

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
 INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

 SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
 TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS
1 NAME

HISTORIC Bering Expedition Landing Site (AHRs SITE NO. XMI 005)

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Katalla

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Alaska

 VICINITY OF

STATE

Alaska

CODE

02

COUNTY

Cordova-McCarthy Div.

CODE

080

3 CLASSIFICATION**CATEGORY**
 DISTRICT
 BUILDING(S)
 STRUCTURE
 SITE
 OBJECT
OWNERSHIP
 PUBLIC
 PRIVATE
 BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
 IN PROCESS
 BEING CONSIDERED
STATUS
 OCCUPIED
 UNOCCUPIED
 WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
 YES: RESTRICTED
 YES: UNRESTRICTED
 NO
PRESENT USE
 AGRICULTURE
 COMMERCIAL
 EDUCATIONAL
 ENTERTAINMENT
 GOVERNMENT
 INDUSTRIAL
 MILITARY
 MUSEUM
 PARK
 PRIVATE RESIDENCE
 RELIGIOUS
 SCIENTIFIC
 TRANSPORTATION
 OTHER
4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Chugach National Forest, U.S. Forest Service

STREET & NUMBER

121 West Fireweed Lane (907) 272-4485

CITY, TOWN

Anchorage

VICINITY OF

STATE

Alaska

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Alaska State Office, U.S. Bureau of Land Management

STREET & NUMBER

555 Cordova

CITY, TOWN

Anchorage

STATE

Alaska

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRs)

DATE

February 2, 1975

__FEDERAL STATE __COUNTY __LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Alaska Division of Parks, 323 E. 4th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Anchorage

STATE

Alaska

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The site is at the mouth of a creek running into the Gulf of Alaska on the southwest shore of Kayak Island. Immediately east of the narrow beach, a small bluff rises on either side of the creek. The bluff is covered with dense forest. No known remains, surface or subsurface, survive as evidence of the 1741 landing.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES July 20, 1741 O.S.* BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Significance

This portion of Kayak Island, a small bit of land approximately twenty miles south of Katalla on the Gulf of Alaska, was the scene of the first scientific investigation of Northwestern North America. Actions of natural Georg Wilhelm Steller, surgeon on Vitus Bering's St. Peter, when he landed here at the mouth of a small creek on the southwest shore, were the first attempts at contact between Europeans and natives of Alaska; Steller's observations, recorded in his journal, are among the first contributions to the West's knowledge of the natural and human history of this area of the world.

Today the site, which is managed as a part of Chugach National Forest, is inaccessible except by charter air or boat from Prince William Sound communities such as Cordova.

Historical Background

A series of Russian attempts to determine if the Asian and American continents were joined culminated in the 1741 Bering Expedition. Under Captain Commander Vitus Bering, the two ships in this venture, St. Peter and St. Paul, sailed west from Kamchatka in the summer of 1741. On the 17th of July (Russian calendar), lookouts on St. Peter (which had become separated from St. Paul) sighted "high snow covered mountains and among them a high volcano...." Two days later, Kayak Island was observed and the next day, July 20, a party went ashore to collect water and explore the island.

Surgeon Steller and his personal cossack landed with the watering party and set off down the beach to investigate. The naturalist's journal noted "I had not gone more than a verst [0.6629 of a mile] along the beach before I ran across signs of people and their doings." Among the finds were scraps of fish and a still smouldering fire, a log hollowed for use as a cooking vessel, and a firedrill.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Golder, Frank A., Bering's Voyages, Vols. I, II, American Geographical Society Research Series No. 1, W.L.G. Joerg, ed., reprint ed., Octagon Books, Inc., New York, 1968.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY -1

UTM REFERENCES

A 06 640250 6642790
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

D
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

an area of less than one acre to the north of the UTM designation above along the beach on the southwest side of Kayak Island

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

William S. Hanable

ORGANIZATION

Alaska Division of Parks

DATE

January 15, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

323 E. 4th Avenue

TELEPHONE

(907) 272-4401

CITY OR TOWN

Anchorage

STATE

Alaska

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Russell W. Cabell

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

Jan 23 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Bering Expedition Landing Site, Alaska (XMI 005)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER

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Venturing still farther, Steller came upon a cellar two fathoms deep from which he took two bundles of fish, another firedrill, arrows, tinder, and thongs of seaweed, bark, and grass. After sending this first ethnographic collection from Alaska back to the ship by his cossack, Steller climbed the prominence now known as Steller Hill and then returned to St. Peter.

On his return to the beach, Steller made careful descriptions of the flora and waited for a reply to his request for additional men and the use of a yawl to continue his research. Instead, he got the answer that he should repair on board immediately or St. Peter would leave without him. This peremptory end to the first scientific examination of the North Pacific coast of North America has been attributed to Bering's desire to seize favorable winds and avoid stormy weather on the return voyage.

Running west, St. Peter passed through the Aleutians, sighting Adak and Atka about September twenty-fourth. Some of the crew had died and others, including Bering, were ill with scurvy by November when a ship's council decided to winter on one of the Kommandorski Islands. Incredible hardships, during which Bering died, followed; but in November of the next year, St. Peter's first officer Sven Waxell led forty-six survivors to Kamchatka. A report of the voyage was dispatched to the Admiralty College. This report, and Steller's journal and notes, constituted the first documented investigation of the land known now as Alaska.

*Old Style--eleven days behind calendar now in use.