



These days, access to the shelter is a bit easier than it was in the 1930s. A 45-minute drive from Petersburg will take you to the Three Lakes Loop trail system, where you can hike a wood planked trail through old growth forest, open muskegs, and along lakeshores. Stop for a picnic at the shelter, which sits on a small lake between Sand and Hill Lakes. We encourage you to step back in time and enjoy this historic site for yourself.

PLEASE RESPECT OUR IRREPLACEABLE CULTURAL RESOURCES: TAKE ONLY PHOTOGRAPHS AND LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS AT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES.

The USDA Forest Service in Alaska is celebrating *49 Sites in the 49th State* in recognition of the **50th Anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966**. The Three Lakes Shelter is one of the chosen 49 sites. For a virtual tour of Alaska's rich and varied cultural history, please visit the 49 Sites website at:

www.fs.usda.gov/goto/AK49Sites

Historic Property

The Civilian Conservation Corps built the original Adirondack style shelter in 1938 as part of a program initiated by President Roosevelt to put Americans to work and provide remote recreation and travel access. In 2006 Forest Service employees and volunteers used Resource Advisory Committee funding to rebuild the shelter, salvaging components when possible and integrating them into the reconstruction process. This property is eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. Please help preserve this shelter for ours and future generations.



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Historic Three Lakes Shelter

By Gina Esposito



The Three Lakes Shelter is located on Mitkof Island, on the Petersburg Ranger District. It was built in 1938 by the Civilian Conservation Corps, or CCC, a work relief program created in 1933 as part of President Roosevelt's New Deal. In Alaska, the Forest Service was responsible for overseeing the CCC program, which hired men across the nation to conserve, protect, and renew natural resources.



The Three Lakes Shelter, 2016

Thirty nine shelters were built on the Tongass National Forest between the mid-1930s and the early 1940s, providing recreation opportunities for the public as well as safe access into largely isolated territories. Most are on lake shores accessible by CCC era trails. Thirty of the shelters are still operable, having been patched or repaired over the years. Most resemble the three-sided Adirondack style with a beam and pole frame covered with hand split shakes.

The CCC built the Three Lakes Shelter with local materials and using only hand tools. This is an impressive feat, considering its remote location. At the time, the only access to it was via the Ideal Cove Trail from Frederick Sound.

Archaeology sites are protected by Federal regulations and it is unlawful to remove or disturb artifacts from a site. If you should find a site, please contact your local FS archaeologist. We welcome your local knowledge and appreciate your interest in preserving our cultural heritage.



USDA Forest Service
Alaska Region

Tongass Archaeology Notes



The original shelter was deteriorating and some of the old shakes were being removed for fire wood.

Even though the Three Lakes Shelter was well built of durable Alaska yellow cedar, it was deteriorating after almost 70 years and patchwork maintenance was no longer enough. Because of its association with the CCC, Forest Service archaeologists determined the shelter was eligible for listing on



Prior to dismantling, each component was labeled with location and dimension attributes.

the National Register of Historic Places. To protect its historic integrity, a plan was developed to preserve the shelter for future enjoyment. The work culminated in a product that combines old with new and embodies a sense of Alaska's remote yet accessible frontier.

Tongass Archaeology Notes

In 2006, archaeologists were joined by other Forest Service employees and a Passport in Time volunteer to help with reconstruction. To maintain the shelter's eligibility status to the National Register, we kept as many of the original components as possible and rebuilt the structure in replica form. Deteriorated pieces were replaced with heavy cedar



Heavy beams and posts were moved into place using traditional log carrier tools. Cedar saplings were selected, stripped of bark, and used as rafters and battens. And finally, the walls and roof were replaced with red cedar shakes handmade on Prince of Wales Island.



The shelter was put back together with hardware and fitting techniques that were used in the construction of the historical structure. Traditional hand tools were used when possible.