



FOREST & RESOURCES

TIMBER CUTTING CONTINUES ON U.S. & PRIVATE LANDS
AMID PROPOSED TRANSITION TO YOUNG-GROWTH HARVEST
IN PUBLICLY OWNED STANDS WITHIN TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

A federal court and the U.S. Congress in 2017 put two big swaths of Southeast Alaskan forest into play for prospective timber harvest—infusions of short-term help for an industry while long-term issues circle in Washington, D.C.

The U.S. Ninth Circuit Court in spring 2017 turned aside environmentalists' challenges to the Big Thorne timber sale on Prince of Wales Island, releasing about 6,000 acres of old-growth timber and 2,300 acres of young growth for a pending cutting program. Most of 149 million board

feet of timber would go through Viking Lumber in Klawock—the last medium-sized sawmill in Tongass National Forest. USFS also laid out sales near Big Thorne for small mills.

The other prospective boost for logging came from Congress. When Alaska Mental Health Trust proposed logging on Deer Mountain in Ketchikan's iconic backdrop, local uproar led Alaska's congressional delegation to push through a land swap in 2017. The trust traded its land behind Ketchikan for federal forest around Prince of Wales Island.

The long-term future of timber harvesting on federal lands may be decided in D.C. Federal foresters are laying out a transition to young-growth timber over the coming 10-15 years, but an industry built to harvest and process old-growth trees argues that the new regime would finish off most of the remaining year-round jobs in wood manufacturing.

USFS foresters propose that eventually most timber taken on federal land will come from areas harvested decades

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ago and regrown in young trees. The authors of the conversion to young-growth projects say that a decade-plus of mixed-age harvests will “support the transition in a way that preserves a viable timber industry” in Southeast.

In 2016-17, Tongass forest personnel collaborated with the state’s Division of Forestry on a massive inventory of timber lands. The assay was meant to produce detailed information, timber stand by timber stand, for decision-makers and stakeholders. Crews surveyed 137 timber stands encompassing 12,165 acres during field work in 2016. Foresters in 2017 inventoried another 12,250 acres—including young-growth forest on Revilla Island.

In the meantime, federal foresters proposed harvests of young-growth trees near Ketchikan and west of Prince of Wales Island. USFS said that the Vallenar and Kosciusko young-growth projects would help private industry bridge from old-growth to young-growth—that is, gear up gradually while finding markets for a new product. But the Alaska Forest Association (AFA),

an industry advocate, contends that federal young-growth timber volumes won’t sustain year-round manufacturing in the region. And AFA argues that the state’s young trees are likely to be exported in the round—not running through sawmills to support jobs.

AFA and the industry lobbied in Washington, D.C., against the land-management plan amendment for Tongass National Forest that was signed in late 2016, before a change of administrations. Aside from concerns about young-growth timber, the industry argues that only a fraction of planned timber sales were implemented by USFS in nearly a decade.

As proposed, the Kosciusko young-growth sale takes in about 30 million board feet of young timber on federal forest; cutting would be administered by the state’s Division of Forestry. The project area on Kosciusko Island is about five miles west of Edna Bay. Tongass forest staff anticipated inking

A MASSIVE INVENTORY OF TIMBER LANDS WAS MEANT TO PRODUCE DETAILED INFORMATION, TIMBER STAND BY TIMBER STAND, FOR DECISION-MAKERS & STAKEHOLDERS

contracts by the end of 2017.

The Vallenar project would harvest roughly 4 million board feet of young growth from 170 acres of national forest land. The project area is on Gravina Island near Ketchikan’s airport. Tongass National Forest staff anticipated implementation of the harvest in 2018. The state made the proposed federal timber sale practical by building a road to adjacent state forest land in an unrelated public works project.

Another state road is threading into timber land at Shelter Cove on Revilla Island. Passing through federal forest, Native corporation timber and parcels owned by the Alaska Mental Health

Trust, the road will benefit both timber harvesting and recreational access.

Old-growth logging on Native land is in a mini-boom. Sealaska Corp., the regional Native corporation, claimed more than 68,000 acres of federal forest in 2015—its final allotment in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. This transfer of Tongass forest land to Sealaska was expected to yield 30 million to

50 million board feet of timber per year. Because private landowners aren’t subject to primary manufacture mandates imposed on national forest timber, most Native logs will go to Pacific Rim markets in the round. Sawmills won’t reap much work from the Sealaska timber, but dozens of roadbuilders, loggers and support personnel will benefit.

Timber industry employment in all of Alaska—most of it in Southeast—is just more than 700 people, according to the Resource Development Council—compared to 4,600 in 1990.

FOREST FACTS

■ Tongass National Forest has more land mass than 10 U.S. states, such as West Virginia or Maryland.

■ Recreational visits in the forest number almost 3 million every year, with estimated value of \$380 million. About 5,000 jobs are supported by recreational visits.

■ The Tongass has one of the nation’s largest silver producers. Greens Creek Mine turns out 2,400 tons of ore each day and employs more than 800 people. Kensington Mine, an underground gold mine, supports more than 300 jobs.

U.S. Forest Service

MULTIPLE-USE MANAGEMENT COVERS 17 MILLION ACRES OF TIMBER HARVEST, RECREATION & CULTURE

Ketchikan was the first HQ for Alaska’s federal foresters and it’s still a nerve center for management.

Nearly 150 people in Ketchikan work for the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service. One of them is the Tongass National Forest supervisor, who has administrative oversight across the entire forest. Ketchikan-Misty Fjords Ranger District is based here.

The first U.S. forester posted to Alaska set up shop in Ketchikan in 1902, soon after President Teddy Roosevelt proclaimed a forest reserve in a third of the Panhandle. Alaska was a district of the U.S. and became a territory in 1912.

Tongass National Forest now encompasses nearly 17 million acres of land spanning 500 miles, southeast of Ketchikan to northwest of Yakutat. About four-fifths of Southeast Alaska is in the national forest.

USFS manages for multiple uses: timber harvest; mining; recreation; wildlife habitat; and cultural preservation. Ketchikan is home to foresters, engineers, biologists, archaeologists, recreation programmers and many other specialists.

The agency’s work is seen in trails and cabins. The public uses agency-mapped logging roads for recreation access—particularly on Prince of Wales Island. USFS decisions on logging units affect our economy and our viewsheds. Interpretation specialists provide information on the forest’s natural history and the human presence. But much of the agency’s work is not so apparent. Stream rehabilitation projects and fish ladders improve salmon stocks. Archaeologists inventory and protect culturally important sites. USFS scientists study living things and natural processes.

Catching fire?

FUEL MADE FROM WOOD WASTE IS GATHERING INTEREST & INVESTMENT

Fossil fuel is giving way to fiber fuel in some of Ketchikan's public facilities and a local mill is delivering cost savings with a heat source that's otherwise wasted.

A biomass energy conference in the First City in 2017 brought statewide attention to the range of wood energy benefits—and to the obstacles.

Ketchikan International Airport fired up a wood energy boiler in 2016. Biomass-fired gear replaced the fuel-oil system in place since 1973. "We had options," said Mike Carney, manager of the airport for Ketchikan Gateway Borough. "The least attractive was oil." The borough studied biomass systems in Alaska and the Northwest—such as in schools, hospitals and corporate offices—before hiring Wisewood Engineering to design a plant. The capital cost was practically zero: grants from Alaska Energy Authority and the legislature funded the \$700,000 system.

Fuel quality and costs were the operational touchstones. Two pellet vendors offered bids. Tongass Forest Enterprises scored well on quality and price. "The goal with biomass was to save money and to support another growing business in our community. We hit on both of those," Carney said. The biomass boiler system may save as much as \$30,000 a year compared to the fuel-oil plant.

Grants for engineering provided a bonus in a design for a biomass system at Ketchikan High School, which will have about eleven times the fuel demand of KIA's installation.

The Alaska Wood Energy Conference in Ketchikan in 2017 drew about 100 participants to look at issues from fiber supply to funding. Representatives from forestry, industry and engineering acknowledged even in their conference tag line ("chipping away at Alaska's energy needs") that conversions from other energy sources will make incremental progress. Conferees heard some good news about wood energy from successful case studies, but they were



Wood-energy conferees observed how mill waste becomes BTUs.



Biomass-fueled heating gear at the airport displaced an old diesel-fired system.

reminded that planning and engineering are crucial—along with reliable and cost-effective fuel supplies. Conference organizer Karen Petersen of Thorne Bay, chair of the state's wood energy development task force, said biomass can be most beneficial in "remote communities where they have a wood resource they could convert—creating local jobs and no longer relying on someone to deliver fossil fuel."

Larry Jackson, co-owner of Tongass Forest Enterprises, said his mill can turn out about 1,600 tons of combustible pellets each year. He was delivering to four local customers in 2017—working off an investment of more than \$400,000 in manufacturing equipment and rolling stock.

Symbolic of transition in forest-related industry, Jackson moved his cedar mill and biomass pellet plant in 2016 from the hull of the former pulp mill, establishing it in a new building above Ward Cove.



The Southeast Alaska Discovery Center has sophisticated exhibits with fun stuff for kids and fascinating interpretive material for adults. It's one of four federal Alaska Public Lands Information Centers across the state.

SEE THE BREADTH OF ALASKA ON A VISIT TO THE DISCOVERY CENTER

Southeast Alaska Discovery Center is where people go indoors to get really *inside* Alaska. The facility on Main Street presents natural history and the human presence in five exhibit areas, starting with touchable totem poles in the foyer. "Native Traditions" displays village life. "Alaska's Rainforest" and "Ecosystems," with educational activities and kinetic interpretive displays, appeal to families. "Natural Resources" features world-class exhibits and recorded commentaries on timber, fishing and mining. Videos play on a 28-foot screen in Elizabeth Peratrovich Theater.

The Discovery Center is one of four Alaska Public Lands Information Centers operated by USFS, the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife. It's open daily during our visitor season. There's a \$5 fee for summertime admission to the exhibits. In the off-season, the center presents educational programs, such as popular Friday Night Insights.

misty fjords



Tens of thousands of visitors each year see the dramatic granite escarpments and moisture-charged air of Misty Fjords National Monument. Flyovers and boat excursions are popular. Some visitors explore by paddle and by foot.

PETER GATES

LOCAL FOLKS' CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT A SPECIAL PLACE DEVELOPED INTO SPECIAL STATUS FOR ONE OF ALASKA'S MOST-VISITED ATTRACTIONS

Straddling the mainland and the east side of Revilla Island, Misty Fjords National Monument Wilderness embraces 2 million acres of glacier-gouged valleys, waterfall-slicked granite cliffs and verdant alpine highlands. Thousands of visitors a week come by boat and floatplane on brief sightseeing excursions. Others stay to kayak on salt water, to use a public cabin or to hike and camp. Wildlife is abundant, from mountain goats and deer to bears and foxes. This grandeur led to a nickname linked to another national treasure: "Yosemite of the North." (The common name for the area is *Misty Fjords*; the designation for the national monument is *Misty Fjords*.)

Decades ago, the place we call Misty Fjords was a remote destination for plucky Ketchikan people, but it wasn't in protected status. Enter the Southeast Alaska Mountaineering Association. In the late 1960s, members of the group hiked and camped Ketchikan's backcountry and especially prized this place called "East Behm Canal" or "back of the island." Timber harvest was spreading in Southeast and nothing on the maps at the Forest Service



'East Behm Canal' was the prosaic local name when a USFS ranger boat visited in the 1940s, before wilderness status.

exempted East Behm Canal. Malcolm Doiron was a log scaler and a member of the mountaineering association. His job depended on timber harvest, but he and other outdoors people wanted USFS and industry to consider other uses of the forest. They formed Tongass Conservation Society (TCS) and sought to set aside a special area.

"We envisioned a wild, untamed place," Doiron said. "We wanted a place where floatplanes could land and where existing cabins could stay. But it needed protection." TCS led a 12-year political campaign: lobbying trips to D.C.,

research and public relations on the home front. Opposition was almost universal in Ketchikan, a timber-processing town. At some point, Doiron said, someone had to map the proposed monument and wilderness and name it.

"I drew it on the map, the watershed boundaries including some of Revilla Island and into the mainland. And one night I just wrote down 'Misty Fjords' for the name," Doiron said.

President Jimmy Carter created Misty Fjords National Monument in 1980. Congress later made wilderness status of the huge area irrevocable.



The water along Stedman Street was oftentimes a way station for rafted timber awaiting its turn in the sawmill.

We came, we sawed, we conquered

Early-days timber cutting in the District of Alaska was somewhat of a free-for-all. Three sawmills operated in Ketchikan in 1902 as President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed the Alexander Archipelago Forest Reserve. One was in Wacker City along Ward Cove, near the future site of Ketchikan Pulp Co. Tongass Tlingits ran a mill in Saxman, the Native village a couple of miles south of Ketchikan. Tsimshian Indians operated a sawmill on Gravina Island. None lasted more than a few years.

Ketchikan Power Co. was founded in 1904, built on pilings over the water in booming downtown. The facility sawed local timber and supplied power to the fast-growing community by burning waste wood under boilers. The electricity sideline was sold in 1925 to municipal Citizens Power, Light and Water Co. But concentrating on lumber production only benefited the plant. The name was changed to Ketchikan Spruce Mills and production capacity doubled. As the U.S. Corps of Engineers dredged the Ketchikan Creek mouth to create Thomas Basin, finishing in 1931, the mill took fill material to extend its tideland property. The mill was the first electrically driven sawmill in Alaska, generating juice from boilers fired with wood waste fed from the mill floor. Waste unfit for the boilers was shunted to a tepee burner—a conical landmark on the skyline until 1969. K.S.M. produced

KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS



The smoke-belching wood-waste burner at Ketchikan Spruce Mills was a fixture for decades on a waterfront where the fishing industry, the timber industry and visitor industry shared a home. The burner came down in 1969.

TIMBER WAS A CORNERSTONE RESOURCE ON THE FRONTIER—ESSENTIAL FOR BUILDINGS, BOARDWALKS, FISH BARRELS, BOAT MASTS, PILINGS, MINE TUNNELS, RAILROAD TIES, UTILITY POLES & CASH. FOR MOST OF THE LIFE OF DOWNTOWN KETCHIKAN, THE ROAR & THE SMOKE OF A BIG MILL WERE ROUTINE.

construction materials and fish boxes for canneries, along with other products.

In the 1960s and after, Japanese freighters tied at the dock to load cants: large, rough-sawn lumber sent for finishing as

dimensional lumber in Japan. The Forest Service required “primary manufacture” of saw-quality timber from Tongass National Forest. The mill was sold to Georgia-Pacific in 1965 and later was operated by Louisiana-Pacific. L.P. closed the mill permanently during a strike by mill workers in 1985. (L.P. ran its Ward Cove pulp mill until 1997, its sawmill at the cove a couple of years longer.) Local folks called the downtown property “the Spruce Mill” long after it was sold to the City of Ketchikan and the buildings were scraped away.

In the late 1980s and '90s, emblematic of tourism as an economic force, the federal government built the

\$10 million Southeast Alaska Discovery Center near the sawmill site and private interests put up retail and office buildings and the Great Alaskan Lumberjack Show arena. Where a major sawmill had for many years loaded export lumber, Ketchikan now watched as cruise ships offloaded cash-bearing passengers.



A flyover of downtown in 1954 shows Ketchikan Spruce Mills fully built out at its half-century mark. Mill buildings on pilings process logs pulled from rafts outside Thomas Basin; the tepee wood waste burner sends a plume of smoke over the city and stevedores load a freighter with sawn lumber. A passenger ship is tied at busy Heckman Wharf—where Berth 2 welcomes cruise ships today.

KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS

MINING

PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND MOUNTAINSIDES ARE THE SITES OF MAJOR MINERAL PROSPECTS

TWO MINERAL DEPOSITS ON THE EAST SIDE OF PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND ARE BUOYING KETCHIKAN'S HOPES FOR PARTICIPATING IN A MINING MINI-BOOM

Development of Ucore Rare Metals' Bokan-Dotson Ridge site west of Ketchikan would bring this region into the global rare earth element (REE) market presently dominated by China. Near that prospect on the southeast coast of Prince of Wales Island, Heatherdale Resources is assessing its Niblack gold/copper/zinc deposit after putting tens of millions of dollars into exploratory work. Both projects have won support from the State of Alaska, in the form of potential financing through the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA). The importance of the two mines in Ketchikan's economy was symbolized when then-Gov. Sean Parnell visited the First City in 2014 to sign the bill that authorized AIDEA to issue as much as \$270 million in bonds to help finance Bokan and Niblack. The Ketchikan Gateway Borough years ago agreed to aid Heatherdale Resources if it develops a processing site on borough land. Although the two Canadian mining companies would extract minerals from a remote arc of Prince of Wales Island closer to Ketchikan than to the island's most populous communities, residents of the island have generally been supportive.

Ucore, based in Nova Scotia, calls Alaska "among the world's leading mine-friendly jurisdictions."

Ucore signed an agreement with an independent engineering firm in 2015 for a feasibility study of Bokan-Dotson Ridge. The company cited the eventual result of that study as a linchpin for final mine engineering and start-up of construction.

Ucore considers Bokan the best prospect in the U.S. for rare earth elements essential in technologies from hybrid cars and magnets to weapons systems and mobile electronics. China has long controlled the market for REEs, holding as much as 95 percent of global supply and at times cutting back exports.



Core samples drilled at Bokan Mountain 40 miles from Ketchikan may be leading to exploitation of the nation's best rare earth element deposit.

Ucore estimates that it will need about \$220 million in capital to fully develop the Bokan mine; shareholders in the publicly traded company had invested about \$45 million by the time the feasibility study commenced in 2015, according to company reports.

The company expects to produce fully separated, high-purity rare earth oxides on site. Executives said reinjection of tailings would make Bokan "the first mine to have no tailing on surface at mine closure." Although a power source on the Prince of Wales Island grid may be available in the future, Ucore calculated development costs assuming that on-site power generation would be fueled by liquefied natural gas.

Niblack's direct economic effects in Ketchikan may be greater than Bokan's if Heatherdale Resources develops an ore-processing facility near the First City. Heatherdale and the borough have a memorandum of understanding that commits them to work together toward establishing a prospective ore-processing site along the shoreline near Ketchikan International Airport. Developable sites in private and public ownership are strung along the water and some are backed by an existing road to the airport.



KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS

In 1904, the Hadley mine on Prince of Wales Island had generated a small town. Impending mines will create fewer on-site impacts.



Niblack samples show prospects for gold, copper and zinc.

HEATHERDALE RESOURCES

The Deer Mountain trail takes hardy hikers to the summit of Ketchikan's landmark peak—about a three-hour round trip. An annual footrace goes out and back in a third of that time.

RECREATION

NATURAL FEATURES & FACILITIES WE'VE BUILT PROVIDE A MYRIAD OF RECREATIONAL OPTIONS. KETCHIKAN PEOPLE TAKE UP ALL SORTS OF PURSUITS—THE EMPHASIS ON OUTDOOR ALTERNATIVES FROM HIKING TO DIVING. OUR FACILITIES INDOORS ARE FIRST-CLASS, INCLUDING A NEW AQUATIC CENTER & A MULTIDIMENSIONAL RECREATION CENTER. OUR COMPLEX COMBINING A FIELDTURF SOCCER/FOOTBALL FIELD WITH A RUNNING TRACK IS IDEAL FOR TEAM PLAY & INDIVIDUAL FITNESS.

Ketchikan has practically numberless recreational opportunities. Do the math. Multiply four seasons by our two environments, land and sea. Factor in elevations from sea level to thousands of feet and divide into human-powered and motor-driven options.

A couple of decades of decisive public investments have made sure that there's something active and engaging for everyone, from tots on trikes at the Rec Center gym to seniors backstroking in the new lap pool.

Dozens of dedicated runners chase improved times and fitness. Hikers follow sunlight to alpine heights. Snowmachiners pack white trails into the backcountry.



Sailboat crews race weekly in spring and summer—and skippers welcome newbies.

We support youth baseball, soccer, football, basketball and softball.

Adults go to the ocean to paddle quietly in kayaks or to zip up and down the channels in high-powered

skiffs. But alongside all our other recreations, we are simply passionate about this fishing thing.

Outsiders seem to think all we do for kicks up here is to fish for king salmon. Not true! There are coho salmon and sockeyes. There are halibut, steelhead, etc.

Fishing really is a great pastime because it occurs when the weather is best; it's a good family activity in the outdoors; and when you're lucky, you get something tasty out of it.

King salmon are back in May and June. Pinks and chums return in midsummer. Cohos, or silvers, arrive mid- to late summer. There isn't a week of summer when there isn't some salmon species swimming through our waters. And if you like the white meat of bottomfish, drop bait or a lure to the bottom and jig for a halibut—our other white meat. You don't have to own a boat to enjoy salmon fishing. Ingratiate yourself with friends who have boats, or rent from any of several waterside businesses. When pinks and cohos are running plentifully, you can hook them from shore. But be sure you're legal for season, gear and area. In 1909, the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries was compelled to post a warning on Ketchikan Creek: "Tourists are prohibited from catching salmon in the creek with their bare hands."

KING DERBY IS A WILD TIME

The pinnacle of local salmon fishing is the annual King Salmon Derby, sponsored by the Cabaret, Hotel, Restaurant and Retailers Association (CHARR) and benefiting their scholarship fund. This contest starts Memorial Day weekend and

Trails. Sails.

Gyms. Swimming.

Roller derby.

Salmon derby.

Footraces.

Skateboards.

Team sports.

runs the two following weekends. Hundreds of people vie for the cash prize of more than \$10,000 awarded for the biggest fish in the derby. There are dozens of other cash and merchandise prizes—big fish, small fish, most pounds of fish, fish caught from small boats, fish caught by young people, fish closest in weight to a selected secret weight. Total prize values run to about \$100,000 for a three-weekend derby. Is this a great system, or what: giving Southeast Alaskans a chance at cash and merchandise for something they'd do anyway?

The derby was founded by sportsmen in the 1940s as local recreation, but subsequent sponsorship by the Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce led to aggressive marketing outside the region and prizes grew into the thousands of dollars in cash and merchandise—most of it donated then, as now, by local businesses.

The 79-pound king salmon hooked in 1956 remains the all-time biggest derby winner. That fish was caught back in the days when two derbies ran each year: a summerlong king derby and a two-day mad dash in June. The derbies were consolidated in 1977 as a single seven-day contest spanning three weekends

Steelhead fishing is popular in remote streams on Revilla Island and Prince of Wales Island. Dolly Varden and several species of trout abound. Crabbing and shrimping are popular pursuits. Subsistence sockeye harvest is allowed in several rivers nearby.

Remote cabins are the places to be for solitude and fishing. U.S. Forest Service has recreational cabins throughout Tongass National Forest; more than a dozen are within 75 miles of →



Salmon fishing is great here from May to October. Five species are just about enough.



A new skateboard park beside Ketchikan Creek challenges youngsters and provides a safe hangout.



CHARLES HABERBUSH

The running club sponsors several races every year, from just-for-fun 5Ks to a serious, competitive half-marathon between a pair of totem parks.

Ketchikan. Some are on salt water, some on estuaries, many on high lakes accessible only via floatplane. They're rustic, but they're well-maintained and in spectacular settings. Many are equipped with small boats. Reservations are available online with USFS.

In winter, if it's raining downtown, it's probably snowing 2,000 feet up. That brings out the Ketchikan Snowmobile Club, which has developed high-country trails. Most are at 1,500 feet elevation or higher. A member described parts of K.S.C. trails as "aggressive—not for the faint of heart." The club maintains an alpine cabin on Forest Service land.

TAKE A HIKE

Hikers have a leg up, so to speak, partly due to the work of the Ketchikan Outdoor Recreation and Trails Coalition. The group participated with government agencies on design and construction of trails.

The U.S. Forest Service maintains miles of trail through the forest. Several reach into alpine country and offer grand vistas of summits, islands and sea. Forest Service cabins in this area—on saltwater and lake sites—provide rustic getaways and can be reserved.

Ketchikan Volunteer Rescue Squad recommends hikers pack emergency Spot beacons with them on backcountry visits. The potentially lifesaving devices are available as free loaners. KVRs distributes the beacons through Ketchikan Visitors Bureau tour centers, the public library and the Alaska State Troopers office.



Sat-based beacons loaned at no cost can be lifesavers.

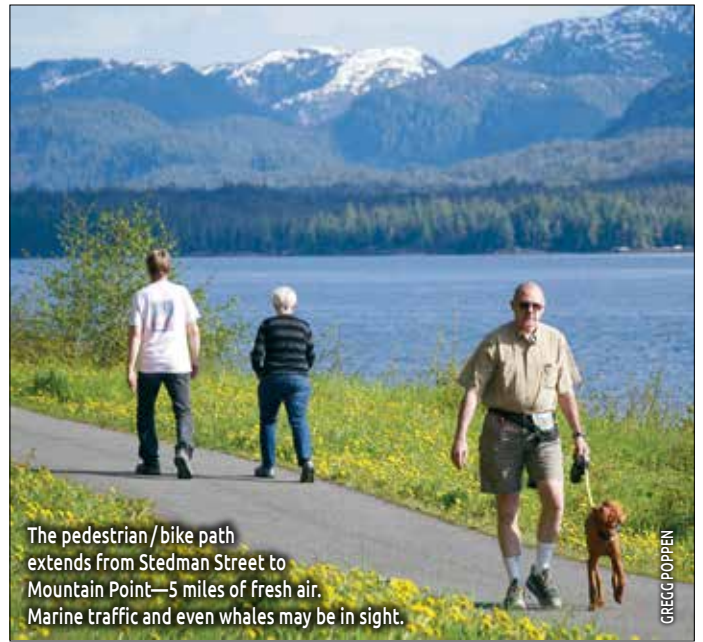
Residents have invested generously in recreation facilities in recent years. The borough's Parks and Recreation Department runs the popular Gateway Recreation Center, built in the 1990s. Two basketball courts are also used for indoor soccer, roller skating and pickleball. The workout room has weights and fitness equipment. Three courts welcome racquetball, handball and squash players. Aerobics, dance, martial arts and special programs use a large room with a custom floor. The rec center offers kids' activity space, meeting rooms and table tennis. Runners and walkers use a twelfth-mile track on the mezzanine. Parks and Rec rents recreational gear from canoes to snowshoes.

A team of competitive roller derby athletes is relatively new in Ketchikan and has conducted intercity matches at the rec center since 2015, hosting groups from out of town.

Skateboarders have a new facility beside the creek at a concrete bowl finished in 2013, where dozens of youngsters hang out and practice tricks on sunny days. The borough donated land and helped with funding; the City of Ketchikan contributed site prep. Ketchikan Youth Initiatives spearheaded the project and is fund-raising to put a roof over the park to extend its use into rainy days.

POOL FACILITATES FITNESS AND COMPETITION

The new Gateway Aquatic Center beside the rec center offers an eight-lane competition pool that gets heavy use by fitness-swimming adults. The pool also hosts competitive club swimmers and the high school's swimming and diving team. Voters approved bonding for much of the complex's



\$24 million cost, as they had nearly two decades before with the recreation center.

Ketchikan has scads of recreational sports leagues. Young basketball players participate in Dribblers League. Ketchikan Youth Soccer League has a fall season outdoors and a mid-winter season indoors. Ketchikan Little League provides baseball for boys and softball for girls each summer. Ketchikan Youth Football League runs August to October. Adults compete in a fall-winter basketball league and take to the softball fields for fast-pitch and slow-pitch over the summer.

Ketchikan Running and Walking Club sponsors a season of runs

from March to late summer, from 5Ks for fun to a grueling sprint up Deer Mountain. Club members also participate with running enthusiasts visiting on cruise ships.

Hunters go after Sitka black-tailed deer and mountain goats in the fall. Black bear season is September to June. There is some waterfowl hunting in the area. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game manages hunting.

DEEP SUBJECTS

Scuba diving is a popular pursuit. Dozens of avid divers go to the depths year-round. Most use dry suits. Summer temperatures at 30 feet are typically about 50 degrees

Fahrenheit; winter water is around 42 degrees. Clarity is slightly better during winter—when cooler water suppresses microorganisms—but visibility is good any time of year. Our North Pacific waters hold a wealth of colorful and exotic species, from corals and sponges to octopuses and rockfish. Anemones and shellfish abound. Wind & Water Charters and Scuba, Ketchikan's only commercial dive shop, has scuba equipment and supplies and conducts training.

Ketchikan's sailors get out for Ketchikan Ocean Racing Circuit in summer; new crew members are welcome. Ketchikan Yacht Club in Thomas Basin is the center of harbor-based activities.



Kelp forests and octopuses are some of the sights that draw divers to our clean undersea world.



The aquatic center has an eight-lane pool, slides and a sauna.

EARLY RECREATION COULDN'T HELP BUT WORK WITH WHAT NATURE GAVE

Time for recreation was scant in Ketchikan's early days. Frontier folks fished for food, not for leisure. They cut trees to clear homesites, not to vie for July 4th chainsaw championships. That came much later.

But even pioneers found time for the national pastime—in the time between high tides, anyway. Ketchikan had a tidal-flats baseball field from about 1903. Local guys competed against teams from Metlakatla, Juneau and Canada. Fishing boats rested on the margins of the nearly level alluvial silt. (Home plate was 12 feet under at highest tide.) Baseball moved to Bear Valley in the 1920s and Thomas Basin was dredged by 1933.

Canoe races on Tongass Narrows drew crowds to the wharf on the Fourth of July in the early 1900s—but these canoes were long wooden models made in traditional style by Alaska Natives. Nearer mid-century on the Fourth, local folks formed a flotilla of boats and barges for a picnic at Black Sand Beach on Gravina Island.

Winter recreation took advantage of snow and gravity. Even rough pioneer streets were tamed for sledgers by



EVERY GAME WAS A TIDE GAME: LOW TIDE—Before the silty mouth of Ketchikan Creek was dredged for Thomas Basin boat harbor, the tidal flat was converted to a baseball diamond when the sea went out.



In 1946, a hardy Nordic skier posed high up on Deer Mountain. This cabin later burned.

the white stuff—and city-sanctioned "coasting" occurred on Main Street when conditions were right. Skiers used Nordic gear on mountain slopes, climbing for each run. A powered rope tow was operated by volunteers at a small ski area near Lake Harriet Hunt in the 1970s-80s.

As the timber industry burgeoned in the 1960s, a loggers rodeo at Walker Field joined the roster of Independence Day activities. Working loggers came in from farflung camps with axes and chain saws to compete in cutting and climbing events, sometimes joined by local men. The "timber carnival" ended early in this century as timber industry employment waned.

A KING'S RANSOM Our summer salmon chase pays ten grand for the big fish

Is salmon fishing a religion in Ketchikan? Not quite. But its faith could be lifted from Ecclesiastes. The race isn't always to the swift, the battle to the strong. *Time and chance happeneth to them all.*

Men, women and children on big boats and small boats have won the spring king salmon derby in seven decades, and no one has repeated as champion.

The winner of the 2017 derby, sponsored by the Ketchikan Cabaret, Hotel, Restaurant and Retailers Association (CHARR), was a 12-year-old boy. He took the title from a young woman, who had taken it from a man. And so on.

Hundreds of fishers plunk down \$35 for a chance at \$10,000 in cash and more than \$2,000 in other prizes for the biggest king caught during three weekends in May and June. Smaller fish qualify for other prizes in a derby treasure chest valued at nearly \$100,000. CHARR pours its proceeds from the annual event into a scholarship fund.



Pre-teen Chase Hanis parlayed his king salmon into a grown-up payday in 2017.

Chase Hanis took his mother's place on Tyler Jackson's boat in 2017; Melissa Leary was at home with Chase's infant sister. He was a past contender on the youth ladder, but the skipper recommended he buy an adult ticket: "If I caught a bigger fish, I could win one of those prizes," Chase said. He picked up Mom's rod, reel and "lucky flasher" and went to work. Chase and Tyler fished every derby day—seven in all. Just once, Chase cut fishing short to play in a Little League game.

His king caught in the second weekend weighed in at 43.7 pounds and wasn't bettered by any of 918 salmon entered. At 12 years old, he was the second-youngest winner.

"There were two very major questions people kept asking," Chase said. "Was I the one who reeled it in?" Well, he reeled

in nine kings totaling 170 pounds in the derby, second in the cumulative list only to John Larson's dozen fish at 175 pounds—and just ahead of Tyler Jackson's 10 kings weighing 148 pounds. Next question. "Did I get to keep it?" Did he keep the fish and keep the money? He kept the fish after it was filleted and packed at Cedars Lodge. Nearly all the cash went into the bank and he was thinking about how to spend a small allocation.

Will he compete to repeat? Of course! But Mom might want her lucky tackle back.



Nice Merc if you can get it. The prize was a new 1952 sedan for this winner of the chamber of commerce's two-day derby.

Hunting

GOATS, DEER & BLACK BEARS FEATURE IN LOCAL BIG-GAME HUNTS

Hunting mountain goats in the high reaches of Southeast Alaska is hard work, but hunters take remarkable billies. Typical male mountain goats weigh around 275 pounds. They're found above treeline and more difficult to glass in the snow of early winter. In the Ketchikan area, including Misty Fiords National Monument, the season is mid-August through December. Non-resident goat hunters must use guides. Goat hunts are by permit only, including bow and arrow hunts; one goat may be taken each year.

STATE OF ALASKA HUNTING REGULATIONS

BIG GAME IN THE KETCHIKAN AREA www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/wildliferegulations/pdfs/gmu1.pdf

BIG GAME ON PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/wildliferegulations/pdfs/gmu2.pdf

WATERFOWL IN THE KETCHIKAN AREA www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/wildliferegulations/pdfs/waterfowl.pdf

Sitka black-tailed deer are numerous throughout the region. Depending on the area, two or four bucks may be taken per year in hunts open to residents and non-residents. Guides are not required for non-residents.

Black bear season runs September through June around Ketchikan and on Prince of Wales Island. Black bears on local islands grow larger than their continental cousins because they don't have to compete with brown bears. Non-residents may take one bear; non-guided hunts require permits from Fish & Game.

Check ADF&G's web site for hunting regs on bears, moose and elk.

Waterfowl hunting in the Ketchikan area and in the rest of the Panhandle runs from mid-September through



TONY AZURE

Black-tailed deer are hunted in fall and winter. Goats, bears, wolves and elk are also hunted in this region.

December. Prey species range broadly, from several species of ducks and sea ducks on through snipes and sandhill cranes. Shooting times are half an hour before sunrise through sunset. Only nontoxic steel shot may be used in Southeast waterfowl hunting.

Alaska has outlawed felt-soled boots in all fresh water, so be sure to bring appropriate boots if you'll be hunting in estuaries or along streams.

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