

**HAINES ALASKA  
ORIENTATION  
PACKET**



# Haines, Alaska

## The Community

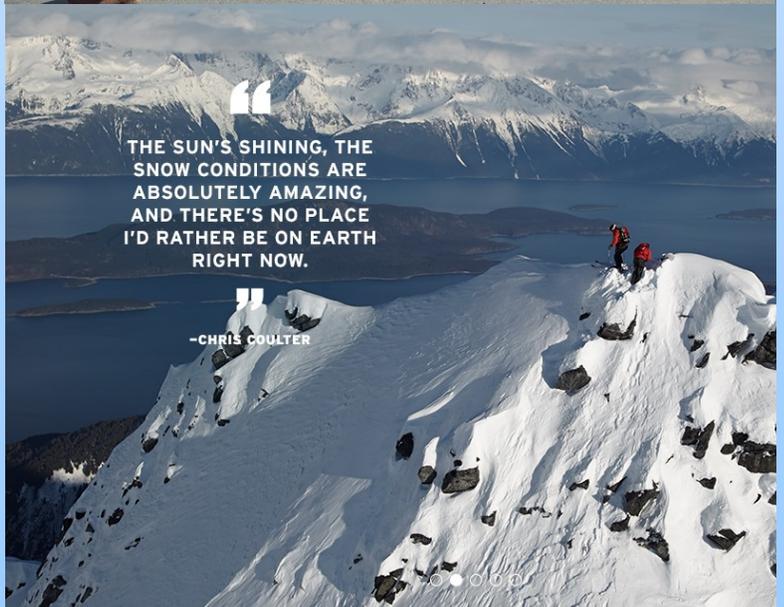


Haines is one of the most ruggedly beautiful places on earth, attracting an eclectic mix of philosophers, artists, commercial fishers, adventurers, professionals and trades people. Native peoples, Canadians, Americans, British and Russians have all contributed to the storied history of the people and area. Haines is located in the northern section of the Alaska panhandle. Surrounded by snow-capped mountains, rainforests, and wild rivers, Haines has an alluring appeal to anyone with a camera, a canvas, and a free spirit. This has resulted in a mix of people born to the area and others who came to visit and never left.

The people of Haines are a passionate people who value the freedom of a near-frontier life. The area's remoteness creates a strong sense of a family community, where differences of opinion are shared enthusiastically, contrasted by an "all come together" spirit whenever and whatever the community need might be. Haines is a collection of versatile people, many of whom--native and non-native--adhere to a subsistence lifestyle that embraces hunting, fishing, gardening and artisanal practices. Haines also has the most artists per capita of any town in the US under 10,000.

The community is packed with events throughout the year that feature local talent in theater, music, arts and festivals that are cherished by locals and the thousands who come to the community to vacation. There is a deep entrepreneurial spirit with many self-starters who have opened a business in the town. There are currently 400 businesses in town, mostly small and independent.

**Education** The Haines Borough School District provides K-12 with three divisions in a single building: Haines Elementary, Haines Middle, and High School, and they also operate the Haines Home School. The District student enrollment has varied from year to year and tends to be between 250 and 300. The District provides laptop computers to all high school students, laptops are available for classroom use in grades three through eight, and mobile devices are available to kindergarten through third grade.



“THE SUN'S SHINING, THE SNOW CONDITIONS ARE ABSOLUTELY AMAZING, AND THERE'S NO PLACE I'D RATHER BE ON EARTH RIGHT NOW.”

—CHRIS COULTER



## An Involved Community full of Volunteers who value their Independence

A long-time resident said, *“The people who are here are here on purpose, and they have a way of becoming protective about the place. The remoteness of the community only fortifies this characteristic, because there is no one else to rely on except the people you see around you every day.”* Residents of Haines don’t wait for others to take care of the needs of the community, they do it themselves. They insist on quality schools and create non-profits (over 75) to do everything from promoting Arts to helping military veterans.



**An involved citizenry:** Haines people are very generous and engaged in civic life. The mentality that has shaped a town is one where individuals feel like their involvement makes a difference. Almost everyone, including youth, volunteers from a few hours a year to hundreds of hours to serve community needs. The highly educated populace (there are more college degrees per capita than any other municipality in Alaska) is full of determination and capability that has produced impressive projects such as the award winning library (awarded Best Small Town Library in the USA in 2005), the Chilkat Center for the Arts, veterans’ housing, and the central playground for children completely constructed by the citizens of Haines.



**Community Organizations:** Haines has established numerous organizations that provide opportunities to connect, explore, rejuvenate, learn and give back. Some of the organizations include: Alaska Arts Confluence, Alaska Bald Eagle Festival, Big Brothers and Big Sisters Alaska, Chilkat Valley Community Foundation, Chilkat Valley Preschool, Alaska Chilkoot Bear Foundation, Children's Reading Foundation of Haines, Friends of the Chilkat Center for the Arts, Chilkat Snowburners, Chilkoot Indian Association, Haines Arts Council, Haines Ski and Hike Club, Haines Chamber of Commerce, Haines Emblem Club, Haines Friends of Recycling, Haines Farmers' Market, Haines Gardeners & Farmers, Haines Port Development Council, Hammer Museum, KHNS Radio, Lynn Canal Conservation, Lynn Canal Community Players, Rainbow Glacier Camp, SAIL (Southeast Alaska Independent Living), SEA Trails, Sheldon Museum, Southeast Alaska State Fair, Takshanuk Watershed Council, The Ugly's of Haines, Haines Sportsmen's Association, Community Education, American Legion, and more.



## Something for Everyone

Cross country skiing, snow machining, snow-shoeing, ice skating, ice fishing and hunting are some of the many things to do during the winter months. Haines has been ranked as the number one heli-skiing destination in the world, attracting skiers and snowboarders from around the world. Most skiing and snow-machining takes place up on the Chilkat Pass at the Haines Summit, about 40 miles outside of Haines. Basketball is extremely popular during the winter months in Haines. Almost every evening of the week sees various age groups and leagues playing ball at the High School Gymnasium. Cycling: Haines has quite a few good mountain bike and road bike trails. Perhaps the biggest cycling event of the year is the Kluane to Chilkat International Bike Relay run between Haines Junction and Haines every summer.

The Haines Borough Public Library is extremely active with regular events. Climbing: Haines is a climbing nirvana, with towering peaks and glistening glaciers all around. The climbing community includes the likes of John Svenson and the folks at Alaska Mountain Guides. Ice climbing is also a popular winter activity. Theater Events: Various live productions are offered year round at the Chilkat Center for the Arts. Exciting sport fishing opportunities are plentiful from April to November, both salt-water and freshwater. Several charter operators offer fishing trips from the Haines Small Boat Harbor for five species of salmon, plus halibut and rockfish. King salmon are caught all season, with the Haines King Salmon Derby held in late May and early June. Guided fishing is also available on Chilkat and Chilkoot Lakes.

Other area activities include Yoga, Golf (9 holes), Recreational and guided hiking, Kayaking, Rafting, Swimming (indoor pool), music, hockey, softball, and Volleyball.

**Living in Haines :** Anyone planning a move to Haines should be prepared for a 4-season climate. The summers are dry and warm with very long days reaching 20 hours of daylight. Winters have short days (6 hours of daylight on December 21) and can be cold; although by Alaska and Mid-west standards, they are fairly mild with average high temperatures in January of 30 degrees.



## Community Capital Projects

**Ports and Harbors.** A \$26 Million project to expand the harbor is underway. Funding is secure through the second of three phases. We expect challenges in funding the third phase which could extend the project over 4-7 years.

Haines is a strategic port. Lack of maintenance has allowed the 4-acre, 60-yr old Borough-owned facility to deteriorate. Effort is made to identify federal and private funding for rehabilitation. A public-private partnership is underway to construct a roll-on, roll-off facility to serve our immediate needs

**Portage Cove Trail.** A phased project to construct an accessible pedestrian trail around the natural harbor is underway in collaboration with a local arts organization and a tribal government.

**Roads.** The Planning department is working with public works to prioritize and schedule construction and maintenance of local roads.

**Library.** Our library earned "Best Small Library in America" in 2015 and has been a star library the past four years. Friends of the Library have launched an expansion project , with the possibility of incorporating new Assembly Chambers.



## Transportation and Economy

**Local Economy and Transportation:** The Haines economy centers primarily on Tourism and Fishing. There are also a large number of retirees in the community. Haines is a port-of-call to several cruise ship operators, including Princess Cruises and the Holland-America Line. There are 120 dockings in Haines this season, bringing around 100,000 passengers and crew.

Haines is much more accessible than most other southeast Alaskan communities, as it is connected to the North American highway system via the Haines Highway, which passes through British Columbia on its way to the junction with the Alaska Highway at Haines Junction, Yukon. However, the primary mode of intra-Alaskan transportation is via the Alaska Marine Highway with regular service to Juneau. The Haines Airport serves two commuter airlines providing service from Haines to Gustavus, Skagway, Sitka, and Juneau.



# Organizational Culture Government Services

Most of the citizens personally know the employees who serve the Borough, as well as the elected officials, and have a connection to them outside of government. Customer service is familial, casual, comfortable, and not heavy on protocol, procedure and formality, compared to other municipalities. The look and feel around the Administration building is relaxed yet professional. The dress is casual and reflects the outdoor nature of the area. It is a Manager form of government.

**Borough Services:** The Borough provides water, wastewater treatment, library, police and fire protection, ambulance, lands, street maintenance, ports and harbors, animal control, snow removal, public improvements, museum, park area maintenance, year round recreation programs, planning and zoning, community and economic development, and general administrative services.

# Committees

The Borough governs with Commissions, Committees and Boards:

- Planning Commission
- Port and Harbor Advisory Committee
- Code Review Commission
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
- Tourism Advisory Board
- Chilkat Center Advisory Board
- Public Safety Commission
- Library Advisory Board

