In 1980, the United States Congress designated 956,255 acres as the Kootznoowoo Wilderness. Located approximately 15 miles southeast of Juneau and encompassed by Admiralty Island National Monument on Admiralty Island, the Kootznoowoo Wilderness is primary accessed by boats or floatplanes but canoes and kayaks can also be used. With its salmon-filled creeks, hundreds of spectacular mountain lakes, and towering alpine peaks, Kootznoowoo can provide for the ultimate wilderness experience. It is strategically managed to continue the preservation of this undeveloped, enduring ecosystem for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

There are 14 public recreation cabins, ten three-sided shelters, the Cross Island Canoe Route, several small portaging trails, and three hiking trails in the Kootznoowoo Wilderness. Several of the cabins and shelters are found on the canoe route. A map of Admiralty Island is available for sale at the Admiralty Island National Monument office.

Walk carefully here. The Tlingit people of Southeast Alaska have long known that brown bears outnumber people by a large margin in the rainforest island wilderness known as Kootznoowoo, the “bear fort.” Here the brown bear confronts us with our fear of the primeval forest and serves as an ambassador for all things wild. If we followed the brown bear through the course of a year, from her rocky alpine den to the coastal stream exploding with spawning salmon, we would discover a vast place known intimately by smell and taste. If we followed her tracks along the edge of a meadow to her lingering scent on the bark of a spruce tree, we would inhale her secret message: “I am here, I walk this place.” It is your place to feel the wild pulse of the earth, where the ambassador treads on padded feet. Walk carefully.
People are lured into Alaska for its beauty and excitement but remember it is also very unforgiving. Kootznoowoo Wilderness is within a temperate rainforest where the average summer temperatures are between 45-65ºF. Be prepared with the appropriate clothing, safety equipment, shelter supplies, and water purifying devices for a cool and frequently overcast climate. This wilderness also contains a high density of brown bears so store food and trash properly. During the summer months, be especially careful around salmon spawning streams. Boaters and paddlers should be especially cautious when traveling in this area. Pay special attention to tides particularly inside inlets and watch for unmarked rocks and reefs.

Tongass National Forest is the largest, intact coastal rainforest in America. The Kootznoowoo Wilderness is a piece of this treasure and is set aside for all visitors – now and in the future. To insure that this area is left unimpaired for future use, practice the following Leave No Trace principles.

♦ Plan ahead and be prepared for extreme weather conditions, and emergencies.
♦ Travel and camp on durable surfaces. There are several beaches in this wilderness that provide excellent camping spots. In pristine areas, disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails. When available use tent sites.
♦ Dispose of waste properly. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and toilet paper. Use bathroom facilities when available. On the marine shore dispose of human waste in the intertidal zone. If camping in upland forests dispose of solid waste by digging a cathole 6 to 8 inches deep located at least 200 feet from water or campsite.
♦ Leave what you find. Examine but do not touch cultural or historical structures or artifacts. Do not build structures or furniture with live trees.
♦ Minimize campfire impacts. Use a lightweight stove when possible. When a campfire is necessary, keep fires small. Build a fire below mean high tide, or when in a forested area, build a mound fire or use a fire pan to avoid damaging the ground vegetation. Stay away from boulders or tree bases to avoid long lasting black scars.
♦ Respect wildlife and other visitors in the surrounding area.

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