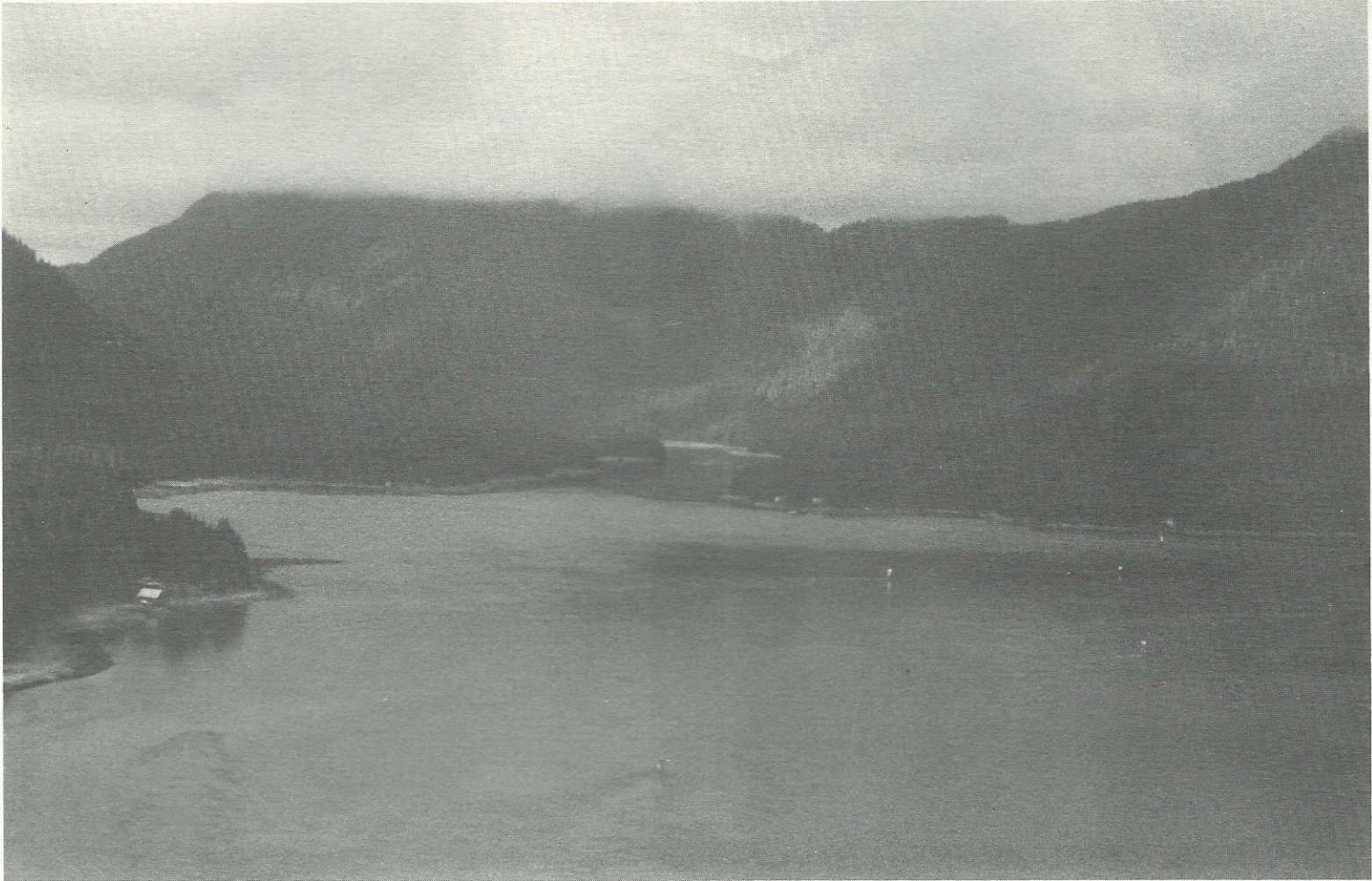


KUPREANOF

Prepared by Calista Professional Services under contract with the Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs, Division of Municipal and Regional Assistance, June, 1984.



The Community

Mayor - Robert Baede

City Council Members, 1985

Ethel Bergmann
Kathryn Chaney
Tom Greer
Emily Merriam
Sharon Sprague
Kurt Wohlhurer

History — The community of Kupreanof is located on Lindenberg Peninsula, on the northeast shore of Kupreanof Island. Early residents homesteaded in the area at the turn of the century, about the same time that Peter Buschmann was founding Petersburg directly across Wrangell Narrows. The first business in Kupreanof was a small sawmill started in 1911 by the Knudsen brothers. In its early years the mill produced barrels for salted fish which were shipped out of Petersburg. In the early 1920s, the Yukon Fur Farm began raising foxes but shortly shifted to mink, becoming the first mink farm in Alaska.

During the 1920's, approximately 100 persons resided in the area then known as West Petersburg. In those days, nearly every residence built on the island was associated with business activities. In addition to the sawmill, Yukon Fur Farm, and commercial fishing, residents operated a small store, a gaff hook factory, and a half dozen mink ranches.

During the 1930's and 40's, other types of commercial activity locating in West Petersburg included a small ship repair facility, an outboard motor repair shop, a clam cannery, and a barrel making enterprise. Commercial logging was also active. Practically every home is located near shore giving residents easy access to marine subsistence resources as part of their real annual income.

Although the Knudsen Mill and Yukon Fur Farm continued operations into the 1960s, the economics of living on the island became more difficult during the 1950s and the Island's resident population fell from 60 in 1950 to 26 in 1960. Since 1960, Kupreanof's population has grown slowly, to 36 in 1970, and about 50 in 1984. The population

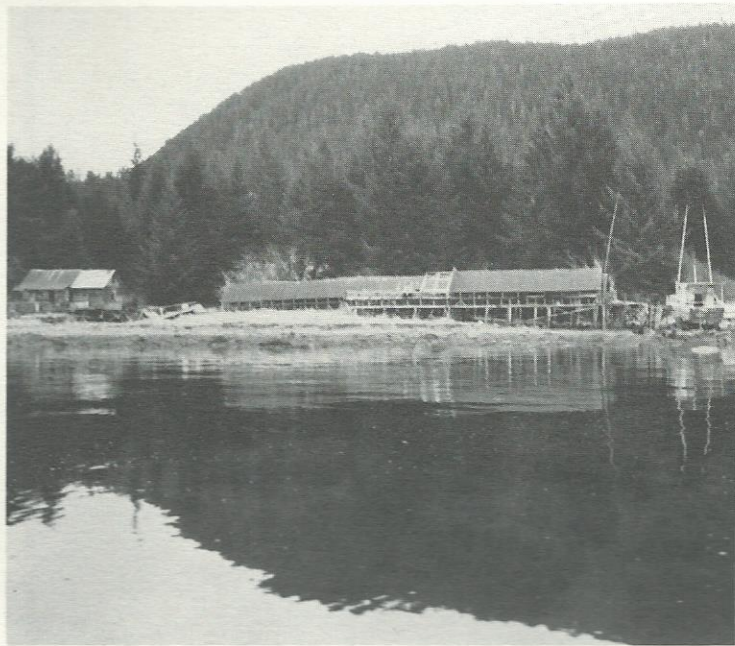
of 26 people in 1960. Thereafter, it has grown, relatively slowly again, to 47 residents in 1980. In that year, Kupreanof's population included 28 men and 19 women, 45 Whites and 2 Natives, and, the population's median age was 31 years. More recent estimates (Alaska Department of Community and Regional Affairs) for 1983 show a total population of 54 persons.



commercially. A few residents travel back and forth weekdays to jobs in Petersburg.

Traditionally and to date, skiffs have been the principal means of local travel for Kupreanof residents. However, trails have been used since the 1920s. Today, boardwalk trails give recreational access to Petersburg Mountain and Petersburg Lake and a means of access from Government Float to some private properties.

Not wanting urban services and committed to maintaining a roadless, sparsely settled area where private, self-sufficient lifestyles can flourish, area residents officially organized as a second class community incorporated under state laws in 1975. They named their community Kupreanof after the island on which it lies.



This is all that remains of the Yukon Fur Farm, which operated for forty years until its closure in the mid-1960's.

Population

Date:	1930	1950	1960	1970	1980
Population:	45	60	26	36	47

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Census of Population, 1980; City of Kupreanof, Kupreanof Policy Plan, 1984.

West Petersburg's population reportedly reached nearly 100 persons in the 1920's (Kupreanof Policy Plan, 1984). However, when the first U.S. Census for West Petersburg was taken in 1930, its count showed only 45 permanent residents.

In a community the size of Kupreanof, the addition or loss of a few people show up as large shifts in population when expressed as percentages. For this reason, it is more informative to note general population trends rather than percentage rates of change from one period to the next.

Following the decline in population during the 1920's, West Petersburg's population increased slightly between 1930 and 1950. During the next decade, its population fell by more than half, to a low



Boardwalks and trails are the primary means of overground access in Kupreanof; however, most travel in this community is by skiff.

This older home is still standing and part of the Yukon Fur Farm facilities.

Economy — The majority of Kupreanof's working residents are self-employed. Eleven persons, forming the community's largest occupational group, fish commercially. Other self-employed people include a dentist, four artists and authors, and individuals engaged in marine repair, carpentry, labor, and domestic service. In addition to these, several residents are employed by government or in other fulltime jobs in Petersburg. Several other residents are retired.

Since the mill closed and mink farming ceased in the 1960's, Kupreanof has had no industrial base nor commercial activities located within its boundaries. For cash income, consequently, most residents work outside the community. However, subsistence uses of water and forest resources available in and around Kupreanof constitute an important portion of every household's income.

Government - Kupreanof residents incorporated in 1975 as a second class municipality under Alaska state law. Located outside any organized borough, municipal powers reside within the city government which is governed by an elected mayor and a six-member city council. The City of Kupreanof has no paid staff and the administration of government affairs is carried out through the volunteer services of appointed officials. These include an administrator, clerk, fire chief, planning director, police chief and treasurer.

Kupreanof provides only a limited scope of municipal services, mainly planning and land use regulations. An appointed, five-member Planning Commission is the local platting authority and serves the city council in an advisory capacity in planning and zoning matters.

Kupreanof has a comprehensive policy plan that was adopted in 1984 and a zoning and subdivision ordinance. In addition, the city has purchased and made available for each residence smoke alarms and fire extinguishers. By policy which is aimed at supporting and encouraging the self-sufficient lifestyle characteristic of Kupreanof residents, local government does not provide other municipal services which are typically available in other communities.



This boardwalk runs between buildings of the once active Yukon Fur Farm in Kupreanof.

Land Ownership - Most of Kupreanof's land is publicly-owned, with the City owning 180 acres, the State of Alaska owning 1,660 acres, and 205 acres in private ownership. The privately-held land consists of single family houses, cabins, and storage sheds on lots located along the coast at several hundred yard intervals. The 205 acres of private land is subdivided into 47 parcels held by 37 owners, with an average of 4.4 acres per parcel. All of Kupreanof's development is residential, with 115 acres of privately held land developed, and 90 acres undeveloped.

City and State lands are undeveloped. The State Department of Natural Resources has classified state lands as public recreation, wildlife habitat, watershed, or unclassified. Of the state lands in Kupreanof, 41 percent are in either public recreation or wildlife habitat classifications, 16 percent are classified as watershed, and 43 percent are unclassified. This 650 acres of unclassified state land is eligible for disposal under future state land disposal programs.

The City of Kupreanof has designated an area on the southern portion of Kupreanof Island's west bank for disposal; however, plans have not been made concerning how much land to sell, or when to sell