

Riverboat Chena Riverboat Discovery Trip into the Interior, with Tim Stallard (afternoon)

Vendor: Out in Alaska (Tim Stallard)
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Dates: Monday, June 28

Times: 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm (includes transport time from/to your lodging)

Price: \$65/person, \$50/child under 12 (includes transport from UAF and River's Edge)

Minimum: 6 persons

Description: Your three-and-a half hour cruise will take you into the heart of Alaska and the heart of a family who has made the rivers of Alaska a way of life for four generations. You will visit the home and kennels of the late four-time Iditarod winner Susan Butcher, and gain insight into the ancient Athabascan Indian culture. Alaskan Native guides who have worked and lived in Alaska will take you on a personalized tour of the Chena Indian Village.

As you pass Trail Breaker Kennels along the Chena River, you'll learn first-hand about kennel life and the challenges that go into making a champion dogsled team. Susan and her husband Dave Monson ran in and won almost every major dog sled race worldwide. Additionally, Susan accomplished many challenges never before attempted, including taking a team of dogs to the summit of Mount McKinley! You will get a chance to see her Iditarod champion dogs in action and meet them up close as you hear more about dog mushing. Susan's husband Dave Monson, a champion of the Yukon Quest, or a senior handler, will share stories of life in the dog yard and on the trails, as puppies play in anticipation of joining the team.

The fish camp is the summer home for Interior Athabascan Indians who practice a subsistence lifestyle. Fish camp is also where family elders work side by side with younger generations, passing down their history and culture. It is at the fish camp that they catch fish to feed their dogs and themselves throughout the winter. The fish are caught in a fishwheel, which scoops the fish from the river as it is turned by the current. You'll see a native guide demonstrate how fish are cut and prepared for human and dog consumption.

The highlight of the cruise is a one-hour stop at the Chena Indian Village, where Alaskan Native guides will take you on a guided tour. You'll see an Athabascan Indian village with cabins made of spruce logs, a cache used for storing supplies, and fur pelts. Your guides will explain how the wolf, fox, martin, and beaver were used to provide food and protection in the harsh Arctic climate.

Our guides will show you a spruce bark hut, which Athabascans used as primitive shelters, and an authentic birch bark canoe made without any metal fasteners. To the side of the cabin are hides of the largest game animals in the Interior--moose, bear, and caribou. You'll learn how Athabascan Indians called animals, how they tanned the hides, and how they preserved them.

In addition, you will visit the fenced dog yard where the late four-time Iditarod champion Susan Butcher's Trailbreaker Kennel keeps some of her dogs. You'll get to see them up close and hear stories about how these champions helped Susan win four Iditarod races.