

# By Land & By Sea

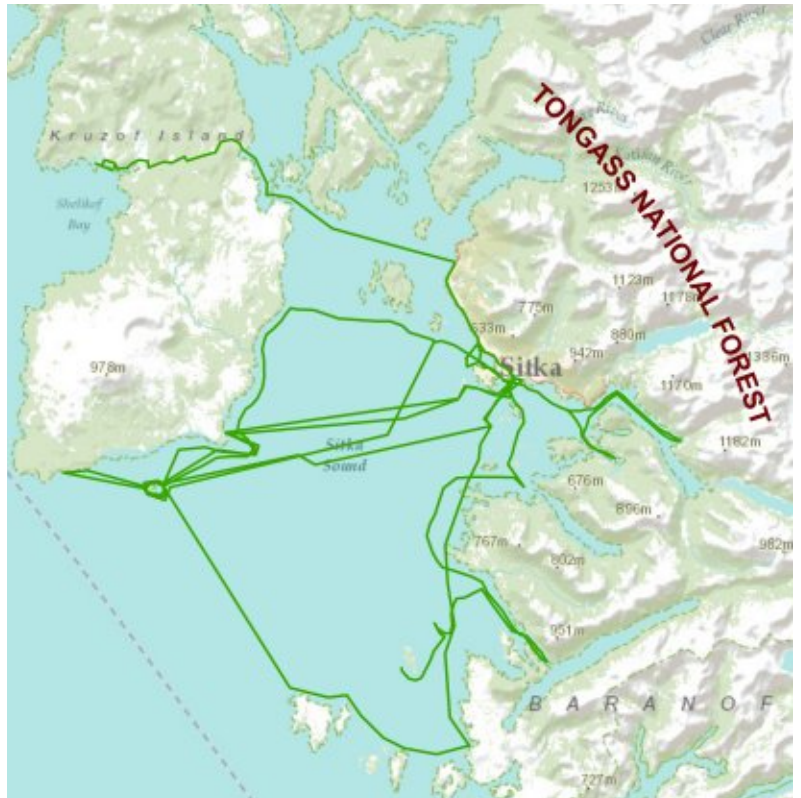
## Tourism in the Tongass

### Mapping Tongass Forest Assets

The Tongass National Forest is valuable for more than old growth timber clear-cutting: it's the source of near limitless value to residents and visitors alike, if used sustainably. Energy production, recreation, tourism, hunting, fishing, education & subsistence resources all rely on the continued health of the Tongass in order to continue bringing thousands of dollars and hundreds of jobs to Sitka.



Dozens of hiking trails and boat tours throughout Sitka Sound let visitors experience one of their biggest reasons for coming to Sitka: the breath-taking scenery and the abundant wildlife.



### A Walk in the Wild

Sitka is located in the heart of the Tongass National Forest, the last remaining intact coastal temperate rainforest in the world. Surrounded by spectacular scenic beauty, and filled with rich history and culture, it's no surprise that hundreds of thousands of out-of-state and international tourists make Sitka one of their destinations each year. Tourism is an important part of the local economy, with the associated 'leisure & hospitality' industry making up 11% of Sitka's employment. When asked, visitors cited *hiking, wildlife, and other outdoor adventures as the most popular reasons* for coming to Sitka.



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*Protecting the natural environment of the Tongass while supporting the development of sustainable communities in Southeast Alaska.*

## More than Just a Pretty Place

Sitka attracts a wide array of travelers, from vacationers to business travelers, adventure-seekers and history-buffs. A rich history steeped in Tlingit and Russian culture, sport fishing, in and out of town sightseeing, hiking and kayaking combined with a locally-oriented, thriving year round downtown, Sitka offers something for everyone. In a survey conducted by the Commerce Department of the State of Alaska, *visitors of Sitka gave the highest ratings* when asked to compare how their trip compared to their expectations, as well as some of the *highest satisfaction ratings* for their trip overall.

The recent economic recession has affected all parts of the nation - including Sitka. The number of tourists coming to Sitka is much less than it was five years ago, but these numbers are on the rise. The aspects of Sitka that make it a beautiful and exciting place to visit are reaching even more people, with new interests in educational trips (e.g. Knox College), and 'eco-vacations': for which Sitka provides an unparalleled experience.

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## Tourism by the Numbers

Of the thousands of visitors to Sitka each year, there are some definite trends to how they come to town:

**Cruise ships:** ~84%

**Air travel:** ~12%

**Ferry/highway:** ~3%

On average, those who come to Sitka via *airplane* stay about *5 nights*; those visiting from off the *ferry* an average of *3 nights*.

Beyond the money made by individuals working tourism-based jobs, the City of Sitka itself benefits from the commerce of visitors:

Approximately *40% of the city/borough sales tax revenues* are derived during the *3 months* of the summer season.

**Left:** Totem Trail in the National Historical Park is home to beautiful representatives of Sitka's rich Tlingit history.

**Below:** Numerous boat tours leaving out of Sitka allow visitors to explore more than just Baranof Island.



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