

What's a 'HUT' anyway?

Is it a cabin? *Is it a hotel in the woods?* **A lodge?**

"Hut" is a term used for mountain shelters in the Alps, New Zealand, Canada, the Lower 48 states, and elsewhere. The term encompasses a wide range of buildings, from the small and humble to multi-story buildings capable of sleeping 100-200 people. Typically what they have in common is access by human power and hostel-like accommodations. Some offer food and beverages, some do not. While cabins, huts, lodges, and hotels have common aims of serving the needs of travelers for a place to rest, huts are unique. When we at Alaska Huts uses the term "Hut," we mean:

- Huts are **non-profit**. They are designed to serve the public interest at the lowest cost for minimal services. There is no incentive to maximize profits for owners or shareholders because there are no individual owners or shareholders.
- Huts are likely to have **only one hut keeper** on site in summer. That person will be on duty only a portion of the day. For much of the year there will be no 'staff.'
- Huts are **rustic**. No standard plumbing or electricity. No linens. Only rudimentary facilities for washing (basin, or sauna). A sleeping space may not have its own door. A hut user sleeps in a sheet sleep sack or sleeping bag.
- **Huts depend on hut users** to help make the operation run smoothly. There are no waiters or busboys or dishwashers.
- Food service, if available at all, consists of a single, simple, self-serve meal prepared from non-perishable food.
- Hut amenities, services, and costs fall well below high-end eco-tourism/fishing/hunting lodges in Alaska, or road-side B&Bs, but above Forest Service public use cabins, providing for a unique mix of people.
- A hut is like a public use cabin but for two or more parties at a time—consciously **meant to mix people**, build community, and accommodate education groups.

Meeting new people and swapping stories and small-world experiences is one of the strongest elements of multi-party huts in other states and countries. And backcountry huts build a community of people who care for public lands. Huts are a unique way for Alaskans to meet people from other parts of the world and for visitors to come together with 'real Alaskans' in a way that is not contrived or 'touristy.'

The Alaska huts proposed may sleep up to 20. And Alaska huts will be priced for a broad cross section of the public, from low cost to moderately high costs, with different levels of self-sufficiency required at each level. Prices will be set to cover costs but not to profit shareholders (Alaska Huts is a 501c3 non-profit organization). The experience, always, will assume a rustic environment and a need for self-sufficiency in the outdoors.

The hut-to-hut trail will bring people together amid the brilliant white peaks and flashing mountain streams at the transition from hemlock forest to open tundra – the amazing glacial landscape of the Kenai Mountains in Southcentral Alaska.