

Monk's Lagoon — Anvik

APAANGCUK ANWIGMI ETAALLRIA. – FATHER HERMAN LIVED AT MONK'S LAGOON.



Photo: Small chapel at Monk's Lagoon. Courtesy of Tim and Norman Smith.

Monk's Lagoon is a tiny, tree-ringed cove at the southeastern end of Spruce Island, about fifteen miles north of Kodiak harbor. It is named for Father Herman, a beloved Russian Orthodox monk who established a hermitage there in 1818. Father Herman ran a small school and an orphanage in Monk's Lagoon, where he is believed to have performed miracles. He lived at the lagoon until his death in 1837. In 1935 another orthodox religious leader, Father Gerasim Schmaltz, moved to Monk's Lagoon.

Today, Monk's Lagoon is the site of an annual pilgrimage. Every August 9, the anniversary of Herman's 1970 canonization by the Orthodox Church of America, the faithful return to the lagoon to celebrate his life. After gathering at the Holy Resurrection Russian Orthodox Church in Kodiak, they proceed to Kodiak Harbor where fishermen provide free transportation to Spruce

Island.

Participants in the pilgrimage attend mass in the small wooden chapel, visit the graves of beloved local priests Father Gerasim Schmaltz and Father Peter Kreta, explore trails, and picnic. Many people also take a handful of dirt from beneath the chapel where Father Herman was buried until his canonization or fill bottles with water from a nearby spring because the soil and water are believed to have curative powers.

Visits to Monk's Lagoon aren't limited to August 9. Families from nearby Ouzinkie often celebrate the Fourth of July by picnicking in the area, many people make spiritual visits on their own, and tourists can contact the church reader in Ouzinkie to arrange a tour of this sacred place.