overs difficult unless travelers are willing to catch the return sailing (usually one or two days later) or fly out. Many of the communities along this segment have inadequate or no visitor services. Given these limitations, most port communities are not set up for a large influx of visitors; however, visitors who travel this segment and are not dissuaded by the limited services can experience rural coastal communities brimming with Alaskan culture and history, world-class bird and wildlife viewing, and breathtaking views of sea and landscape.

### Route Overview

This segment of the Alaska Marine Highway extends from the City of Homer on the Kenai Peninsula to Kodiak Island, then along the Alaska Peninsula and the Aleutian Islands to the port community of Unalaska. This part of Alaska is known for wind, fog, and severe winter storms—there is no such thing as a casual traveler here. The nearly 2,000-mile trip takes at least six days round trip and can cost as much as a cross-country plane fare. The communities in this segment are, from east to west: Homer, Port Lions, Kodiak, Chignik, Sand Point, King Cove, Cold Bay, False Pass, Akutan, and Unalaska.

Eclectic, artsy, and surrounded by wilderness and ocean, **Homer** lies at the end of the Sterling Highway, a state scenic byway, and is the most easterly port of call. Nestled on the shore of glittering Kachemak Bay with active volcanoes looming in the distance, it is a quaint fishing and tourist community and a popular recreation destination. Homer is known for its spectacular views, bald eagles, annual shorebird festival, outstanding halibut and salmon fishing, and the Homer Spit, a 4.5-mile terminal glacial moraine. The community is home to the Islands and Ocean Visitors Center, a state-of-the-art interpretive, educational, and research facility that highlights the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge and the Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.



*View of Homer Spit  
Homer Chamber of Commerce, Joan Langfeld*

Since there are frequent ferries to Homer, ferry travelers often arrange their itineraries to include a few extra days here to access the area's many outdoor recreation sites. Anchor River State Recreation Area offers premier fishing for king, silver, and pink salmon, and Dolly Varden and steelhead. Just across the bay is Kachemak Bay State Park, Alaska's first State Park, which covers over 400,000 acres, with 80 miles of trails and 15 campgrounds.

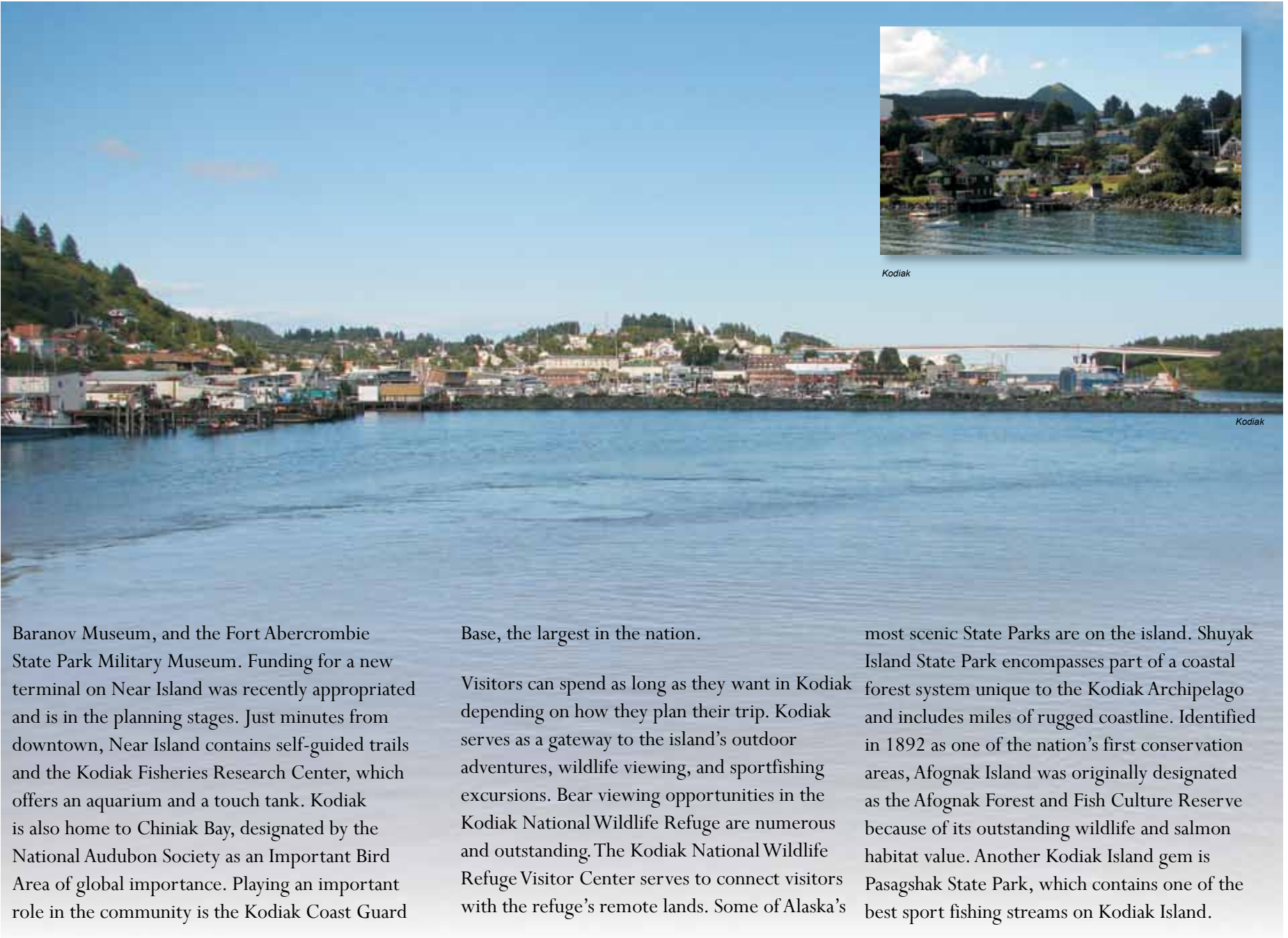
After departing Homer, the ferry enters Kachemak Bay. On clear days, travelers can view four volcanoes across the inlet: Douglas, Augustine, Iliamna, and Redoubt. About 60 miles out of Homer, the ferry passes the Barren Islands, home of a significant seabird colony of nearly a half-million birds. Just north of Kodiak, the ferry

may stop briefly at **Port Lions**. Port Lions was built to house the residents of Ag'waneq from the neighboring island of Afognak after the Good Friday Earthquake destroyed their village in 1964. This small community is situated on Settlers Cove, which is off Kizhuyak Bay on the northeast coast of Kodiak Island. Several local lodges offer accommodations and recreational services that include sport fishing, hunting, beachcombing, kayaking, birding, and wildlife viewing.

Next on the route is Kodiak. Nicknamed the "Emerald Isle," **Kodiak** is one of the nation's largest commercial fishing ports. It has been inhabited by the Alutiiq people for millennia and is noteworthy as the first capital of Russian America. The town offers visitor activities, historic sites, and museums, such as the Alutiiq Museum, the



*Beach in Homer, Homer Chamber of Commerce, Joan Langfeld*



Kodiak

Kodiak

Baranov Museum, and the Fort Abercrombie State Park Military Museum. Funding for a new terminal on Near Island was recently appropriated and is in the planning stages. Just minutes from downtown, Near Island contains self-guided trails and the Kodiak Fisheries Research Center, which offers an aquarium and a touch tank. Kodiak is also home to Chiniak Bay, designated by the National Audubon Society as an Important Bird Area of global importance. Playing an important role in the community is the Kodiak Coast Guard

Base, the largest in the nation.

Visitors can spend as long as they want in Kodiak depending on how they plan their trip. Kodiak serves as a gateway to the island’s outdoor adventures, wildlife viewing, and sportfishing excursions. Bear viewing opportunities in the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge are numerous and outstanding. The Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center serves to connect visitors with the refuge’s remote lands. Some of Alaska’s

most scenic State Parks are on the island. Shuyak Island State Park encompasses part of a coastal forest system unique to the Kodiak Archipelago and includes miles of rugged coastline. Identified in 1892 as one of the nation’s first conservation areas, Afognak Island was originally designated as the Afognak Forest and Fish Culture Reserve because of its outstanding wildlife and salmon habitat value. Another Kodiak Island gem is Pasagshak State Park, which contains one of the best sport fishing streams on Kodiak Island.

From Kodiak the ferry rounds into Shelikof Strait and journeys along the southern coast of the **Alaska Peninsula**. The Alaska Peninsula extends about 500 miles to the southwest from the mainland of Alaska, separating the Pacific Ocean from Bristol Bay, an arm of the Bering Sea, and ending in the Aleutian Islands. Travelers along the Alaska Peninsula's coast see many unique geologic and scenic features such as volcanoes, waterfalls, and sheer rock cliffs. The interplay of volcanic activity with shoreline erosion and glacial scour has created some of Alaska's most stunning scenery. Running along the Peninsula's entire length are the Aleutian Mountains, a highly active volcanic mountain range. The southern side of the Alaska Peninsula is rugged and mountainous, created by the convergence of the oceanic Pacific Plate and the continental North American Plate. The north side is generally flat and marshy, a result of millennia of erosion and seismic stability. Wildlife is especially rich. The Peninsula is home to the greatest concentrations of brown bears anywhere; it approaches one bear per square mile in some locations. Containing several national parks and wildlife refuges, the majority of the Alaska Peninsula is designated public land.

**Chignik**, meaning "big wind," is a rugged community of less than 100 residents located on the south shore of the Alaska Peninsula. It's tucked among towering mountains and exotic waterfalls. The Castle Cape Fjords just outside of Chignik consists of rugged mountains deeply

indented by the sea. The formation exhibits a pattern of contrasting dark and light layers that is so pronounced that the cape serves as a famous landmark to ships. Towering over town, Mount Veniaminof, a National Natural Landmark, is the only known glacier on the continent with an active volcanic vent in its center. Chignik was established in the late 1800s as a Russian fur trading outpost and commercial fishing port.

Today, Chignik is a classic fishing village. Fishing for salmon, halibut, and other species serves as the basis for the local economy. If it seems like no one is home, they may not be; most families spend summers in fish camps beside nearby Chignik Lagoon, and many residents depend on subsistence activities such as clam-digging, hunting, fishing, and berry picking. The ferry stops in Chignik for approximately an hour and a half.



Chignik

The ferry's next port of call is **Sand Point**, located on Popof Island, where it stops for approximately an hour and a half. This thriving commercial fishing community is home to the largest fishing fleet in the Aleutian Islands. A lucrative cod fishery attracted Unangan settlers (known since the Russian era as "Aleuts") from surrounding villages and Scandinavian fishermen in the 1800s. These influences can be seen in the names and faces of Sand Point's nearly 1,000 residents. Russian explorers also made it to

Sand Point. The Russian Orthodox St. Nicholas Chapel, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, is one example of Russian influence. A popular day trip destination is nearby Unga Island, where one of the largest abandoned villages in the Aleutians is located. Unga Village was once a booming cod fishing and gold mining town, but most residents eventually relocated to the larger community of Sand Point. The grayed and weathered buildings are now in various stages of collapse, from a slight tilt to flat on the ground

and gone. There is also a petrified forest on Unga Island that rivals those in national parks. Uncovered by wave action, the trees have been identified as Sequoias. They were buried by volcanic breccia and preserved by silicification. Outdoor recreation opportunities abound in Sand Point—the community boasts an excellent hiking trail system, wildlife viewing, world-class sport fishing, sea-kayaking, camping, and other outdoor activities.



Sand Point



Cold Bay

Next on the route is **King Cove**, which is located on the south side of the Alaska Peninsula mainland. Established by English immigrants with Unangan wives in the 1880s, King Cove developed as a commercial fishing hub and attracted early settlers from Scandinavia, Europe, and surrounding Unangan villages. King Cove is the site of one of Alaska's largest and oldest salmon canneries. The community continues to serve as a seafood harvesting and processing port. The ferry stops in King Cove for approximately an hour and a half. Accommodations, taxi service, and other limited visitor services are available.

Just around the corner is **Cold Bay**, where visitors have up to two hours to explore. Located within the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge at the western end of the Alaska Peninsula, this small community of 100 people is circled by dramatic volcanoes. The Refuge is best known for Izembek Lagoon, which contains the largest eelgrass system in North America and is an important stopover for hundreds of thousands of migrating waterfowl. Virtually the entire population of Pacific black brant, Taverner's Canada geese, and emperor geese inhabit Izembek Lagoon each fall. Approximately 23,000 threatened Steller's eiders also molt, rest, and feed at Izembek each autumn.

During World War II, Cold Bay was built as a covert United States military air base. At the height of the Aleutian campaign, thousands of troops were stationed at Fort Randall, and an extensive runway was built. The oldest building in town is a Quonset hut chapel, a historic remnant of the war. Today the Cold Bay airport continues to serve as an important regional transportation hub—it is even designated as an alternate landing site for the NASA Space Shuttle. Accommodations, taxi service, and other limited visitor services are available.

From Cold Bay the ferry heads to **False Pass**, where it stops for between 45 minutes to an hour and a half. False Pass is the easternmost of the Aleutian communities and the first Aleutian Island visited by the ferry. This community rests on Isanotski Strait, which connects the North Pacific to the Bering Sea. The area was settled in the early 1900s and grew with the establishment of a cannery. Once thought to be a “false pass,” the strait now serves as a major route between the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea, and the community is an important refueling stop for fishing fleets. The pass is famous for its concentrations of whales. Gray whales often migrate through the strait in large numbers, and killer whale pods are a common sight. Predatory killer whales will sometimes herd gray whales into the pass because the shallows of the pass limit gray whales’ options for escape.

Scheduled air service is available via Cold Bay from Anchorage. Visitor services are limited.



False Pass

The **Aleutian Islands**, a series of underwater volcanoes, span more than 1,100 miles. Like precarious stepping-stones, the Aleutian Islands bridge the seas between the New and Old worlds, reaching westward from the tip of the Alaska Peninsula to within 500 miles of the Siberia coast. They rise from an underwater landscape bounded by the shallow Bering Sea to the north and the deep Aleutian Trench to the south. Nicknamed

the “Birthplace of the Wind,” conflicting weather systems generated in the bordering seas are responsible for severe cyclonic storms, strong winds, heavy rains, and dense, impenetrable fog. Yearly precipitation averages fifty inches, with measurable rainfall occurring 200 days per year.

From False Pass, the ferry crosses Unimak Pass on its way to **Akutan**, where it docks briefly. Akutan is located on Akutan Island, a volcanic island that last erupted in 1992. Its volcanic history is evident in the unique geological features that freckle the island. Fur trading, whaling, and cod fishing persuaded Unangan, Russian, and European settlers to establish the community in the 1870s. The Pacific Whaling Company built a whale processing station across the bay from Akutan in 1912. It was the only whaling station in the Aleutians, closing its doors in 1939. During World War II, the United States government evacuated Akutan residents to the Ketchikan area.



Akutan, Alaska Volcano Observatory/U.S. Geological Survey

The village was reestablished in 1944, although exposure to the outside world brought many changes to the traditional lifestyle and attitudes of the community. Today Akutan continues to be one of the nation's most productive fishing ports. The Russian Orthodox Church stands as a reminder of the Russian colonial period. Limited visitor services are available.

Just a short distance from Akutan is **Unalaska**, the westernmost terminus of the Alaska Marine Highway System. Depending on how they plan their itinerary, visitors can spend an indefinite amount of time in Unalaska. The official name of the City of Unalaska's port is Dutch Harbor, named for a Dutch ship that wintered in the harbor in the late 1700s. During World War II, the military referred to the entire town as Dutch Harbor, as does today's transient fishing population. In reality, the port of Dutch Harbor

is within the city limits of the City of Unalaska and is not technically a different town.

Traditionally occupied by the Unangan, Unalaska is now the most productive seafood harvesting and processing port in the nation. Crab, halibut, cod, pollock, and other groundfish fisheries are the foundation of the local economy. The community's crabbing fleet is featured in the popular television show *The Deadliest Catch*, a documentary-style show on the Discovery Channel that has introduced viewers to the dangerous, exotic industry of Bering Sea crab fishing.

Complete visitor services are available in Unalaska. The Museum of the Aleutians documents the Unangan culture and local history. Visitors can intimately explore this culture while hiking on ancient trails that were established thousands of years ago by Unangan hunters and

gatherers. Another community highlight is the Aleutian World War II Interpretive Center and National Historic Area. The Aleutian World War II Visitor Center, housed in the restored aerology building, documents the major events of WWII in the Aleutians. Exhibits tell the story of the Aleutian Campaign and the Empire Express missions, internment of Aleutians and U.S. military in Japanese prison camps, the evacuation and resettlement of the Unangan, and the war's lasting impact on the region.

The National Historic Area encompasses the footprint of Fort Schwatka at Ulakta Head on Mount Ballyhoo. The fort is one of four coastal defense posts built to protect the harbor. What remains are some of the most intact gun mounts and lookouts in the country, and the remnants of a once vibrant post with over 100 buildings.



Unalaska



Crab pots at Unalaska



# 3.

## PLANNING PROCESS

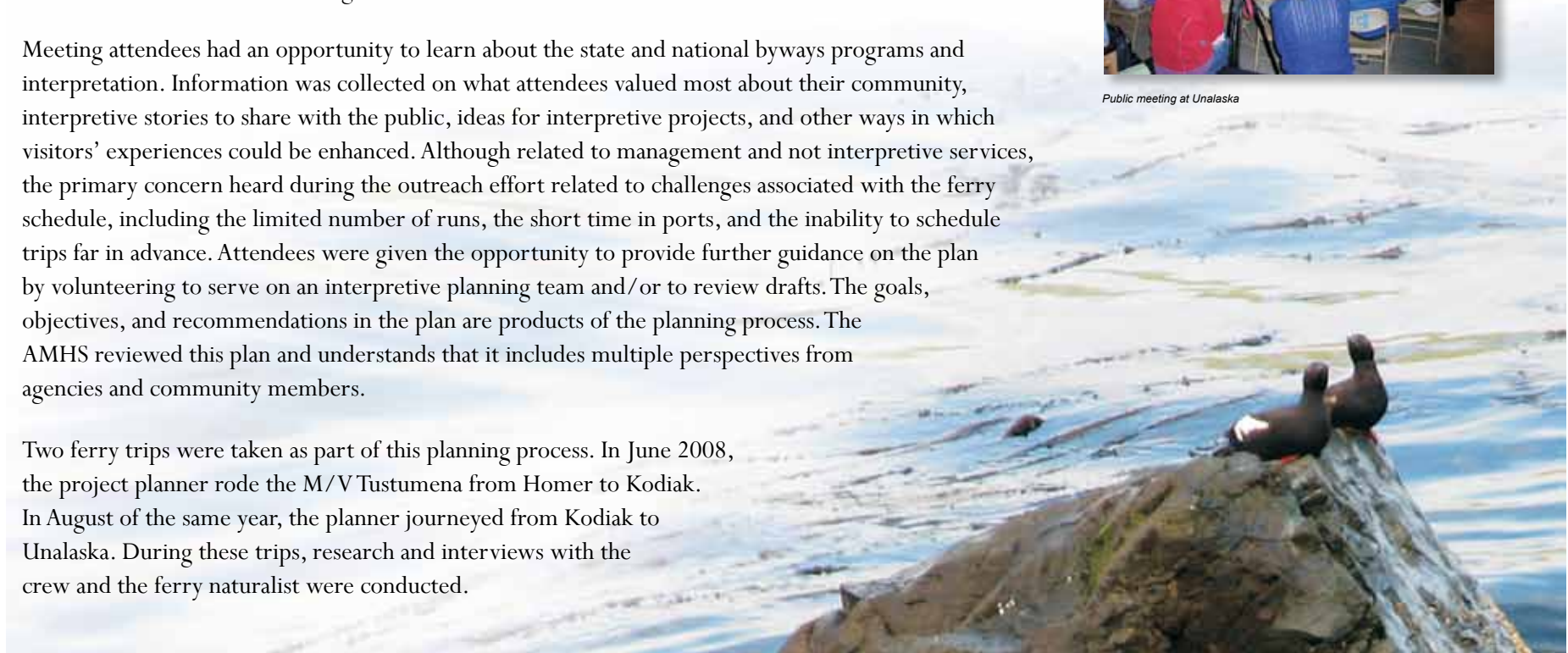
The public process began with informing local governments in Homer, Kodiak, and the Aleutians East Borough of the project inception. Along with the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC), these organizations helped coordinate public scoping meetings in Homer, Kodiak, Sand Point, Cold Bay, and Unalaska. The scoping meetings were widely advertised in local newspapers, community online forums, and by radio. Meeting announcements were posted in local post offices, airports, and on community bulletin boards. Fourteen stakeholders attended the meeting in Unalaska, six in Cold Bay, twelve in Sand Point, fourteen in Kodiak, and eight in Homer.

Meeting attendees had an opportunity to learn about the state and national byways programs and interpretation. Information was collected on what attendees valued most about their community, interpretive stories to share with the public, ideas for interpretive projects, and other ways in which visitors' experiences could be enhanced. Although related to management and not interpretive services, the primary concern heard during the outreach effort related to challenges associated with the ferry schedule, including the limited number of runs, the short time in ports, and the inability to schedule trips far in advance. Attendees were given the opportunity to provide further guidance on the plan by volunteering to serve on an interpretive planning team and/or to review drafts. The goals, objectives, and recommendations in the plan are products of the planning process. The AMHS reviewed this plan and understands that it includes multiple perspectives from agencies and community members.

Two ferry trips were taken as part of this planning process. In June 2008, the project planner rode the M/V Tustumena from Homer to Kodiak. In August of the same year, the planner journeyed from Kodiak to Unalaska. During these trips, research and interviews with the crew and the ferry naturalist were conducted.



*Public meeting at Unalaska*



*Black Guillemots*

# 4.

## MISSION STATEMENTS

### Master Interpretive Plan for the Alaska Marine Highway, Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment

The mission of the *Master Interpretive Plan for the Alaska Marine Highway, Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment* is to establish a long-range vision for enhancing visitor experience on the route by providing recommendations on educational and informational opportunities.

### Alaska Marine Highway System

The mission of the Alaska Marine Highway System is to provide safe, reliable, and efficient transportation of people, goods, and vehicles among Alaskan communities, Canada, and the Lower 48, while providing opportunities to develop and maintain a reasonable standard of living and high quality of life, including social, education, and health needs.

### National Wildlife Refuge System

The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System is to administer a network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.



*Bald eagles at Sand Point*

### Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge

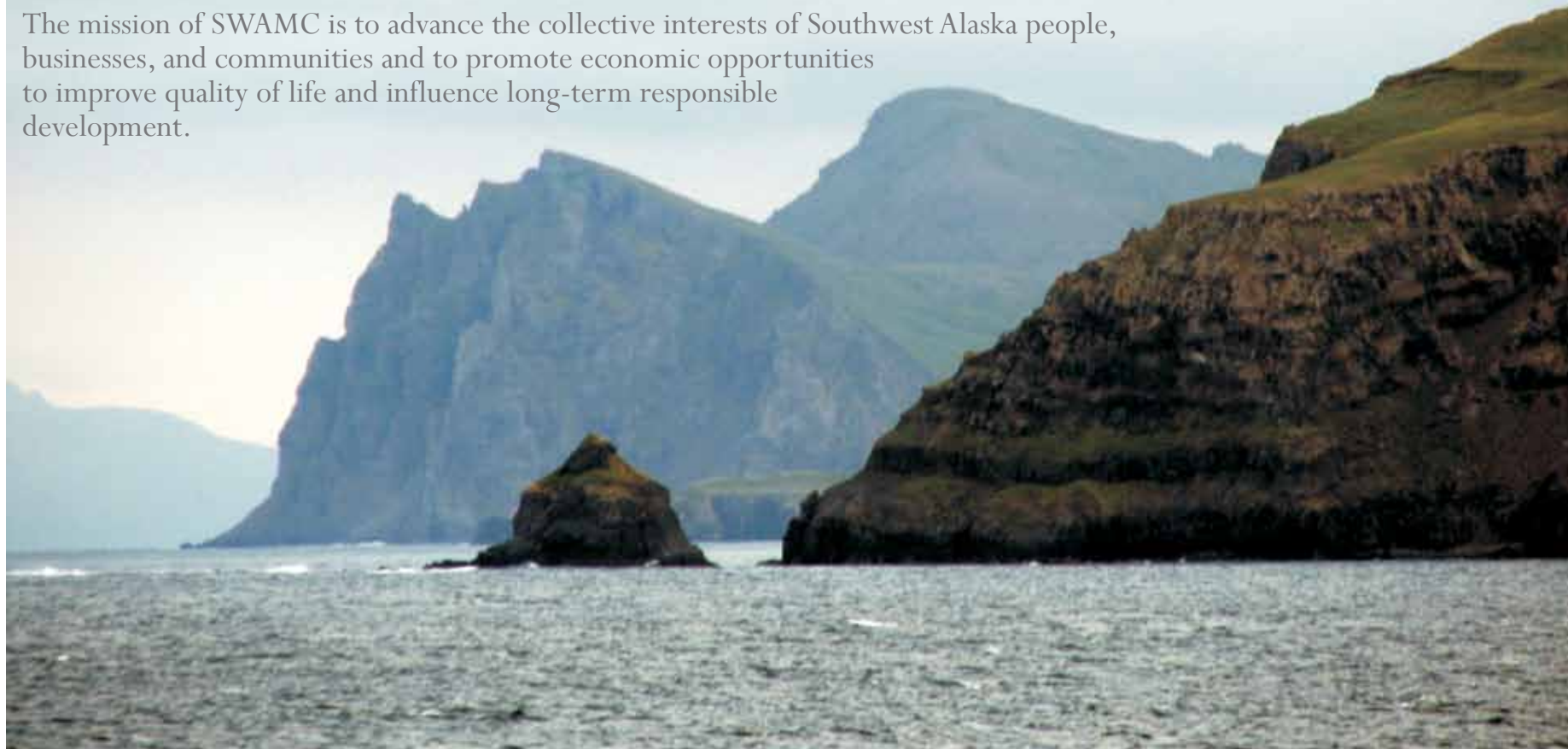
The mission of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge is to conserve marine mammals, seabirds, and other migratory birds, and the marine resources on which they rely.

### National Park Service

The mission of the National Park Service is to preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

### Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)

The mission of SWAMC is to advance the collective interests of Southwest Alaska people, businesses, and communities and to promote economic opportunities to improve quality of life and influence long-term responsible development.



# 5.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Interpretive goals for this segment of the Alaska Marine Highway will keep managers focused on the overall vision while supporting the mission of the Alaska Marine Highway System. Measurable objectives indicate how interpretation will be used as a management tool by providing specific time frames and other parameters.

### **1. Provide year-round interpretive opportunities onboard the M/V Tustumena, in port communities, and online that enhance visitor understanding and appreciation of the resources of the ferry route.**

- Within five years, the majority of ferry visitors will confirm they received adequate interpretive information to have an educational and enjoyable travel experience.
- After viewing interpretive media, the majority of visitors will be able to state the main interpretive theme of the route.

### **2. Provide way-finding information that allows travelers to take full advantage of the opportunities available in port communities and public lands along the way.**

- Within five years, the majority of ferry visitors will confirm they received adequate way-finding information to take advantage of the route's recreational opportunities.

### **3. Foster support and stewardship of the route's resources through partnerships.**

- Within five years, at least five separate partners will be assisting in interpretive programs onboard and in port communities.



"Tusty" at False Pass



Aboard the Tustumena

# 6.

## RESOURCES

### Introduction

Interpretation seeks to link themes and messages with real objects and sites. Artifacts and places can be powerful connections to the past. For example, an abandoned World War II bunker is a compelling symbol of the violence of the Aleutian Campaign. More than just concrete and brass, it represents the power struggle between two countries and is a memorial to the men who lived and died for this cause.

This chapter presents an overview of the region's significant resources. The following resource inventories are intended to help organize the stories, physical artifacts, buildings, and landscapes as examples of important themes and messages.

### Scenic Resources

***Beauty and the Sea.*** The Kodiak and the Aleutians route of the Alaska Marine Highway provides an unparalleled opportunity to see the dynamic coastline of Alaska. This region encompasses some of Alaska's most remote,

*“Interpretation is an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.”*

- Freeman Tilden



Popov volcano on Popov Island

inaccessible, and rugged country. Volcanoes, earthquakes, wind, and water continue to carve the landscape. The ever-changing geology reveals itself in craggy cliffs, sea stacks, pinnacles, and snow-topped volcanoes, which rise 2,000 to 5,000 feet above the treeless landscape. Such magnificent views represent the region at its scenic best.

The Aleutian Islands are actually the tops of large, submerged mountains. The coastline varies from sheer rock to beach and calm bays with many offshore pinnacle rocks. Most of the islands, particularly the larger ones, are rugged and mountainous—the shorelines are irregular and deeply indented, with towering cliffs rising abruptly from the sea. In contrast to the prevailing jagged coastlines and high relief of the larger islands, some of the smaller ones have a more subdued outline, with low and relatively flat surfaces.

### Natural Resources

**Ice, Water, and Fire.** This young region is shaped by ice, water, and fire. Much of the Alaska Peninsula was covered with glaciers during the last ice age, while the larger islands of the chain were covered with individual ice caps. The smaller islands were completely covered, with only the higher ridges and mountaintops standing above the ice. Some of the most significant natural resources in the region today are the deepwater bays and natural harbors that have been homeport to boats for centuries.

From a seismic and volcanic perspective, this is one of the most turbulent regions in the world. The subduction of the Pacific Plate under the North American Plate is part of the “Pacific Ring of Fire,” a volcanic band that stretches around the Pacific Ocean and includes the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands. More than 70 volcanoes have been identified in the region. Many of them are active, and steam, lava, cinders, and ash regularly burst through the earth’s surface during eruptions.

**Birder’s Paradise.** The region provides important nesting, breeding, and rearing habitat for seabirds and terrestrial birds, some who migrate thousands of miles to nest. Large low pressure systems that build along the Aleutians and the Bering Sea create ideal tail wind conditions for birds migrating around the Pacific Ocean. Birds from Asia, the South Pacific, and the Americas funnel through the region on their way to and from nesting grounds in the Arctic. Forty million birds are seasonal residents—the islands and coastal lands along the route are magnets for seabirds, species whose only other home is the ocean.



Crested Auklet  
USFWS, D. Dewhurst



Red-faced Cormorant  
USFWS, A. Sowlis



Fork-tailed Storm Petrel  
USFWS, C. Schlawe

While some seabirds migrate along Asian routes and need to rest and eat, others evolved on these remote islands and breed nowhere else. Birds that only nest in this zone include whiskered, crested, and least auklets, red-legged kittiwakes, Aleutian terns, and red-faced cormorants. Some birds, including fork-tailed storm-petrels and horned and tufted puffins, breed in other areas of the North Pacific in relatively low numbers, but the overwhelming majority breed in Alaska and along the route.

**Other Marine and Terrestrial Wildlife.** The region's abundance and diversity of wildlife result in one of the richest ecosystems in the world.<sup>1</sup> The waters of the Pacific Ocean filter through the Aleutian Islands, bringing with them nutrients that feed the plankton and support the Bering Sea's abundant marine life. Fish species, which feed on the plankton, are in profusion, especially salmon and halibut. Salmon originating from many corners of Alaska travel to the region to feed and prepare for their migration back to fresh water streams. Fish communities support numerous terrestrial species.<sup>2</sup> On the Alaska Peninsula and Kodiak Island, brown bears grow to enormous proportions on a high-protein diet of salmon. Other terrestrial mammals that make their home in the region include caribou, wolf, coyote, wolverine, red fox, weasel, and mink. Marine mammal species, which in the past provided the Aleuts with food, clothing, light, heat, and other materials necessary for survival, include sea lion, sea otter, seal, whale, dolphin, orca, and porpoise.

**Vast Protected Area.** Wild and remote, this region is considered one of the world's last great wilderness frontiers. The route provides travelers with excellent opportunities to experience unique local and regional ecosystems set within vast expanses of federal and state protected lands. From port communities, visitors can journey to these areas to experience the rain, mist, fog, wind, waves, tides, sweeping terrain, beaches, and wildlife that comprise maritime life.

The Aleutian Islands are an International Biosphere Reserve. These preserves form a worldwide network where the protection of biological and cultural diversity is balanced with sustainable development. Additional national designations along the route include the following:

- Aniakchak National Monument
- Katmai National Park and Preserve
- Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, T. 2003. The Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands—Region of Wonders. Fairbanks, AK: Alaska Sea Grant College Program, University of Alaska.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

- 1. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.*
- 2. Information, as such, is not Interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based on information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.*
- 3. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any art is to some degree teachable.*

- Becharof National Wildlife Refuge
- Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Izembek National Wildlife Refuge

Many natural resources remain unique to particular islands or sites and contribute significantly to their character and development. Eleven state-managed recreation and critical habitat areas are dedicated to protecting and conserving these special places:

- Fort Abercrombie State Historic Park
- Afognak Island State Park
- Buskin River State Recreation Site
- Pasagshak River State Recreation Site
- Shuyak Island State Park
- Woody Island State Recreation Site
- Izembek State Game Refuge
- Tugidak Island State Critical Habitat Area
- Kachemak Bay State Critical Habitat Area
- Fox River Flats State Critical Habitat Area
- Homer Airport State Critical Habitat Area

***Treeless Landscape.*** Most of the Aleutian Islands are destitute of trees, with the exception

of some stunted willows and non-native conifers. To the unaccustomed eye, the treeless landscape of this region is unnatural. Trees were considered a critical source of fuel, building material, and protection only to the non-Native people who visited and migrated to the region. To the Native Alaskan, trees had no context. On some of the islands, there are a few non-native coniferous trees growing, remnants of the Russian period—efforts to plant entire forests failed. Although tall trees grow in many cold climates, these Aleutian conifers—some of them estimated to be two hundred years old—rarely reach a height of even ten feet, and many of them are less than five feet tall. This is because the islands experience such strong winds that taller trees are vulnerable to snapping. Instead of trees, sponge-like Arctic tundra covers most of the hilly terrain. In the valleys and lowlands, a luxuriant growth of grasses, wild berries, and herbaceous plants thrive in the long days of the summer.

#### Historic Resources

***First Peoples.*** This land supported a rich culture shared by at least two distinct but related prehistoric groups who came to be known as the Aleut and Alutiiq peoples. Most anthropologists believe that early inhabitants came from Beringia years ago across the land bridge that is now covered by the Bering Sea. Others think the region was a crossroads

*4. The chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.*

*5. Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole person rather than any phase.*

*6. Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program.*

- Freeman Tilden's six fundamental principles that have guided and sustained the art of interpretation



where people came from the east, west, and north. The most supported evidence indicates Native peoples of the region are cousins of the Eskimos.<sup>3</sup> Whomever their antecedents, the Aleuts and Alutiiqs prospered. They developed from a group of small communities with few possessions to a society founded on complex traditions of burial rights, marine hunting technology, and artisan carving. The Aleut and Alutiiq were maritime peoples—the sea was their living.

**The Fur Rush.** Marine wildlife—not petroleum or gold—lured newcomers to Alaska. Eager to explore the lands to the east and sustain a lucrative fur and tea trade with China, Russians ventured into the Pacific in search of a western land bridge to North America. In the late 1700s, a Russian explorer discovered a group of islands in the Bering Sea, the Pribilof Islands, with an immense population of fur seals. Russian traders enslaved Aleuts and relocated them from their homes in the Aleutians to the distant Pribilofs to hunt fur seals. Russian hunters and traders also exploited the abundant and richly furred sea otter. The fur rush would last 170 years and decimate populations of Native peoples and animals.

**Russian Influence.** Russian explorers charted the territory in a series of government-sponsored expeditions and established communities based on fur trading and expansion of the Russian Orthodox Church. The success of the Russian outposts depended largely on the acculturation and exploitation of the Aleut and Alutiiq. Russians depended on Natives for labor, housing, food, and women. By the early eighteenth century, the Russian American Company recognized the need to sanction the Aleut and Alutiiq peoples and took steps to integrate them into Russian culture. In doing so, they established a stronger local infrastructure, including schools and churches, many of which are still standing today. The Russians heavily influenced the Aleut and Alutiiq cultures. Modern Native peoples make Russian dishes using local subsistence food and use Russian words in their common vocabulary.<sup>4</sup>

**Christianity Converts.** The church followed close behind the traders in colonizing the region. All churches and chapels were constructed through the resources of the Russian American Company. The support of clergy—travel expenses, lodgings and salaries—was also provided by the company. Newly arrived priests were given special missionary instructions that took into consideration local conditions. For example:

“Thou shalt not proceed to administer holy baptism to Natives before they have been thoroughly

3 Morgan, M. 1981. *Islands of the Smokey Sea*. Fairbanks, AK: Alaskan Prospectors Publishing.

4 Morgan, M. 1981. *Islands of the Smokey Sea*. Fairbanks, AK: Alaskan Prospectors Publishing.



Aleut atlatl  
Ethnology, 1-1933-9427, Archives, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks



Herd of fur seals  
Charles S. Hamlin Papers, UAF-728-7, Archives, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks



Aleksandr Dimitrievich Pustynskii, later Bishop Innokentii  
Michael Z. Zinokoureff, Alaska State Library, ALS-P243-1-044



Alaska Purchase Centennial Collection, ca. 1764-1967  
Alaska State Library, ASL-P20-142

instructed.”

“In giving instruction and talking with Natives, generally be gentle, pleasant, simple, and in no way assume an overbearing, didactic manner, for by so doing thou canst seriously jeopardize the success of thy labors.”<sup>5</sup>

One of the most influential of all the Russian churchmen to preach in Alaska was Father Veniaminov, who eventually became the Bishop of Alaska. He opened schools, learned the Native dialects, and gained the trust of Natives by inoculating them during a small pox epidemic. Much of what is known of early Aleut and Alutiiq culture and language is based on Father Veniaminov’s observations. With the assistance of the Russian American Company, he set in motion the establishment of nine churches and 35 chapels in the region.<sup>6</sup> One of these places of worship was the Church of the Holy Ascension of Christ, built in Unalaska in 1895. Today, it is listed as a National Historic Landmark.

The Russian Orthodox Church did much to alleviate the ills of colonization. Churches became the most prominent village structure and the locus of community life. Aleuts and Alutiiqs served as lay readers. They formed choirs, practicing the Orthodox liturgy in their own tongue. The Church became a sanctuary, its icons representing a spiritual world that transcended the often harsh realities of life. The Russian Orthodox faith remains a dominant force in modern Aleut and Alutiiq culture.

**For Sale: Alaska.** After sea otters were depleted, the Russian government had little use for Alaska. The first offer to sell Alaska to the United States came in 1844, when Emperor Nicholas offered the entire Alaskan territory “for the mere case of transfer if President Polk would maintain the United States at 54 degrees 40 minutes, and thus shut England entirely from the frontage of the Pacific.” Nothing was done about it then. The real promoter of the sale of Alaska was the Grand-duke Constantine. In 1857 in a letter to the Russian Chancellor, Gorchakov, he urged the sale of Alaska to the United States for three reasons: first, the territory was of small value to Russia; second, Russia needed the money; and third, the United States needed the territory to round out its possessions on the Pacific. In 1867 the United States purchased Alaska from Russia for 7.2 million dollars. Efforts continued to settle the territory; new construction appeared in villages that changed the appearance of many Native and Russian settlements.<sup>7</sup>



Ivan Veniaminov, St. Innocent  
Alaska State Library Portrait File, Photographs, ASL\_P01\_1983



Profile of William H. Seward  
Alaska Purchase Centennial Collection, ca. 1764-1967, Photographs, Alaska State Library, ASL-P20-023

5 Cook, L.A. 1990. Historic Preservation Plan for Unalaska, Alaska. Anchorage, AK: National Park Service.

6 Steinbrecker, R. 1982. The Land...The Sea. Sand Point, AK: Sand Point School Press.

7 Ibid.

**The Gold Rush.** In the mid-1800s, gold was discovered in numerous locations, luring European-Americans to Alaska. The gold rush era was a busy time for the region. The islands, especially Unalaska, were a backwash from the gold rush. Prospectors often got stuck on the islands waiting for the sea ice to break so they could join the stampede to the gold fields around Nome. Sidewheelers, barges, converted whale ships, and salmon fishers crowded harbors. After the frenzy of the gold rush, the islands were generally forgotten, their economy depressed, its people overlooked. Fox farming, herring processing, cod fishing, and whaling stirred commerce a bit, but nothing like the gold fever of previous years.<sup>8</sup>

**Early Fisheries.** Although cod were plentiful in the mid-1800s, getting them to market was difficult. Picturesque three- and four-masted schooners sailed north from the West Coast of the Lower 48, their decks stacked with nested dories. A single man operated each dory, rowing, sailing, and cranking a hand-powered winch to retrieve setlines. It was brutal, dangerous work, but profitable. However, the fish were apt to spoil during the long journey from the Bering Sea to San Francisco, where they were cured. In the late 1800s, a shore station and saltery was established in the Shumagin Islands and from then on, ships sailed south with their holds full of dried salted cod instead of fish that could spoil. Many cod processing stations were established, bringing an influx of Scandinavian and European fishermen to the region. In addition to salted cod, the region began to produce salted salmon. One of the best salmon streams in the world at this time was the Karluk River on Kodiak Island. A saltery opened there in the late 1800s, and a cannery followed. During this time, the Karluk River produced about one-third of the salmon canned in Alaska.<sup>9</sup>

**Fox Fever.** Fox farming took off in many of the Aleutian Islands once it was apparent the otter population was seriously declining. “Farm” really overstates the situation; in many cases blue foxes were simply released on remote islands and left to fend for themselves. Many entrepreneurs hoped that fox farming would offset losses experienced by the dwindling otter population. Unfortunately, seabirds in the Aleutian Islands evolved in the absence of land mammals, leaving them completely vulnerable to predation by foxes. A Russian wrote, “Foxes have chased off the fowl which nowadays are afraid even to come ashore.”<sup>10</sup> By 1932, 53 islands in the Aleutians had been leased from the federal government for fox farming.

8 Alaska Geographic. 1991. Unalaska/Dutch Harbor. Vol. 18, Number 4. Anchorage, AK: The Alaska Geographic Society.

9 Johnson, T. 2003. The Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands—Region of Wonders. Fairbanks, AK: Alaska Sea Grant College Program, University of Alaska.

10 Aldrich Pears Association. 2001. Homer Marine Science Center Interpretive Communications Plan. Unpublished document.



**The Oil “Boom.”** Arctic whalers’ routes passed through the Aleutians and their fleets began calling at ports in the region. An oil “boom” erupted when a Yankee whaling ship discovered sperm and right whales in the seas just south of Homer. Soon almost 300 whaling ships operated off Kodiak, glowing from fires they used to render blubber into oil. Two years later, the first whaling ship entered the Bering Strait and found a bowhead whale. In 1907 a group of Norwegians started a whaling station on Akutan Island near Unalaska, turning whale meat into dog food and fertilizer. Over a period of decades, whalers decimated the bowhead, sperm, fin, humpback, and gray whale populations. Whalers turned to walrus for oil and ivory as whales became scarce.

**World War II Aleutian Campaign.** Military operations in the region began in 1939. The Aleutian campaign was dubbed the “Thousand Mile War” because the Aleutians stretch across approximately 1,000 miles. Military policy showed little sensitivity for historic Aleut sites as it reshaped the islands’ topography to build roads, airstrips, tunnels, artillery magazines, offices, and underground hospitals.<sup>11</sup> To construct major military installations engineers faced the barriers of volcanic rock, muskeg, hilly tundra, floods, violent winds, and unpredictable cloud cover. Military structures varied from elaborate interconnecting buildings to individual prefabricated units and Quonset huts. Small, rectangular wooden cabanas dotted hillsides and larger structures conformed to the rolling landscape. Semi-circular revetments carved into hillsides sheltered vehicles and structures from possible air attack.

On the morning of June 3, 1942, two waves of Japanese Zeros bombed Dutch Harbor. Three days later Japanese troops landed on Kiska and Attu Island, where they captured forty-five Native Aleuts and an American school teacher. A ten-man Navy weather crew was also captured on Kiska Island and all, including the Aleuts, were taken to Japan as POWs for the duration of the war. As a safety precaution, the United States Army expedited the evacuation of Aleut residents from villages on Atka, Akutan, Unalaska, Umnak, St. George, and the St. Paul Islands. They were interned for three years in evacuation camps in southeast Alaska. Military sites along the route that are listed as National Historic Landmarks include Cape Field at Fort Glenn, Chaluka Site on Umnak Island, Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base, and Fort Mears.

**Aleut Evacuation.** The repercussions of the evacuation and relocation devastated the Aleut. Much controversy still surrounds the events of the evacuation and the years of internment. Poor coordination and communication imposed unnecessary hardship on the evacuees. In many cases, the Ugangax had

<sup>11</sup> Cook, L.A. 1990. Historic Preservation Plan for Unalaska, Alaska. Anchorage, AK: National Park Service.



Whalers, 1920  
General Photograph File, Alaska Museum at Rasmuson Center,  
AMRC-b70-28-172



Cape Chignik, ca. 1950s  
Christine M. McClain Papers, UAA-hmc-0370



Downed Japanese Zero in the Aleutians, Akutan 1942  
Aleutian/Pribilof Project Collection, ca 1886-1960  
Alaska State Library, asl\_p233\_v110



Aleut (Unangan) relocation to Southeast Alaska  
Evelyn Butler and George Dale Photographs, 1934-1982, Alaska State  
Library, ASL-P306-1044

less than 24-hours notice before leaving on military ships. Their abandoned village houses were either torched or used to house Army troops. Deplorable conditions existed in the evacuation camps, causing mortality among the elderly and children. Some of the wooden buildings were so rotten people fell through the floor. A toilet on the beach just above the low tide mark served 200 people. Food was scarce. The return of the Aleuts was equally calamitous. Some homecomings were delayed, and when Natives finally arrived home, some found their houses partially destroyed by a combination of neglect, trespass, and rats. Some homecomings were never realized as villages like Makushin, Kashega, and Biorka on Unalaska Island were never occupied again. Many people were moved to the city of Unalaska instead of their native villages.

***Evolution of Vessel Travel.*** For thousands of years people traversed the region in iqax, one-man and two-man skin boats or kayaks, and Eskimo umiaks—large, open, skin boats. It has only been in the last few hundred years that the mode of marine transportation has changed. During the fur rush, Russians sailed from Kamchatka in small makeshift boats in pursuit of furs. Later Russian exploration brought larger sea-going ships peopled with explorers, merchants, and clergy.

Ocean shipping via the North Pacific Great Circle Route gained momentum after the United States purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867. Ocean shipping was Alaska's only link with the rest of the United States, and it remained so for many years thereafter. Alaskan waters are said to be one of the most challenging areas in the world for sailors, and Alaskan shippers faced many problems, including navigating in Alaska's uncharted and stormy waters, inadequate port facilities, and a lack of cargo to be shipped south from Alaska. Ice limited access to western and northern Alaska for months each year, making much of Alaska's economic activity seasonal.

World War II dramatically affected shipping to Alaska, requiring new vessels and new regulations. Worldwide Allied shipping requirements meant that the federal government took control of most ships registered in the United States for the war effort. By 1948, the pre-war Alaska shipping industry, which had included 42 vessels, had shrunk to seven vessels. At the same time, the Alaska Highway was in operation, and non-scheduled and scheduled airlines began service to Alaska. Increasingly costly ocean ship service faced a new competitor as airline passenger service to Alaska became routine. In 1952 airfare from Seattle to Seward was \$105 for a trip that took only a day. Ocean liner fare between the same points was \$115 for a trip that took about a week.

Not long after achieving statehood in 1959, Alaskans authorized a publicly owned and operated ferry



*Three men in an Alaska bydarka (iqax)  
Michael Z. Vinokourov Photograph Collection, ca. 1980s-1970s  
Alaska State Library, ASL-P243-2-132*



*Crew loading the Thetis  
Shattuck, Mrs. Allen (Agnes Swineford), A summer on the Thetis, 1988  
Alaska State Library, ASL-P227-093*



*The Alaska Marine Highway's ferry, the Malispina on her maiden voyage  
Ernest H. Gruening Papers, 1914-1974, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections,  
Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks*

system to serve Alaskan communities. The ferries, known as the Alaska Marine Highway System, began operating in 1963. By the early 1980s, service was extended on an occasional basis to Aleutian Island communities.

***National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks.*** The following sites are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), as National Historic Landmarks (NHL), or both and can be accessed from port communities along the route:

- Church of the Holy Ascension, Unalaska Island (NRHP, NHL)
- Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base and Fort Mears, U.S. Army, Unalaska (NRHP, NHL)
- Cape Field at Fort Glenn, Umnak Island (NRHP, NHL)
- Sitka Spruce Plantation, Amaknak Island, Unalaska (NRHP, NHL)
- Russian-American Magazine (Erskine House), Kodiak Island (NRHP, NHL)
- Kodiak Naval Operating Base/ Fort Greeley and Fort Abercrombie, Kodiak Island (NRHP, NHL)
- Three Saints Bay, Old Harbor, Kodiak Island (NRHP, NHL)
- Chaluka Site, Umnak Island (NHL)
- St. Alexander Nevsky Chapel, Akutan (NRHP)
- St. Nicholas Chapel, Sand Point (NRHP)
- Agricultural Experiment Station Barn, Kodiak (NRHP)
- American Cemetery, Kodiak (NRHP)
- Ascension of Our Lord Chapel, Kodiak (NRHP)
- Holy Resurrection Church, Kodiak (NRHP)

## Cultural Resources

***Aleut and Alutiiq Peoples.*** Coastal Native peoples had a complex understanding of the ocean's currents and tides, wind and sky, and changing seasons. Many of the abundant natural resources in this region have at one time had cultural significance. Men hunted seals, sea otters, whales, sea lions, walrus, and in some areas, caribou and bears. Fish, birds, and mollusks were also taken. Aleut and Alutiiq hunters wore distinctive bentwood visors with sea lion whiskers that provided protection from glare and were a visual symbol of the status of the hunter. The skins of seal, sea lion, sea otter, bear, birds, squirrels, and marmots were used for clothing. From spruce roots and grass, women wove baskets that are considered among the finest in the world, with up to 2,500 stitches per square inch. Women wove other goods from plant fibers and animal tissue, including cords, cables, and fish line.



*Aleut (Unangan) relocation to Southeast Alaska, 1942  
Evelyn Butler and George Dale Photographs 1934-1982, Alaska State Library, ASL-P306-1032*



*1942, a relocated Aleut, Mike Marchenius, receives a medical examination  
Evelyn Butler and George Dale Photographs 1934-1982, Alaska State Library, ASL-P306-1063*



*An Aleut basket made from baleen, with an ivory handle  
Ethel Ross Oliver Collection, UAF-1985-0012-163, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks*



*Crab legs at Unalaska plant*

Exchanges between islands were common and resources shared.

The Aleut and Alutiiq peoples maintained base villages, which might be occupied for most or all of the year, and seasonal subsistence camps. They located their villages near cliffs, bays, and reefs where they would have the greatest access to marine foods and materials for shelter and clothing. The traditional houses of both cultures were semi-subterranean, built from driftwood, whalebone, stone, and sod. Separate groups mingled for political, social, and economic purposes.<sup>12</sup>

The Native Alaskans of the region have both flourished and suffered under Western occupation. Health services have lengthened life spans and reduced infant mortality. The cash economy brought technologies that have made village life easier and more comfortable. People in this region are among the poorest people in the nation in terms of per capita income. Cash is scarce but the region is wealthy in subsistence resources. Modern Aleuts and Alutiiqs have retained much of their Native culture and still supplement their income with subsistence lifestyles based on the harvest of wild game, berries, fish, and other foods from the sea.<sup>13</sup>

**Frontier Fishing Culture.** The waters of the North Pacific and the Bering Sea support a billion-dollar fishing industry that produces three percent of the entire world's fish catch.<sup>14</sup> While sea otters drew early traders, in recent years the lure has been salmon, crab, and bottomfish. Fishermen and processors, no matter how remote, are all part of the immense global food industry. A salmon plucked yesterday from Bristol Bay may be featured tomorrow sliced, salted, and grilled as *aramaki* in an upscale Tokyo restaurant. The gangly king crab dumped on the deck of a pitching crab boat will eventually become the centerpiece of a family dinner in New York. What happens to fish in the region affects people in many countries, and what happens in many countries in turn affects the marine resources of the region.

The majority of jobs in the region depend on the fishing industry. At any given time, thousands of people are riding the Bering Sea's tempestuous waters aboard trawlers, crabbers, longliners, and floating processors. Thousands more are at the sea's edge in processing plants. And that doesn't count dozens of small seasonal processing operations handling salmon and herring from several thousand small gillnetters, seiners, and skiffs catching fish in bays and straits.

12 Cook, L.A. 1990. Historic Preservation Plan for Unalaska, Alaska. Anchorage, AK: National Park Service.

13 Alaska Geographic. 1991. Unalaska/Dutch Harbor. Vol. 18, Number 4. Anchorage, AK: The Alaska Geographic Society.

14 Johnson, T. 2003. The Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands—Region of Wonders. Fairbanks, AK: Alaska Sea Grant College Program, University of Alaska.



Fish processing at Unalaska



Forage fish research, Shumagin Islands, Steve Hillebrand, UFSWS



Agattu Island, Steller's Sea Lion bull  
Anne Morkill, USFWS

Some coastal villages boom dramatically in summer. During this time, the region becomes even more culturally rich—it is common to hear multiple languages spoken simultaneously in local grocery stores and watering holes. The unique frontier fishing culture is present in crab pots and fishing nets stored along main streets, eagles and seagulls flying overhead in the salty breeze, shoreside businesses competing to service fishing fleets, and the standard uniform worn by one and all: thick sweatshirts, heavy-duty raingear, and knee-high rubber boots.

***Day to Day Life.*** Things go crazy at the start of the fishing season, and the excitement in the air is as palpable as the smell of the sea. International fishing crews and extra processing workers flood airports, hotels, restaurants, and bars. Unfortunately, the fishing peak coincides with the year's worst storms, when the weather is wet and stormy, the winds horizontal and cutting, and the fog all-pervading. For days at a time planes cannot fly. People cannot leave and supplies cannot get in. It is common for any area of the region to be “weathered in” or “weathered out” for days at a time. This makes provisioning important. Locals often shop in bulk from big box stores in Anchorage. Life off the road system presents its own unique challenges, yet the challenge of overcoming these obstacles and relying on self-sufficiency is sometimes what draws people to the region.

The fast-paced, high-finance fishing industry has left islanders little time for themselves. They stay constantly busy, working multiple jobs, participating in city government, and tackling an unending array of projects to make their community a better place to live. In the last two decades, the marine frontier has experienced activity like nowhere else in Alaska. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested in the region's communities to expand docks, build processing plants, warehouses, clinics, and apartment buildings, and to make extensive improvements to schools and water and sewer systems.<sup>15</sup> These once pastoral villages are evolving into vibrant, international communities.

### Recreational Resources

***Wildlife Viewing.*** Ferry visitors can travel among the world's largest mammals, observing their behavior. Many different species of whales can be seen along the route on their annual migrations to the Arctic, breaching and lunging out of the water, clearing the ocean's surface with their massive bodies. Travelers are almost guaranteed to view Dall's and harbor porpoises, sea otters, and Steller's Sea Lions. Harbor seals and cormorants lounge atop the navigation buoys along the route. Binoculars can be used to see shore-based wildlife, such as: mountain goats, black and brown bears, and Sitka black-

15 Alaska Geographic. 1991. Unalaska/Dutch Harbor. Vol. 18, Number 4. Anchorage, AK: The Alaska Geographic Society.



tailed deer (mountain goat and black bear sightings are rare). People don't have to be birders to appreciate the incredible number and variety of bird life along the route. Sea birds, including pigeon guillemots, buffleheads, scoters, harlequin ducks, gulls, and goldeneyes, fly overhead and float on the rolling waves below.

**Avian Adventuring.** Birdwatchers around the world know the Aleutian Islands as a spectacular destination. Millions of migratory waterfowl and shorebirds find food and shelter in the coastal lagoons and freshwater wetlands of the region on their way to and from their subarctic and arctic breeding grounds. Spring and fall migrations regularly bring Asian strays into the western islands. During summer, more than ten million seabirds nest throughout the Aleutians and the ice free coastal waters shelter tremendous flocks of wintering waterfowl, who ride mountainous breaking waves in icy winds and darkness. The chance to see a unique species makes birding in the Aleutians fun and challenging for experienced birders.

**Angler's Paradise.** Barn door-sized halibut, feisty rainbow trout, steelhead, Dolly Varden, and all five salmon species call the region's waters home, making sport fishing some of the best found anywhere. Visiting anglers can choose from a menu of fishing experiences—charter boats, fish camps, and wilderness lodges help people create their ideal fishing vacation. Local skippers share their favorite fishing grounds and offer tips on how to fight with 50-pound “chickens” and 200+ pound “barn doors.”

**Watery Playground.** Fishing is just one option for adventure on the water. Several charter companies offer marine mammal viewing excursions or sightseeing packages. One of the best ways to explore the region is by boat and sea kayak, although long exposed passages and rough waters in some areas reduce opportunities for all but the most experienced boaters and kayakers. However, there are small coves and protected channels that offer intimate views of marine mammals, birds, and marine ecosystems. Scuba diving is another way to enjoy the region's waters. Shallow shipwrecks and cold-water and pinnacle dives are some of the local diving attractions.

**Hunting.** The Alaska Peninsula and Kodiak Island are world famous brown bear hunting destinations, and with just cause. Bears from the peninsula and neighboring Kodiak are the world's largest—they can weigh up to 1,500 pounds thanks to their rich diet of salmon. Not only are bears big, they are also numerous. There are approximately 3,500 brown bears on Kodiak Island and even more on the Alaska Peninsula. Waterfowl and sea duck hunting are also popular. Kodiak Island has



*Aiugunak Pinnacles Steller's Sea lions*  
Ed Bailey, USFWS



*Aleutian Tern*  
F. Deines, USFWS



*Buskin River angler*



*Kodiak Brown bear sow with salmon*  
G. Wilker, USFWS



Parakeet Auklet flight, Castle Rock, Shumagin Islands  
Steve Hillebrand, USFWS

been rated as the third duck hunting destination in the United States. Scoters, harlequin, goldeneye, and common eiders are frequent targets. Izembek Lagoon near Cold Bay is considered to have some of the best waterfowl hunting in North America.

***The Trail Less Traveled.*** Hikers will find a network of established and primitive trails in port communities; several peaks offer accessible and interesting climbs and summertime snow for skiing. The lack of trees and brush in some of the region create great walking opportunities, even if there are not established trails. A handful of established trails, some ancient routes used by Natives, and small roads outside of Unalaska provide options for hiking and mountain biking. Kodiak and Homer have a system of trails and Sand Point offers a 14-mile, multi-use trail system.

### Archaeological Resources

***Aleut Prehistory.*** Knowledge of Aleut prehistory extends back some 8,000 years. The oldest recorded site in the Aleutian Archipelago is on Umnak Island, which has been dated to approximately 6000 B.C. At that time, a community of ancient sea hunters and gatherers—probably ancestral to later Aleut peoples—lived on Umnak Island. For the last 4,000 to 5,000 years, archaeological sites have been abundant in the islands and were all clearly occupied by Aleuts. These sites occur at advantageous coastal locations, many of which Aleuts used for millennia. They are often deep, sometimes up to 30 feet or more—the remains of daily life slowly accumulated during thousands of years.



Fort Abercrombie, Kodiak Island



Archaeological dig outside the Baranof Museum, Kodiak  
Courtesy of Alutiiq Museum



Unalaska

# 7.

## VISITOR PROFILES

People travel this segment of the Alaska Marine Highway for many reasons. Passengers are diverse and vary greatly in their knowledge of Alaska, their awareness of public land, and their expectations for information, orientation, and interpretation. Passengers can be loosely categorized into the following groups: retired travelers, package tour groups, families, adventure travelers, foreign visitors, Alaska residents, educational groups, and seasonal workers.

### Visitor Demographics

The AMHS annually publishes a traffic volume report for the entire system. In 2007, it was reported that 23,843 passengers rode the Kodiak and the Aleutians segment, a slight increase from 2006 and a major increase from 2005 (see Fig. 2).

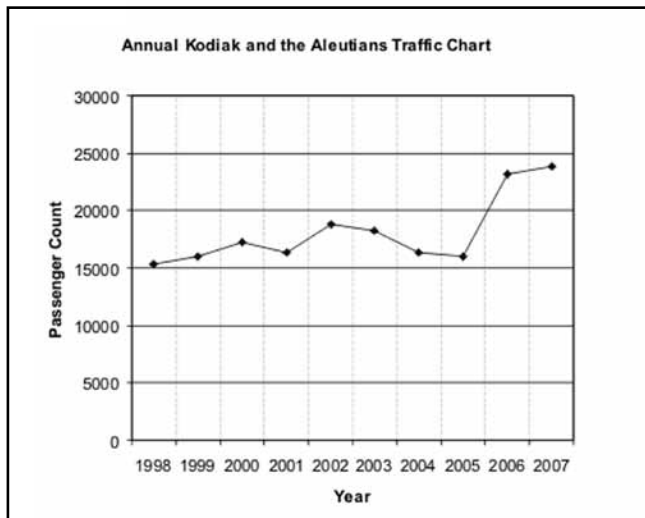
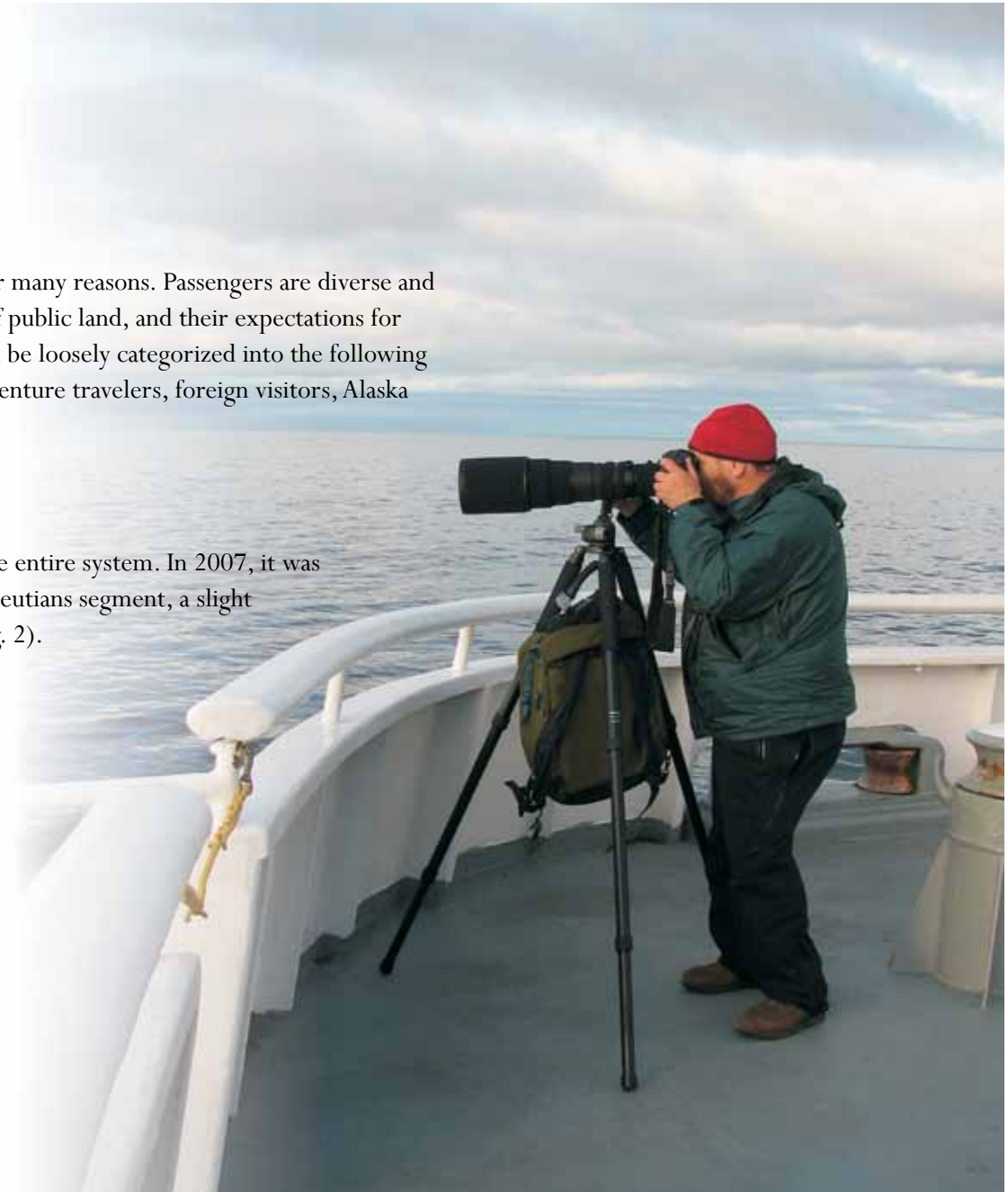


Figure 2. Annual Traffic Count



Photographer aboard the Tustumena

	Akutan	Chignik	Cold Bay	Dutch Harbor	False Pass	Homer	King Cove	Kodiak	Port Lions	Sand Point	TOTAL
Akutan	-	4	3	351	2	14	10	-	-	10	394
Chignik	8	-	-	3	-	146	2	106	-	-	265
Cold Bay	7	-	-	29	13	19	64	5	-	13	150
Dutch Harbor	231	8	33	-	5	234	11	96	-	25	643
False Pass	1	-	17	12	-	19	13	-	-	14	76
Homer	16	141	25	303	26	-	76	7,116	334	33	8,070
King Cove	5	1	70	12	10	54	-	10	-	178	340
Kodiak	-	88	4	102	-	6,818	5	-	1,191	15	8,223
Port Lions	-	-	-	1	-	303	-	1,155	-	-	1,459
Sand Point	42	2	17	24	6	34	229	19	-	-	373
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>7,641</b>	<b>410</b>	<b>8,507</b>	<b>1,525</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>19,993</b>

Table 1. Intercommunity Travel, 2007



Tustumena passengers

The majority of visitor traffic on the route happens between Homer and Kodiak (see Table 1). In 2007, 7,116 passengers traveled from Homer to Kodiak and 6,818 traveled from Kodiak to Homer.

In 2004, the AMHS conducted a study that assessed AMHS visitor profiles.<sup>1</sup> Although passengers of the Tustumena were not part of the onboard sample, passengers of the M/V Kennicott, which travels between Homer and Kodiak, were surveyed. Several survey questions were identical to survey questions asked in a 2001 study, allowing researchers to track survey responses over time. Since a visitor study based on the Kodiak and Aleutians Segment hasn't been conducted, results of this study are loosely generalized for the Alaska Marine Highway, Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment.

The majority of respondents were independent travelers. The number of independent travelers increased 10% between 2001 and 2003. Package and Inde-package markets in 2003 were half of the 2001 level (see Table 2). The average respondent was well educated, with over one-half having college degrees. The percentages of respondents who were college graduates increased almost ten percent from 2001 to 2003.

	2001	2003
<b>Trip Purpose</b>		
<i>Vacation/Pleasure</i>	87%	85%
<i>Friends and Family</i>	11	13
<i>Business</i>	3	2
<b>Traveler Type</b>		
<i>Independent</i>	82%	92%
<i>Package</i>	10	5
<i>Inde-Package</i>	8	4

Table 2. Trip Purpose and Travel Type 2001 / 2003

<sup>1</sup> ADOT&PF. 2004. Alaska Marine Highway Visitor Profiles. Anchorage, AK: McDowell Group.

	2001	2003
Average Party Size	2.2 people	2.3 people
Gender		
Male	60%	53%
Female	40	47
Age		
34 and under	17%	23%
35-44	9	8
45-64	42	42
Over 65	32	26
Education		
Less than high school	2%	2%
High school diploma	16	25
Associates degree	10	12
College Graduates	49%	58%
Bachelor's degree	25%	27%
Master's degree	19	22
Doctorate	5	9
Household Income		
Median Income	\$65k	\$68k

Table 3. Respondent Demographics 2001 / 2003



Lunchtime on the Tustumena

Median household income increased slightly between the years. The largest percentage of respondents fell between the ages of 45 and 64 years old, indicating that many respondents still may have been in the workforce (see Table 3).

In general respondents were very satisfied with their trip—key findings indicate that 96% were very satisfied or satisfied with the overall ferry experience in 2003. Consistent with the 2001 survey, the onboard crew and naturalists each received the highest percentage of very satisfied ratings (see Fig. 3).

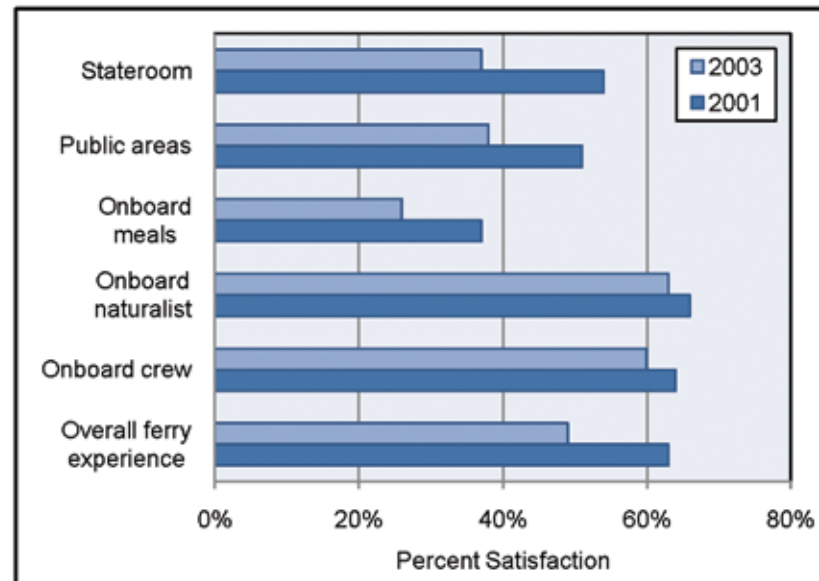


Figure 3. Satisfaction Ratings 2001 and 2003



Disembarking at Chignik

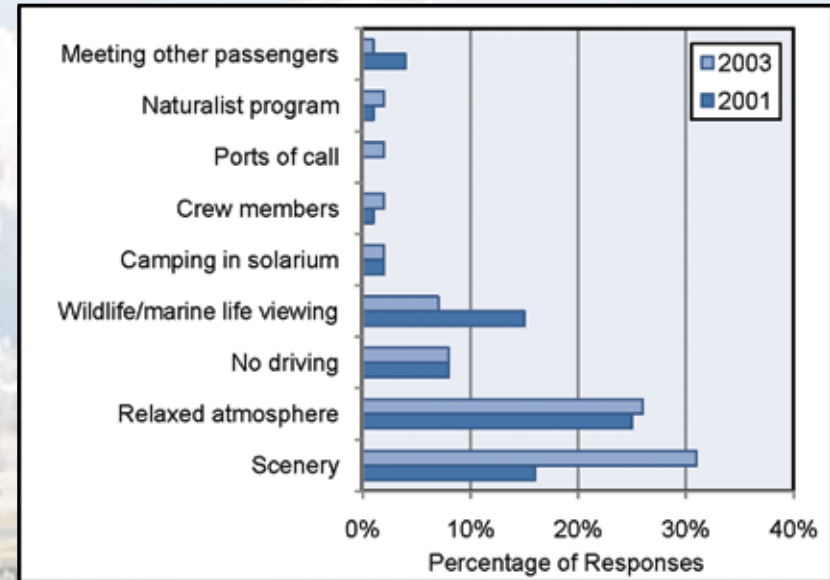


Figure 4. Most Enjoyable Experience 2001 and 2003

Respondents particularly enjoyed the “cruising” aspects of ferry travel, such as the scenery and the relaxed atmosphere (see Fig. 4). In 2003, twice as many respondents named scenery as their favorite part of the ferry experience as in 2001. Wildlife and marine life viewing was mentioned by only half as many respondents as in 2001.

Almost one-half of respondents could not be persuaded to spend more nights in port communities along ferry routes. One quarter of respondents identified changes related to the ferry schedule as a potential incentive to spend more overnights (see Fig. 5).

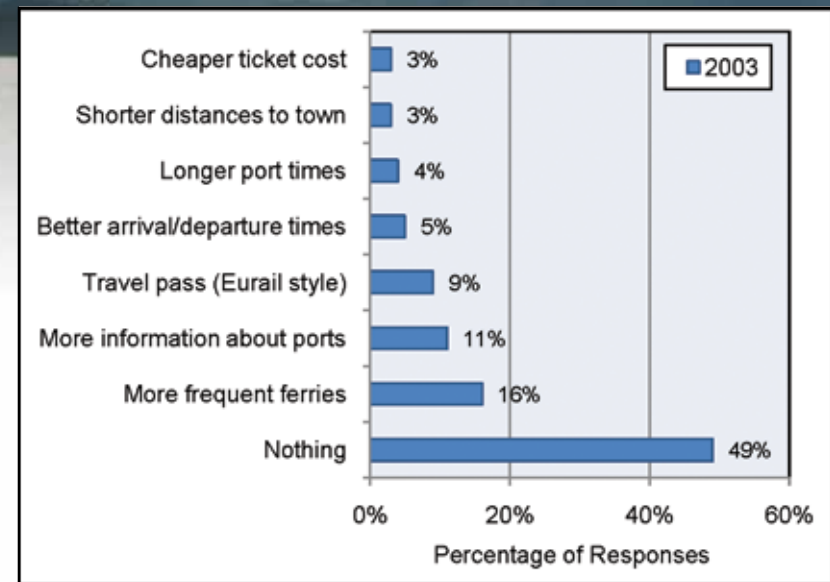


Figure 5. Factors that would persuade travelers to stay longer in port communities

# 8.

## INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Interpretation is most effective when media and other interpretive opportunities allow visitors to grasp the meanings expressed in themes and apply them to their own lives. Visitors may not parrot the themes we write, but if they are provoked, inspired, or can relate to something within themselves, we have been successful.

### Primary Theme:

*The Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment of the Alaska Marine Highway transports travelers through a dynamic maritime region that is a crossroads for culture, ecology, and commerce.*

### Sub-Themes:

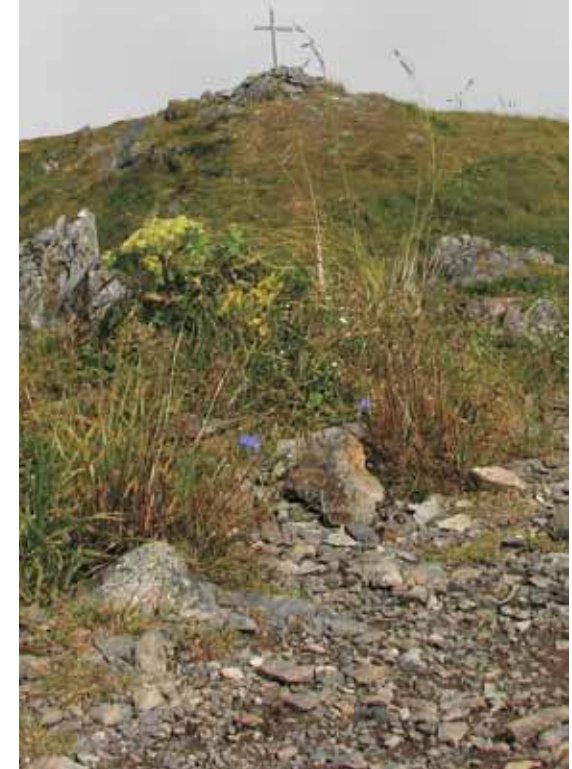
**Sub-Theme 1:** *Native people have lived in the region for millennia; over the last two hundred years non-Natives have become a major influence, producing dramatic effects.*

### Messages for Sub-Theme 1:

- This land supported a rich maritime culture shared by at least two distinct, but related, prehistoric cultures who came to be known as the Aleut and Alutiiq peoples.
- Russian explorers charted the islands in a series of government-sponsored expeditions and established communities based on fur trading and expansion of the Russian Orthodox Church.
- The United States purchased Alaska from Russia for 7.2 million dollars in 1867.
- World War II operations in the region began in 1939 when the United States Army/Navy Board mandated the development of Alaskan defenses.
- The region has developed a massive seafood industry with many shore-based processors and a number of floating processors turning out millions of pounds a year to markets worldwide.



Church of the Holy Ascension, Unalaska



**Sub-Theme 2:** *This region encompasses unique, highly productive habitats.*

Messages for Sub-Theme 2:

- This region is geologically unique, with terrain shaped by glaciers and volcanic activity.
- The region contains distinctive local and regional ecosystems set within vast expanses of federal and state protected lands.
- While the vast majority of the Aleutian Islands are destitute of native trees, the herbaceous terrain is highly productive.

**Sub-Theme 3:** *This region attracts and nourishes vast numbers of seabirds and other marine and terrestrial wildlife.*

Messages for Sub-Theme 3:

- With miles of remote seacoast and year-round ice-free waters, the region provides important nesting, breeding, and rearing habitat for over forty million seabirds.
- The nutrient-rich waters of the Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea support abundant marine fish and shellfish species that in turn support numerous terrestrial species.
- Marine mammal species are abundant and in the past provided the Aleuts with food, clothing, light, heat, and other materials necessary for survival.



**Sub-Theme 4:** *This region has been subject to many boom and bust economies that have dramatically shaped the land, wildlife, and inhabitants.*

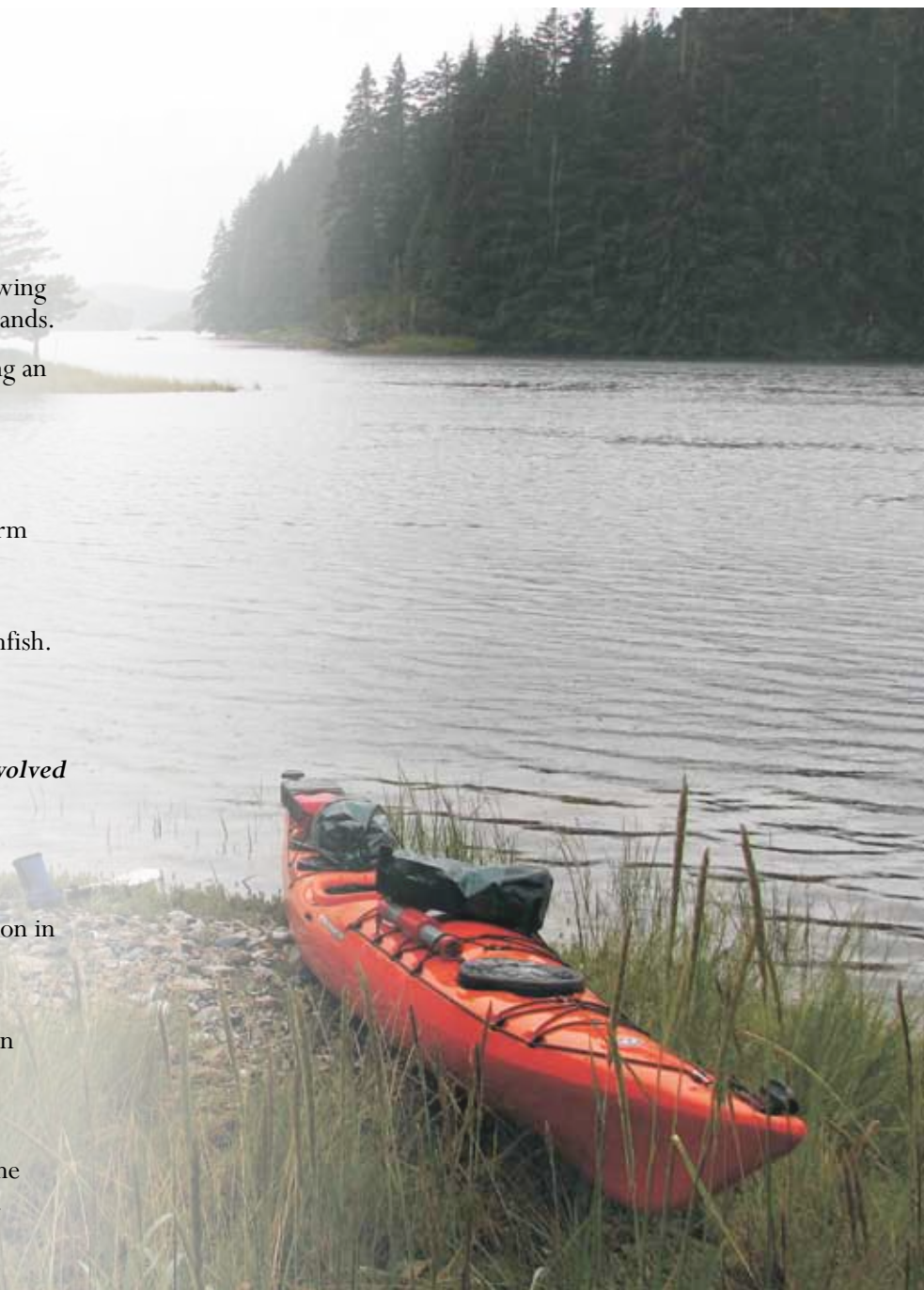
Messages for Sub-Theme 4:

- Fur-bearing marine wildlife lured newcomers to Alaska.
- In the mid-1800s, gold was discovered in numerous locations, drawing European-Americans into the Alaska Peninsula and the Aleutian Islands.
- In the late 1900s, cod processing stations were established, bringing an influx of Scandinavian and European fishermen to the region.
- Fox farming took off in many of the Aleutian Islands once it was apparent the otter population was seriously declining.
- An oil “boom” erupted when a Yankee whaling ship discovered sperm and right whales in the seas just south of Homer.
- In recent years, the region has developed an enormous seafood industry, lured by massive populations of salmon, crab, and bottomfish.
- The unique maritime culture is present in day-to-day life.

**Sub-Theme 5:** *Transportation along this historic travel route has evolved through trade, war, and tourism.*

Messages for Sub-Theme 5:

- For thousands of years Aleut and Alutiiq peoples traversed the region in skin boats.
- Ocean shipping via the North Pacific Great Circle Route gained momentum after the United States purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867.
- World War II dramatically impacted shipping to Alaska.
- The Alaska Marine Highway System began operating in 1963; by the early 1980s, service was extended to Aleutian Island communities.



**Sub-Theme 6: *The Alaska Marine Highway offers unique opportunities for residents and visitors to experience the diverse landscapes, habitats, weather, and culture of the region.***

Messages for Sub-Theme 6:

- Ferry visitors will experience dynamic weather patterns as they travel through the region commonly referred to as “the birthplace of the winds.”
- Ferry visitors can experience maritime life on public lands.
- Ferry visitors can travel among and observe the world’s largest marine mammals.
- The region is world-renown for birdwatching.
- Sportfishing in the region is some of the best in Alaska.
- The region’s extensive natural landscape supplies great water recreational opportunities.
- Many trails provide access to the region.
- Hunting is a popular activity in the region.
- Visitor centers and museums in port communities connect visitors to the culture and history of the region.



*Russian Orthodox Cemetery, Unalaska*



*Wildflowers*



*NPS Bunker Park, Unalaska*



*Kodiak Military Museum, Fort Abercrombie, Kodiak Island*

# 9.

## EXISTING INTERPRETIVE EXPERIENCE

This chapter highlights visitor services and interpretive conditions as they existed at the onset of the interpretive planning process. The Alaska Marine Highway, Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment has unrealized potential as a tourist destination. Although there are interesting attractions in port communities, it is a challenge to find many of the sites of interest along the way. Few connections exist to link attractions to the story of this historic travel route and its meanings to a contemporary traveler. Yet there is much to reward the determined and imaginative tourist. The quirky, modern communities of Homer and Kodiak contrast dramatically with some of the more remote port communities. Many rich cultural and natural attractions beckon the traveler to experience the route's heritage.

### The M/V Tustumena

Two interpretive concerns regarding the ferry were identified in the Alaska's Marine Highway, Kodiak and Aleutians Segment Corridor Plan:

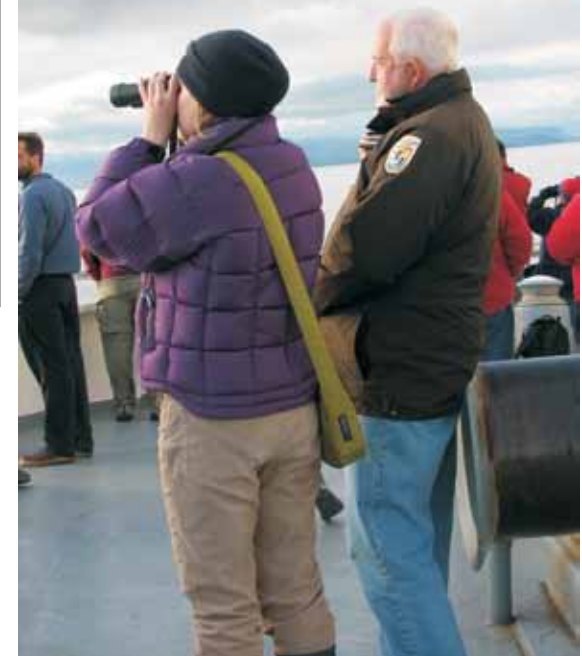
- The ferry naturalist has too little space to perform his/her duties and this limits interpretive opportunities
- The theater has a capacity of just over 20 people, but it is always overflowing during interpretive programs and films

**Information and Orientation.** Information and orientation services aboard the Tusty are hit and miss. The information onboard has been accumulating over a long period.

**Main Foyer:** There are two brochure racks in the main foyer. Brochures and tourist guides on Alaska, public lands, and regional businesses are placed in the racks by the ferry naturalist. Before every sailing, the ferry naturalist tapes up laminated paper signs, which announce the presence of the ferry naturalist program, program times, and information and images of whales and other marine wildlife.



Main foyer rack display



Naturalist aboard the Tustumena ferry

A map of Alaska, AMHS policies and regulations, and charts of the route are permanently hung on walls in the main foyer.

**Forward Lounge:** There is a small lending library in the forward lounge that the ferry naturalist displays during each voyage. There is no tracking system in place—fifteen to twenty books are lost each year. There is a theater in the forward lounge where educational and informational films are shown periodically. Films are also broadcasted to the area's two televisions. A NOAA electronic display that was out of service in 2008 sits in the front of the forward lounge.

**Hallways between the Main Foyer and the Forward Lounge:** In the hallways between the main foyer and the forward lounge hang a scenic byway designation certificate, photos of the crew, and an outdated schematic of the entire ship.

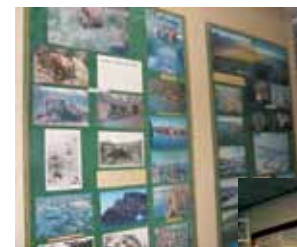
**Interpretation.** Interpretive space is at a premium on the Tusty and demand exceeds available space.

**Naturalist Program:** The United States Fish and Wildlife Service offers an excellent onboard naturalist program. Interpretive specialists sail with the ship and provide interpretive programs and films throughout the sailing. This unique program is very popular.

**Theater:** The theater in the forward lounge is the main interpretive space onboard. With a capacity of just over 20 people, the theater is always overflowing during interpretive programs and films, with people sitting on the floor and standing in the hallway blocking traffic. The theater does not have good infrastructure and is without the technology to adequately support programs. For example, before each trip, the ferry naturalist tapes the projector screen to the wall. Unfortunately, the heavy screen sometimes crashes to the floor during rough seas. The naturalist also tapes projector wires to the ceiling and floor to get them out of the way of visitors.

**Interpretive Tabletop Displays:** There are four tabletop interpretive displays in the lounge area. The booths are popular camping areas during the voyage; typically, those passengers camping in them are the only ones to view the displays. Topics include marine mammals, birds, terrestrial mammals, and ocean animals.

**Interpretive Wall Panels:** There are four displays in the two hallways between the forward lounge and the main foyer. Two displays describe the history of Kodiak and another highlights Unalaska. The other



*Tusty hallway interpretive panels*



*Main foyer chart*



*Lending library*



*Theater*



*Tabletop interpretation*

Artwork aboard the "Tusty"



Kodiak interpretive panel



Taped interpretation

display is a panel on Alaskan seabirds. People looking at these displays often block the hallway. A newer interpretive panel on the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge in the forward lounge interprets Kodiak's wildlife, birds, plants, and habitats.

Photos: Four framed photos hang on ship walls; none are interpreted or labeled. There is a photo of a volcano and one of the port communities in a hallway between the main foyer and the forward lounge and two photos of unlabeled port communities in the main foyer.

Cultural Materials: There are two Aleut cultural displays on the walls. A cased sculpture of a face decorated with birds hangs in one of the hallways connecting the main foyer with the forward lounge; the other mask is placed on a wall in the forward lounge. Neither piece is interpreted.



Castle Cape as seen from the Tustumena

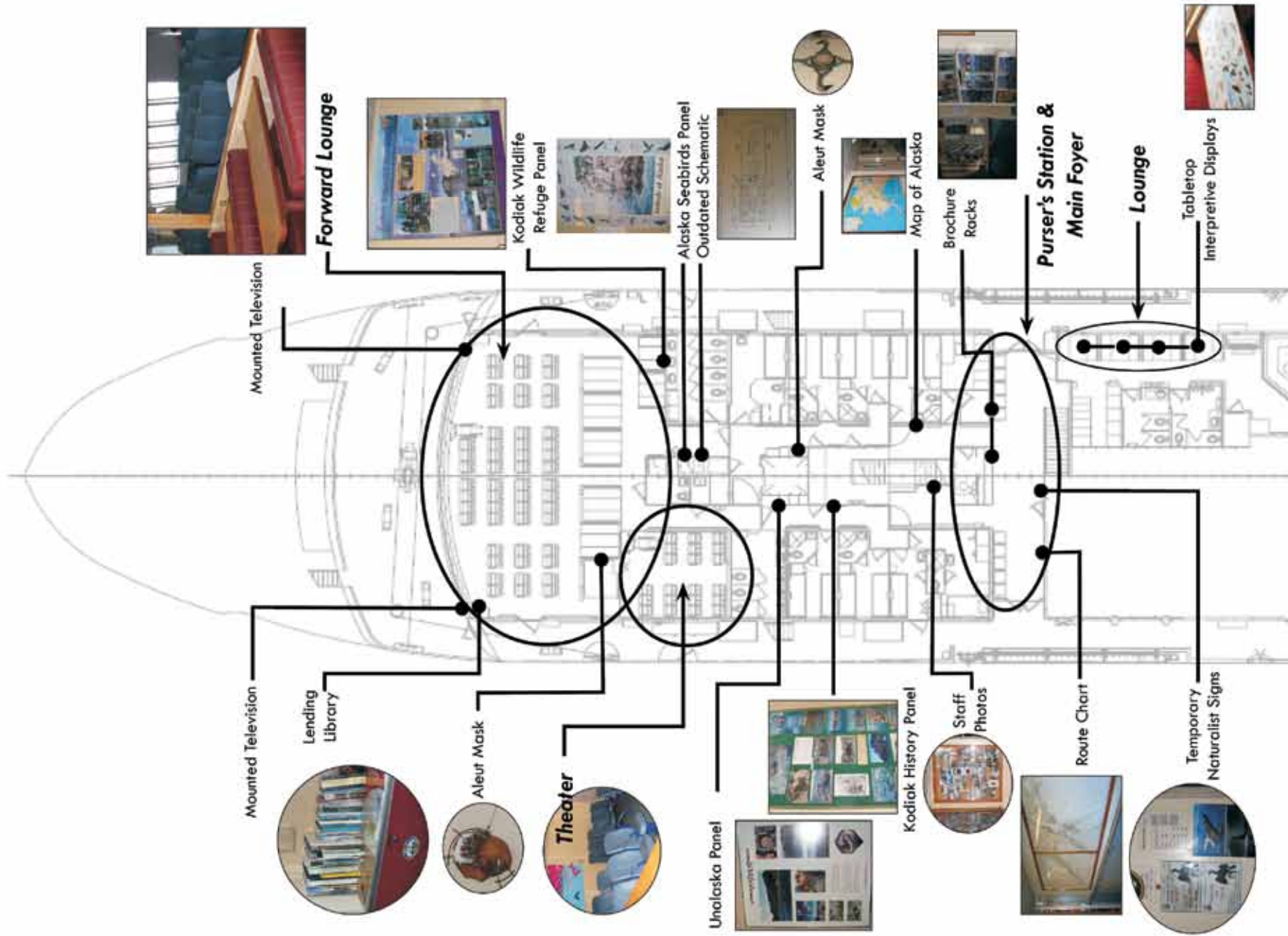


Figure 6. Existing Interpretation and Information Aboard the Tustumena

## Homer

**Information and Orientation.** The ferry terminal is located at the end of the Sterling Highway. It has a small visitor center, waiting area, and restrooms. Flyers of other port community services, M/V Tustumena amenities, traveler advisories, a map of Alaska, and a walking map of Homer are tacked to a bulletin board. The terminal is located five miles from town on the Homer Spit. Many visitor attractions are located within one mile of the terminal.

**Interpretive Sites.** Local museums, interpretive centers, and historic sites bring the natural history and culture of the Kachemak Bay region alive.

**Historic Town Center:** A walking tour highlights some of the earliest buildings in the area. Included in the tour are the following historic buildings: the Harrington Cabin (1935), the Homer Cash Store (1936), Alaska Wild Berry Products (1946), the old Homer Post Office (1927), the Heady Hotel (1946), the Kranich House (1944), the Hansen Log Home (1920), the Inlet Trading Post (1937), and the Olsen Lane Cabin (early 1900s). Walking tour pamphlets are available at the Pratt Museum or the Homer Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center.

**Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies:** The Center offers guided programs on Kachemak Bay's diverse and productive environment. A popular program is a guided natural history tour to a field station in Peterson Bay. Guides interpret Gull Island, intertidal life, and coastal forest ecology. Naturalists also provide guided walks through the Center's 140-acre Carl E. Wynn Nature Center. The Center offers an education program in summer called "Creatures of the Dock," which teaches about marine life living under harbor docks.

**Pratt Museum:** The Pratt Museum explores the art, science, history, and culture of the Kachemak Bay region. It features displays on contemporary Alaskan art, natural history, Native cultures, homesteading, fishing, and marine ecology. Live remote video shows brown bears at Katmai National Park and seabirds at the rookery in Kachemak Bay. Exhibits include the historic Harrington homestead cabin, a botanical garden, and a nature trail. The Pratt Museum also hosts guided boat harbor tours.

**Islands and Ocean Visitor Center:** A self-guided tour of the facility simulates a journey through the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge that is an interactive, interpretive experience. Daily films are shown, including an award-winning movie on the Refuge's research vessel, "Journey of the Tiglax." The center hosts events, guided bird watching, and marine discovery labs year-round.



Homer Spit  
Courtesy of Jeff Johnson



Bird watching  
USFWS, K. Laubenstien



Pratt Museum  
Courtesy of the © Pratt Museum



Homer Seafarers Memorial

Historic Salty Dawg: A popular watering hole, this historic landmark is actually composed of several buildings that were spliced together.

The Seafarer’s Memorial: Erected on the Homer Spit by a group of dedicated fishermen, the Seafarer’s Memorial stands as a tribute to those who died at sea. The 350-pound bell tolls for lost sea fishermen.

Ninilchik: A Russian-created retirement settlement, the historic Transfiguration of Our Lord Russian Orthodox Church is located here.

Seldovia: In the late 1800s, Seldovia was a thriving town, with many stores and Russian Orthodox and Methodist churches. Seldovia is now a quaint village, charming visitors with its historic boardwalks and picturesque buildings fronting the harbor. There is a visitor information center and museum in Seldovia.

Russian Villages: Russian is the first language of many residents of these Old Believer Russian communities, many of who still wear traditional dress.

## Port Lions

**Information and Orientation.** The ferry may stop briefly in Port Lions, which is just north of Kodiak. A small terminal is used for both ticketing and waiting. There is no information or orientation available on the dock.

**Interpretive Sites.** Interpretive sites and services in Port Lions are limited.

## Kodiak

**Information and Orientation.** The AMHS has a contract for priority berthing of the M/V Tustumena at the City of Kodiak’s Pier 1 berth. Because of increased demand by the cruise ship industry, the city is unable to give the AMHS priority use of Pier 2 for M/V Kennicott dockings. This and other reasons have resulted in a discussion with the community to relocate and consolidate both vessel calls at a new location that is yet to be determined. The existing terminal includes ticket sales, restrooms, and a very small waiting area with only four seats. The current facility is conveniently adjacent to the Kodiak Visitor Center, where many different brochures and maps can be obtained.



Ninilchik and the Transfiguration of Our Lord Russian Orthodox Church  
State of Alaska © Community Photo Library, Nicole Grewe



Seldovia—State of Alaska © Community Photo Library, Shannon  
Deik-Sims



Port Lions harbor  
State of Alaska © Community Photo Library, Elizabeth Manfred



Fort Abercrombie, Kodiak Island



**Interpretive Sites.** Visitors can discover Kodiak’s Russian, Alutiiq, military, and maritime history at Kodiak’s world-class visitor centers, museums, state parks, and historic and cultural sites.

**Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center:** Located in downtown Kodiak, the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center is a year-round facility that uses interpretative displays and education programs to connect people to the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge.

**Kodiak Visitor Information Center:** This small visitor center is adjacent to the city dock. Staff and brochures assist visitors in planning their time in Kodiak.

**Ft. Abercrombie State Historic Park:** Ft. Abercrombie State Historic Park contains the historic ruins of a World War II coastal defense installation. A self-guided historical walking tour is available. The Kodiak Military History Museum interprets World War II history through artifacts and interpretive displays.

**Baranov Museum:** The Baranov Museum, located in the oldest Russian-built wooden structure in the United States, offers an overview of Alutiiq, Russian, and early American history. The building, originally a storehouse, was built by the Russians between 1793 and 1796.

**The Alutiiq Museum:** The Alutiiq Museum preserves the prehistoric and historic cultural traditions of the Alutiiq people. The museum collects Alutiiq archaeological, ethnological, and archival materials and tells the Alutiiq story through exhibits and publications.

**Waterfront Interpretive Displays:** The Kodiak Maritime Museum installed a series of interpretive displays overlooking the St. Paul Boat Harbor and Shelikof Waterfront. Topics include maritime cultures, marine vessels, the United States Coast Guard, fish processing plants, crabbing, salmon, and the marine research community.

**Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Church:** Originally consecrated in 1794 and reconstructed for the fifth time in 1949, the Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Church is a Kodiak landmark and the oldest Orthodox parish in the state. The church is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

**Kodiak Fisheries Research Center:** Located on scenic Near Island, the center offers interpretive exhibits, an aquarium, and a touch tank.



Kodiak Military Museum



Baranov Museum, Kodiak



The Alutiiq Museum, Kodiak



Harbor interpretation, Kodiak



Kodiak Fisheries Research Center

## Chignik

**Information and Orientation.** The ferry docks at the Norquest dock in the center of the community. The dock is often used for storage of fishing equipment, and this intermingling of ferry and fishing activities makes for an interesting experience. There are no information or orientation media on the dock.

**Interpretive Sites.** This rural community has limited interpretive services, but great interpretive potential given the town's spectacular scenery and fishing history.

## Sand Point

**Information and Orientation.** The City dock, which serves the AMHS, is approximately one mile from town. There are no terminal facilities, information, or orientation media on the dock. Overall, the community is spread out and it is difficult to locate and find attractions. There is a walking map available.

**Interpretive Sites.** Interpretive services in Sand Point are limited, although the interpretive potential for the town is high.

## King Cove

**Information and Orientation.** The city dock is located one half mile from town. The Harbor Master's office at the end of the dock provides information. The arriving ship is sometimes met by local residents providing food and Native art for sale. The community is linear in nature and provides easy access to attractions, but the nature of the attractions is not apparent to visitors.

**Interpretive Sites.** Interpretive sites and services in King Cove are limited.

## Cold Bay

**Information and Orientation.** The M/V Tustumena docks on the one-half-mile-long Cold Bay dock. Terminal buildings, information, and orientation signs are unavailable. The long walk along the narrow dock with vehicles driving on it can be daunting. Overall, the community is very spread out and it



Chignik  
State of Alaska © Community Photo Library, Elizabeth Manfred



Sand Point Russian Cemetery



Clinic in King Cove  
State of Alaska © Community Photo Library, Eastern Aleutian Tribes



Cold Bay city dock

is difficult to locate and identify buildings. There is a walking map available, but it is not handed out onboard.

**Interpretive Sites.** The Izembek National Wildlife Refuge provides most of the town's interpretive services. Visitor's can discover Cold Bay's military, maritime, and natural history through the refuge.

**Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center:** A mini visitor center at the refuge headquarters houses several displays, and a variety of maps and printed information is available to assist visitors.

**Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Tour:** The USFWS provides a free shuttle service to the Bering Sea side of the refuge. Unfortunately, not all ferry passengers can fit inside the refuge van, so a lottery is conducted onboard to decide who gets to go and who gets left behind. At Grant Point, overlooking the world famous Izembek Lagoon, the refuge has constructed a small observation building. Interpretive panels help the visitor learn more about the variety of species found in the area within the context of the important eelgrass lagoon environment.

### False Pass

**Information and Orientation.** The city dock is located about one half-mile from town. There is no information or orientation media available. Sometimes community members meet the ship and sell Native crafts, Japanese glass floats, and local cuisine.

**Interpretive Sites.** Interpretive sites and services in False Pass are limited.

### Akutan

**Information and Orientation.** There are no terminal facilities, information, or orientation media.

**Interpretive Sites.** Interpretive sites and services in Akutan are limited.

### Unalaska

**Information and Orientation.** The city dock is located in the industrial docking area. No formal terminal building exists, nor any information or orientation media. A new terminal is in the planning process. The Visitor Information Center downtown provides maps and information about community



Izembek Refuge tour bus



Buying halibut casserole from locals in False Pass



Akutan—State of Alaska © Community Photo Library, Game McGimsey



Unalaska WWII National Historic Area

attractions.

**Interpretive Sites.** Unalaska offers the majority of interpretive services available in the Aleutian Islands. Visitors can learn about the region’s Russian, military, cultural, and natural history at the town’s many museums and historic and cultural sites.

**Museum of the Aleutians:** The Museum of the Aleutians highlights the human history of Unalaska and the Aleutian Island region.

**Aleutians World War II National Historic Area and Visitor Center:** Perched on Mount Ballyhoo, the concrete remains of the Aleutians World War II National Historic Area includes bunkers, Quonset huts, and barracks. This is an excellent jumping-off point for visitors, where they can obtain valuable information about the Island’s historic resources and start their exploration with a trip up to Ulakta Head on Mount Ballyhoo. The Ounalashka Corporation owns the land in the National Historic Area and manages the visitor center, with the National Park Service acting as a visible partner.

**Memorial Park:** Visitors can walk Front Beach to this cemetery and memorial park for a close-up view of a bunker from World War II and the propeller from the SS Northwestern.

**View to the Past:** This driving guide to WWII buildings and structures on Amaknak Island and Unalaska Island is a comprehensive resource for visitors interested in touring WWII sites. The guide is available at the Unalaska/Port of Dutch Harbor Convention and Visitors Bureau and at the Aleutian World War II Visitor Center. The Fort Schwatka Self-Guided Tour (a National Park Service/Ounalashka Corporation publication) can be obtained at the Aleutian World War II Visitor Center.

**Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Ascension of Christ:** Constructed in 1894, the cathedral is the oldest church in Alaska. The cathedral is a National Historic Landmark and is on the American Heritage 12 Most Endangered Landmarks and World Monument watch lists.

**Sitka Spruce Plantation National Historic Landmark:** This site, also known as “The Forest” or AHRS UNL-074, is the first afforestation site in North America. Through this project, Russians sought to make the Unalaska community self-sufficient in timber. The number of trees originally planted is not known; however, in 1834, 24 trees stood.



Unalaska  
State of Alaska © Community Photo Library, Elizabeth Manfred



Unalaska Russian Orthodox Church



Popof Island

World War II Interpretative Displays: The Army Corps of Engineers has installed interpretive panels on World War II activities at strategic locations throughout the community.

Processing Plants: Visitors can tour fish processing plants to get an inside view of the fishing industry.

### Online

**Information and Orientation:** Much of the online information on the Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment is unconsolidated and unlinked.

Alaska Marine Highway System website: The official AMHS website, <http://www.ferryalaska.com>, provides a comprehensive overview of the entire Alaska Marine Highway System, including information on routes, schedules, port communities, trip planning, and Alaska in general. The website also has links to video clips, specials, current news, and online reservations.

Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge and the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge: These USFWS websites, <http://kodiak.fws.gov/> and <http://alaskamaritime.fws.gov/>, are comprehensive and include links to the regions' wildlife, history, culture, news and events, community festivals, recreation information, and visitor services. The Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center website, <http://www.kodiakwildliferefuge.org/>, has links to regional information, visitor services, exhibit information, education programs, and more.



Double-crested Cormorant, Castle Rock, Shumagin Islands, Steve Hillebrand, USFWS

Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference: SWAMC's tourism website, <http://www.southwestalaska.com/>, is comprehensive and contains links to the Alaska Peninsula, the Aleutians, a community events calendar, and trip scheduling and preparation. SWAMC's website contains links to the Alaska Marine Highway System and the region's major airways. It also provides links on how to get around communities, where to stay, what to do, where to eat, and where to shop. Visitors to this website are able to create a trip itinerary by navigating through individual links and then following instructions to add the item to their trip. Although this site is very comprehensive, the casual visitor may not initially gravitate to it.

Aleutians East Borough: The Aleutians East Borough's website, <http://www.aleutianseast.org/>, has limited community information on Akutan, Cold Bay, False Pass, King Cove, and Sand Point.

National Park Service, Aleutian WWII: This website, <http://www.nps.gov/aleu>, provides an overview of the National Historic Area, links to trip planning, historical and cultural information, and contact information.

Ounalashka Corporation: This website, <http://www.ounalashka.com>, provides a link to historical and cultural information on the Aleutian WWII National Historic Area. The Ounalashka Corporation is the land owner and manages the Aleutian WWII Visitor Center.

**Interpretation.** Interpretation on the region is not easily available online.

# 10.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Interpretive recommendations draw from public meetings, research, interviews, the Alaska's Marine Highway, Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment Corridor Plan, and professional experience. They are organized in subsequent pages by the following categories:

- Onboard the M/V Tustumena
- Publications
- Online
- Programs
- Staffing
- Port Community Projects

It is important to recognize these recommendations are only suggestions and should not in any way limit the creativity essential to the program and project planning and design process. Additional site plans may be needed to implement some projects. Recommendations are not presented in any specific order or priority—projects may be implemented in any order.

### Onboard the M/V Tustumena

**Ferry Naturalist Program.** It is strongly recommended to continue and improve the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge ferry naturalist program. This popular resource gives visitors the opportunity to make a personal connection with someone knowledgeable about the region, while encouraging visitor appreciation, protection, and stewardship of site resources. This recommendation is predicated by the need to improve the position description of the ferry naturalist and create a volunteer naturalist program, needs that are further described in the *Staffing* section. Visitors will be encouraged to learn more about the natural and cultural history of the area if naturalists are extensively trained.

**Expanded and Upgraded Theater.** An expanded and upgraded theater is proposed. Recommended upgrades include an expansion of the theater into the forward lounge area. Other suggested upgrades include: two additional rows of seats, a screen that can be pulled down from the ceiling, a new public access system, a wireless projector, a flat screen monitor, and a laptop stand.

**Electronic Kiosk.** A touch screen electronic kiosk with a small footprint and an audio component is recommended for installation in either the main foyer (a few plastic seats will need to be removed if this location is selected) or the forward lounge. The following websites offer examples of different kiosk styles that would work on the M/V Tustumena:

<http://www.seepoint.com/gallery-products.asp>

<http://www.5point.com/products.htm>

<http://signal-innova.com/intro/intro.html>

The main foyer is the preferred location for the kiosk, as it would be the most accessible to travelers. A software program that can be easily updated and expanded without outsourced technology should be selected for the kiosk. Implementation of this recommendation could allow visitors to access the following interpretive, educational, and informative resources in different languages:

- Podcasts
- Natural, cultural, archaeological, colonial,

and recent history

- Community information and port community orientation
- Available tours
- Photos
- Research reports conducted in the region

**Tabletop Interpretive Displays.** Seven tabletop interpretive displays are proposed for the forward lounge to augment similar displays installed in the center lounge. Topics that would enhance interpretation on the M/V Tustumena and tell the story of the segment include: maritime culture, Russian history and influence, World War II history and influence, boom and bust economies of the region, the fishing industry, evolution of transportation in the area, and everyday life in rural port communities. Interpretive tabletop displays on the dining room's sixteen tables would further improve interpretation onboard and capture the largest audience.

**Improved Lending Library.** It is proposed to upgrade the lending library. Additional materials such as DVDs, CDs, and new books would give visitors more choices and reach out to a broader audience, especially youth. A secure display cabinet that allows for display of the collection during every trip would make this resource more available to all passengers. Sign-out sheets should be provided so missing resources could be traced. Alternatively, the ferry naturalist could

open the library for a few hours each day and be responsible for checking items in and out. Lips should be built on cabinet shelves to keep materials in place during rough weather.

**Stateroom Displays.** Given the limited interpretive space onboard, the staterooms have good interpretive potential for reaching a broad, diverse, and captive audience. Wall posters produced from an existing brochure and artwork of the region could be attached to the stateroom bulkheads. Alternatively, each stateroom could be interpreted with a separate interpretive theme. For example, one room could be the "volcano" room and display interpretation on the region's geologic history. Other rooms could focus on seabirds, canneries, marine mammals, Native culture, and other interpretive themes.

**Digital Map.** A map with a GPS locator is recommended to show the location of the ferry in relation to the rest of the route. This recommendation would allow visitors to view the scenery virtually when inclement weather obstructs views. The map could be a static display in the forward lounge or part of a program broadcasted periodically from the screens in the forward lounge. Tele Atlas or another company that specializes in digital maps and navigation resources with dynamic content could be used to implement this recommendation.

**Bulletin Board.** A locked bulletin board is recommended for the main foyer to provide



the naturalist with permanent wall space. This resource could feature naturalist announcements and other temporary information.

**Remove Outdated Material.** Removing the schematic wall map in the hallway between the lounge and the forward lounge is recommended. Other material may be removed and/or updated at the discretion of M/V Tustumena staff.

**Youth Oceans Kit.** An oceans kit, available for checkout from the ferry naturalist, would provide children with a hands-on ocean education resource. These proposed kits could include ocular aids, laminated wildlife ID cards, wildlife-related games and puzzles, field guides, information on ocean ecosystems, a youth curriculum, and more.

**Updated and Expanded Rack Display.** An expanded brochure display in the main foyer is recommended to provide more room for additional maps, business brochures, community visitor guides, walking tour maps, and pamphlets on the region's state parks and critical habitat areas.

**Audio Guides.** Hand-held, multilingual audio guides are recommended to provide a different interpretive experience and reach a broader audience. They could be rented or checked out from the ferry naturalist or downloaded from the Internet onto a portable media player prior to the trip. A company such as Antenna Audio may be

used to produce an audio guide:

<http://www.antennaaudio.com/>

#### **Interpret Existing Natural History Displays.**

There are a number of uninterpreted wall displays including photos and Aleut artwork. It is recommended to interpret:

- Aleut displays in the forward lounge and the hallway leading to the forward lounge.
- Photos of port communities in the main foyer and hallways leading to the forward lounge.

**Alaska Geographic Library.** Including a small Alaska Geographic store onboard is recommended for the hallway space between the main foyer and the forward lounge. This resource could sell items such as books, laminated wildlife guides, and apparel. This passenger service would help travelers deepen their understanding of the region.

**Chart Light.** In order to assist with viewing ease, a light is recommended for over the popular chart in the main foyer.

#### Publications

**Podcasts.** Podcasts are recommended to feature the route's interpretive themes: World War II, Russian history, daily life, bird and whale sounds, fishing culture, walking tours, public lands, and more. A youth-produced podcast would be a great

partnership opportunity. Links to podcasts could be provided on the AMHS website, the USFWS Islands and Ocean's website, SWAMC's website, and others.

#### **AMHS Kodiak and Aleutians Segment**

**Brochure:** Creating a comprehensive brochure on the ferry route is recommended. This brochure, which could be made available online, may contain information on all aspects of the travel experience from Homer to Unalaska, including onboard amenities, things to do in port communities, community orientation, the USFWS naturalist program, the route's interpretive themes, and port of call times.

#### **Cold Bay and Izembek Refuge Birding**

**Brochure:** A Cold Bay and refuge birding brochure and checklist is proposed to summarize the general seasonal status for each species.

#### **State Critical Habitat Area and Game Refuge**

**Brochures:** Updating certain State Critical Habitat Areas (SCHA) and Game Refuges brochures are recommended: Kachemak Bay SCHA, Fox River Flats SCHA, Homer Airport SCHA, Tugidak Island SCHA, and Izembek State Game Refuge.

#### **Self-Guided Walking / Driving Maps.**

Self-guided walking and driving maps, such as "View to the Past: A Driving Guide to WWII Buildings and Structures on Amaknak Island and Unalaska Island," are proposed to highlight port communities'

natural, scenic, historic, recreational, and cultural resources.

***Izembek Film:*** It is recommended to create a professionally made movie on Izembek National Wildlife Refuge. The movie could highlight the Refuge's wide variety of fish and wildlife species and their habitats, including the world-famous Izembek Lagoon. The movie will be used as an educational resource as well as a marketing tool. The movie will be shown onboard the M/V Tustumena and in regional visitor centers. It will also be made available online.

***AMHS Kodiak and the Aleutians Film:*** A film on the AMHS Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment is recommended. Highlighting all of the route's interpretive themes, the movie could be shown onboard the M/V Tustumena and in regional visitor centers.

***State Critical Habitat Area and Game Refuge Film:*** A film on State Critical Habitat Areas and Game Refuges along the route is recommended. This resource could be shown onboard the ferry and made available online.

***Port Community Video Clips:*** Implementation of this recommendation would result in production of five-minute video clips on each port community. Clips may include information on available visitor services, wayfinding, recreation opportunities, cultural and tribal history, and other community highlights. These video clips

could be played onboard to orient visitors to port communities prior to stopping in them.

***Identification Charts.*** Updated identification charts are proposed. Suggested topics include: the route's peaks, volcanoes, birds, marine mammals, and commonly seen boats.

***Birding the Ferry Route Guide.*** A professional bird guide specific to the route is recommended. Providing an electronic version of the guide would reach more people.

***Regional Recreation Map.*** A map of the entire route is recommended to show recreational opportunities in each community. Maps could be made available onboard, online, and in port communities' visitor and information centers.

### Online

***Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment Website.*** Creating a website for the route would greatly improve visitor services. Although the Alaska Marine Highway website provides some visitor information, a website dedicated to only this segment would be easier to navigate and could include a greater variety of visitor information. Recommended web page links include: the AMHS website, E-bird, the Alaska Bird Observatory website, the Alaska Volcano Observatory, port community information, podcasts, images, and a blog for people to record wildlife sightings. Educational and

interpretive media could also be added to the website.

***Update Homer Chamber Website.*** It is recommended to update the Homer Chamber of Commerce website to include a link to the AMHS website.

### Programs

***Guided Tour Volunteer Program.*** A guided tour volunteer program is recommended to provide ferry visitors with the opportunity to make a personal connection with someone knowledgeable about the area. This program could train volunteers in interpretive and communication techniques. Onboard volunteers could assist the ferry naturalist by leading guided tours at port calls. Alternatively, recruited local volunteers could meet the ferry during port calls and give community tours to interested travelers. Tour locations may include visitor centers, fish processing plants, historic buildings, and other community highlights. Potential partners in this project are the Student Conservation Association and the Friends of Alaska Wildlife Refuges.



Kodiak Fisheries Research Center

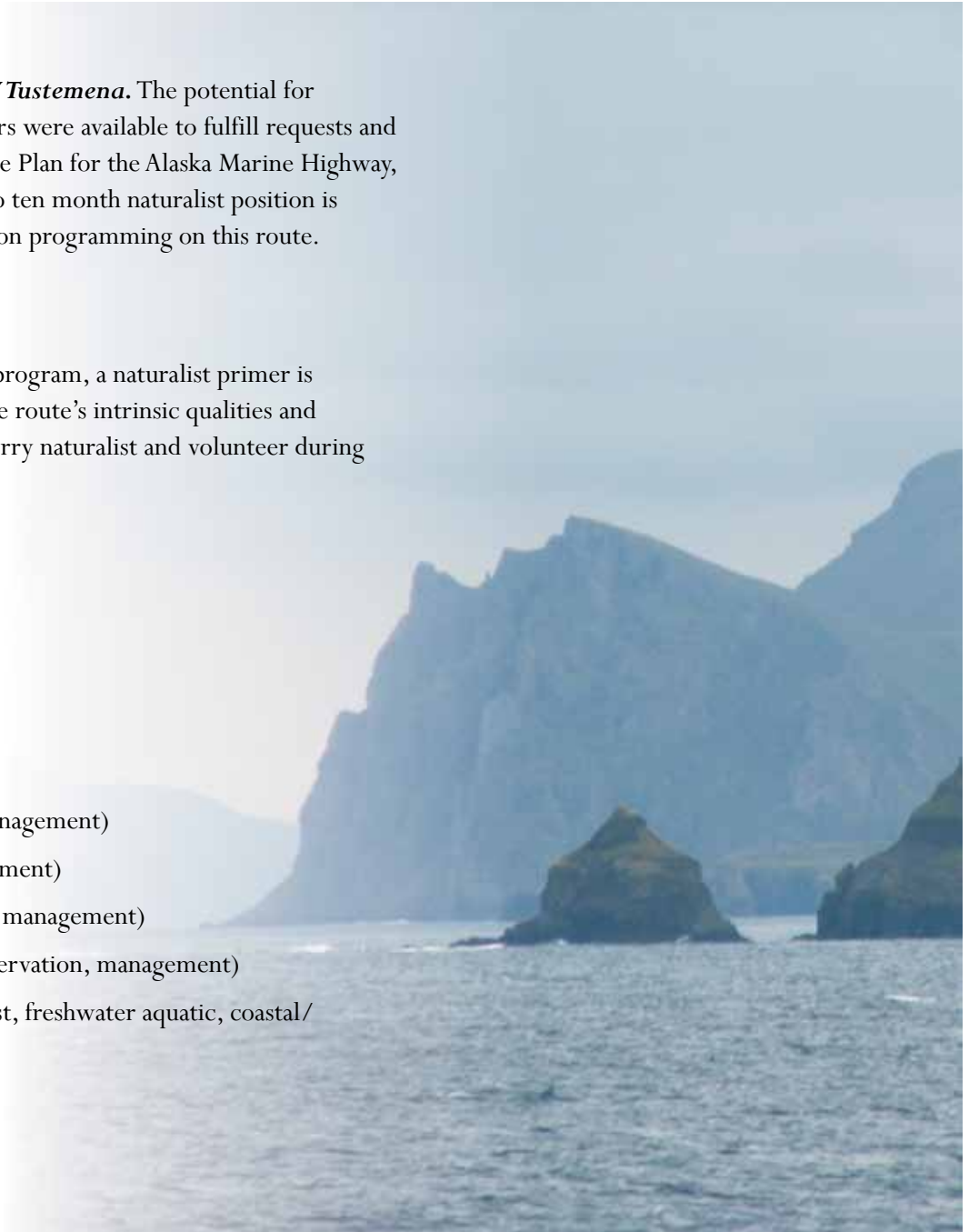
## Staffing

***Permanent Funding for Naturalist Position Onboard the M/V Tustemena.*** The potential for interpretive programming is virtually unlimited if staff or volunteers were available to fulfill requests and provide community outreach. To implement the Master Interpretive Plan for the Alaska Marine Highway, Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment, permanent funding for a nine to ten month naturalist position is recommended to improve the quality of interpretation and education programming on this route.

## Staff Resources

***Naturalist Primer.*** To ensure continuation of the ferry naturalist program, a naturalist primer is recommended to capture the current institutional knowledge of the route's intrinsic qualities and resources. A copy of the naturalist primer could be given to each ferry naturalist and volunteer during training. The primer may include the following topics:

- An introduction to the ferry naturalist program
- History of the region
- Background on port communities
- Basic ecological concepts
- Biogeography of the region
- Geology
- Mammals (biology, ecology, identification, conservation, management)
- Birds (biology, ecology, identification, conservation, management)
- Invertebrates (biology, ecology, identification, conservation, management)
- Trees and other plants (biology, ecology, identification, conservation, management)
- Overview of natural resource management of the area (forest, freshwater aquatic, coastal/estuarine, urban/suburban)
- Education and interpretation skills
- AMHS contacts



## Port Community Interpretive Projects

Many interpretive projects are recommended for Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment’s port communities. Additional site plans may be needed to implement some projects. Recommendations are not presented in any specific order or priority—projects may be implemented in any order at any time.

INTERPRETIVE PROJECT NAME	LOCATION	PAGE NUMBER
Homer Spit Interpretive Center	Homer	57
Homer Spit Trailside Interpretation	Homer	59
Extension of the Homer Spit Trail	Homer	61
End of the Road Wayside	Homer	62
Boat Harbor Interpretation	Homer	64
Ferry Terminal Enhancements	Homer	65
Fox River Flats Interpretive Kiosk	Homer	66
Airport State Critical Habitat Area Interpretation	Homer	67
Update Kachemak Bay State Park and Wilderness Park Airport Display	Homer	68
Grewingk Glacier Trailside Interpretation	Homer	69
Beluga Slough Trail Enhancement	Homer	70
Islands & Ocean Ferry Interpretive Exhibit	Homer	71
Native Plant Interpretation	Kodiak	72
Cannery Row Trail and Interpretation	Kodiak	73
Maritime Heritage Center and Museum	Kodiak	74
Ferry Terminal Electronic Kiosk	Kodiak	75
Ft. Abercrombie State Historic Park Master Interpretive Plan	Kodiak	76
Buskin River State Recreation Site Interpretation	Kodiak	77
Island Lake Creek Trailside Interpretation	Kodiak	78
Kodiak Military History Museum Audio Tour	Kodiak	79
City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk	Chignik	80
City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk	Sand Point	81
City Dock Bike Rental Kiosk	Sand Point	82
Harbor Interpretation	Sand Point	83
Airport Interpretive Enhancements	Sand Point	84
Interpretive Bike Trail	Sand Point	85

Table 4. Port Community Interpretive Projects Quick Reference Guide

INTERPRETIVE PROJECT NAME	LOCATION	PAGE NUMBER
City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk	King Cove	86
Hovercraft Tour to Cold Bay	King Cove	87
City Dock Interpretation	Cold Bay	88
Interpretive and Informational Structure	Cold Bay	89
The City Dock Shed	Cold Bay	90
Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Bus	Cold Bay	91
Community Center Enhancements	Cold Bay	92
Quonset Hut Chapel Restoration and Interpretation	Cold Bay	93
Airport Interpretive Enhancements	Cold Bay	94
City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk	False Pass	95
City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk	Akutan	96
City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk	Unalaska	97
Interpretive Trail	Unalaska	98
Airport Enhancements	Unalaska	99
Grand Aleutian Hotel Interpretation	Unalaska	100
Pillbox Park	Unalaska	101



**Project Name and Site Location:** Homer Spit Interpretive Center—Homer, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** Home to the ferry dock and the Homer Boat Harbor, the spit is a 4.5-mile-long piece of land jutting into Kachemak Bay. The facility would provide educational and interpretive experiences for travelers exploring port communities. Travelers arriving either by ferry or via the Sterling Highway would gain information about marine recreational opportunities such as fishing, wildlife viewing, hiking, camping, kayaking, and ecotouring. The project would complement and enhance the visitor experience on the “Bike and Pedestrian Trail at the Homer Terminal—Alaska’s Marine Highway,” a 2006 project, and serve as a local extension for the 2006 “Interpreting Alaska’s Marine Highway Wildlife Story” project. The Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies proposed a location for the facility one mile from the ferry terminal and five miles from the city center. Another proposed location places the interpretive center adjacent to the ferry terminal.

**Interpretive Significance:** All of the Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment’s interpretive themes come together at the Homer Spit. The site boasts an interesting geologic history—the spit was created thousands of years ago by glaciers. The cultural and historic resources of the site are just as interesting. In 1899 the Cook Inlet Coal Fields Company laid a railroad track along the spit, connecting the docks to the coalfields along Kachemak Bay. The resulting business led to the development of what eventually became Homer, Alaska. Today the spit is the most popular tourist destination in Homer.

**Project Goals:**

- Provide an interpretive experience integrated with other opportunities along the ferry segment
- Offer visitors to the Homer Spit a centralized place to go for visitor information

**Project Description:** An interpretive center designed with all of the Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment’s interpretive themes in mind is recommended for the Homer Spit. Visitors, especially those with limited time in Homer, would be provided with an efficient means to survey the recreational and educational opportunities available to them and to view displays and signage. The facility would serve as a base for educational, historical, and natural history-oriented tours of the Homer harbor provided by the Pratt Museum and the Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies. The facility could include bike racks and be designed to provide access to interpretive information on outside walls or in an outdoor kiosk during periods when it would not be staffed.



*Homer Harbor along the Spit  
Homer Chamber of Commerce, Jill Aho*



*Fishing Hole  
Homer Chamber of Commerce, Jenny Olson*



*Homer Harbor along the Spit  
Homer Chamber of Commerce, Jill Aho*

Interpretive media could focus on the region's pioneer culture and frontier history along with displays on the region's fishing industry. Numerous natural history topics would be appropriate here as well, including glacier morphology and marine ecosystems. It is important that this plan coordinate with other planning efforts in the region.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Extensive planning via a separate Master Interpretive Plan is recommended. It is paramount that interpretation influence the building's design. Interactive interpretive displays are recommended that include a variety of media such as audio devices, innovative interpretive panels, film, and sculpture. These displays would facilitate connections between visitors and the resources of the region.

**Interpretive Objective:** After visiting the Homer Spit Interpretive Center, the majority of visitors will recognize Homer as part of a dynamic maritime region that is a crossroads for culture, ecology, and commerce.

**Land Owner/Manager:** City of Homer

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
- Homer Chamber of Commerce
- Pratt Museum
- Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park



*Homer Chamber of Commerce, Gretchen Krause*



*Common Murres  
© Division of Community and Business Development, Robert Angell*

**Project Name and Site Location:** Homer Spit Trailside Interpretation—Homer, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The Homer Spit Trail is a flat walking/biking trail with mountain and ocean views. The paved trail starts at the base of the spit, with parking at the corner of Ocean and Kachemak drives. The four-mile walk to the harbor wanders along the edge of Mud Bay, and then along the narrow finger of land that bisects Kachemak Bay.

**Interpretive Significance:** People-watching is one of the more entertaining sports on this trail. Numerous bird and marine species can be sighted as well. Several glaciers are clearly visible in the Kenai Mountain Range to the south. Locals use the trail to exercise and connect with the ocean environment.

**Project Goal:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience along the Homer Spit Trail

**Project Description:** Interpretive displays, including interpretive panels and sculpture, are proposed for installation along the Homer Spit Trail. These exhibits would interpret area resources 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Interpretive panel topics could focus on what trail users can visually see and experience: birds and geology of Mud Bay, wildflowers, tidal influence, and harbor and marine industry. Other panel topics may highlight secondary themes of the trail such as ocean ecosystems, contemporary life in Homer, climate change, ocean acidification, shorebirds, waterfowl, geology, tidal influence, and marine mammals. Once the trail is completed, partner organizations could provide online links to a virtual Homer Spit Interpretive Trail on Google Earth. See the following website for an example: <http://campbelltrail.muni.org/CCIT/20-Page.html>

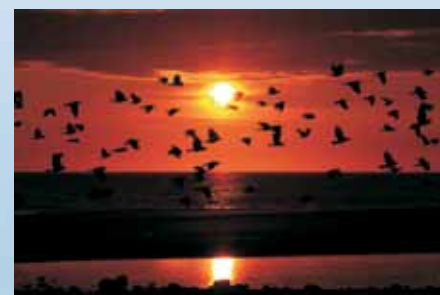
**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type C interpretive panel; bronze and stone sculptures

**Interpretive Objectives:** After viewing these displays, the majority of visitors will be able to state that over time, people have become a major influence in the region. The majority of visitors will also be able to state that this area encompasses important, highly productive habitats that attract and nourish vast numbers of seabirds and other wildlife.

**Land Owner/Manager:** City of Homer

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
- Homer Chamber of Commerce



Homer Chamber of Commerce, Juxia Scarpitta



Homer Chamber of Commerce, Jenny Olson



**Project Name and Site Location:** Extension of the Homer Spit Trail—Homer, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** In 2002 the Department of Natural Resources developed a site plan for the Spit Trail Extension from the Nick Dudiak Fishing Lagoon to the ferry terminal and proposed End of the Road Wayside (see Fig. 7). This project is marked as an urgent need in the City of Homer's 2009-2014 Capital Improvement Plan.

**Interpretive Significance:** Activity on the Homer Spit has increased dramatically, especially in the summer.

### Project Goals:

- Complete a non-motorized transportation route from the tip of the Homer Spit to downtown
- Enhance the interpretive experience on the Homer Spit

**Project Description:** It is proposed to extend the Homer Spit Trail to the end of the Homer Spit. Low-profile interpretive panels would be installed to highlight the Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment's interpretive themes. Additional site planning may be necessary to complete this project. Interpretive panel topics could focus on the influence of humans in the area and may include Alaska Native and pioneer culture, contemporary life in Homer, climate change, and ocean acidification. Other panel topics may highlight secondary themes of the trail such as ocean ecosystems, shorebirds, waterfowl, geology, tidal influence, and marine mammals. Once the trail is completed, partner organizations could provide online links to a virtual Homer Spit Interpretive Trail on Google Earth. See the following website for an example: <http://campbelltrail.muni.org/CCIT/20-Page.html>

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type D interpretive panels

**Interpretive Objectives:** After viewing these displays, the majority of visitors will be able to state that over time, people have become a major influence in the region. The majority of visitors will also be able to state that this area encompasses important, highly productive habitats that attract and nourish vast numbers of seabirds and other wildlife.

**Land Owner/Manager:** City of Homer

### Potential Partnerships:

- Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
- Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
- Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
- Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park
- Homer Chamber of Commerce



Homer Chamber of Commerce, Tom Stroozas



Homer Chamber of Commerce, Brandon Grochow



Figure 7. A portion of the Homer Spit Trail Extension

**Project Name and Site Location:** End of the Road Wayside—Homer, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The site for the End of the Road Wayside is at the end of the Homer Spit, between Land's End Resort and the ferry terminal parking. A site plan for the End of the Road Wayside was developed in 2004 by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (see Fig. 8). This project has been envisioned for the Homer Spit since the early 1990s. The City of Homer originally sought Federal Transportation Enhancement funding for the wayside, which was to be built in conjunction with a marine highway ticket office. However, in 1995 the two projects were separated and the wayside was never built.

**Interpretive Significance:** This project would benefit the Alaska Marine Highway traveler by interpreting the natural character of Homer, Kachemak Bay, and Kachemak Bay State Park. The wayside, located adjacent to the ferry terminal and five miles from the city center, would provide educational, interpretive, and recreational experiences for travelers. This site provides outstanding opportunities to view bald eagles, sea otters, marine life, and a variety of birds.

#### **Project Goals:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience of Homer and the Homer Spit

**Project Description:** An End of the Road Wayside would replace the existing dusty parking lot with an attractive multi-purpose park that includes interpretive displays, a boardwalk, a viewing tower, native landscaping, possibly restrooms, and comfortable seating. Panoramic and low-profile interpretive panels may be installed to highlight the Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment's interpretive themes and to interpret Kachemak Bay State Park and State Wilderness Park. Panoramic displays could detail rivers, peaks, and other geologic features. This wayside should complement the ferry terminal and enhance the scenic values of the area. Additional site planning will be necessary to complete this project.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type D interpretive panels; panoramic interpretive panels

**Interpretive Objectives:** After visiting the wayside, the majority of visitors will state that they were very satisfied with their experience. After viewing interpretive displays, the majority of visitors will also be able to identify Kachemak Bay State Park and State Wilderness Park as the first Alaska State Park.

**Land Owner/Manager:** City of Homer

#### **Potential Partnerships:**

- Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
- Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
- Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
- Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park
- Homer Chamber of Commerce



*Homer Chamber of Commerce, Robin Mester*



*Homer Chamber of Commerce, Jill Aho*



Figure 8. Homer Spit End of the Road Wayside Design

**Project Name and Site Location:** Boat Harbor Interpretation—Homer, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** Located near the end of the Homer Spit, the Homer Boat Harbor is a regional facility serving and supporting the northern Gulf of Alaska, Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet, and Kachemak Bay. It accommodates a range of vessels including fishing vessels, workboats, tugs, barges, personal watercraft, and more. The boat harbor may some day be expanded in size by an additional 11-15 acres to accommodate more vessels.

**Interpretive Significance:** The Homer Boat Harbor is an excellent area to study the relationship between living things and their non-living surroundings in a coastal area enhanced by stunning mountain views. Many people participate in marine ecology field trips and guided visitor tours here.

**Project Goal:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience at the Homer Boat Harbor

**Project Description:** Low-profile interpretive panels are proposed for around the boat harbor. Located close to the features they interpret, these exhibits would readily answer visitors' questions, nurture curiosity, and help facilitate intellectual and emotional connections between visitors and resources. Panel topics may include waterfowl, fishing culture, history of fishing in the region, tidal influence, and history of the Alaska Marine Highway System.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type D interpretive panels

**Interpretive Objectives:** After viewing displays, visitors will be able to communicate that proximity to the sea has dramatically shaped the resources and people of Homer. The majority of visitors will also be able to state that Homer encompasses important, highly productive habitats that attract and nourish vast numbers of seabirds and other wildlife.

**Land Owner/Manager:** City of Homer

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
- Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Pratt Museum
- Alaska Sea Grant



*Homer Chamber of Commerce, Jane Dunn*



*Homer Chamber of Commerce, Aaron Owen*

**Project Name and Site Location:** Ferry Terminal Enhancements—Homer, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The Homer Ferry Terminal sits at the end of the Homer Spit. Built in 1999, the terminal has a small waiting area, restrooms, brochures, and maps. There is no interpretation in the terminal.

**Interpretive Significance:** This terminal serves as the gateway to the Kodiak and the Aleutians portion of the Alaska Marine Highway. Many visitors traveling the route spend a few days in Homer, then board the M/V Tustumena from the terminal to begin their trip.

**Project Goals:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience of the Homer ferry terminal
- Familiarize visitors with port communities along the Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment

**Project Description:** Terminal improvements are recommended to provide travelers with the opportunity to learn about the significant resources along the route prior to beginning their trip. For the many people who begin their ferry trip in Homer, interpretation at the Homer terminal would link the diverse attractions of the region to the stories and meanings of the route.

- **Whale Art.** It is proposed to paint a large whale scene on the outside of the terminal building.
- **Outside Interpretive Display.** A type B interpretive kiosk is proposed for outside the terminal building. Panel topics may include boom and bust economies and evolution of transportation.
- **Flying Birds.** An interpretive display composed of a lightweight mobile-type sculpture that simulates flying seabirds is recommended.
- **Whale Skeleton.** An articulated whale skeleton may be hung from the terminal ceiling to interpret the dynamics of marine ecosystems and the importance of carrion for bears, eagles, and other wildlife. See <http://www.theboneman.com> for instructions on the preparation and articulation of animal skeletons.
- **Updated Map with Orientation Information.** An updated route map is recommended for inside the terminal. This map may include locations and orientation information for all port communities.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Painted mural on outside terminal wall; type B interpretive

kiosk; lightweight, flying bird mobile; articulated whale skeleton; type C interpretive panels

**Interpretive Objective:** After visiting the terminal exhibits, the majority of visitors will be able to list at least two of the Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment’s interpretive themes.

**Land Owner/Manager:** Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

**Potential Partnerships:**

- City of Homer
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
- Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Pratt Museum
- Alaska Sea Grant



Homer Chamber of Commerce, Gretchen Krause

**Project Name and Site Location:** Fox River Flats Interpretive Kiosk—Homer, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The Fox River Flats extends from the beach up the valley along the toe of the bluff. A steep switchback trail leads down to the flats from East End Road. Located at the head of Kachemak Bay, Fox River Flats Critical Habitat Area encompasses expansive intertidal mud flats and a complex of low-lying marshlands in the lower Fox River Valley. Each fall waterfowl and moose are hunted on the flats. Currently, no public use facilities exist in the area.

**Interpretive Significance:** The flats serve as a major staging area for thousands of waterfowl and upwards of a million shorebirds that stop to rest and feed during migration.

**Project Goals:**

- Provide opportunities for Fox River Flats visitors to have an interpretive experience
- Inform visitors about the value of State Critical Habitat Areas

**Project Description:** A four-paneled interpretive kiosk is proposed for somewhere along East End Road or at another appropriate site. Kiosk panels may interpret productive bird habitat within the context of State Critical Habitat Areas.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type B interpretive kiosk

**Interpretive Objectives:** After viewing this exhibit, the majority of visitors will be able to state at least two benefits of State Critical Habitat Areas. The majority of visitors will also be able to describe at least two different components of good bird habitat.

**Land Owner/Manager:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**Potential Partnerships:**

- City of Homer
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
- Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Pratt Museum
- Alaska Sea Grant



Homer Chamber of Commerce



Homer Chamber of Commerce, Gretchen Krause

**Project Name and Site Location:** Airport State Critical Habitat Area Interpretation—Homer, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** This State Critical Habitat Area (SCHA) protects approximately 280 acres of state land, mostly wetlands. It provides important habitat for wildlife and is a source of outdoor activities for residents and visitors. A wildlife-viewing platform is located across the street from the Homer Airport. Other recreational activities include photography, berry picking, hiking, and Nordic skiing.

**Interpretive Significance:** The wetlands, lakes, and ponds of the SCHA are major resting and feeding areas for over a hundred species of nesting and migratory waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds, and raptors. The area also contains the necessary winter browse and thermal cover critical to sustaining a healthy local moose population.

**Project Goals:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience at this popular site
- Improve wildlife viewing opportunities
- Inform visitors about the value of State Critical Habitat Areas

**Project Description:** In order to implement this project, additional planning is necessary. A site plan should include the following components:

- Existing viewing platform: Install viewing scopes and one interpretive panel display that interprets birds.
- Next to the viewing platform: Install an interpretive boardwalk and place a series of interpretive panels along it that interpret marsh ecology.
- Northern part of the site: Install trails, viewing decks, and interpretive panels.
- North side of Beluga Lake: Install a new viewing deck, interpretive signs, and viewing scopes.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Low-profile, type D interpretive panels; other media as determined by additional site planning

**Interpretive Objectives:** After viewing interpretive displays, the majority of visitors will be able

to state that the area encompasses important, highly productive habitat that attracts and nourishes vast numbers of birds and other wildlife. The majority of visitors will also be able to state at least two benefits of State Critical Habitat Areas.

**Land Owner/Manager:** Alaska Department of Fish and Game

**Potential Partnerships:**

- City of Homer
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
- Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Pratt Museum
- Alaska Sea Grant



Homer Chamber of Commerce



**Project Name and Site Location:** Update Kachemak Bay State Park and Wilderness Park Airport Display—Homer, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The Homer Airport is located on a coastal bench between Kachemak Bay to the south and portions of the Beluga Lake wetlands and undeveloped wooded uplands to the north. Today Homer Airport is the primary air transportation access to Homer and the surrounding area, serving as an access point to the intrastate air transportation system for all of the southern Kenai Peninsula and Kachemak Bay region. Many ferry passengers fly to Homer.

**Interpretive Significance:** Alaska's first state park, and only wilderness park, contains roughly 400,000 acres of mountains, glaciers, forests, and ocean. The bay's twisted rock formations are evidence of the movement of the earth's crust. Highlighted by constantly changing weather patterns, the park's outstanding scenery is a backdrop for high quality recreation. Kachemak Bay is a critical habitat area, supporting many species of marine life. Visitors frequently observe sea otters, seals, porpoise, and whales. Intertidal zones offer natural settings for marine studies. Land mammals include moose, black bear, mountain goats, coyotes, and wolves. The many species of birds that inhabit the bay, including eagles, gyrfalcons, and puffins, make it a popular bird watching area.

**Project Goals:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience at the airport
- Create a greater awareness about Alaska's first state park and only wilderness park

**Project Description:** Updating the defunct Kachemak Bay State Park and Wilderness Park exhibit in the airport lobby will provide travelers with the opportunity to learn about the significance of Alaska's first State Park and the coastlines, bays, and lagoons of Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat Area. The kiosk

in the lobby could be replaced with a large flat screen digital feed that shows video on the park, hiking trails, and wildlife. The display may be a continuous loop or accessed by a push button. Visitors may also be able to access information on other public lands in the area.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:**

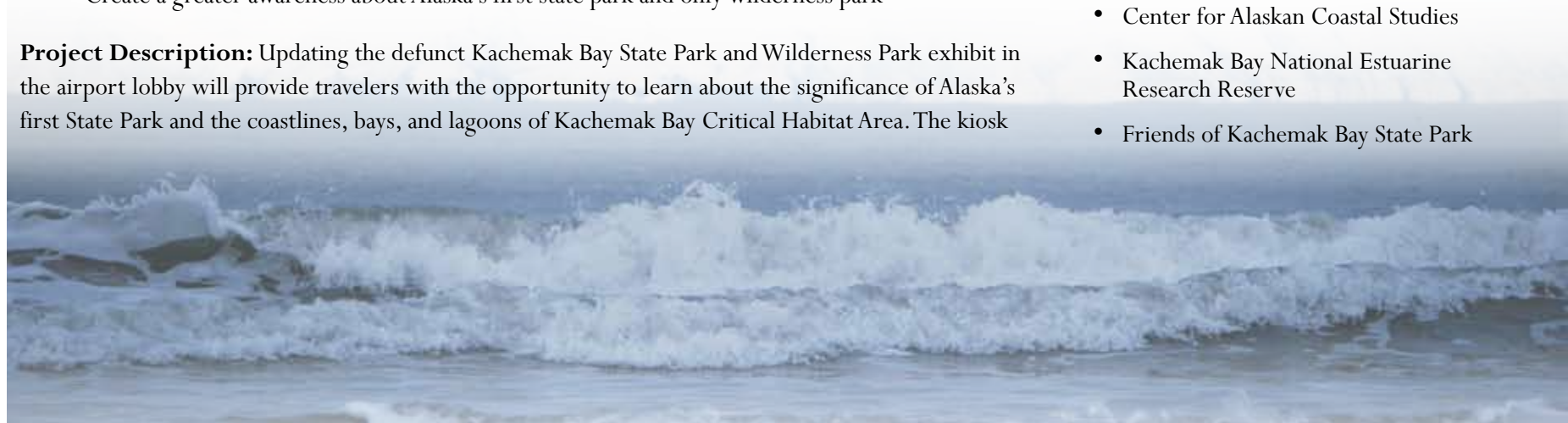
Interactive electronic display

**Interpretive Objective:** After viewing this display, the majority of visitors will state that they have greater appreciation for the natural resources within Kachemak Bay State Park and Wilderness Park.

**Land Owner/Manager:** City of Homer

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
- Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
- Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park



Homer Chamber of Commerce

**Project Name and Site Location:** Grewingk Glacier Trailside Interpretation—Homer, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** This Kachemak Bay State Park trail meanders through a mature forest of large spruce and cottonwoods and a glacial outwash plain of low alders and shrubs, passes by a small glacial lake or “tarn,” and ends at an area recently covered with glacial ice and hence largely denuded of vegetation. Hikers can walk along the shore of this glacial lake or explore newly exposed rocky ridges.

**Interpretive Significance:** The Grewingk Glacier Trail provides the only developed access to a glacier in the area (although the glacier is not accessible without technical rock climbing skills).

**Project Goal:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience along the Grewingk Glacier Trail

**Project Description:** Interpretive displays along the Grewingk Glacier Trail are proposed. Interpretive panels may discuss the area’s geology, human history, wildflowers, plant succession, bears, and bear safety. Once interpretation is complete, partner organizations could provide online links to a virtual Grewingk Glacier Trail on Google Earth. See the following website for an example:

<http://campbelltrail.muni.org/CCIT/20-Page.html>

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type C interpretive panels

**Interpretive Objective:** After viewing these displays, the majority of visitors will state that they have a greater appreciation of Kachemak Bay State Park’s resources.

**Land Owner/Manager:** Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
- Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park



**Project Name and Site Location:** Beluga Slough Trail Enhancement—Homer, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The Beluga Slough Trail connects the Islands & Ocean Visitor Center with Bishop’s Beach and the Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat Area. Islands & Ocean is frequently the first stop for ferry passengers headed to Kodiak or the Aleutians and the trail is often their first exposure to the coastal environment. Islands & Ocean receives about 70,000 visitors a year and is located on the Sterling Highway, a State Scenic Byway. Islands & Ocean is the visitor center for the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve and the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, which staffs the Tustumena’s interpretive program. The trail has fallen into disrepair with one section missing and other sections out of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

**Interpretive Significance:** The Beluga Slough Trail provides an outstanding opportunity to explore a coastal forest, a freshwater wetland, a tidal slough, and the beach environment. Bird watching is seasonally excellent and the slough and beach provide excellent examples of coastal processes.

**Project Goals:**

- Provide a safe, enjoyable, educational, and high quality trail experience
- Provide interpretation about the trailside coastal environment

**Project Description:** It is proposed to replace sections of the boardwalk trail that are missing, damaged, and/or out of compliance with ADA. Interpretive panels may be installed along the trail that invite visitors to learn about the coastal environment.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Low-profile, type D interpretive panels

**Interpretive Objective:** As a result of walking the trail and viewing interpretive signs, the majority of visitors will be able to state that coastal habitats are important, highly productive areas that attract and nourish vast numbers of birds and other wildlife.

**Land Owner/Manager:** U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the City of Homer

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Kachemak Bay Research Reserve
- City of Homer



*Bishops Beach, Homer Chamber of Commerce*

**Project Name and Site Location:** Islands & Ocean Ferry Interpretive Exhibit—Homer, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The Islands & Ocean Visitor Center is frequently the first stop for ferry passengers headed to Kodiak or the Aleutian Islands. In addition to these ticketed passengers, numerous potential passengers become interested in the Southwest ferry route after experiencing the Aleutian exhibits in Islands & Ocean. The center receives about 70,000 visitors a year and is located on the Sterling Highway, a State Scenic Byway. Islands & Ocean is the visitor center for the Kachemak Bay Research Reserve and the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, which staffs the Tustumena's interpretive program.

**Interpretive Significance:** This visitor center serves as the gateway to the Kodiak and the Aleutians portion of the Alaska Marine Highway for many passengers. Existing exhibits offer a great deal of information about the Aleutian Islands but do not specifically describe the experience of the ferry. Visitors to the center who are not booked on the ferry are intrigued by the ferry and would like to know more about the route for future trip planning.

#### **Project Goals:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience of present and future ferry passengers
- Offer information about the ferry experience to present and future passengers, including information on port communities, wildlife resources, scenery, logistics, and associated costs

**Project Description:** A touch screen electronic kiosk with a small footprint and an audio component is proposed. The kiosk could allow visitors to view the route, view film clips about the villages, preview the wildlife and scenic highlights of the trip, and find information about costs and onboard services. This exhibit would provide travelers with the opportunity to learn about the significant resources along the route prior to beginning their trip.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** A touch screen electronic kiosk with an audio component is recommended. A software program that can be easily updated and expanded without outsourced technology will be selected for the kiosk. Implementation of this recommendation will allow visitors to be able to access many interpretive, educational, and informative resources:

- Downloadable podcasts
- Birding on the ferry route

- Cultural history, Alaskan prehistory, colonial history, and recent history
- Port community information and orientation
- Available tours
- Photos
- Research reports

Check out the following websites for examples of different kiosk styles:

<http://www.seepoint.com/gallery-products.asp>

<http://www.5point.com/products.htm>

**Interpretive Objective:** As a result of visiting the Islands & Ocean ferry exhibit, the majority of visitors will be able to list at least two of the Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment's interpretive themes.

**Land Owner/Manager:** U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

#### **Potential Partnerships:**

- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Kachemak Bay Research Reserve
- Alaska Marine Highway System



Wall mural at Islands and Oceans

**Project Name and Site Location:** Native Plant Interpretation—Kodiak, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The suggested sites for this project are at the proposed ferry terminal and select downtown locations. The new ferry terminal will provide an opportunity to interpret Kodiak’s native plant communities and Alutiiq culture through landscaping projects. Downtown locations for native plant interpretation are to be determined.

**Interpretive Significance:** The variety of vegetation and plant communities on Kodiak Island is quite spectacular and provides an unusually attractive array of colors, patterns, and textures. The mild maritime temperatures and ample rainfall contribute to the abundance of green vegetation that is responsible for Kodiak’s other name, “The Emerald Isle.” Stunningly beautiful coastal wildflower meadows are a highlight for any visitor in summer. Other lowland vegetation includes grasslands, shrub-lands of willow, dwarf birch, alder, rich wetlands, and wet tundra.

**Project Goals:**

- Enhance aesthetic qualities of the terminal area and downtown Kodiak
- Enhance the interpretive experience of Kodiak
- Increase awareness about Alutiiq culture

**Project Description:** Native plants landscaping is recommended for outdoor areas around the new terminal and selected locations downtown. Small interpretive signs would be installed to interpret the resource, identifying the Alutiiq name for plants and using stories to describe traditional plant uses. Additional site designs are needed to implement this project, which would complement and build upon existing signs posted by the Alutiiq Museum in two local parks—one on Near Island and the other at Ft. Abercrombie.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Small, lightweight interpretive signs permanently installed next to Native plants

**Interpretive Objective:** After viewing interpretive displays, the majority of visitors will be able to identify at least three of Kodiak’s native plants and state corresponding traditional uses.

**Land Owner/Manager:** The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (terminal) and the City of Kodiak (downtown)

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
- Friends of Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
- Alutiiq Museum
- Kodiak Historical Society



**Project Name and Site Location:** Cannery Row Trail and Interpretation—Kodiak, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** Cannery Row stretches along the waterfront and showcases Kodiak’s commercial fish canneries. There are many fish processing canneries along Cannery Row that process halibut, cod, pollock, sole, crab, salmon, and more. Although Cannery Row is a popular tourist and tour group destination, the area is not pedestrian friendly nor is it interpreted.

**Interpretive Significance:** Commercial fishing is a bedrock industry in Kodiak. Adaptability and diversification in a variety of fisheries has enabled the Kodiak economy to develop and stabilize over the years. Today numerous fish processing companies operate here year round. The largest processors include International Seafoods, Trident, Ocean Beauty, North Pacific, and Cook Inlet Processors. Fish processing in Kodiak is not limited to the present day; the Alutiiq people were Kodiak’s first fish processors. Looking out from Women’s Bay, visitors can see the locations where past Alutiiqs harvested and processed fish to feed their families.

**Project Goals:**

- Improve pedestrian travel and safety along Cannery Row
- Create a greater awareness about Kodiak’s maritime heritage, culture, and history

**Project Description:** This proposed trail would link Pier 2 to the downtown area through the seafood processing district. It would provide a safe walking route for plant employees and tourists, while at the same time create an opportunity to interpret Kodiak’s economy, maritime heritage, culture, and history through interpretive displays. Proposed interpretive panel topics may include cannery workers, maritime stories that tie Kodiak to other parts of Alaska, a day in the life of a caught fish, and the Alutiiq as Kodiak’s first fish processors. A proposed extension of this trail would terminate at the end of the St. Paul harbor breakwater. A self-guided walking tour map would facilitate the interpretive experience. Once the trail is completed, partner organizations could provide online links to a virtual Cannery Row Interpretive Trail on Google Earth. See the following website for an example:

<http://campbelltrail.muni.org/CCIT/20-Page.html>

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Modified type C interpretive panels shaped like fish

**Interpretive Objectives:** After walking on the trail, the majority of visitors will be able to state

that Kodiak’s maritime history was important in shaping the culture of present day Kodiak. The majority of Cannery Row visitors will also be able to name at least three different jobs associated with fishing and fish processing.

**Land Owner/ Manager:** City of Kodiak

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Island Trails Network
- Kodiak Maritime Museum
- Fish processing plants along Cannery Row
- Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
- Friends of Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
- Alutiiq Museum



Preparing cod fillets  
© Division of Community and Business Development, Curt Buyers

**Project Name and Site Location:** Maritime Heritage Center and Museum—Kodiak, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The building site will be located on Kodiak’s working waterfront. In 2006 a Maritime Museum Interpretive Plan was written that also recommended satellite exhibits and harbor interpretation.

**Interpretive Significance:** The Kodiak Maritime Museum was founded in 1996 by a group of Kodiak residents with close ties to the region’s fishing and maritime heritage. The Museum’s founders were first-hand observers of the Alaskan commercial fishing boom of the 1970s and 1980s and the profound changes, which overtook the industry in the 1990s. As witnesses to this history, the founders were driven to preserve Alaska’s maritime heritage and artifacts, much of which is currently housed and displayed in museums on the West Coast, and to present them in an Alaskan maritime heritage center and museum.

**Project Goal:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience of Kodiak by creating a maritime heritage center and museum dedicated to Alaska’s maritime history.

**Project Description:** This proposed facility would be built on Kodiak’s waterfront to recognize, preserve, house, and interpret Alaska’s maritime heritage. A Master Interpretive Plan is recommended to assist with building and display design and audience identification.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Interactive indoor and outdoor interpretive displays are recommended that use a variety of interpretive tools such as audio devices, oral histories, interpretive panels, photographs, and video to help visitors understand and connect with Alaska’s maritime history and resources.

**Interpretive Objective:** After visiting the Maritime Heritage Center and Museum, the majority of visitors will have a greater appreciation of Alaska’s rich maritime heritage.

**Land Owner/Manager:** Kodiak Maritime Museum

**Potential Partnerships:**

- City of Kodiak
- Kodiak Island Borough
- Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
- Friends of Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
- Alutiiq Museum
- Kodiak Historical Society



24-pound Alaska King Crab, Kodiak

Above, Barge aground near Kodiak Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center, AMRC-b65-18-205

**Project Name and Site Location:** Ferry Terminal Electronic Kiosk—Kodiak, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The Kodiak ferry terminal

**Interpretive Significance:** The Kodiak terminal serves as a gateway to the Kodiak and the Aleutians portion of the Alaska Marine Highway. Many visitors traveling the route begin their trip in Kodiak.

**Project Goals:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience of the ferry terminal
- Familiarize passengers with the port communities along the route
- Provide passengers with easy access to route information

**Project Description:** An electronic kiosk will provide travelers with the opportunity to learn about the significant resources along the route. It will link the diverse attractions of the region to the stories and meanings of this historic travel route through podcasts, oral histories, games, photos, films, and orientation information.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** A touch screen electronic kiosk with an audio component is recommended. A software program that can be easily updated and expanded without outsourced technology should be selected for the kiosk. Implementation of this recommendation will allow visitors to be able to access the following interpretive, educational, and informative resources:

- Podcasts
- Birding on the ferry route
- Cultural history, Alaskan prehistory, colonial history, and recent history
- Port community information and orientation
- Available tours
- Photos
- Research reports

The following websites offer examples of different kiosk styles:

<http://www.seepoint.com/gallery-products.asp>  
<http://www.5point.com/products.htm>

**Interpretive Objectives:** After using the Kodiak terminal electronic kiosk, the majority of visitors will recognize Kodiak as part of a dynamic maritime region that is a crossroads for culture, ecology, and commerce. The majority of visitors will also state that using the kiosk significantly improved their travel experience.

**Land Owner/Manager:** City of Kodiak

**Potential Partnerships:**

- City of Kodiak
- Kodiak Island Borough
- Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
- National Park Service
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
- Friends of Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge



*Kodiak Island*



**Project Name and Site Location:** Ft. Abercrombie State Historic Park Master Interpretive Plan—Kodiak, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** This World War II coastal defense installation consists of about 186 acres. There are three large concrete bunkers, smaller concrete structures including searchlight facilities and foundations for an SCR-296 radar transmitting station, and remnants of two eight-inch guns. Other attractions include foot trails leading to the rugged coastline and a lake stocked with rainbow trout and grayling.

**Interpretive Significance:** Ft. Abercrombie State Historic Park is a very popular tourist destination. Few other units of comparable size in the Alaska State Park system possess the cultural and natural resources that are found at Ft. Abercrombie. The site is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

#### **Project Goals:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience of Kodiak through interpretive improvements at Ft. Abercrombie State Historic Park
- Create a greater awareness of Kodiak’s role in World War II

**Project Description:** It is recommended that a separate Master Interpretive Plan be created for the historically significant Ft. Abercrombie State Historic Park. Planners should consider interpretive goals and objectives, inventory the parks’ extensive natural, recreational, cultural, historic, archaeological, and scenic resources, and choose methods to interpret each significant resource. The Ft. Abercrombie State Historic Park Master Interpretive Plan could:

- Use the Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment’s interpretive themes to tell the story of the site.
- Enhance the site by recommending new interpretive displays to support themes.
- Recommend displays in the visitor center, on the bike path, and at Miller Point that discuss the importance of conserving and protecting resources.
- Recommend partnerships with local businesses and community groups.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** A Master Interpretive Plan that includes interpretive goals, objectives, themes, exhibit suggestions, and design guidelines for interpretive projects is recommended.

**Interpretive Objective:** By creating the Ft. Abercrombie State Historic Park Master Interpretive Plan, interpretive media, will be installed that tells the story of the site through the Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment’s interpretive themes.

**Land Owner/Manager:** Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

#### **Potential Partnerships:**

- City of Kodiak
- Kodiak Island Borough
- Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities



*Fort Abercrombie, Kodiak Island*



*Fort Abercrombie, Kodiak Island*

**Project Name and Site Location:** Buskin River State Recreation Site Interpretation—Kodiak, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** Buskin River State Recreation Site borders the Buskin River and is one of the most productive fisheries on the Kodiak road system. Visitors from around the world visit this river to fish for sockeye and coho salmon. For those who like to hike or mountain bike, old military roads connecting World War II structures hidden in the spruce forest on the north side of the park provide just the place. This site had an interpretive kiosk that was taken down during recent construction but never replaced.

**Interpretive Significance:** The World War II structures interspersed throughout Buskin River State Recreation Site were part of Fort Greely, once a large United States Army post built during World War II to help defend the continental United States from invasion by the Japanese. Little is left of Fort Greely; older naval base buildings were replaced with modern housing for the Kodiak United States Coast Guard Base. Bears are numerous and are commonly seen during salmon runs.

**Project Goals:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience of the Buskin River State Recreation Site
- Create a greater awareness about Kodiak’s role in World War II
- Provide visitors with bear safety information

**Project Description:** It is recommended to replace the interpretive kiosk taken down during construction with one four-paneled interpretive kiosk. Interpretive panels may interpret bears, salmon fishing, prehistoric Alutiiq settlements, and World War II history and influence.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type B interpretive kiosk

**Interpretive Objectives:** After viewing this interpretive kiosk, the majority of Buskin River visitors will be able to name at least two different things they can do to prevent a negative bear encounter. The majority of visitors will also be able to state that the Buskin River State Recreation Site was once important to the defense against Japanese invasion during World War II.

**Land Owner/Manager:** Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

**Potential Partnerships:**

- City of Kodiak
- Kodiak Island Borough
- Alutiiq Museum



*Buskin River anglers, Kodiak Island*

**Project Name and Site Location:** Island Lake Creek Trailside Interpretation—Kodiak, AK

**Site Description and Background:** Island Lake Creek Trail begins at the head of Mill Bay and meanders through wooded areas of residential neighborhoods along the creek’s path. Halfway along the trail are remnants of the Kodiak Gristmill that was used to grind imported grain in the mid-1800s. The grinding stone is currently at the Baranof Museum.

**Interpretive Significance:** Mill Bay was named for the gristmill that was located in the area during the mid-1800s and operated by the Russians to grind imported grain. The Kodiak Gristmill was believed to have been powered by water cascading through Spruce Creek. Milling took place during the spring and fall flooding period—the mill was difficult to reach in the wintertime as it was built over the creek and not under cover. It was abandoned after the American purchase of Alaska, eventually falling into ruins.

**Project Goals:**

- Preserve the historical significance of the Kodiak Gristmill
- Provide interpretive signage identifying local flora and fauna

**Project Description:** This project would provide an interpretive kiosk at the trailhead identifying the entire trail and points of interest. Interpretive panels may be located at key locations along the trail that interpret the salmon run, local wild flowers and trees, birds and other wildlife, and areas of historical significance. An additional kiosk would be located at or near the location of the gristmill to explain the history of the mill and its operation and emphasizing the importance of the creek. Events in history that could be highlighted include the Katmai eruption and the 1964 earthquake.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Interpretive signage made from a high-pressure laminate

**Interpretive Objective:** After viewing trailside displays, the majority of trail users will be able to identify the Island Lake Creek Trail as the past site of the Kodiak Gristmill.

**Land Owner/Manager:** Kodiak Island Borough

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Island Trails Network

- Kodiak Historical Society/Baranof Museum
- Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
- Alaska State Parks
- Kodiak Island Borough



*Red fox kits playing, Kodiak Island*  
© Division of Community and Business Development

**Project Name and Site Location:** Kodiak Military History Museum Audio Tour—Kodiak, Alaska

**Site Description:** The Kodiak Military History Museum is located in the Ready Ammunition Bunker at Miller Point within Ft. Abercrombie State Historic Park. It is owned and operated by a non-profit organization.

**Interpretive Significance:** Located inside a World War II bunker, the museum walls are several feet of thick concrete, and the museum itself is covered with soil. The museum contains a number of unique and historically important military collections that include artifacts such as radio and electronics, field telephones, teletype machines, newspapers, books, manuals, artillery shells, vehicles, bombs, mess gear, gas masks, uniforms, flags, aircraft parts, a library, and more. The museum is open during summer months or by appointment.

Project Goals:

- Improve accessibility of the Kodiak Military History Museum
- Create a greater awareness about Kodiak's role in military history

**Project Description:** This project would bring the Kodiak Military History Museum to life using a non-linear, guided audio tour that includes music, sound effects, and archival audio. Designed for all audiences and environments, this project would offer a comprehensive approach to the diverse educational and interpretive needs of museum visitors via an audio tour that guides visitors through the museum. Audio tours could be available onsite on a single player that may include hundreds of messages in multiple languages.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Headset and small electronic device. See the following website for examples of different audio tours:

<http://www.antennaaudio.com/>

**Interpretive Objective:** After taking the Kodiak Military History Museum Audio Tour, the majority of visitors will have a greater appreciation of Kodiak's World War II history.

**Land Owner/Manager:** Kodiak Military History Museum

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation
- City of Kodiak
- Kodiak Island Borough
- Kodiak Historical Society



*Kodiak Military Museum at Miller Point*

**Project Name and Site Location:** City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk—Chignik, Alaska

**Site Description:** A breakwater, 110-slip small boat harbor, and public dock are under development.

**Interpretive Significance:** The oldest community of the five villages in the area, Chignik was established as a fishing village when a local cannery was constructed in the early 1900s. A four-masted ship called the Star of Alaska transported cannery workers and supplies between Chignik and San Francisco. The main portion of the village is compacted into an area about 600 feet long and connected by boardwalks. The beach is the best walk in town; it's completely covered with bivalve shells, with a small shipwreck on the shore about a five-minute walk from where the ferry docks.

**Project Goals:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience of Chignik
- Encourage passengers to explore Chignik by providing orientation information

**Project Description:** A four-paneled roofed interpretive and informational kiosk is recommended for the dock. This kiosk could contain interpretive panels on Native Alaskan culture, marine wildlife, and the history and people of Chignik. Other information may include:

- Map of the community with local attractions indicated
- Walking distances
- Federal, state, and locally designated lands
- Description of available resources and their location
- A list of things to see and do

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type B interpretive kiosk

**Interpretive Objectives:** The majority of visitors who view the kiosk will recognize Chignik as part of a dynamic maritime region that is a crossroads for culture, ecology, and commerce. The majority of visitors that view this exhibit will also explore the community of Chignik.

**Land Owner/Manager:** Northquest Seafoods

**Potential Partnerships:**

- City of Chignik
- Aleutians East Borough
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)



*Chignik—State of Alaska © Community Photo Library, Elizabeth Manfred*

**Project Name and Site Location:** City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk—Sand Point, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The Sand Point City dock, which services the AMHS, is approximately one mile from town. The dock is large and sparse; there are no terminal facilities or orientation signs.

**Interpretive Significance:** This dock serves as the gateway to Sand Point, a quirky fishing town originally settled by Aleuts and Scandinavian fishermen.

**Project Goals:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience of Sand Point
- Encourage passengers to explore Sand Point by providing orientation information
- Provide passengers not intending to explore the community a glimpse into the resources of the area

**Project Description:** A four-paneled roofed interpretive and informational kiosk is recommended for the dock. This kiosk may contain interpretive panels on Aleut culture, marine mammals, birds, and the history and people of Sand Point. Other information may include:

- Map of the community with local attractions indicated
- Walking and driving distances
- Federal, state, and locally designated lands
- Description of available resources and their location
- A list of things to see and do
- Where to get additional information and maps

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type B interpretive kiosk

**Interpretive Objectives:** The majority of visitors who view the kiosk will recognize Sand Point as part of a dynamic maritime region that is a crossroads for culture, ecology, and commerce. The majority of visitors who view this exhibit will also explore the city of Sand Point.

**Land Owner/Manager:** The City of Sand Point

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Shumagin Corporation
- Aleutians East Borough
- Trident Seafoods Corporation



*Winter at Sand Point—State of Alaska © Community Photo Library*

**Project Name and Site Location:** City Dock Bike Rental Kiosk—Sand Point, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The Sand Point City dock, which services the AMHS, is approximately one mile from town. There are no terminal facilities or orientation signs.

**Interpretive Significance:** A bike rental kiosk will allow ferry passengers easier access to Sand Point’s visitor services and recreation resources in town and beyond.

**Project Goal:**

- Encourage ferry passengers to explore Sand Point by providing easier access to the town’s resources and services

**Project Description:** A bike rental kiosk is recommended. Bike donations could be solicited from the community to help defray costs, and rental bikes made available when the ferry is in port. A self-paying station would be low maintenance.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Fish-shaped bike rack

**Interpretive Objective:** The majority of visitors who rent bikes will confide that this service significantly improved their experience in Sand Point.

**Land Owner/Manager:** The City of Sand Point

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Shumagin Corporation
- Aleutians East Borough
- Trident Seafoods Corporation



*Sand Point dock—State of Alaska © Community Photo Library*

**Project Name and Site Location:** Harbor Interpretation—Sand Point, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The boat harbor is approximately one mile from the city dock. Marine facilities include a 25-acre boat harbor with 4 docks, 134 boat slips, a harbormaster office, barge off-loading area, and a 150-ton lift.

**Interpretive Significance:** Sand Point is home to the largest fishing fleet in the Aleutian Chain and the harbor is the backbone of Sand Point's livelihood. Trident Seafoods operates a major bottomfish, pollock, salmon, and fish meal plant off the harbor, and its neighbor, Peter Pan Seafoods, owns a storage and transfer station. One hundred and sixteen residents hold commercial fishing permits; most of them depart from the harbor.

**Project Goal:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience of Sand Point

**Project Description:** Low profile interpretive signs are proposed for around the harbor to enhance the interpretive experience. Topics could include identifiable peaks, cultural history, marine mammals, birds, fishing and maritime culture, the evolution of transportation, and other topics related to the route's interpretive themes.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Low-profile type D interpretive panels

**Interpretive Objective:** After viewing the harbor exhibits, the majority of visitors will confess a greater understanding and appreciation of Sand Point history and culture. The majority of visitors who view harbor exhibits will also recognize Sand Point as part of a dynamic maritime region that is a crossroads for culture, ecology, and commerce.

**Land Owner/Manager:** The City of Sand Point

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Shumagin Corporation
- Aleutians East Borough
- Trident Seafoods Corporation
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge



*Sand Point Harbor*



**Project Name and Site Location:** Airport Interpretive Enhancements—Sand Point, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** Some ferry visitors take the ferry to Sand Point and fly back to their point of origin. The waiting area is large with ample wall space, but there is no information or interpretation other than one brochure rack and some paper maps tacked to the wall.

**Interpretive Significance:** Some ferry visitors disembark in Sand Point and fly out. There is considerable traffic through the airport, particularly during fishing season.

**Project Goal:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience of the airport

**Project Description:** Airport interpretive enhancements are recommended to provide travelers with the opportunity to learn about the stories of Sand Point. Recommended projects may include:

- **Public Lands Display.** A display of all public lands along the ferry route may be designed and posted at the airport.
- **Interactive Kiosk.** A touch screen electric kiosk with an audio component is recommended. Implementation of this recommendation will encourage visitors to learn about the region’s many interpretive themes, Sand Point and Unga history, rural Alaska, the Alaska Peninsula and the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuges, and more.
- **Sand Point Interpretive Map.** An interpretive map of Sand Point, with distances from Sand Point to other important Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian communities as well as the rest of the world may be designed and posted at the airport.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Interactive kiosk; panels made from high-pressure laminate

**Interpretive Objective:** As a result of viewing airport displays, the majority of visitors will state that interpretive media enhanced their trip. The majority of visitors that view displays will also recognize Sand Point as part of an ocean-providing region that is a crossroads for culture, ecology, and commerce.

**Land Owner/Manager:** State of Alaska

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Aleutians East Borough
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- The Alaska State Office of History and Archaeology
- Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge
- Pen Air



Sand Point runway—State of Alaska © Community Photo Library

**Project Name and Site Location:** Interpretive Bike Trail—Sand Point, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** Sand Point is located on the northwest coast Popof Island, which is ten miles long and five miles wide. The peak elevation is 1,550 feet.

**Interpretive Significance:** Sand Point was founded as a trading post and cod fishing station. Aleuts from surrounding villages and Scandinavian fishermen were the first residents of the community. Sand Point served as a repair and supply center for gold mining during the early 1900s, but fish processing became the dominant activity in the 1930s. The St. Nicholas Chapel, a Russian Orthodox Church, was built in 1933 and is now listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Today Sand Point is home to the largest fishing fleet in the Aleutian Chain. Sand Point is characterized as self-sufficient and progressive, with commercial fishing activities at the heart of the local culture.

**Project Goals:**

- Provide Sand Point visitors with an additional recreation resources
- Encourage ferry passengers to stay longer in Sand Point

**Project Description:** An interpretive trail that circumnavigates the entire island is proposed. Partner organizations could provide online links to a virtual Sand Point Interpretive Trail on Google Earth. See the following website for an example:

<http://campbelltrail.muni.org/CCIT/20-Page.html>

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Interpretive displays, including interpretive panels and sculpture, will be installed at strategic locations along the new bike trail. These exhibits will interpret area resources 24 hours per day, seven days a week. Interpretive panel topics may include historic landmarks, frontier culture, contemporary life in Sand Point, Aleut and Scandinavian history and influence, and bison.

**Interpretive Objective:** After viewing exhibits on the interpretive bike trail, the majority of visitors will be able to list at least two of the Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment’s interpretive themes. After implementing this project, the number of passengers disembarking in Sand Point will increase.

**Land Owner/Manager:** The City of Sand Point

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Shumagin Corporation
- Aleutians East Borough
- Trident Seafoods Corporation

**Project Name and Site Location:** City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk—King Cove, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The King Cove City dock, which services the AMHS, is approximately one mile from town. The gravel dock is large and sparse—there are no terminal facilities or orientation signs.

**Interpretive Significance:** This dock serves as the gateway to King Cove.

**Project Goals:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience of King Cove
- Provide passengers not intending to explore the community a glimpse into the resources of the area

**Project Description:** A four-paneled roofed interpretive and informational kiosk is recommended for the dock. This kiosk could contain panels that interpret Aleut culture, fishing, and the history and people of King Cove. Other information may include:

- Map of the community with local attractions indicated
- Walking distances
- Federal, state, and locally designated lands
- Description of available resources and their location
- A list of things to see and do
- Where to get additional information and maps

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type B interpretive kiosk

**Interpretive Objective:** The majority of visitors who view the kiosk will recognize King Cove as part of a dynamic maritime region that is a crossroads for culture, ecology, and commerce.

**Land Owner/Manager:** The City of King Cove

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Aleutians East Borough



*King Cove  
State of Alaska © Community Photo Library*

**Project Name and Site Location:** Hovercraft Tour to Cold Bay—King Cove, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The King Cove hovercraft represents a twenty-year struggle to develop a safe, dependable link to the Cold Bay airport located eighteen miles away. For approximately \$75/person, villagers and freight are ferried from King Cove to a terminal site about three-quarters of a mile south of the Cold Bay dock.

**Interpretive Significance:** King Cove is located on a sand spit fronting Deer Passage and Deer Island, wedged between the dramatic peaks of the Aleutian Range and the Pacific Ocean. The community was the site of one of Alaska's largest and oldest salmon canneries. Brown bears are abundant.

**Project Goals:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience of King Cove and Cold Bay
- Provide passengers with an alternative way to experience King Cove and Cold Bay
- Provide an economic boost to the community of King Cove

**Project Description:** A fee-based hovercraft tour option is proposed for passengers aboard the M/V Tustumena. During the King Cove port call, passengers would have the option of taking an overland shuttle bus in King Cove to the hovercraft landing, and then traveling by sea to Cold Bay. Approximately 25 people can fit on the King Cove shuttle bus, which would meet the ferry during the port call. Visitors could make reservations beforehand or onsite if there is space left on the tour. The Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge ferry naturalist would give naturalist talks on the shuttle bus and hovercraft.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Oral interpretive program

**Interpretive Objectives:** The majority of visitors will state that taking the hovercraft tour significantly improved their travel experience. The majority of visitors who take the tour will also recognize King Cove as part of a dynamic maritime region that is a crossroads for culture, ecology, and commerce.

**Land Owner/Manager:** Aleutians East Borough (contact Hovercraft Captain Gary Mack)

**Potential Partnerships:**

- The Alaska Marine Highway System
- The City of King Cove
- The City of Cold Bay
- Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Izembek National Wildlife Refuge



*Pavlof volcano could be seen from a hovercraft tour  
Ron Thomas, Alaska Volcano Observatory*

**Project Name and Site Location:** City Dock Interpretation—Cold Bay, Alaska

**Site Description:** The one-half mile city dock terminates on a stark wood platform devoid of interpretation or orientation information.

**Interpretive Significance:** Cold Bay was utilized extensively by Native Aleutian communities, and later, by European and Russian explorers and traders for its rich fish and wildlife resources. During World War II, it became the site of a strategic airbase and navy base. Cold Bay is now home to the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, which is famous for its migratory bird population. The scenery is magnificent. On a clear day, some of the most dramatic sites in the world can be seen from the dock. To the west is Shishaldin Volcano, a National Natural Landmark. Shishaldin almost always has a puff of steam emitting from its summit crater. About 35 miles due east are the dramatic Aghileen Pinnacles. Sitting next to the pinnacles is 8,200-foot Pavlov, another active volcano visible from Cold Bay. Birding from the dock is also exceptional.

**Project Goals:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience of Cold Bay
- Improve the aesthetic qualities of the ferry dock
- Provide passengers not intending to explore the community a portrait of the area’s resources

**Project Description:** Five small, low-profile interpretive panels are proposed for installation on the City dock. Interpretive panel topics may include geology, waterfowl, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge and Izembek State Game Refuge, marine and terrestrial mammals, and Cold Bay’s World War II history.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type D interpretive panels

**Interpretive Objectives:** After viewing these exhibits, the majority of visitors to the site will be able to state that Cold Bay was important to the defense against Japanese invasion during World War II. The majority of visitors will also be able to state that the area provides migrating birds with important habitat.

**Land Owner/Manager:** City of Cold Bay

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Izembek National Wildlife Refuge
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Aleutians East Borough
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)



Dock at Cold Bay

**Project Name and Site Location:** Interpretive and Informational Structure—Cold Bay, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The one-half mile City dock terminates on a stark wood platform devoid of interpretation or orientation information.

**Interpretive Significance:** Cold Bay was utilized extensively by Native Aleutian communities, and later, by European and Russian explorers and traders for its rich fish and wildlife resources. During World War II, it became the site of a strategic airbase and navy base. Cold Bay is now home to the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, famous for its migratory bird population. The scenery is magnificent—on a clear day, some of the most dramatic sites in the world can be seen.

**Project Goals:**

- Provide passengers with a shelter that keeps out harsh winds
- Encourage passengers to explore Cold Bay by providing orientation information
- Enhance the interpretive experience of Cold Bay

**Project Description:** A roofed interpretive and informational structure is proposed for installation on the land side of the Cold Bay dock. This kiosk could contain interpretive panels that may interpret geology, community life, waterfowl, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, Izembek State Game Refuge, marine and terrestrial mammals, and Cold Bay’s World War II history. If interpretive panels are installed on the dock, interpretive media in the land structure should complement and augment dock panel topics. Other information may include:

- Map of the community with local attractions indicated
- Walking and driving distances
- Federal, state, and locally designated lands
- Description of available resources and their location
- A list of things to see and do
- Where to get additional information and maps

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** A modified Type B interpretive kiosk that includes seating and greater wind protection may be used to complete this project. An alternative idea is to create a

structure similar to the South Palmer Station (see Fig 9). Additional project designs are necessary to implement this recommendation.

**Interpretive Objectives:** After viewing the exhibits in the interpretive structure, the majority of visitors will be able to list at least two of the Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment’s themes. The majority of visitors will also state that the facility enhanced their experience.

**Land Owner/Manager:** City of Cold Bay

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Izembek National Wildlife Refuge
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Aleutians East Borough
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)



Figure 9. South Palmer Station Structure

**Project Name and Site Location:** The City Dock Shed—Cold Bay, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The shed is at the end of the city dock. The shed is painted with a landscaped image of a bear with the words “Cold Bay, Alaska.” The paint is badly peeling, giving the shed a run-down appearance.

**Interpretive Significance:** The shed, with its “Cold Bay, Alaska” motif, is an often-photographed landmark. Since it is the only structure on the dock, it is the first thing that visitors notice upon disembarking.

**Project Goals:**

- Improve the aesthetic qualities of the city dock
- Showcase community pride

**Project Description:** It is proposed to repaint the city dock shed with an interpretive mural that portrays community pride, relates to the region’s interpretive themes, and provides visitors a more aesthetic object to photograph. A community map may also be painted on the shed.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Weather-resistant paint

**Interpretive Objective:** After viewing the mural, the majority of visitors will be able to state at least two of the Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment’s interpretive themes.

**Land Owner/Manager:** City of Cold Bay

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Izembek National Wildlife Refuge
- Aleutians East Borough
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)



*Shed at the end of the Cold Bay dock*

**Project Name and Site Location:** Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Bus—Cold Bay, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** Izembek National Wildlife Refuge sponsors a refuge tour that is available to ferry passengers. A tour bus meets passengers at the ferry dock and takes them on a journey through the refuge and to Grant Point. Unfortunately, the bus has a limited number of seats—15 for passengers and one for the interpreter—and not all who want to go on the tour are able. At Grant Point, overlooking the world famous Izembek Lagoon, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge has constructed a small observation building. Through the 360-degree viewing windows, visitors can view a variety of wildlife including waterfowl, shorebirds, sea otter, seals, gray whales, and killer whales. Interpretive panels help visitors understand and learn more about the variety of species in this important eelgrass environment.

**Interpretive Significance:** Izembek National Wildlife Refuge protects the watershed of Izembek Lagoon, one of the largest eelgrass beds in the world. This estuary serves as an international crossroad to migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. The world's population of Pacific brant, thousands of Canada geese, and other waterfowl congregate at the lagoon from late August through early November. Each spring and fall, the entire population of emperor geese migrates through Izembek, with several thousand wintering here. The colorful Steller's eider, a threatened species that nests on the Arctic coast of Alaska and Siberia and molts at Izembek Lagoon in fall, is the most common wintering duck. Izembek Refuge provides the final opportunity for many migrating shorebirds to feed and rest before their long over-water flights to wintering areas as far away as South America, Polynesia, and New Zealand.

**Project Goal:**

- Expand capacity of the Refuge tour to provide for all interested passengers

**Project Description:** It is proposed to replace the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge tour bus with a bus that can accommodate everyone interested in touring the refuge.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** A heavy-duty bus that will accommodate at least 30 people

**Interpretive Objectives:** After attending the Refuge tour, the majority of visitors will say the service significantly improved their travel experience. The majority of visitors will also be able to state that Izembek National Wildlife Refuge provides migrating birds with important habitat.

**Land Owner/Manager:** Izembek National Wildlife Refuge

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Aleutians East Borough
- City of Cold Bay
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Alaska Geographic
- Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges



Izembek Refuge tour bus



**Project Name and Site Location:** Community Center Enhancements—Cold Bay, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The Cold Bay Community Center is a new, centrally-located building; however, it lacks interpretation and is not visitor friendly.

**Interpretive Significance:** The center, which could also serve as a visitor center, has unlimited potential as a visitor resource.

**Project Goals:**

- Add interpretation at the community center to enhance the interpretive experience of Cold Bay
- Maximize use of the community center through upgrades that will make the center more visitor friendly

**Project Description:** Community center improvements are recommended to provide travelers with the opportunity to learn about the stories of Cold Bay.

- **Canon Relocation and Interpretation.** The historic World War II cannon and interpretive panel may be installed in front of the community center.
- **Install Interpretive Panels.** A series of interpretive panels may be installed inside on the community center walls. In keeping with the theme of “community,” panels may interpret the people and community of Cold Bay over time.
- **Create Local Arts & Crafts Program.** A partnership with the local artist community could encourage interactions between visitors and local residents.
- **Listening Station.** A listening station consisting of a push button audio program would interpret contemporary life in Cold Bay. Content could include oral histories and local voices.
- **Grant Point Slideshow.** A slideshow may be created that runs through a series of images of Grant Point in Izembek National Wildlife Refuge.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type D interpretive panel for outside the community center; interpretive panels for inside the community center; audio station, slideshow projector, laptop, and screen.

**Interpretive Objectives:** The majority of Cold Bay visitors who visit the community center will state that the interpretive experience enhanced their trip. The majority of visitors who view displays in

the Cold Bay community center will recognize Cold Bay as part of a dynamic maritime region that is a crossroads for culture, ecology, and commerce.

**Land Owner/Manager:** City of Cold Bay

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Aleutians East Borough
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Izembek National Wildlife Refuge



Community Center  
State of Alaska © Community Photo Library, Elizabeth Manfred

**Project Name and Site Location:** Quonset Hut Chapel Restoration and Interpretation—Cold Bay, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The town’s church was housed in a Quonset hut left behind by the Air Force during World War II. It is privately owned and no longer in use.

**Interpretive Significance:** Quonset huts were ubiquitous in Alaska during World War II. They appeared virtually everywhere troops were stationed, which was throughout the territory. One estimate suggests that between 20,000 and 30,000 of the huts were shipped to Alaska. Quonsets were typically used for housing, library and medical facilities, storage, mechanical work, and as post offices.

**Project Goals:**

- Restore the Quonset Hut Chapel to preserve and protect this valuable resource
- Create a greater awareness of Cold Bay and Alaska’s role in World War II

**Project Description:** Restoration of the historic World War II Quonset Hut Chapel is recommended to house, recognize, preserve, and interpret Cold Bay’s heritage. Creation of an interpretive plan is recommended to assist with planning and display specifications. Two interpretive panels could be installed outside to interpret the Quonset Hut and World War II activities in Cold Bay.

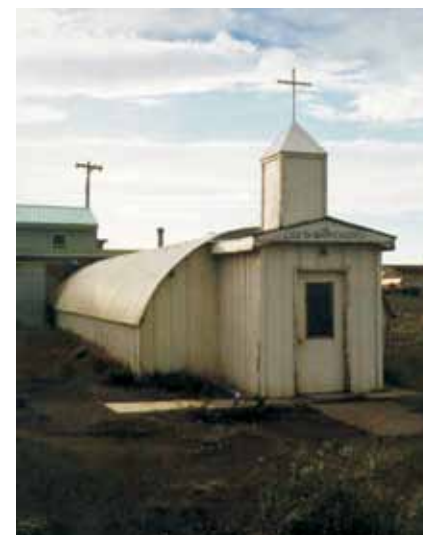
**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type D interpretive panels are recommended for outside the museum. Interactive indoor interpretive displays are recommended in order to facilitate connections between visitors and Cold Bay’s resources. Media will include a variety of interpretive tools such as audio devices, oral histories, innovative interpretive panels, film, and sculpture.

**Interpretive Objectives:** After visiting the museum, the majority of visitors will have a greater appreciation of Cold Bay’s history and will be able to state that Cold Bay was important to the defense of Japanese invasion during World War II.

**Land Owner/Manager:** Privately owned by Connie Newton, owner of the Bearfoot Inn

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Aleutians East Borough
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- The Alaska State Office of History and Archaeology



*Cold Bay Quonset Hut Chapel  
State of Alaska © Community Photo Library*

**Project Name and Site Location:** Airport Interpretive Enhancements—Cold Bay, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** Cold Bay airport is a public airport located in downtown Cold Bay. It is owned by the state and is one of the main airports serving the Alaska Peninsula. The terminal itself is owned by Pen Air. There is also a new terminal that is owned by the Aleutians East Borough. Interpretive enhancements may be installed in either terminal, depending on when the new terminal opens.

**Interpretive Significance:** Built during World War II, Cold Bay's main runway is the fifth-largest in Alaska. Today it is used by scheduled cargo flights and is sometimes used as an emergency diversion airport for passenger flights across the Pacific Ocean. Some ferry passengers travel to Cold Bay and fly back to their point of origin.

**Project Goal:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience at the airport

**Project Description:** Airport interpretive enhancements will provide travelers with the opportunity to learn about the stories of Cold Bay and the surrounding region.

- **Public Lands Display.** A display of all public lands in the Cold Bay area, plus those along the ferry route, is recommended.
- **Interactive Kiosk.** A touch screen electronic kiosk with an audio component is recommended. Implementation of this recommendation would encourage visitors to learn about the region's many interpretive themes, Cold Bay history, rural Alaska, Izembek National Wildlife Refuge and Izembek State Game Refuge, World War II history and influence, and more.
- **Cold Bay Interpretive Map.** An interpretive map of Cold Bay, with distances from Cold Bay to the rest of the world, is recommended.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Interactive kiosk; panels made from high-pressure laminate

**Interpretive Objectives:** After viewing airport displays, the majority of visitors will state that interpretive media enhanced their trip. The majority of visitors who view displays will also recognize Cold Bay as part of a dynamic maritime region that is a crossroads for culture, ecology, and commerce.

**Land Owner/Manager:** The terminal is owned by Pen Air. There is also a new terminal not yet in

use that is owned by the Aleutians East Borough.

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Aleutians East Borough
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- The Alaska State Office of History and Archaeology
- Izembek National Wildlife Refuge



Cold Bay  
State of Alaska © Community Photo Library, Elizabeth Manfred

**Project Name and Site Location:** City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk—False Pass, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** There is no boat harbor in False Pass, but the city dock and boat ramp, which are one-half mile from town, are available for ferry use.

**Interpretive Significance:** The city dock serves as the gateway to False Pass. The name False Pass is derived from the fact that the Bering Sea side of the strait is extremely shallow and cannot accommodate large vessels. The area was originally settled by a homesteader in the early 1900s. It grew with the establishment of a cannery, which has operated almost continuously since 1917.

**Project Goals:**

- Encourage passengers to explore False Pass by providing orientation information
- Provide passengers not intending to explore the community a portrait of the area’s resources
- Enhance the interpretive experience of False Pass

**Project Description:** A four-paneled interpretive and informational kiosk is recommended to improve and enrich ferry visitors’ experience. This kiosk could contain interpretive panels on Aleut culture, Unimak Island, volcanoes, bears, the cannery, whales, and the history and people of False Pass. Other information may include:

- Map of the community with local attractions indicated
- Walking distances
- Federal, state, and locally designated lands
- Description of available resources and their location
- A list of things to see and do

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type B interpretive kiosk

**Interpretive Objectives:** The majority of visitors who view this exhibit will explore False Pass. The majority of visitors who view displays will also recognize False Pass as part of a dynamic maritime region that is a crossroads for culture, ecology, and commerce.

**Land Owner/Manager:** The City of False Pass

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Aleutians East Borough
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- False Pass Tribal Council
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Peter Pan Seafoods



False Pass  
State of Alaska © Community Photo Library, Lotta Hines

**Project Name and Site Location:** City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk—Akutan, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** A 200-foot dock and a small boat mooring basin are available. Construction of a large boat harbor began in 2004. Boats, amphibious aircraft, and helicopters are the only means of transportation in and out of Akutan.

**Interpretive Significance:** Akutan began in 1878 as a fur storage and trading post for the Western Fur & Trading Company. A whale processing station was built across the bay in 1912. It was the only whaling station in the Aleutians and operated until 1939. During World War II, Akutan residents were evacuated. This exposure to the outside world brought many changes to the traditional lifestyle and attitudes of the community.

**Project Goals:**

- Encourage passengers to explore Akutan by providing orientation information
- Provide passengers not intending to explore the community a portrait of the area’s resources
- Enhance the interpretive experience of Akutan

**Project Description:** A four-paneled interpretive and informational kiosk is recommended to improve and enrich ferry visitors’ experiences. This kiosk may contain interpretive panels on Aleut culture, the cannery, whaling, and the history and people of Akutan. Other information may include:

- Map of the community with local attractions indicated
- Walking distances
- Federal, state, and locally designated lands
- Description of available resources and their location
- A list of things to see and do

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type B interpretive kiosk

**Interpretive Objective:** The majority of visitors who view displays will recognize Akutan as part of a dynamic maritime region that is a crossroads for culture, ecology, and commerce.

**Land Owner/Manager:** The City of Akutan

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Aleutians East Borough
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- Trident Seafoods
- The Native Village of Akutan



*Akutan  
Alaska Volcano Observatory/U.S. Geological Survey, R.G. McGimsey*

**Project Name and Site Location:** City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk—Unalaska, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The ferry docks at the city dock about three-quarters of a mile from the visitor facilities. Unalaska’s economy is based largely in part on the commercial fishing, fish processing, fleet services, and transportation services located in this industrial part of the community.

**Interpretive Significance:** Known as the “Crossroads of the Aleutians,” Unalaska has witnessed sweeping change in nine thousand years of human history. The Unangan people were the first to inhabit the island of Unalaska. They developed an intricate and complex society long before the first contact with Russian fur traders who documented their existence. Unalaska is also known to war veterans and history buffs as the only harbor in North America, besides Pearl Harbor, that was bombed during World War II. The city enjoys a strategic position near the center of the nation’s most productive fishing grounds.

**Project Goals:**

- Encourage passengers to explore Unalaska by providing orientation information
- Enhance the interpretive experience of Unalaska

**Project Description:** A roofed interpretive and informational kiosk is recommended for the dock. This kiosk could contain interpretive panels that will interpret Aleut culture, the fishing culture of Unalaska, World War II, and the history and people of Unalaska. Other information may include:

- Map of the community with local attractions indicated
- Walking and driving distances
- Federal, state, and locally designated lands
- Description of available resources and their location
- A list of things to see and do
- Where to get additional information and maps

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type B interpretive kiosk

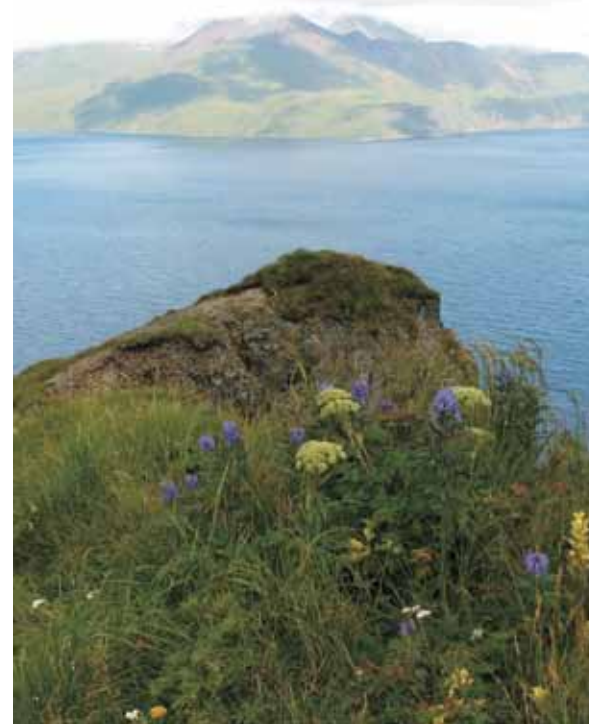
**Interpretive Objectives:** The majority of visitors who view this exhibit will be inspired to explore

Unalaska. The majority of visitors who view displays will also recognize Unalaska as part of a dynamic maritime region that is a crossroads for culture, ecology, and commerce.

**Land Owner/Manager:** The City of Unalaska

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Southwest Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- The National Park Service
- The Museum of the Aleutians
- Ounalashka Corporation



Unalaska

**Project Name and Site Location:** Interpretive Trail—Unalaska, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** This proposed trail will rim the harbor, beginning where the ferry docks and heading into town. Currently, people walking in this part of town share a two-track, muddy gravel road with constant vehicle traffic. Pedestrian access is uninviting and unsafe.

**Interpretive Significance:** The City of Unalaska is the number one fishing port in the United States. The harbor is a protected, deep-water port that hosts two large marine cranes and serves two major international shipping companies. The harbor has 10 major docks for fishing, fuel, and cargo ships, and is a waypoint for barge traffic from Anchorage and the western coast of Alaska. Unalaska is also known to War veterans and history buffs as the only land in North America, besides Pearl Harbor, that was bombed by Japanese zeros during World War II.

**Project Goals:**

- Encourage passengers to explore Unalaska by providing pedestrian travel from the ferry dock to the community's resources and services
- Enhance the interpretive experience of Unalaska by linking major Unalaska themes
- Improve pedestrian travel and safety

**Project Description:** An interpretive trail from where the ferry docks and heading into town is recommended. This trail would encourage ferry passengers and others to walk into town. Interpretive displays, including interpretive panels and sculpture, could be installed at strategic locations along the trail. Interpretive panel topics may include fishing culture and history, WWII history, modern day life, the evolution of marine transportation, geology, shorebirds, waterfowl, and other interpretive themes of the route. A bronze interpretive sculpture of a fishing net and a crab pot covered on top with bald eagles may be placed along the trail. Once the trail is completed, partner organizations could provide online links to a virtual Unalaska Interpretive Trail on Google Earth. See the following website for an example:

<http://campbelltrail.muni.org/CCIT/20-Page.html>

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type C interpretive panels; bronze and stone sculptures

**Interpretive Objectives:** After viewing these displays, the majority of visitors will be able to state

that people have become a major influence in the region, producing dramatic effects. The majority of visitors who view displays will also recognize trade as an important influence of the region.

**Land Owner/Manager:** The City of Unalaska

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- The National Park Service
- The Museum of the Aleutians
- Ounalashka Corporation
- Unalaska Parks, Culture and Recreation Department



Unalaska

**Project Name and Site Location:** Airport Enhancements—Unalaska, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** Unalaska Airport is a public airport in the City of Unalaska, on Amaknak Island.

**Interpretive Significance:** Unalaska is known as the “Crossroads of the Aleutians.” In many ways, this community is the heart of the entire region. Many visitors take the ferry to Unalaska, spend a few days in town, and then fly out.

**Project Goal:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience of the airport

**Project Description:** Airport interpretive improvements are recommended to provide travelers with the opportunity to learn about the stories and interpretive themes of Unalaska.

- **Interpretive Panels.** Airport interpretive panel topics may emphasize Unalaska as the heart of the Aleutians, highlighting fishing culture and history, World War II history, volcanoes, and other interpretive themes of the route.
- **Unalaska Interpretive Map.** An interpretive map of Unalaska, with distances from Unalaska to the rest of the world is recommended.
- **Aleutian Chain Map.** A wall map is recommended to familiarize travelers with the extent of the Aleutian Islands and the location of small villages, such as Nikolski, Akutan, Adak, Atka, and important historical and wildlife islands, such as Attu, Kiska, Bogoslof, and Buldir.
- **Model Ship Display.** A model ship display with trawl gear and a school of fish in a net is proposed.
- **Interactive Kiosk.** A touch screen electronic kiosk with an audio component is recommended. The kiosk could have the following touch screen options: podcasts, natural history, Unalaska history, Unalaska fishing culture, and more. The primary theme of this display should focus on natural history to prevent redundancy of displays at the World War II Museum and the Museum of the Aleutians.

**Aleut Art.** An art display will provide insight into Aleutian heritage by describing, interpreting, and illustrating Aleut art. The display may document the revival of cultural traditions including dance, weaving, carving, painting, and woodworking. This exhibit will provide a space for contemporary Aleut artists to showcase their work.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Panels made from high-pressure laminate; model ship; interactive kiosk; contemporary Aleut art

**Interpretive Objectives:** After viewing airport interpretive displays, the majority of visitors will state that the displays enhanced their trip. The majority of visitors who view displays will also recognize Unalaska as part of a dynamic maritime region that is a crossroads for culture, ecology, and commerce.

**Land Owner/Manager:** Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

**Potential Partnerships:**

- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- The National Park Service
- The Museum of the Aleutians
- Ounalashka Corporation
- City of Unalaska
- Qawalangin Tribe
- Unalaska Convention and Visitors Bureau



**Project Name and Site Location:** Grand Aleutian Hotel Interpretation—Unalaska, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** The Grand Aleutian Hotel is conveniently located on Amaknak Island, close to the airport and on the waterfront.

**Interpretive Significance:** The Grand Aleutian is the most popular place to stay and eat in Unalaska. The hotel also has the largest gift shop in Unalaska. Rooms have expansive views of the surrounding mountains and waterways. Throughout the rooms and common areas, works of local and regional artists capture Unalaska's landscape and depict its rich cultural heritage. From a restaurant on the second floor, birdwatchers can see waterfowl in the bay.

**Project Goal:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience at the Grand Aleutian Hotel

**Project Description:** Bird identification signs on the deck of the hotel are recommended to identify both wintering and summering species typically seen in Margaret Bay.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type C interpretive panels

**Interpretive Objectives:** After viewing the hotel deck displays, the majority of visitors will be able to identify at least five species of birds commonly seen in Margaret Bay. The majority of visitors will also recognize Unalaska as an important nesting, breeding, and rearing area for seabirds.

**Land Owner/Manager:** UniSea Corporation

**Potential Partnerships:**

- City of Unalaska
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- The Museum of the Aleutians
- Ounalashka Corporation



Albatross



Captains Bay



The Grand Aleutian/Harbor View Inn

**Project Name and Site Location:** Pillbox Park—Unalaska, Alaska

**Site Description and Background:** This site is located off Airport Beach Road, across the road from the Grand Aleutian Hotel. It encompasses many important remnants of World War II—strewn with pillboxes, this area is the site of the bombing of Fort Mears. It also offers good views of Hog Island. In 1998 the National Park Service designed a site concept as part of an Aleutian World War II National Historic Area Site Facility Guide to make the World War II resources at the site more accessible to the public (see Fig. 10).

**Interpretive Significance:** Fort Mears was a United States Army and Air Force Base during the Aleutian WWII Campaign and once had hundreds of buildings. Today, remnants of the base include the many pillboxes dotting this site that provided emergency cover in case of enemy attack and were also used as machine gun bunkers. On this site in June 4, 1942, Japanese aircraft dropped bombs on the fort, killing 25 men and injuring others. After the June bombing, troops were dispersed to nearby Hog Island where Garrison 7 radio operators, often stranded for weeks at a time during bad weather, transmitted critical meteorological data, tide information, and constant weather updates to outposts along the coastline.

**Project Goal:**

- Enhance the interpretive experience of Unalaska
- Complement and expand World War II interpretation in the community

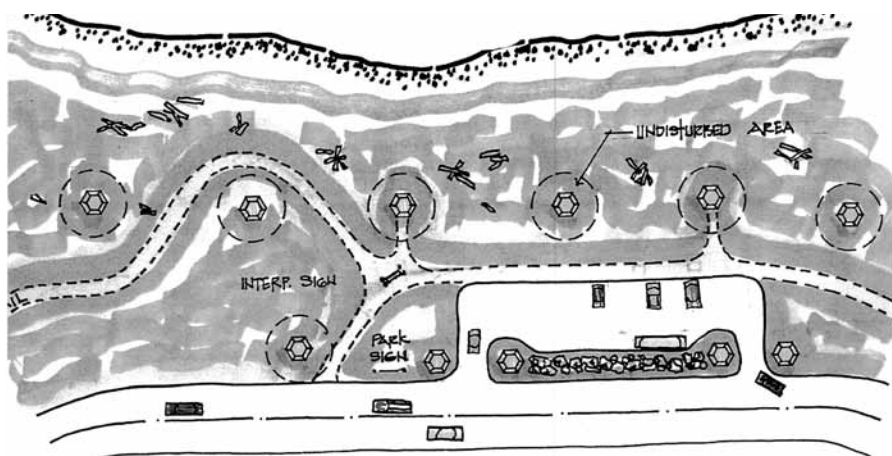


Figure 10. Conceptual Drawing for NPS Pillbox Park

**Project Description:** Taking advantage of the pillboxes, the easy accessibility of the site, the view of Hog Island, and the location of the bombing of Fort Mears, this interpretive area could interpret the World War II history of Unalaska without duplicating stories and displays at the Aleutians World War II National Historic Area and Visitor Center. Interpretive displays, including interpretive kiosks, panels, and sculpture are recommended. A parking lot and trails would make resources more accessible (see Fig. 10).

**Interpretive Objectives:** After visiting Pillbox Park, the majority of visitors will share that the park expanded their knowledge of Fort Mears and Unalaska's role in World War II.

**Recommended Interpretive Media:** Type B interpretive kiosk and type C interpretive panels

**Land Owner/Manager:** Ounalashka Corporation

**Potential Partnerships:**

- City of Unalaska
- National Park Service
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC)
- Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge
- The Museum of the Aleutians

# 11.

## DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design guidelines recommend that managers use unifying elements to connect interpretive sites and material and to give the route a distinctive appearance. Decision makers should work with professional interpreters to ensure facilities and products meet these design recommendations.

### Interpretive Panels

**Panel Design.** Interpretive panels in port communities should have a unifying design element to instill a sense of familiarity to visitors and have a similar visual characteristic. Managers should also take into consideration existing panels and displays when choosing designs for new interpretive media. The content of an interpretive panel, including the theme and topic, should determine the types of graphics used. Interpretive text should exhibit a consistency in writing style. This can be accomplished by utilizing one contractor for all interpretive panel projects so that interpretation has a consistent look and style. The America's Byways logo should be on all Kodiak and Aleutians Segment interpretive panels.

**Panel Layout.** Fig. 11 shows a typical Alaska State Park interpretive panel layout, while Figs. 12 & 13 show the typographic standards developed for National Park Service wayside exhibits. Fig. 14 illustrates USFWS interpretation for Izembek Lagoon. Regardless of the land manager, panels along the Kodiak and the Aleutians Segment should have a similar layout design and incorporate these major textual elements.

*Interpretation is a communication process that forges intellectual and emotional connections between the interests of the visitor and the meanings inherent in the resource.*

—Lisa Brochu, *Interpretive Planning: The 5-M Model for Successful Planning Projects*

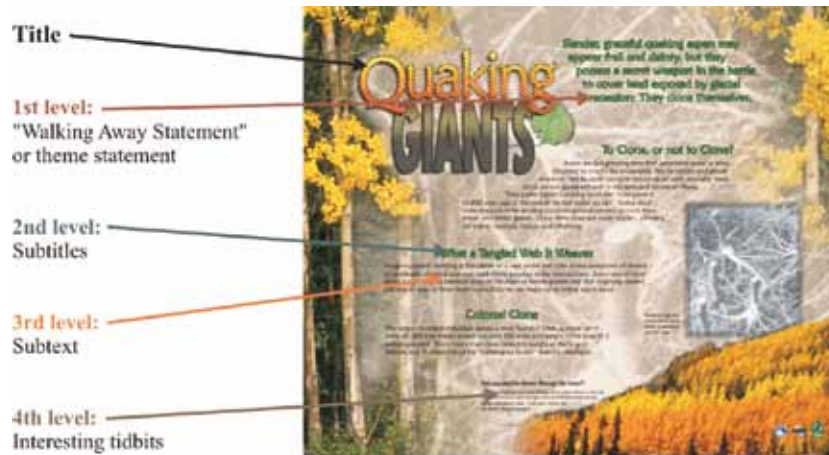


Figure 11. State Park Interpretive Panel Layout



Figure 12. National Park Service Interpretive Panel Layout 1

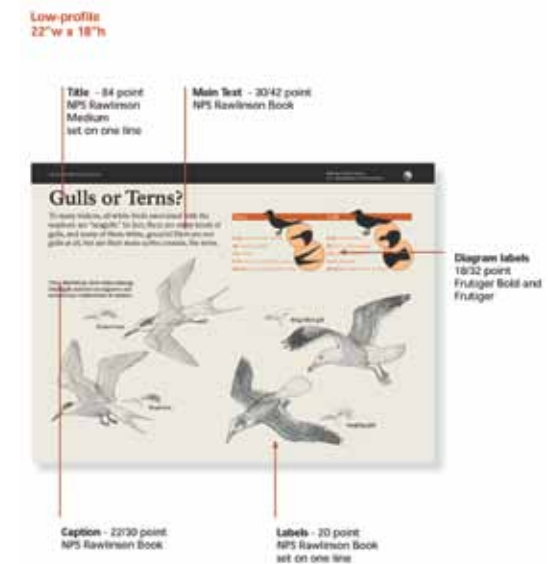


Figure 13. National Park Service Interpretive Panel Layout 2

**Figure 11 description:** The different textual components of the panel are as follows:

- **Title:** the title tells the audience what the panel is about and should stimulate further investigation. Bold colors and unique fonts can attract the audience.
- **1<sup>st</sup> level:** the walking away statement or theme statement presents the overall theme of the panel and provokes the audience to read further. However, if this statement is the only thing they read, they should still “walk away” with the main message of the panel. The font size is typically between 50-65 points. The font type can be somewhat creative and differ from the body text as long as it is legible.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> level:** subtitles introduce readers to the subtext below. The subtitle should be representative of its subtext and vice versa. Typically, the walking away statement and subtitles have the same font type and are the same size.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> level:** the subtext is the main body of text. It supports the walking away statement. Both the subtext and walking away statement should relate the resource being interpreted to the audience and reveal something meaningful about the resource. Subtext font is typically around 32 points.
- **4<sup>th</sup> level:** 4<sup>th</sup> level text reveals interesting information not included in the subtext; it can be used to describe a process, person, or an event. It can also describe a detailed photograph. Font size is typically between 18-22 points.

**Photo captions and credits** describe the photograph portrayed and give credit to photographers and holding agencies. Photo captions and credits are 12 and 9 points respectively.

**Panel Size.** It is recommended that interpretive panels along the route adopt the same panel size standards to keep a consistent look.

- Horizontal interpretive panel: 36.5”w x 30.5”h
- Vertical interpretive panel (for kiosks): 30.5”w x 36.5”h

Some sites may require a panoramic-shaped panel or other alternate design.

**Panel Mount.** It is recommended that interpretive panel mounts are either type C interpretive panel or type D interpretive sign. These standards are recognizable and thematic elements that will help link individual sites together. These designs bolt horizontally-oriented interpretive panels to an aluminum plate, supported by two 4X4s. Type Cs, which are appropriate for trails and overlooks, are buried into the ground. Type Ds, which are more appropriate for decks and docks, are bolted to wood or installed via concrete.

**Two and Four-paneled Kiosks.** To display multiple interpretive panels and bulletin boards, type A and B interpretive kiosks are recommended. These kiosks are roofed, typically displaying vertically-oriented interpretive panels. These standards are recognizable thematic elements that will link individual sites together. Four-panel kiosks can be easily converted to hold more panels by adding an additional beam.



Figure 14. USFWS Interpretation for Izembek Lagoon

# 12.

## IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES

This plan is a representation of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference's (SWAMC) vision for interpretation along this segment of the Alaska Marine Highway. These two organizations will play a pivotal role in overseeing and prioritizing implementation activities and in preparing and presenting projects to the AMHS for implementation coordination specific to AMHS vessels and properties. See Table 5 for a prioritized summary of project leads for each interpretive recommendation. The suggestions in this table are intended only as that—suggestions; projects may be implemented by any organization or agency and at any time.



Unalaska



Table 5. Interpretive Project Recommendations

LOCATION	PROJECT PROPOSAL	POTENTIAL PROJECT LEAD <sup>20</sup> *does not preclude others from applying for project funding	PRIORITY (Low, medium, high)
<b>Onboard the M/V Tustumena</b>			
	Ferry Naturalist Program	USFWS	H
	Expanded and Upgraded Theater	AMHS	H
	Electronic Kiosk	USFWS	L
	Tabletop Interpretive Displays	USFWS	H
	Improved Lending Library	AMHS & AKGEO	M
	Stateroom Displays	USFWS	M
	Digital Map	AMHS	H
	Bulletin Board	AMHS	M
	Remove Outdated Material	AMHS	H
	Youth Oceans Kit	USFWS	H
	Updated and Expanded Rack Display	AMHS	H
	Audio Guides	USFWS	L
	Interpret Existing Natural History Displays	USFWS	M
	Alaska Geographic Library	AMHS	M
	Chart Light	AMHS	M
<b>Publications</b>			
	Podcasts	USFWS	M
	AMHS Kodiak and Aleutians Segment Brochure	USFWS & AMHS	H
	Cold Bay and Izembek Refuge Birding Brochure	USFWS	M
	State Critical Habitat Area and Game Refuge Brochures	ADF&G	L
	Self-guided Walking Maps (Port Lions, Chignik, King Cove, Sand Point, False Pass, Cold Bay, Akutan, and Unalaska)	SWAMC	H
	Izembek Film	USFWS	M
	AMHS Kodiak and the Aleutians Film	AMHS	H

<sup>20</sup> The following entities have expressed interest in participating: USFWS—United States Fish and Wildlife Service; AMHS—Alaska Marine Highway System; ADF&G—Alaska Department of Fish and Game; SWAMC—Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference; CACS—Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies; ADOT&PF—Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; KMM—Kodiak Maritime Museum; KICVB—Kodiak Island Convention and Visitors Bureau; ADPOR—Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation; AEB—Aleutians East Borough; AKGEO—Alaska Geographic; KIB—Kodiak Island Borough

<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>PROJECT PROPOSAL</b>	<b>POTENTIAL PROJECT LEAD<sup>21</sup></b> *does not preclude others from applying for project funding	<b>PRIORITY (Low, medium, high)</b>
	State Critical Habitat Area and Game Refuge Film	ADF&G	L
	Port Community Video Clips	SWAMC	H
	Identification Charts	USFWS	H
	Birding the Ferry Route Guide	USFWS	H
	Regional Recreation Maps	SWAMC	M
<b>Online</b>			
	AMHS Kodiak and the Aleutians Website	SWAMC/AMHS	H
	Update Homer Chamber Website	Homer Chamber	M
<b>Programs</b>			
	Guided Tour Volunteer Program	USFWS	M
<b>Staffing</b>			
	Permanent Funding for Naturalist Position Onboard the M/V Tustumena	USFWS	H
<b>Staff Resources</b>			
	Naturalist Primer	USFWS	H
<b>Port Community Interpretive Projects—Homer</b>			
	Homer Spit Interpretive Center	CACS	M
	Homer Spit Trailside Interpretation	City of Homer	M
	Extension of the Homer Spit Trail	City of Homer	M
	End of the Road Wayside	City of Homer	M
	Boat Harbor Interpretation	Pratt Museum	M
	Ferry Terminal Enhancements	ADOT&PF	H
	Fox River Flats Interpretive Kiosk	ADF&G	L
	Airport State Critical Habitat Area Interpretation	ADF&G	L
	Update Kachemak Bay State Park and Wilderness Park Airport Display	ADPOR	L
	Grewingk Glacier Trailside Interpretation	ADPOR	L
	Beluga Slough Trail Enhancement	USFWS/City of Homer	M

<sup>21</sup> Acronyms: USFWS—United States Fish and Wildlife Service; AMHS—Alaska Marine Highway System; ADF&G—Alaska Department of Fish and Game; SWAMC—Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference; CACS—Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies; ADOT&PF—Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; KMM—Kodiak Maritime Museum; KICVB—Kodiak Island Convention and Visitors Bureau; ADPOR—Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation; AEB—Aleutians East Borough; AKGEO—Alaska Geographic; KIB—Kodiak Island Borough



LOCATION	PROJECT PROPOSAL	POTENTIAL PROJECT LEAD <sup>22</sup> *does not preclude others from applying for project funding	PRIORITY (Low, medium, high)
	Islands & Ocean Ferry Interpretive Exhibit	USFWS	M
<b>Port Community Interpretive Projects—Kodiak</b>			
	Native Plant Interpretation	City of Kodiak	M
	Cannery Row Trail and Interpretation	KMM	M
	Maritime Heritage Center and Museum	KMM	M
	Ferry Terminal Electronic Kiosk	KICVB/AMHS	H
	Ft. Abercrombie State Historical Park Master Interpretive Plan	ADPOR	L
	Buskin River State Recreation Site Interpretation	ADPOR	L
	Island Lake Creek Trailside Interpretation	KIB	L
	Kodiak Military History Museum Audio Tour	ADPOR	L
<b>Port Community Interpretive Projects—Chignik</b>			
	City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk	City of Chignik	H
<b>Port Community Interpretive Projects—Sand Point</b>			
	City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk	City of Sand Point	H
	City Dock Bike Rental Kiosk	City of Sand Point	L
	Harbor Interpretation	City of Sand Point	H
	Airport Interpretive Enhancements	State of Alaska	
	Interpretive Bike Trail	City of SP/AEB	L
	Airport Interpretive Enhancements	State of Alaska	M
<b>Port Community Interpretive Projects—King Cove</b>			
	City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk	City of King Cove	H
	Hovercraft Tour to Cold Bay	AEB	M

<sup>22</sup> Acronyms: USFWS—United States Fish and Wildlife Service; AMHS—Alaska Marine Highway System; ADF&G—Alaska Department of Fish and Game; SWAMC—Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference; CACS—Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies; ADOT&PF—Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; KMM—Kodiak Maritime Museum; KICVB—Kodiak Island Convention and Visitors Bureau; ADPOR—Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation; AEB—Aleutians East Borough; AKGEO—Alaska Geographic; KIB—Kodiak Island Borough

<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>PROJECT PROPOSAL</b>	<b>POTENTIAL PROJECT LEAD<sup>23</sup></b> *does not preclude others from applying for project funding	<b>PRIORITY (Low, medium, high)</b>
<b>Port Community Interpretive Projects—Cold Bay</b>			
	City Dock Interpretation	USFWS	H
	Interpretive and Informational Structure	City of Cold Bay	H
	The City Dock Shed	City of Cold Bay	L
	Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Bus	USFWS	H
	Community Center Enhancements	City of Cold Bay	M
	Quonset Hut Chapel Restoration and Interpretation	C. Newton/SWAMC	M
	Airport Interpretive Enhancements	ADOT&PF	L
<b>Port Community Interpretive Projects—False Pass</b>			
	City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk	City of False Pass	H
<b>Port Community Interpretive Projects—Akutan</b>			
	City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk	City of Akutan	H
<b>Port Community Interpretive Projects—Unalaska</b>			
	City Dock Interpretive and Informational Kiosk	City of Unalaska	H
	Interpretive Trail	Unalaska CVB	M
	Airport Enhancements	Aleutian Museum	H
	Grand Aleutian Hotel Interpretation	UniSea Corp.	M
	Pillbox Park	National Park Service	M

<sup>23</sup> Acronyms: USFWS—United States Fish and Wildlife Service; AMHS—Alaska Marine Highway System; ADF&G—Alaska Department of Fish and Game; SWAMC—Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference; CACS—Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies; ADOT&PF—Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; KMM—Kodiak Maritime Museum; KICVB—Kodiak Island Convention and Visitors Bureau; ADPOR—Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation; AEB—Aleutians East Borough; AKGEO—Alaska Geographic; KIB—Kodiak Island Borough

# 13.

## ISSUES AND INFLUENCES

**Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) All-American Road.** In September 2005, the Alaska Marine Highway was named an All-American Road by the Federal Highway Administration. Partnering with other byway committees would bring lasting impacts in the way of further visibility, increased marketing opportunities, and linking of interpretive messages.

**Visitor Statistics.** An updated visitor study needs to be conducted to enhance data already collected by the AMHS. There is a need to know what visitors' motivations and expectations are for riding this ferry route, what their experience was like, the effectiveness of the ferry naturalist program, and their ideas for interpretive and educational opportunities.

**Electronic Media.** Growing reliance on electronic media creates an opportunity to develop electronic interpretive messages that not only reach out to a broader audience, but also are independent of interpretive staff. Audio tours have progressed dramatically over the last decade. Today's systems combine convenience and ease of use with excellent sound quality. Audio tours can be non-linear and self-paced, accommodating multiple languages and offering thousands of messages on a single player. Sound designers and technicians can create clips from audio tours that are optimized for the web.

Multimedia tours have revolutionized the visitor experience. The media-rich content of these tours is delivered on a screen-based PDA (personal digital assistant), giving each visitor the freedom to experience the information they want, at the time and place they need it. Combining images, audio, text, graphics, and video, the possibilities of this real-time interactivity are endless. New technologies should be re-evaluated on a regular basis to ensure interpretive media is up to date.



Black-legged Kittiwake nests, Castle Rock, Shumagin Islands  
Steve Hillebrand, USFWS

# 14.

## EVALUATION

Evaluation of interpretive products helps managers measure whether interpretive goals and objectives are being met. Evaluation often saves time and money by allowing managers to avoid management problems by bringing unrealized issues to the forefront.

### Quantitative Methods

Quantitative data can provide insight on a breadth of different topics relating to visitor experience and effectiveness of interpretive methods. In quantitative research, the researcher is ideally an objective observer that neither participates in nor influences what is being studied. One example of a method used to collect quantitative data is a visitor survey questionnaire.

**Survey Questionnaires.** Surveys can be given in multiple ways that typically yield accurate, measurable data. Survey questionnaires can be administered directly to visitors, which is especially effective if the survey contains only multiple-choice questions, or given to the visitor upon leaving the site, to be mailed back anonymously or dropped into a collection box at the end of their visit. Survey questionnaires can also be given to a large group at one time. Disadvantages of surveys are that visitors may interpret the questions inaccurately, not return the survey, or be subjected to response bias if administered incorrectly by a researcher.

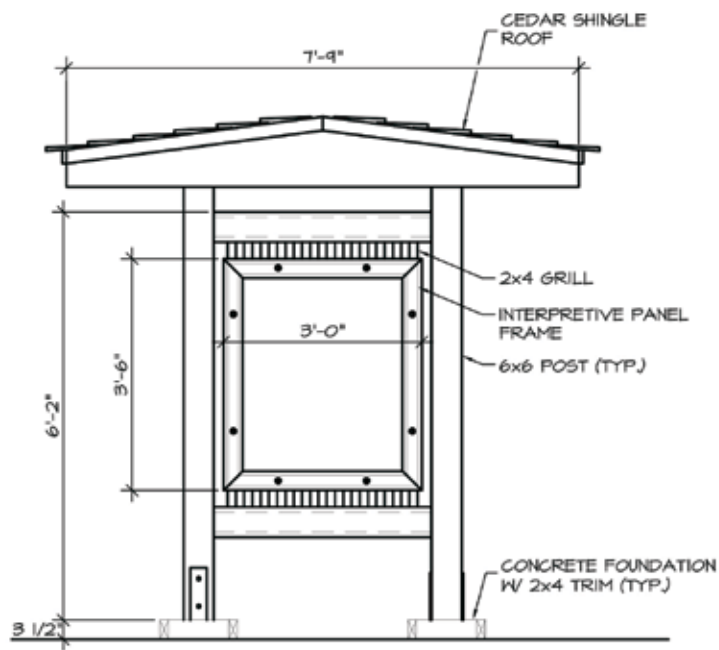
### Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methods are useful for adding depth and richness to evaluative studies. In qualitative research, it is thought that researchers can learn the most about a situation by participating and/or being immersed in it.

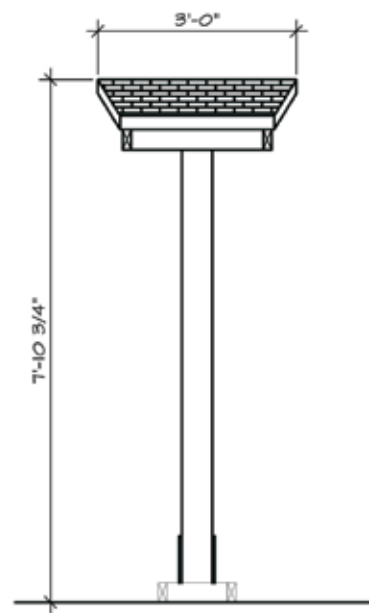
**Visitor Observation.** Visitors are observed and their behavior and interactions are recorded during application of this method. Different variables chronicled might include the time of day, age groups observed, time spent at particular exhibits, and conversations overheard. Spreadsheets can be developed to log the number of occurrences of certain behaviors and what provoked them.

**Interviews.** Sometimes the most obvious and accurate way of measuring visitors' moods, thoughts, attitudes, and behavior is to directly ask what they are thinking, how they are feeling, and what they would like to see at a specific location. A written set of questions administered orally to visitors can be updated and conducted every three to five years. The interviews should be designed and implemented by an outside agency or individual to account for researcher bias.

APPENDIX: STANDARD DRAWINGS FOR INTERPRETIVE PANELS AND KIOSKS



ELEVATION VIEW



SIDE VIEW

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION STATE OF ALASKA

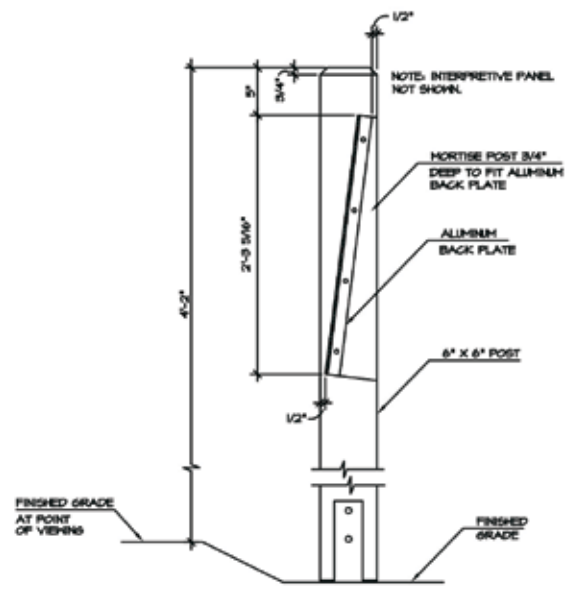
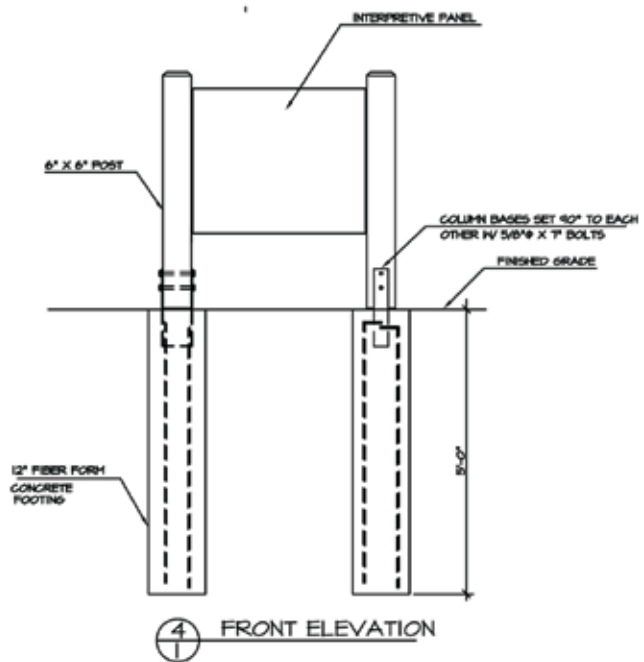
DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION SECTION

INTERPRETIVE KIOSK, TYPE A

PREPARED: D.J.L.  
DRAWN: R.K.  
REVIEWED: T.A.T.  
DATE: 2/25/05

SHEET 1  
S-10A  
OF 1 SHEETS





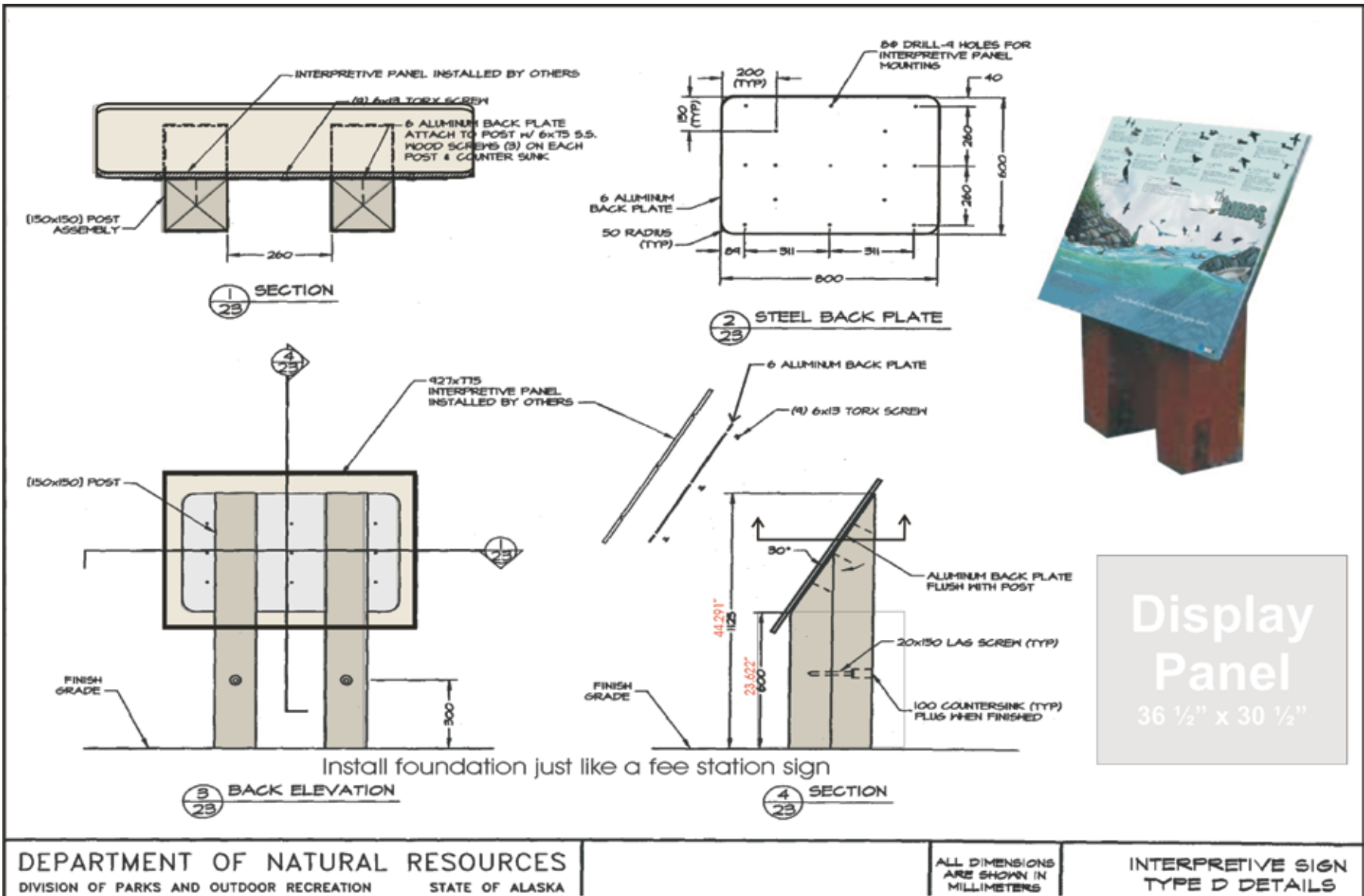
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION STATE OF ALASKA

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION SECTION

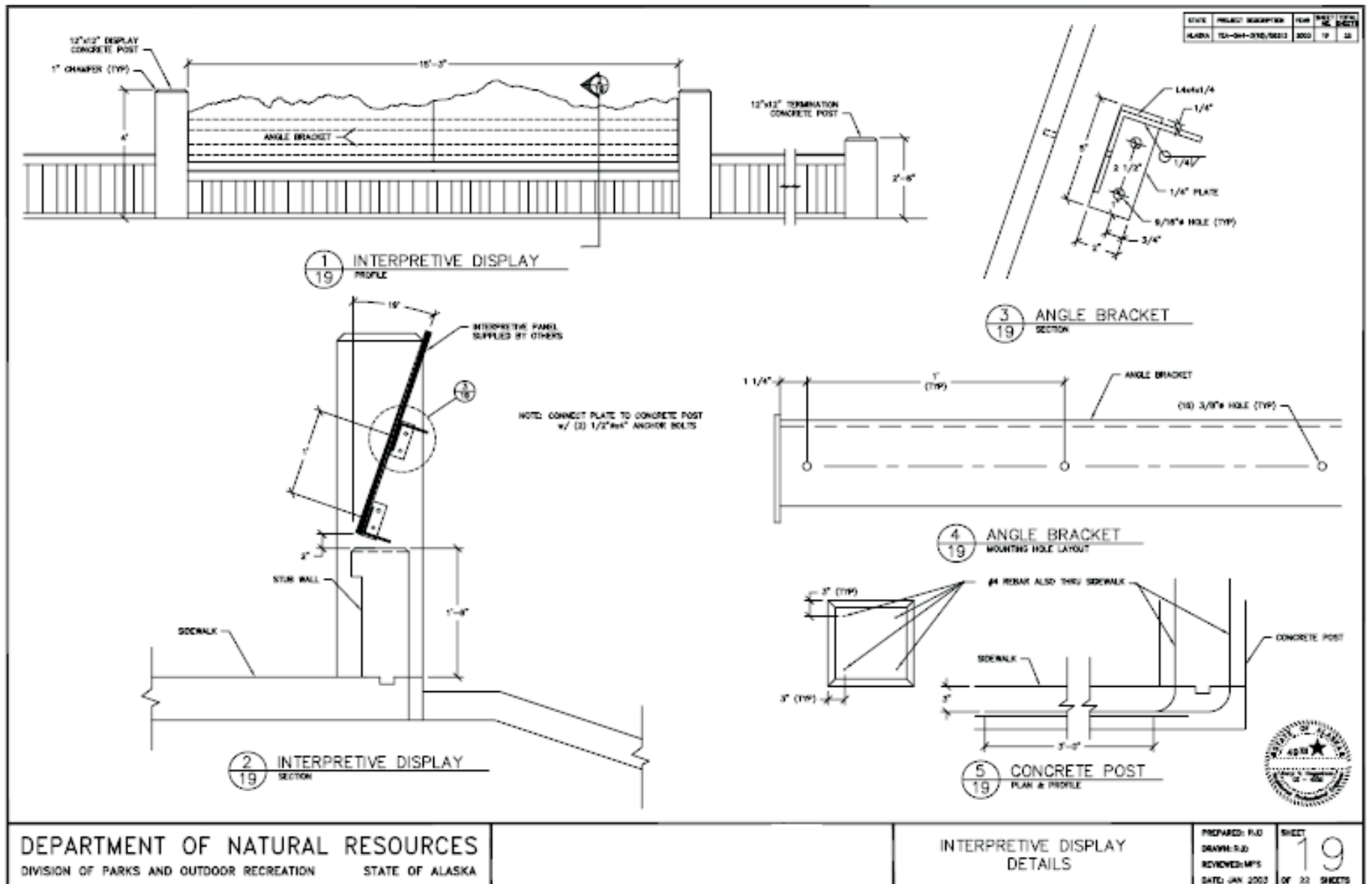
INTERPRETIVE SIGN, TYPE C

PREPARED:  
DRAWN:  
REVIEWED: CH  
DATE: APRIL, 91

SHEET 1  
S-11C  
OF 1 SHEETS









*Mt. Augustine, Homer Chamber of Commerce, Brandon Grochow*



*Homer Chamber of Commerce, Brandon Grochow*



*Eagles, Homer Chamber of Commerce, Brad Imhoff*



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