

# City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska

## 134 acre Land Prospectus



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### Summary Details:

**Legal Description:** Known locally as the former Institute Property, it is comprised of Lot 26 of USS 3403; and, Lots 1-5, Block 1, Lots 1-5, Block 2, Lots 1-3, Block 3, and Tract A, of Shoemaker Bay Subdivision.

**Plats:** # 87-5; #87-9; #90-3; #2009-4

**Area:** Total acreage is approximately 134 acres. Shoemaker Bay Subdivision area is approximately 12 acres; Lot 26, USS 3403 is approximately 124 acres.

**Zoning:** All parcels are zoned Holding, until such time that proposals may be reviewed and the property can be rezoned appropriately.

**Environmental Issues:** The property is gently sloped closest to the road, but has much steeper slopes in the northern portion of the property. Mostly forested wetlands occur throughout the property with several large creeks and smaller drainages.

There are two small documented hazard sites suspected to contain petroleum contaminated soil located along the fence line adjacent to Lots 2 and 3, Block 3 Shoemaker Bay Subdivision.

A U.S. Forest Service Trail easement for Rainbow Falls traverses through a portion of Lot 26 on the northern property line adjacent to Lot 25.

Tyee Hydro Electric power line easements, owned by the Southeast Alaska Power Agency, crosses the northern corner of the property.

The Assembly signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Alcan Forest Products in 2013 to allow a forest road be constructed through the southern portion of the property from Zimovia Highway to adjacent Alaska Mental Health Trust land to the east of the property for access to a Trust timber sale. The access road will remain after the timber sale is completed.

**Reports pertaining to the land:** Timber Cruise – 1996; Wrangell Institute Master Plan – 2000; Topographical Survey – 2000; Appraisal – 2002; Wetlands and Watershed Management Plan– 2003; Environmental Clean-up – 2009; MOU agreement with Alcan Forest Products for a forest road – 2013

**Appraisal:** An appraisal was conducted in 2002 for several development options the community was considering at that time and again in 2013. In 2002, the property was appraised at \$720,000. In 2013, it was appraised at \$1,625,000.

### Location:

Wrangell Island is located 90 miles north of Ketchikan in Southeast Alaska, near the mouth of the Stikine River. By air, Wrangell is approximately 1 hour 30 minutes (155 air miles) south from Juneau, and 3 hours from Anchorage and Seattle (just over 700 air miles each). The City of Wrangell is located on the northern tip of Wrangell Island.

The property, known as the former Institute Property is located along Zimovia Highway 5 miles from Wrangell's downtown area near the Shoemaker Bay Recreational area consisting of a park, marina, beach access, RV park, tent camping area, and trail.

The adjacent parcel of land to the north (Lot 25, USS 3403) is owned by the City and Borough of Wrangell, and is used strictly for recreational purposes. Rainbow Falls Trail, a USFS maintained trail, crosses directly through the Borough's Lot 25 property, and even enters into the subject property

along the northern mutual property line with Lot 25. The USFS has a recorded easement for the trail through Lot 25 and the subject property, as well as through adjacent Mental Health Trust Authority property until it enters the Tongass National Forest.

Mental Health Trust Authority owns a tract of land (Lot 3, USS 3709) surrounding the subject property on the eastern property line and portions of the northern and southern property lines. Mental Health Trust Authority land consists of almost 100 acres or more. They are currently under contract with Alcan Forest Products for timber harvest south of the Tyee electrical lines. On the southern property line adjacent to Zimovia Highway, privately owned residential land abuts the subject property.

Abutting the property line on the west is Zimovia Highway. Across the highway is beach access (borough tidelands) and Shoemaker Bay Park. The park consists of a tennis court, playground area, picnic tables, covered shelter and tent camping area.

### **Background:**

The property was the former site of the Wrangell Institute, a Bureau of Indian Affairs Native school from 1932 until 1972. The school was located on the 12 acres of the Shoemaker Bay Subdivision. In the 1980's, the entire 134 acre property was acquired by the Cook Inlet Regional Corporation (CIRI) and used for the Youth Conservation Corps in Wrangell. It was abandoned in the late 1980's and the primary building, residence halls, and other supporting structures fell into a state of disrepair. In 1996, the City of Wrangell acquired the parcel with the intent to develop the site for economic opportunity for the community. Over the next 10 years, the City commissioned several studies, including one detailing the extent of hazardous materials on the 12 acre portion that had previously been developed. Asbestos and soil contamination from underground fuel storage tanks required clean up of the property. The buildings, having been ignored for 15 years, were demolished, the asbestos disposed of in an off-site inert landfill, and the contaminated oil was removed or treated on-site. The 12 acre site area was given a clean bill of health in 2010 by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. The remainder of the subject property has remained relatively untouched.

### **Characteristics:**

The 134 acre subject property is vacant land and has direct road access via the State maintained and paved Zimovia Highway with municipal utilities easily available to the property. The site is primarily untouched, except for 12 acres previously developed for the Wrangell Institute. The property for the most part is gently sloped with dramatic views of Zimovia Straits. Property available for development could potentially increase by another 100 acres, as it is surrounded on three sides by land owned by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. The City and the Trust previously developed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to plan and develop adjacent properties. While the MOU is no longer in effect, administrations for both agencies work cooperatively on other shared interests. Near-by amenities include a recreational area providing boat moorage, beach access, picnicking, camping and trails. The Institute Creek runs along the north side of the property, and the Tongass National Forest lies beyond the Mental Health Trust land.

### **Development Constraints:**

Slope – the northern corner of the property has a deep ravine which could restrict use of that portion of the property.

Electrical lines – Wrangell's electricity is provided by the Tyee Hydroelectric facility located southeast of Wrangell Island in the Bradfield area. The mainline line crosses Wrangell Island east to west just south of the subject property and the lines travel to the substation north of the subject property. The

lines traverse across a northern portion of the 134 acre parcel. The Southeast Alaska Power Agency, owner of Tyee, maintains a 100 foot electrical utility easement for the lines.

Beach Frontage – Zimovia Highway separates the property from direct water frontage and access, limiting its use for marine oriented developments.

### **Goal and Potential Uses:**

The goal of the City and Borough of Wrangell is to develop the property to the benefit of the community for economic development and diversification.

Wrangell has gone through several visioning discussions pertaining to the former Institute Property, most recently during a new comprehensive plan for the City and Borough of Wrangell. Potential uses for the site, as previously mentioned by the public include: single and multi-family housing on large and small lots; retirement housing/facility; year-round lodging for business and leisure travel with restaurant and entertainment facilities; education facility for environmental or cultural studies targeted to both residents and visitors; medical facility; school or other educational training facility; RV parking sites with quality amenities; low impact commercial uses. The Borough Assembly will review any proposal for its economic merit, long term sustainability, and impacts to the Borough.

### **Community Information:**

The City and Borough of Wrangell's population is 2,456 (Jan 2014 AK DCCED). The vast majority of the borough's residents live in the city of Wrangell. The Borough is a unified municipality, incorporated in 2008 after dissolving the City of Wrangell which had incorporated in 1903. It has a Manager-Assembly structure of government.

Wrangell has a rich cultural history. It is the only community to have been ruled by four nations: Tlingit Natives, Russia, Great Britain, and the United States. The City of Wrangell is located at the mouth of the Stikine River and the Stikine-Leconte Wilderness. The surrounding area offers unsurpassed recreational opportunities.

Wrangell is strategically located in central southeast Alaska. Primary private industries include visitor services and marine industries (seafood harvesting and processing, vessel repair and support services).

The Borough's website, [www.wrangell.com](http://www.wrangell.com) provides data pertaining to the history, the cultural richness, the recreational opportunities, and local services. There is also a Facebook page, City and Borough of Wrangell, that provides daily updates for local activities or issues of concern.

### **Transportation:**

Barge services bring in most of the bulk of goods to Wrangell. There is weekly barge service from Seattle operated by two companies, with connections of goods arriving from Anchorage or Juneau. The Alaska Marine Highway System provides mainline passenger service traveling north and south from Wrangell multiple times a week. Goods are also transported via commercial trucks on the AMHS ferries.

Alaska Airlines provides twice daily jet service on Boeing 400 series with direct connections to and from Seattle, Juneau and Anchorage. Seafood and perishable goods are usually shipped via air service.





Lines are approximate, to give reviewer a general idea of land layout.

— Property boundaries — Electrical lines — Institute Creek/Rainbow Falls — Trail — Trust Land Boundary