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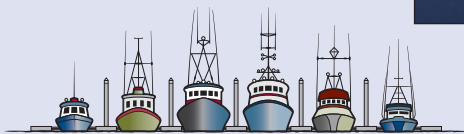
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- All questions about Petersburg



Photo courtesy of Carey Carmichael Case / Wild Iris Photography



**PETERSBURG**  
A L A S K A

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## PILOT PUBLISHING, Inc.

VIKING VISITOR GUIDE PUBLISHED SINCE 1979

Phone: 907-772-9393

207 N. Nordic Dr. • P.O. Box 930 • FAX 907-772-4871

email: [pilotpub@gmail.com](mailto:pilotpub@gmail.com) website: [www.petersburgpilot.com](http://www.petersburgpilot.com)

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# Velkommen to Little Norway

Welcome to Petersburg, known for its Norwegian heritage and for harboring one of Alaska's most prosperous fishing fleets.

Fishing began approximately 2,000 years ago northeast of Petersburg at Sandy Beach. The beach area served as a fish camp for local Natives of Tlingit heritage.

The region turned into a year-round community around the turn of the 20th century after a Norwegian, Peter Buschmann, eyed the blue ice of LeConte Glacier. Buschmann decided the north end of Mitkof Island, with glacier ice available nearby, would be an ideal spot for a cannery.

In 1897, construction began on the new site for Icy Straits Packing Co., for which Buschmann was manager. Icy Straits also built a sawmill to cut lumber for the building of the cannery, which was completed in 1900. Docks, homes, warehouses and other businesses sprang up around the cannery and in 1910 the city of Petersburg was incorporated.

Icy Straits, after changing hands several times, eventually evolved into Petersburg Fisheries Inc., now the largest seafood processor in town as measured by canning capacity. Petersburg Fisheries eventu-

ally developed into a major seafood-processing corporation, Iccle Seafoods Inc. Their parent company is Cooke Aquaculture, based on the East Coast of the U.S.

Many of Petersburg's residents can trace their heritage back to Norwegian ancestors, who followed Peter Buschmann to the snowy mountains and fjords that reminded them of home. At one time, Norwegian was commonly heard on the town's wooden streets and Norwegian Constitution Day is still celebrated during the Little Norway Festival each May.

Fishing continues to be the backbone of the economy, with some \$50.9 million in seafood landed and processed in 2015. Logging, long another mainstay of the community, has returned: In 2014 Kupreanof Island was the site for a major timber sale, scenes from which are featured on the television show "Ax Men." The U.S. Forest Service continues to be a major employer in the community, with staff overseeing both timber and recreation programs.

Ours is a busy, working fishing community that enjoys hosting summer visitors.



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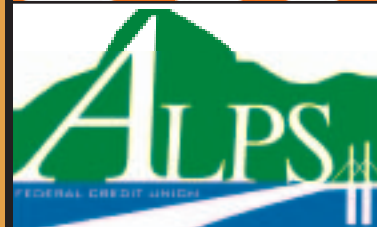
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An Alaska Airlines 737 takes off from the Petersburg airport. Photo courtesy of Troy Larson.

# Getting to Petersburg

Getting to Petersburg is part of the adventure. To reach Mitkof Island, where Petersburg is located, you will have to fly or float. Many visitors arrive on Alaska Marine Highway ferries. Small cruise ships also bring guests to our shores.

Alaska Airlines provides twice-daily jet service from Seattle or Anchorage and several smaller scheduled and chartered air taxis serve Petersburg from throughout Southeast Alaska. And best of all, Petersburg is off the beaten path of the large cruise ships, keeping it less crowded than many tourist destinations.

Petersburg hosts a growing

flotilla of luxury yachts, owned and leased by the rich and famous. It is a popular port of call for everything from recreational activities to re-supplying the vessel.

## On the Cover...

Reflections of the F/V Viannese in the waters of Petersburg's South Harbor.

Photo courtesy of Carey Carmichael Case, Wild Iris Photography.

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CHAMBER  
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# PETERSBURG

## Little Norway.....

**BIG SHOPPING:** We're a small town with a giant selection of goods and wares. You can buy colored shoelaces at our clothing store or a spool of inch-thick wire rope at our shipyard. Our art galleries feature the work of world-renowned artists and the crafts of many locals. Grocery stores here rival the selection of the chain-owned stores "down south," while our retail seafood processors will pick-up and fillet your catch or serve your recently delivered seafood, cooked to perfection. Men, don't miss our hardware stores. Home Depot and Lowes have nothing on us.

Shop keepers joke: "if we don't have it, you don't need it."

**BIG WILDLIFE:** Our critters are well fed. From 500 lb. black bears to 30-ton hump-

backs to trophy moose, we have it all. Early morning walks or drives are the best way to view our wildlife on shore. Off-shore, charter captains can take you to view orcas, porpoises, humpbacks, sea lions and all species of sea birds. Try your hand at hooking and netting our famous wily king salmon.

**BIG BOATS:** Walk the 3-miles of floats in Petersburg's north, south and middle harbors and view nearly 700 vessels from 12-ft row boats to megatenders that can haul hundreds of thousands of pounds of salmon back to the canneries. Often mega-yachts of the rich and famous tie-up here during the summer. Sorry, no 2,000 passenger cruise ships here. We lack the restrooms and amenities for that many guests.



Sea lions hauled out on the "red can" greet every boat passing through the mouth of Wrangell Narrows. Photo courtesy Carli Byrer.

**BIG MARKETS:** Petersburg fishermen brought an estimated \$39 million in income to town in 2015, according to a

NOAA Fisheries report. Petersburg is ranked 26th in the nation by value of the 2015 landings.

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# Petersburg facts and statistics at a glance

• **Population:** 3,270 within the Petersburg Borough.

• **Size:** Mitkof Island is 23 miles at its longest point and about 16.5 miles wide at its widest point, covering 211 square miles. Much of the island's flat land is covered by muskeg bogs.

• **Geography:** The island's highest point is Crystal Mountain, which reaches an elevation of 3,317 feet. Mitkof Island is separated from Kupreanof Island by the 20-mile-long Wrangell Narrows, which, in some areas, is just wide enough to accommodate the state ferries. The tide in the narrows can vary as much as 23 feet in one day from high tide to low tide.

• **Annual Precipitation:** The average annual precipitation is about 130 inches. About half of that falls in September, October, November and December. In 2015 135.99 inches of rain fell



An aerial view of downtown Petersburg, overlooking the north boat harbor.

upon Petersburg.

• **Daylight:** 17 hours and 50 minutes on the summer solstice; six hours and 46 minutes on the winter solstice.

• **Personal income:** The estimated median household income for the Petersburg/Wrangell census area is \$66,125. In Petersburg, private sector wages are paid to 51 percent of the

workforce; 30 percent are employed by the government sector and 19 percent are self-employed.

• **Demographics:** According to the 2010 Census, Petersburg is 79.9 percent white; 7.9 percent two or more races; 7 percent American Indian and Alaskan natives; 3.2 percent Asian; 0.4 percent Black; 0.2 percent Pacific Islander and 1.1 percent other.

• **Vehicles & Boats:** According to the State of Alaska, 1,713 passenger vehicles and 1,407 pickup trucks are registered within the Borough. Some 1,437 boats were registered locally.

• **Economy:** Federal, state and local government, which includes the schools and hospital, is the largest employer in the town, employing 30 percent of the workforce.

Fishing is the economic force that drove the creation of Petersburg and continues to be a driving force in today's economy.

According to NOAA Fisheries, Petersburg generated \$39 million in fish landings, and ranked 26th place by value in the nation.

The town's seafood processors employ a total of about 1,100 people during a busy summer season.

Behind fishing, tourism and timber also drive the local economy.

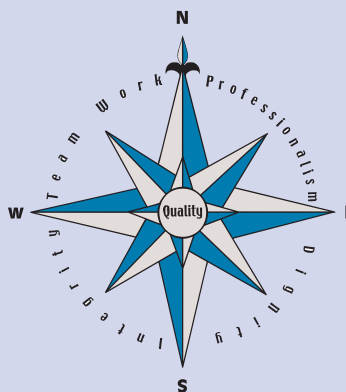
**Continued on page 7**

## Petersburg Medical Center



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**Continued from page 6**

• **Education:** About 80 percent of the population over 25 has at least a high school education. About one quarter have a bachelor's degree or higher. The Petersburg public school system has just 472 students enrolled in grades K-12 and has a graduation rate of 91 percent. The school district operates on a \$8.7 million budget annually.

• **Electrical:** Borough owned Petersburg Municipal Power & Light provides electrical power to the borough. The borough consumes approximately 48,698,286 kilowatt hours (kWh) of power. The majority of that came from the Tyee Hydro facility in Bradfield Canal connected by an 83-mile transmission line.

The local hydroelectric power source is located at Crystal Lake on Crystal Mountain south of Petersburg and generates @ 25% of the Borough's power. Less than a million kWh comes from stand-by diesel generated sources that provide back-up power to the borough.

• **Garbage:** The borough collected and shipped 2,022 tons of solid waste to the Roosevelt Regional Landfill in Washington in 2016. Trash is compacted, baled, loaded into shipping containers and barged to Seattle. An additional 318 tons of recycling was also shipped out in 2016. The Borough manages a co-mingled recycling program.

• **Utilities:** Petersburg's

water is supplied by the Cabin Creek reservoir. It contains a 52 million gallon water supply that is treated and piped to 80 percent of the households. A few homes use cisterns, wells or have water delivered. Municipal sewage receives primary treatment.

**Total assessed valuation:** About \$312 million Borough-wide.

• **Government:** Petersburg Borough has a manager/assembly form of government. The borough's annual general fund budget is \$9.6 million.

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# Community events throughout the year

## Little Norway Festival —

The third full weekend in May. Petersburg's celebration of Syttende Mai — May 17, Norwegian Constitution Day. This is Petersburg's biggest festival featuring food and crafts downtown, parade, pageant, melodrama, dances and much more. Sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce; 772-3646.

## King Salmon Derby —

Memorial Day weekend. Four days of fishing frenzy with more than \$30,000 in prizes. Sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce; 772-3646.

## Fourth of July —

Petersburg's old-time Independence Day celebration with food concessions and craft booths, a parade, carnival games, street games, races and contests, logging events and a fireworks display at night. Sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce; 772-3646.

## Rain Game Classic —

Through October. Guess Petersburg's annual precipitation total. 50-50 split of ticket sales with winner. Sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce; 772-3646.

## Rainforest Festival —

Weekend after Labor Day. The festival is a non-profit event with the goal of bring-



The U.S. Coast Guard color guard leads the Fourth of July parade down Nordic Drive.

ing participants closer to the natural world through education, exploration and the arts while learning more about our rainforest and the ocean that surrounds it. Events include lectures, walking tours,

workshops, and visiting artists and authors.

**Oktoberfest** — October and November. A month of special events including music concerts, readings, arts and crafts classes, gallery walk and play.

**Oktoberfest Artshare** — October. The largest arts and crafts fair in Petersburg, featuring handmade items by artists and crafters from Petersburg as well as around the state. Quilt show and auction, food booths and entertainment. Sponsored by Muskeg Maleriers; 772-4453

**Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony** — Friday after Thanksgiving. Lighting of the tree, music and benediction to kick off the Christmas season. Sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce; 772-3646.

**Julebukking** — Christmas Eve. The streets of downtown Petersburg fill with shoppers as, according to Norwegian tradition, merchants offer customers food and spirits in appreciation for their business that year.

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## 52 Things to do in Petersburg

### DESTINATION: PETERSBURG

Petersburg is a small town with a metropolis sized list of things to do. For more information drop into the **Petersburg Visitor Information Center** at 1st & Fram St. or call (907) 772-4636.

It is advisable to make reservations for specific tours before you arrive in town. Tours are sometimes fully booked on specific days, especially in July and August.



Blind Slough picnic area provides fishing and picnic opportunities, along with ice skating in the winter.

#### 1. Adventure Tours:

Local companies can provide wilderness adventures by land, sea or air.

#### 2. Peruse Art Galleries:

Several galleries feature local and Alaska artists of all media.

#### 3. Go Beachcombing:

Search our rocky beaches for shells, rocks, & marine life.

**4. Pick berries:** Harvest blueberries and salmonberries.

#### 5. Bird Watching: A

large variety of species unique to Southeast Alaska can be sighted, the most popular being the bald eagle, raven, waterfowl (Trumpeter Swans in winter), shorebirds, and songbirds.

#### 6. Boat on a Lake:

Enjoy a quiet day of rowing on one of our small lakes.

#### 7. Fish for King

**Salmon:** Blind River Rapids offers one of the few opportunities in southeast Alaska to fish from shore for King Salmon in June and July.

Continued on page 10



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## 52 Things to do in Petersburg

Continued from page 9

### 8. Day Trip up the

**Stikine River:** Adventure up the fastest free-flowing navigable river in North America.

### 9. Blind Slough Recreation Area:

Picnic and swim on warm summer days, or ice skate during the brief winter freeze.

### 10. Go Swimming:

Petersburg Aquatic Center; fun for the whole family.

### 11. Explore the

**Clausen Memorial Museum:** Discover the history and many cultures of the Petersburg area. See the unofficial world record king salmon!

### 12. Fish Off the Public

**Docks:** Try your hand at fishing off one of our public docks. Catch herring, Dolly Varden or maybe a passing king salmon.

### 13. Work Out at the

**Community Gym:** Modern recreation complexes with a gymnasium, racquetball courts, a fitness center and arts/crafts facility. Outdoor gear rentals are available.

### 14. Go Flightseeing:

Sightseeing by floatplane or helicopter offers a personal tour of glaciers and coastal landscape by air.

### 15. Fresh Water Fish-

**ing:** Located along the



The LeConte Glacier is one of the most popular visitor destinations.

Mitkof Highway are many streams, full of salmon and trout, just waiting for the avid fisherman. Don't forget your fishing license.

### 16. Self-Guided Public

**Art Tour:** Wear comfortable walking shoes.

### 17. Check Your Email:

During business hours, wireless access is available at the Petersburg Library.

### 18. Take a hike:

A full menu of easy, moderate or challenging hikes awaits you. The Three Lakes Loop Trails and the connecting Ideal Cove Trail are great for families, and are favorites among hikers.

### 21. Take a Nature

**Walk:** The Evergreen Trail (corner of Dolphin and 5th, next to the elementary school) and the 12th Street Boardwalk next to the ball-field at the end of Excel Street. Hike the trail from Sandy Beach Park to City Creek.

### 22. Visit the Crystal

**Lake Hatchery:** Salmon eggs are raised and released to enhance salmon stocks.

### 23. Bojer Wikan Fishermen's Memorial Park:

Our community's tribute to loved ones who have passed on, and those lost at sea.

### 24. Stop and take in

the sights and sounds of South Harbor at the viewing platform and benches on the east end of the harbor lot.

### 25. See a movie:

A nonprofit student-run theater offers first-run movies from Thursday to Sunday in the Wright Auditorium.

### 26. Performing Arts:

The Mitkof Mummies, Mitkof Dance Troupe,

Continued on page 11

### 19. Play horseshoes:

Pits are located in Sandy Beach Park. Inquire at the Parks and Recreation department in the community pool for equipment rental.

### 20. Go kayaking:

In our harbor and all around the island.



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## 52 Things to do in Petersburg

Continued from page 10  
Leikarring Dancers, Seetka Kwan Dancers, and more all perform seasonally.

**27. Take photos:** What better way to remember your vacation than with your own photographs? Take advantage of the wildlife, flora and panoramic views found in the area.

**28. See Petroglyphs and Prehistoric Fish Traps:** Found at Sandy Beach Park. Tread lightly! Once these nonrenewable heritage resources are gone, they're gone forever.

**29. Play!:** There are several conveniently located playgrounds throughout town, including Yeil Ka Chaak Park, Mort Fryer Memorial Ballfield, and two

playgrounds at the elementary school.

**30. Charter A Boat:** Available year round: harbor tours, adventure touring, day and overnight fishing and expeditions.

**31. Camp at Ohmer Creek:** A campground located in the National Forest. Popular with campers due to its natural setting close to trails and fishing.

**32. Walk the docks:** Petersburg's public harbors are a popular place to observe the fishing fleet.

**33. Visit the Public Library:** The Public Library has a collection of rare Alaskan books. A popular location to get out of the rain!

**34. Eat at a local restaurant**

**35. Lloyd Roundtree Memorial Seaplane Base:** Seaplanes provide charter flights to outlying areas.

**36. Go shopping**

**37. Take in a game:** From T-ball to adult softball leagues, there's always lots of action at the Mort Fryer Memorial Ball Park.

**38. Catch a Sunset:** Capture the beauty on film.

**39. Watch the Aurora Borealis**

**40. Walk the Waterfront:** Bring your camera and enjoy a walk on the waterfront.

**41. Go Whale Watching**

**42. Visit Eagle's Roost Park:** Atop PFI Hill; walk down the stairs to the beach.

**43. Hike Raven's Roost Trail**

**44. Falls Creek Fish Ladder:** View salmon running up the Falls Creek on

their way to spawn in the summer.

**45. Walk the Loop:** 4.7 miles

**46. See the Viking ship Valhalla:** Next to the Sons of Norway on Sing Lee Alley.

**47. View Rosemaled Store Fronts**

**48. Van Tours:** Island scenery/wildlife/light hiking.

**49. Rent a Car:** Cruise the island for a day.

**50. Rent a Boat:** Explore or fish local waters.

**51. See the Totem Poles:** The Eagle and Raven totem poles stand on the lawn of the federal building at the corner of Haugen and Nordic Drive.

**52. Visit Outlook Park:** Located on the beach side of Sandy Beach Road. The park and gazebo offer public beach access, fixed binoculars, and a spectacular view of the Coastal Range and often whales.

## Petersburg Visitor Information Center

A partnership between the Petersburg Chamber of Commerce



Petersburg Borough,  
and the U.S. Forest Service,  
Petersburg Ranger District.



Located at the Corner of First and Fram Streets  
in downtown Petersburg

Open daily through the summer – limited winter hours.

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# Petersburg offers many attractions for visitors

Petersburg offers a wide range of attractions for visitors

There is no shortage of places to see and things to do while visiting Petersburg — it's really a question of how much you can squeeze in before you leave town.

## WHAT TO SEE

**Clausen Memorial Museum** — Located on Fram Street between Second and Third streets. The museum provides a glimpse into Petersburg's rich history. Outside the museum is the fountain-sculpture "Fisk" — Norwegian for fish. The 11-foot bronze work, which depicts halibut, salmon and herring, was created by Karson Boysen and dedicated in 1967.

**Outlook Park/Whale Observatory** — Constructed in 2003, the park is located on the beach side of Sandy Beach Road about 1.5 miles north of downtown. The park and gazebo offer public beach access, fixed binoculars, and a spectacular view of the Coastal Range. A restroom, barbecues and benches were recently added.

**Sandy Beach Fish Traps** — For the archeology lover, remnants of 2,000-year-old Tlingit fish traps can be found snaking their way across the mud flats of Sandy Beach during a low tide. The beach also includes a rock in which ancient petroglyphs have been carved. The fish traps, easily over-

looked by those unfamiliar with this type of fish trap, are best seen with the assistance of a guide. Inquire at the Petersburg Ranger District about interpretive walks during the summer or at the Visitor's Center to arrange a tour. To protect the site, persons going on their own are asked not to move or remove any of the stakes or rocks in the mud flats.

**Swan Observatory** — Located at Mile 16 of Mitkof Highway, the wheelchair-accessible observatory was constructed in 2008. The building provides a shielded place to view trumpeter swans, some of which winter on Mitkof Island. Though 50 to 75 swans overwinter here, hundreds more of these large waterfowl stop here between mid-October and early December to rest and feed before continuing their migratory journey to the south. Be careful not to disturb the resting swans. Bears and salmon also may be seen during the summer downriver from the Swan Observatory in the shallow waters.

**Crystal Lake Hatchery** — Adjacent to the Blind Slough picnic area at Mile 17 Mitkof Highway, the fish hatchery is operated by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game and the Southern Southeast Aquaculture Association. Visitors are welcome to walk the hatchery and ask questions between the hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; no tours are offered.



Green's Camp provides 30 camp sites, picnic areas and multiple restrooms.

## WHERE TO PICNIC

**Eagle's Roost Park** — Bald eagles are frequent visitors to this park atop the hill by

Petersburg Fisheries on Nordic Drive.

**Sandy Beach Picnic Area**  
Continued on page 13

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# Attractions

## Continued from page 12

— This day-use picnic area is at the end of Sandy Beach Road and is about two miles from downtown Petersburg. Situated in a small cove, the park has three enclosed shelters with tables, two of them with large stone fireplaces. There is a play area for children and a sand volleyball court is located near the beach. Restrooms and running water are available.

## Blind Slough Recreation Area

— Drive 17 miles south of Petersburg along Mitkof Highway to this impressive recreation spot. The picnic area includes tables, grills, two large covered group shelters and wheelchair accessible rest-



Petersburg Whale Observatory, also called Outlook Park, is a wonderful place to take in the sights of Frederick Sound.

rooms. It was constructed in 2009. Swimming in the salt-

water slough is permitted at the risk of the swimmer.

**Man Made Hole** — Located at Mile 20 Mitkof Highway, this swimming hole is another picnic spot equipped with picnic tables and grills, trails and shelters — perfect for a cookout. The site was formed by removing gravel for construction of Mitkof Highway.

**Ohmer Creek Campground** — A day use picnic area is provided at the campground located 22 miles south of Petersburg on Mitkof Highway. Watch for signs for parking and picnic locations.

## WHERE TO CAMP

**Ohmer Creek Campground** — Located 22 miles south of Petersburg on Mitkof Highway, this Forest Service campground has 10 sites suitable for tents or trailers up to 32-feet long, but services including waste disposal and water are no

longer provided. Campers should provide their own contained waste system and bring water. No fee. The campground is set along a trout and salmon fishing stream. Fishing is permitted but licenses are required. Please check on local fishing regulations before dropping your line.

**Green's Camp** — A favorite location for family picnics and beach combing, this campground is directly on saltwater 26 miles from Petersburg on Mitkof Highway. 30 campsites, four picnic areas and multiple restrooms are available.

**Wilson Creek Recreation Area** — At Mile 27.9 Mitkof Highway, this area has tables, outhouses and turn-arounds for trailers.

## CABIN RENTALS

Twenty Forest Service cabins are scattered throughout the Petersburg Ranger Dis-

**Continued on page 14**

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# Attractions

**Continued from page 13**  
 trict. Most cabins are accessible by boat or floatplane only. Contact charter air companies in town if you plan on flying to a cabin. Each cabin includes tables, benches, bunks (without mattresses), wood or oil stoves (not suitable for cooking, bring your own fuel), an ax, a broom and an outhouse.

You must bring your own bedding and cooking gear. Rain gear, rubber boots and warm clothing are essential. Insect repellent is often needed during summer months. Water can be obtained from nearby streams, or lakes and should be boiled for five minutes before drinking.

Cabins can be reserved through the National Recreation Reservation Service at 1-877-444-6777, or at their website [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov). Information and assistance with cabin reservations can be found at the Petersburg Visitor Center, the Petersburg Ranger District office, or on the website.

**Petersburg Lake Cabin** — Located on Kupreanof Island, the Petersburg Lake Cabin is accessible by a short boat ride or kayak paddle across the Wrangell Narrows followed by a hike or by floatplane. Petersburg Lake is ice-free from April through November. The hike can begin from the Kupreanof State Dock or is accessible four miles up Petersburg Creek by boat or kayak. The hike is 10.5 miles from the state dock and 6.5 miles from the upper trail.



Dig clams or hike at Sandy Beach park, during low tide. Bridge walkway pictured at right connects to City Creek trail.

The pan-abode style cabin sleeps six and is heated with a wood stove. A rowboat is available at the lake. Petersburg Lake drains into Petersburg Creek, an area with outstanding steelhead, Coho, and sockeye fishing. Cutthroat trout and sockeye salmon can also be caught in the lake. In the fall, black bears can sometimes be viewed in Petersburg Creek fishing for salmon.

**Kah Sheets Lake Cabin** — Located on Kupreanof Island, the Kah Sheets Lake Cabin is approachable by floatplane. The lake offers good sockeye fishing from the picnic platform or from the rowboats, which are provided at the cabin. A 2.5-mile plank trail connects the lake cabin to Kah Sheets Bay Cabin. The trail also accesses the creek for steelhead and Coho fishing, and views of the falls.

The cabin, picnic platform, and outhouse all meet barrier-free standards. The cabin sleeps seven people.

**Raven's Roost Cabin** — Located on the mountain behind the Petersburg airport, the cabin is accessible by trail or helicopter. Scenery is exceptional year-round. The cabin sleeps six people. The trail can be accessed two ways — a trailhead across the street from Sandy Beach Park adds a

half mile of flat, gravel trail walking through the muskeg onto the 4.2 mile trek. Or shorten the trek by parking off Haugen Drive behind the airport and look for trail signs that lead uphill. The middle section of the trail is very steep, and then flattens along the ridge top. Allow up to three hours one-way for the hike. Water is typically available from muskeg pools, but visitors are encouraged to bring their own water, especially

**Continued on page 15**

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# Attractions

Continued from page 14 during dry conditions. Oil is provided.

**Castle Flats Cabin** — The Castle Flats Cabin lies on the edge of the mud flats of the Castle River in Duncan Canal. It is 30 minutes by air and 30 miles by boat from Petersburg. A 15-foot high tide is required for a plane to land or a 13-foot tide for a boat to anchor next to the cabin. Water is available from a small creek west of the cabin. Good steelhead fishing runs May to June, trout runs May to October, and excellent silver salmon fishing runs throughout August. The tidal flats in front of the cabin make this a particularly good site for bird

watching. A rowboat is provided at the cabin. The Castle River Trail connects the flats cabin with the Castle River Cabin and accesses the upper rowboat. The cabin sleeps four people.

**Swan Lake Cabin** — This A-frame cabin constructed in 2005, is one of the district's most popular. Be sure to make cabin reservations early.

Swan Lake is an alpine lake at 1,514 feet above sea level on the mainland east of Thomas Bay. The lake is accessible by a 30-minute plane ride from Petersburg. The cabin is surrounded by the steep peaks of the Coast Range, offering some of the most spectacular scenery and photo opportu-

nities on any site in the district. The steep slopes are home to mountain goats and alpine flowers. Rainbow trout are plentiful in the lake.

Special cabin features include two rowboats and a boathouse. The cabin sleeps five people.

**West Point Cabin** — This impressive modified A-

frame is located on the northern end of Kupreanof Island. The cabin, trail and outhouse are wheelchair-accessible.

The cabin also provides access to excellent beach hiking, saltwater fishing for king and silver salmon and viewing of whales in Frederick Sound. The cabin sleeps six people.

## Petersburg's Churches



See map on pages 22 and 23

1. **St. Andrew's Episcopal Church**  
3rd & Excel Street
2. **Petersburg Lutheran Church**  
Corner of 5th & Excel
3. **Petersburg Baha'i Community**  
Call 772-3321
4. **Assembly of God**  
Corner of Aaslaug & Lake
5. **First Baptist Church**  
Corner of 5th & Gjoa
6. **Petersburg Bible Church**  
916 Sandy Beach Rd
7. **Catholic Church**  
Corner of 3rd & Dolphin
8. **Seventh Day Adventist Bilingual & Living Hope**  
201 Noseum Street
9. **First Presbyterial Church**  
Corner of 2nd & Haugen
10. **Salvation Army**  
Corner of 2nd & Fram
11. **Bethesda Fellowship**  
Corner of 8th & Haugen
12. **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints**  
904 Sandy Beach Road
13. **Petersburg Friends Meeting (Society of Friends)** PO Box 1603, 772-3658

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# Colorful, historic salmon can trash bins line streets

Karen Hofstad has a collection of a couple hundred seafood related cans and labels that would make fishing industry historians salivate. The majority of the collection represents the salmon industry and canneries throughout Alaska, including Kodiak, Petersburg and Wrangell, and they are the inspiration for trash cans worthy of a framed photograph.

Bruce Schactler, a fisherman from Kodiak, contacted Hofstad to ask her to share her labels to create 30 trash cans to help revitalize downtown Kodiak. The quick-thinking Hofstad, joined in on the Kodiak order to save some money through a quantity discount, and ordered 10 cans of her own to put in Petersburg.

Hofstad ended up with 12 cans to be distributed around town. They are specially made in Canada, then shipped to Oregon to complete the finished product. The graphics used to wrap the cans need to be strong enough to last and withstand the daily bump and grind a trash can takes. The company responsible for placing the graphics on the cans do the graphics for NASCAR stock cars, so they should keep their finish and look good for years to come, Hofstad says.

Hofstad enlisted the help of Petersburg local Glo Wollen and they found sponsors to purchase individual cans.

"We have a lot of civic pride in this community," Glo Wollen says. Sponsors were found to pay for all the cans.

**"We have a lot of civic pride in this community,"**

— GLO WOLLEN

Eleven of the 12 trash cans are dedicated to salmon and the other is a shrimp can sponsored by the Ohmer family. For Dave Ohmer of Trident Seafoods, the can symbolizes the pride he and many others have in their background.

"We are thrilled with the can, and it's going to be right there out front where my dad and grandfather's office was, and I couldn't be any happier."

Hofstad says the trash cans are part of an ongoing effort to preserve and promote the history of the fishing



Cannery label inspired trash cans are displayed along Petersburg sidewalks.

industry in Petersburg. The majority of the cans are downtown, with one at the airport, one at the library and another placed at the ferry terminal.

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# Wildlife viewing tips

**Dawn and dusk are the best viewing times:** If you arrive early or stay late, you are likely to see more wildlife.

**Learn feeding habits:** Many shorebirds, marine birds and waterfowl follow the tides during their feeding cycle. Other wildlife such as bears, spend large amounts of time during the summer near salmon streams and berry patches.

**Blend-in:** Wear natural colors and unscented lotions. Hide behind vegetation and rocks.

**Look for sign:** Tracks in the mud and snow, unusual scents, scat and browsed vegetation provide evidence of wildlife in the area. Use these clues to locate animals.

**Be patient:** Allow enough time. Even in Alaska, where wildlife is abundant, it can take years, if not a lifetime, to see all the species.

**Don't get too close:** Give wildlife plenty of space. Binoculars and spotting scopes allow you to view wildlife without getting too close.



Twin moose calves, just a few days old, walk with their mother along a Wrangell Narrows beach.

**“View without changing behavior:  
Don't throw rocks to make birds fly...  
Harassing wildlife is illegal.”**

— ALASKA FISH AND GAME

Approach wildlife slowly and quietly. Allow animals a route to escape.

**View without changing behavior:** Avoid using calls or devices that attract wildlife. Don't throw rocks to make birds fly. Harassing wildlife is illegal.

**Be respectful:** Nests, denning areas, rookeries and calving grounds are sensitive areas. Intrusive visitors may cause parents to flee, leaving young vulnerable to the elements or predators. Stay on designated trails.

**Leave “orphaned” or sick animals alone:** Young animals left alone usually have parents waiting nearby.

**Don't feed the animals:** Don't get wildlife hooked on handouts. Some foods may even harm their digestive systems.

*Information courtesy of Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game*

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# Area waters ideal for humpbacks

## *One of the best places in the world for viewing*



An adult humpback breaches from the waters of Stephens Passage.

By Kelly Bakos

The marine environment around Petersburg is abundant with sea life. The ecosystem is rich with plankton and fish, which makes it an ideal summer feeding ground for migratory humpback whales. Of the esti-

mated 22,000 humpback whales in the North Pacific, approximately 5,000 – 7,000 spend the summer feeding in Southeast Alaska. Nearly half of those may pass through and feed in Frederick Sound before taking the 2,800 mile journey back to Hawaii in the



Gulls escape the feeding frenzy from humpback whales during a bubble net feed.

fall for the birth of their calves. This makes Frederick Sound one of the best places in the world for observing humpback whales.

Orcas, sea lions, seals,

and porpoises also call the local waters home. Harbor seals can be seen swimming along Petersburg's coast line and pupping on the ice near

**Continued on page 19**

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Petersburg Marine Mammal Center's stranding network members free an entangled humpback whale with the assistance of the US Coast Guard. Entanglement response activities conducted pursuant to NMFS Permit No. 18786.

# Humpback

**Continued from page 18**  
LeConte Glacier. Keep an eye out for Steller's sea lions at the harbors or along North Nordic Drive and Sandy Beach Road, where they can often be heard while hauled out on buoy markers. Orcas are sometimes observed

cruising through the Wrangell Narrows.

With the waters prolific with marine activity, researchers, wildlife photographers, and eco-tourists travel here to view and study these creatures. The Petersburg Marine Mammal Center

(PMMC) is a non-profit organization providing a link between the environment and the community, students, and visitors. PMMC supports traveling researchers, delivers public education programs, and responds to local reports of stranded marine mammals

as an authorized responder of NOAA Fisheries' Alaska Marine Mammal Stranding Network.

PMMC's volunteers are trained to respond to a variety of situations whether it is injury, entanglement, disease, exposure to contaminants, or disorientation, and have special equipment for disentangling 40-ton free-swimming whales from marine debris, which is a dangerous job!

If you see a stranded or entangled marine mammal, do not attempt to move, feed, or approach the animal. Oftentimes, animals that appear to be distressed are actually displaying normal behavior. Whales may quietly rest on the surface for long periods of time, and it is not uncommon for seal mothers to leave their pups alone on the ice or beach while they feed. Marine mammals are protected



Orcas on the hunt for salmon in Frederick Sound.



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**Find the 2017 Market schedule and special event information on our Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/petersburgmarket](http://www.facebook.com/petersburgmarket)**

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under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and it is illegal to disturb, approach, or handle marine mammals.

But if a marine mammal is found sick, injured or dead, reporting the stranding is the best way to help the distressed animal. It also provides biologists an opportunity to gather valuable data. Take photos from a safe distance and record as much information as you can. Please report the event by calling the Alaska Stranding Hotline at 1-877-925-7773.

# A walking tour through Petersburg

The following numbers correspond with the map on page 22 and page 23.

## 1. Petersburg Fisheries —

A division of Icicle Seafoods Inc. of Seattle. Pilings were driven in 1897 for a public dock, now the site of the cold storage. Icy Straits Packing Co. (Quadra Packing Co.), with Peter Buschmann as manager, built a sawmill where the Trading Union now stands to provide lumber for the cannery, which was completed in 1900. Icy Straits Packing Co. packed 32,750 cases of salmon that season. In 1901, they sold to Pacific Coast and Norway Packing Co. Pacific American Fisheries purchased it in 1929. PAF sold to Petersburg Fisheries Inc. in 1965. In 1977 they changed their corporate name to Icicle Seafoods, with Petersburg Fisheries as a subsidiary. In June 2016, Cooke Aquaculture purchased Icicle Seafoods.

Petersburg Fisheries celebrated their 50th Anniversary in 2015.

**2. Buschmann Historical Marker** — Placed in 1967, it marks the spot where Peter Buschmann, originally from Norway, built a cannery in 1898.

**3. Trident Seafoods, Inc.** — Founded in 1916 as



Petersburg's largest employer and oldest local seafood processor, Petersburg Fisheries, is located at the north end of town along Wrangell Narrows.

Alaskan Glacier Seafoods and later moved to the corner of Main and Excel streets after a 1943 fire. The cannery was destroyed by fire again on Feb. 1, 1985. The oldest shrimp cannery in Alaska, it was founded by Earl Ohmer and Karl I. Sifferman. Three generations of Kaino, Greinier and Ohmer families have taken part in the operation. Dave Ohmer Jr. remains as general manager. The cannery merged with Silver Lining Seafoods of Ketchikan in January 1990, then merged with Lafayette Fisheries Inc. two years later to form NorQuest

Seafoods Inc. It is now owned by Trident Seafoods. The plant handles salmon, halibut, **Continued on page 21**



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# A walking tour through Petersburg

Continued from page 20

shrimp, crab, rockfish, black cod, sea cucumbers and sea urchins.

**4. Petersburg Boat Harbors** — The North Harbor was originally constructed in 1958 and rebuilt in 2014. Middle Harbor was built in 1972 and the South Harbor was built in 1984. The entire harbor has more than 700 stalls for Petersburg's large commercial fishing fleet and numerous pleasure crafts. Visitors' boat moorage is on a per-foot basis. Public restrooms and showers are available. Grids can handle boats up to 70-80 feet long. Water and electricity are available on the floats. Children younger than 12 must be accompanied by an

adult and wear a personal flotation device, which are available at the Harbormaster shed. Box 1047. Phone 772-4688. Standby on Channel 16 VHF and CB Channel 9.

**5. Ocean Beauty Seafoods** — Ocean Beauty is in a building built before 1912 by Citizen Wharf Co. for steamships. Alaskan Glacier Seafood's original cannery was located on the dock, and then moved to its Harbor Way and Excel Street location following a fire in 1943. Chris Dahl next bought the dock and operated a crab cannery. In 1945 Dahl and Dean Kayler formed Kayler-Dahl Fish Co. and started canning salmon as well. In 1946 the cold storage

Continued on page 26



Petersburg's Sons of Norway Hall continues to be a social gathering place. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Bojer Wikan Fisherman's Memorial Park is next door.

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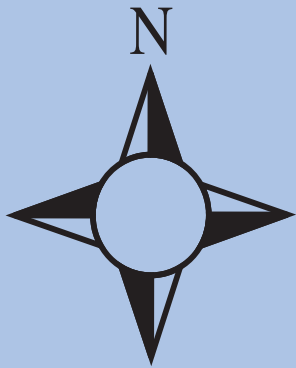
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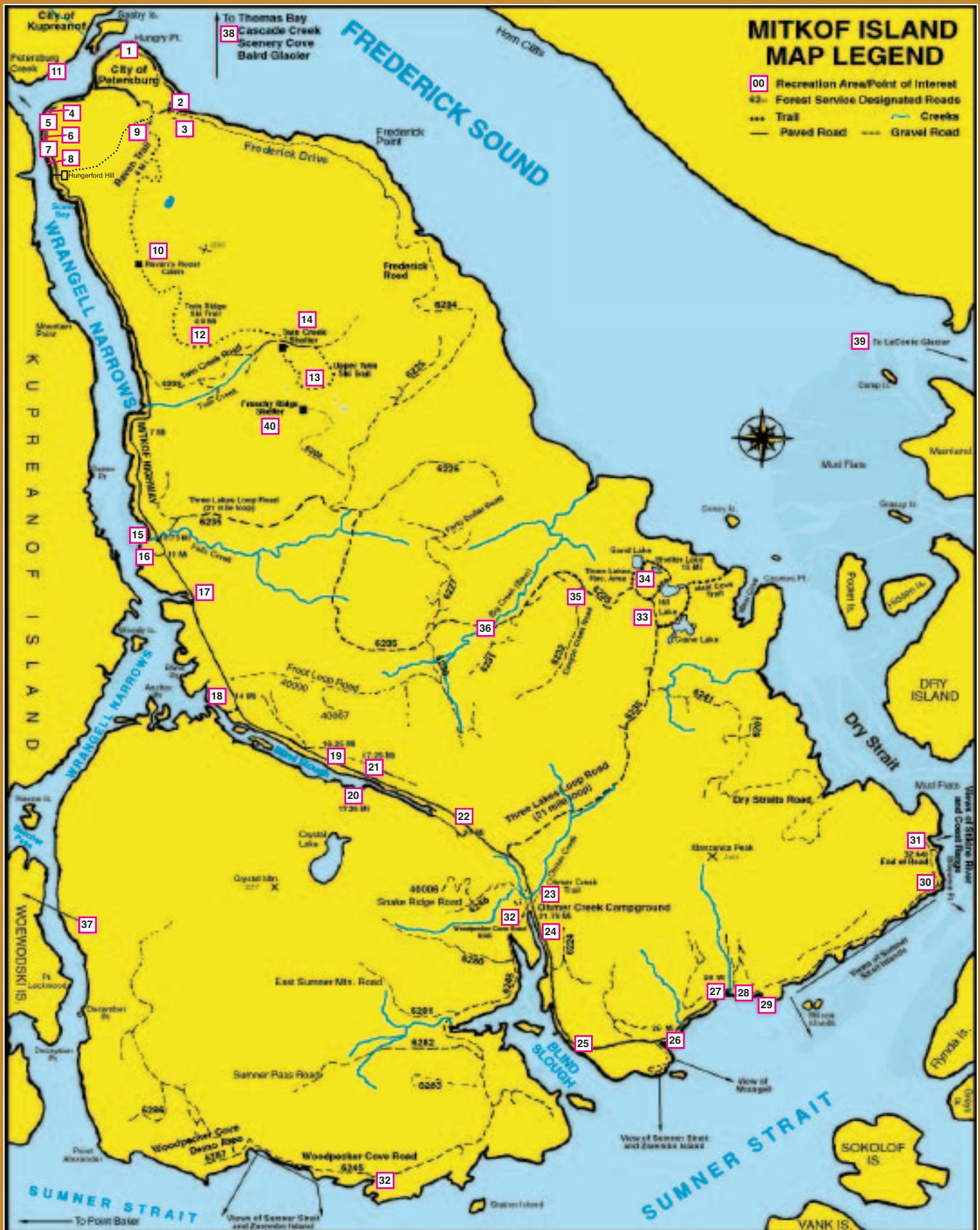
-  Park
-  Church . . . See Pg. 15
-  Point of Interest
-  Public Building

See "Walking Tour" Pages - 20-29













Seine boat crewmembers haul in a catch of pink and chum salmon during the summer purse seine fishery. Commercial fishing is the mainstay of the Petersburg economy.

## Points of Interest on Mitkof Island

*The first Mitkof Highway mile marker is located just beyond the Ferry Terminal parking lot and the first mile is measured from Wells Fargo Bank downtown.*

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Hungry Point   | 22. Man-Made Hole Lake: 20 Mi   |
| 2. Sandy Beach Park   | 23. Ohmer Creek Trail   |
| 3. Dump Road - View of Frederick Sound                                    | 24. Ohmer Creek Campground: 21.75 Mi  |
| 4. Kings Row  | 25. South Mitkof Ferry Terminal: 25 Mi  |
| 5. Odin Road  | 26. Green's Camp Public Use Area: 26 Mi, Picnic Area, Camp Sites, Toilets                                       |
| 6. Mill Road  | 27. Crescent Beach: 28 Mi   |
| 7. Cornelius Road   | 28. Wilson Creek Rec. Area: 28 Mi, Picnic Area, Camp Sites, Toilets   |
| 8. Lyons Road   | 29. Banana Point: 28 Mi, Toilets, Boat Launch   |
| 9. Raven Trail Head: 4 Mi   | 30. Blaquiere Point: 32.9 Mi, Toilet, Boat Launch   |
| 10. Raven's Roost Cabin: (Permit Required)                                | 31. End of Road: 33.8 Mi  |
| 11. Kupreanof State Dock: (Psg. Mtn. Trail & Petersburg Lake Trail Heads) | 32. Woodpecker Cove: 21.5 Mi  |
| 12. Twin Ridge Ski Trail: 4.9 Mi  | 33. Three Lakes Rec. Area: 21 Mi Loop   |
| 13. Upper Twin Ski Trail  | 34. Shelter Lake: 15 Mi   |
| 14. Twin Creek Shelter  | 35. LeConte Glacier Overlook  |
| 15. Falls Creek Fish Ladder: 10.75 Mi                                     | 36. Big Creek Bridge (Bear Creek)   |
| 16. Papke's Landing: 11 Mi  | 37. To Duncan Canal through Beecher Pass: To Forest Service cabins, hiking, waterfalls, fishing and viewpoints. |
| 17. Petersburg Shooting Range   | 38. Thomas Bay: To Forest Service cabins, Baird Glacier, hiking, waterfalls, fishing and viewpoints.            |
| 18. Blind River Rapids: 14 Mi   | 39. To LeConte Glacier: Icebergs, seals, mountain goats, and excellent views.                                   |
| 19. Swan Observatory: 16.25 Mi  | 40. Frenchy Ridge Shelter   |
| 20. Crystal Lake Fish Hatchery: 17.25 Mi                                  |   |
| 21. Blind Slough Rec. Area  |   |

# A walking tour through Petersburg

## Continued from page 21

was built. Kayler-Dahl operated it until October 1969 when they sold to Whitney-Fidalgo Seafoods, Inc. It was purchased by Chatham Strait Seafoods in April 1987, and is now owned by Ocean Beauty Seafoods.

### 6. Sing Lee Alley Area —

Formerly called Indian Street, this was the center of early Petersburg. The street contained the Variety Theater and skating rink (built in 1912), the Salvation Army Hall, Enge Building (built in 1901) housing a restaurant and store, and Sons of Norway Hall (built in 1912). The Petersburg Trial Court's building is on the corner of Sing Lee Alley and Nordic Drive.



Looking north down historic Sing Lee Alley. In the early 1900s the alley was a center of commerce for the town.

### Historic Marker Locations

— Bronze markers and photo interpretive plaques are displayed at several historic sites listed below.

### 7. Gjoa & Nordic Drive—

Centennial Park, Centennial Plaque & "Bruno" Bear Sculpture.

### 8. 13 N. Sing Lee Alley —

Helse Restaurant

### 9. 15 N. Sing Lee Alley —

Kinder Komfort Toy Store

### 10. 14 S. Sing Lee Alley—

Enge Building

### 11. 18 S. Sing Lee Alley

### 12. 23 S. Sing Lee Alley—

Sons of Norway Hall — Fedrelandet 23 — The hall was built in 1912 and declared a National Historic Site in 1979. Sons of Norway is an international fraternal organization to preserve Norwegian heritage. The building is built on pilings over Hammer Slough. Rosemaling on the exterior is a traditional Norwegian art form. Box 629. Phone 772-4575.

**13. Bojer Wikan Fishermen's Memorial Park** — Located next to the Sons of Norway Hall the Bojer Wikan Memorial Park, constructed in

1998, provides a commemorative memorial for those who have lost their lives at sea.

Turn left at intersection of Sing Lee Alley and Nordic Drive, go over the bridge and you'll arrive at the corner of Gjoa Street and First Street.

### 14. Federal Building —

Built in 1972, the building contains the Petersburg Ranger District office for the U.S. Forest Service, which is open weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Area maps, woodcutting permits and general information

are available at the district office. Tlingit totem poles and a small park are located in front of the building.

### 15. Municipal Building —

Built in 1959, the building houses the police department (dial 911), the borough assembly chambers and administrative offices. Box 329. Phone 772-4425. The structure was remodeled in 2016-17 for \$6.3 million.

Cross Nordic Drive, continue two blocks up Haugen Drive and turn right.

### 16. Petersburg Public Library —

Built in 2013, this facility houses digital and print collections, computer terminals and public wifi, conference rooms, and more.

Backtrack one block west to First Street, continue one block.

### 17. Petersburg Indian Community (ANB) Hall —

Built in 1978. Center for tribal meetings, the Alaska Native Brotherhood and the Alaska Native Sisterhood. Available for all community activities. Box 1128. Phone 772-3636.

Continue north on First Street.

### 18. Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Information Center —

On the corner

Continued on page 27



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# A walking tour through Petersburg



Sandy Beach park tide flats are an ideal clam digging spot during minus tides.

**Continued from page 26**  
of First and Fram streets. General business and recreational information available, includ-

ing a Marine Mammal Center kiosk. Box 649. Phone 772-3646. Bronze Historic Marker site.

**19. Petersburg Medical Center** — The hospital was built in 1983 and 1984, and dedicated in November 1984.

The long-term care wing was renovated and incorporated into the new hospital. The building housing the Joy Janssen clinic was erected in 1994. The hospital is at 103 Fram St. Phone 772-4291.

Turn right on Fram walking past the Medical Center to the museum.

**20. "The Fisk"** — On the grounds of Clausen Memorial Museum, this fish sculpture was designed and fabricated by former Petersburg artist Karsten Boysen.

**21. Clausen Memorial Museum and Museum Store** — 203 Fram St. Opened in 1967, with the Heritage of the Sea addition added in 1976. Petersburg-Kupreanof area his-

**Continued on page 28**

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# A walking tour through Petersburg

## Continued from page 27

tory and culture is represented by a diverse collection of business, social and cultural items. Special attractions include a Tlingit dugout canoe, the Cape Decision Lighthouse lens, fish-trap anchors, and a stuffed 126.5-pound king salmon. On the grounds is "Land, Sea and Sky," a wall piece designed and mounted by the Petersburg Arts and Crafts Guild in 1977. Call for more information. Handicapped-accessible. Phone 772-3598.

Turn right on Second Street and head south to Haugen Drive. Turn left on Haugen, heading 1/4 mile to Twelfth Street. A paved walking path runs parallel to Haugen Drive beginning at Eighth Street.

**22. Hallingstad Peratrovich Center** — Located on 12th Street, the building houses offices of the Petersburg Indian Association.

**23. Mountain View Manor** — Located on 12th Street off Haugen Drive. The borough-owned facility features a 48-unit apartment building for senior citizens. The grounds include beautiful flower gardens and landscaping. The building was doubled in size in 2004.

Head back to Haugen Drive & turn left.

**24. Petersburg Fire Hall** — Petersburg's Fire Hall was completed in 2012 and is the headquarters for Petersburg's volunteer fire and EMS providers.

**25. U.S. Post Office** — Completed in 2000, the post office is open 24 hours for box holders. The post office window is open from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. weekdays and 2



Skunk cabbage blossoms are a sign of spring along many trails around Petersburg.

p.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays.

**26. James A. Johnson Airport** — Built in 1969. The first daily jet service started in June 1977 by Alaska Airlines. The Alaska Airlines terminal was remodeled and expanded in 1991. The former gravel runway was paved in 1982. Private plane tie-downs, fuel and aircraft maintenance, as well as helicopter and fixed-wing air service are available. Careful scrutiny in the area across from the airport reveals the remains of a three-plank boardwalk that

people used to walk on to Sandy Beach over the muskeg before airport days.

Continue past the airport on Haugen Drive eventually turning left towards Frederick Sound.

**27. Sandy Beach Recreation Area** — Daytime picnic area. Low tides reveal abundant sea life and ancient petroglyphs and fish traps on the left-hand side toward the point. The petroglyphs probably mark a heart-shaped fish trap of long ago.

Beach access is available at the following locations:

**28. Sandy Beach Park Middle Shelter**

**29. Sandy Beach Park North Shelter**

**30. Whale Observatory & Outlook Park** — View wildlife through mounted binoculars. Interpretive panels feature information on humpback and orca whales as well as other marine mammals which frequent Frederick Sound.

**31. Hungry Point View Area** — Where the Wrangell Narrows meets Frederick Sound. Offers a great view of the Coast Mountains and Devil's Thumb.

**32. Strand's Home** — Built in 1902 by Peter and Laura Summer. Erling began fishing with his uncle Peter in 1911 and resided in this home until his death in Oct. 14, 1984. The home is located at 806 North Nordic Drive. The home is now owned by their son.

**33. Eagle's Roost Park** — Atop Petersburg Fisheries Hill is a city park where bald eagles may be observed. The eagles perch and roost there while they spy for fish to feed in Wrangell Narrows. Photo interpretive sign shows historic Ness Point.

Turn left on First Street across from Eagle's Roost Park.

**34. Petersburg High School - Mitkof Middle School - Wright Auditorium** — The school district has strong vocational and academic programs. Many electives are offered, including foreign language, surveying and aquaculture. The 1952

**Continued on page 29**



# A walking tour through Petersburg



Springtime wind and tidal currents sometimes push icebergs ashore near Sandy Beach Park.

**Continued from page 28**  
building was remodeled in 1986 to become the middle school/junior high school. The 1976 addition is the black building housing high school classrooms. The 300-plus seat Wright Auditorium is housed in the middle school. Northern Nights Theater, a student run movie theater, shows recent release movies year round. The entrance is at 500 First Street.

Turn uphill at Charles W. Street.

**35. Petersburg Community Gym & Pool**— Built in 1990 and 1991, it contains a full basketball court, racquetball courts, a weight room and an arts and crafts room.

**36. The Aquatic Center** — Features Olympic sized pool,

water slide, warming pool, sauna, and exercise area. Built in 2006. Call 772-3304 for the swim schedule. An RV service facility available at the rear parking lot.

**37. Rae C. Stedman Elementary School** — Built in 1969 and renovated in 2014 for kindergarten through fifth grades.

Walk through the parking lot side, walk to Dolphin Street. At the dead-end head uphill on Fifth Street. At Fifth and Excel is the historic Lutheran Church.

**38. Petersburg Lutheran Church** — The cornerstone was laid in 1938 but the church building was completed and dedicated in November 1948. The education building was completed and

dedicated in 1963. In 1997 the education building was cut in half and moved across the street. Holy Cross House, the current education/fellowship facility, was dedicated in

November 1998.

Continue walking down either Excel or Fram streets and you'll arrive back on Nordic Drive.

## RVs are welcome here

Petersburg welcomes RV guests and has two private parks to accommodate their visits. RV parking is available at the Ohmer Creek campground, operated by the U.S. Forest Service. Ohmer Creek has limited maintenance and no water or bathrooms.

Recreational vehicles can find legal parking on most streets as long as posted signs are obeyed.

A water and service station is located at N. 3rd St. off Wrangell Ave., behind the community gym and aquatic facility. The service station fee is \$10. Contact the front desk at Parks & Rec to pay fee and receive the lock's combination.

For additional information, contact the Visitor Information Center at 2nd and Fram Streets or 772-4636.

# PHS students track LeConte Glacier movement

LeConte Glacier, located 23 nautical miles southeast of Petersburg is perhaps the most studied glacier in the world. For 34 consecutive years retired Petersburg High School geology instructor Paul Bowen and current instructor Victor Trautman have accompanied student teams to the glacier to survey the face and track the glacier's movement.

The group plots the glacier's location the second

week of May every year.

"It's probably one of the longest running high school surveys in the nation," says Trautman. He added that the survey data has been used several times in scientific publications and is also cited on the U.S. Forest Service website.

The glacier is on the mainland on the Horn Cliffs side of Frederick Sound. The snowfield above the glacier

**Continued on page 31**



Icebergs as large as a small cruise ship can be seen in the LeConte Bay fjord during the summer months.

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**Continued from page 30** runs up the Stikine River valley. It has the distinction of being the southernmost active tidewater glacier in North America, often sending icebergs into Frederick Sound and onto beaches around Petersburg. In fact, the spring of 1998 saw the waters of Frederick Sound choked with bergs after a half-mile of ice from the glacier calved into the bay.

Trautman described LeConte Glacier as a tube of toothpaste. The more snow pack and weight that compresses the ice further up the valley, the more ice advances into the bay.

For the past decade, the face of the glacier has remained stable.

The face of the glacier has remained within an average distance of 92 yards of its 1999 position. Its farthest retreats were in the years 2001 and 2004 and its greatest advances were recorded in 1991, 2003 and 2005.

Each year, the survey readings determine the ter-



A wall of ice rises 200 feet above sea level at the terminus and 800 more feet of ice is below the surface.

minus, or ice base of the glacier. While the glacier hasn't moved significantly in recent years, its general tendency is to move forward with the spring melts, retreating again in the fall. LeConte has retreated approximately 1.2 miles since 1991.

In some places, students have measured ice as thick as 4,400 feet. "We're not going to run out of ice," Trautman laughed.

At the terminus, about 200 feet of ice rise above sea level, and 800 feet are hidden below the water line of the bay.

To collect the data, the group is split in two. The students stand at two pre-set spots that have been measured from each other. They then measure the distance from their points to various outcroppings across the glacier.

Using basic trigonometry,

the group takes the data and plots out the glacier's face.

The students are an exclusive group, having had to apply for their positions in the glacier survey club. They spend a great deal of time honing their surveying skills before making the trip to the glacier, Trautman said.

Despite years of study, there is something else no one knows: The age of the oldest snowflake at the bottom of the glacier, Bowen said.

The annual survey trip for high school students teaches them more than glacial science. "It really gives them a practical application of math and science," Bowen said.

Projects of this type usually run out of funding before a long-term consistent body of data can be gathered. "That's what's so different about this project. It's been consistently supported by the school and by Temsco Helicopters since 1983," Trautman added.

The glacier also provides visitors with spectacular scenery close to town. Several charter boats based in Petersburg offer sightseeing trips to LeConte Bay, and flight seeing trips also are available for people who want to gaze across the ice field from above.

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# Be cautious when encountering bears

On Mitkof Island, you're likely to see only black bears. But the larger and more aggressive brown bears occasionally have been spotted on the island.

While many bear stories are greatly exaggerated, it's smart to fear these furry mammals. Statistically, however, the likelihood of being injured by a bear in Alaska is about one-50th that of being injured in a car on a state highway. With proper precautions, the odds get even better.

The most important rule to follow is never feed the bears. In addition to it being illegal in Alaska, feeding bears can lead to injury – to you or the bear.

Cubs are cute and cuddly looking but potentially deadly because of their mother's protectiveness. If

you see a bear cub in the woods, move away quickly because the mother will be somewhere nearby. Placing yourself, even inadvertently, between a sow and her cubs is virtually inviting the mother to attack.

Camping in bear country is a safe adventure if some simple rules are followed. Bears are attracted when food is left in accessible places.

Food should be stored and eaten separately from where you plan to sleep. It also should be packed separately from clothing in case of spills or leakage.

On other occasions, being a little noisy is a good idea. A surprised bear, especially one at close range, will often charge. Loud

**Continued on page 33**



Bears may appear harmless, even cuddling, but keep a safe distance away.

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# Bears

Continued from page 32

singing or talking is the simplest method of letting bears know you are there. Backpackers sometimes tie bells or a can of rocks to their packs.

If you come into close range of a bear, do not turn and run. Instead, back away slowly, without making sudden movements that could frighten the bear.

Startled bears often make a “whoosh” or “woof” sound as they turn to run. If a bear runs away, don’t be alarmed. If a bear stands its ground and begins a series of woofs or teeth-popping, this is your invitation to leave, since the bear may charge.

More information on Alaska’s bears is available from the Peters-



To avoid bear encounters, make noise while hiking so the bears are aware of your presence. Photo courtesy of Carli Byrer.



This type of trap is unique to a 40-mile area around Petersburg. They are found nowhere else in the world. (Drawing courtesy U.S. Forest Service.)

## Sandy Beach fish traps found nowhere else in the world

While the modern town of Petersburg has over 100 years of history under its belt, it is very young in comparison to the Native presence on the island.

U.S. Forest Service archaeologists often lead tours through the vast collection of artifacts located near town, which include six rock and wooden fish traps.

The oldest of the remnants dates back 2,090 years when, archaeologists believe, the tribe of Tlingits built two traps of stone, one on either side of Sandy Beach. The traps are over thirty feet across and all that is showing, during an average low tide nowadays, is a heart-shaped pattern of rocks pointing toward the water with a row of rocks leading the fish into the top of the heart in a V-shape. The theory is that fish that swam in near the beach at high tide would be funneled into the heart-shaped traps, which might have been three to four feet high, and would be unable to escape with the ebbing tide. The Tlingits probably then speared the trapped fish and brought them up the beach to be cleaned.

Later traps at Sandy Beach began to use wooden stakes as well as the rocks piled up for trap walls. The Tlingits eventually constructed all wooden traps. Wooden stakes preserved by the anaerobic conditions in the fine, wet sand still remain in the heart and V-shaped patterns.

burg Police Department, the U.S. Forest Service, the Visitor Information Center and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.



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# There's no shortage of local walks and hikes – short or long

## WALKS CLOSE TO TOWN

### Ferry Terminal to Town

[15 minutes one way]

Easy

A left-hand turn out of the ferry terminal takes you on a quick walk to the heart of town.

On the way you'll pass the floatplane dock and South Harbor. To your left as you near town you'll see the historic Sons of Norway Hall with rose-maling on the shutters, and to the right the picturesque houses that line Hammer Slough.

### Ferry Terminal to Scow Bay Loop Rd.

[45 minutes]

Easy

From the ferry terminal parking lot the walkway is indicated by highway stripes.

About a mile of the walkway runs along the Wrangell Narrows shoreline.

### The Big Loop

[90 minutes]

Easy

A favorite with Petersburg walkers, this loop swings up past the airport around muskeg, with an excellent view of mountains in every direction.

Head up the hill by the totem poles at the corner of Haugen and Nordic drives until you reach the walking and biking path adjacent to the road to the airport. Follow Haugen Drive all the way to Sandy Beach Park. Then turn left and take Sandy Beach Road to Nordic Drive. Follow it along the Wrangell Narrows until it takes you back downtown.

### Hungry Point Trail Loop

[40 minutes]

Easy

From downtown, walk up the hill to the end of Excel St. Make a left hand turn just past the end of the baseball field. Follow the gravel road past the small t-ball field and enjoy this quiet trail that bisects the town. Muskeg and mountain views



This trailhead, across from Sandy Beach Park, provides an easy first half mile to the Raven Trail, which continues for over four miles and becomes quite steep and strenuous.

are all around; blacktail deer can also often be seen. The trail exits to Sandy Beach Road. Turn left and take the sidewalk back to town along Wrangell Narrows, or take one of the stairwells down to the beach.

### South Harbor Loop

[25 minutes]

Easy

From downtown, follow Nordic Drive south over Hammer Slough toward the ferry terminal until you reach South

Harbor. Enter the parking area and walk until reaching the harbor ramp. For those who have difficulty with inclines, be careful of the steep harbor ramp at

**Continued on page 35**

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# Walks & Hikes

Continued from page 34  
low tide.

This is a pleasant and short jaunt past part of the Petersburg fleet. On the way back, turn left on Sing Lee Alley to pass the Sons of Norway Hall and Sing Lee Alley, which takes you back downtown.

## **Beach Walk**

**[20 minutes one way]**

### **Easy**

Eagle's Roost Park north of Petersburg Fisheries includes a stairway onto the beach.

From there, at low tide, you can walk along the Wrangell Narrows all the way to Hungry Point, where the Narrows meets Frederick Sound. It's a good way to check out the eagles. Occasionally, whales also can be seen from the point.

## **Hammer Slough**

**[10 minutes round trip]**

### **Easy**

The Birch Street boardwalk (across the street from the police department) is the first left off of Nordic Drive after Haugen Drive, if you're coming from downtown. It's a short but picturesque walk up the slough, past old homes and warehouses.

## **Twelfth Street Loop**

**[45 minutes]**

### **Easy**

Start off at Hammer & Wikan hardware store downtown and walk up Excel Street past the Lutheran Church and to the baseball field past Eighth Street.

Off to the right of the ball field is the William Musson Memorial pathway, which runs



The City Creek trail combines gravel and boardwalk surfaces for a short, easy hike.

briefly through the muskeg and hooks up with 12th Street. In the summer, the flowers around Mountain View Manor retirement home can be enchanting.

Take a right off of 12th and

you're back on Haugen Drive. Or turn left to walk to Sandy Beach.

While you're in the area, there is a nature boardwalk at the end of Dolphin Street, next to the elementary school just a

few blocks toward town from the ball field at Eighth Street. The nature boardwalk is a shortcut to Eighth Street and goes through forested wetlands for about 900 feet.

## **Sandy Beach to City Creek Trail**

**[1 hour one way]**

**Easy (some mobility necessary to step up and down)**

Trail starts at the troll bridge at the south end of Sandy Beach Park. Walk can also be started at the bridge along Frederick Sound Drive that goes over City Creek.

Trail winds through the woods following the beach with a couple overlooks. If timed right, hikers may see or hear whales in Frederick Sound. Petersburg Indian Association has upgraded portions of the trail to be handicapped accessible.

## **Raven Trail**

**[3 1/2 hours one way]**

### **Strenuous**

The trail can be accessed by a new trailhead across the street from Sandy Beach Park. The beginning of the Raven Trail is gravel and connects to a Borough Service Road for a distance of 1/2-mile. Across the service road, the trail continues for another 4.1 miles. About half of the trail is boardwalk and other parts have somewhat steep sections that are a good workout.

The view from the top offers outstanding views of Petersburg, Frederick Sound and Wrangell Narrows. The Trail accesses the Raven's Roost

**Continued on page 38**

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# Fishing, and 'catching,' is the Petersburg way of life

Petersburg is home port for approximately 600 commercial fishing vessels. Petersburg fishermen hold over 1000 fishing permits for a variety of fisheries conducted statewide.

In 2016, Petersburg Borough and the State of Alaska each received \$664,000 in fishery business and landing taxes collected when seafood products are delivered to Petersburg's processors.

Following is an illustration of how various fisheries are conducted.

## Longliners

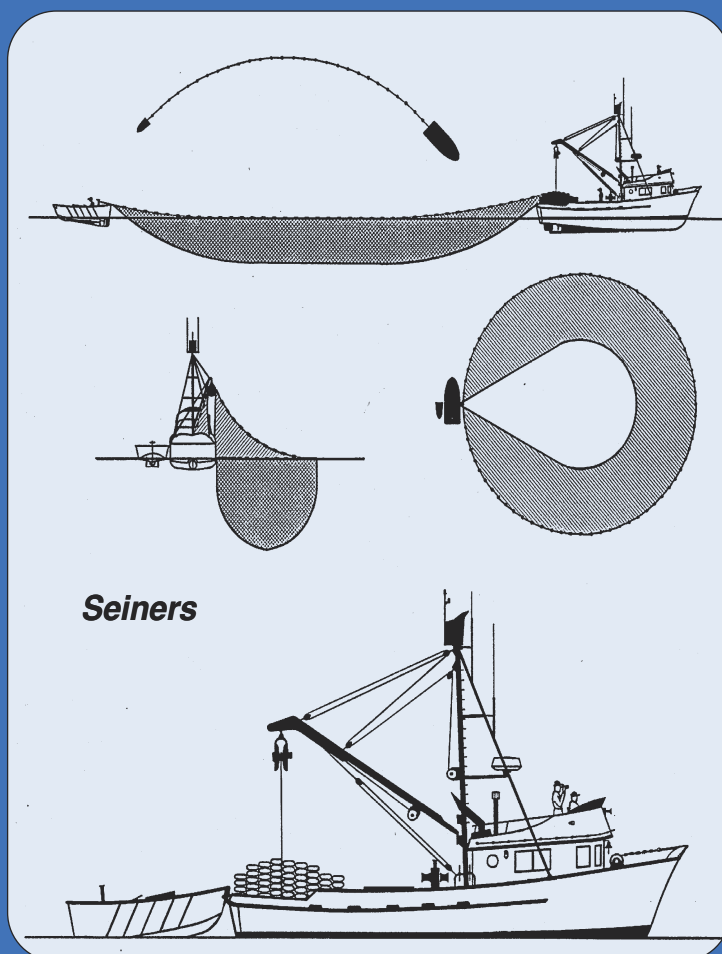
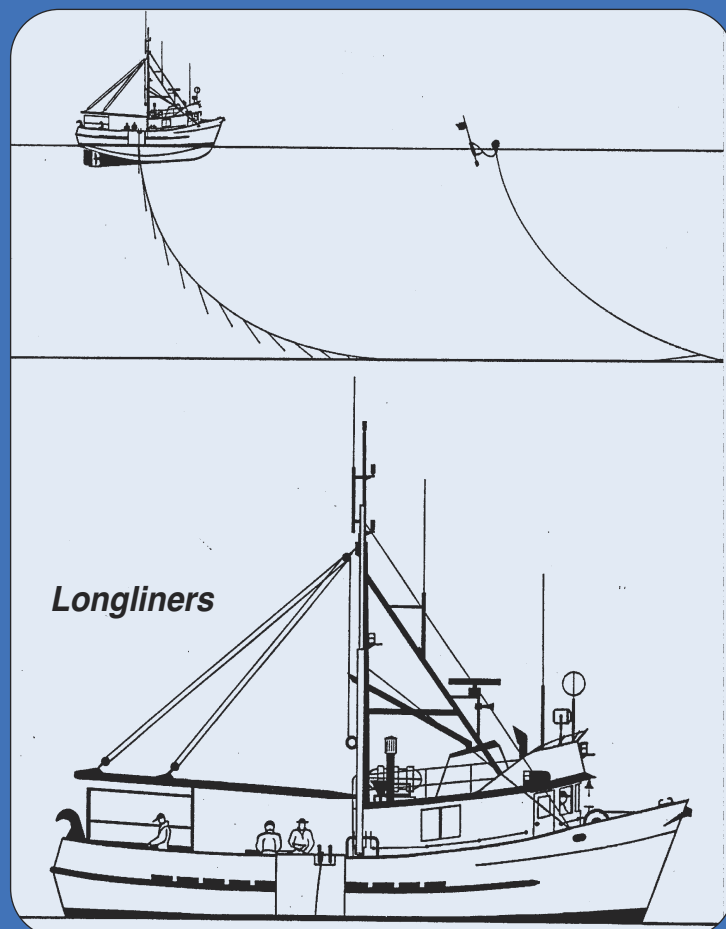
Bottom dwelling fish such as halibut and black cod are caught much the same way

— with long lengths of line — hence the name longliners — using a series of hooks strung out across the ocean floor.

## Seiners

While trollers and gillnetters use just one or two-man crews, seiners usually have four or more on deck and one piloting a skiff. They catch large quantities of salmon, mostly pink salmon — called humpies — the primary product in the canned salmon market.

Once a school of fish is found, fishermen set out the open net with the skiff towing one end off the stern of the seiner and the seiner mo-



tor away holding the other. After a short period the two boats close in a circle and close, or 'purse' the seine, trapping the salmon.

Seine boats are typically 58-feet in length and among the largest vessels in the harbor. They can be spotted by the power skiff in the back and the net, with corks and lead line, piled in the stern.

## Trollers

Five types of Pacific salmon are caught in the region: kings (or Chinook), Coho (silvers), sockeye (reds), humpies (pinks) and chums (dogs). Kings, or Chinook, are the big money fish, caught primarily by

trollers who run multi-hook lines from poles lowered out over the water as the vessels move through the fishing grounds.

Trollers also catch silvers or Coho, which usually bring a good price and return to their spawning grounds somewhat later in the season than kings. Trollers should not mistakenly be called 'trawlers.'

## Gillnetters

Gillnetters target sockeye (reds), chums (dogs) and occasionally Coho (silvers). In this region, gillnetters use 150-fathom driftnets. The

Continued on page 37



# Fishing

Continued from page 36

nets are set and as fish swim into them, they become tangled and are pulled into the boat. Gillnetting can become an art form as fishermen constantly work the net to keep them from tangling in seaweed, logs, or on the rocks.

Gillnet fish are sold for restaurant and specialty use. Their price per-pound is higher than that of seine-caught fish, but not quite as high as troll-caught salmon.

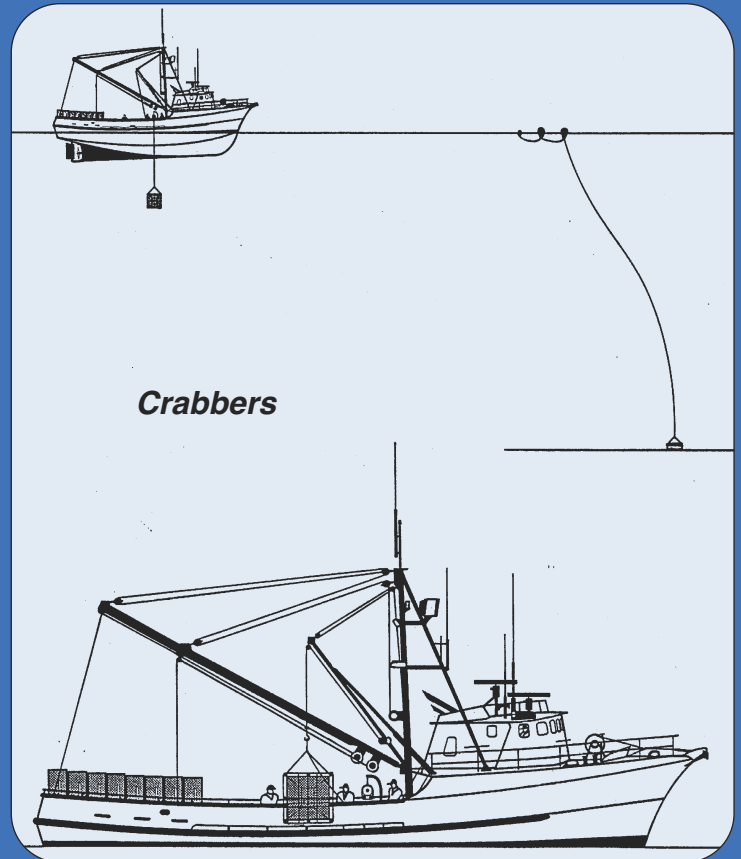
Gillnet boats can be spotted by the hydraulic reel at the rear of the boat. The reel is used to free-wheel out the net while setting and to wind in the nets that catch salmon.

## Crabbers

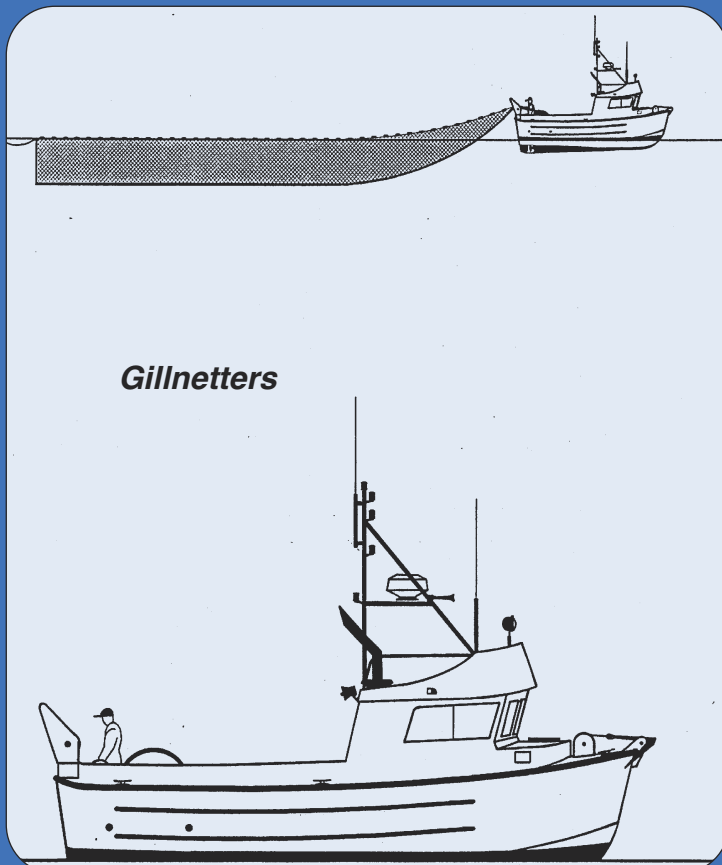
Crews of two or more use pots weighing around 45-pounds for Dungeness crab, and over 500-pounds for the tanner and king crab (red, blue, or golden) fisheries. Crab boats use booms and power blocks to lower and raise the heavy crab pots to the ocean floor, marking the location of their pots with buoys. Pots contain bait jars to attract their crustacean prey. Fresh crab and 'live-crab' have become a 'must-have' for restaurants worldwide and Alaskan crab are rated as the finest.

## Dive Fisheries

Dive fishermen are the newest kids on the block, marketing wise, but also



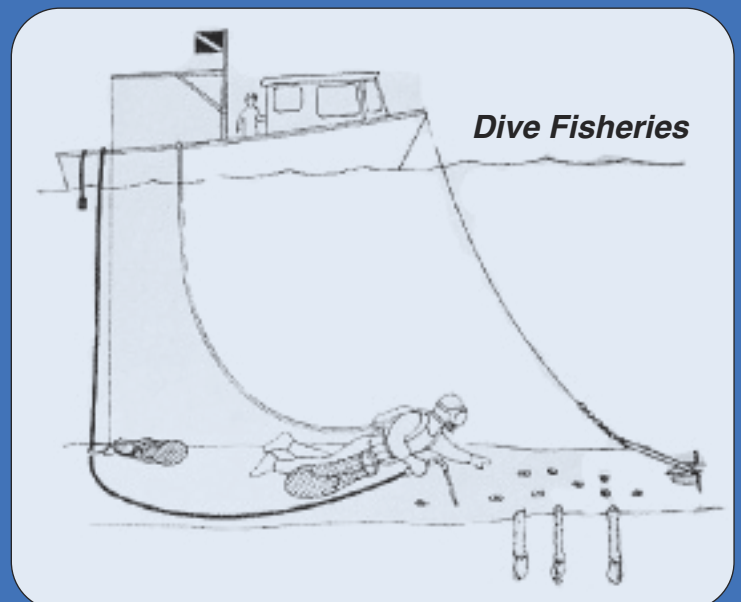
**Crabbers**



**Gillnetters**

some of the most talented and ingenious. Swimming down in scuba gear (or sometimes with umbilical diving gear) and often among sea lions, sea otters, and other aquatic life, dive

fishers have targeted Abalone, Sea Cucumber, Geoducks and Sea Urchins in the past. The species are plucked from between rocks or sandy sea floors and placed in bags, buckets, or netting and raised to the surface.



**Dive Fisheries**

# Walks & Hikes

Continued from page 35

Cabin.

## HIKES OUT THE ROAD

### Blind River Rapids Boardwalk

[30 minutes round trip]

Easy

Located 14 miles from downtown on Mitkof Highway, this trail leads to one of the most popular fishing spots in the area.

The trailhead sign is highly visible from the road. A large parking lot can accommodate motor homes. The boardwalk to the rapids is approximately one-quarter-mile long, and the loop is one-half-mile. The trail passes through a muskeg bog before reaching the popular fishing hole at the rapids.

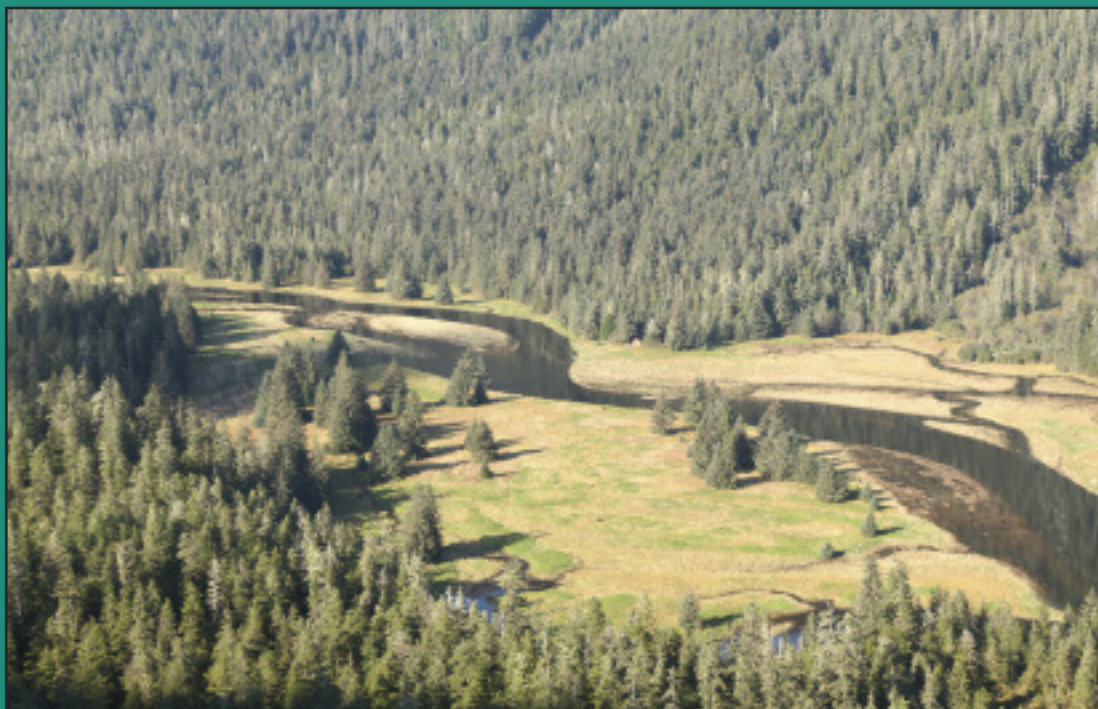
Restrooms are provided near the parking lot, and a shelter is available near the trail's end. Handicapped accessible.

### Man Made Hole

[20 minutes]

Easy

Enjoy a quiet stroll in the woods around the swimming hole off Mitkof Highway at mile 20. Handicapped – accessible. Restroom and a picnic shelter are available.



Petersburg Creek is a popular recreation area for locals. The trail provides access to fishing, and access to the Petersburg Lake Cabin.

### Ohmer Creek Trail [1 hour from Woodpecker Road to Snake Ridge Road]

Easy to moderate

Located off Mitkof Highway at mile 21.5. This one-mile trail is adjacent to the Ohmer Creek

Continued on page 39



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# Walks & Hikes

## Continued from page 38

Campground, and follows Ohmer Creek through mature rain forest and muskeg and over a beaver pond.

The first quarter-mile of the trail is wheelchair-accessible and accesses a fishing platform and the second part of the trail is plank and native tread. The trail provides anglers with access to the creek and adjacent ponds, providing fair to good trout and salmon fishing in late summer and fall.

### Three Lakes Loop Trail and Ideal Cove Trail [30 minutes from the trailhead to any one lake; two hours from the Crane Lake trailhead to the Sand Lake trailhead] Easy

This trail is located 21 miles from downtown off Mitkof Highway.

To get there, drive past

Crystal Lake Hatchery onto the road, past Man-made Hole and take the first left onto Three Lakes Loop Road. The total length of the Three Lakes trails and Ideal Cove Trail is about 5.4 miles. Wildflowers and berries abound along most of the trail and all four lakes offer trout fishing.

Rowboats and picnic tables provided at all three lakes.

An Adirondack shelter is provided at a small lake between Sand and Hill Lakes. Rowboats, fishing platforms, and picnic tables are available at all three lakes.

### HIKES ON KUPREANOF ISLAND

#### Petersburg Lake Trail [Eight to twelve hours round trip] Moderate

Located on Kupreanof Island across the Wrangell Narrows from Petersburg, the trail

is accessible only by boat or kayak.

Hikers have a choice of getting onto the boardwalk trail at two separate locations: Kupreanof State Dock trailhead for a 10.5-mile hike, or the high tide trailhead up Petersburg Creek for a 6.5-mile hike. Both trails follow the creek, with access to trout and salmon fishing, wildflower meadows and great opportunities for photographers.

The wilderness portion of the trail has primitive construction and can be challenging to even experienced hikers. Hikers are advised to contact the Petersburg Ranger District on trail conditions prior to hiking.

The trail also traverses a portion of the Petersburg Creek and Duncan Salt Chuck Wilderness.

The Petersburg Lake Cabin, located at the end of the hike is available for rent from the Pe-

tersburg Ranger District.

### Petersburg Mountain Trail [Six hours round trip] Difficult

To get to the trailhead, boat across the Wrangell Narrows from Petersburg to the Kupreanof State Dock.

To the north (right), the trail goes to Petersburg Mountain. The trail extends 3.5 miles one-way. The first mile is an easy walk through the community of Kupreanof. The trail climbs fairly steeply for the next 2.5 miles to the saddle.

The last quarter-mile is a very steep scramble over rocks to the 2,750-foot summit, which provides one of the best views of Petersburg, coastal mountains and glaciers.

Veteran walker Susan Erickson and U.S. Forest Service staff contributed to this article.

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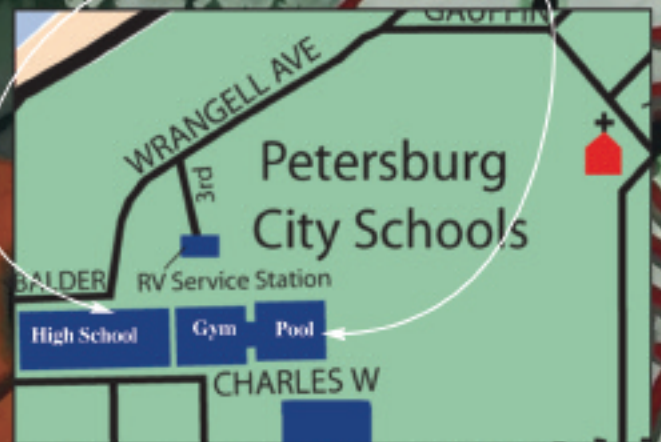
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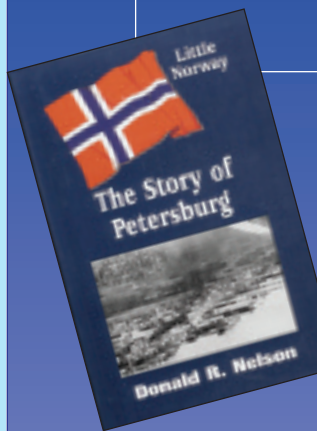


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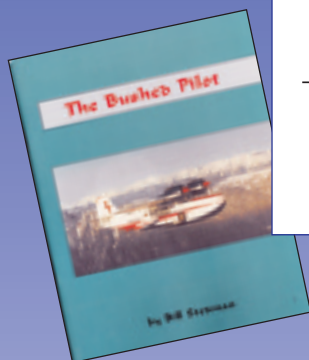
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# Researchers let lighthouse visitors listen underwater

Humpback whales feeding in Frederick Sound during summer months can be seen and heard via streaming recordings of whale vocals made possible by a research grant.

Thanks to a Scenic Byway grant allotted to the Juneau Lighthouse Association, whale-watchers visiting the Five Finger Lighthouse now have the option to listen to live underwater sounds. A hydrophone connected to a swinging mooring is outfitted with a converted white-water kayak, which supplies the battery power to a transmitter sending wireless signal to a receiver located in the lighthouse tower. Eventually, the goal is to have recordings streaming online so that people anywhere can listen.

The grant allowed student-researcher Dawn Barlow, an unpaid intern from Pitzer College in Los Angeles, to spend the summer in Southeast conducting field research for her senior thesis. Her goal was to monitor for whale vocalizations in the region and classify how the acoustic behavior varies with



Five Finger Light Station stands sentinel at the northern end of Frederick Sound.

environmental conditions. She was also in charge of archiving incoming sounds and making them available for visitors.

Barlow worked under the supervision of Dr. Fred Sharpe, a founding member of the Alaska Whale Foundation.

The abundance of krill and small school herring keep plenty of whales swimming around the island where Five Finger Lighthouse stands. Some even

feed within a few yards of the shore.

During the summer, Barlow logged over 480 hours of underwater recordings.

The Juneau Lighthouse Association provided Barlow with a room, in addition to an office and workbench space. She received some support for food from the Scenic Byways grant, and grant money from her university's science department helped her pay for travel to and from Alaska.

Scenic Byway grant money also went toward creating and installing interpretive signs to showcase the

unique history of the lighthouse. Volunteers are always welcome and needed to help with maintenance and improvements on the island during summers. Monetary donations are also accepted and greatly appreciated.

"Five Finger Lighthouse is going through a re-birth as a center for public visitation, education and research. I am excited to be a part of that," Paul Sharpe said. Paul and Fred are brothers and both have spent time together on the island.

Anyone wanting more information can contact Paul at [p.sharpe@comcast.net](mailto:p.sharpe@comcast.net).

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# Sailors' luck is steeped in superstitions

Fishermen, like many who depend on nature have a laundry list of superstitions and rules that are enforced on-board their boats.

Some are based upon the Bible. For example, since Christ was crucified on Friday, boats would not depart on that day. Sunday, however, is the best day to commence a voyage, because Christ's resurrection on that day is seen as a good omen. The adage is: 'Sunday sail, never fail.'

Fishermen would throw pocket change or canned goods overboard in the hope that the "hook-on men" (those who had died at sea) would lend a hand and put fish on their gear.

When a gillnet was pulled up with only one fish on it, fishermen called it, "getting the skunk off the deck." Future catches they believed, would certainly improve.

*Other boat myths are:*

**Split Pea Soup** — When served on board, a southwest wind was sure to blow.

**Whistling** — "Whistlin' up a westerly," was believed possible when persons whistled on deck. A fierce westerly storm gale is a much-feared storm at sea.

**Horses** — Don't mention them when on board. Call them long faces or long-ears if you must talk of them. Some skip-pers forbade horse clams coming on deck.

**Buckets** — Don't leave a full bucket of water on deck. Deck buckets are normally turned upside down. Hatch covers on the other hand are not turned upside down.

**Women** — For centuries it was believed that women had no place at sea. A ship could be doomed; by having the fairer sex aboard and furthermore they would distract the men from their duties. A naked woman however, according to ancient lore, could calm the seas. Thus the reason many vessels have a bare breasted figurehead at the bow.



**Bananas** — Long considered bad luck, the yellow skinned fruit is not to be brought aboard. They are believed to be the cause of everything from spider bites to causing ships to disappear. Pouring wine on the deck will bring good luck on a long voyage and is considered an appreciated libation for the gods.

**Dolphins** — Dolphins swimming with the ship are a good omen while sharks following, are a sign of inevitable death.

**Black Cats** — Black cats are considered lucky while flowers are not. Flowers are used for funeral wreaths.

Cutting your nails or hair at sea is forbidden and never step-aboard a ship with your left foot. When stirring a pot or coiling a line, it must always be done in a clockwise direction.

Another mariner myth is that sailors pierced their ears to improve their eyesight and wearing a gold earring was both a charm against drowning, as well as payment to Davy Jones to enter the next world should a sailor die at sea.

With time, this list of superstitions has withered in the modern world and some fishermen scoff at them.

"A lot of people joke about them, but if they can avoid doing those things, they will," noted a longtime descendant of a Petersburg fishing family.

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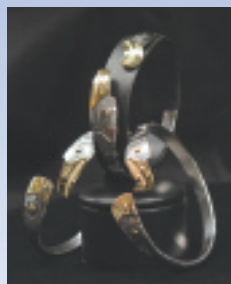


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## Restrooms -

It's nice to know where they are

**Ferry Terminal** – Restrooms can be found at the ferry terminal off of South Nordic Drive, south of South Harbor as you head out of town. The terminal also has a pay phone but is only open when a ferry is due in port.

**North Harbor** – Toilets are right next to the harbormaster's office. A hot shower can also be had for \$1 and a pay phone is available.

**South Harbor** – In the South Harbor parking lot.

**Visitor Information Center** – Just two blocks east of Nordic Drive sits the Visitor Information Center at the corner of First and Fram streets.

**Borough Gym & Pool** – From downtown, take Nordic Drive and turn onto Dolphin Street. At Third Street, turn left. The public gym is on Charles W. Street between the high school and the elementary school. In addition to public toilets, there are showers available.

**Borough Ball Park** – At the top of Excel Street, the ball park offers toilets during spring and summer months.

**Sandy Beach Park** – For those on the north end of town, toilets are available at the park that can be reached after a scenic drive on Nordic Drive, the town's main street, which eventually turns into Sandy Beach Road. Bathrooms are in the picnic shelter at the north end of the park. Another bathroom is located along the road at the South end of the park as well.

**Traveling South on Mitkof Highway** – Restroom facilities can be found at Blind River Rapids Parking Area, Blind Slough Recreation Area, Man Made Hole, Green's Camp, Wilson Creek Recreation Area, Banana Point and Blaquiere Point Boat Launch.



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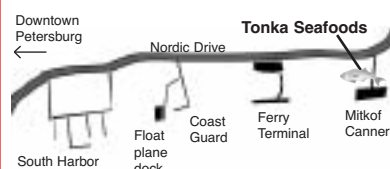
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The next Visitor Guide will be distributed in January 2018.

# Rainy days, mild temperatures

Petersburg has average recorded temperatures of 53.6 degrees in June, 58.3 degrees in July and 57.4 degrees in August, according to National Weather Service data.

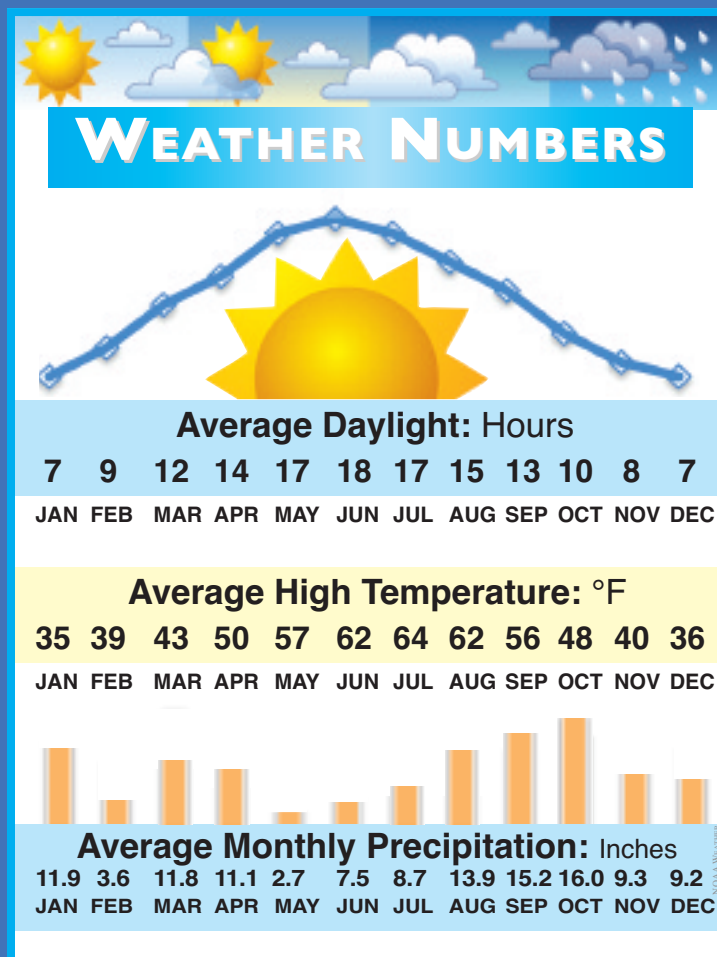
Despite being wetter than normal, the summer was reflective of Petersburg's typical weather patterns which bring a lot of rain. The average annual rainfall for the area is about 130 inches according to data from the National Weather Service. Compare that to an annual average of just 15 inches in Anchorage or 11.3 inches in Fairbanks and the weather in Petersburg may look inhospitable.

But the same ocean conditions that bring in all the mois-

ture also moderate the temperatures. This makes for mild winters and cool summers. Even in the coldest month, January, temperatures rarely fall below freezing.

People who live in this climate adapt. The essential piece of rain gear, either on sea or land, is a good pair of rubber boots, sometimes called "Petersburg sneakers." Style takes a back seat to the comfort of dry feet, and it is not out of place to wear these brownish-red boots on almost any occasion.

On the other hand, umbrellas are uncommon, and serious outdoor work or play is more comfortable in a good waterproof rain jacket and rain pants.





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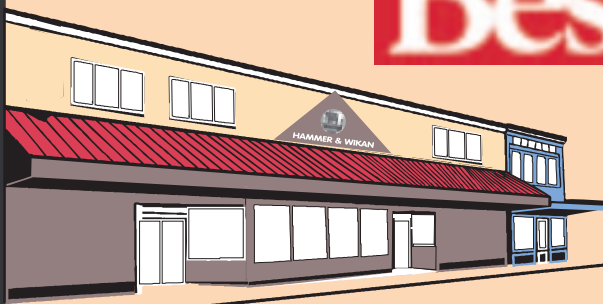
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