

ACTIONS



4

Brown bears can be found along the Alaska Peninsula including in many of the port communities. Be bear aware, especially when the salmon are running in the streams and rivers. Many of the Refuges offer safe bear watching facilities.



4 ACTIONS

This final section describes specific actions that the *Kodiak and the Aleutians* segment of Alaska's Marine Highway can pursue. These actions both echo those from the full corridor partnership plan as well as highlight actions that are specific to this region. The purpose of this section is to provide the Alaska's Marine Highway System and this segment's port communities with a roadmap for regional actions. These byway actions are broken into five categories: byway organization, marketing, physical improvements, information and interpretation and All American Road status.

Early Russian culture influenced the area and continues to be part of the daily lives for many.



A. BYWAY ORGANIZATION

The region supports the entire byway's efforts to adopt an organizational structure that will provide full and efficient representation for each segment, as well as the communities and other byway partners within each segment.

- a. **Action: Due to the limited population and large geographical distance between the communities, using an existing organization to lead the region's representation is the strongest concept.** The Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference (SWAMC) is an appropriate organization for this role. The SWAMC Tourism Committee will use their local representatives and committee members to be byway representatives. Much of their work, goals and objectives are parallel to the byway program. If needed, an *ad hoc* committee can provide more flexibility on some issues. The communities are already represented by SWAMC, however should additional community members wish to participate, they should be allowed to join the byway committee or provide input to the committee as a stakeholder for *Kodiak and the Aleutians*.
- b. **Action: Identify a local spokesperson for each community to help spread the word and explain the program to residents and business people.** Provide each representative with materials on the state and national programs so that each rep is a good liaison with the community.

B. MARKETING

PACKAGING AND DIFFERENTIATION

There are various ways that Alaska's Marine Highway and the region can work together to promote and package the *Kodiak and the Aleutians* segment. Several actions appear critical.

- a. **Action: Explore the relationship between sailing capacity and tourism impact.** Evaluate past years' sailing data and the local tourism sector to understand the relationship between sailings and economic impact. How many more visitors could sail through the region if the frequency of sailings was increased or larger ships served the segment? How many visitors would it take to generate sufficient demand to increase the number of sailings to the region? How might a more assertive, targeted marketing program fill that space? From the travelers perspective, how cost effective is it to sail versus fly into the region? Could it make economic sense for Alaska's Marine Highway System to increase the number of sailings to this segment during the peak season or to put a larger ship on for one sailing and promote it?
- b. **Action: Alaska's Marine Highway should begin to shift byway marketing materials away from using the words *Southcentral*, *Southeast* and *Southwest* and instead use terms that mesh more closely with the real geographic terms used in existing tourism marketing materials produced by the state, communities and regions: *Inside Passage*, *Prince William Sound and the Kenai Peninsula* and *Kodiak and the Aleutians*.**

- c. **Action: Establish clear and recognized partnerships with the mainland communities and entities that are points of origin for travel to the *Kodiak and the Aleutians* segment.** For example, encourage more cooperation between Anchorage and the segment. Continue efforts to encourage private operators to package *Kodiak and the Aleutian* travel using concepts such as *Ferry & Fly* to promote the idea of sailing one way to the region and returning by air. In the same manner continue to encourage private operators to expand the options for travelers to *Rail, Sail & Fly*, wherein the Alaska Railroad is included in packages that extend from Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula out to the Aleutian Chain. A *Ferry & Hotel* program would link the sailing experience to a base hotel on the mainland or in Unalaska, Kodiak or Homer. More strongly market the current *Airpas* program for international travelers so that it emphasizes *Kodiak and the Aleutians* communities.

Another facet of this concept is to work closely with Homer to emphasize this community as a port of entry to the *Kodiak and the Aleutians* segment. The new Islands and Oceans Visitor Center is an excellent introductory interpretive experience for those beginning a trip into the segment. Homer's many resources can also help to promote sailings to this segment. Homer will stand to benefit anytime a traveler makes Homer their mainland point of origin or destination for a trip into the segment. In addition, there are many more sailings from Homer to Kodiak than there are for the full Aleutian chain. Market these short trips in order to give more people a taste of the *Kodiak and the Aleutians* segment.

World War II installations dot the coastline to protect from Japanese invasion. The National Park Service and local agencies are in the process of making these into interpretive sites.



d. Action: Work with the many small communities along this segment to make them aware of the byways program and to consider how they might improve the experience for byway travelers. A series of tourism development workshops that link the byway program with other communities, entities and programs should be considered along the segment.

e. Action: Tie the byway effort into cruise ship branding and create partnerships where possible. Both the byway program and the cruise industry market the same attractions for obtaining visitors, but both can find ample common ground to work together given the different nature of each experience.

f. Action: Explore the creation of thematic sailings that use resources uniquely accessible via this region's portion of the Alaska's Marine Highway and relate them to relevant land-side resources. Just as private tour operators concentrate their trips on certain themes, this same potential — with admittedly more time required and somewhat less focus given the other demands on the shipping system — could be applied to certain sailings along this segment. For instance, if Native history is the theme and the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak and the Museum of the Aleutians in Unalaska are the anchors, what else can be connected to that resource? How else could a given sailing be focused on the topic of Native history?

g. Action: Create a stronger, more integrated internet strategy for the segment. A variety of actions are needed:

- All the smaller communities need websites. Thought should be given to structuring the various sites so that there is a similar organization and feel.
- Redevelop and restructure the regional website so that it addresses local and byway system issues. Link the regional site to all local sites.
- Tie the region's websites and tourism activities to Alaska's Marine Highway's website and its schedules and marketing.

The fishing industry and its culture has shaped the communities along this segment of the byway. Combined with the treeless, wind swept mountains and smoldering volcanoes, they create a unique destination.



Native culture is strong in all communities along this segment.



- h. Action: Develop a marketing strategy for this segment that emphasizes some of the unusual and unique aspects of the region.** There are a few clear examples of where this type of marketing could be effective:
- Birding is a major travel segment both nationally and internationally. This segment offers the opportunity to see birds not to be found in any other area of the world. Specifically target the birders. Consider special sailings that would focus all interpretation and activities on birding. Encourage communities to sponsor birding-related events for this special sailing.
 - Other target markets include travelers interested in Native culture, World War II history, and marine mammals.
 - Consider other emerging markets such as geocachers. This program has been initiated for some communities along this segment but could be expanded for each community to get people off the ships and into the communities.
 - Develop more fish processing tours and educational experiences along the segment. This region produces over half of all fish products in the United States and is a great untapped interpretive opportunity.
 - Market the great museums along the route.
- i. Action: Increase ridership during non-peak sailings (April, May and October).** Use some of the above target niches to increase ridership. Market to Alaskans and near-province-Canadians with themed sailings. Develop special events to draw Alaskans and Canadians to these off-season sailings. Coordinate sailings with regional events such as the Whalefest (April), the Crabfest (May) and the Pumpkin Run (October).
- ## MARKET RESEARCH
- j. Action: Perform surveys of passengers traveling within this byway segment.** Identify aspects of their trip that were inefficient or unsatisfactory. Identify activities they wished to do participate in, but could not. Test their willingness to return to the area if offered any of the itineraries or themed sailings defined above. (See the Appendix for a sample questionnaire.)
- k. Action: A simple tourism profile template should be prepared that allows byway partners to assess the visitor services that individual communities provide Marine Highway users.** Topics should include terminal design and usability, transportation options, hours of ferry service and hours of business operations in town (i.e., do they overlap?), information accessibility, disabled travelers access issues, lodging capacity, experiences readily accessible to visitors and general degree to willingness to encourage more tourism by the community. This survey should identify which communities are ready today to encourage more byway travelers, as well as help the segment identify where further investments are needed.

- l. Action: Explore the potential for promoting this segment of the byway to international travelers.** Given the time and financial demands of reaching this segment, it is possible that travel costs for some Asian markets are comparable to those faced by Americans. Travel distance to the segment may also be comparable for some markets.

COLLATERAL PRODUCTION

- m. Action: Seek a byway marketing grant to produce brochures and maps** associated with the itineraries, marketing and transportation tasks described above, in concert with the Alaska's Marine Highway marketing department.

OTHER MARKETING ACTIONS

- n. Action: Other facility actions to be considered include the following**

- Continue to use a consistent look and feel to all Alaska's Marine Highway marketing materials.
- Create and market a passport program (similar to the National Park Service) with themes to get people into the communities and learn about them.
- Market camping on the ships more strongly since many travelers will need to camp given the lack of state rooms on the *M/V Tustumena*.
- Obtain funding to develop database templates and website information for the various communities along the byway to be used by the Alaska's Marine Highway and others in marketing this segment.
- Produce a video or digital presentation for each community and points of interest along the segment. Allow it to be viewed on the internet to promote the segment.
- Promote the opportunity to purchase local art and food at the dock to get people off the ships and to better understand the cultures living in these communities.
- Market the byway towards Alaskans, not just to out of state or international visitors.

Several bald eagles sit atop a tree next to a Russian Orthodox Church; bringing culture and natural qualities together.



INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

- a. Action: Continue to work with regional and state travel entities on international marketing. Work with National Byways Program on same.**

Three key actions should be pursued:

- o** Draw more foreign journalists to cover Alaska's Marine Highway in international publications. In particular, provide these journalists with sets of clear, feasible travel itineraries at different times of year so that international visitors can more easily plan their Marine Highway travels.
- o** When an interpretive plan is prepared for the Marine Highway, include plan, design concepts and funding projections for putting key signs and interpretive facilities in other languages and use international pictographic symbols. Consult with the Alaska Travel Industry Association and tourism owners along the route on the languages that should be targeted.
- o** Identify wayfinding signs along the route that should be translated into other languages and upgrade using international pictographic symbols and market these.

Passengers and crew maximize their sometimes short port time in some communities by bringing bicycles to explore and get around quickly.



C. FACILITY AND COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS

This section reviews the terminals, landside transportation and port community facility improvements that must be addressed along the byway.

TRANSPORTATION FROM TERMINAL TO TOWN

- a. Action: Encourage all communities interested in establishing or improving pedestrian routes from terminals or docks to town centers to prepare plans.** Identify the costs associated with these various projects to safely and effectively move passengers from the ship to the community. Where possible, tie in with interpretation opportunities and aesthetics. Set priorities and seek funding to begin to make these improvements.
- b. Action: Seek National Scenic Byway, Transportation Enhancements and/or National Trails Program funding** to begin to construct trails/non-motorized routes in the high priority communities as discussed above. Seek funding to improve or create pedestrian routes into town with adequate lighting.

c. Action: Develop a brief survey for Alaska's Marine Highway passengers to measure their transportation experience at each of the ports.

Seek assistance from a university or college to design and administer the survey. Potential topics to be covered include the following: Are visitors able to get into town given the physical facilities and given the time in port? Why or why not? Is the service satisfactory? Could they find needed contact information promptly? How long did it take to reach their destination? Choose questions that will then allow the byway partners to assess the level of demand at the various terminals.

d. Action: Encourage more transportation options at all ports where possible.

Work with regional or state economic development agencies to sponsor a workshop for those who might be interested in providing terminal-to-town transportation services. Cover licensing, insurance and an overview of typical operating expenses and revenues. Encourage people to start-up businesses in communities where demand appears to be sufficient. In particular, work with the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Cold Bay to find ways to offer all interested passengers the opportunity to see the Refuge, rather than the limited number now chosen by raffle. The new road linking Cold Bay to King Cove would be another opportunity for creating a transportation link for passengers to see the landscape and then catch the ship again in King Cove or Cold Bay.

e. Action: Encourage the use of bicycles to explore segment communities. Explore the feasibility of carrying bicycles on board which could then be used by passengers to explore the communities. Make it inexpensive for travelers to bring their own bicycles on board. Encourage communities to provide easy and affordable bicycles rentals at all appropriate terminals/docks to allow passengers to see the communities with limited time while in port.

A pickup truck loads onto the M/V Tustumena. The ship can carry a wide array of vehicles, bicycles, kayaks and freight.



GENERAL ACTIONS FOR ALL PORT COMMUNITIES

- f Action: Many port communities along this segment have no or limited uplands facilities or terminals. Where possible, provide minimal shore side services that might include covered seating/waiting, defined parking and loading zones, site lighting and basic interpretation or directions on where to get more information.** Where possible develop partnerships with other visitor and passenger services or businesses in the community to offset costs, use and maintenance of these facilities.
- g Action: Encourage communities to look at their terminals or dockside areas, the shore side passenger facilities and the physical interface between the dock, terminal and town to identify ways that this gateway area can be improved.** Would a welcome sign be sufficient? What are the minimum passenger facilities that are needed at those ports that currently have no improvements? What are the safety considerations? The objective is to identify what can be done to improve the traveler's initial experience in the community, what can be done for passenger comfort at the dock, and what can be done to ensure that the traveler has access to sufficient information to pursue an enjoyable stay.

Kodiak is an exceptional gateway community to this segment with its Russian church, several cultural museums, visitor centers and abundant public lands.



Specific issues to consider include the following:

- Provide some measure of a weather protecting structure at all docks appropriate to the size of the community and duration of time in port.
- Develop a well designed interpretive/information kiosk or area at each terminal and dock. Provide information that will be appropriate for the size of the community and duration of time in port
- Provide signage at all terminals/docks that clearly indicate the types of activities and resources present in the community related to the time in port.
- All new terminals must provide planned information and interpretive space.
- Make all attempts to locate and design new terminals in aesthetic settings and near other visitor services. Maintain terminal scale in proportion to the scale of the host community.
- Increase safety at staging areas by separating loading and unloading and vehicles and pedestrians.
- Ensure safe and obvious pedestrian routes on the docks that are often piled with fishing gear and other equipment.

h. Action: Each community should identify where it needs directional, information and interpretive signs. The byway group should prepare a set of criteria to help communities perform a full inventory of needed signs and to establish priorities as to which are most important. A detailed list of needed signs, types of signs, suggested wording/graphics for each sign and type of installation needed should be prepared. Maps with clear labels should be prepared in association with the list. These community plans should be assembled at the regional level and funding sought for the most urgent projects first.

Where possible information about the community should be located where the ship docks, in the waiting shelter, or terminal. The amount of shore side interpretation and visitor information should be based on the size of the community, the amount of time in port and based on local attractions. Due to the lack of terminals in many of the communities the Tusty may need to provide information about the communities if they cannot be provided dockside. A thorough planning effort will be required to determine what can be located in the communities and what needs to be placed on the ship to meet the needs of visitors to this segment.

- Each community needs to provide a unified, easy to identify **visitor information area** about the port community at the docking area or terminal where they exist. This wayfinding area must have the same graphics and layout as all other communities to be easily identified but allow local character. All new terminals and remodels should have adequate space allocated for these areas. Maps, signs and interpretive panels must be made current, be made of durable materials and have easy to read text and graphics. This local visitor information area should have the following at a minimum:
 - o Map of the community with terminal and local attractions indicated.
 - o Map of immediate area surrounding terminal within 1-3 miles with attractions.
 - o Walking and driving distances on all maps.
 - o Indicate all Federally, State and locally designated lands and their associated features (ie, Tongass National Forest and USFS campgrounds).
 - o A brief description of the intrinsic qualities found in the port community and, if appropriate, their location on maps.
 - o Information on how to get to the center of the community for those without a vehicle.
 - o A list of things to see and do based on time available while in port or the community.
 - o Where to get additional information and the location indicated on maps.

Small port communities such as Chignik do not have a terminal. Provide basic wayfinding and shelter where possible.



- o Provide aesthetic rack space for local tour operators to display flyers and pamphlets.
- o When funding permits, also provide interactive electronic kiosks for visitor information and community interpretation. This would be an additional type of interpretation and should not replace the static maps and information above which do not breakdown and require minimal maintenance.
- For the gateway communities, they need to provide a unified, easy to identify **interpretation area** that discusses the port communities serviced by the Marine Highway and the areas traversed by the ships. This interpretation area can be reproduced and placed in each of the terminals or docking areas. Most communities with terminals have some manner of this information; however it varies from terminal to terminal and needs to be expanded. Research needs to be carried out to ensure all of the 'corridor stories' are being told to their potential.



Kodiak Harbor has several interpretation panels along its Harborwalk that interprets the various boats in the harbor and fishing techniques.

For the gateway and larger communities, they need to provide the same basic information listed above, but each community should also tell a unique story. When each story is pieced together with all the other along this segment, the result will be a detailed and complete story about the Marine Highway segment (i.e. *Kodiak and the Aleutians*). The graphics should be unique from the visitor information area indicated above and concentrate on interpretation. Maps, signs and interpretive panels must be made current, be made of durable materials and have easy to read text and graphics. All new terminals and remodels should have adequate space allocated for these interpretation areas. This interpretive area should have the following:

- o Map of the entire Alaska's Marine Highway route with major attractions indicated (e.g., Kenai National Wildlife Refuge)
- o Enlargement of the Alaska's Marine Highway corridor segment (ie. *Inside Passage*) with attractions indicated. Provide topographic information and marine depth soundings. Indicate distances from port to port.
- o Provide images of attractions in each port community and briefly list the intrinsic qualities and attractions in each port community. Select the two major intrinsic qualities that best portray the community and indicate them on the maps.

- o Provide images and brief descriptions of points of interest traversed by the Marine Highway between communities.
- o Provide interpretation on a specific topic that is relevant to the terminal community (ie, Hoonah and Native culture) that is not duplicated at other terminals. When all the terminal stories are linked together, a visitor understands in detail much about the communities, the landscape, wildlife, cultures and history of the corridor segment.
- o When funding permits, also provide interactive electronic kiosks for interpretation. This would be an additional type of interpretation and should not replace the static maps and information above which do not breakdown and require minimal maintenance.
- o Provide secure and aesthetic display space at each terminal for local art work, interpretation or cultural/historic items.

Many terminals have examples of local taxidermy but many do not include interpretation on the animal being displayed other than size and species. These displays should be expanded as dioramas unique to the port community but all displays need to be coordinated to eliminate repetition of displays and ensure all the stories of the corridor are being told. Display cases should be easy to identify and be consistent in each terminal; however the contents will be unique to the terminal with detailed interpretation. The display should be coordinated with the two major intrinsic qualities the community is being identified with (e.g., Dutch Harbor: history-WWII, and cultural- Russian Orthodox). The size of the terminal and available space will dictate the number of displays and their size. All new terminals and remodels should have display space allocated.



The Museum of the Aleutians provides an outstanding look into the traditional lifestyle of the Native cultures of the Aleutians.

COMMUNITY SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS

Due to the very few communities that have terminals, providing basic shelter and signs should be a priority for all communities as indicated in General Actions for All Communities listed above. The following outline community specific improvements that could be made to make this segment of the Marine Highway meet the needs of passengers.

- i. Action: Include the recommendations below in the Alaska's Marine Highway capital programming and seek other sources for funding.** A concerted, long term effort will obviously be needed to move all of these various port community improvements forward. Action on the recommendations will do much to move the Marine Highway system toward being more unified and visitor-oriented.

King Cove (below) will soon be linked by road to Cold Bay. This will allow passengers to get off the ship, experience the communities, reboard in the next community and continue their trip.



Homer

This terminal has all the necessary facilities including a small visitor center, brochures and maps, waiting area and restrooms.

Actions:

- Extend the existing non-motorized path to the terminal.

Kodiak

Kodiak is in the process of designing a new terminal facility.

Actions:

- Ensure the new location and design of the terminal includes the recommendations discussed in this plan to create a full service gateway terminal including visitor center, interpretive signs and other visitor service.
- If the new terminal location is not near visitor services such as lodging, food and local attractions, provide safe and effective non-motorized links to the community and ensure public and private transportation meet all ships.

Port Lions

There is no terminal at this location:

Actions:

- Given the frequent level of service to this community some basic terminal services should be provided.

Chignik

There is no terminal at this location however there is a small multi-use covered area at the dock but this is often used for storage of fishing equipment, can be slippery and cluttered, and is thus not accessible to Marine Highway travelers.

Actions:

- This terminal area needs signage as three communities are served by the port and are in close proximity.

Sand Point

There are no terminal facilities but an existing storage building can be used for shelter.

Actions:

- Capitalize on the opportunity for fish processing tours.

King Cove

The Harbor Master's office is located at end of dock and provides washrooms, public phones and information.

Actions:

- There is a need for a formal waiting room in the Harbor Master's office.
- Capitalize on the opportunity to provide vehicle tours of the area and meet the ship at its next port of call in Cold Bay or opposite once the road is constructed.

Cold Bay

No shelter or terminal buildings are available in Cold Bay.

Actions:

- Shelter is needed at the dock due to the long walk along the dock.
- Provide a US Fish & Wildlife Service Visitor Center for the Izembek National Refuge near the dock and/or the airport.
- Due to popularity of the shuttle bus to the Izembek National Refuge expanded service to provide shuttle for all interested passengers.
- Expanded the viewing pavilion and signage at the Refuge to provide more interpretation.
- Expand upon on the World War II role of community.

Dutch Harbor is the main port facility for the community of Unalaska.



False Pass

There are no terminal facilities in this very rural community.

Actions:

- Provide basic shelter and signs.

Akutan

There is no terminal in this boardwalk community.

Actions:

- Provide basic shelter and signs.

Unalaska

There are no terminal facilities in this gateway community and plans are underway to design a new facility in partnership with the cruiseship industry.

Actions:

- Ensure the design of the terminal includes the recommendations discussed in this plan to create a full service gateway terminal including visitor center, interpretive signs and other visitor service.
- Provide tour buses to meet Marine Highway ships during port of call.
- Provide safe and effective non-motorized links to the community through this industrial area.

The M/V Tustumena is the only ship serving this segment. Although one of the oldest and smallest ships in the fleet it is well loved by residents. The ship does not always meet the needs of its passengers, some of which are making a trip of a lifetime.



SHIP IMPROVEMENTS

j. Action: Seek ways to improve the M/V *Tustumena*'s facilities and services. Include these recommendations in the Alaska's Marine Highway capital programming and seek other sources for funding. A concerted, long term effort will obviously be needed to move all of these various ship improvements forward. Action on the above recommendations will do much to move the Marine Highway system toward being more unified and visitor-oriented. Specifically, consider ways to address the following:

- Improve on-board lighting, informational signage, and interpretive signage. Provide more information on artwork, crafts, maps, charts and historical photos/materials.
- Inventory what is currently on display and set interpretation priorities for updating, removing or enhancing existing material. Space on the ship is at a premium.
- Find ways to expand the space available for interpretation and entertainment. The current lack of space lessens the popular interpretive program.
- Update the public address system to make it clearer and more understandable.
- Explore providing on-board digital, GPS and passenger communication equipment (e.g., internet access and satellite phones). This can help reduce the interpretive congestion during workshops and create self guided interpretation through the use of interactive interpretive kiosks.
- Allow seating in dining room during non-dining hours to create more accessible space on the ship.

k. Action: Explore increasing the number of sailings for the M/V *Tustumena* during peak months and/or find ways to utilize the M/V *Kennicott* or another larger ship to the segment during peak months in order to accommodate the needs of current passengers and potential increase in ridership.

Thirty-seven active volcanoes can be seen along this portion of the byway.



D. INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATION

INTERPRETATIVE IDEAS AND STRATEGIES FOR SHIPS, TERMINALS AND COMMUNITIES

- a. Action: Support the byway-wide effort to prepare an interpretive plan.** Given the large size of the byway, the vast number of potential stories to tell and the many ways those stories might be conveyed, a plan is needed to identify the best options for action and investment. Topics that must be addressed in the plan include the following: Native culture, commercial fishing, bird populations, marine mammals, World War II history, volcanoes, and the unique local ecosystems including Izembek National Refuge and the Alaska Maritime National Refuge. In addition, interpretation should cover the history and operations of Alaska's Marine Highway. Key information should be provided in multilingual formats.

Izembek National Wildlife Refuge has exceptional wildlife viewing and interpreters on site. All Refuges and Preserves have interpreters at their facilities.



- b. Action: Engage more partners in the interpretive program.** Continue partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, National Park Service, and create new partnerships with other federal, state, local and non-governmental organizations, and communities along the route to become involved in the segment's interpretive program. Continue to upgrade, develop new material and opportunities for the ships, terminals, communities, including publications and other materials to improve interpretation.
- c. Action: As an initial objective, develop interpretation facilities in at least three Kodiak and the Aleutians port communities and on the ships and then expand from that base over time.** Given the many ports and communities along the route, it will be important to identify a limited, initial number of locations where new facilities should be designed and installed. A significant interpretive facility in Unalaska combined with a new terminal that could be shared with cruiseship users would be a priority. See byway funding to construct the facilities. The nature of the facilities (i.e., full museum versus interpretive/informational kiosk) should be determined by the nature of the terminal and community.

- d. **Action: Flowing from the interpretive and information plan, encourage the full byway to seek a byway marketing grant to fund the Alaska Marine Highway's graphics designer, or to hire an outside professional graphic designer, to develop a set of standards for all interpretive and sign materials associated with this byway.** The standards should be sufficiently flexible to support the full range of information kiosks and interpretative materials appropriate for a wide range of communities served by the Marine Highway. This approach must be coordinated with and extend from the Marine Highway's overall graphics approach to its collateral including ships, terminals, publications and other materials. Ensure international pictographic symbols are use throughout.
- e. **Action: Create a brief digital presentation on each community that can be modified over time.** Show these presentations prior to arrival in port. Make it clear, given the available time in port, the options open to passengers to explore the community.
- f. **Action: Analyze existing interpretive material on board the ship and make interpretive priorities.** Hire an interpretive professional to look at the material on board and make recommendations to update, consolidate given the limited space available and many stories and information that could be told.
- g. **Action: Update all panels, maps and interpretive information on the M/V Tustumena.** Based on the above recommendations develop modify existing or create new interpretive materials for the ship.

- h. **Action: Provide more space and better facilities for on-board U.S. Fish & Wildlife interpreters.** A designer must look at the *Tusty* and determine whether there are changes that can be made for reasonable costs in order to improve the efficiency of the on-board interpretive experience.
- i. **Action: Provide VHF radios or other communication that will allow discussion between passengers and the dozens of U.S. Fish & Wildlife biologists in the field along this segment working in the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge.** Allow passengers to understand the ecology of the area and the work being performed along the route by communicating with the biologists in the field. If successful, the program could expand beyond inexpensive VHF radios and include video phones, GPS and other technology to improve communication and an understanding of the area.
- j. **Action: Encourage walking tours to explore communities while in port.** Explore the feasibility of having walking tours of the communities. Many passengers are concerned about the ship leaving without them while they are in port for a short period of time. Establishing a walking tour which guarantees they will be back in time will allow passengers to get into the communities and learn about them. Combine with tours of local industry including seafood plants, boatyards and other points of interest.

Passengers walk along a dock lined with crab pots (traps). There is an opportunity to provide dockside interpretation of the many fisheries including types of boats and gear used.



- k. Action: Include interactive interpretive kiosks on board the *Tusty* to help reduce the demand of interpretation services.** Link electronic kiosks with the ship's GPS to show passengers the location of the ship in relationship to the landscape and its voyage. The kiosk should allow interaction so passengers can learn about the landscape, communities and get an understanding of what they are seeing, the culture and history of the area. Include bird and mammal identification charts and maps showing areas where they can be seen. This would help reduce some of the interpretive pressure placed on the already over popular USF&WS interpretation program.
- l. Action: Ensure key information is translated into other languages.** Where possible all materials listed above should be translated into other languages to meet the needs of international passengers. Prioritize translations based on nationality and languages spoken by international passengers of the Marine Highway.

There is lots of pointing when you travel this segment of the Marine Highway.



INFORMATION FOR TRAVELERS ABOUT COMMUNITIES

- l. Action: Prepare a template for a community information profile and request that each community complete the forms.** (See Appendix for a sample form.)
- m. Action: Develop a standardized community profile brochure/information rack.** Seek byway funding to produce aesthetic racks. Working with the Marine Highway terminal managers and port stewards, place racks on all ships and/or at all terminals.
- n. Action: Provide walking and orientation maps for passengers for each community that are based on the time the ship is on port.**
- o. Action: Where necessary, provide information and warnings about the potential presence of bears in port communities.**
- p. Action: Provide/sell clothing and lighting to allow passengers to explore communities during darkness.**
- q. Action: Encourage passengers to meet and mingle with port community residents who board the ship for dining or recreation at various ports.** For many communities the *Tusty* is the only local restaurant when tied up at the community. This draws many locals to the ship to enjoy a meal in the dining room. Encourage interaction between the locals and the passengers to learn about the communities, people and their lifestyle. Encourage locals to continue selling crafts and food at the docks and expand to other communities.

E. ALL-AMERICAN ROAD STATUS

PREPARING APPLICATION

The Alaska's Marine Highway has the support and proper qualifications to achieve All-American Road status and therefore the byway should pursue that designation.

- a. **Action: Continue with efforts to prepare the application for All-American status for the spring of 2005.**

BUILDING SUPPORT IN COMMUNITIES

The Alaska's Marine Highway is an extensive byway with many communities and thousands of miles of byway. Support for the program has been overwhelmingly positive but there is still more that can be done to build additional support.

- b. **Action: Hold annual, regional meetings that allow people with either a general or narrow interest in the byway to participate.** Update attendees on the byway's general status and news. Make the meetings practical and informative. For example, hold a workshop that not only talks about the current status of the overall byway, but also provides sessions on partnering with local tour operators and guides, or terminal-to-town transportation opportunities.
- c. **Action: Host annual byway meetings to update stakeholders and byway groups on byway happenings.** Meetings should establish or confirm priorities, continue to build partnerships and determine actions and projects to pursue.

- d. **Action: Select a few easy to complete yet high visibility, high priority projects that will benefit as many communities as possible as well as passengers and the Marine Highway.** Getting a few projects completed at an early stage will build additional support for the byway. Make these a priority for creating partnerships and acquire funding, if need be, and complete these projects as soon as possible. Projects might include analyzing and updating interpretation panels on the Tustumena, or building partnerships with the US F&WS to improve access and facilities at Izembek National Refuge to name a few.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service estimates this segment is home to over 40 million seabirds comprised of over 250 species, many of which are only found in in this area. The steep cliffs, grassy hills and rich ocean make this prime seabird habitat.



