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Information about this Visitor Guide

This guide is a hybrid version of our 2020 edition, which went largely unused during the pandemic plagued year which brought the visitor industry to a halt.

With the cooperation of our advertisers, we are able to use the inside pages of last year’s publication and print a new cover section that includes space for new advertisers.

See page B-1 for advertiser revisions.

ON THE COVER:
Stellar Sea Lions at rest on the Red Can at the intersection of Wrangell Narrows and Frederick Sound. The navigational buoy is a popular hangout for both mammals and birds like the Pelagic Cormorant, seen atop the structure.

Photo by Carey Carmichael Case/Wild Iris Photography

An official publication of the PETERSBURG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, P.O. Box 649, Petersburg, Alaska 99833, Phone: (907)772-3646
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Petersburg Visitor Center
P.O. Box 649 • Petersburg, Alaska 99833
Phone: 907-772-4636
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 eventually developed into a major seafood-processing corporation, Icicle 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 $45.1 million in seafood landed and processed. Tourism has replaced logging as a driver of the local economy. Small timber harvests continue on a much more limited basis.

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

Waterfront Dining at an historic salmon cannery

The restaurant features a wide selection of appetizers:
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Velkommen to Little Norway
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 smaller cruisers from both Alaska and along the western coastline of the lower 48.
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 humpbacks 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 mega-tenders 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.

BIG MARKETS: Petersburg fishermen brought an estimated $45 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.
Petersburg facts and statistics at a glance

• Population: 3,226 within the Petersburg Borough in 2019.

• 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 120 inches. About half of that falls in September, October, November and December. In 2015 135.99 inches of rain fell 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, 1,740 passenger vehicles and 1,447 pickup trucks are registered within the Borough. Some 1,391 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.

• 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 461 students.

Continued on page 7

The Time Bandit tied up at a Petersburg float for an overnight stay. The crab boat was made famous by the reality show Deadliest Catch. Photo courtesy of John Havrilek

Petersburg Medical Center

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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 collects and ships about 2,000 tons of solid waste to the Roosevelt Regional Landfill in Washington. Approximately 300 tons of recycled material is shipped.

• **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 $323 million Borough-wide.

• **Government:** Petersburg Borough has a manager/assembly form of government. The borough’s annual general fund budget is $9.6 million.
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, mela-rama, 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. Cancelled for 2020.

**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.

**Rainforest Festival** — Weekend after Labor Day. The festival is a non-profit event with the goal of bringing 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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The U.S. Coast Guard color guard leads the July 4th parade down Nordic Dr.
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.

1. Adventure Tours: Local companies can provide wilderness adventures by land, sea or air.

2. Peruse Art Galleries: Galleries feature local and Alaska artists of all media.


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. Be aware of regulations.

8. Day Trip up the Stikine River: Day Trip up the Stikine River: Adventure up the longest, 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.

Continued on page 10

Slush and ice bergs make paddleboarding more fun in LeConte Bay. Photo courtesy of Jeremy Collison

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52 Things to do in Petersburg

Continued from page 9

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


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.

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.

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 ballfield 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.

Continued on page 11

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52 Things to do in Petersburg

Continued from page 10


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 restaurants.

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 Storefronts. See decorative Norwegian designs imprinted in the sidewalks. Historic canned salmon labels are wrapped around public trash cans throughout the town.

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 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 overlooked 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.

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 — This day-use picnic area is at

Continued on page 13
Attractions

Continued from page 12

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 restrooms. It was constructed in 2009. Swimming in the saltwater 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 beachcombing, 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 provides 30 camp sites, picnic areas and multiple restrooms.

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.

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.
Attractons

Continued from page 13

Highways, this area has tables, outhouses and turnarounds for trailers.

**CABIN RENTALS:**
Twenty Forest Service cabins are scattered throughout the Petersburg Ranger District. 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.

Cabin reservations can be made through the National Recreation Reservation Service at 1-877-444-6777, or at their website 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 boat or floatplane. 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 Kah Sheets Lake is ice-free from April through November. The hike can begin from the Kupreanof State Dock or is accessible by boat or kayak. Petersburg Lake is sea-free from April through November.

**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 Raven’s Roost Cabin is accessible by a short boat ride or kayak paddle across the Wrangell Narrows followed by a hike or by floatplane.

The pan-abode style cabin sleeps six and is heated with a wood stove. A rowboat is available at the lake.

The pan-abode style cabin sleeps six and is heated with a wood stove. A rowboat is available at the lake.

**Continued on page 15**
Water is typically available from muskeg pools, but visitors are encouraged to bring their own water, especially 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 opportunities 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 boat house. 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.
Nearly without exception, visitors seek out Norwegian pastries and fresh seafood when visiting Petersburg.

Seafood, sometimes fresh, is readily available from local vendors who are willing to ship frozen products home for you. Don't expect bargain prices. Seafood is a commodity sold worldwide, so expect to pay market rates.

Visiting cruise ships, yachts and overnight excursion vessels often purchase fresh seafood items when in port and serve it onboard to their guests.

The cheapest, freshest seafood is that which you catch yourself. Fishing charters will provide that opportunity.

Norwegian baked goods may be available at catered events and are rarely offered at restaurants, except on special occasions. During the Christmas holidays, Petersburg is famous for its Julebukking. Merchants set out trays of homemade delicacies for their customers to enjoy along with a variety of beverages. The Little Norway Festival offers the best opportunity for some Norske fare. The Sons of Norway features a sampling of authentic pastries, cookies and open-faced sandwiches at their Kaffe Hus each May. The Sons also host potlucks for their members and guests throughout the year including a lutefisk dinner and pickled seafood contest in December.

Another option is to select a cookbook, purchase the required ingredients and bake your own meals and desserts when you return home. Bookstores and gift shops feature a variety of cookbooks.

Three reasons large cruise ships don’t visit Petersburg

It is rare to see large 2,000 to 6,000 passenger cruise ships pull into Petersburg.

First, we don’t have enough public restrooms — or other amenities for that matter. A ship offloading 3,000 people would quickly fill up the streets, sidewalks, stores and restaurants.

Second, cruise ships cannot transit Wrangell Narrows. It’s too shallow and in some cases not wide enough to keep the vessel within the channel.

Third, Petersburg is too far from the beaten path that large ships travel when moving to and from the larger port cities such as Ketchikan, Juneau, Sitka and Skagway. Large cruise ships would lose too much sailing time getting into and out of Petersburg. A Petersburg visit would require one to two additional travel days to make a stopover here.
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.


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.

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
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 estimated 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 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 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. Orca cruises 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 incidents.
Continued from page 18

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 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. Cannery Park — Learn about Petersburg’s cannery history.

4. Trident Seafoods, Inc. — Founded in 1916 as 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 Northquest Seafoods Inc. It is now owned by Trident Seafoods. The plant handles salmon, halibut, shrimp, crab, rockfish, black cod, sea cucumbers and sea urchins.

5. 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

Continued on page 21
A walking tour through Petersburg

Continued from page 20

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.

6. 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 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 next owned by Ocean Beauty Seafoods. The cannery no longer is in operation and the cannery has been sold but the new owner has not been made public.

7. 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

The creek flowing under the troll bridge at Sandy Beach rages during a heavy rainfall.

Continued on page 26
Hungry Point Trail

William Musson Trail

Approximate Distances
USFS Ranger District office . . Mile 0
12th St. & Haugen Dr. . . . . . 0.5 mile
Airport Terminal . . . . . . . 0.9 mile
Sandy Beach Park . . . . . . . 1.6 mile
Hungry Point . . . . . . . . . . . 1 mile
Eagle’s Roost Park . . . . . . . 0.4 mile
Ferry Terminal . . . . . . . . . . . 0.8 mile

Frederick Sound

James A. Johnson Airport

Petroglyphs

Ballfields
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. Cell service may be limited or non-existent outside of downtown Petersburg. *Bear spray recommended.

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

Continued from page 21

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.

**HISTORIC MARKER LOCATIONS:**

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

8. Gjoa & Nordic Drive — Centennial Park, Centennial Plaque & “Bruno” Bear Sculpture

9. 13 N. Sing Lee Alley — Helse Restaurant

10. 15 N. Sing Lee Alley — Kinder Komfort Toy Store

11. 14 S. Sing Lee Alley — Enge Building

12. 18 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. 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.

14. **Bojer Wikan Fisherman’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.

15. **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.

16. **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.

Continued on page 27
A walking tour through Petersburg

Continued from page 26

17. **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.


   Continue north on First Street.

19. **Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Information Center** — On the corner of First and Fram streets. General business and recreational information available, including a Marine Mammal Center kiosk. Box 649. Phone 772-3646. Bronze Historic Marker site.

20. **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.

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

22. **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 history 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.

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

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

Continued on page 28
A walking tour through Petersburg

Continued from page 27

building was doubled in size in 2004.

Head back to Haugen Drive & turn left.

25. Petersburg Fire Hall — Petersburg’s Fire Hall was completed in 2012 and is the headquarters for Petersburg’s volunteer fire and EMS providers.

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

27. 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.

28. 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:

29. Sandy Beach Park Middle Shelter
30. Sandy Beach Park North Shelter
31. 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.

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

33. 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.

Continued on page 29

Sea lions hauled out on the “red can” greet every boat passing through the mouth of Wrangell Narrows.

Bring some Local Culture home with you!

- Native Art
- Fur
- Paintings
- Prints
- Jewelry
- Apparel
- Home goods & more

The Cedar Box
Monday - Saturday 9:30am — 6pm
101 B Nordic Dr • 907-772-2666
akcedarbox.com • @TheCedarBox
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.

35. 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 building was remodeled in 1986 to become the middle school/junior high school. The 1976 addition is the back 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.

36. 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.


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.

39. 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.
Six Petersburg High School students that make up the glacier survey class determined last May that one side of LeConte is in about the same location as it was in 2018, but the other side came out about 60 to 80 feet. Their instructor said the fast moving glacier can easily shift 100 feet in a day.

“They have committed a lot of time and effort, so when they go over there, though they have fun don’t get me wrong, it’s serious,” said former instructor Victor Trautman. “They take care of the business, and then we can have fun.”

The program first started back in 1983 when PHS teacher Paul Bowen wanted to create a field study that would get the students engaged. He was awarded a federal grant for the study of the movement of the LeConte Glacier and received a special permit from the United States Forest Service to land a helicopter in the area. Trautman got involved with the program in the early 1990s after the glacier moved back about a half of a mile, which resulted in the team having to create a whole new set of points.

The all day expedition in early May began with a boat trip out to LeConte Bay in the morning and was followed by a helicopter ride courtesy of Temsco. The students were then split up into two groups. One group was flown to a point on the south side of the bay. The south team selected all the points on the glacier that the group was going to measure, but the work had to be done quickly before the glacier could calve and erase the points.

Once the points were selected on the glacier, the students on the south team were flown to a location 4721.51 feet northwest on the other side of LeConte Bay where the rest of the team was already waiting for them. The group was able to triangulate each point on the glacier with the two points on either side of LeConte Bay to determine the location of the face of the glacier and how far it has moved since the prior year’s survey.

“It’s a lot of hard work, but it’s totally worth it when you get up there,” said PHS junior Jolyn Toyomura.

Like the rest of the students in the program, Toyomura spent her lunchtime every Wednesday practicing for the moment when she would get to survey LeConte Glacier. Some Wednesdays, she said she even went without lunch, but she was able to make friends with a group of people she may not have had before.

Continued on page 31
the opportunity to bond with otherwise.

Math teacher Tom Thompson assumes coordinator duties following Trautman’s retirement. This is Thompson’s third year being involved with the program. He first joined to help with the math that is involved with the surveying, but will now be the coordinator of the program.

“I am going to be guiding the kids who will take over the program,” said Thompson. “The great thing about the kids is that they’re such self motivated, self starters that the kids teach the kids.”

A Harbor Seal hauled out onto ice near the face of LeConte Glacier.

Icebergs travel with ocean currents, sometimes smashing up against the shore or getting caught in shallow waters.

**Ingas’s Galley**

*Fresh & Local Food made with love*

Offering a variety of homemade entrees using local seafood, freshly baked bread, and locally sourced ingredients. Serving Beer and Wine.

Opening in early May

772-2090 or 305-0540 during off season

104 N Nordic Drive • akingasgalley@gmail.com

For daily specials, check us on Instagram

Ingas’s offers catering services for charter boats, parties, conferences, weddings, and more!
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 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 Petersburg Police Department, the U.S. Forest Service, the Visitor Information Center and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

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.
Cannery Park honors past & present cannery workers

Cannery workers, past and present are recognized for their contribution to Petersburg’s seafood industry with a covered, open air gazebo that sits over a concrete slab with two benches on Main Street, next to the Trading Union, Inc. parking lot. On three walls of the structure are five panels that give a history of the canneries that have operated in Petersburg. One panel displays cannery workers throughout the years. Some are peeling shrimp by hand and others are using more modern techniques of processing seafood. Another panel shows a timeline of all the canneries that have operated in Petersburg. There’s also a map of the current canneries in Petersburg, and historic labels from salmon and shrimp cans processed in town sits on a panel next to the map. Probably the most detailed panel shows the history of the Peter Buschmann Cannery.

Decorative metal benches were designed & produced by local welder Joseph Quinslet. Yet to be added to the project, are planters and cement bricks on either side of the structure. There are also four mosaics that feature a salmon, shrimp, rockfish and crab that are to be placed on the concrete slab. The remaining work is to be completed by this summer.

Production workers have come from all over the world to work at Petersburg’s various canneries, and Petersburg’s Icicle Seafoods General Manager Patrick Wilson said, “They should be recognized.”

“There’s usually not much mentioned about their contribution to the industry,” said Wilson. Their work is often overshadowed by that of the fishermen.

Another historic cannery panel is on display at the Clausen Memorial Museum that was donated by local historian and publisher Karen Hofstad.

The colorful panels detail the history of the various canneries that have operated in Petersburg over the years.
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 rosemaling 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 white 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 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 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.

Glacier Laundry
Coin-op Laundry & Showers
Located Downtown
Open 8 am – 8 pm • 772-4144

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
Continued on page 35
It takes around two hours to hike to the first lookout on Raven’s Roost Trail. Kupreanof Island is to the right and the Suokoi Islands in the background.

Walks & Hikes

Continued from page 34
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 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.

Continued on page 36

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Continued from page 35

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 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.

Three Lakes Loop Trail and Ideal Cove Trail

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 KUPREANOFS 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 Petersburg Lake Trail construction is primitive and sometimes difficult to locate due to mud and brush. 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 Petersburg Ranger District.

Petersburg Mountain Trail
[Six hours round trip]
Difficult
Walks & Hikes

Continued from page 36

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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Sunset at the Greens Camp. There are several large campsites with picnic tables and fire pits near the water with great views. Photo courtesy Jenny Annett Photography

Crystal Mountain is the highest point on Mitkof Island. View shows Wrangell Narrows in the background.
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.

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 gill-netters 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 motoring 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 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 con-

Continued on page 39
Fishing

Continued from page 38

Gillnetters

Crabbers

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. There are roughly 86 permits in Petersburg.

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 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.
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>ITEM COST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>$11.95 + $3 S&amp;H</td>
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<td>No Show Tonight</td>
<td>$12.95 + $3 S&amp;H</td>
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Lighthouse soon to be accessible to visitors

On a three-acre island 45 miles north of Petersburg, sits the Five Finger Lighthouse. It was the first and last manned lighthouse in Southeast Alaska. The names of the men who manned the lighthouse through winter storms are scrawled on the underground walls of the structure, and their stories are recorded in log books. Located at the confluence of Stephens Passage and Frederick Sound, the historic Five Finger Lighthouse stands 68 feet tall.

There aren’t any mammals on the island, but there are plenty of birds, including bald eagles, songbirds and nesting seabirds. Sea lions, harbor seals, harbor porpoise and sea otters can be seen swimming off shore, while nearby killer whales keep a close watch. Humpback whales are often found feeding on the abundance of krill and herring that surround the area.

The Five Finger Lighthouse was built in 1902 and was manned by the United States Coast Guard. The original wooden structure burned down in 1935, but the lighthouse was rebuilt and still stands today. The USCG operated the lighthouse until 1984 when it went fully automated. The lighthouse is currently leased from the USCG and maintained by the Five Finger Lighthouse Society (FFLS), which is based out of Petersburg.

The 118-year-old lighthouse may have seen better days, but FFLS is working towards upgrading the facility and providing regular maintenance. Because of the remote location of the lighthouse, it can sometimes be hard to access. Rocks surround the island, and winds can pick up to storm-force speeds in the open waters to the west of the island.

After remodels are complete, FFLS hopes to have a full-time lighthouse keeper who will live onsite several months out of the year. The lighthouse keeper will maintain the lighthouse and greet visitors. FFLS may even turn the lighthouse into a bed and breakfast in the future, so visitors can experience Southeast Alaska from one of its lighthouses.

“Our objective as an organization is to preserve and maintain the historic structure and to make the site accessible to the public in order to increase the awareness of the significance and educational value of the Five Finger Lighthouse,” said Thomas Cumps, vice president of the FFLS board.

The facility has a base of operation for many whale research organizations.

Anyone wanting more information about the lighthouse can visit its website at www.fivefingerlighthouse.com
Devil’s Thumb: Saltwater to Summit in 8 Days

Excerpts from Patrick Fowler’s account of his Devil’s Thumb ascent in 2019 with fellow climber Alex Jahn, both Petersburg residents.

By Patrick Fowler

On July 28 we departed Petersburg with a short boat ride to Thomas Bay and the terminus of the Baird Glacier. With one packraft and one kayak we paddled, portaged and climbed through several large islands of ice separated by moats of water to obtain the contiguous glacier.

The lower Baird Glacier was a labyrinth of crevasses, requiring us to move back and forth until we found a bridge of ice or walls of each crevassed narrowed enough to allow a crossing.

On day three we walked into the Witches Cauldron under overcast skies, the thundering sounds of rock and ice falling from all sides and a lone seagull screeching a warning above us.

The terrain was tough to move through, essentially an ice cube covered in gravel and boulders of all sizes amongst large moats of standing water.

On day five we started up the icefall on the southern aspect of Devil’s Thumb, where the Stikine Icecap at 6,500 feet elevation flows 4,000 feet down into the Witches Cauldron (2,500 feet).

At 1,700 feet we avoided the most hazardous terrain and gained approximately 500 feet in elevation before things got tricky.

While the terrain was not consistently steep, several bands of heavily crevassed sections barred upward progress. Rockfall and the consistent noise of collapsing ice urged us to move fast to exit that terrain. After a very tense day, we topped out onto the Stikine Icecap near the 6,500-foot level.

On the morning of day seven, we started our ascent of the com-

Continued on page 43
complete east ridge direct with an alpine start and bivied on a low-angled dome around the 9,000 foot level.

Following a glorious red sunrise from our high vantage point, we strolled along the summit ridge to the highest point (9,077 feet) and looked out over Southeast Alaska and deep into Canada. We located the register left by the British Mountaineering Club and added our own note to the three others that were in the canister.

For the descent, we reversed course along the summit ridge to an existing rappel station. Somewhere around 13 rappels (45 to 60 meters) with some traversing and downclimbing brought us back to the snow.

Upon arrival at our base camp we gorged ourselves with snacks and decided to helicopter out to avoid the unnecessary risk of traveling through icefall and crevasses. The Temsco helicopter picked us up the next morning.
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 moisture 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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Average Daylight: Hours

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Average Monthly Precipitation: Inches

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</tbody>
</table>
REVISED
Advertiser’s Index 2021

Alaska Fibre Inc. ............... A-44
Alaska Floorcovering ............. 17
Alaska Passages Adventures ...... 9
Alaska Seaplanes ................. B-44
ALPS Federal Credit Union ....... 21
Bearing Song & Gifts ............. 27
Borough Phone Numbers .......... 2
Breakaway Adventures ............ 30
Chamber of Commerce .......... 1
Clausen Memorial Museum ...... 16
Das Hagedorn Haus ............... 7
Diamanté Gift Shoppe .......... 15
El Zarape ......................... A-1
Firelight Gallery & Framing ...... 21
First Bank .......................... 13
Glacier Laundry ................... 34
Hammer & Wikan .................. Back Cover
Harbor Way Parts, Inc. .......... 43
Homeport Electronics .......... 41

Inga's Galley .................... 31
Jensen Boat Rentals ............. 35
Joan Mei Restaurant .......... 4
Lee's Clothing ................. 10
Majestic Eagle Lodge .......... 42
Nordic Air, LLC ............... 35
Pacific Wings, LLC .......... 4
Papa Bears Pizza ............... 37
Petersburg Flying Service ...... A-1
Petersburg Harbors ........... 18
Petersburg Medical Center ... 6
Petersburg Motors ............. 16
Petersburg Parks & Recreation ... B-44
Petersburg Properties .......... 32
Petersburg Pilot Newspaper ... 40
Petersburg Rexall Drug ....... 7
Petersburg Sportfishing ....... 19
Psg Visitor Information Center .. 11
Rocky's Marine ............... 14
Salty Pantry ................. 8
Scandia House ................... 12
SeekAlaska Tours ............. B-1
Sing Lee Alley Books & Gifts .. 2
Tamico ......................... 15
Temisco Helicopters, Inc. ... 20
The 420 .......................... 33
The Beachcomber ............... 3
The Cedar Box ................. 28
Tides Inn .......................... 5
Tongass Kayak .................. Inside Front Cover
Tonka Seafoods ............... 3
The Trading Union ........... 26
The Trees RV Park & General Store ... 41
Viking Travel .................. 1
Waterfront Bed & Breakfast ... 29
Whale Song Cruises .. Inside Back Cover

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