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# LONG-RANGE INTERPRETIVE PLAN

GLACIER BAY AND WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS NATIONAL  
PARKS AND PRESERVES

## YAKUTAT DISTRICT 2001



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



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# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Harpers Ferry Center

P.O. Box 50

Harpers Ferry, West Virginia 25425-0050

IN REPLY REFER TO:

K1817(HFC-IP)  
GLBA/WRST

MAY 29 2001

### Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve  
Superintendent, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

From: Acting Associate Manager, Interpretive Planning, Harpers Ferry Center

Subject: Distribution of Approved Long-Range Interpretive Plan for Glacier Bay and  
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (Yakutat District)

The Glacier Bay and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (Yakutat District) Long-Range Interpretive Plan was approved by GLBA memorandum dated May 11, 2001 and WRST memorandum dated May 9, 2001.

Ten bound copies are being sent to each of you with this memorandum. We ask your office to directly handle the appropriate distribution of copies to the region and to park staff using your stock of copies. We are also enclosing one unbound copy for your use in making additional copies as needed in the future.

We have certainly appreciated the fine cooperation and help of your staff on this project.

/s/ Don Kodak

Donald E. Kodak

Enclosure (11)

Copy to:  
Edmond Roberts, Chief of Interpretation, WRST  
Kris Nemeth, Chief of Interpretation, GLBA  
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KHammond:lmf:May 22, 2001

**LONG-RANGE INTERPRETIVE PLAN**  
**GLACIER BAY AND WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS**  
**NATIONAL PARKS AND PRESERVES**

**YAKUTAT DISTRICT**  
**ALASKA**  
**2001**

**PREPARED BY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**Glacier Bay and Wrangell-St. Elias**  
**National Parks and Preserves**  
**and Partners**

**Harpers Ferry Center**  
**Division of Interpretive Planning**

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# INTRODUCTION

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*Vast, smooth snow surfaces without crevasses stretch away to limitless distances, broken only by jagged angular mountain peaks.*

- Israel C. Russell, early explorer in the Yakutat region

Nestled between the peaks and bays of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve lies the small Tlingit village of Yakutat. This unassuming village provides access to wonderful recreational, educational, wilderness and subsistence opportunities at the "back door" of both parks that most visitors to either park do not usually see. Yakutat is surrounded by the preserve portions of both parks, which provide subsistence opportunities to the residents of the local area. The areas surrounding Yakutat also have important cultural meanings to the Yakutat Tlingit people.

At the community's request, the National Park Service developed a district ranger station at Yakutat that services both Wrangell-St. Elias and Glacier Bay. The ranger station offers opportunities to connect to "typical" visitors who come from far away to enjoy the resources of both parks. More importantly, the National Park Service's presence in Yakutat provides a crucial opportunity to connect to the park neighbors and local residents upon whom the future of both parks depends. Forging those connections is the goal of this plan.

# THE PLANNING PROCESS

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The goal of the interpretive planning process is not the creation of a plan. The ultimate goal is the development of a cost-effective, tightly focused, high quality park interpretive program that effectively addresses all audiences and achieves management goals.

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) recommends actions that should occur over the next 8 - 10 years. It identifies park themes, describes visitor experience goals, and recommends a wide array of interpretive services, media, programs, and outreach activities to communicate in the most efficient and effective way the parks' purpose, significance, themes, and values. It will join a park-produced annual interpretive plan and interpretive database to

make up a comprehensive interpretive plan for the Yakutat District of Glacier Bay and Wrangell-St. Elias National Parks.

Work on this LRIP began in the spring of 1999 when the Harpers Ferry Center interpretive planner traveled to Yakutat to view the site's resources and facilities, to meet with interested parties, and to begin discussing this project with park and regional staff. Park staff and the interpretive planner then selected the planning team to include members of the park staff, Alaska Support Office (AKSO) staff, Harpers Ferry Center staff, park partners, and other interpretive experts. This plan is the result of a three-day interpretive planning workshop that took place in Yakutat in October of 2000.

Barring legislative changes or major new research, the planning foundation expressed in this LRIP - purpose, significance, themes, and visitor experience goals - will remain constant over the life of this plan. Specific recommendations about media and programs may need to be updated as staffing, funding, technology or resource conditions change. Further design documents will need to be prepared to implement some of the goals and recommendations in this plan.

# BACKGROUND

Located at the base of the St. Elias Mountains, the borough and city of Yakutat (pop. 680) is a Tlingit settlement on the Gulf of Alaska. To the north and west of Yakutat is the preserve section of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. To the southeast is the Dry Bay area of Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. To the north are Canada's Kluane National Park and Tatshenshini-Alsek Provincial Park. Commercial fishing, sport fishing, and tourism are the primary sources of income for most Yakutat residents.

Yakutat is accessible only by airplane or boat and is approximately 200 air miles northwest of Juneau and 300 air miles southeast of Anchorage. There is daily commercial jet service from Anchorage and Juneau. From Yakutat, visitors can access either national park by boat or by air taxi.

Yakutat is centrally located between the two parks and is relatively accessible. For these reasons and because of the community's expressed interest, the National Park Service established an office/ranger station in Yakutat that provides information about both parks and serves as a base of operation for activities in both parks. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve is headquartered in Copper Center, while Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve is headquartered in Bartlett Cove near Gustavus.

*Recognizing the value of both our community's rich native culture and high quality natural environment we now enjoy, we therefore desire to take advantage of the opportunity to expand nonconsumptive tourism and provide more services to the existing level of visitors. We believe this development effort will be sensitive to these important community attributes and enhance local recreational opportunities.*

*"Our Vision for Yakutat," A Visioning Project by the Community of Yakutat*

# LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

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- Glacier Bay was originally established as a National Monument in 1925. In 1980, as part of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), the boundaries were expanded and a national preserve was created in the Yakutat area. Wrangell-St. Elias was established as a National Park and Preserve in 1980 under ANILCA.
- In 1981, Wrangell-St. Elias established a Yakutat District operation to cover the Malaspina forelands, Icy Bay, Hubbard Glacier, and St. Elias Mountains of the Park and Preserve. In 1982, Glacier Bay posted a seasonal ranger at the Dry Bay area.
- In May of 1985, an agreement between Wrangell St. Elias and Glacier Bay was reached for joint operations at Yakutat. Among other things, the agreement spelled out that "the Yakutat District Office will coordinate the dissemination of National Park Service policy, regulatory and interpretive information for the North Gulf Coast."

# PURPOSE

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The interpretive purpose of the National Park Service's presence in Yakutat is to:

Planning focuses first on why a park was established and what conditions should exist there before delving into details about specific actions.

- Provide orientation and information to recreational users and audiences.
- Provide a point of contact with the National Park Service.
- Gain understanding of the interest and concerns of the community as they relate to management of the parklands through the National Park Service's direct involvement with the community.
- Provide education and outreach programs in the local community and to park visitors about the Yakutat themes.
- Facilitate contact with commercial operators that service both parks.
- Disseminate information about National Park Service policy and regulations.
- Help facilitate cultural resource research and cultural programs as they relate to parklands.
- Help facilitate natural resource research and natural resource programs as they relate to parklands.

# INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Meaningful interpretation doesn't cost anything; it just requires a theme.

Primary interpretive themes are those ideas or concepts that every visitor should understand. They are the key ideas through which the parks' nationally significant resource meanings are conveyed to the public. These themes provide

the foundation for interpretive programs and media at the park. The themes do not include everything we may wish to interpret, but rather the ideas that are critical to a visitor's understanding of the parks' significance. All interpretive efforts should relate to one or more of the themes, and each theme should be addressed in the overall interpretive program.

*The Gulf of Alaska coast...is one of the world's most tumultuous regions. It is a land of "instant geology," where glaciers of ice age proportions have both advanced and retreated within modern times, closing or opening bays and rivers.*

- Alaska Geographic, 1975

1. Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve are part of the National Park System, which helps protect this nation's natural and cultural heritage.

2. Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Kluane National Park, and Tatshenshini-Alsek Provincial Park make up a World Heritage site, one of the largest protected areas in the world,

managed so that natural processes function relatively undisturbed.

3. This region, poised on the edge of the north pacific rim, provides opportunities to witness and understand the earth's most basic forces and their effect on a diversity of life.
4. This region's culture is an example of how geography, biological resources, and geology shape cultures, and how these cultures in turn shape the land.
5. ANILCA recognizes native and rural cultures and their way of life as important park values and provides opportunities for that lifeway to continue.

# VISITOR EXPERIENCE GOALS

Visitor experience goals describe what physical, intellectual, and emotional experiences should be available for visitors to the Yakutat District and local residents. These experiences will be available to visitors of all abilities, including those with visual, auditory, mobility, or cognitive impairments.

## **Visitors and local residents of Yakutat will have opportunities to:**

- Acquire information before their visit to the parklands.
- Once in Yakutat, be encouraged to experience the park resources.
- Feel welcome at the Yakutat Ranger Station.
- Learn about the themes through a variety of media and programs appropriate for their age and ability.
- Share comments about their experiences.
- Be adequately prepared to assume responsibility for their personal safety and for resource protection in the two parks.
- Feel a sense of discovery.
- Want to visit the ranger station multiple times.

"Visitor experience" is what visitors take from a park. It is everything that visitors do, sense, feel, think, and learn; it includes knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and values; it is affected by experiences prior to the visit and affects behavior after the visit. Interpretive planning describes desired experiences, and recommends ways to facilitate those experiences.

# VISITOR & AUDIENCE PROFILES

Yakutat visitors and area residents have a wide range of interests, expectations, and abilities, and use the Yakutat region for a variety of activities. Because there are no central entrance points to the respective parks, and no real definition of what a Yakutat "visitor" is, measuring visitation to Yakutat is impossible. Many visitors fly or boat directly to their destination points within the parks without ever coming into contact with National Park Service personnel or facilities.

No formal study or survey of visitors has been conducted at Yakutat. The list below is a summary of current or potential audiences for interpretive programs. The statements about park visitors are generalizations based on staff observations and are meant only to give an idea about park visitors and audiences.

**Sport fishermen and hunters** come to Yakutat from around the country and Alaska to hunt and fish, often on preserve lands. Many come with their spouses who are not interested in hunting and fishing. These visitors stay in accommodations in Yakutat or in hunting or fishing lodges scattered around the area.

**Tour boats and cruise ships** ply the waters around Yakutat as part of cruises along the Alaskan coast. This is the Yakutat area's largest potential audience. While most passengers do not ever get off the boat (the Yakutat harbor can not accommodate large ships) they are still viewing park resources, most commonly Disenchantment Bay and the Hubbard Glacier. Currently the bay receives approximately 175 tour boat and cruise ship visits per year.

**Commercial operators** have businesses in and around the parks and the Yakutat area that cater to park visitors. These businesses include lodges, bed and breakfasts (B&B), kayak tours, rafting companies, air taxis, hunting guides, boat charters, etc. They are the main way that visitors access the parks.

**Kayakers and river rafters** are attracted to the Yakutat area primarily to float the Tatshenshini-Elsek international rivers, which flow into Dry Bay. Permits are necessary to float these rivers. Some kayakers and river rafters are independent travelers while most (approximately two-thirds) are on commercially guided trips. Many pass through Yakutat Airport before or after their trip. Currently there are approximately 20 commercial kayakers per year, and 800 commercial river rafters per year.

**Mountaineers** are attracted to the Yakutat area to climb the peaks of the St. Elias Mountains. This use is small (20 climbers per year) due to the level of skill and experience required. Some of these mountaineers stop in Yakutat; most get information from the Yakutat Ranger Station by phone before their trip.

**Surfers** are a growing visitor group to Yakutat. These visitors come from around the world to surf off the coast of the two parks. Many camp on the coast in the parks.

**Local residents** are a primary audience for the Yakutat interpretive operation. These residents use the parks regularly for recreation and subsistence purposes. Yakutat has approximately 680 year-round residents. The population grows to 1200 during the summer.

**Local school children** are a target audience for interpretive programs. There are about 140 students in grades K-12 in the Yakutat School.

**Boaters or airplane pilots or passengers** often stop by Yakutat for fuel or provisions. Passengers on the daily jet service from Seattle to Anchorage often disembark in the Yakutat airport while waiting for the flight to depart.

**Airline passengers and flightseeing tours** fly over the prominent features of the two parks - the Tatshenshini-Alsek Rivers, the peaks of the St. Elias Range, and the Malaspina Glacier. Pilots on commercial airlines will often give impromptu interpretation while flying over these resources.

**Virtual visitors** from Alaska, the lower 48, or the world at large may never physically visit the resources of the Yakutat area for economic, accessibility, or other reasons. They still may desire or enjoy information about the area's resources and may enjoy armchair visits to the parks.

**Commercial fishermen** make their living fishing the waters off the two parks. Many use the Yakutat area as a base of operations.

**Political representatives** have an interest in the parks and Yakutat and visit the parks or the community on occasion.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS & VISITOR EXPERIENCE

### SUMMARY

Many visitors to Yakutat get their information from commercial operators or from the National Park Service via phone or the internet. Few stop by the Yakutat Ranger Station. Most Yakutat Ranger Station visitors are local residents who come by to look at photographs, get information, watch videos, or purchase books. Currently a few interpretive programs are offered in the community each year.

*The Indians believe that the mountains were people in the olden times and St. Elias and Fairweather were married. Fairweather was the woman and St. Elias the man. They had lots of slaves, workpeople, and children. During a family quarrel they separated, Mt. St. Elias traveled west and took a lot of slaves and men with him and from these the range of mountains were formed between Mt. St. Elias and Fairweather. The mountains to the east of Fairweather are their children....*

- Dr. Frederica de Laguna,  
Alaska Geographic

### PRE-VISIT INFORMATION

Information about the Yakutat District of the two parks is available by phone and mail from the Yakutat Ranger Station and the Headquarters of both parks. Information is also available on the two parks' websites. Many visitors also get information from the commercial operators, from friends, from guides, or from their previous experiences. Some visitors may not even know they are going to a National Park Service area - they are planning a hunting, fishing, or rafting trip that happens to take them to one of the two parks. Others, such as tour boat visitors or flightseeing visitors, may never know they are viewing a national park.

River rafters must currently get a permit before they are allowed to float the Alsek River.

Information packets are sent out to all permit holders. The district office maintains a 24-hour river information phone line.

### Commercial Operators

Many visitors to the Yakutat area and the two parks utilize the services of one or more commercial operators. Many visitors use air taxis to get in and out of the park, others stay in lodges, and still others hire guides for their hunting, fishing, or rafting trip. Commercial operators provide a variety of levels of service and a variety of information about the park and its resources. Some commercial operators provide pre-visit information and help visitors plan their trips.

Visitors can get a list of authorized commercial operators that do business within the parks from the National Park Service by mail. Other visitors find their commercial operator through websites, advertising, or by word of mouth.

## **Tour Boats and Cruise Ships**

Approximately 175 tour boat or cruise ship trips enter Disenchantment Bay each year to see the Hubbard Glacier. Most of these boats are on multi-day cruises of the Alaska coast. Due to size restrictions in the Yakutat Harbor, most of the passengers never disembark in the Yakutat area. The Yakutat community has been sending interpreters to board certain ships to provide interpretation during the ships' visit to Disenchantment Bay. In the past, the National Park Service has helped provide training information to these interpreters.

## **YAKUTAT**

### **Airport**

Until the recent renovations to the Yakutat airport, there was a small interpretive display on the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service at the airport lobby.

### **YAKUTAT RANGER STATION**

The Yakutat Ranger Station is an attractive building constructed in 1993 on a hill above the road from the airport into town. The National Park Service occupies the first floor of the two-story building.

The ranger station serves both public contact and administrative functions. The ranger station received approximately 1500 visitors in 2000. The facility is open and staffed on a regular basis during the summer season. There are no signs from the road indicating the building is a National Park Service or public facility.

After parking in the small parking lot, visitors step onto the porch of the building. Bulletin boards provide information about the two parks. A National Park Service arrowhead hangs outside the door, the only indication the building is a National Park Service facility. Inside the arctic entry is a bulletin board for community purposes.

Upon entering the building the visitor's first encounter is with an ANHA bookshelf, which dominates the middle of the room. Behind the bookshelf on a far wall leans an enormous beautiful Tlingit beaver screen, on long-term loan from a private resident. A few seemingly random exhibits adorn the walls including an exhibit about the Malaspina glacier (a National Natural Landmark), historic photos of Yakutat, a few Tlingit items on loan, and a giant map of the two parks. The exhibits are not thematic, many do not contain interpretation, and some of the cultural items are not protected or displayed to National Park Service standards.

*EXISTING CONDITIONS & VISITOR EXPERIENCE*

Brochures on the two parks and the Yakutat district are available on a table at the rear of the room.

To the rear of the exhibit room is a small multipurpose room that serves as a meeting room, a space for interpretive programs, and a room to watch videos. The park has a small collection of videos about park resources and other National Parks for visitors to watch on demand. A small park library is also stored in this room and open to the public.

Office and administrative facilities for the park staff are located behind the exhibit room.

# **PERSONAL SERVICES**

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Interpretive programs are offered periodically in Yakutat at the ranger station, lodges, or other locations. Park staff participate in local events and community functions.

In the past, the park has sponsored cultural and natural history programs given by local residents or experts, or experts from outside the community. Most attendees are local residents

## **School Programs**

School programs are offered on request at the Yakutat School. Each year the park presents programs as part of the statewide Sea Week curriculum. Occasionally staff from either of the two parks will pass through Yakutat and offer a special program.

## **Staffing**

The district currently has the following staff

District Ranger (Wrangell-St. Elias)  
Dry Bay Ranger (Glacier Bay), subject to furlough  
Seasonal Interpretive Park Ranger  
Seasonal Law Enforcement Ranger (Wrangell-St. Elias)  
Interns, volunteers, and various special hiring programs

# ISSUES AND INFLUENCES

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The following visitor, management, and safety issues could be addressed through interpretation.

## **Visitor-related resource issues**

- ATVs are widely used in the preserve areas. This use is both legal and illegal.
- Not all visitors practice minimal impact camping. Some visitors - surfers, rafters, and mountaineers - abandon equipment.
- Bear-human interaction is both a resource and a safety issue.
- Human waste management is an issue, particularly in Dry Bay and for rafters.

## **Safety issues**

- ATV use can be dangerous.
- Some visitors do not know how to behave safely in bear country.
- There are a variety of environmental and weather hazards in the Alaskan backcountry.
- Aircraft safety is an issue in and around the parks.
- Water and boat safety are issues on park rivers, lakes, and the coast.
- Mountaineering in the region requires significant experience and skill.

## **Other management issues**

- Some visitors do not understand why commercial fishing is allowed, or why there are cabins and structures within the park.
- Some visitors and residents question or do not understand the river management plan.
- Some out-of-state visitors do not understand the unique management of National Parks in Alaska (ANILCA), and do not understand subsistence issues.
- Some visitors and residents question the lack of salmon in recent years and the treaty with Canada.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a description of programs and media proposals designed to realize the visions, objectives, themes and visitor experiences previously described for the Yakutat District. The discussion of each program or media proposal identifies its purpose, special considerations, and sometimes the suggested themes or methods of presentation. However, the methods of presentation are merely suggestions and should not limit creativity in the media design stage.

Interpretive planning analyzes all needs and recommends a wide array of interpretive services, facilities, and programs to communicate in the most efficient and effective way the park's purpose, significance, and values.

## SUMMARY

Park staff will work to develop a consistent, theme-based education and outreach program for the community, as this is one of the fundamental purposes of the interpretive presence at Yakutat. Better information will be made available to visitors via commercial operators. Small improvements will be made to the ranger station exhibits to improve conditions of the items on display and to increase visitor understanding. Creation of a Yakutat specific website will help visitors plan their visit and help virtual visitors learn about the two parks and the Yakutat region.

## PRE-VISIT INFORMATION

One website with information specific to the Yakutat district of the National Park Service will be developed. This website could be hosted on either the Wrangell-St. Elias page, the Glacier Bay page, or a Yakutat community page. The Yakutat District website would be accessible by link from any of these sites. It would contain information on commercial operators, the district's themes, resource protection information, safety information, floating the Alsek River, etc. Specific information would be available for the various user groups - kayakers, fishermen, surfers, and mountaineers. This information could target special safety concerns or resource information for that user group. The website will be promoted by the phone message at the Yakutat Ranger Station, in publications, and on area bulletin boards.

High quality information will continue to be available in person and by phone from the Yakutat Ranger Station.

River rafter permit packets could be expanded and improved to include thematic information, and more safety and resource protection information. They could also reference the Yakutat website. The 24-hour river information line could be expanded with safety and resource protection information.

### **Commercial Operators**

The majority of visitors entering either park come into contact with commercial operators - in a sense they are the front line for the National Park Service. Although not always recognized, commercial operators and the National Park Service have a common goal of providing a quality experience for their clients/visitors. Park staff will work with commercial operators to develop materials - a rack card, brochures, an information packet, or information kits - that can be distributed by commercial operators, displayed in their lobbies, or even handed out on the planes or boats.

In particular, park staff will work with lodge operators to provide interpretive, safety and resource protection programs. A "standard" program could be developed as a start and offered at all the lodges in and around town. Park staff will work with lodge operators to develop exhibit albums for display in lodge and air taxi lobbies. These albums would contain thematic information, photos, safety, and leave-no-trace information as well as brochures and links to the Yakutat District website.

Information packets could be developed for commercial operators themselves that include answers to commonly asked questions, a supply of brochures, and links to the Yakutat District website. A newsletter, perhaps multi-agency, could be developed and distributed to commercial operators with information about what's new at the two parks. Information specifically for surfers and boaters will be developed and given to surf shops and kayak/raft guide services to distribute to their clients.

### **Website**

If the tribe desired, a partnership could be developed to create a "virtual repatriation" program for the Yakutat Tlingit. This would allow local residents and people from around the world to "virtually" visit cultural resources from the Yakutat area that have been distributed worldwide. To accomplish this, the tribe would continue to work on locating Tlingit items from the Yakutat area that have been dispersed worldwide in private collections or in museums. A computer database or website would be set up with a map of the world showing "Where is Yakutat now?" The map would link visitors, locals, and interested parties to photographs of artifacts or items from Yakutat that are still physically located around the world. Audiences could learn about these items and how they came to be where they are, and through this experience, learn about themes 4 and 5.

### **Tour Boats and Cruise Ships**

According to information from the Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska, all cruises to Alaska have at least one ice day. Currently these are shared between Glacier Bay, Tracy Arm, College Fjord, and Yakutat Bay. If there were an

increase in cruise ship traffic in Alaska, it would be shared by these areas. Alaska cruises will probably grow at a slower pace in the future than they have in the last several years. Sources in the cruise industry expressed doubt that larger vessels would stop in Yakutat because there is no rafting, bus tours, flightseeing, etc. Rough seas keep out many of the small boats. If ships are looking for new ports and infrastructure in the future, it is unlikely to be in Yakutat in the immediate future. Yakutat will likely continue to be more of a destination for independent travelers, not the cruise industry.

Park staff will work with the cruise ship industry to provide better interpretive materials for cruise ship passengers. A video addressing the district's themes could be developed and loaned to cruise ships for showing prior to arrival in Yakutat Bay. It could also be made available to passengers before their cruise. An internet site could be developed that cruise ships can download and incorporate into their daily log. A junior ranger program could be developed that children can do on board the boat, then turn into boat staff. The National Park Service can let the cruise companies know that information at the Yakutat District website is available for use in any of their literature. Together with the cruise companies, the National Park Service can explore other strategies for providing services, programs, or products relating to the parks that will increase the quality of cruise passengers' experience.

The National Park Service will continue to provide technical assistance for local tour guide training. It is possible, but unlikely, that the National Park Service could give interpretive programs directly onboard vessels in Yakutat Bay.

### **Wayside Exhibits**

Bulletin boards will be developed and those that exist improved at the put in and take out spots on the Alsek River. Staff will coordinate with the jurisdictions in which these bulletin boards are located to post relevant and up-to-date information for river rafters and kayakers.

### **Publications**

A Trails Illustrated Map or other similar style map could be developed both for the Alsek River and for the Yakutat area showing relevant portions of each park. These maps could include resource protection and safety messages as well as information introducing the Yakutat themes. In addition, a free or low cost area map could be developed for distribution by commercial operators (see under "Backcountry.")

## **YAKUTAT**

### **Airport**

The National Park Service will work with the U.S. Forest Service to develop

## RECOMMENDATIONS

interpretive materials and programs for the Yakutat airport. Considerable coastal traffic passes through the airport, and visitors have leisure time while waiting for departures, arrivals, or baggage. A new interpretive exhibit could be developed. A bulletin board of current events and press releases will be available. Rack cards or a simple newsletter could be developed for easy and inexpensive distribution. "Push-the-button" on-request videos could be available at a fixed video station at the airport. Interpretive place mats or coasters could be developed for the Airport Lodge (or other lodges).

Park employees could give short interpretive talks or "rove" the airport during the jet arrival and departure times. The park will develop better information to provide to pilots and airlines, including Alaska Airlines, who fly over the two parks. Park staff will also work with publications such as inflight magazines to put in articles about the parks' resources.

### **Ranger Station**

The ranger station will continue to have both administrative and outreach/educational functions.

Management of the public areas of the ranger station will continue to focus on making these areas appealing and comfortable to visitors and helping facilitate desired visitor services and understanding of park themes. A National Park Service sign will be designed and installed at the base of the driveway to the ranger station. Over time, minor modifications will be made to the existing exhibits to make them more thematic, make the presentation more cohesive, and make the exhibits look more professional. Some exhibit ideas follow. The final exhibit planning and design should be done in a coordinated fashion, even if they are constructed over time as funding allows.

The existing map of Wrangell St. Elias and Glacier Bay could be made more interpretive by highlighting the area of the World Heritage Site, or by making cutouts of other states that visitors could place over the map to give a sense of scale. This exhibit will be tied into theme #2 with appropriate text.

The Beaver Screen will be moved to the side wall, and the ceiling raised so that the screen can be displayed properly and safely. Measures will be taken to protect the screen from vandalism. Text will be developed to link the screen to theme #4. Photographs of other screens, if made available by the clans, could be displayed with thematic text.

Consideration will be given to moving the ANHA display so that it does not break up the room. A brochure rack will be acquired for easy and adequate display of park brochures. An exhibit could be placed in the center of the room that would discuss ANILCA (theme #5). The landmark exhibit could be modified to more expressly address theme #3.

These exhibits could include photographs of repatriated items, or photographs of items from private collections.

The conference room will continue to be available for public meetings and events at the discretion of the District Ranger. Rotating exhibits will be developed and displayed when possible to attract repeat local visitation. The park themes will be posted on the walls. Videos will continue to be available for public viewing, and the park library will continue to be open for reference. The park will attempt to collect footage or old movies of park sites including Dry Bay for viewing by park visitors and the local community. A good source is Alaska Moving Images Preservation Association.

### **Proposed Cultural Center**

Plans have been underway for several years for the Yakutat Tlingit tribe to develop a cultural center in Yakutat. This cultural center would house Tlingit artifacts and provide educational exhibits and demonstrations about Tlingit culture. Currently, the exact location has not been determined, and it has yet to be determined where funding would come from and who would operate the facility. There has been speculation that all land management offices in Yakutat could be relocated to the facility if and when it was developed.

If requested, the National Park Service might be able to facilitate training or short-term professional development in a variety of disciplines including planning, curation, and operations to provide technical assistance in the development of the cultural center. There is the possibility that, if the cultural center is built, the National Park Service administrative offices would move to the new building. Small exhibits on Glacier Bay and Wrangell-St. Elias could be developed for the new cultural center if desired by the tribe. There could be additional joint efforts for interpretation of mutual themes in a new cultural center. However, the National Park Service will not be able to acquire or maintain additional collections.

*We faced an incredible, insidious hazard only 200 yards from the beach. Rock debris carried on the surface of the glacier, arriving at the terminus, slid and flew sporadically without warning to the ground with terrific force and noise. Thousand-pound boulders, ricocheting erratically down the uneven ice surface, several times missed us by inches as we climbed on to the glacier.*

- climbers log from an assault on Mount Crillon

### **Backcountry Visitors**

The park will develop specific information targeting users that will actually enter the parks. A simple map of the Yakutat district of the two parks could be developed and inexpensively reproduced with interpretive and safety information on the back. It could also include safety statistics. Commercial operators would distribute this map free of charge. Safety, leave-no-trace, and thematic

## RECOMMENDATIONS

information will be developed and with permission posted on bulletin boards in town (targeting places where backcountry users might stop) and at put-in places for float trips.

Information about the public use cabins will be more widely disseminated. Public comments and involvement will be solicited for the upcoming backcountry management plan.

Park staff could work with local school children to develop programs or materials about resource protection; the children would present these programs to backcountry visitors at the airport, at lodges, or in town.

The National Park Service will consider offering training for commercial guides, charter boat captains, lodge owners, etc., that would cover thematic information, safety information, and resource protection messages.

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The National Park Service will continue to develop and sponsor interpretive programs in the ranger station or other locations in town about park themes. Programs could be given by community experts, experts from out-of-town, or Wrangell-St. Elias or Glacier Bay staff. Special attention will be given to programs that can marry traditional ways of knowing with western science and research. Personal service programs could be offered at Dry Bay for fishermen, lodge guests, and for rafters who are taking out after their trips.

In the future, researchers could be requested to give a program or develop a nonscientific publication as a condition of their permit to conduct research in either park. Or, park staff could work with researchers to develop visitor-friendly information on research projects.

## **Community Outreach**

Parks can not survive as islands. Many resource issues transcend park boundaries and need the support of the local and statewide communities to be effectively addressed. This is particularly true at parks such as Wrangell St. Elias and Glacier Bay that contain non-federal lands, get subsistence use from the local population, and have local residents who have very deep cultural connections to the parks, having lived and subsisted in the area for centuries.

The park will encourage political representatives to visit the parks and get out into the resources. Newsletters will be sent to political representatives, and briefing statements will continue to be prepared on important issues. Press releases from both Wrangell St. Elias and Glacier Bay will be forwarded to Yakutat.

Community outreach is an effective way to reach local and regional audiences, whether they visit the park or not. Community outreach can be an effective way to reach people who, for financial, physical or other reasons, can not or do not visit Yakutat or the two parks.

The park will develop a newsletter focusing on park themes, recent activities, research developments, partnerships, etc. This would be distributed to all box-holders in Yakutat, as well as to park friends, political representatives, Wrangell-St. Elias and Glacier Bay staff, commercial operators, and others. The newsletters would also be posted on bulletin boards and could be distributed via fax. Information about Yakutat will also be distributed through the existing Glacier Bay and Wrangell-St. Elias newspapers and newsletters.

Park staff will work with the existing local, state, and special interest news and media publications to send out information on the parks' significance, and provide up-to-date information on resource, safety, and other issues. This could be

accomplished through the newsletter, press releases, or media packets. The park will compile a distribution list of media agencies and publications such as the Annual Subsistence Update, the Alaska Airman's Association, FAA publications, Alaska pilot's guide, Alaskan magazine, the Alaska Airlines inflight magazine, Surfer, and Fishing magazines, and television shows such as Hangar Flying and Alaskan travel television shows. The information would also be distributed to local post offices, stores, and gathering places.

The park will work with local historical groups, native corporations, universities, and museums to tell the story of human history in the Yakutat area. One project, Video-Jukebox, a CD-ROM collection of oral histories of the area, is already underway.

The park will contact the Yakutat Culture Camp organizers to see if they are interested in the park's participation at their camp. The park may be able to offer support ranging from sponsoring sessions during the camp to pre- and post-camp experiences.

### **Education Program**

District staff are already conducting outreach programs in the Yakutat School and responding to school requests as they can. The district's educational program could be made more effective if it were thematically based and were focused into a methodical, goal oriented program based on the school curriculum. The district could start by adapting lesson plans from Glacier Bay and Wrangell St. Elias, or using some pre-existing curriculum. There is currently an Alaska Archeological Resource Guide for Alaska Elementary school teachers that is curriculum based and was produced by the NPS Alaska Support Office. Eventually, lesson plans will need to be developed specifically for Yakutat.

The park will need to consult with the local teachers and school district to determine what theme(s) to target, how to fit into the state curriculum, what grade levels (if any) to target, and how the park can most effectively work with the school. This consultation can be accomplished through meeting with curriculum coordinators, tapping into teachers' in-service workshops, developing an advisory council of teachers, or information meetings with teachers.

Once the theme and goals of the program are established, the park will need the teachers' input to determine the most effective way to deliver the message. This could include conducting teacher workshops and training teachers to give programs, developing staff visits to the classroom, developing pre- and post-visit activities, developing traveling trunks, developing hands-on activities in the resources, etc. Ideally, if park staff visit classrooms it should be as part of a series of activities including pre- and post-visit work. Programs will need to

be designed to reach a wide variety of learning styles and learning abilities. School staff has expressed an interest in "business-like" partnerships between the National Park Service and the school. These partnerships could include information about career opportunities, summer activities (working or educational), or internship weeks working with the National Park Service. The parks can use special hiring authorities to support these kinds of programs.

Specific ideas of projects that could be developed as part of a comprehensive educational program include:

- Use Glacier Bay and Wrangell St. Elias expertise to develop a learning week or projects at the school.
- Develop a brochure for kids about what the National Park Service does.
- Expand upon Career Day and Alaska Sea Week with NPS involvement.
- "Sponsor" a naturalist outdoor educator in the school, or elders from the community, to give programs in the school.
- Have kids develop programs or educational resources to be given to recreational users.
- Develop educational/working internships with the National Park Service. Take 2-3 students at a time on park projects, such as to East Alsek.
- Have students develop a Tlingit map of the Yakutat area.

### **Staffing**

To fully implement the proposals in this plan - and meet the National Park Service objectives of providing for visitor enjoyment and the long-term protection of resources - the staff dedicated to interpretation and education will need to increase. In particular, the district will need to hire staff to develop and implement an educational and outreach program.

At a minimum the district will need one permanent subject-to-furlough professional interpreter that can provide continuity with the community from year-to-year. This interpreter could develop cooperative working relationships and materials for use with the school and commercial operators. This position could also help staff the ranger station, develop the website, and develop plans for improving the exhibits in the ranger station.

### **Collections**

The National Park Service at Yakutat is not and will not be in the "collection" business. The National Park Service will continue to care for the objects in the NPS collection, and care for objects that are currently on indefinite loan to the best ability and within the current budget. If and when the legal owners of the loaned items would like the items returned, the National Park Service will

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comply. The National Park Service will not accept any additional items on loan or into the permanent collection without clear title and determination that it fits within the scope of collection. In the meantime, the park will consult with the region's curator to ensure items are displayed in a manner that protects them.

# PARTNERSHIPS

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Implementation of elements of this interpretive plan depends on the continuation and expansion of existing partnerships and the development of new ones. Some of these cooperative efforts have been proposed in other sections of the plan but will be summarized here.

The ultimate outcome of planning for national parks is an agreement among the National Park Service, its partners, and the public on why each area is part of the national park system, what visitor experiences should exist there, and how those conditions can best be achieved.

While all partnerships are important, the relationship between the National Park Service and the commercial operators that have businesses in and around the two parks will be critical to the parks' ability to reach visitors.

Partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service will be important for the dissemination of information about Yakutat and the development of ecosystem interpretive and educational programs.

The continued partnership with ANHA will be important to disseminate information about the park themes and to fund interpretive and research projects about park themes.

Partnering with the local school, local community groups, local and regional tribal organizations, local museums and universities will be critical to the parks' ability to reach local school children and other local audiences.

The park is and will continue to partner with a variety of federal, state, local and private groups to conduct research about the natural and cultural resources of the Yakutat District of the two parks. These agreements should include a public education component as a condition of their acceptance.

Continuing to work with the Education and Interpretation Team at the support office in Anchorage will help the parks complete the projects recommended in this plan. The Team offers technical assistance in developing funding or grant requests, guidance in design of print and electronic publications, and help in identification of training opportunities in interpretive skills. The Team can serve as a liaison between the park and ANHA, exhibit fabricators, printers, and other interpretive media vendors and park partners.

# **IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES**

These initial priorities were developed using a voting system. The number in parenthesis is the number of "votes" that idea received. In parenthesis are a few ideas about implementation.

1. Develop education curricula (13) [grant, school could write grant, STF position]
2. Redo exhibits in Yakutat VC (9) [ANHA money, in house or contractor]
3. Develop Yakutat NPS website (8) [use WRST web person]
4. Virtual repatriation program (8) [NAGPRA grants, coordinate with tribe]
5. Participate in special community activities (8) [Spirit camp, Alaska Natural History Program, holiday activities]
6. Sponsor/facilitate programs, including getting researchers and WRST and GLBA staff to give programs (8) [coordination]
7. Develop standard lingo on themes (3) [to Kris by January]
8. Develop packets for commercial operators (3) [Betty will coordinate GIS, coordinate with USFS, STF employee]
9. Develop info logs for lodges/commercial operators lounges (2)
10. Provide alternative hiring/work experience (2)
11. Personal service programs on tour boats and cruise ships (1)
12. Local tour guide/commercial operator training (1)
13. Develop NPS Yakutat newsletter or column in local paper (1)
14. Redo exhibit at airport including rack card (0)
15. Work with magazines and newspapers to correct information, get resource protection messages out (Alaska Air, Surfer, Fishing, etc) (0)
16. Develop audiovisual program about Yakutat themes (0)
17. Takeout programs for river rafters (0)

## **Sources of funding**

Possible sources for funding include:

- Grants from National Park Foundation, Parks as Classroom, private enterprises, educational programs
- Challenge cost-share
- Fee demonstration money
- Cruise ships

# THE PLANNING TEAM

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## **Wrangell-St. Elias NP&P**

Gary Candelaria, Superintendent  
Jon Murphy, District Ranger at Yakutat  
Edmond Roberts, Chief of Interpretation

## **Glacier Bay NP&P**

Jim Capra, Dry Bay Ranger  
Wayne Howell, Cultural Resource Manager  
Tomie Lee, Superintendent  
Kris Nemeth, Chief of Interpretation

## **Other National Park Service Staff**

Kate Hammond, Interpretive Planner, Harpers Ferry Center (Denver)  
Betty Knight, Senior Curator, Alaska Support Office  
MaryAnn Porter, Chief of Interpretation, Western Arctic Parklands  
Clara Wooden, Representing Interpretation and Education, Alaska Support Office

## **Park Partners**

Elaine Abraham, Yak-Tat Kwaan  
Bert Adams, Senior, Yakutat Tlingit Tribe  
Robert Johnson, Greater Yakutat Chamber of Commerce  
Skip Johnson, Emergency Medical Services and Alaska Native Brotherhood  
Bill Lucey, United States Forest Service  
Lowell Petersen, Yak-Tat Kwaan  
George Ramos  
Judy Ramos, Alaska Native Sisterhood and park seasonal interpreter  
Rod Schug, Yakutat School Principal  
Paul Wescott, Planner, City of Yakutat

# APPENDIX I

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## Accessibility

Every attempt will be made to promote full access to interpretive media and programs to ensure that people with physical and mental disabilities have access to the same information necessary for safe and meaningful visits to National Parks. This is in compliance with the National Park Service policy:

**"...To provide the highest level of accessibility possible and feasible for persons with visual, hearing, mobility, or mental impairments, consistent with the obligation to conserve park resources and preserve the quality of the park experience for everyone."**

NPS Special Directive 83-3, Accessibility for Disabled Persons

All interpretation will follow general standards for accessibility as described in the Harpers Ferry Center Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media.

# APPENDIX II

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## References Used

Alaska Geographic Society. Alaska Geographic: Yakutat, The Turbulent Crescent. Alaska Geographic Society, Anchorage, 1975.

Department of the Interior, National Park Service

Interpretive Prospectus, Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve

Long-Range Interpretive Plan (Draft), Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve

"Our Vision for the Future of Yakutat," May 1, 1998. A Visioning Project by the Community of Yakutat