

# ALASKA'S MARINE HIGHWAY

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## CORRIDOR PARTNERSHIP PLAN



### *Celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Nation's Most Scenic Byway.*

**Prepared for**

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, as part of the submission materials required for the designation under the National Scenic Byways Program of the Federal Highway Administration

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January 22, 2002

Dear Reader,

It is with great pleasure I endorse the proposal to designate Alaska's Marine Highway as a National Scenic Byway. One travel writer summed up the great power of Alaska's Marine Highway this way: "one of the world's most scenic highways requires no driving, no road maps, no expensive stops at the gas station, and no automobile."

As a water-based highway, Alaska's Marine Highway may be an unusual nominee for National Scenic Byway this year. But, for many coastal communities that are completely bounded by water with no interconnecting paved roads, the Alaska Marine Highway is the only way to "drive" from one town to the next. Coastal Alaska's historic dependence on ferry travel has woven Alaska's Marine Highway into the fabric of Alaska culture. Simply put, travel on Alaska's Marine Highway is as much a part of life in coastal Alaska as mist on a summer morning.

A typical experience aboard one of our ships starts with parking the car down below, locating a suitable seat for the ride, and securing a warm cup of coffee from the on board cafeteria. Then, relaxed travelers sit back, relinquish all concerns to the captain, and watch the spectacular scenery unfold.

The Alaska Marine Highway story takes place in America's two largest national forests, the Tongass, along the Inside Passage, and the Chugach, in

Southcentral Alaska, as well as along the far-flung chain of Aleutian Islands. It is a story about people who have thrived for generations upon the richest landscape—Native Alaskans, Russian settlers, Scandinavian fishermen, soldiers, miners, and timber harvesters. It is a story about marine and upland wildlife—humpback and killer whales, seals and sea lions, sea otters, salmon and a myriad of exotic fish, teeming colonies of seabirds, bears, deer, moose and wolves. It is a story about geology, archaeology, Alaska's past, and our future.

For over 30 years, Alaska has enjoyed a unique partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, which provides trained interpreters on board our ships to help summer travelers fully understand and enjoy the Marine Highway experience. In the fall and spring, these interpreters provide tour guidance for our Elderhostel program. These interpreters help tell the story of Alaska's Marine Highway. We hope that National Scenic Byway designation will help us expand on board interpretation to a year-round service.

Alaska's Marine Highway is an important conduit for recreational activity. Generations of basketball players, swimmers, runners, and other sports enthusiasts have used the Marine Highway to travel to high school tournaments and other competitions. Many travelers bring along their bicycles, kayaks, and other alternative modes of transportation. In the future, intermodal

connections will be improved, allowing recreational enthusiasts to go directly from ships to footpaths, to port communities, to hiking trails, to other scenic byways, and beyond.

In 2003, Alaska's Marine Highway turns 40 years old. In honor of this milestone, the State of Alaska is nominating the Marine Highway for designation as a National Scenic Byway. We believe it has all the qualities recognized by the byway program, and much more.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tony Knowles".

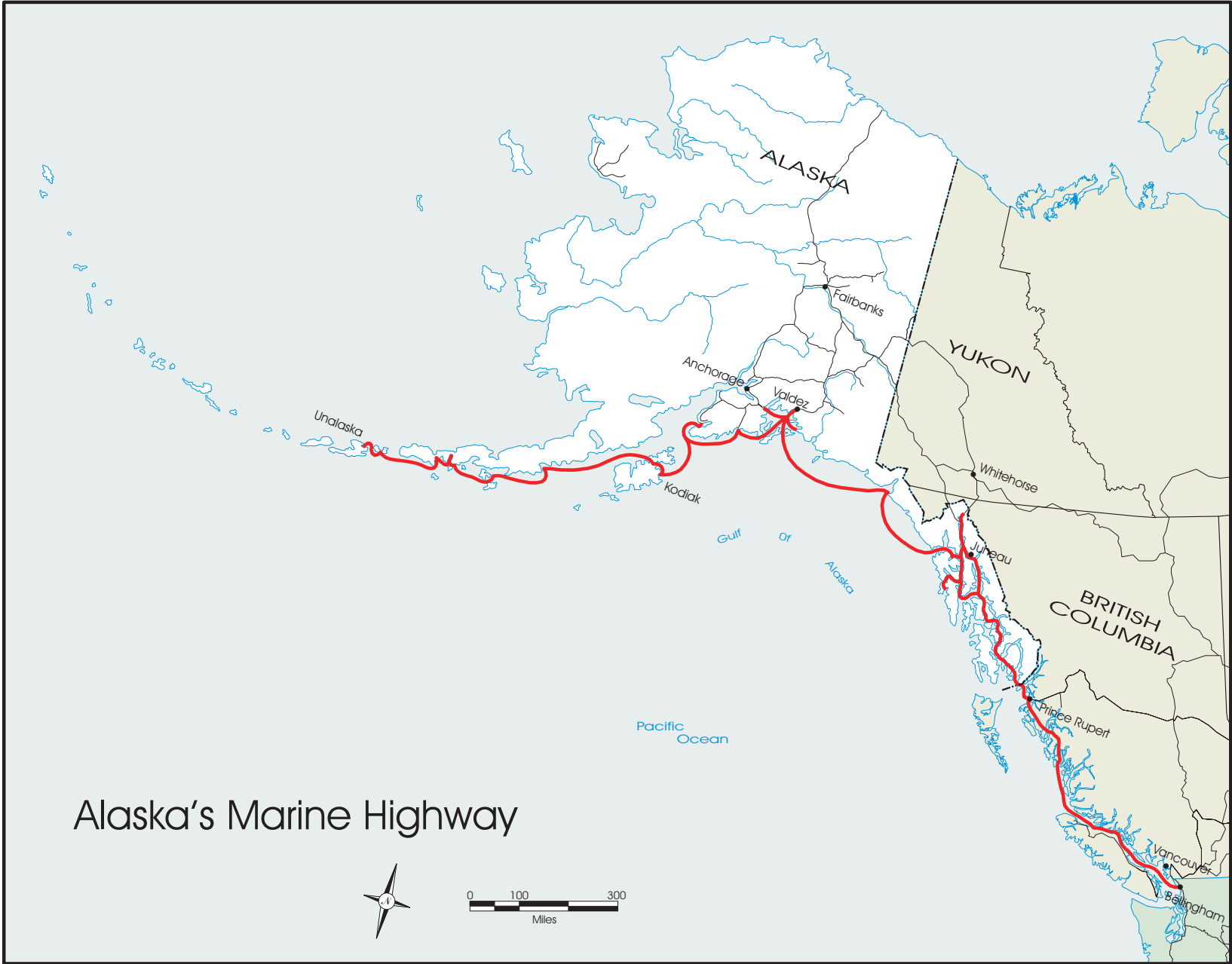
Tony Knowles  
Governor



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# Alaska's Marine Highway

Map courtesy of ADOT & PF.

# 1

## Introduction

Alaska's Marine Highway is the only route in America offering views of fjords, mountains, waterfalls, glaciers, icebergs, islands, whales, volcanoes, fishing vessels and a variety of other magnificent scenes - all from the water. Once travelers arrive at one of the 33 port terminals along the route, they can explore the beauty and wonder of coastal Alaska aboard a leisurely cruise to their next point of adventure.

Alaska's Marine Highway has the potential to be the most unique byway in America's Byways system. This byway is evidence that Alaska is one of the most unusual places in North America. Designation of our marine route as a National Scenic Byway will help generate more visitors to our communities. It will help our economies without interfering with or damaging the resource-based industries upon which we depend. *A Scenic Byway designation provides an excellent opportunity to increase awareness about the important role of Alaska in our visitors' lives.*

### Alaska's Marine Highway is Special

The key features of this byway that lend it national significance are as follows:

Alaska's Marine Highway is perhaps the most scenic road in the world and someone else does all the driving! The ship-based nature of this

byway, in itself, makes the route unique. There are, however, a wide range of other aspects that also make it significant. The byway provides travelers with the chance to see a rugged, beautiful landscape from the water and to explore communities and places that have no roadway links to the outside world. It also offers travelers a chance to participate in an ancient Alaskan transportation tradition.

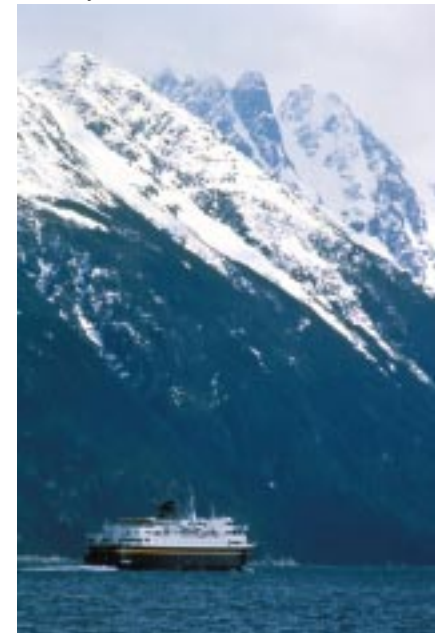
The byway reaches across national and state boundaries by linking Alaska to Canada, via British Columbia, and to the United States via Washington.

This byway is also significant because it gives the average traveler an in-depth experience of the multifaceted quality of Alaskan life. Byway travelers not only see and meet Alaskans, one-on-one, as they travel aboard the Marine Highway ships, but through interpretation and their own experiences, visitors see and learn about Alaska's diverse resource-based economy and the way of life our economy supports.

This byway is also significant because it winds around and through Native lands, which hold cultures that are unique to the Pacific Coast of North America. No other U.S. byway provides such a comprehensive window of understanding to these cultures.

Finally, this byway already exists as an agency within the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. Although not created as a grassroots entity, its nomination and hopefully designation as a National Scenic Byway, provides consensus opportunity for grassroots support and advisement.

The M/V Malaspina in Lynn Canal, a steep walled fjord.



## **A Note on this Plan and its Structure**

This Corridor Partnership Plan is a written document outlining goals and objectives intended to enhance the experience of passengers on Alaska's Marine Highway and meet the goals of the National Scenic Byway Program. These goals and objectives focus solely on the Alaska Marine Highway System facilities and carries with it NO regulations for the communities or lands the Marine Highway travels through. This plan is the first step to making improvements to the Alaska Marine Highway System while being a user-friendly, flexible tool that encourages implementation of the strategies. We also see this effort as a beginning for this byway. Due to the route's length and complexity, it will take years for it to fully evolve. We have designed this plan in a manner that will convey the significance of the entire 8,834 mile-long byway, while leaving the door open for communities, businesses and property owners along the route to participate at a time and in a manner they see as appropriate. The key to success for this Partnership Plan will be the vital *partnerships* between the communities and the Alaska Marine Highway System working cooperatively on related projects.

Each chapter in this plan is organized with a similar structure. First, basic issues and facts are presented, followed by a summary of the challenges and opportunities that arise from those issues. The goals and objectives are stated to provide a positive, clear direction when addressing the challenges and opportunities. The seventh chapter of the plan focuses solely on implementation. The broad directions covered within each of the previous chapters are explored and given more structure in Chapter 7.

*Alaska's Marine Highway vessels traveled 475,650 nautical miles in 2000... that is over 161 trips from New York to Seattle.*

Source: Alaska Marine Highway System

As we proceed with our byway work and planning, we feel it will be most useful to focus our efforts on specific issues that may arise in the coming years. Each of these issues will be the topic of a separate analysis to be performed as needed. We wish to avoid the production of a weighty, awkward planning document, but instead keep ourselves focused on specific problems and opportunities we can pursue within the framework offered by this plan.

## **A Two Corridor Approach**

An important aspect to the plan's organization is the concept of two types of corridors:

**The Management Corridor:** The management corridor refers to the terminal land owned by the Alaska Marine Highway System and the ships on which passengers travel. This will be the only land and infrastructure affected by this byway program, unless our neighbors in communities along the route choose to participate in some way. We, of course, would welcome their participation.

**The Experience Corridor:** This term refers to the lands and communities lying along the route into which passengers will venture. These lands lay outside the jurisdiction of this plan, but they provide much of the experience that draws people to our state. Land owners, tribal corporations, businesses and government entities that choose to participate in the byway effort may become Byway Partners, and as such, Alaska's Marine Highway will work with them on grants and byway related projects. All other individuals and groups in the Experience Corridor will be unaffected by the byway.



This two-corridor concept is an important one for the Marine Highway. Due to the nature of this byway, all travelers using the route must board via terminals and use Alaska Marine Highway System ships. Given that access is limited to those terminal points, it is appropriate that our plan focus just on that system. Unlike a road that may be owned and operated by the state or federal government that has numerous private and public properties along its frontage, Alaska's Marine Highway has a limited number of access and frontage points - just 33. The use of the management corridor concept allows us to recognize that the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities is the only management entity for this byway's core infrastructure.

Along with the experience of riding on the System, visitors will want to explore our Alaskan communities. Clearly, it is also a major objective of the byway to encourage increased tourism and the associated economic benefits. Nonetheless, this byway is long and complicated and there is an important tradition within Alaska of supporting local rights. The Alaska Department of Transportation does not in any way want to impose the creation of this byway on the rights and wishes of local residents and business people in the port communities. The distinction of the Experience Corridor allows this byway plan to clearly recognize that the on-land places our visitors will go to and enjoy are separate, independent jurisdictions. It is already clear that there is strong support by many communities along the route. Many have requested to become byway partners and will participate actively in the effort to develop improved infrastructure and stronger marketing for The Alaska Marine Highway System.

It is also important to allow communities the choice not to participate. By focusing our initial efforts within the Management Corridor and allowing a more gradual evolution of the Experience Corridor, we provide all communities with that freedom of choice.

## **Segmenting the Marine Highway**

This byway is divided into three segments:

**Inside Passage:** Bellingham, Washington to Skagway, AK (1048 miles)

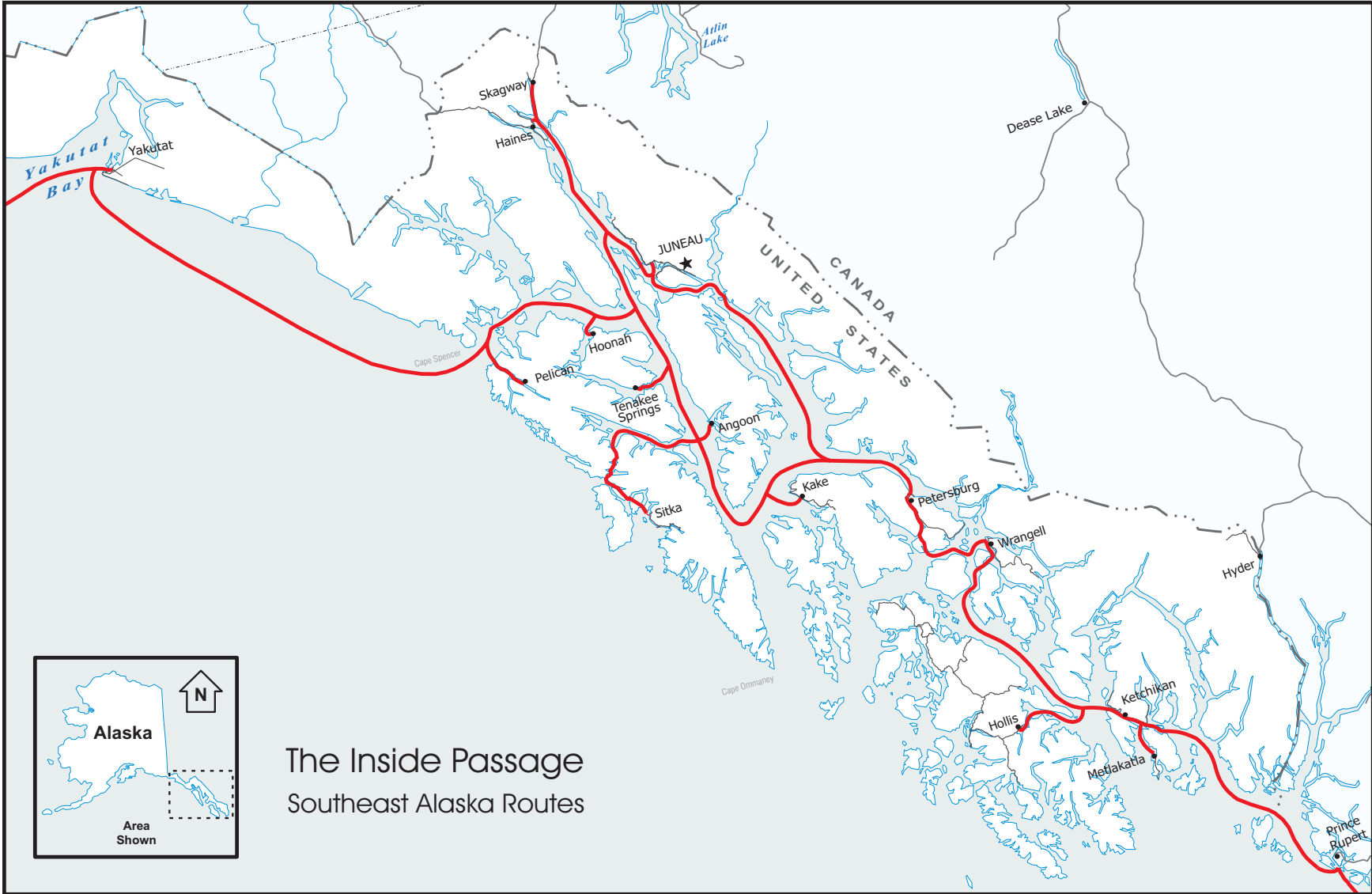
**Southcentral Alaska and Cross-Gulf:** Cordova to Homer (825 miles)

**Southwest Alaska and the Aleutians:** Kodiak to Unalaska/Dutch Harbor (825 miles)

This segmentation is the format currently used by Alaska's Marine Highway in routing and scheduling. As such, it is familiar to the Alaska Marine Highway System staff, to the Federal Highway Administration and to residents.

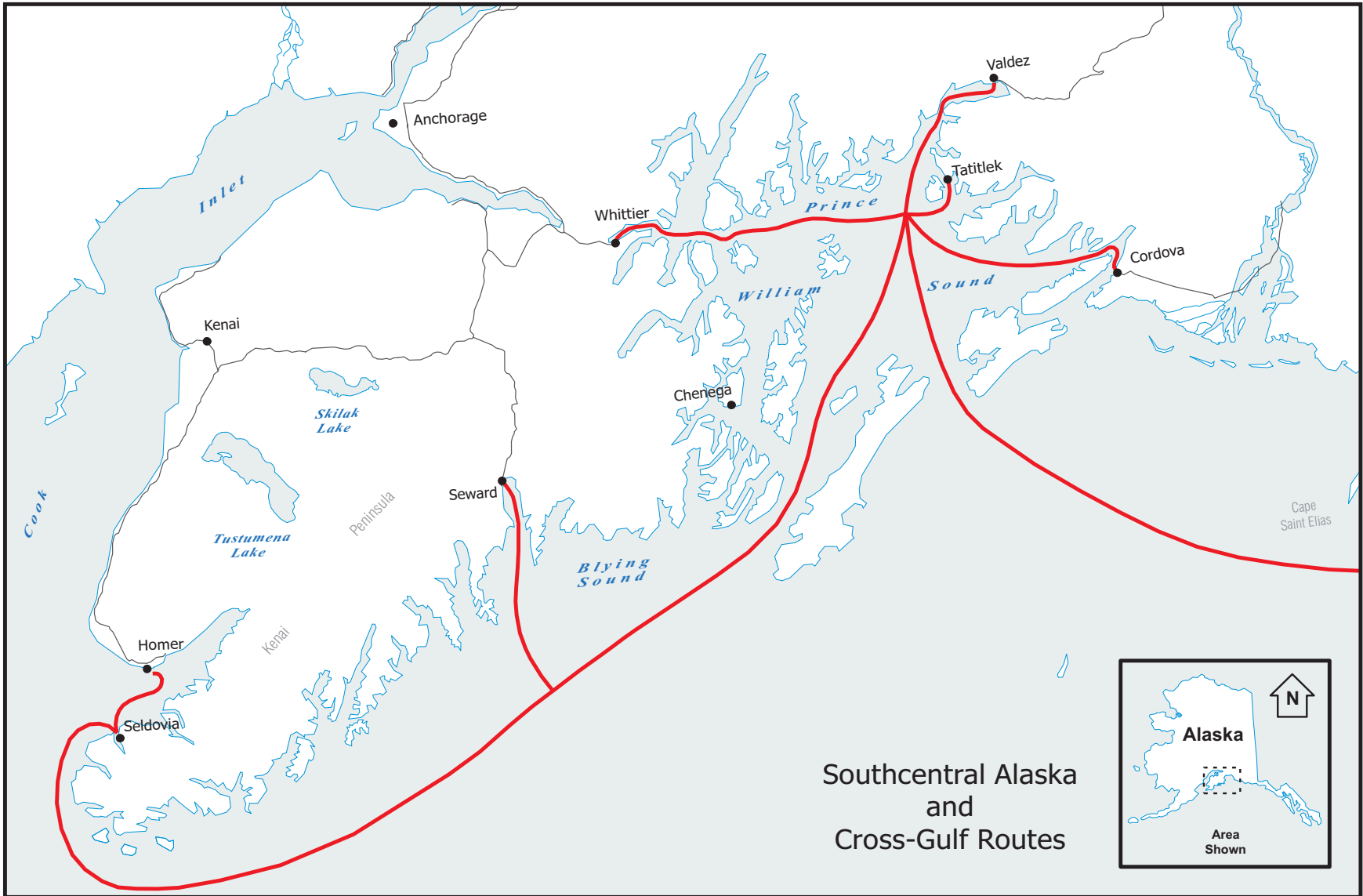
The M/V Taku sailing through the Wrangell Narrows.



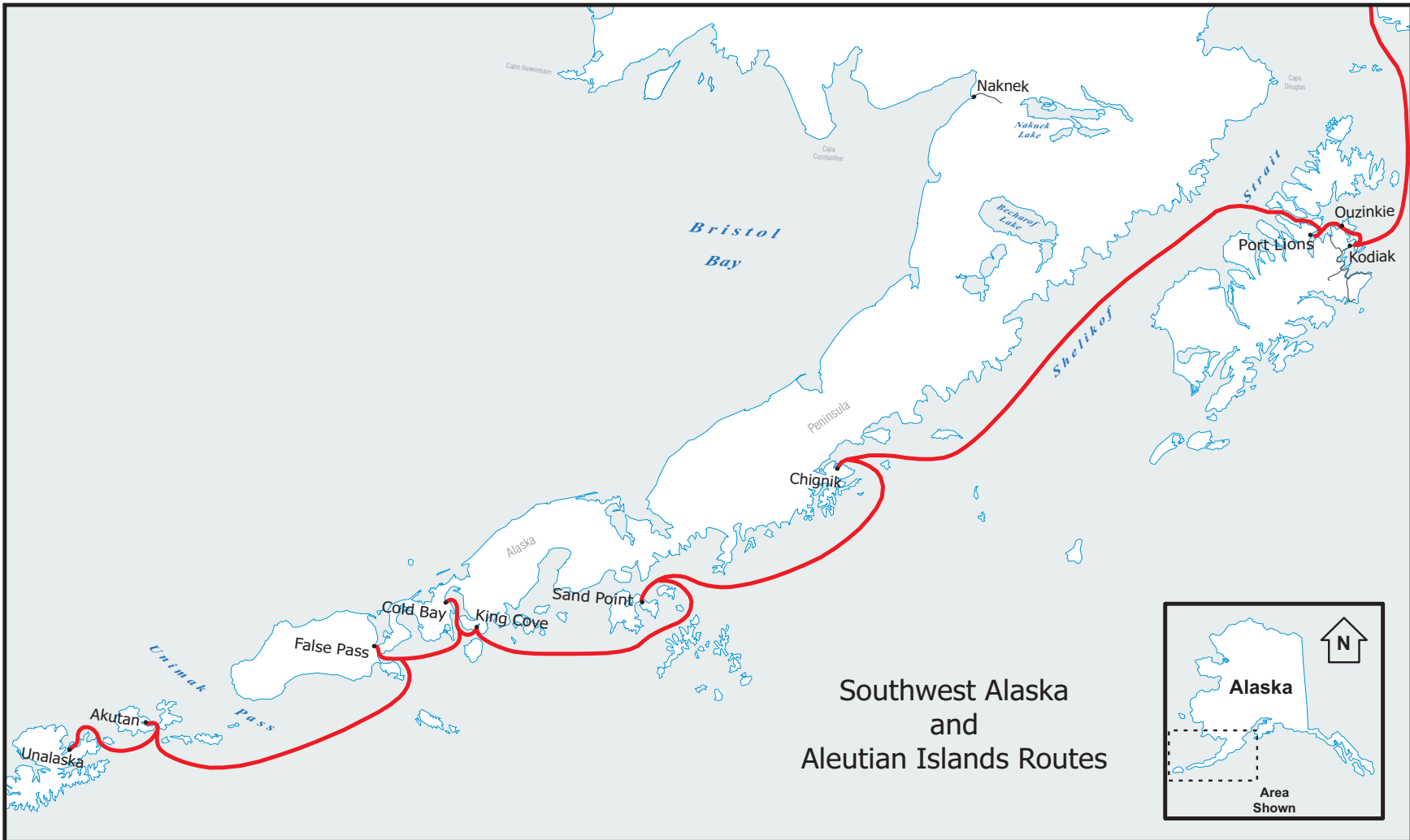


The Inside Passage  
Southeast Alaska Routes

Map courtesy of ADOT & PF.



Map courtesy of ADOT & PF.



Map courtesy of ADOT & PF.

## **Meeting the Federal Corridor Management Plan Requirements**

We have designed this Corridor Partnership Plan to meet both the requirements of the National Scenic Byways Program and our own needs, locally. Please refer to the Resources chapter for a presentation of the specific requirements of the National Program.

## **Conclusion**

Alaska's Marine Highway will be a unique byway in the America's Byways System, and it will reinforce the message that Alaska is one of the most unusual and special places in North America. We believe that designation of our marine route as a National Scenic Byway will generate more visitors to our communities and help our economies, without interfering or damaging the resource-based industries upon which we depend. We see the byway as an excellent opportunity to increase visitors' awareness of Alaska's role in their lives.

This plan is taking a fresh approach to corridor partnership planning for what is perhaps the most unusual byway in North America. The nature of this ship-based highway means we must look at both the travel experience and our partnerships in new ways. As such, we need to define our corridors from an organizational perspective rather than a geographic perspective. We recognize that the Alaska Marine Highway System is the central management entity for the backbone infrastructure of this byway. We also recognize that people will choose to travel the Marine Highway for the experience of the ships as much as the communities and landscape surrounding the

ships and terminals. Thus, we will approach this byway in a manner that will allow communities to participate, if they so choose.

What this byway will actually mean for the communities and businesses along the route is still unclear to some. It will take time before the cumulative impacts of increased marketing and investments in byway infrastructure yield significant economic returns to our communities. As such, we are taking a flexible grassroots approach. The success of this byway will be based on the degree to which the people who live and work along this route perceive it as something that enhances their lives. Preparation of this Corridor Partnership Plan is a first step in helping both Alaska's Marine Highway and all potential byway partners see with more clarity what this byway might mean for Alaska's coastal communities, as well as our neighbors in British Columbia and Washington.

Passengers watch the landscape slip by on the stern of an Alaska Marine Highway System ship.





# 2

## Byway Organizational Plan

This chapter describes an approach for participation in the byway, the organizational structure of the byway plan and how future efforts will be coordinated.

### Organization of the Route

The primary organizing entity along this byway is The Alaska Marine Highway System - a division of the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities. The system owns the terminals and ships that comprise the Management Corridor for the byway.

The Alaska Marine Highway System is primarily involved in preparing this plan and in guiding the byway during the initial stages of implementation. During the initial period, and then more substantially afterwards, an Experience Corridor organization will emerge as communities clarify the degree to which they wish to participate in the byway effort.

### Outreach to the Experience Corridor During Plan Preparation

The outreach and awareness building effort for this byway began in November 2000, at the Alaska Municipal League Conference. That was followed by informal contacts and an intensive one-on-one field outreach effort in the autumn of 2001.

The major concerns the outreach effort encountered related to how the byway would portray Alaska and the byway communities. Local leaders felt strongly that the byway should play a role in helping all visitors understand the realities of Alaska and the degree that its people are dependent on its natural resources. Additionally, they felt that interpretation should show the ways in which Alaskan resource management addresses both economic development and conservation.

### Implementation within the Management Corridor

We are fortunate that implementation within the primary Management Corridor is solely the responsibility of the Alaska Marine Highway System. As such, the Alaska Marine Highway will guide the actions that need to occur within the Management Corridor.

The following entities will be responsible for various categories of actions that are likely to flow from the corridor partnership:

**Signage** – The Alaska Marine Highway System staff

The M/V Taku with Tongass National Forest as a backdrop.





**Interpretation** – The Alaska Marine Highway System and USDA Forest Service staff. A special committee for interpretation established for the byway will direct interpretative planning. It will have representation from the USDA Forest Service, Alaska’s Marine Highway, the Office of History and Archaeology, Native organizations and coastal communities.

**Marketing** – Marketing manager for Alaska’s Marine Highway

**Terminal Improvements** –Alaska’s Marine Highway System Southeast Region planning, design and construction staff.

### **Challenges and Opportunities Regarding Byway Organization**

Given the above issues, the following are the major challenges and opportunities facing this byway:

#### **Challenges**

1. Moving the byway project forward within a framework of community support.
2. Moving the effort sufficiently fast to see economic impacts, but not so fast as to out-distance community support.
3. Creating organizational approaches that take into account the great distances that separate byway partners.

*Alaska’s estimated coastline, including islands, inlets, and shoreline, is 47,300 miles.*

Source: AK DCED

### **Opportunities**

1. Making short-term improvements within the management corridor to demonstrate the practical nature of the byway and show this as a real and positive force.
2. Building on the high levels of interest and support shown within byway communities.

### **Goals and Objectives for Byway Organization**

**Goal 1: Create and sustain a byway process that allows for open, effective and efficient participation for all interested entities and individuals.**

- a. Objective: Create an organizing committee for the Management Corridor.
- b. Objective: Create an organizing entity for the Experience Corridor.

**Goal 2: Create and sustain a process that allows experience corridor communities to learn about and participate in the byway at their own pace and in a manner consistent with community needs.**

- a. Objective: Encourage Experience Corridor communities to define the potential byway benefits and costs for their places and businesses.
- b. Objective: Encourage communities to identify beneficial projects locally.



**Goal 3: Find short-term practical projects that demonstrate the byway's effectiveness.**

- a. Objective: Convene communities and the Alaska Marine Highway System regularly to seek cooperative ventures related to the byway.

If the state of Alaska was superimposed over the continental United States, Alaska's Marine Highway would stretch from central Florida, north to Missouri, and as far west as New Mexico.



Map courtesy of Alaska DCED.



# 3

## Intrinsic Quality Assessment and Management

### Introduction

We believe all six intrinsic qualities recognized by the National Scenic Byways Program are represented in world-class form along this byway: scenery, nature, recreation, history, archaeology, and culture. The first part of this chapter reviews each of these intrinsic quality categories as they relate to the byway and the degree to which each category demonstrates regional and/or national significance. In order to provide a sense of the context within which the intrinsic qualities exist and related byway management might occur, an overview of the major land use and ownership patterns along the route follows. This chapter concludes with a review of the likely intrinsic quality challenges the byway will face and the management approaches that make sense for this route.

This byway's intrinsic qualities, especially those that relate to the marine experience, are unique to the nation in that this byway covers a northern latitude coastal system. The historical and cultural resources of the route are also exceptional.

### Review of Scenic Qualities

Alaska's Marine Highway provides an unparalleled opportunity to see the dynamic coastline of Alaska. The scenic qualities of coastal Alaska can be divided into two distinct regions: one incorporating the Inside Passage and Southcentral routes and the second being Southwest Alaska and the Aleutians. Much of the landscape is viewed as middleground and background scenery, allowing spectacular panoramic viewing, including 13 of the 20 tallest peaks in the United States. Approximately 1,500 islands provide foreground and middle-ground interest and establish a sense of scale along the route.

The landscape along the Inside Passage and Southcentral is one of the most aesthetic coastlines in North America, and perhaps even the world. Rugged snow-capped mountain peaks typically rise 4,000 to 8,000 feet above the ocean. The area is blanketed by America's largest temperate rainforest, much of it a part of the Tongass and Chugach National Forests. Glaciers slowly creep through mountain valleys scouring deep fjords and rocky cliffs lined by waterfalls. Icebergs dot the coastline and drift free from glaciers that extend into saltwater. Unique coastal landscapes include the 18,000 foot peaks of the Wrangell-St. Elias Mountains and the more than 50 mile-wide Malaspina Glacier.

The scenic landscape of the Southwest Alaska and Aleutians route is characterized as rugged and energetic. The route serves the volcanic mountain chain of the Alaska Peninsula and the Aleutian Islands. The rocky coastline is energized by ocean swells with smoldering volcanic peaks rising 2,000

A typical landscape seen along the Marine Highway in Southeast & Southcentral Alaska.



to 5,000 feet above the grassy, treeless landscape. Scenic elements include Aniakchak Crater National Monument and picturesque Kodiak Island.

It would be a monumental task to inventory the thousands of miles of coastal landscape that the Marine Highway traverses. A large portion of it travels through the Tongass and Chugach National Forests' 22 million square acres. The USDA Forest Service has inventoried the scenery of these forests using the national Visual Management System. Forest Service scenic inventories indicate that approximately 30 percent of the landscape has a 'high' scenic rating, 60 percent has a 'common' landscape rating and 10 percent has a 'low' scenic rating. Compared to other national forest landscapes, Alaska has a much higher scale for scenic qualities and a 'common' rating in Alaska might equal a 'high' rating in many other locations throughout America.

### **Review of Natural Qualities**

Coastal Alaska is a young land shaped by fire, ice, and water. The collision of tectonic plates pushed up the rugged coastal peaks and created the "ring of fire," a volcanic band that stretches around the north rim of the Pacific Ocean. Many of the volcanoes along the southern portion of the Marine Highway are quiet, however, eruptions continue in the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Chain.

Much of Alaska was covered by ice during the last ice age and thousands of square miles of ice fields and glaciers remain along coastal Alaska. As the ice retreated, deep fjords were created and coastal

temperate rain forests replaced the barren landscape. The wet, cool climate created by the collision of marine air and coastal mountains, results in large amounts of rainfall and sustains the world's largest contiguous coastal temperate rain forest, from Kodiak Island in Alaska, through British Columbia and the Pacific Northwest.

The nutrient-rich waters of the Pacific Ocean create abundant marine wildlife, fish and shellfish communities that support numerous terrestrial species. Over 400 species can be found along the Marine Highway route. These species include the bald eagle, trumpeter swan and brown bear – species that are endangered in other parts of the United States. Other species include humpback whales, orcas, sea lions, moose, Sitka black-tail deer, porcupines, wolves and world-class salmon and halibut, to name a few. The unusual diversity and abundance of marine life, wildlife, and forest resources results in one of the richest bio-regions in the world. When combined with its outstanding geological, glacial and marine environment, it is easy to understand why we say Alaska's Marine Highway traverses some of the most interesting natural landscapes in America.

### **Review of Historical Qualities**

Since travel by water was the most effective mode of transportation prior to the 1920's, some of Alaska's richest history can be found in coastal communities served by Alaska's Marine Highway. Much of this history is preserved and interpreted, or capable of being interpreted in the future. The first inhabitants

Deep fjords with floating icebergs remain after the retreat of glaciers, in Southeast and Southcentral Alaska.



were from a variety of Alaska Native tribes, and Native cultures in Alaska continue to have strong influences throughout the state.

Russian explorers arrived in coastal Alaska in the mid-1700's and established communities based on fur trading and expansion of the Russian Orthodox Church. The Russian influence is evident from Unalaska to the last Russian-America capital of Sitka. In the mid-1800's, gold was discovered in numerous locations and drew European-Americans into Alaska through the early 1900's. In 1867, the United States purchased Alaska from Russia and efforts continued to settle the territory. In 1942, the Japanese invaded the Aleutian Islands including the community of Unalaska. In 1959, Alaska became a state. At that time, Alaska was exporting large amounts of timber, fish and oil. Today much of Alaska's economy is still based on its rich natural resources, along with tourism and government.

### **Review of Cultural Qualities**

Alaska's Marine Highway carries its passengers through areas inhabited by Alaska's indigenous people. The corridor passes through the traditional boundaries of seven of Alaska's original Native cultural and language groups. The Alaska Marine Highway System uses the original Native trade and migration routes as it passes through the ancestral homelands of the Tsimshian, Haida, Tlingit, Eyak, Athabaskan, Tanaina, and Alutiig (Aleut) peoples. These major groups have numerous distinctive subgroups or are related to other major groups. The Eyak people have their origins in the Alutiig, Athabaskan and Tlingit groups. Native languages,

arts, technologies and ways of life flourished in the response to the abundance of natural resources along Alaska's coast.

Many of the present port communities remain predominantly Alaska Native or retain strong Native traditions. Some of these include the communities of Metlakatla, Angoon, Cordova, Chignik, and Unalaska.

Many of these communities also retain evidence of the Russian settlers that populated coastal Alaska. Some of the strongest cultural icons from the Russian period are the Russian Orthodox Churches of the 1800's; their pointed onion domes and crosses are found in many of the port communities.

One element all of these coastal communities have in common is a strong seafaring tradition. These people were, and remain, people of the sea, dependent on its resources including vast timber supplies along the coastline. In Petersburg, Scandinavian settlers still make their living in the seafood industry and celebrate the Little Norway Festival every year.

### **Review of Recreational Qualities**

Alaska offers world-class recreational opportunities. The coastal nature of the marine corridor allows users to recreate on land, water or ice. Numerous outfitters and guides in port communities offer passengers recreational opportunities including: fishing; hiking; cross-country, downhill and extreme skiing; ice and rock climbing; mountaineering; surfing; cycling; glacier tours; dog-sledding; boating;

*The Alaska Marine Highway System just signed a contract to construct the first high speed passenger and vehicle catamaran ferry to be built in the United States. Sustained speed is expected to be 32 knots. Delivery is scheduled for spring 2004.*

Source: Alaska Marine Highway System

sailing; kayaking; camping; environmental tours; whale watching; scuba diving; hunting; and flight-seeing.

Independent travelers have the ability to explore the Alaskan wilderness and coastline by visiting its national forests, national parks, state parks and wilderness areas. These areas have public-use facilities including over 1,000 miles of trails, more than 200 public use cabins, wildlife viewing facilities, fishing platforms, canoe and kayak routes, campgrounds and RV facilities.

### **Review of Archaeological Qualities**

Coastal Alaska hosts numerous archaeological resources. Many of these are not open to the public due to the Native community's strong desire to keep them out of the public domain. However, the Native people living in many communities, along with numerous excellent museums along the route, have outstanding exhibits and ceremonies for public viewing. Some of the most popular public archaeological sites are the Wrangell petroglyphs, the totem parks in Ketchikan and Sitka, the ongoing archaeological excavations at the Baranof Castle in Sitka, and the excavations in the Aleutian Islands and on Kodiak Island. Due to the sensitivity of some archaeological sites, this intrinsic quality will not be significantly marketed. These important resources should be recognized as significant and protected, and in some cases they should be interpreted.

The Russian Orthodox Church in Unalaska/  
Dutch Harbor.



### **National Designations**

Alaska's rich history, cultural and scenic qualities are evident in the following national designations along the marine route and can be easily accessed from port communities:

- Admiralty Island National Monument
- Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve
- Chugach National Forest
- Copper River Delta Wildlife Refuge
- Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve
- Katmai National Park and Preserve
- Kenai Fjords National Park
- Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park
- Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge
- Misty Fjords National Monument
- Tongass National Forest
- Seward Highway All American Road
- Sitka National Historic Park
- Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve
- 19 designated wilderness areas

### **The Context**

The sheer length of this corridor and the millions of square acres viewed from the Marine Highway are difficult to comprehend. A large portion of the land seen from the marine routes falls within the management of the state and federal governments. Approximately 98 percent falls within public ownership and exists as unspoiled and wild landscape. The remaining land is under private ownership including Native corporations.

The USDA Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, the State of Alaska and numerous other agencies actively manage the high proportion of public lands in the state. Many of these agencies have inventoried and set regulations to manage these lands in the public's best interest. Portions of these public lands are open to mining and timber operations and guidelines are in place for these operations. This plan does not place any regulations on any lands or types of operations along the corridor or within the communities. An important goal of this plan is to educate visitors about Alaska and its role in their daily lives. The interpretation of the working landscape and coastal communities is a vital component of this plan and therefore, travelers should see Alaska's natural-resource industries in action. This plan allows the agencies managing these lands to continue to do so using their own best management practices.

The plan does not place any restrictions upon the numerous communities or private lands that the Marine Highway serves. The recommendations put forth in this plan only deal with the ship and terminal facilities and end at the ADOT&PF property line. Again, we believe that one of the strengths of this plan is that we allow communities to function as is, so visitors can see and understand the raw energy that makes these communities unique. No theme park could replace the first-hand learning experience gained from seeing the working docks and fish processing plants that helped build a state.

## Scenic Byway Survey

In 2002, Greg Brown of Alaska Pacific University released a study of the scenic qualities of Alaska's highways. This report surveyed Alaskan residents, asking them to rank our state highways.

The Seward Highway was the highest ranked scenic byway and is now an All-American Road. Alaska's Marine Highway was ranked in fourth place closely clustered with the Denali and Richardson Highways. The study goes on to say that the Marine Highway's rank was due to many residents being unfamiliar with Alaska's Marine Highway. Those who were familiar with it clearly ranked it as the most scenic byway in the state.

The survey report also characterized the qualities and intrinsic values of the state's byways. Alaskans overwhelmingly ranked Alaska's Marine Highway with the highest cultural, archaeological and historic values in this survey. The Marine Highway also received a high percentage for its natural, recreation and scenic qualities.

This survey indicates that there is a statewide community perception that Alaska's Marine Highway has a high scenic quality and a high proportion of all six intrinsic values along the corridor. It also indicates that many residents could become more familiar with the byway.

*Kodiak Island, in the Gulf of Alaska, is the largest island in Alaska at 3,588 square miles. There are 1,800 named islands in the state, 1,000 of which are located in Southeast Alaska.*

Source: AK DCED



## Get to Know Our Communities

This section presents brief reviews on each of the major port communities and the general resources within each segment. These profiles provide a flavor of these places and some of the intrinsic qualities they offer. A detailed description of each port community can be found through the Department of Community and Economic Development.

Alaska is unique among the 50 states in that most of its landmass has not been organized into political subdivisions equivalent to a county form of government. Local government is made up of a system of organized and unorganized boroughs surrounding a city or groups of cities and towns. These boroughs are a small percentage of the total landmass of the state.

## Inside Passage

The “Inside Passage,” extending from the Queen Charlotte Islands of British Columbia north to Skagway, is a region of dramatic fjords, pristine islands, and forests of tall hemlock and spruce. Rich in history, the towns and villages of the Inside Passage will provide a unique opportunity to explore the region’s abundant and diverse cultural experiences and scenic wonders.

**Bellingham**, WA, just 1.5 hours north of Seattle and south of Vancouver, BC, is the southern-most port for Alaska’s Marine Highway, an easily accessible place from which to begin an Alaskan journey. The ferry terminal lays in the historic **Fairhaven District**, a waterfront area of Victorian-era buildings that house shops, restaurants and galleries.

**Prince Rupert**, BC, on the northern British Columbia coast, is the other gateway to Alaska on the Marine Highway. Like Bellingham, this easily-accessible city boasts many “sights to see” including the **Museum of Northern British Columbia**, the **Kwinitza Railway Museum**, and **Cow Bay**, the oldest part of town.

**Ketchikan**, “Salmon Capital of the World,” is the Marine Highway’s first port of call entering Alaskan waters. This picturesque waterfront town serves as a regional hub for shopping, services and transportation, including ferry routes to the nearby villages of **Metlakatla** and **Hollis**. Ketchikan boasts the world’s largest collection of totem poles, which showcase the rich traditional culture of the Tlingit people. Rows of businesses built on stilts lining **Creek Street**, provide visitors with an impression of Alaska’s wild, early days. The USDA Forest Service’s **Southeast Alaska Discovery Center** is also located in Ketchikan.

**Wrangell** is the gateway to the mighty **Stikine River** and the **LeConte Glacier**, the southernmost tidewater glacier in North America. Jet boat tours and river rafting on the Stikine are available through October. **Chief Shakes Tribal House** is surrounded by totem poles and “petroglyphs,” prehistoric stone carvings, that appear at low tide.

**Petersburg**, a quaint town known as “Little Norway,” celebrates its Scandinavian heritage with decorative traditional Norwegian painting (rosemaling) on houses and storefronts. Fishing plays a prominent role, with charter fishing available from the waterfront. Excursions to LeConte Glacier also originate in Petersburg.

Petersburg’s annual “Little Norway” festival.





**Sitka**, once known as the “Paris of the Pacific,” offers a blend of Russian, Native and pioneer cultures. Capital of Russian America from 1808 to 1867, Sitka’s past is evident in preserved buildings and parks, among them the **St. Michael’s Russian Orthodox Church**, the **Baranof Museum**, and the **Sitka National Historical Park**.

**Juneau**, Alaska’s capital city, is balanced between steep mountains and the **Gastineau Channel**. The government offices contrast with a restored historic downtown district lined with shops and restaurants. In addition to its natural attractions and other activities, Juneau is also the “Gateway to **Glacier Bay National Park**.” When winter snow falls, skiing is a popular activity with residents and visitors at the city’s **Eaglecrest Ski Area**.

Juneau’s **Auke Bay** ferry terminal, located 15 miles from downtown, also serves as a point of departure for ferry trips to the communities of **Angoon**, **Hoonah**, **Pelican**, **Tenakee Springs**, and **Take**.

**Haines**, on the Northwest point of Lynn Canal, is home to the **Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve** —the gathering place of the largest concentration of bald eagles in North America. Historic **Fort William Seward** is home to several inns, a Native arts center, and **Tlingit Lodge House** where the famed Chilkat Indian Dancers perform. Haines is connected to the Yukon and the Alaska Highway via the Haines Highway, a state scenic byway.

**Skagway**, the Inside Passage’s northernmost port, sprang to life in 1898 as the staging area for the thousands of Klondike gold seekers headed to the Yukon. Visitors can relive those days through the

preserved buildings and storefronts of downtown that comprise the **Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park**. From May to November, the “road to riches” can still be experienced by scaling the **Chilkoot Trail** or by taking an excursion on the vintage cars of the **White Pass & Yukon Route Railroad**, one of the world’s most scenic railways.

From Skagway, the Klondike Highway, a state scenic byway, parallels the Chilkoot Trail, linking the Inside Passage with the Alaska Highway and the Yukon Territory. Many travelers “drive” the Marine Highway to Haines or Skagway, then “turn north” to begin their Alaska Highway driving adventure.

**Whitehorse**, the capital of Canada’s Yukon Territory, was founded during the Klondike gold rush as a service center for miners seeking their fortunes. Traces of that era are still evident in the buildings and attractions. Visit the **MacBride Museum**, **Beringia Interpretive Centre**, and the **S.S. Klondike**, a restored Yukon River sternwheeler beached in the town center. **Takhini Hot Springs** provides year-round relaxation and recreation ranging from hot spring pools to Nordic skiing.

### **Northern Inside Passage**

**Lynn Canal** is the northernmost waterway of Alaska’s Inside Passage. In addition to the service provided by mainline vessels, daily summer service is provided by the M/V *Malaspina* – a ship serving the popular port cities of **Juneau**, **Haines**, and **Skagway**. Cruising the scenic waters of Lynn Canal, travelers are flanked by sheer rock faces, views of the snow-capped Chilkat Mountains and passing islands.

The White Pass and Yukon Route Railroad in historic Skagway.



Made famous in the late 1800's, Lynn Canal served as the highway to riches for thousands of gold seekers streaming to the Klondike goldfields.

Telltale signs of the goldrush era are still experienced along the “**Golden Circle.**” The Golden Circle itinerary begins in Juneau and connects with Haines or Skagway via the Alaska Marine Highway System. The Golden Circle proceeds from either port to the Yukon communities of **Whitehorse** and **Haines Junction**, via the Haines and Klondike state scenic byways.

### **Southern Inside Passage**

At the southern end of Alaska's Inside Passage, small villages and communities are served from the Marine Highway's hub of Ketchikan by the *M/V Aurora*. A service provided by the Inter-Island Ferry Authority operates between Ketchikan and Hollis.

A small fishing community, **Hollis** is a gateway to the road system on **Prince of Wales Island** that connects the villages and towns of **Klawock**, **Hydaburg**, **Craig**, **Thorne Bay** and **Coffman Cove**. The island is noted for fishing, hunting and other recreational opportunities. Several villages have totem parks and Indian heritage centers.

The *M/V Aurora* calls on Metlakatla and Prince Rupert, British Columbia several times per week from June to September. **Metlakatla**, is a Tsimshian Indian village located on Annette Island. Tours offer traditional dance performances, a salmon bake, and tours of the totems and lodge house. Visitors may also tour the seafood processing plant.

A typical harbor in Southcentral.



### **Southcentral Alaska**

Alaska's Marine Highway service in Southcentral Alaska takes you through the incredible beauty of Prince William Sound and into the Gulf of Alaska and Lower Cook Inlet. Glaciers and fjords, concentrations of seabirds and marine wildlife may be seen at every turn. *The M/V E.L. Bartlett* transits Prince William Sound daily during the summer, linking towns and villages and providing visitors access to a bounty of recreational and sight-seeing opportunities.

**Whittier**, is one of two highway-accessed ports served by the ferry system. Ferry connections can be made using the **Alaska Railroad** or by driving through the Anton Anderson Tunnel. The tunnel is a toll road open for directional traffic during much of the day. Whittier is home to charter fishing operators and day-cruise boats that tour the glacier-filled fjords nearby.

**Valdez** connects the Richardson Highway, part of Alaska's highway system, with the eastern shore of Prince William Sound. The town is the southern terminus of the 800 mile **Trans-Alaska Pipeline** and has a bustling harbor of fishing boats and recreational watercraft. Day-cruise boats provide tours of **Prince William Sound** to view glaciers, marine mammals, and seabird rookeries.

**Cordova**, a fishing port and visitor destination, is served by the Marine Highway from Whittier and Valdez. Cordova has historically been home to the Alutiiq and Eyaks people. Alaska's Marine Highway provides a “whistle stop” service, stopping only with advance reservations, at **Tatitlek** and **Chenega Bay**.

**Seward** is served by the *M/V Tustemena* and from across the Gulf of Alaska and Juneau by the *M/V Kennicott*. It is a popular spot for saltwater fishing, hiking and sightseeing. At the downtown waterfront, visit the **Alaska Sealife Center**, a world renowned interpretive and research center that also serves as a rehabilitation and recovery facility for injured marine wildlife and seabirds. Seward is also the gateway to daylong wildlife and glacier viewing cruises of **Kenai Fjords National Park** and the Seward Highway, All-American Road.

**Homer**, a quaint and charming coastal community at the tip of the **Kenai Peninsula**, serves as the homeport for a large fleet of halibut charter operators, fishing the rich and scenic waters of **Kachemak Bay**. Homer is linked to Alaska's highway system by the Sterling Highway, a state scenic byway.

Across Kachemak Bay is **Seldovia**, a small picturesque town spread along the town boardwalk. The community has a small fishing fleet and a rich history that dates back to the Russian days. This history is evident in the town's name, which is derived from the Russian word *seldevoy*, meaning "herring bay."

## **Kodiak and the Aleutians**

From the gentle coastal grasslands of its islands to the rumbling snow-capped volcanoes along its shores, Southwest Alaska is a region known for its spirit of adventure. Stretching from Kodiak Island to the Aleutian Chain, it is home to the largest brown bears in the world, as well as walrus, seals, dozens of species of seabirds, giant halibut and plentiful salmon runs. It also has many rich cultural and historical treasures.

Originating in the town of **Homer**, with its famous spit of land jutting into Kachemak Bay, the *M/V Tustemena* sets sail into lower Cook Inlet and on toward **Kodiak Island**. Covered in lush green during the summer months, the island is affectionately known as Alaska's "Emerald Isle." The **Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge** covers nearly two-thirds of the island, protecting the natural habitat of the famous Kodiak brown bear.

**Port Lions**, in Settler Cove on the northeast coast of Kodiak Island, offers amenities such as hunting and fishing lodges. Beach combing and kayaking opportunities abound along the spruce-lined coves of **Kizkuyak Bay**.

**Kodiak**, one of the nation's largest commercial fishing ports, was once the capital of Russian America. Traces of its Russian heritage can still be seen at the **Russian Orthodox Church** and the **Baranof Museum**, Alaska's oldest wooden structure. The city serves as a base for salmon and halibut fishing, kayaking, bear watching, and horseback riding adventures.

Kodiak is the western terminus for the Marine Highway routes originating in Southcentral Alaska. Once each month during the summer, the *M/V Tustemena* ventures down the Alaska Peninsula to the Aleutian Islands.

The *M/V Tustemena* travels along 400 miles of the Alaska Peninsula coastline, passing smoldering volcanoes and steep slopes of mountain ranges, before starting its journey to the **Aleutian Islands**. Covered in lush green, the volcanic islands are a haven to seabirds and marine mammals.

The mountainous landscape surrounding Chignik.



Along the way, the *M/V Tustumena* calls on the small villages of **Chignik, Sand Point, King Cove, Cold Bay, False Pass** and **Akutan**.

**Unalaska/Dutch Harbor**, is the terminus for the route. Unalaska is the Aleutians' largest community, with over four thousand residents. A busy fishing and seafood processing port, it is also a visitor destination offering sport fishing charters, bird watching and wildlife tours, cultural and historical exploration, hiking and beachcombing. The **Museum of the Aleutians** traces the culture and history of the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands from their beginnings to the Russian-America period.

## **Challenges and Opportunities Relating to Intrinsic Qualities**

### **Challenges**

1. There are so many port communities and so much of Alaska to explore, it is a challenge to package the experiences of Alaska's Marine Highway into consumable pieces. Ideally, the Alaska Marine Highway System experience should be one that people will return to, time and again.
2. The great diversity of intrinsic qualities means that the process of preparing an effective interpretive strategy for Alaska's Marine Highway must be coordinated with travel packages that can be offered to visitors. Interpretation should support marketing and marketing efforts should support interpretation.

*Alaska has an estimated 100,000 glaciers, ranging from tiny cirque glaciers to huge valley glaciers. There are more active glaciers and ice fields in Alaska than in the rest of the inhabited world.*

Source: AK DCED

### **Opportunities**

1. Given the great distances from which visitors view many of the byway's intrinsic qualities, the impact of tourism is minimal on the integrity of resources.
2. Due to the high levels of federal and state land ownership along the route, most intrinsic qualities are well managed and not threatened by tourism.
3. It may be that as more communities become active in the byway program, their interest in community character management will rise. Thus, locally-controlled intrinsic qualities must be balanced to maintain them.

### **Goals and Objectives Relating to Intrinsic Qualities**

**Goal 1: Provide the visitor with a number of travel experience choices. Approach Alaska's Marine Highway as many different travel experiences, not just one.**

- a. Identify multiple travel experiences within the system.
- b. Seek ways to package the byway's different experiences into distinct tourism products.

**Goal 2: Interpretation should support marketing and marketing should support interpretation.**

- a. Once different travel packages are defined, prepare interpretive approaches that focus on each package's localized stories.
- b. Design interpretation that addresses the identified needs of the visitor markets targeted by each travel package.

**Goal 3: Encourage partnership communities to identify local intrinsic qualities that may be threatened by additional tourism.**

- a. Create an opt-in process whereby communities can consider byway impacts on their economies and on community character.
- b. Provide information and services for communities to consider a range of methods to manage potentially threatened local intrinsic qualities.

**Goal 4: Raise the awareness of visitors about the balance that must be struck in Alaska between two mistaken extremes in thinking: 1) Alaska has an exceedingly fragile environment that cannot withstand human use, and 2) Alaska's vast, endless land can withstand any abuse.**

- a. Design both marketing and interpretive programs with this goal in mind.

**Goal 5: Work closely with state and federal land managers to ensure that byway programs avoid negative impacts on intrinsic qualities.**

**Goal 6: Encourage public land entities to become byway partners.**

**Goal 7: Create localized task forces to address byway-public land challenges and opportunities that arise.**

Each town has its own unique flavor for celebrating a holiday or special event.







# 4

## Transportation

### Introduction

This byway is the only water-based byway in the nation. As such, its 'highway' issues and challenges are very different from other byways. This chapter addresses each topic required by the National Scenic Byway's Program, as well as the unique challenges that are inherent in this byway.

### Description of the System

Alaska's Marine Highway consists of two fundamental transportation elements: the terminals and the ships. For the auto-traveler, this byway will begin and end at a terminal, but the ride on board will provide the primary byway experience. In addition, travelers can explore our coastal communities, but these areas are outside of the byway, within our Experience Corridor, and the roads to and from the communities are not addressed by this plan. For the most part, we are not dealing with a road and the typical safety, signage and service issues of traveling along a traditional byway.

Since its inception following statehood in 1959, the Alaska Marine Highway System has existed to link the many coastal communities in Alaska not connected by a road; in effect extending the road network to them. Up to present day, this has

remained the core priority of the Alaska Marine Highway System. Its routes connect the communities of Southeast Alaska, Prince William Sound and Southwest Alaska to each other and to mainland Alaska. Additionally, Alaska's Marine Highway includes the historical passenger vessel route between Southeast Alaska and the State of Washington, which has existed ever since the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898. It also includes an international route connecting Ketchikan with Prince Rupert in Canada. The entire Marine Highway fleet and its terminals are designated National Highway System infrastructure.

The most direct route between Bellingham and Unalaska/Dutch Harbor equals 2,698 miles in length. When all the community links and loop routes are included, the byway distance exceeds 8,800 miles.

The Management Corridor currently consists of the Alaska Marine Highway System-owned terminals and nine vessels. The nine ships are the *Matanuska*, the *Kennicott*, the *Columbia*, the *Taku*, the *Malaspina*, the *Tustumena*, the *E.L. Bartlett*, the *LeConte* and the *Aurora*. Depending on the size and design of the ships, they can hold between 300 and 971 passengers and between 29 and 134 vehicles. Six ships offer cabins (up to 109 on some ships) and full services such as cafeterias, gift shops, cocktail lounges, solariums and observation lounges. The three smallest vessels offer only cafeterias and solariums.

The M/V LeConte in port.



# Alaska's Marine Highway Fleet



**M/V Matanuska**



**M/V Kennicott**



**M/V Columbia**



**M/V Taku**



**M/V Malaspina**



**M/V Tustumena**



**M/V E.L. Bartlett**



**M/V LeConte**



**M/V Aurora**

photos courtesy: Alaska Marine Highway System



## **Alaska's Marine Highway Fleet**

### **M/V Matanuska**

The *M/V Matanuska* can carry 745 passengers and 88 vehicles through the Inside Passage – Mainline Route. It has 6 four-berth cabins, 21 three-berth cabins, and 82 two-berth cabins, a cafeteria, gift shop, cocktail lounge, solarium, and forward observation lounge.

### **M/V Kennicott**

The *M/V Kennicott* is the newest addition to Alaska's Marine Highway fleet. It can carry 748 passengers and 80 vehicles through the Inside Passage – Mainline Route, the Southcentral Alaska Routes and the Southwest Alaska Routes. It has 51 four-berth cabins, 34 three-berth, and 59 two-berth cabins. It also has a cafeteria, gift shop, cocktail lounge, solarium, and observation lounge.

### **M/V Columbia**

The *M/V Columbia* is the largest of the Alaska Marine Highway System fleet. It can carry 971 passengers and 134 vehicles through the Inside Passage – Mainline Route. There are 45 four-berth cabins and 59 two-berth cabins, as well as a dining room, cafeteria, gift shop, cocktail lounge, solarium, and forward observation lounge.

### **M/V Taku**

The *M/V Taku* can carry 500 passengers and 69 vehicles through the Inside Passage – Mainline Route. In addition to the 6 four-berth cabins and the 35 two-berth cabins, the ship has a cafeteria, gift shop, cocktail lounge, solarium, and forward observation lounge.

### **M/V Malaspina**

The *M/V Malaspina* can carry 701 passengers and 88 vehicles through the Inside Passage – Lynn Canal Route. There are 46 four-berth cabins and 27 two-berth cabins, as well as a cafeteria, gift shop, cocktail lounge, solarium and forward observation lounge.

### **M/V Tustumena**

The *M/V Tustumena* can carry up to 220 passengers and 36 vehicles through the Southcentral and Southwest Alaska Routes. Passengers can enjoy the 8 four-berth cabins, 18 two-berth cabins, the dining room, cocktail lounge, solarium, and forward observation lounge.

### **M/V E.L. Bartlett**

The *M/V E.L. Bartlett* can carry 236 passengers and 29 vehicles through a variety of Southcentral Alaska Routes. Passengers can enjoy food service and the solarium.

### **M/V LeConte**

The *M/V LeConte* can carry 300 passengers and 34 vehicles through the Alaskan Community Link Routes. While aboard, passengers can enjoy the cafeteria and the solarium.

### **M/V Aurora**

The *M/V Aurora* can carry 300 passengers and 34 vehicles through the Alaskan Community Link Routes. Passengers can enjoy the cafeteria and solarium while on board.

*All Alaska Marine Highway System ships are named after glaciers found in Alaska and are selected by the state's children.*

Source: Alaska Marine Highway System

The other components of the Management Corridor are the 33 terminals along the route. These are categorized by segment and briefly summarized below.

### **Inside Passage Terminals**

#### **Bellingham, Washington**

Bellingham's terminal is located on the southern end of Bellingham Bay in the Fairhaven District. The building is a multiple use facility owned by the Port of Bellingham. The facility houses a ticketing office, waiting areas, a deli, a small historical display, tour operators, restrooms and other concession spaces. The facility also boasts a large exterior wraparound deck on three sides of the building and two smaller, floating docks used by tour operators. The staging area has separate long and short-term parking areas. Pre-ticketed passengers may directly enter the staging area.

#### **Prince Rupert, British Columbia**

The Prince Rupert terminal is owned by the City of Prince Rupert and operated for Alaska's Marine Highway under a lease arrangement with the Prince Rupert Port Corporation. The B.C. Ferries terminal is located just to the north of the Alaska Marine Highway System terminal, allowing for simple and convenient transfer between the two systems. The Alaska Marine Highway System terminal is approximately 8,500 square feet and houses passenger waiting areas, restrooms, ticket areas, terminal offices, customs agent offices, and a customs clearance room. The building is located inside a fenced staging compound separated from the vehicle pre-staging area by 500 feet of two-lane road.

Ketchikan's waterfront.



#### **Metlakatla, Alaska**

The Metlakatla terminal is located about two miles from town at the end of Walden Point Road. The modular terminal building is currently only in operation for two hours prior to arrival of ships, and have few amenities. The staging area is illuminated and sized to meet its current level of operations.

#### **Ketchikan, Alaska**

The Ketchikan terminal is located at the north end of town. The terminal building is 4,976 square feet and has ticketing counters, passenger waiting areas, vending machines, restrooms and an unattended traveler information station. The staging area has ample parking and maneuvering space for even the largest of recreational vehicles. Alaska's Marine Highway operates two separate berths at Ketchikan, each with covered walkways to protect pedestrian traffic from the elements and provide a safe barrier between pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

#### **Wrangell, Alaska**

The Wrangell ferry terminal is located at the north end of town, on Evergreen Avenue. The 1,540 square foot building has a modest waiting area, which at times forces passengers to congregate in the adjacent parking area. The staging area is paved and sized for current Alaska Marine Highway System operations.

#### **Petersburg, Alaska**

The Petersburg facility is located in the Wrangell Narrows, south of town. The terminal was renovated in 2000 to add an additional 646 square feet, bringing the total terminal space to 2,078 square feet. The facility is now ADA accessible and completely

renovated to meet the needs of travelers. As part of this renovation project, the staging area and illumination were upgraded, as well. Currently the City of Petersburg provides a “park” of sorts, salvaged from the old timber approach structure.

### **Kake, Alaska**

The Kake facility consists of a paved staging and parking area, a waiting shelter and a purser’s shelter with site illumination.

### **Angoon, Alaska**

The Killisnoo Harbor facility is located one mile south of town. The staging area provides access to a small boat grid, city wharf and warehouse. A small, city-owned terminal building located in Angoon has not been used for several years. The staging area is paved and is in good condition.

### **Sitka, Alaska**

The Sitka terminal is located on Halibut Point Road, about seven miles from Sitka, on Starrigavin Bay. The 2,330 square foot terminal building is sized to meet the current operational needs and is ADA accessible. There is a covered walkway to provide shelter for passengers between the terminal building and the head of the transfer bridge. The parking and staging areas are paved and in good condition, with adequate illumination.

### **Tenakee, Alaska**

The Tenakee facility has no improvements or amenities, mostly due to its size and usage patterns. Vehicle traffic to and from Tenakee is limited to small, motorized vehicles like four-wheelers. No cars

or trucks are allowed in the community. The Marine Highway docks are adjacent to the city dock that provides a small passenger waiting shelter.

### **Pelican, Alaska**

Pelican, like Tenakee, does not have any uplands improvements or amenities due to the size of the community and level of usage it receives.

### **Hoonah, Alaska**

The Hoonah terminal is located to the northwest of the City of Hoonah on Port Frederick. The terminal building is adequately sized and is ADA compliant, providing ticketing counters, restrooms and a small waiting area. The vehicle staging area is paved, striped and illuminated.

### **Auke Bay (Juneau), Alaska**

The Auke Bay facilities are located about 14 miles northwest of downtown Juneau along Glacier Highway. The terminal building is approximately 6,100 square feet, ADA compliant and provides restrooms, ticketing, passenger waiting and un-staffed visitor information space. Additionally, the Auke Bay terminal provides a 588 square-foot waiting shelter and a purser’s office. The parking and staging areas were improved in 1998 to improve traffic flow, signage, parking, site illumination, a waiting shelter, warehouse facilities. These improvements also create two distinctly separate eastern and western staging areas for the docking of two ships.

The M/V LeConte arriving in Pelican surrounded by fishing vessels.



### **Haines, Alaska**

The Haines facility is located four miles from town on Lutak Road. It is the third busiest facility on the system and is approximately 4,350 square feet. It is ADA compliant and provides restrooms, ticketing and waiting areas. The staging area was expanded in 1993 and is paved, striped and illuminated.

### **Skagway, Alaska**

The Skagway facility is the northernmost terminal on the Southeast Alaska/Inside Passage route. The facility consists of a terminal building, and staging and uplands parking areas. The staging area is well illuminated, adequately paved and appropriately sized for Skagway operations. The 4,900 square foot terminal building is ADA compliant.

### **Yakutat, Alaska**

Yakutat is a “whistle stop” community used during cross-gulf sailings between Juneau and the Southcentral route. The system uses the City Dock and there are no upland facilities.

### **Southcentral Route**

#### **Cordova, Alaska**

The Cordova Ferry Terminal facility is located about one mile north of downtown Cordova. The Cordova facilities were completely refurbished in 1998. Major improvements included new paved staging and long term parking areas, and a new 2,200 square-foot terminal building.

The port of Valdez.



### **Valdez, Alaska**

The Valdez terminal is located southwest of Valdez. Currently the Valdez terminal does not have a staging area; vehicles park along the side of the approach road and use a small parking area north of the terminal building. The 700 square-foot terminal building is located about 50 feet north of the city dock. Currently, a replacement facility is being designed. Construction of the new terminal and associated uplands improvements are slated to complete construction within the next three years.

### **Tatitlek, Alaska**

In the past, the *M/V Bartlett* had discharged passengers and freight to smaller boats in the Tatitlek Narrows. These “whistle stops” were performed when requested by the communities, however they posed a significant liability. A new dock and ramps were constructed in 1995, however there are no uplands improvements.

### **Chenega, Alaska**

Chenega is also a “whistle stop” community and thus does not have any uplands improvements.

### **Whittier, Alaska**

The Whittier terminal is located north of town, and does not operate during the winter months. The terminal building consists of not much more than a “shanty” with ticketing and restroom facilities. The Whittier terminal is slated to receive a new terminal building by the year 2004, as well as parking and staging improvements.

## **Seward, Alaska**

In 1995, Alaska's Marine Highway started using the Alaska Railroad's Seward wharf for moorage and terminal operations in Seward. The vehicle and staging area is paved and illuminated. Ticketing space is leased from the Alaska Railroad and includes restroom and waiting facilities.

## **Seldovia, Alaska**

Alaska's Marine Highway uses the Seldovia City Dock to provide shuttle service across Kachemak Bay from Homer. Although there is no terminal, the City of Seldovia provides terminal space with restroom facilities for passengers in the City Office.

## **Homer, Alaska**

The Homer facility is located on the lee side of the Homer Spit. The terminal staging area was built in 1993 to provide an adequate staging area for the *M/V Tustumena* sailings to Seldovia, Kodiak, and the Southwest Alaska route. A new 2,335 square foot terminal building was built in 1999 and is ADA compliant. Vehicle and passenger transfers take place on the city dock. The City of Homer and the State of Alaska are working to replace the facility, scheduled for completion in 2001. This will improve traffic flow.

## **Southwest Alaska and the Aleutians**

### **Kodiak, Alaska**

The *M/V Tustumena* uses the city dock in Kodiak. The facility does not have a dedicated vehicle staging area. Embarking vehicles line up on the adjacent city

street and parking lot prior to boarding. The ticket office is located in a City building constructed on fill between the approach legs. Efforts to determine a suitable location for a new Alaska Marine Highway System terminal are ongoing.

### **Port Lions, Alaska**

The Port Lions facility is located on a timber pile dock constructed by the US Army Corps of Engineers in the 1960's. There is a small terminal building that is in need of repair or replacement. There are no parking or staging areas associated with the Alaska Marine Highway System.

### **Chignik, Alaska**

The *M/V Tustumena* moors at the NorQuest Seafood Processor Facility in Chignik. There are no uplands improvements at Chignik for parking, staging or ticketing services associated with the Alaska Marine Highway System.

### **Sand Point, Alaska**

The Sand Point Facility is a freight wharf located at the tip of the small boat harbor breakwater and is owned by the City of Sand Point. There are no uplands improvements at Sand Point.

### **King Cove, Alaska**

The *M/V Tustumena* uses the Aleutians East Borough facility in King Cove. There is not a terminal building at King Cove.

Kachemak Bay.





### **Cold Bay, Alaska**

The *Tustumena* moors at the Cold Bay dock during its East/West passage through the Aleutian Chain. The facility does not have a dedicated ferry terminal building or staging area.

### **False Pass, Alaska**

The False Pass facility is owned and operated by the Village of False Pass. False Pass is a “whistle stop” community. There is adequate staging space for the current usage, however no terminal building.

### **Akutan, Alaska**

The *M/V Tustumena* docks in Akutan during its May through September Aleutian Chain trips. Alaska's Marine Highway currently discharges passengers only at this facility. There is no terminal building at Akutan.

### **Unalaska / Dutch Harbor, Alaska**

The *Tustumena*'s last stop on its Westward Route occurs at Dutch Harbor serving the City of Unalaska and Dutch Harbor. There is no staging area or terminal building at Dutch Harbor.

### **Topics Required by the National Byways Program**

In accordance with the requirements for a corridor management plan as defined by the National Scenic Byways Program, we offer the following brief discussion on the Marine Highway:

### **Corridor Definition**

Two corridors defined for this byway were the Management Corridor and Experience Corridor. The Management Corridor consists of the Alaska Marine Highway System's property, terminals and ships. Given that the on-board experience is such a central element to this byway, the Management Corridor can stand alone as the byway. However, it is likely that as communities in the surrounding Experience Corridor decide to actively participate in the byway, they will become formal partners with the Alaska Marine Highway System byway effort.

The Experience Corridor contains communities and all the activities found beyond the ferry experience. These areas are all outside the Alaska Marine Highway System jurisdiction and the two-corridor approach gives all communities the option to participate in the byway effort.

### **Design Standards Review**

The Alaska Marine Highway System consists of a series of vessels that travel along a waterway that is marked with buoys and lights and mapped between coastal communities. The system differs from a roadway in the sense that individuals traveling the route do not navigate or pilot their vehicles. Navigation and piloting are performed by the Alaska Marine Highway System personnel. Travelers park their vehicles and themselves and relax in comfort, while they devote their full attention to experiencing the spectacular Alaskan coastline. The professional and experienced Alaska Marine Highway System staff is trained and certified according to US Coast Guard and the International Maritime Organization. Each

The grassy landscape of the Aleutian Islands.



route is traveled according to a Coast Guard approved Route Operating Plan. Crews are certified for specific routes and vessels, and all crewmembers, even the food servers, are trained in safety, lifesaving, equipment operation, and navigation under the Standards for Training Certification and Watchkeeping.

### **Safety and Accident Record**

Alaska Marine Highway vessels run 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Between 1997 and 2001, the system has carried about 1,750,000 passengers and 500,000 vehicles. During that time period, the Alaska Marine Highway System received reports of 1,463 incidents of injury or property damage. There were 1,224 reported injuries of Alaska Marine Highway System employees, and 21 reported injuries of passengers. Most of the injuries were minor, such as slips, trips, falls, bumps or scrapes. In addition, 226 reported incidents of passenger property damage occurred during that time. The majority of the property damage was from scrapes and bumps of vehicles during the loading or unloading process. Thirteen reports of damage to the hull of an Alaska Marine Highway System vessel have occurred over this five year period. This includes an electrical fire aboard the *M/V Columbia* in 2000, which caused a general evacuation of the ship, but minimal injury or passenger property damage.

Relative to a similar number of travelers and vehicles on a road system, over a similar time period, injuries and property damage are minor. In comparison to typical byways, many injuries and accidents may be avoided because Captains and crews of Alaska's

Marine Highway ships are experienced with their routes and the traffic, sea and weather conditions on those routes, and are well trained in safety.

### **Commercial Traffic and the Byway**

Commercial traffic aboard the Alaska Marine Highway System consists mostly of unaccompanied cargo vans carrying freight to various communities. Other commercial traffic includes cargo trucks, passenger vans, motor coaches /tour buses and large construction equipment. Only the cargo vans are tracked separately from standard vehicles. In the year 2000, 4,949 commercial cargo vans traveled on the Alaska Marine Highway System. This represents five percent of the vehicles carried, and eight percent of the linear car deck used that year. During the summer months, competition for car deck space occurs between commercial and standard vehicles. As the system evolves, and point-to-point fast vehicle ferries are added, this problem may diminish as capacity increases. Commercial vans will likely use the mainline vessels, leaving more room for tour buses, RV's and standard cars on the point-to-point fast vehicle ferries. Sharing shipboard space with commercial van traffic will educate the byway traveler about an important part of the Alaska experience. The Alaska Marine Highway System is indeed a highway and thus a crucial part of the economic infrastructure of the state, bringing essential items such as food, mail and other goods to and from the coastal communities.

Alaska Marine Highway System ships are able to accommodate a wide range of vehicles including RVs.



## Other Transportation Modes and the Byway

The continuity and quality of the traveling experience on Alaska's Marine Highway is not limited to motor vehicles. Many passengers who ride the system are *walk-ons* and board the ships without any vehicle other than their own two feet. These passengers are typically dropped off and picked up at their destinations by friends or locally available commercial transportation. Two other very popular modes of travel in conjunction with the marine highway are kayak and bicycle. Visitors and residents alike frequently load their kayaks on board the vessels and travel to a selected port to begin a kayak trip. Petersburg and some of the smaller ports are popular destinations for kayaks. Where travel does not require having a car at the other end, such as a trip from Juneau to Sitka and back, a bicycle is the perfect mode of transportation. Plenty of recreational cycling and mountain biking awaits travelers within close proximity to most terminals. The neighboring islands and Tongass National Forest destinations provide miles of spectacular cycling. The Alaska Marine Highway System routes in Prince William Sound and in northern Southeast Alaska also represent link in popular bicycling touring routes, including the Golden Circle Route through the Yukon.

Vehicle data is collected for 'alternate means of conveyance' (AMC), which includes bicycles, kayaks, small rafts, small carts, and hand-pulled trailers weighing less than 300 pounds. Approximately 40 percent are bicycles, 40 percent are kayaks, and 20 percent are carts and trailers.

Some small communities do not have vehicles and are popular destinations for cyclists and walk-ons.



In 2000, 2,421 AMC's were transported, of those, approximately 968 were bicycles and 968 were kayaks. That same year 2,099 AMC's were transported from May – September or about 87 percent of the year's total. Bicycles and kayaks are stowed in a portion of the car deck. In addition to the fares charged all passengers, bicyclists are charged fees for their bicycles, though they are nominal in comparison to motor vehicle fees.

## Expected Improvements

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities has recently undertaken several regional transportation studies resulting in regional transportation plans. The three ferry service regions were among those plans, and significant changes to the system in two of those regions were recommended. In both Southeast Alaska and Prince William Sound, changes to accommodate new high-speed vessels are underway. The new faster vessels and shuttle route structures will be added to the system in phases, beginning in about 2004.

In Southeast Alaska, plans will change the size and speed of some vessels and the route structure. The system currently is not a typical point-to-point ferry service; it is more of a passenger vessel service that carries cars, and is complete with sleeping accommodations for the passengers. It travels long routes, taking one or more days and visits several ports rather than going between two points like a standard ferry. New plans will add smaller, Fast Vehicle Ferries to the system that will travel more in a shuttle or point-to-point manner. Most trips will take less than six hours one way and will occur during



daylight hours. These new vessels will not have passenger-sleeping accommodations. For the mainline, long voyages, multiple-port vessels will still operate in addition to the shuttle ferries. The benefit of these new vessels and route structures to the byway experience will be that travel can occur during daylight, the prime viewing hours. Speed and frequency of trips will also be improved with these new ships. In addition, more capacity for travel will be available. Travelers will soon have the option to get to their destination quickly, or to spend their time leisurely aboard the ship and enjoy a slower pace.

The new Fast Vehicle Ferries are planned to come on-line within the next three to five years. The first two of the new class of Fast Vehicle Ferry, are scheduled to enter service in Southeast Alaska in 2004 and Prince William Sound in 2005. Alaska's Marine Highway will continue a program to refurbish and replace existing vessels and infrastructure to maintain and improve service throughout the entire system.

Improvements to ferry terminals are in the works, but travelers will notice few visible changes. Mostly, the terminals are being modified to accommodate the new vessels.

## Signage

The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities manages the terminals and oversees signage and sign-control issues. The department has provided adequate directional signs to the terminals. Directions from the terminals to the communities and their various attractions are less clear.

## Outdoor Advertising

In 1998, Alaska voters passed one of the most restrictive outdoor advertising laws in the country, by a 72 percent majority. As a result, billboards are banned in the state. The ADOT& PF Right-of-Way Section enforces outdoor advertising at terminals and within highway corridors leading to the terminals.

The City of Bellingham is currently involved in discussions with the Washington Department of Transportation to improve enforcement of federal sign guidelines in the I-5 corridor. The main issue they are dealing with is the number of signs exceeding federal regulations along a stretch of highway. Discussion revolved around follow-through signing for private businesses and the clutter it can create.

Given the combination of existing laws and the nature of the marine byway experience, outdoor advertising will not be a significant issue along the Alaska Marine Highway.

The M/V Le Conte with mountains and a glacier in the background.



## Transportation Challenges and Opportunities

### Challenges

1. Funding to maintain and improve the system is a major challenge. Capital funding is needed for new and upgraded vessels and for terminal upgrades. Also, until the new system is fully implemented, planned savings in operational costs will not be realized. A continued commitment to provide adequate operational funding in times of a shrinking state budget is also a challenge.
2. Terminal improvements will be needed in the future and funding will be the critical challenge.
3. The new ships and resulting schedule changes may make the already complicated Alaska Marine Highway System schedule more daunting for visitors making travel plans.
4. Local acceptance of changing routes, departure and arrival times and levels of service to communities is another challenge. Ferry service is a part of everyday life in some coastal areas of Alaska and changes as broad as those planned can be unsettling to local residents. Byway travelers are generally not familiar enough with the system to be as affected by these changes.

5. The Alaska Marine Highway System serves both visitors and local residents. Often the objectives and preferred service of these two groups are different. Visitors provide the system with 70 percent of its revenue, so it is important to serve them. The system provides essential transportation for people, goods and vehicles to some Alaska communities with few transportation alternatives. Their needs must be considered also. Balancing service to meet the needs of both can be challenging.
6. Traffic conflicts along the route are an upcoming challenge with the addition of Fast Vehicle Ferries to the fleet. Vessels must slow down for other traffic and for weather conditions. Extensive training programs, before the ships are delivered, and comprehensive route guides will minimize conflicts with other vessels and the operating environment. Tides and currents present a challenge for conventional speed vessels, but these challenges are being minimized on certain routes by the addition of Fast Vehicle Ferries.
7. Security has become a transportation challenge worldwide. Security for marine transportation systems is now a US Coast Guard mandate. Alaska's governor is performing a study on Alaska Marine Highway System security, with recommendations due in the spring of 2002. Security measures should only slightly impact the byway traveler's experience. Changes may involve terminal modifications, auto searches (currently occurring), and luggage and passenger screening.

Sea lions lounge on a buoy along the Marine Highway.



8. One goal for Alaska's Marine Highway is to better connect visitors from one mode of travel to the next; from ship to shore, to communities and beyond. The idea is to give people the opportunity to hop on the ferry with only their bike or shoes, get off in the next town, and walk or bike to town or to other trails for a day-hike, etc. In some cases, there may be a need for additional public transportation. As the new system is implemented in Southeast Alaska, shuttle ferries will provide short direct trips between ports, and some road travel between terminals to the next shuttle will be necessary for through passengers. Surface transportation must be provided between terminals in areas, such as Mitkof Island, for those travelers without vehicles. The Alaska Marine Highway System will consider providing or contracting shuttle busses for travel between terminals. Currently, public transportation is available between town centers and ferry terminals except where the terminal is located within the town.

### Opportunities

1. New ships and the resulting upgrades in service create a stronger system for state residents and more varied range of scheduling options for visitors.
2. There is an opportunity to take the new and more varied schedule and package more varied trips and tours for visitors in order to help them make easier travel decisions.

3. If the byway program's interpretation helps visitors understand Alaska, it is more likely that these visitors will be better guests. And, if the byway program's interpretation can also help residents understand the role of visitors, residents may be better hosts.
4. With visitors providing 70 percent of the Alaska Marine Highway System operating revenues, it is critical that the byway effort and other ventures to increase the number of travelers be pursued in order to provide a more sound financial footing for Alaska's Marine Highway.

### Transportation Goals and Objectives

**Goal 1: Ensure operational funding provides, at a minimum, the current level of service through full implementation of the Southeast Alaska and Prince William Sound Transportation Plans.**

- a. Ensure adequate operational funding annually.
- b. Ensure adequate funding to complete service upgrade and expansion plans.
- c. Replenish the Alaska Marine Highway System Stabilization Fund to ensure funds are available to deal with unforeseen circumstances, such as emergency vessel or engine repairs, or schedule delays.

*The M/V Kennicott's engines develop 13,380 horsepower to propel the 7,503 ton ship at 17 knots, the most economical speed.*

Source: Alaska Marine Highway System

The M/V LeConte sailing through Southeast Alaska.



**Goal 2: Ensure capital funding for vessel upgrade/ construction and terminal upgrades to complete the implementation of the Southeast Alaska and Prince William Sound Transportation Plans.**

- a. Provide matching funds for U.S. DOT appropriations for vessel and terminal construction and upgrade.
- b. Develop and approve innovative funding techniques, such as GARVEE bonds, for capital projects within the Southeast Alaska and Prince William Sound Transportation Plans.

**Goal 3: Educate local residents about changes and improvements to the system.**

- a. Provide information regarding schedule changes and system improvements to local communities via a web-site, newsletter, press releases, public outreach and other methods.

**Goal 4: Minimize the conflicts between visitor and local service needs.**

- a. Educate the local residents about the contribution made to the system by visitors, and educate local residents about visitors' transportation needs.
- b. Educate the visitor about the transportation needs of local residents and the role of the system in the economic structure of the regions it serves.
- c. Use interpretation to foster understanding that may help residents become better hosts and visitors become better guests.
- d. Continue to evaluate levels and types of services and adjust them as needed to maintain a balance.

**Goal 5: Minimize traffic conflicts to maintain predictable schedules and levels of service.**

- a. Strive to retain experienced, knowledgeable, and trained personnel within the system.
- b. Educate the public and other mariners about the operational abilities of the new vessels and the routes and travel times of all vessels in the system.
- c. Share operational experience gained among crew members.

**Goal 6: Provide a safe, secure and pleasant travel experience for all passengers and users of the system.**

- a. Comply with required security standards.
- b. Minimize safety and security concerns for all passengers and users of the system.
- c. Minimize time delays and inconvenience resulting from security screening and other safety measures for passengers and users of the system.

**Goal 7: Improve intermodal connections for ferry travelers.**

- a. Provide travelers with connectivity from the ferry to pedestrian paths, to communities, to trail systems and other scenic drives.

**Goal 8: Provide for convenient and safe surface transportation between terminals for through-passengers without vehicles.**

- a. Examine surface shuttle options prior to implementation of shuttle ferry service.
- b. Take steps to implement surface shuttle service between terminals by providing or contracting the service, or encouraging a private entity to provide the service.

Residents and visitors enjoy the sun and ocean breezes on the solarium deck.







# 5

## Tourism and Marketing

A major objective of this project is to increase the number of riders on Alaska's Marine Highway System and encourage the associated economic benefits to the system, terminal communities, and statewide. This chapter provides an outline of the tourism environment in which the byway is operating and the private sector economic framework surrounding use of Alaska's Marine Highway by visitors. This chapter also discusses current tourism marketing efforts and the nature of the experience for the traveler. Finally, the chapter reviews potential tourism development, management and marketing goals and objectives.

### Tourism Environment and Current Marine Highway Experience

The total traffic on Alaska's Marine Highway increased from 269,000 passengers and 67,000 vehicles in 1978 to 413,000 passengers and 111,000 vehicles in 1992, its historical high. From 1992 to 2000, passenger traffic declined by about 15 percent and vehicle traffic by roughly 10 percent.

Statewide visitor arrival trends show recent increases in all modes but the Marine Highway. Between 1992 and 2000, overall summer-season visitor arrivals into

Alaska increased more than one-third, from 1.2 million to 1.6 million. Summer cruise ship arrivals more than doubled, from 211,000 to 501,000, and summer domestic-air arrivals increased by more than 75 percent to nearly 900,000. Arrivals by the Marine Highway fell from 36,000 in 1992 to 25,000 in 2000; that is 30 percent. Alaska's Marine Highway arrivals were somewhat restricted in 2000 when the *M/V Columbia* was removed from service due to an electrical fire.

A market study performed in 2000 attributed the disparity between Alaska's Marine Highway and private cruise traffic primarily to a lack of marketing by Alaska's Marine Highway and difficulty accessing its reservations system.

The first system marketing manager was hired that year and efforts were made to improve the reservation system.

Heavy marketing and discounting among the large cruise providers tended to dominate public awareness of Alaskan marine travel options. Resident use of the Marine Highway has also been flat or declining in recent years. This is primarily due to increased competition from local air carriers, combined with relatively inconvenient ferry schedules. The rapid growth that characterized the visitor market in the late 1990's is expected to slow. However, cruise ship companies continue to add capacity to their Alaska operations, and this, together with lower prices, may fuel some continued growth.

Passengers crowd in the observation deck of the *M/V Matanuska* and enjoy the scenery.





Follow up research conducted in summer 2001 indicates that the Alaska Marine Highway is already making great strides in both marketing and reservation access.

The most significant opportunity to increase Alaska's Marine Highway use is on the runs frequented by visitors. Approximately two-thirds of the annual use occurs during the visitor season, May through September. A recent study estimated that traffic on the heavily used routes between Juneau and road connections in Haines and Skagway could increase more than 15 percent if more frequent and convenient service was provided. Additionally, Alaska's Marine Highway is under-used in winter. The relatively small winter demand is dispersed throughout the state and would need to increase substantially to have a significant financial impact on the system.

### **Typical Visitor Profiles**

Approximately half of the overall Alaskan visitor market, and 35 percent of visitors who ride the Marine Highway, come from the western United States. International visitors make up one-fourth of summer ship travelers. Approximately one-third of these come from Canada, with Britain, Australia and Germany also among the major points of origin. Men make up 60 percent of Alaska's Marine Highway visitors and about half have post-secondary degrees, this is similar to Alaska visitors overall. Average household income for visitors traveling on the Marine Highway is approximately \$70,000.

*Postcard sales aboard the ships exceed 45,500 last year.*

Source: Alaska Marine Highway System

The common denominator among Alaska's visitors is an interest in wildlife and spectacular scenery. The typical private cruise ship passenger is 50 years-old or more, with above-average income and travels with a spouse. Private cruise passengers tend to be more sedentary and more interested than the average visitor in Alaska's history and culture.

Alaska's Marine Highway visitors are primarily independent travelers. They control their own itinerary rather than traveling on a set tour. They tend to make their own travel arrangements and many do significant research into travel options. These independents are also more likely to be "action/adventure" travelers. They are younger than cruise passengers, more likely to engage in kayaking, hiking, boating and other physical activities and more interested in seeing the "real" Alaska.

The lure of Alaska's Inside Passage and other pristine areas such as Prince William Sound is strong for these independent travelers and their ratings of the quality of the Marine Highway experience tends to be quite high. More than two-thirds of summer Alaska Marine Highway System passengers do not consider using an alternative transportation mode. Many use the ships for one-half of a "cruise/drive" or "cruise/fly" itinerary that typically lasts two to three weeks. Their itinerary often includes substantial travel in portions of Alaska not directly served by Alaska's Marine Highway, such as Anchorage and Fairbanks. Marketing Alaska's Marine Highway as a unique visitor experience, together with a more accessible reservations system, is expected to increase use in the future. About half of all summer ship passengers travel with a vehicle and would be particularly likely to respond to Scenic Byway designation.

## Current Tourism Marketing and Development Activities

Alaska's Marine Highway is in the unusual position of being both a transportation link for Alaskan residents and a major transportation provider for many of Alaska's visitors. However, research conducted during the summer of 2001, found that 63 percent of summer visitors do not consider the Marine Highway as simply a transportation link, but as an important part of their Alaskan experience. In other words, Alaska's Marine Highway is "a destination unto itself," which travelers will visit solely for the "driving" experience.

While it is summer visitor traffic that fills the ships and increases revenues, one of the System's major marketing goals is to increase year-round use. A heavy emphasis is placed upon tourism trade (tour operators/wholesalers and travel agents) during the summer months. In fall-winter-spring, advertising is purchased in consumer publications, especially those that might increase Alaska and west coast travel. Year-round, media, tour operators/wholesalers and travel agents are encouraged to participate in familiarization trips, another integral part of the Marine Highway's marketing "mix."

It is important to note that for the majority of communities served by the Alaska Marine Highway System, state ferries are the only available mode of transportation. Conveying this to potential visitors is also a major challenge, since many assume most places in today's world are reachable by car, RV or motor coach, in addition to sea or air. New ads are being developed that encourage people to "Drive Alaska's Marine Highway," and a new bumper sticker

program will be introduced in summer 2002, that provides statewide awareness of the System for those who take their vehicles with them.

Alaska's Marine Highway has recently begun to position itself as "Alaska's Marine Highway and its Ferry Land," a vehicle for assisting port communities with tourism development. Various co-op marketing opportunities are provided to communities, such as advertising or trade show booth shares, to enable smaller entities to promote themselves to consumers and in marketplaces previously unobtainable. Additionally, the Marine Highway is an active partner with the state's marketing organization, the Alaska Travel Industry Association, which not only publishes the official *Vacation Planner*, but provides additional trade and consumer co-op marketing opportunities.

Alaska is less a "land of attractions," as much as it is an attraction in and of itself. There are numerous historical and cultural experiences along the route, in addition to scenic wonders, that greatly enhance the visitor experience. While not every facet of Alaska can be described in this space, Alaska Native Cultures, Russian Influences and remnants of the Gold Rush, offer a good sampling of the diverse attractions along the Alaska Marine Highway System.

**Alaska Native Cultures:** Alaska's indigenous population is prevalent throughout the route from the Inside Passage/Southeast Alaska to Southcentral and Southwest Alaska. Visitors can experience everything from totem parks to Native craft demonstrations to performances of Native dances, songs and storytelling.

A Tlingit parade ceremony.



**Russian Influences:** Although many nationalities have left their mark on Alaska, few have had more of an impact than the Russians. From St. Michael's Church in downtown Sitka to the Kenai Peninsula and westward to Kodiak and the Aleutian Chain, the religious and cultural vestiges of Russian settlements are clearly visible in churches and museums throughout the route.

**The Gold Rush:** This event was key to the development of Alaska and remnants of the Gold Rush are visible along many parts of the route, especially in the Inside Passage/Southeast Alaska. Juneau and Skagway both owe their existence to the discovery of gold in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and today offer visitors a glimpse into that time. A particular favorite of numerous Alaska Marine Highway System travelers is the hike from Dyea, north of Skagway, over the famous Chilkoot Pass into Canada – the trail many miners and fortune seekers took in *The Days of '98*.

### **The Nature of the Experience**

Alaska's Marine Highway terminals are open, for the most part, when ships are in port. Currently, communities place brochures about their towns and activities in racks located at many terminals. However, developing full-service visitor centers at major terminals in cooperation with the state's Office of Tourism would greatly enhance the visitor experience. These would, theoretically, provide visitors with on-site information specialists. Additionally, future plans for the System call for on

board "excursion desks," that would be enhanced by a more sophisticated information center in major ports than is currently available.

One of the System's goals is to continue to work with all the communities it serves to promote slowing down the voyage by spending some nights "off-board" and experiencing the "real Alaska." Though the route is laden with all things "Alaskan", such as beautiful scenery, pristine wilderness, marine wildlife, opportunities to hike, canoe, bike, or merely visit an Alaskan community can greatly enhance a visitor's experience. Encouraging visitors to build itineraries with a combination of overnights in communities and on board, not only increases potential use, but also benefits port communities.

A similar strategy is employed in the travel trade, especially motor-coach operators who require 20 plus cabins per tour. Another strategy is to encourage operators with large groups to travel outside of the "high traffic months," September through May, which virtually guarantees cabins and car deck space.

A typical trip on Alaska's Marine Highway involves traveling to and within Alaska on a personal and flexible schedule, with the ability to stay in communities and truly experience the state. Being able to experience the natural beauty and scenery of the Marine Highway's route is also a strong selling point for travelers. Car decks provide those with motor vehicles safe transport. Overnight passengers can stay in a cabin (two, three and four-berth, when available), sleep in recliner lounges, or "camp out" in heated solariums. Food service is available on all ships and many have bars. Smoking is prohibited on board the vessels, except in designated areas on outside decks.

A couple view scenery from one of the open decks.



The limited number of cabins in the summer, however, deter some from making the trip. In addition to a finite number of cabins, another deterrent could be the schedule itself. The only regular schedule is tied to the Bellingham runs that depart each Friday northbound at 6pm and Tuesdays during the summer. No other route offers this consistency. Likewise, arrivals and departures at many communities can occur in the middle of the night.

An extremely positive aspect of summer travel on Alaska's Marine Highway, however, is the chance to learn about *The Great Land* from USDA Forest Service interpreters. Alaska's Inside Passage is a part of the Tongass National Forest. Through an agreement with the Forest Service, interpretive staff are on board most ships to inform travelers about the sights that surround them, as well as what communities throughout the state can offer visitors. (Read more about the interpretation program in Chapter 6).

The latest research conducted for the Alaska Marine Highway System continues to show that most passengers use the Inside Passage route as a "throughway" to the land based highway system that connects in either Haines (the Alaska Highway) or Skagway (the Klondike Highway). From these ports travelers can access the Yukon Territory, Alaska and British Columbia by vehicle.

There is a project currently underway in Alaska that fits well with the needs described above: SEATrails. SEATrails, the Southeast Alaska Trail System, is a grassroots, community-led initiative to improve the regional economic base through increased small-scale

tourism, thereby improving local economies, community quality-of-life and transportation services. It is also a partnership between communities, individuals and area land managers with the common goal of establishing, maintaining, and supporting a world-class system of trails in Southeast Alaska. The initiative seeks to include existing trails and future trail links to form the SEATrails system, which will be marketed to people with an interest in exploring the region. Improved marketing materials will help highlight community businesses and transportation services and enable better trip planning. The SEATrails system is a "hub and spoke" concept, transporting travelers from community to community. The ability to enjoy each community by bicycle, hiking, scuba diving, kayaking, or taking in the rich history and culture in these communities, is facilitated by Alaska's Marine Highway and other local transportation services. Only those trails deemed appropriate by the affected communities for inclusion in the system will become part of SEATrails promotional effort.

SEATrails is currently in its middle planning stages to incorporate as a non-profit organization. The planning effort is being coordinated by the participating community members and incubated by state and federal sponsors. SEATrails has secured funding for regional meetings and has been conducting community trail inventories since the summer of 2001. SEATrails will begin promoting the trail system when the community trail assessment is complete. A goal of SEATrails is to match marketing with individual community economic goals and desired tourism outcomes. The SEATrails overlay will include monitoring to ensure that trail promotion leads to the desired level of use

Enjoying the scenery from the recliner lounge on an Alaska Marine Highway System ship.



of each community's fantastic trails. If successful, the SEATrails initiative will create a European-style system of interconnected communities and their trails, with Alaska's Marine Highway serving as the glue that holds them all together.

If the Alaska Marine Highway System's geographic area were laid atop the continental U.S., its length would stretch from central Florida to New Mexico. The communities the Marine Highway serves are equally diverse. It is a highway that tries to serve two constituencies – Alaska's residents and visitors. For those who live here, especially on the coast and in the Inside Passage, it is a major mode of transportation. For Alaska's visitors, it is a way in which to experience the state on their terms, as "up close and personal" as they would like. 'Time' is not a factor on an Alaska Marine Highway System vacation, but, rather, one of the reasons for using it. Traveling on Alaska's Marine Highway means spending time on a scenic waterway, as well as in the communities it serves.

## Challenges and Opportunities

### Challenges

1. Strengthened marketing is clearly a major challenge for Alaska's Marine Highway if it is to capture a greater share of tourism visitation to Alaska. In 2000, the System hired its first marketing manager, but efforts to market the System are based upon a less-than-adequate budget.

*Alaska's unique beauty and vast wilderness areas are among its greatest treasures. More than half the nation's parklands are found here. In all, Alaska contains over 322 million acres of public lands.*

Source: AK DCED

2. Alaska's Marine Highway faces demographic/ transportation challenges. As vacation lengths have declined, the drive-and-sail traveler has become rarer. Efforts will continue to turn this around and to encourage travelers to either bring their vehicles with them as they travel to and in Alaska, or to rent motor vehicles once they arrive. In both instances, an emphasis will be placed on the Alaska Marine Highway System as an essential part of the Alaskan experience.
3. Alaska's Marine Highway and its partners in the National Byways Program must recognize that along with marketing to automobile travelers, the Marine Highway will benefit from marketing to fly-sail travelers both domestic and international.
4. Scheduling poses a major challenge. A newly formatted schedule, which also showcases the communities served by Alaska's Marine Highway (Fall-Winter-Spring 2001-2002 and Summer 2002), is easier to read and use than previous formats, but the schedule itself still poses trip-planning difficulties. As a Scenic Byway, consideration will be given to developing and marketing several predefined trips to consumers. The on-line reservation system is periodically reviewed to evaluate its efficiency, and to identify possible improvement points.
5. The limited number of cabins in the summer could deter visitors from using Alaska's Marine Highway. Marketing efforts should be made to groups and individuals that might not need cabins, or would overnight in communities. Marketing when less cabins are in use, should continue.



6. Alaska's Marine Highway serves two primary audiences with different needs: visitors and residents. It is a challenge to convey to visitors that state ships are the only feasible mode of transportation available for some communities.

## Opportunities

1. Achieving a National Byway designation and benefiting from the National Byways Program's own marketing efforts, as well as through its marketing-oriented grants, is an important opportunity for the Marine Highway. SEAtails is a perfect partner to create an intermodal travel experience. Encouraging communities to think about the non-auto traveler and provide alternative transportation modes (bike, walk, van, etc.) fits well with the Marine Highway demographic/transportation challenge.
2. The diversity of communities and sights along the byway create numerous packaging and adventure options for tour operators/wholesalers and travel agents, as well as the communities themselves.
3. Landside lodging and activities that mesh with predefined trips will benefit both the Alaska Marine Highway System and partnership communities.

## Goals and Objectives

### Goal 1: Increase year-round use and improve marketing of Alaska's Marine Highway and port communities.

- a. Continue to work with port communities to continue positioning Alaska's Marine Highway in national and international markets (Alaska's Marine Highway and its Ferry Land).
- b. Seek additional funding to support expanded marketing activities.

### Goal 2: Continue to work with travel trade to create travel products that mesh with the needs of target travel markets.

- a. Define a series of sample travel adventures within each byway segment
- b. Establish excursion desks on board the mainline ships.
- c. Fully utilize major terminals by establishing full-service visitors centers.

Passengers view mountains, glaciers and icebergs from an open deck.



**Goal 3: Encourage non-auto travel along the Alaska Marine Highway System.**

- a. Seek ways to strengthen the intermodal and within-community non-auto transportation system along the byway.
- b. Work with SEATrails to create model projects that advance SEATrails goals and those of the byway.
- c. Encourage the National Scenic Byways Program to expand its focus on the 'alternate transportation' systems along byways. This will appeal to communities encouraging travelers to stay longer and will mesh with the Alaska Marine Highway System's need to use the byway program to market to drive-sail, rail-sail, as well as fly-sail travelers.

**Goal 4: Define affordable, tangible return-trip products that can be marketed to Alaska Marine Highway System travelers on board and in partnership communities.**

- a. Define affordable, short-trip options. Move consumers past the idea that they need at least two to three weeks to experience Alaska.

Enjoying a game of cards in the dining lounge.





# 6

## Interpretation

### Introduction

In the summer, May through September, Alaska's Marine Highway offers interpretive opportunities for each visitor on board a ship for a period of time even before the visitor encounters terminals, communities and the greater Alaskan landscape. This offers the chance to both educate the traveler about what they are seeing and to raise awareness on political, social or cultural issues of importance to Alaskans. Due to an agreement with the USDA Forest Service to provide interpretation, the visitor leaves the vessel with both a deeper understanding of the sites and attractions, and a better appreciation for Alaska's role in the United States and the world.

Alaska's Marine Highway has all of the six intrinsic qualities recognized by the National Scenic Byways program. It has nationally significant scenic, natural, recreational, archaeological, historical, and cultural features. Our existing interpretation only represents the tip of the iceberg (pun intended). We can and should provide much, much more interpretive information to our visitors.

### Existing Interpretive Experience

Interpretation within the Management Corridor has three components: static information at some terminals, on board brochures and materials, and live interpretation from the Tongass National Forest Service staff.

At the terminals there is little in the way of nonessential information. Most terminals provide the following:

- Alaska Marine Highway System Schedules
- Route Maps
- Local Visitor information

In some terminals there is the potential to expand interpretation, thus providing both residents and visitors with information on the byway program and the interpretive themes of the Marine Highway.

Once on board, visitors encounter a minimal amount of static interpretive materials and information relating to the themes. This is another area where there is the potential to enhance interpretation.

Finally, Alaska's Marine Highway, in partnership with the Tongass National Forest, provides live interpretation on board its five ships working the Inside Passage routes. For nearly 40 years, Alaska's Marine Highway and the USDA Forest Service have enjoyed a unique partnership with the mutual goal of providing information about the Tongass and Chugach National Forests to ship riders. Under a special arrangement, Forest Service interpreters travel on board ships during the summer months to

A USDA Forest Service Interpreter leading a workshop on board a ship.



provide live interpretation and information to travelers. The Forest Service Naturalist speaks to passengers on a public address system to point out interesting wildlife, historic sites, nautical markers and lighthouses, geographic and natural history, as well as significant cultural features along marine routes.

The state provides transportation, room, meals and space to present programs on the vessels and the Forest Service provides interpreters to share knowledge and promote understanding of the two national forests with visitors and locals. Currently, no money changes hands in this agreement.

This program was started in 1963 with D.R. “Bob” Hakala serving as the first interpreter aboard the *M/V Malaspina* on its inaugural cruise, at the invitation of the Alaska Marine Highway System. Seeing great potential, but having no money, the program managers began service with audio messages broadcast over the ships’ public address systems, cued by the pursers. Next there were slides and messages on consoles that looked like TV sets. The first scheduled, live interpreters were on duty in 1970 and have been there ever since.

*The USDA Forest Service has 14 staff members, including 2 volunteers, to implement the Alaska Marine Highway System/ USDA Forest Service interpretive program aboard the Marine Highway ships. This program also includes interpretation services for the annual spring and fall Elderhostel trips.*

Source: USDA Forest Service

The Tongass Marine Highway program was expanded in the late 1980’s to include participation in Elderhostel trips traveling on the Marine Highway ships. Agreements were made between several sponsoring organizations and the Forest Service to provide instructors for the Inside Passage portion of the adult education trips. This put interpreters on board in the spring and fall as well as the summer.

The Tongass interpretive team consists of 10 on board staff. Their annual budget for training, community preparation/information gathering visits and interpretive work is \$242,000. There were 326,663 riders on Southeast routes in 1999 and 302,926 in 2000, according to Alaska Marine Highway System reports. In 2001, the total number of riders was similar to 2000. The following table summarizes the number of programs presented and attendance at those programs during 2001. These figures suggest that the interpretive program reaches about one-third of the total riders on the Inside Passage routes.

Type of program	How many times	To how many people
Interpretive talk	1,085	90,573
Video and discussion	185	9,732
Children s program	54	842
Community introduction	622	44,745

Figures from 2001 AMHS trip reports, summer season

## Existing and Potential Interpretive Themes

The Forest Service interpreters work with six specific themes. Although interpreters are free to develop programs that suit their ability and style, they cover each of “The Big Six Topics” at some point in each trip.

- Alaska/Tongass National Forest Introduction
- Forest Ecology
- Geology/Glaciations
- Marine Mammals
- Wildlife
- Cultural/Heritage

Interpreters also introduce each community as the ships approach, giving passengers some local history, what services to expect and interesting things to do.

The interpretive team provides information using a variety of tools. These tools include a small reference library, a supply of current visitor guides and brochures and visitor information on the computer. Each info desk has a PC with the Inside Passage CD and other visitor information downloaded from the Internet for passenger use.

The interpreters use audio/visual equipment and many portable visuals, including models, hides and skulls, games and handouts. Some of the material is on loan by permit from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Wildlife Division including several brown and black bear, mountain goat and wolf hides, as well as skulls. The team has a stash of Smokey Bear items to give to children as prizes in educational games. The unit library was expanded

this year, adding depth to the history and children’s sections, updating the natural history material and replacing some videos.

Overall, this interpretive program is unique in the national system of byways. The ship-based format of the byway combined with the creative partnerships already in place, provide an ideal environment to talk about Alaska and about the byway. At present, this program is available along the Inside Passage and Prince William Sound routes. Additional resources, including people, material and funding, will be required to expand this effort.

## Future Interpretive Directions

Along with the existing themes, there is the potential to branch out in new directions. Indeed, based on community feedback received during the preparation of this plan, there is a clear need to talk more about the broader topic of Alaskan life and the Alaskan economy. Potential themes might include:

Alaska’s working landscape: tourism, logging, fishing, and mining all depend on Alaska’s rich resources.

The role of Alaska’s resources in all Americans’ lives.

History of the last battle on U.S. soil when the Japanese invaded the Aleutian Islands during WWII.

Timber harvesting can occasionally be viewed and is part of Alaska’s working landscape.



A priority is to expand the live interpreter program. In addition, the presentations can be enhanced with on board computer kiosks. In the terminals, plans should be prepared to provide more interpretive and tourism-oriented information.

3. Expanding the interpretive program offers the potential to make the Alaska Marine Highway System experience more appealing, with the end result of attracting more riders.

## Challenges and Opportunities

### Challenges

1. It is a challenge to maintain consistency in interpretation while covering large geographic areas.
2. Another challenge is arriving at a consensus among various groups when determining new interpretive themes.
3. Developing interpretive plans for the system and for partnership communities is a challenge.
4. Funding the development and construction of static interpretation will also pose a challenge.
5. A similar challenge is finding ways to fund an expansion of the live interpretive program.

### Opportunities

1. There is a creative, successful model in place from which to build.
2. The byway program offers funding for interpretive planning and facility construction.

## Goals and Objectives

**Goal 1: Expand the Alaska Marine Highway System interpretive program in a manner that will enhance the experience and attract more riders.**

- a. Investigate whether and how enhanced interpretation can become a stronger competitive advantage for the Alaska Marine Highway System.
- b. Develop a system-wide interpretation plan that capitalizes on the strength of our existing partnership with the USDA Forest Service while adding new partners and new interpretive themes such as the working landscape, or cultural influences.
- c. Devise the interpretive plan in a manner that it supports the Alaska Marine Highway System's marketing and expansion goals.
- d. Develop interpretive plans for key partnership communities.
- e. Make interpretation available year-round, with broadened themes and new ideas.

Fishing activity can be seen along several routes.



- f. Develop new, permanent interpretive displays for on board ships.
- g. Establish a regionally and culturally representative interpretive committee that provides direction to the byway for interpretive planning.
- h. Seek funding to implement the interpretive goals.

A fishing seiner lists to one side as it hauls in a net of salmon.







# 7

## Implementation

The focus of this chapter is on what happens next. The preceding chapters reviewed the issues that will impact the success of this byway: involvement, resource management, transportation system management, tourism and interpretation. This is a long, complex byway with a large and expensive infrastructure supporting its operation. Nonresident use is an important part of the annual revenue for Alaska's Marine Highway. Therefore, the byway program and other Alaska Marine Highway System efforts to attract more customers have an important role to play in this highway's future.

This chapter begins with a set of foundation themes that shape the strategy along with a statement of the desired future. The action plan is then presented, along with an implementation schedule.

### **Building Blocks for the Byway Strategy**

The material presented in Chapters 1-6 suggests there are several important factors and concepts that should shape this byway plan.

Increasing the number of nonresident riders is a mission-critical goal for Alaska's Marine Highway. This strategy must focus on increasing the number of travelers who use the byway.

Given the Alaska Marine Highway System's circumstances, there is support within the organization for this byway effort. Therefore, if this byway strategy is substantive, the Alaska Marine Highway System will work to implement the strategy.

The intrinsic qualities of this byway are not under threat nor will they be in the foreseeable future, primarily due to the ship-based nature of traveling in the Management Corridor and the high levels of public land ownership along the route.

Due to the resident-servicing and goods/material transporting duties of the Alaska Marine Highway System, as well as the cost and complexity of running the system, it is unrealistic to expect the scheduling and routing of the system to change dramatically in order to create ideal circumstances for visitors. Thus, the byway program and its strategies to increase use must largely fit within the predetermined schedules and routes.

Travelers continue to find the idea of sailing Alaska's waters appealing, as evidenced by the increasing numbers of ships and programs offered by the private cruise industry. Therefore, it is realistic to expect that if the Alaska Marine Highway System product is appealing, and sufficiently marketed and promoted, more people will come to Alaska to ride Alaska's Marine Highway Scenic Byway.

A Grizzly Bear on Kodiak Island.



If private cruise lines are one model of competition, then what is and what could be the Alaska Marine Highway System's competitive advantages? The advantages include the following:

More independence for the traveler to explore, stay longer on land, change directions and change plans.

Potentially more opportunities to access the 'real' Alaska via landside lodging, dining and travel experiences that are unique and more personalized.

The system, as a public sector entity, has more opportunities to partner in creative ways with other public sector entities in order to provide a more novel travel experience. An example of this type of partnership that is already in place is the USDA Forest Service interpreter program.

The ability to travel beyond the marine route and explore other parts of Alaska, should travelers decide to take a vehicle or other form of transportation on the ship or arrange for connecting transportation.

In order to have and build additional legitimacy and value for residents, the byway program must act as a sailing ambassador for Alaska and its way of life. Riders should have an opportunity to learn about Alaska; to be better informed guests while in the state and better promoters for the Alaska Marine Highway System once they return home.

*During the summer months, Alaska enjoys extended daylight hours everywhere. The farther north you travel, the greater the difference. In Anchorage, the sun can set as late as 10:42 p.m. In Barrow, the northernmost town in Alaska, the sun doesn't set for 84 days! This phenomenon is called the Midnight Sun.*

Source: State of Alaska

## The Future

What is this plan's intention? What will byway travelers experience in the future? How might the byway impact Alaska's Marine Highway? These paragraphs attempt to answer these questions and describe aspects of the Scenic Byway's future.

The America's Byways experience will become a recognized travel *brand*. National marketing and promotion will sufficiently raise awareness of the byways. More travelers will know about byways and, it is hoped, more will want to experience as many byways as possible, similar to the National Park system. Within the family of byways, Alaska's Marine Highway could stand out as one of the most interesting and novel routes.

Alaska's Marine Highway will be on the list as one of the *must-sees* for travelers planning an automobile trip to the Pacific Northwest and the "Great North Land".

The Alaska Marine Highway System byway program will, in partnership with other entities and efforts, create a non-automobile travel track as one facet of the byway and offer an unusual travel experience.

The Marine Highway byway program will be seen as an affordable and high-value way to see Alaska for as short or as long as one might want to travel. Alaska's Marine Highway will be seen as a travel experience that requires a few return trips in order to be entirely appreciated.

## The Strategy

In order to focus the action strategy, four categories are used to organize implementation:

Establish 'Blue Ribbon' Steering Committee  
and Fortify Partnerships  
Shape the Experience, Promote the  
Experience  
Interpret the Byway  
Invest in the Transportation Infrastructure

All the concepts from the goals and objectives defined in the plan's chapters are organized below within this structure, but they have been refined, renumbered and reordered.

## Establish Steering Committee and Fortify Partnerships

### Goals

1. Create and sustain a byway process that allows for open, effective and efficient participation for all interested entities and individuals.
2. Create and sustain a process that allows Experience Corridor communities to learn about and participate in the byway at their own pace and in a manner that meets their particular needs.
3. Pursue short-term practical projects that demonstrate the byway's effectiveness and build partnerships.

## Objectives

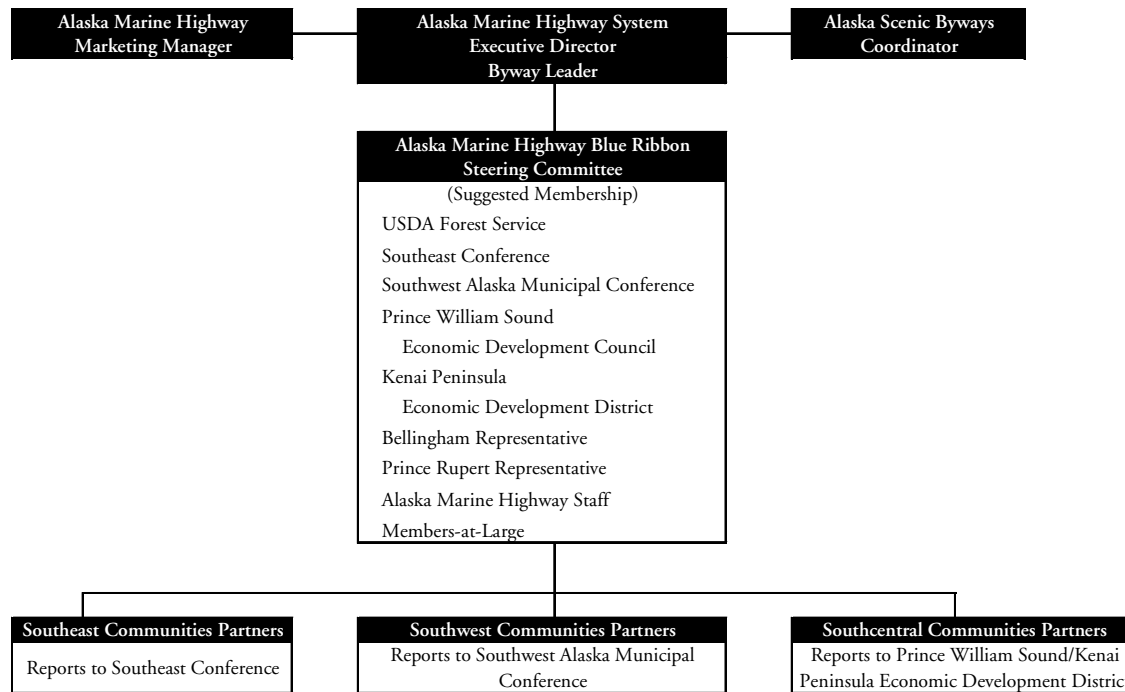
1. Establish the 'Blue Ribbon' steering committee to oversee byway programs. Locate an executive director/byway leader, as a paid position, to support the steering committee.
2. Create partnerships through which communities and interested individuals can learn about and participate in the byway.
3. Encourage Experience Corridor communities to define the potential byway benefits and costs for their places and businesses.
4. Encourage communities to identify locally beneficial projects and bring them to regional development corporations.
5. Convene communities and the Alaska Marine Highway System regularly to seek cooperative ventures related to the byway.
6. Expand the number of public and private sector partners who can provide round trip 'terminal to lodging and fun' services for travelers without automobiles.
7. Provide information regarding schedule changes and system improvements to local communities via a web-site, newsletter, press releases, public outreach and other methods.
8. Encourage partnership communities to identify local intrinsic qualities they fear may be threatened by additional tourism, as well as identify tourism-related opportunities.

Hundreds of public use cabins are found along the corridor.



9. Provide information and services for communities to consider a range of methods to manage potentially threatened local intrinsic qualities and to take advantage of tourism opportunities.
10. Encourage public land entities to become byway partners.
11. Create localized task forces to address byway-public land challenges and opportunities that arise.

### Alaska's Marine Highway Byway Organization Chart



### Actions for Year One

1. Organize regular meetings of the 'Blue Ribbon' Committee, Executive Director/Byway Leader, Marketing Manager, Byway Coordinator and ADOT&PF staff. Establish committee chair and committee seats. Entity to implement: Executive Director. Timeline: Meet every month for first year.
2. Prepare a Byway Partner information package that describes the byway concept and how communities can become involved. Provide materials and worksheets that make it easier for communities to perform assessments of their transportation, tourism and intrinsic quality management needs. Entity to implement: Blue Ribbon Committee and Executive Director. Timeline: Prepare prior to Byway Forum workshop in March.

3. Assemble supporting communities for a first Alaska's Marine Highway Forum workshop to review the status of the byway's nomination and identify potential grants for the upcoming grant round in the spring of 2002. Entity to implement: Blue Ribbon Committee and Executive Director. Timeline: Meet in March to allow sufficient time to prepare grants. Hold another Forum meeting in the summer or fall.
4. At the Forum, identify a set of communities interested in participating in a Model Travel Experience Project. This project will work to identify specific routes and schedules and landside activities that can be woven into a clear, easy to understand travel experience. This experience will then be used as a model to explore whether and how marketing efforts can be improved by packaging routes and experiences. (See Marketing Actions.) Entity to implement: Blue Ribbon Committee and Executive Director. Timeline: Discuss at Forum and then assemble concise white paper on experience within one month of Forum.
5. Assemble localized working committees composed of communities interested in becoming byway partners. Entity to implement: Blue Ribbon Committee and Executive Director. Timeline: Test interest at Forum.
6. Encourage and facilitate the preparation of grants to the National Byways Program. Entity to implement: Blue Ribbon Committee. Timeline: Deadline is May 31, 2002.

7. Launch a concise, regular communication tool (i.e., web-site or newsletter or e-mail newsletter, etc.) that will provide up-to-date information for residents and communities about the byway. Entity to implement: Executive Director. Timeline: Send out every quarter, or if web-site, maintain regularly.

### **Actions for Future**

1. Hold periodic Forum gatherings.
2. Assist communities with grant projects.
3. Move model travel experience project forward. Work with more individuals and communities to create more packages, if the concept is proven to be useful.
4. Work with entities such as SEAtrails to create more comprehensive landside services for travelers, especially those riding without a car. (See Marketing and Interpretation Actions.)

Totems are prevalent in many coastal communities.



## Shape the Experience, Promote the Experience

### Goals

1. Increase and improve marketing of Alaska's Marine Highway and port communities.
2. Create travel products that better mesh with the needs of target travel markets and the needs of the Alaska Marine Highway System. From a product development perspective, provide the visitor with a number of travel experience choices and view Alaska's Marine Highway as many different travel experiences, not just one.
3. Encourage both auto and non-auto travel along the Marine Highway.
4. Define affordable, tangible return-trip products that can be marketed to Alaska's Marine Highway travelers on-board and in partnership communities.

### Objectives

1. Establish and implement a byway marketing plan that works with port communities to continue positioning Alaska's Marine Highway in national and international markets.
2. Seek additional funding to support expanded marketing activities.
3. Identify multiple travel experiences within the system.

4. Seek ways to package the byway's different experiences into individual tourism products.
5. Define a series of sample travel adventures within each byway segment that truly meet the needs of the consumer.
6. Seek ways to strengthen the intermodal and within-community non-auto transportation system along the byway.
7. Work with SEATrails to create model projects that advance SEATrails goals and those of the byway.
8. Encourage national marketing of byways to expand its focus on the 'alternate transportation' systems along byways such as bicycles and kayaks. This will appeal to communities encouraging travelers to stay longer and will mesh with the Alaska Marine Highway System's need to use the byway program to market to both drive-sail as well as fly-sail travelers.
9. Market predefined segment trips within other segments of the Alaska Marine Highway System.
10. Train in-state staff to promote the next trip to all travelers.
11. Define affordable, short-trip options. Move consumers past the idea that they need at least two to three weeks to experience Alaska.

*Of the 20 highest peaks in the United States, 17 are in Alaska.*

Source: AK DCED



## Actions for Year One

1. Define small individual model travel products that have good schedules, attractions and landside lodging and services. For example, cross-gulf and southwest trips offer a new product to be developed. Also focus on interest-themed trips like Native American culture or natural history. Work with partners to refine these products. As part of the market plan development effort, devise marketing strategies for these products. Entity to implement: Byway Marketing Manager. Timeline: Define model travel experiences in spring of 2003.
2. Pull together these ideas for the summer travel season and allow Forest Service interpreters to encourage travelers to try these tours and experiences. Entity to implement: Byway Marketing Manager. Timeline: summer 2003.
3. Perform a marketing analysis of the types of unique and individual products Alaska's Marine Highway is offering to travelers, including the model travel experiences. Perform this assessment prior as part of preparing the marketing plan. Entity to implement: Byway Marketing Manager. Timeline: Assess concept by fall of 2002.
4. Create Byway Experience Working Committees with other groups, such as SEATrails and communities in order to work together and communicate on how to provide integrated travel experiences. Entity to implement: Executive Director. Timeline: Assemble after the Forum in March.
6. Create a byway marketing plan to complement the Alaska Marine Highway System marketing plan. This approach should be partially community-based, involve local input and include the findings from the above byway experience work. Submit a National Scenic Byways grant to support marketing. Entity to implement: Byway Marketing Manager. Timeline: Test interest at Forum.
7. Seek to increase funding for marketing once a clear byway marketing plan is adopted. Entity to implement: Blue Ribbon Committee and Marketing Manager. Timeline: Next fiscal year.
8. Explore grant sources to encourage the provision of landside intermodal transportation services for travelers without automobiles. Consider a Byway and Enhancements Grant for this effort. Encourage the National Byways Program to consider this issue through a research effort. Entity to implement: Blue Ribbon Committee and Executive Director. Timeline: Ongoing.

## Actions for Future

1. Work to integrate byway marketing and community services to a greater degree over time.
2. Continue to find ways to generate revenues for marketing efforts through partnerships and other means.

Mount Saint Elias near Yakutat.



3. Use terminals as Visitors Centers. Make better use of the terminals as places where visitors can get maps and travel information. Alaska's Marine Highway terminals should be a one-stop-shop for visitor information. These could include static interpretive displays, as well as kiosks for hotel and tour information.

## Interpret the Byway

### Goals

1. Expand the Alaska Marine Highway System interpretive program in a manner that will enhance the travel experience and attract more riders. Interpretation should support marketing and marketing should support interpretation.
2. Raise the awareness of all visitors to the balance that must be struck in Alaska between two mistaken extremes in thinking: 1) Alaska as an exceedingly fragile environment that cannot withstand human use, and 2) Alaska as the vast, endless land that can withstand any abuse.

### Objectives

1. Develop a system-wide interpretation plan that capitalizes on the strength of our existing partnership with the USDA Forest Service, while adding new partners and interpretive themes, such as the working landscape, or cultural influences.

2. Investigate whether and how enhanced interpretation can be a stronger competitive advantage for Alaska's Marine Highway.
3. Devise the interpretive plan so that it supports the Alaska Marine Highway System's marketing and expansion goals. Once travel packages are defined, consider interpretive approach packages that focus on localized stories. Design interpretation so that it addresses the needs of visitor markets targeted by travel packages.
4. Develop interpretive plans for key partnership communities.
5. Make interpretation available year-round, with broadened themes and new ideas.
6. Provide new permanent interpretive displays on board ships.
7. Explore the potential for regional artists on board.
8. Establish a regionally and culturally representative interpretive committee that provides direction to the byway for interpretive planning.
9. Seek funding to implement the interpretive goals.
10. Design marketing and interpretive programs with the goal of balancing the overuse and underuse fallacies.
11. Use interpretation to help residents become better hosts and visitors become better guests.

The boardwalk community of Pelican is typical of the smallest communities.



12. Educate local residents about contributions by visitors, and about transportation needs.
13. Educate the visitor about the transportation needs of local residents and the role of the Alaska Marine Highway System in the economic structure of the regions it serves.

### **Actions for Year One**

1. Apply for grant funds to prepare a system-wide interpretation plan. This should build from the work already being done by the Tongass National Forest Team and explore the implications of expanding the program, costs, ways interpretation can be a competitive advantage for the Marine Highway and how interpretation can support marketing and expansion goals. The plan should address issues of raising awareness about Alaska's character and working landscape. Entity to implement: USDA Forest Service Interpretation Committee. Timeline: summer of 2002.
2. Establish a regionally and culturally representative interpretive committee that provides direction to the byway for interpretive planning. Entity to implement: Byway Steering Committee. Timeline: summer of 2002.
3. Obtain funding and prepare interpretive plan. Entity to implement: Byway Steering Committee with involvement of interpretation committee. Timeline: fall of 2002 and spring of 2003.

### **Actions for Future**

1. Seek grant funding to prepare interpretive plans for partnership communities.
2. Use terminals as one-stop visitors' centers. Make better use of the terminals as places where visitors can get maps and travel information. These could include static interpretive displays, as well as kiosks for hotel and tour information.

### **Invest in the Transportation Infrastructure**

#### **Goals**

1. Ensure operational funding provides, at a minimum, the current level of service and, ideally, the full implementation of the Southeast Alaska and Prince William Sound Transportation Plans.
2. Ensure capital funding for vessel upgrade/ construction and terminal upgrades to complete the implementation of the Southeast Alaska and Prince William Sound Transportation Plans.
3. Educate local residents about changes and improvements to the system.
4. Minimize the conflicts between visitor and local service needs.
5. Minimize traffic conflicts to maintain predictable schedules and levels of service.

All coastal communities have a tie with fishing.



6. Provide a safe, secure, and pleasant travel experience for all passengers and users of the system.
7. Improve intermodal connections for Alaska's Marine Highway travelers.
8. Provide for convenient and safe surface transportation between terminals for through-passengers without vehicles.
7. Strive to retain experienced, knowledgeable, and trained personnel within the system.
8. Educate the public and other mariners about the operational abilities of the new vessels and the routes and travel times of all vessels in the system.
9. Share operational experience gained among crew members.

### Objectives

1. Ensure adequate operational funding annually.
2. Ensure adequate funding to complete service upgrade and expansion plans.
3. Replenish the Alaska Marine Highway System Stabilization Fund to ensure that funds are available to deal with unforeseen circumstances, such as emergency vessel or engine repairs, or schedule delays.
4. Provide matching funds for U.S. DOT appropriations for vessel and terminal construction and upgrade.
5. Develop and approve innovative funding techniques, such as GARVEE bonds, for capital projects within the Southeast Alaska and Prince William Sound Transportation Plans.
6. Continue to evaluate levels and types of service and adjust them as needed to maintain a balance.
10. Comply with required security standards.
11. Minimize safety and security concerns for all passengers and users of the system.
12. Minimize time delays and inconvenience resulting from security screening and other safety measures for passengers and users of the system.
13. Provide travelers with connectivity from the ships to pedestrian paths, communities, trail systems and other scenic drives.
14. Examine surface shuttle options prior to implementation of shuttle ferry service.
15. Take steps to implement surface shuttle service between terminals by providing or contracting the service, or encouraging a private entity to provide the service.
16. Improve bicycle and pedestrian access to ferry terminals from nearby communities

*The M/V Kennicott and the M/V Tustumena are Ocean Class Vessels, meaning they can ply the high seas anywhere in the world. Other vessels in the Alaska Marine Highway System fleet are restricted to the Inside Passage from Washington through Canada and inside Alaskan waters.*

Source: Alaska Marine Highway System

## Actions for Year One

1. Have Alaska's Marine Highway reservation agents conduct a brief survey of passengers after they purchase their tickets to evaluate the success of marketing and determine the reasons for increased ridership. Entity to implement: Alaska's Marine Highway Staff and Marketing Manager. Timeline: 2002
2. Seek grant funding for directional signage. The byway will need adequate signs to direct passengers from ships to local communities and trails. Entity to implement: Alaska's Marine Highway Staff. Timeline: Spring of 2002.
3. At a more general level, Alaska's Marine Highway should explore innovative funding techniques such as GARVEE bonds and other mechanisms to support the System. Entity to implement: the Alaska Marine Highway System. Timeline: Spring of 2002.
4. Through the Byway Forum and by working with SEATrails, encourage communities to consider how to improve the intermodal system along the byway. Entity to implement: Blue Ribbon Committee. Timeline: Spring of 2002.

## Actions for Future

1. Encourage bicycle/pedestrian paths. One example of intermodal connection is to build a four-mile path from Alaska's Marine Highway dock in Haines to town, a project that was given high priority by the DOT&PF Southeast Region pedestrian study for Haines completed in 2001. One other example is the Sitka Cross Trail, which connects the terminal in Sitka to town. The planning phase would assess the need for paths in all Alaska Marine Highway System port communities.
2. Expand on board bike storage. Another way to improve intermodal connections is to provide bicycle racks on board all ships.
3. Create regional intermodal maps. Visitors could plan their intermodal tour with an interpretive map featuring trails, campsites, and suggested bicycle, kayaking, hiking, and other recreational activities in communities along the Alaska Marine Highway System route. Due to the size of the Alaska Marine Highway System, the map may need to be broken into a series of three maps.

The rugged and treeless landscape of the Aleutian Islands.







# 8

## Conclusion

Alaska's Marine Highway is a state highway unlike any other in the United States. It traverses America's richest aesthetic and cultural landscapes, inaccessible by a typical asphalt highway. The views from this marine-based corridor are dramatic and beautiful, allowing those who travel on it to become absorbed in Alaska's beauty, without having to "watch the road". Aboard Alaska's Marine Highway vessels, both drivers and passengers can interact with locals, interpreters and each other while being transported to their next destination. This type of interaction, concurrent with learning about the corridor, cannot be found on any other state or nationally recognized byway.

This Corridor Partnership Plan represents groundwork toward recognizing the world-class features of Alaska's Marine Highway and the coastal landscape it traverses. The plan also examines the diversity of each of the System's 33 port communities, as well as the activities within them, essential to Alaska's well being. The plan does not look to regulate activities along the corridor, but rather to identify and embrace its fishing, timber, and mining industries; the very fabric that makes Alaska the great state that it is. "To increase visitor awareness of the important role coastal Alaska plays in their lives," is the prevailing theme of this plan.

With this in mind, the Corridor Partnership Plan defines two corridors, the *Management Corridor* (the ships and terminals under the direction of the Alaska Marine Highway System), and the *Experience Corridor*, (the lands and communities along the route that are outside the jurisdiction of the Marine Highway and, therefore, this plan). The goals, objectives and improvements in this plan apply to the ships and terminals, although this plan also sets the framework for which communities can become byway partners. Should these entities so choose, additional enhancements could extend further along the corridor.

Alaska's Marine Highway covers more than 8,000 miles of coastline, traversing state and international boundaries while serving 33 port communities. The list of stakeholders is extensive as evidenced by the strong community response in support of this nomination. However, once the initial public outreach has been completed, there will still be a great deal of work to be done. Based upon the goals and objectives throughout this plan, the following are the immediate tasks to be completed upon designation:

### Public Involvement

Continue to reach stakeholders for support and comments about the byway.

Establish a submission process for communities and organizations to submit projects for grant applications for water-based or land-based enhancements.

Fireweed lines the shore, as the M/V Columbia and a fishing vessel motor by.



## **Organize a Major Byway Workshop/ Conference for the Route**

Once the initial public involvement has concluded, host a byway workshop or conference to enable the Alaska Marine Highway System to solidify byway partnerships with and within communities.

Establish the 'Blue Ribbon' Steering Committee to work with the Marine Highway, byways partners and the scenic byway program.

## **Produce Text and Graphics that Inventory the Intrinsic Qualities**

Produce detailed inventories of intrinsic values for placement within a management database and web-site. This would be valuable information to assist users with trip planning on the Alaska Marine Highway System.

Work with the Marine Highway in its continuing efforts to market the byway.

Produce a full size 'road map' for the corridor and its communities

Establish the framework for the development of GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) linked information kiosks on board the ships to monitor the ship's location and describe surrounding points of interest along the route.

Seals are just one variety of wildlife that can be observed along Alaska's Marine Highway routes.



## **Produce a Detailed iPhase One Facilities Improvement Plan**

Inventory each terminal and ship in order to make recommendations for signage, information and affordable service facilities

Make recommendations for connecting the entire byway through graphics, signage and other connecting themes.

## **Expand Forest Service Interpretation on board ships**

Work with the Forest Service interpretive team to determine how the existing partnership with the Marine Highway can be expanded to reach more riders.

Explore the potential for greater interpretation through technology or increased funding.

Seek input from communities and byway partners for inclusion in interpretation efforts.

## **Produce a Detailed Byway Marketing Plan**

Expand the existing marketing plan for the Marine Highway to include the National Scenic Byway designation.

Seek funding for an expanded marketing initiative.

As the Alaska Marine Highway System celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, this plan represents a ‘road map’ for the byway to follow over the next 40 years. With thoughtful, creative and open discussion, Alaska’s Marine Highway can meet the needs of its passengers and stakeholders while enhancing the experience aboard its ships.

In future years, should Alaska’s Marine Highway be nominated as a National Scenic Byway, travelers will have a better understanding of the important role coastal Alaska and the Pacific Northwest plays in their lives – and a greater awareness of the unique recreational, cultural, historical, aesthetic and scenic qualities accessible only on Alaska’s Marine Highway.

A bald eagle hunts in Alaskan waters with snowcapped mountains as a backdrop.





# 9

## Resources

### Alaska's Marine Highway Byway

#### Supporters and Contacts

Public outreach has been underway during the development of this Corridor Partnership Plan. Due to the high number of potential stakeholders along the corridor, this process will continue for many more months. Once the initial outreach is complete in the spring of 2002, the 'Blue Ribbon' Steering Committee will be established, and a paid Executive Director/Byway Leader will be sought. At the time of going to press the following resolutions and letters of support have been received with many more in the 'works'. A majority of the communities and organizations have assigned a local contact person to work with the byway. Comments and support for this designation has been very positive.

#### Resolutions of Support

City of Chignik, Mayor Jim Brewer  
City of Cold Bay, Mayor John Maxwell  
City of Haines, Mayor David Black  
Haines Convention & Visitors Bureau  
City of Hoonah, Mayor Albert Dick  
City & Borough of Juneau, Mayor Sally Smith  
Juneau Convention & Visitors Bureau,  
Jeff Butcher

Kodiak Chamber of Commerce,  
Christopher Ellis  
Lake & Peninsula Borough,  
Mayor Glen Alsworth, Sr.  
City of Petersburg, Leo Luczak  
City of Seldovia, Mayor Susan Hecks  
City of Skagway  
City & Borough of Sitka, Barnaby Dow  
Sitka Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Sitka Chamber of Commerce  
Southeast Conference, Loren Gerhard  
Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference  
City of Valdez, Mayor Bert Cottle  
City of Wrangell, Carol Rushmore

#### Letters of Support

Senator Alan Austermann, Kodiak  
Alaska Lighthouse Association, David Benton  
Aleutians East Borough,  
Mayor Dick Jacobsen  
City of Bellingham, Mayor Mark Asmundson  
Bellingham/Whatcom County Convention &  
Visitors Bureau, John Cooper  
Port of Bellingham, Jim Darling  
Whatcom County Department of Community  
& Economic Development,  
Deborah Sedwick  
Gastineau Channel Historic Society  
Glacier Swim Club, Carol Pratt  
City of Hoonah  
Juneau Lighthouse Association, Valerie O'Hare  
City of Kodiak, Mayor Carolyn Floyd  
Kodiak Convention & Visitors Bureau,  
Murphy Forner  
Kodiak Island Borough, Robin Heinrichs

Historic lighthouses line the marine routes throughout coastal Alaska.



Sheldon Museum, Haines, Cynthia Jones  
Representative Gary Stevens, Kodiak  
City of Unalaska, Mayor Pamela Fitch  
Unalaska Convention & Visitors Bureau  
USDA Forest Service, Alaska Region,  
Nora Laughlin  
USDA Forest Service, Chugach National Forest,  
Dave Gibbons  
USDA Forest Service, Tongass National Forest,  
Thomas Puchlerz

We expect several more resolutions and letters of support for the Alaska Marine Highway System after the printing of this plan. An updated list of supporters can be found on the Alaska Marine Highway System State Scenic Byway web-site at <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/scenic/bamhs.html>.

## Contacts

### Principal Byway Contacts

Alaska's Marine Highway  
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Marketing Manager/Acting Byway Leader  
Sharon Gaipman  
Alaska Marine Highway System  
3132 Channel Drive  
Juneau, AK 99801-7898  
(907) 465-8827  
E-mail: [sharon\\_gaipman@dot.state.ak.us](mailto:sharon_gaipman@dot.state.ak.us)

**Operations and Administration:**  
**Alaska Marine Highway System-Operations**  
3132 Channel Drive, Room 200  
Juneau, AK 99801-7898  
(907) 465-3955

**Reservations:**  
**Alaska Marine Highway System-Reservations**  
6858 Glacier Highway  
Juneau, AK 99801-7909  
Central reservations office: 1-800-642-0066  
Text telephone for the speech or hearing impaired: 1-800-764-3779  
Reservations Fax (907) 277-4829  
<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/amhs/index.html>  
Local reservation numbers:  
Juneau (907) 465-3941  
Anchorage (907) 272-7116  
Commercial shipping desk: (907) 465-8816

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
Statewide Planning  
3132 Channel Drive  
Juneau, AK 99801-7898  
(907) 465-4070

The largest glacier in Alaska is the Bering Glacier complex, 2,250 square miles, which includes the Bagley Icefield. Ice fields cover about 5% of the state of Alaska, or 29,000 square miles.

Source: State of Alaska



## **Federal Offices**

**USDA Forest Service**  
**Region 10: Alaska Region**  
P.O. Box 21628  
Juneau, AK 99802-1628  
(907) 586-8806  
Fax (907) 586-7843  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/>

**Tongass National Forest**  
648 Mission Street (Federal Building)  
Ketchikan, AK 99901-6591  
(907) 228-6202  
Fax (907) 228-6215  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/index.html>

**Chugach National Forest**  
3301 C Street, Suite 300  
Anchorage, AK 99503-3998  
(907) 271-2500  
Fax (907) 271-3992  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/>

**Federal Highway Administration**  
**Scenic Byway Program**  
Intermodal Division, HEP-50  
400 7<sup>th</sup> Street SW, Room 3222  
Washington, DC 20590  
(800) 429-9297  
<http://www.byways.org/>

**FHWA - Alaska Division**  
P.O. Box 21648  
Juneau, AK 99802-1648  
(907) 586-7422  
Fax (907) 586-7420

**National Scenic Byways Resource Center**  
227 West First Street, Suite #610  
Duluth, MN 55802  
(218) 529-7510 or (800) 429-9297 option 5  
Fax: (218) 625-3333  
<http://www.byways.org/community/center/>

## **State Offices**

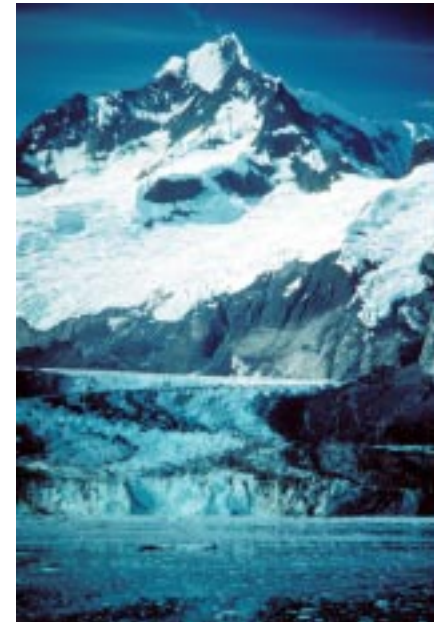
**Alaska Department of Transportation and Public  
Facilities**  
**Scenic Byways**

**Diane Regan**  
**Alaska Scenic Byways Coordinator**  
3132 Channel Drive  
Juneau, AK 99801  
(907) 465-6975  
[scenic\\_byways@dot.state.ak.us](mailto:scenic_byways@dot.state.ak.us)

**Central Region Scenic Byways Coordinator**  
**Murph O'Brien**  
P.O. Box 196900  
Anchorage, AK 99519-6900  
(907) 269-0516  
[Murph\\_O'Brien@dot.state.ak.us](mailto:Murph_O'Brien@dot.state.ak.us)

**Northern Region Scenic Byways  
Coordinator**  
**Jerry Rafson**  
2301 Peger Road  
Fairbanks, AK 99709-5316  
(907) 451-5308  
[JerryL\\_Rafson@dot.state.ak.us](mailto:JerryL_Rafson@dot.state.ak.us)

Rugged mountainous peaks and majestic glaciers line many of Alaska's Marine Highway routes.



State Office of Tourism  
Alaska Division of Tourism  
P.O. Box 110801  
Juneau, AK 99811-0801  
(907) 465-2012  
Fax (907) 465-3767  
<http://www.dced.state.ak.us/tourism/>

Alaska Department of Natural Resources  
Divisions of Land, Mining, Forestry and Water  
400 Willoughby Ave, Ste 500  
Juneau, AK 99801  
(907) 465-2400  
Fax (907) 465-3886  
<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/>

Alaska Department of Natural Resources  
Parks and Outdoor Recreation  
550 W. 7th Ave Ste 1380  
Anchorage, AK 99501-3561  
(907) 269-8700  
Fax (907) 269-8907  
<http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/index.htm>

Ketchikan's once famous brothel in the historic Creek Street district.



## Local Government and Chamber of Commerce/Convention and Visitor Bureaus

State of Alaska  
Department of Community and Economic Development  
PO Box 110800  
Juneau, AK 99811-0800  
(907) 465-2500  
Fax (907) 465-5442  
<http://www.dced.state.ak.us/mra/home.htm>

All contact information and web links to the Alaska port communities and their Chamber of Commerce/Convention and Visitor Bureau can be found through the Department of Community and Economic Development above.

Alaska Municipal League  
217 Second Street, Suite 200  
Juneau, AK 99801  
(907) 586-1325  
Fax (907) 463-5480  
<http://www.akml.org/>

City of Prince Rupert, British Columbia  
424 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue West  
Prince Rupert, B.C. V8J 1L7  
(250) 627-0934  
<http://www.city.prince-rupert.bc.ca/>

Prince Rupert Tourism  
1-800-667-1994 or (250) 624-5637  
<http://www.tourismprincerupert.com/welcome.htm>

**City of Bellingham**  
210 Lottie Street  
Bellingham, WA 98225  
(360) 676-6979  
<http://www.cob.org/index.htm>

**Bellingham and Whatcom County Chamber of Commerce and Industry**  
PO Box 958  
Bellingham, WA 98227  
(360) 734-1330  
Fax (360) 734-1332  
<http://www.bellingham.com/>

### **Additional Information Sources and Contacts**

**AASHTO**  
**American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials**  
444 North Capitol Street, NW  
Suite 249  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202) 624-5800  
<http://www.aashto.org/>

**Southeast Conference**  
P.O. Box 21989  
Juneau, AK 99802-1989  
(907) 463-3445  
Fax (907) 463-5670  
<http://www.seconference.org/>

**Prince William Sound Economic Development Council**  
P.O. Box 2353  
Valdez, AK 99686  
(907) 835-3775  
Fax (907) 835-3265  
<http://www.alaska.net/~pwsedc/>

**Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District**  
14896 Kenai Spur Highway, Suite 103A  
Kenai, AK 99611-7756  
(907) 283-3335  
Fax (907) 283-3913  
<http://www.kpedd.org/>

**Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference**  
3300 Arctic Blvd., Suite 203  
Anchorage, AK 99503  
(907) 562-7380  
Fax (907) 562-0438  
<http://www.swamc.org/>

**Seward Highway Partnership Board**  
**Byway Leader: Murph O'Brien**  
**Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities**  
P.O. Box 196900  
4111 Aviation Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99519-6900  
(907) 269-0700

**Glenn Highway Partnership Board**  
**Byway Leader: Joe Lawton**  
**General Manager, Alaska State Fair**  
2075 Glenn Highway  
Palmer, AK 99645  
(907) 745-7150

*Dining on the ships extends beyond fast food. Meal items include salmon, halibut, lamb and vegetarian dishes, as well as daily specials. However, the most popular cafeteria sales item is the famous cheeseburger, selling over 25,000 per year.*

Source: Alaska Marine Highway System

**SEAtails**

215 Shotgun Alley  
Sitka, AK 99835  
(907) 747-6481  
<http://www.seatrails.org/>

**TRAAK**

**Trails and Recreation Access for Alaskans**  
**Alaska Department of Transportation and Public**  
**Facilities**  
3132 Channel Drive  
Juneau, AK 99801  
(907) 451-2387 or (907) 465-8769

**American Society of Landscape Architects**

636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736  
(202) 898-2444  
Fax (202) 898-1185  
<http://www.asla.org/>

**Scenic America**

801 Pennsylvania Ave., SE  
Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20003  
Phone (202) 543-6200  
Fax (202) 543-9130  
<http://www.scenic.org/>

A passenger aboard an Alaska Marine Highway System ship enjoying the views from the observation deck.



## **Meeting the Federal Corridor Management Plan Requirements**

We have designed this corridor management plan to meet both the requirements of the National Scenic Byways Program and our own needs, locally, for easy use and interpretation of the plan. Therefore, we provide the following summary section to indicate the required 14 elements of a corridor management plan.

### **Location**

#### **Corridor Map (USGS or comparable quality)**

Show on the map the corridor boundaries (length and width), the location of intrinsic qualities (recognizing that the scale of the map may prevent you showing all details — just get in as many as possible), and the different land uses (what land within the corridor has been zoned by your county or town). USGS maps are recommended because they are available for the entire U.S. and provide excellent details of land forms and building locations.

### **Physical Description**

#### **General Review of Road (Safety) Narrative**

Discuss design standards concerning any proposed modifications (e.g., shoulder improvements, road widening, curve straightening) to the roadway. This discussion should include an evaluation of how the proposed changes may effect the intrinsic qualities of the byway corridor. Discuss how the shape (length & width) of the corridor was determined (as is shown on the map described above) by identifying why the endpoints were chosen and why the width is the same or variable along the length.

#### **Highway Design & Maintenance Standards**

Provide a general review of the roadway's safety and accident record to identify any correctable faults in highway design, maintenance, or operation. The idea is to locate hazards and poor design that may be a problem for drivers who are not familiar with the route and identify the possible corrections. This information is typically available at the State DOT or from the State Police.

### **Intrinsic Qualities**

#### **Intrinsic Quality Assessment**

Evaluate the intrinsic qualities as to which are of local, regional, or national importance, and identify their context within the areas surrounding them. There should be at least one substantive paragraph for each intrinsic quality identified.

#### **Intrinsic Quality Management Strategy**

This narrative shows how the intrinsic qualities will be managed and identifies the tools that are used to do this (e.g., zoning, overlay districts, easements). Recognize that the level of protection for different areas along a National Scenic Byway or All-American Road can vary, with the highest levels of protection given to those sections with the most important intrinsic qualities. All nationally recognized scenic byways should, however, be maintained with particularly high standards, not only for travelers' safety and comfort, but also for preserving the highest levels of visual integrity and attractiveness.

An Alaskan fisherman displays his catch.



### **Interpretation Plan**

Describe plans that are in place, or are planned, within the communities along the byway (such as museums, seasonal festivals that interpret the culture, existing State historical markers) to interpret the significant resources of the scenic byway to visitors.

## **Visitor Needs & Expectations**

### **Visitor Experience Plan**

List and discuss the efforts to minimize any intrusions on the visitor experience and identify the plans for making improvements to enhance that experience.

### **Development Plan**

Describe how existing development might be enhanced and new development might be accommodated while still preserving the intrinsic qualities of the corridor. For instance, this might be done through design review, land management techniques, and economic incentives, etc.

### **Commerce Plan**

Evaluate how to accommodate commercial traffic (logging trucks and farm vehicles) and access to businesses along the route, particularly services for the traveler, while ensuring the safety of sightseers in smaller vehicles, as well as bicyclists and pedestrians. Explain in paragraph format.

### **Sign Plan**

In paragraph format, demonstrate how the State will ensure and make the number and placement of highway signs (regulatory, directional, warning, and guide) more supportive of the visitor experience and

will not get in the way of the scenery, but still be sufficient to help tourists find their way. This includes, where appropriate, signs for international tourists who may not speak English fluently. The State DOT Traffic Engineering office should have this information.

### **Outdoor Advertising Control Compliance**

In paragraph format, demonstrate that all existing local, State, and Federal laws on the control of outdoor advertising are being met. The State DOT Outdoor Advertising Compliance section should have this information.

## **Marketing & Promotion**

### **Marketing Narrative**

Describe how the National Scenic Byway will be marketed and publicized, what actions are in place and what is planned.

## **People's Involvement & Responsibility**

### **Public Participation Plan**

Discuss how on-going public participation will be achieved in the implementation of corridor management objectives.

### **Responsibility Schedule**

List all agency, group, and individual responsibilities (specific and general) who are part of the team that will carry out the plan. Describe the enforcement and review mechanisms and include a schedule of when and how you'll review the degree that those responsibilities are being met.

*The longest Alaska Marine Highway System ship is the M/V Columbia at 418 feet, while the shortest is the M/V Bartlett at 193 feet.*

Source: Alaska Marine Highway System



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Alaska Marine Highway System:

1-7, 4-1, 4-11, 5-4, 9-10

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3-1, 3-9, 4-5, 4-12, 4-14, 6-5, 8-2, 8-3, 9-1

## Special thanks to:

Federal Highway Administration

USDA Forest Service

Region 10: Alaska

Tongass and Chugach National Forests

Alaska Department of Community and Economic

Development

Alaska Department of Transportation and Public

Facilities

Alaska Marine Highway System Staff

Statewide Planning and Operating

GIS and Mapping

The many communities, organizations and local governments served by the Alaska Marine Highway System who have offered their support for the Nation's most unique scenic byway.

Cormorants cluster on a rock along the Alaska Marine Highway Southcentral route.



**Prepared for:**

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The McDowell Group  
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Graphic Design by James Veo and Emily Richardson

The M/V Kennicott on its maiden voyage in 1998.



Enjoying the mountainous landscape from the observation deck of an Alaska Marine Highway System ship.



