

Seagate and Wild Blue Alaska Cruise – Sunday, July 13, 2008



It's just an hour down to the Tanu Island Watchman Station. This Haida site contains the remains of an Eagle clan village.

(← *The Helmut Islands live up to there name.*)



The Watchman sites are staffed by 2 to 4 persons of Haida descent who provide information to visitors. Only 12 visitors at a time are allowed to go ashore and to make the arrangements, a call is made over VHF channel 6. Our boats arrive at Tanu Island, where Seagate picks up the convenient mooring and Wild Blue sides ties next to her.

(← *Tanu Island Watchman Station from the north.*)



We are cleared ashore by the Watchman and all crews prepare for the visit. A “dry” landing is achieved and, with happy feet, we meet with our Haida guide named Stephen.

(← *Moored and side-tied at Tanu Island.*)

At one time there were 25 to 40 longhouses in the village along with 31 mortuary columns and 15 mortuary houses. Today the house depressions and fallen mossgrown house posts give a



*(← Seagate crew and Justin head to shore.)*

sense of the village layout. Two hereditary leaders representing the descendants of Tanu, an Eagle Chief and Raven Wolf chief now live in Skidegate, just west of QC City.



*(← Stephen shows the location of a fallen longhouse. The posts and beams remain on the ground. You can see vague remains of the carvings. Many of the poles from this village were preserved and are displayed in the University of British Columbia museum in Vancouver.)*



*(← It's difficult to keep the unruly Seagate and Wild Blue crews in line. Here's a rare photo of their total cooperation.)*

It's an informative 1-hour tour. We thanked our guide, re-boarded the boats, and headed to Crescent Inlet, our final destination for the day.



*(← A new watchman residence is under construction. The simple architecture follows the beam and post design of the Haida longhouse.)*



*(← This is a mortuary box which would contain the newly deceased as the body is being prepared for its last rights. It has the face of a beaver carved into the end. Stephen says this box could possibly still hold a body and that an x-ray would determine if so.)*



*(← Although persons are not allowed to enter or disturb this site, deer and other animals regularly trample through. This one is grazing in the middle of the remains of a mortuary house.)*



*(Crescent Inlet is housed behind and below these snow-covered peaks.)*



*(The boats anchor for the night in Crescent Inlet. We haven't seen another boat since Tanu Island. Dick enjoys the view of the bears.)*

The ride takes us across smooth waters and on the way into the Inlet, we drop the prawn and two crab traps. Crescent Inlet is secluded and remote. The Douglass Guidebook classes the Inlet “a bombproof anchorage” meaning it is safe from the worst storms. The Inlet has glassy water, a small river and a large, green meadow full of deer and bears grazing side-by-side. Everybody wants to see the bears, but not too closely. We approach in the tender with motor at idle and the bears lie low, or move away. The trick is to quietly kayak near the shore. This is a bit nerve-racking as you get to about 150 feet, and think, “If the bear runs towards me, how fast can I paddle?” Tomorrow we move on to Hot Springs Cove. See you there.



*(A bear den just above the high tide line.)*



*(← Bear den owner from 150 feet, taken from the a kayak in 8" of water with a shaky hand. Photographer is ready to turn tail and paddle fast if the bear just looks over this way.)*



*(← It's a Seagate yak attack! Norm and Dick flash their bear whistles before they stalk the bears.)*