

Striving to be recognized as the best fishing lodge in Alaska and...
as always... Closest to the Fish!



**TO FISH... OR NOT TO FISH?
THAT IS THE QUESTION!**



Prince Hamlet, as written by William Shakespeare, was haunted by his father's ghost (the king) to avenge his murder by his own brother (Hamlet's uncle). Hamlet, fearing for his life, and unable to choose a course of action, pretends to go mad! Seizing on Hamlet's indecisiveness, his uncle (now the new king) plots to kill Hamlet. Hamlet is tortured with indecision. His agonizing dilemma: "To be or not to be?"

Perhaps if Hamlet hadn't procrastinated, he would have been king and lived happily ever after. But, this is a Shakespearean tragedy! He is killed. His uncle is killed.... and his mother is killed... everyone dies.

Hamlet was confused and he dithered...

Perhaps Hamlet should have just gone fishing!

WE ALL HAVE TO MAKE CHOICES

"May you live in interesting times." is a saying attributed (correctly or not) to the Chinese. It was actually meant to be a curse.

I don't know if we have been cursed. We are indeed living in "interesting times".

It started with the impeachment hearings... and then the virus hit the fan and spread across the globe.

Trump or no Trump, the Highliner Lodge would go on. Wuhan virus, the Chinese virus, Covid-19... call it what you will, this pandemic is turning everyone's world upside down!

I have been an infomaniac for the past few months. Watching four hours of cable "news"... of any persuasion, everyday is not healthy. Lest you think I am illiterate; I also read "news" about two hours a day... National Review, The Atlantic, Politico... who would have guessed there are so many different flavors of "news"!

Did our collective fever just break? Are we on the road to recovery or relapse? Will it be a "V" shaped recession or a worldwide depression? That depends on the "flavor" of "news" you consume. Apparently, we are all experiencing an alternate universe alongside our own reality.

I'm old enough to know that I don't know shit. I'm also old enough to know that most people know less shit than me... but they are unaware that they don't know shit. As little as I know for sure; I know that I am well past tired of cable news pundits, or late night comedians, telling me what to think!

Like Hamlet, I have to make a decision... and so do you!

TO FISH... OR NOT TO FISH?

I have put this decision off, thinking that as time passed there would be more clarity on the situation. I can't wait any longer, it is time to... "To Fish... or not to Fish!"

I choose to Fish!

Our bookings fell off a cliff these past two months, and we have had more than the usual cancellations, though less than I thought we would have. Our bookings are nowhere near where they have been over for the past five years. Our bookings have fallen to near our 2013 level.

I know that we are not alone. In fact, I feel very fortunate. The overwhelming majority of our guests have stuck beside us. Perhaps other lodges don't enjoy the same loyalty and trust from their guests that we do at the Highliner Lodge. I feel truly blessed. Thank you!

As you all know, we really don't know what June will bring, or July, or even 2021. And when it is time for you to get on a plane and fly to Alaska...? That is your "To be ... or not to be?" moment.

We will be here. We will do our best to keep you safe and healthy. We will be ready. We will be having fun doing what we love to do. We hope that you too will be willing and able to join us!

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE FISHING

Fishing is the great equalizer, the great escape!

When I am at the Highliner Lodge, I don't watch cable TV news. I don't worry about things I have no control over. I leave all that behind. The world will still be there when I return from Alaska. I am living in the moment. We, the Highliner team, are all here to fully engaged with you and focus on your fishing!

So I implore you to leave your work, your cell phones, laptops, internet, cable news, and any my-tribe vs your-tribe attitudes behind! You are coming here to fish!

Simplify your life for at least a few hours each day, for four or five days out of the entire year. It's just you and one hook, looking for that one gigantic fish (or many fishes) hoping to pit your fishing acuity against the odds! Not everyone is going to catch a big fish, so Lord, let it be me! Selfishness? Sure! Competitive? You bet! But, doesn't it create a great sense of community? Shared experience? Fishing is indisputably the great equalizer! You can lie about your catch, but not to those who you fish with!

The anticipation. The hope? The excitement! The failure? Yes, fishing is the great equalizer. We all have the same opportunity and we have to seize the moment when it presents itself! No dithering Hamlets at the Highliner Lodge! Reputations and legends are made as fish are landed... sometimes by the very skin of their teeth... or lost!

Even some of you "A Types" can't help but lose yourself when you start to relax and live in the moment. Fishing isn't about anxiously thinking, "To catch, or not to catch?" but patience, persistence and serendipity. Fishing is focusing, paying attention to the little things and also noticing and embracing the big things like the world around you... your friends, your fellow fisherman... the glorious and curious natural world of southeast Alaska! How lucky we are to be in this extraordinary environment! To breathe, to smell, to feel... to just be! (or not to be?)

Not to be? Not to be fishing?

Inconceivable!!

SEEING THE BIG PICTURE. SETTING YOURSELF FREE!

Fishing is competitive, and yet, in this extraordinary environment, I always feel we are all part of something so much bigger than ourselves. I feel a certain grace to be part of that. God shed his (her, their?) grace on me. Thank you Lord! Thank you fish! Thank you Mother Nature!

Yes, just like Jimmy Stewart in my favorite Frank Capra movie; after weeks of trepidation... I'm feeling magnanimous! I'm feeling whole and complete, and thankful! "Zuzu's Petals!!" I am going fishing in Alaska!

Perhaps that is why fishing in Alaska is the number one bucket list adventure. (Don't know if that's true, I just made it up!)

We aren't going to hunker down. We are going to take a calculated risk. We are going to open up!

I loved spending these past few months quarantined with my wife, Jill, here in Arizona! We are extraordinarily lucky. We have 5 acres, 4 donkeys, 4 dogs and 2 cats... an owl nesting with 3 owlets in the front yard. A great heron visits our pond most mornings. Every night we sit at the pond and watch the ducks take off and land. The fish anticipate Jill tossing dry dog food onto the pond every evening. They school up at the pond edge and feed like piranhas, until the two big 10 pound grass carp show up and take over the feeding! Yes, I've been quarantined with my best friend! We are married 27 years this month! We haven't suffered and we have nothing to complain about.

To fish or not to fish?

That isn't a question (for me). This will be my 35th season!

Today I am contacting each of my Highliner A team and making plans to be prepared to open in early June.

Steve Daniels

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COMING SOON: 2020 FISHING REGULATIONS

Complaint Department

Our Cancellation Policy



I want express my deepest concern for the health and well being for all of our guests, our Highliner crew, and friends in these most "Interesting Times". Also, I know that many of you have been financially impacted by the Coronavirus global shutdown. I personally understand that pain and worry. In many ways we are all in this together.

Recently, I had a group of two who wanted to cancel their late July trip and threatened to go to the Alaska Attorney General, Better Business Bureau and file a complaint with the Small Claims Court, if I didn't give them everything they wanted. One of them even implied that I was discriminating against him in particular.

We are indeed living in Interesting Times.

While almost all of us are financially impacted to some degree by the Coronavirus, some have been infected by the virus and have suffered greatly. Some have succumbed to a sad and lonely death. Many people are grieving for their lost loved ones. Any financial impact pales in comparison to the loss of a life; particularly the loss of one dear to us.

Those two who insisted on a full refund were not concerned with a health issue but strictly a financial issue. Both could have carried almost all of their payments over to another year and were not pleading economic necessity. One of the two was negotiating a trip this summer with another lodge while cancelling with us.

I have given full refunds in the past for serious health issues and because of death in a family, because it is the right thing to do. I will continue to do that. However, I cannot give anyone who asks for a full refund all of their money back. The financial fallout would be too great for our small business to absorb.

I am doing the best that I can to survive these "Interesting Times".

I very much appreciate the understanding and confidence of the vast majority of our guests! We have had less than 10% of our bookings cancelled and almost all of those cancellations have been re-booked later in this 2020 season or in 2021.

As we gear up for 2020, we expect that we will be fully capable of operating safely and mitigating, as much as possible, the chances of spreading any virus. We also accept the risk that it is possible that the state could choose to close down businesses, or that many our guests will not be able to make their trip. This would be a serious financial hardship for the Highliner Lodge. But we accept this risk because we know that the vast majority of our guests are counting on us being open when they make their fishing trip to Alaska and we are going to be there for them!

I must make my commitment now. I cannot wait until the first guests arrive to get the crew together and ready the lodge and boats... that effort takes six weeks (at great expense) under normal conditions.

You still have many weeks, in some cases months, to make your decision "to fish, or not to fish?"

It is my fervent hope that your decision will be based on breakthroughs in personal protection equipment production, steadily declining infection rates, ramped up response capabilities, new treatments, and progress in long range vaccinations and cures. I hope your decision will be made with joy and confidence!

Sermon on the Seamount



Is this a face that you can trust?

**...of all the liars among mankind, the fisherman is the most trustworthy.
~William Sherwood Fox**

Speaking of Social Distancing

I recently commented, via online survey, to the Pelican City Council regarding how best to manage the upcoming charter and commercial fishing seasons, taking into account the potential spread of Coronavirus into the town of 50 year-round residents. I agreed that they are also taking risks to allow visitors from all over the United States into their town. They, like the rest of the world, have to weigh the economic repercussions to their community if their summer season is cancelled. Alaska is an oil state and was experiencing budget difficulties before the price of a barrel of oil went down to zero! Losing their tourist and commercial fishing seasons (the vast majority of which happens in the summer) would be a terrible additional blow.

The town, like most of the rest of the world, was initially torn by the prospect of even its own residents returning from vacations down south. At one point they were considering banning anyone who hadn't physically been in Pelican 10 of the past 12 months! They asked that anyone who wished to comment on this proposed ordinance take their on-line survey.

One of my survey comments was that "Pelican residents are experts at "social distancing" and have been for years... turning one's head and looking the other way as one approached their Pelican neighbor (who they had a grudge against!) on the 12 foot wide wooden boardwalk is a highly developed skill!"

I don't know if that comment was appreciated by the city council.

However, the city ordinance didn't pass. Pelican is trying to adapt to very

The State of Alaska's 17th Public Health Mandate

"Given the ongoing concern for new cases of COVID-19 being transmitted via community spread within the state, Governor Dunleavy and the State of Alaska are issuing Mandate 017 to go into effect April 24, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. and will reevaluate the Mandate by May 20, 2020."

There have been 17 amendments to date. By the time we open, or by the time some of our guests arrive in July or August, it is likely to have been amended many more times. Alaska, like many states, is starting to open back up. How open Alaska will be when you are scheduled to arrive is unknown.

We, like all businesses that want to open in Alaska, are required by the State of Alaska to prepare a Covid-19 Safety and Response Plan. That plan will be completed this week and I will share that with you in another newsletter or email.

Our plan will provide reassurance to Pelican residents, and our own guests, that we will be well prepared and take meaningful precautions to insure everyone's health and safety.

A few of the many precautions we are considering:

1. **Staggering our dinners (one dinner at 6pm another at 7 pm) so that we have the proper social distancing space between tables.**
2. **Keeping our trophy shots off the boardwalk and relocating those photo ops to boats in the harbor.**
3. **Staggering our breakfasts into 2 or 3 shifts. (like dinner)**
4. **Staggering gear-up and departure times by 10 minutes.**
5. **Effective ways to sanitize rooms, boats and gear; including the use of a professional disinfectant dispensing fogging machine.**
6. **Guest and/or crew use of PPE gear (face masks, gloves)**
7. **Guidelines for proper response to discovery of coronavirus**
8. **Segregating guests from the fish processing room.**
9. **Segregating all of our staff from Pelican residents.**
10. **Minimizing interactions with guests and Pelican residents.**
11. **Asking our guests to report their health conditions in advance of their arrival in Pelican at 14 day, 7 day and 3 day intervals. This includes taking temperatures at home.**
12. **Asking our guests to take precautions in advance of their trip**

These are just a few of the protocols we are considering. Whatever Covid-19 Safety and Response Plan we decide on next week will be re-evaluated and updated as conditions change.

Pelican itself is presents a unique environment that in many ways minimize the threat of virus spread.

1. There currently is zero Coronavirus in Pelican.
2. There are only 50 people living in Pelican today.
3. In the summer there are an additional 50 people living in Pelican.
4. Contact tracing could be very easy with such a small population.
5. The only way to get into Pelican is by boat or seaplane making it very easy to see who is new to Pelican.
6. Each new arrival into Pelican (visitor or resident) will be required to register with the city in advance of entering the town.
7. Each new arrival will be required to report their recent travel itinerary in advance of entering Pelican.
8. A city official will meet every boat or seaplane to advise new arrivals of the current social distancing standards.
9. Currently anyone entering the town is required to self quarantine for 14 days.
10. There are very few common areas.
11. Most people stay in their homes.
12. The boardwalk is 12 foot wide, there is plenty of room to pass.
13. Our guests are only in town half of each day, the other half they are out fishing.

For more detailed information:
[The State of Alaska's 17th Public Health Mandate](#)

***We have several openings in July and August
that are currently still available!***

Call toll free (877) 386-0397 or email our operations manager Dylan at dylan@highlinerlodge.com for details or click the "BOOK NOW!" link

[BOOK NOW!](#)

Highliner Lodge & Charters, Inc. | All-Inclusive Alaska Fishing Charters | (877)-386-0397 | [Email Us](#) | [Website](#)

