MEALS HILL PARK

TRAIL ETIQUETTE

- NO MOTORIZED VEHICLES ALLOWED
- YIELD TO PEDESTRIANS
- PLEASE PICK UP DOG WASTE
- PACK IT IN, PACK IT OUT

TRAIL MAP

LEGEND

- PARK BOUNDARY
- PRIVATE PROPERTY
- 10' CONTOURS
- RESTROOM
- SCENIC VISTA
- COVERED SHELTER
- TRASH CAN
- EXPOSED CLIFFS
- TRAILHEAD (YOU ARE HERE)

TRAIL TYPES

- MULTI-USE SPINE TRAIL
- SECONDARY MULTI-USE TRAILS
- HIKING ONLY TRAILS
- MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAILS
- WINTER ONLY TRAIL
- BIKE ONLY
- HIKE ONLY
- WINTER ONLY

TRAIL	LENGTH	DESCRIPTION
MULTI-USE SPINE TRAIL	1.2 mi	This is the main artery of the trail system, a wide path that leads you up to the high point of Meals Hill.
OVERLOOK LOOP	0.04 mi	The Overlook Loop provides seating and views of the harbor. The trail will lead to the shelter and toilet.
VALDEZ VISTA TRAIL	0.3 mi	The Valdez Vista Trail is a hiking only trail that begins with an over 10% grade but flattens out and provides great views.
BOG VIEW TRAIL	0.2 mi	Multi-use trail open to hikers, bikes, skis. Ungroomed.
FOREST FLOW MOUTAIN BIKE TRAIL	0.5 mi	Natural surface non motorized singletrack trail with limited technical features suitable for beginner and intermediate riders. No hiking.
ALDER FLOW MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL	2.0 mi	Natural surface with banked turns for intermediate riders. No hiking.

Meals Hill: A Place for People to Experience The Dynamic Landscapes of Valdez

Park History

The Valdez region was settled by Sugpiaq, Eyak and Ahtna Native peoples. These tribes hunted, fished, and traded in the area for thousands of years.

During the Klondike gold rush of the late 1800s, what is known today as Meals Hill became part of a 700 acre claim by two entrepreneurs, George Cheever Hazelet and Andrew Jackson Meals.

Over the turn of the century and through the early decades of the 1900s Valdez developed into a city, but the historic townsite was destroyed in the infamous Good Friday earthquake of 1964.

To assist with the town relocation, the descendants of Meals and Hazelet formed The Port Valdez Company. In the aftermath of the earthquake, The Port Valdez Company worked with the city to relocate the townsite to Meals and Hazelet homestead lands. As the new Valdez townsite grew, The Port Valdez Company continued to look for development opportunities on their remaining holdings. As a landmark with 360-degree views of the port, mountains, and town, Meals Hill had always been valued for its unique features. In 2019, the Port Valdez Company agreed to sell the Meals Hill property to COV for use as a city park.

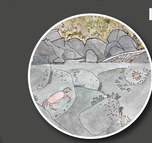
Conservation & Stewardtship

The purchase of the Meals Hill Park property was funded in part by a grant from the *Exxon Valdez* Oil Spill Trustee Council (EVOSTC). EVOSTC was formed to oversee the restoration of the ecosystem injured by the oil spill through the use of the $900 million civil settlement approved by the U.S. District Court on October 9, 1991 between the State of Alaska, the United States government, and Exxon.

EVOSTC funded the purchase of the Meals Hill property due to its environmental significance and alignment with EVOSTC's mission to restore species and services impacted by the spill. The property contains 184 acres of undisturbed coastal rainforest, rocky coastal habitat, and wetlands that protect and aid in recovery of species, habitat, and services that were injured by the oil spill. The conditions of the EVOSTC funding included the placement of a conservation easement on the property to protect the property's natural environment in perpetuity.

Through the efforts of the Great Land Trust, The Port Valdez Company, EVOSTC, the U.S. Department of the Interior, BLM, the City of Valdez, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and individual community members, the land transfer and conservation easement were successfully completed in 2019.

Habitats of Meals Hill:



Intertidal Zone
Meals Hill is located right on the water,its rocky cliffs along the port of Valdez contain tidal species.

Old Growth Conifers
Throughout the forests of Meals Hill, there are old growth Sitka Spruce and hemlock.

Coastal Rain Forest
Valdez is located within the Pacific Temperate Rainforest, which extends down to the coast of California. The Pacific Temperate Rainforest is the largest rainforest in the world.

Mountain Views
Weather dependent, spectacular views will be visible along your visit.

Things to Look For:

As you enjoy Meals Hill Park you will get to experience these types of habitats and the plants and animals that call them home.

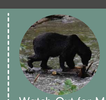
Be Aware Of:

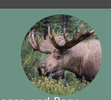
Cow Parsnip
Heracleum maximum

Devil's Club
Oplopanax horridus

Stinging Nettle
Urtica dioica

Things That Sting

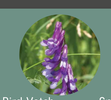




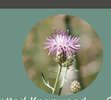
Watch Out for Moose and Bear
Make Noise & Keep Your Distance

Animals

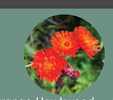
Butter & Eggs
Linaria vulgaris



Bird Vetch
Vicia cracca



Spotted Knapweed
Centaurea stoebe



Orange Hawkweed
Pilosella aurantiaca

Common Invasive Species

Between Land & Sea:
The Intertidal Zone

MEALS HILL
Valdez, Alaska

The intertidal zone is the area where land and sea meet. This zone is sometimes exposed, sometimes covered in water depending on the tides. Many special species thrive in this zone. There is an Alaska Native phrase:

"When the tide goes out, the table is set."

A Place of Vital Recovery

The Coast of Meals Hill contains rocky cliffs and intertidal beaches that are a vital ecosystem that are very important to protect. After the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill, many species that thrive in the intertidal zone were impacted severely. Some of these species are now considered recovered, but others have failed to return to their pre oil spill population levels.

Life & Legend: Sugpiaq Stories

Sea otter populations in Valdez Harbor declined severely after the *Exxon Valdez* Oil spill in 1989, but they are now considered recovered. Sea otters feed on many of the species found in the intertidal zone like mollusks and crustaceans as well as small fish. Alaska Native hunters would mimic the sounds the sea otters make in order to capture them.

Alaska Native legend tells us that the sea otter started first as a man. The man was hunting for chitons (a mollusk) when he became stranded as the tide came in. As the water level grew higher, he transformed into a sea otter in order to survive.

Sea Otter
Sugpiaq: Ikamaq

Arctic Tern
Sugpiaq: Nerusiculiq

Black Legged Kittiwake
Sugpiaq: Ukigiyaq/Qay'agaag

Black Oystercatcher
Sugpiaq: Kiggwikiaq

Cliff Dwellers: Sea Birds of Valdez

Arctic Terns (*Sterna paradisaea*) are unique in their ability to hover - like hummingbirds. Arctic terns are known for their incredibly long migration patterns - farther than any other animal.

Black Legged Kittiwakes (*Rissa tridactyla*) are a seabird and a type of gull. They nest on cliffs to protect their young from predators. Both the mother and father care for the young and build the nests together.

Black Oystercatchers (*Haematopus bachmani*) feast on many of the species found in the intertidal zone like barnacles, mussels and crabs. The Alutiiq word for oystercatcher is *kiwisaq*.

Tidal Species

Starfish, chiton, and barnacles are species that can be found along the rocks when the tides goes out, all of which are edible.

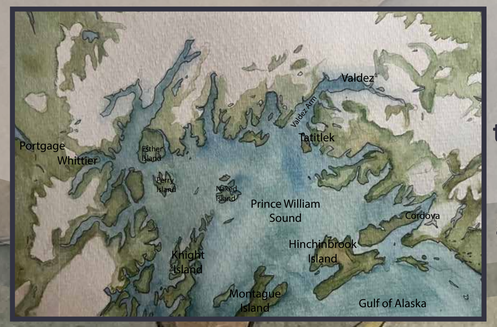
Starfish (Asteroidea sp.)
Sugpiaq word: *Agyaruaq*

Chiton (Polyplacophora)
Sugpiaq word: *Uriitaq*

Barnacles (Cirripedia)
Sugpiaq word: *Qaugtat*

Ocean Wonders:
Marine Life of Valdez

MEALS HILL
Valdez, Alaska



Valdez is located right on the water on the Gulf of Valdez, connected to Prince William Sound by the Valdez Arm. Marine life frequents this area, with whales coming into the gulf to feed. Keep your eye out for all kinds of creatures that might be taking a swim.

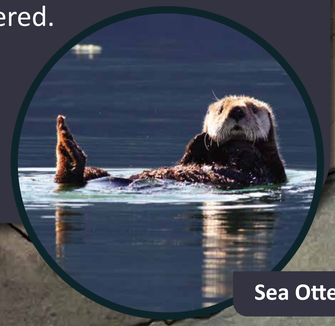
Sea of Sustenance
Hunting Marine Mammals

Sugpiaq peoples would have made use of the many animals found in the harbor for their food. Native peoples that lived or traveled to this area would have hunted for various marine mammals - like sea otters, seal, sea lions, and whales. Sugpiaq people would have used harpoons to hunt the sea otters, seal, and sea lions, usually from their kayak.

These animals would not be used merely for their meat. Sugpiaq people used many parts of the animals to craft tools and clothing. The stomach of the seal (Sugpiaq: Isuwim Suqaa) served as waterproof vessels, floats, food storage, and drums, among many other uses.

Water & Oil

When the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill occurred, the oil spilled out of the harbor into Prince William Sound, the coast line in the Valdez Harbor was not impacted. But marine mammals of Prince William Sound were greatly affected. Many animals became coated in oil, and massive efforts when in to save animals. Thousands of marine mammals died from the oil. Today, sea otters and harbor seals are both considered recovered.

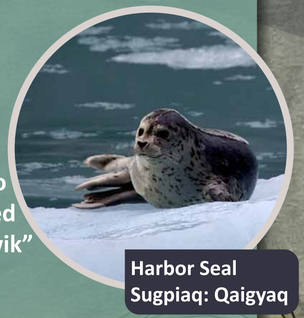


Sea Otter

Take a Dive: Marine Mammals

Sea Lion
Sugpiaq: Wiinaq

Stellar Sea Lion (*Eumetopias jubatus*) Sea lions The Sugpiaq word for Sea Lion is wiinaq.



Harbor Seal
Sugpiaq: Qaigyaq

Harbor Seal (*Phoca vitulina*) The Harbor Seal tend to congregate together on top of rocky outcrops called "haulout rocks" The Sugpiaq word for this is "ugwik" meaning :a place to climb on top of.

Sea Otter
Sugpiaq: Arhnaq

Sea otter (*Enhydra lutris*) tend to stay close to shore, and do have the ability to travel on land. Sea otters are considered an endangered species worldwide, but in Prince William Sound, they have recovered from the thousands that died after becoming coated in oil from the spill in 1989.

Take a Dive: Underwater Views

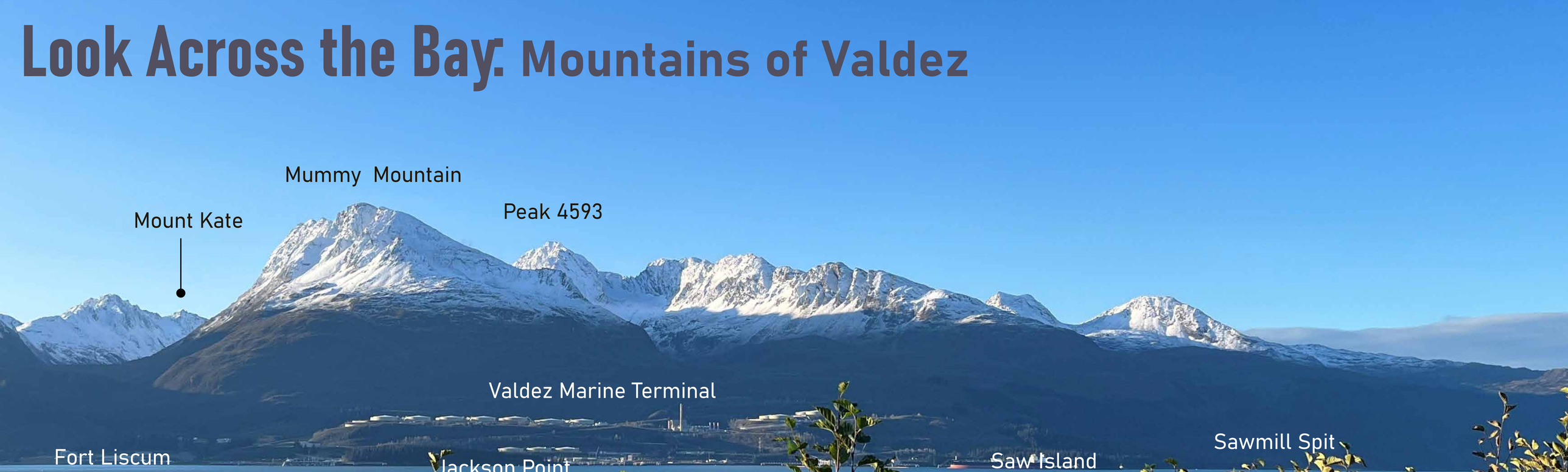
While the view from shore may appear calm, there is a very active world below the surface.

Jellyfish (Scyphozoa sp.)
Sugpiaq word: Qaacek

Humpback Whales (Megaptera novaeangliae)
Sugpiaq word for whale: Qenulek

Dall's Porpoise (Phocoenoides dalli)
Sugpiaq word: Mangaq/Cilpig

Look Across the Bay: Mountains of Valdez



Alyeska Pipeline

The Alyeska Pipeline reaches its southern end here at the Valdez Marine Terminal. Pipeline construction began in the 1970s, with oil transportation beginning in 1977.

Oil Spill

On the evening of March 24th, 1989 the Exxon Valdez left the Valdez Marine Terminal and a few hours later struck Bligh Reef, south of the Valdez Arm and 6 miles west of Tatitlek. This collision caused a major oil spill.

In Recovery

Ecosystems are still recovering from the devastating 1989 Exxon Valdez Oil spill in which 10.8 million gallons of oil spilled into Prince William Sound.

MEALS HILL
Valdez, Alaska