

National Parklands in Alaska

Alaska National Parklands
Alaska
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Chullina Bay, Lake Clark by Fred Hirschmann

Alaska is expansive and diverse. Its magnitude is difficult to comprehend, but its rewards are many and apparent. For climate and topography, “the Great Land” constitutes a virtual subcontinent. Seventeen National Park System areas protect representative natural, cultural, and historic features of this immense landscape. Ten were created by the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. This brochure introduces Alaska’s national parklands and national wild and scenic rivers administered by the National Park Service, as well as two complementary affiliated areas to which the National Park Service provides technical aid.

Travel Tips

Visiting the Alaska National Parklands requires planning. Alaska’s isolation and vastness can make travel to and through the state challenging. Just getting to Alaska can be an adventure—by air, highway, and/or sea. Commercial airlines serve Juneau, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and other cities. Cruise ships ply Alaska’s southeastern waters through the Inside Passage. The state ferry system, the Alaska Marine Highway, transports people and vehicles from the Lower 48 to southeast points and between points in southcentral Alaska. The Alaska Highway extends 1,500 miles from Dawson Creek, British Columbia, to Fairbanks and provides a land link with roads to the south. The Alaska Highway, paved in Alaska and most of Canada, is maintained year round.

Once in Alaska you may again have several options for travel to the parklands. Unlike most National Park Service areas in the Lower 48, most in Alaska are not accessible by road. Scheduled jet service to cities near some parklands puts you within air-taxi distance. To see or experience Alaska’s more remote reaches can require significant added time, effort, and money and may involve air and boat charters, rafts, kayaks, and hiking. See the back of this brochure for access information for the individual parklands.

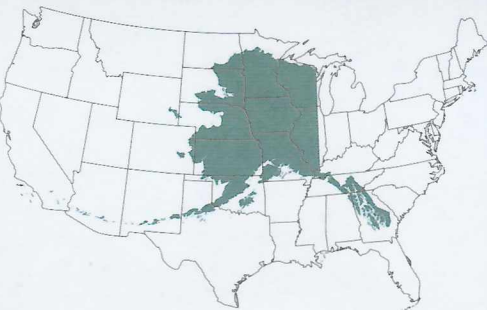
Private Lands

Privately owned lands are located within and next to parklands boundaries throughout Alaska. These private lands are not open to public use or travel without permission from the owners. Check with the appropriate park superintendent to determine the location of private lands and public easements. Unauthorized use or travel across private lands or public easements could be deemed criminal trespass.

Uses of Parklands

Many national parklands in Alaska are designated as national preserves. This designation allows for uses not typical in national parks or national monuments. Within these preserves, sport hunting and trapping are permitted subject to state fish and game laws, seasons, and bag limits and to federal laws and regulations.

Traditional subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering uses by rural Alaskans continue on many national parklands here. Subsistence uses include customary and traditional uses of wild renewable resources for direct personal or family consumption. Local residency and customary reliance on hunting, fishing, and gathering determine eligibility for continued subsistence uses on national parklands.



Superimposing Alaska—the Great Land—on the Lower 48 states shows how vast it is. Travelers must plan accordingly.

Our Lasting Frontier

Entering the American scene in 1867 as “Seward’s Folly” did little to reveal the awesome character of a place early people called *Alyeshka*—the Great Land. The rush for gold that followed created its own colorful images of derring-do and fortunes won and lost by scalawags. But the haunting beauty of the Far North at times overshadowed the miner’s quest for gold. Dreams of quick riches often gave way to making peace with the land and settling in.

The chronicles of explorers and naturalists are a strangely appealing mix of impressions: a barren arctic wasteland teeming with herds of caribou; uninhabitable terrain that proved to be the ancestral homeland of cultures harkening back to the end of the ice age; and winters of deadening cold giving way to balmy summers that warm vast nurseries for migratory birds destined for every state and all continents of the world. Alaska has the biggest moose, biggest bears, tallest spruce, rivers thick with salmon, yet it is our nation’s most fragile environment. Could all these descriptions come from one state? The elusive character of Alaska is an important part of its appeal. Alaska recalls an earlier time in our westward expansion when uncharted frontiers helped shape the American image. It recalls our sense of adventure and hardiness—in response to which progress and change have in fact moved northward to Alaska. Statehood in 1959 brought an entitlement to the state of 106 million acres of public lands potentially rich in oil and gas, minerals, and coal. The largest oil strike in U.S. history, at Prudhoe Bay, underscores the state’s promising future and its vital role in our nation’s economy.



For More Information

For information about individual areas, contact them—see the back of this brochure—or visit the National Park Service homepage at www.nps.gov. For information about other public lands in Alaska visit or contact the Alaska Public Lands Information Centers in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Ketchikan, and Tok or visit their homepage at www.nps.gov/aplic. Contact: Anchorage Alaska Public Lands Information Center, 250 Cushman Street, Suite 1A, Fairbanks, AK 99701-4848, 907-456-0527, TDD 907-456-0532; Southeast Alaska Visitor Center, 50 Main Street, Ketchikan, AK 99901-6659, 907-228-6214, TDD 907-228-6237; and Tok Alaska Public Lands Information Center, Box 359, Tok, AK 99780-0359, 907-883-5667.

Tourist information is available from the Alaska Division of Tourism, Department of Commerce and Economic Development, P.O. Box 110801, Juneau, AK 99811-0801, 907-465-2010, www.commerce.state.ak.us/tourism/homenew.htm. For information about ferry or railroad travel in Alaska contact: Alaska Marine Highway System, P.O. Box 25535, Juneau, AK 99802-5535, 800-642-0066, www.dot.state.ak.us/external/amhs/home.html or Alaska Railroad Corp. Passenger Services, P.O. Box 107500, Anchorage, AK 99510-7500, 800-544-0552, www.akrr.com.

Claims to land by Alaska’s Native people were similarly settled by Congress in 1971. Nearly 44 million acres of federal land and more than \$962 million were awarded in final settlement of all Native claims to land. Amid such rapid change our Last Frontier could easily slip away, as did our first. But the national interests in Alaska go beyond raw materials for industry and settlements of land claims. Vast unblemished landscapes and tumbling rivers fresh as creation are also treasures of our collective heritage. Ancient hearths, gravesites, and delicate stone tools of chert and jade tell of early American peoples and their survival at the outer edge of human habitat. We, like the pioneer travelers, find the abundant fish, wildlife, matchless scenery, unnamed mountains, and numberless valleys beyond our wildest expectations.

Alaska abounds with the inspiring landscapes that fired our ancestors’ spirits through risk and hardship on their westward trek. It also offers further test to a uniquely American idea, born at Yellowstone in 1872, that certain places are special, above the marketplace, and worthy of lasting protection. The first national park area in Alaska was established in 1910 at Sitka in commemoration of the Tlingit culture and early European settlers of Russian America. By the time Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park was established in 1976, such well-known landmarks as Mount McKinley (1917), Katmai (1918), and Glacier Bay (1925) had entered the rolls.

After statehood and the settlement of Native land claims, the push to preserve more land continued, culminating in 1980 with passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. It established 10 new units of the National Park System and expanded Glacier Bay, Katmai, and Mount McKinley (renamed “Denali”). The act more than doubled the size of the National Park System, which, in Alaska, now contains more than 54 million acres, or 13 percent of the state’s 375 million acres.

Alaskan in scale, with towering mountains, vast glaciers, wild rivers, and bountiful wildlife, these parks also reflect the human values of the Last Frontier. The traditional dependence by rural Alaskans on wildlife, fish, and plants continues in many park areas. In addition to these subsistence provisions, national preserves allow the continuation of sport hunting and trapping.

The Alaska national parklands also protect a vast sweep of history, from the artifacts of the first North Americans—found in Bering Land Bridge National Preserve and other northwestern Alaska national parklands—to the buildings and belongings of turn-of-the-century gold seekers in Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park. For recreation, scientific research, and as a vast adventuring ground for present and future generations, the Alaska national parklands comprise the finest natural and cultural resources in public ownership—an enduring frontier for all the world.

National Parklands in Alaska



Aniakchak 1

Central to Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve is the 30-square-mile volcanic Aniakchak Caldera. It was created when the volcano's center collapsed sometime after the last glaciation. Later volcanic activity built a cone, Vent Mountain, inside the caldera. Aniakchak last erupted in 1931. The caldera's Surprise Lake, heated by hot springs, cascades through a 1,500-foot rift in the crater wall to become the Aniakchak River. Volcanic lava flows, cinder cones, and explosion pits can be seen here in one of Alaska's most remote national park areas. Wildlife includes occasional caribou, grizzly bears, eagles, and sockeye salmon.

Access: Scheduled air service puts you within charter flight distance via King Salmon or Port Heiden, but floatplanes can land on Surprise Lake. Peninsula weather can be severe any time of year. **Approximate Size:** 600,000 acres. **For Information** contact: Superintendent, Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve, P.O. Box 7, King Salmon, AK 99613-0007; 907-246-3305; www.nps.gov/anla.



Bering Land Bridge 2

Bering Land Bridge National Preserve is a remnant of the land bridge connecting Asia with North America more than 10,000 years ago. During the ice age, whenever sea level fell enough, this became part of a migration route—up to 1,000 miles wide—for people, animals, and plants. Prehistoric Asian hunters may have entered the Americas here. The Chukchi and Bering Seas now cover the land bridge. Today Eskimos from neighboring villages pursue subsistence lifestyles and manage reindeer herds in and near the preserve. More than 112 migratory bird species can be seen here and occasional seals, walrus, and whales. Muskoxen, grizzly bears, foxes, wolves, and moose also inhabit the preserve.

Access: Usual access to this isolated preserve is by air service out of Nome and Kotzebue. **Approximate Size:** 2.7 million acres. **For Information** contact: Superintendent, Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, P.O. Box 1029, Kotzebue, AK 99752-1029; 907-443-2522; www.nps.gov/bela.



Cape Krusenstern 3

Cape Krusenstern National Monument is a coastal plain with big lagoons, backed by gently rolling, limestone hills. Archeological sites trace 4,500 years of human use of its coastline by prehistoric peoples who occupied it seasonally to hunt marine mammals, especially seals. As big storms and regular wind and wave action formed new beach ridges, camps were made on those close to the water. Oldest sites are on beach ridges farthest from the ocean. Over centuries this made a timeline giving a definite, datable outline of northwest Alaska's cultural succession and development. The Cape Krusenstern area is a designated Archeological District in the National Register of Historic Places and a National Historic Landmark.

Today, as for centuries, primary human use of Cape Krusenstern is subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering by Inupiaq Eskimos of nearby villages. Wildlife includes caribou, grizzly bears, wolves, red foxes, lynx, and wolverines, with walrus, polar bears, seals, and whales found offshore at various times of year.

Access: Daily jet service from Anchorage to Kotzebue; chartered air taxis from Kotzebue to the monument. A boat charter is available in summer by advance arrangement. **Approximate Size:** 660,000 acres. **For Information** contact: Superintendent, Cape Krusenstern National Monument, P.O. Box 1029, Kotzebue, Alaska 99752-1029; 907-442-3890; www.nps.gov/cakr.



Denali 4

Mount McKinley, at 20,320 feet, is North America's highest mountain. The Athabaskan natives called it Denali, "the High One," and in 1980 the national park's name was changed to Denali. Massive Mount McKinley is the towering centerpiece of the glacier-strewn Alaska Range. Under its shadow in Denali National Park and Preserve are barren-ground caribou, grizzly bears, wolves, moose, Dall sheep, and other wildlife. Glacier-born rivers laden with silt (or rock flour) meander across their wide, flat valleys. Much of the park's scant tree growth lies in the river valleys. At higher elevations are large expanses of the tundra's fascinating world of dwarfed shrubs and miniature wildflowers.

Access: By highway, railroad, and scheduled air service. To protect wildlife and to preserve opportunities to see it, private vehicle use is restricted on the park road. A shuttle bus service operates in Denali along the 85-mile wilderness road from the park entrance to Wonder Lake. Buses will drop you off or pick you up at points along the park road. **Approximate Size:** 6 million acres. **For Information** contact: Superintendent, Denali National Park and Preserve, P.O. Box 9, Denali Park, AK 99755-0009; 907-683-2294; www.nps.gov/dena.



Gates of the Arctic 5

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve lies entirely north of the Arctic Circle. Its austere beauty and grandeur defy description. It includes the scenic headland of the Brooks Range, the northernmost extension of the Rocky Mountains. Park and preserve combined are four times the size of Yellowstone National Park. This is the ultimate wilderness that captured the heart and imagination of Arctic explorer Robert Marshall in the 1930s.

Barren-ground caribou and grizzly bears range the spacious, fragile tundra to garner a living based in its thin veneer of arctic soil. The park straddles the crest of the Brooks Range. Its southern flank samples the boreal forest of Alaska's interior. Its north slope lies at the edge of a polar desert with precipitation comparable to Earth's driest regions. Two distinct cultures are represented here: the Athabaskan peoples of the spruce-taiga forests and the Nunamit Eskimos, who hunt caribou in the high valleys. Both cultures continue traditional subsistence patterns of life in the park and preserve.

Access: Scheduled flights from Fairbanks serve Bettles/Evensville and Anaktuvuk Pass. **Approximate Size:** 8.4 million acres. **For Information** contact: Superintendent, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, 201 First Avenue, Fairbanks, AK 99701-4848; 907-692-5494; www.nps.gov/gaar.



Glacier Bay 6

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve contains some of the world's most impressive tidewater glaciers. The bay has experienced at least four major glacial advances and four major retreats and serves as an outdoor research laboratory. Mountains rise right from its tidewater up to three vertical miles. Mount Fairweather is southeastern Alaska's highest peak. The dramatic variety of plant communities ranges from barren terrain just recovering from glacial retreat to lush temperate rain forest. The story of plant succession is nowhere more richly told than at Glacier Bay. The park and preserve harbors brown and black bears, mountain goats, moose, whales, seals, plus eagles and more than 200 other species of birds.

Together with Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and the Tatshenshini-Alsek Park in British Columbia, this 24-million-acre wilderness is a World Heritage Site and the world's largest internationally protected area.

Access: By commercial cruise ship, tour boat, or aircraft or by scheduled air or boat service from Juneau and other southeastern Alaska communities. **Approximate Size:** 3.3 million acres. **For Information** contact: Superintendent, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Bartlett Cove, Gustavus, Alaska 99826-0140; 907-697-2232; www.nps.gov/glba.



Katmai 7

In 1912 a tremendous eruption occurred in the wilderness that today is Katmai National Park and Preserve. One of the most violent ever recorded, the blast collapsed Mount Katmai. Afterwards, in what came to be called the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, fumaroles by the thousands issued steam hot enough to melt zinc. Only a few active vents remain today, and the crater holds a lake.

Katmai's scenery boasts lakes, rivers, glaciers, waterfalls, and a coastline of plunging cliffs and islets. Here the huge brown bear—Earth's largest terrestrial carnivore—feasts on migrating salmon in the summer. This area is critical for the brown bear's survival on the Alaska Peninsula. It also boasts some of southwestern Alaska's best sport-fishing.

Brooks Camp Reservations: Advance day-use and campground reservations are required for trips to Brooks Camp between June 1 and September 17. Call the national park reservation service at 800-365-2267 between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. Alaska time.

Access: Scheduled jets from Anchorage serve King Salmon on the park's west boundary year-round. Daily commercial flights operate between King Salmon and the Brooks River area from June through mid-September. Air charters from King Salmon operate from May through October. **Approximate Size:** 4 million acres. **For Information** contact: Superintendent, Katmai National Park and Preserve, P.O. Box 7, King Salmon, AK 99613-0007; 907-246-3305; www.nps.gov/katm.



Kenai Fjords 8

The 700-square-mile Harding Icefield, one of four major ice caps in the United States, crowns Kenai Fjords National Park. The icefield may be a remnant of the Pleistocene ice masses once covering half of Alaska. The magnificent coastline of Kenai Fjords is steep valleys that were carved by glaciers in retreat. Active glaciers still calve and crash into the sea as visitors watch from tour boats here. Sea stacks, islets, and jagged shoreline are remnants of mountains now inching imperceptibly into the sea under the geological force of the North Pacific tectonic plate. Exit Glacier, the park's most accessible area, can be reached by car and a short walk. The glacier is a nine-mile drive off the highway.

Moose, bears, and a large population of mountain goats inhabit the land. Steller sea lions haul out on rocky islands at the entrances to the fjords. Wildlife includes harbor seals that rest on icebergs, porpoises, sea otters, and Killer (orca) and other whales. Thousands of sea birds—horned and tufted puffins, common murrelets, and black-legged kittiwakes—rear their young on steep cliffs.

Access: Seward, 130 miles south of Anchorage via the Seward Highway, is the gateway to Kenai Fjords. Served by scheduled buses, commuter flights, and railroad, Seward offers charter boats and aircraft services. The park visitor center is next to the Harbor Master's office in Seward's small boat harbor and offers area information, a slide show, and videos, exhibits, and a bookstore. Ranger-led programs are offered in summer. **Approximate Size:** 669,000 acres. **For Information** contact: Superintendent, Kenai Fjords National Park, P.O. Box 1727, Seward, AK 99664-1727; 907-224-3175; www.nps.gov/kefj.



Klondike Gold Rush 9

When an 1897 Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* reported a steamer from Alaska putting in at Seattle, Washington, with a ton of gold aboard, it set off the great gold stampede. At the rush's height John Muir likened Skagway to "a nest of ants taken into a strange country and stirred up by a stick." Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park preserves historic buildings from this period in Seattle's Pioneer Square Historic District and Skagway, Alaska, and portions of the Chilkoot and White Pass Trails in Canada and Alaska. In 1998 the park was designated as a unit of the nation's first international historical park, combining with Parks Canada units commemorating the Klondike Gold Rush.

The park offers interpretive programs from its visitor center in the restored railway depot buildings at Broadway and Second Avenue. The visitor center offers information about the Chilkoot Trail from Dyea, Alaska, to Bennett, British Columbia.

Access: By ferry, cruise ship, scheduled airline, air taxi, or road (South Klondike Highway). **Approximate Size:** 13,200 acres. For Chilkoot Trail information, permits, and reservations visit The Trail Center at Broadway and Second Avenue, 907-983-3655 (seasonal) or 800-661-0486 or 867-667-3910 in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. **For Information** contact: Superintendent, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, P.O. Box 517, Skagway, AK 99840-0517; 907-983-2921; www.nps.gov/kglo.



Kobuk Valley 10

Enclosed by the Baird Mountains on the north and the Waring Mountains on the south, Kobuk Valley occupies a broad valley along the Kobuk River in northwest Alaska. The boreal forest reaches its northern limit here, resulting in an open woodland of small trees in a mat of thick tundra. The dry, cold climate of the Kobuk Valley still approximates that of late Pleistocene times, supporting a remnant flora once covering the vast Arctic steppe tundra bridging Alaska and Asia. Sand created by the grinding of glaciers has been carried to the Kobuk Valley by winds and water. The Great Kobuk Sand Dunes—25 square miles of shifting dunes where summer temperatures can exceed 90°F—is the largest active dune field in the arctic latitudes.

People have lived in the Kobuk Valley for at least 12,500 years. This human use is best recorded at the extensive archeological sites at Onion Portage. The Kobuk Valley remains an important area for traditional subsistence harvest of caribou, moose, bears, fish, and many edible and medicinal plants. The Western Arctic caribou herd, numbering 450,000, migrates to and from their calving grounds through the park every spring and fall. The gentle Kobuk River is popular for fishing and canoeing or kayaking. The Salmon River is a designated national wild and scenic river. There are excellent opportunities for photography and wilderness backpacking throughout the park.

Access: Daily jet service from Anchorage to Kotzebue. Scheduled air service to nearby villages, and chartered air taxis for remote landings in the park. In summer, with advance arrangement, boat charters are available. **Approximate Size:** 1.7 million acres. **For Information** contact: Superintendent, Kobuk Valley National Park, P.O. Box 1029, Kotzebue, AK 99752-1029; 907-442-3890; www.nps.gov/kova.



Lake Clark 11

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, where the Alaska and Aleutian ranges meet, has been called the Alaskan Alps. Set in the heart of the Chignik Mountains along Cook Inlet's western shore, the park boasts great geologic diversity. Its jagged peaks, granite spires, glaciers, two active volcanoes, and 50-mile-long Lake Clark provide a dazzling array of scenery. Fed by hundreds of waterfalls throughout its rimming mountains, the lake is part of an important red salmon spawning ground. These features combine to create a maze of natural river running and hiking routes providing spectacular wilderness experiences.

Brown and black bears, caribou, moose, Dall sheep, salmon, and trout inhabit these scenic environs. Within the park and preserve are coastal lowlands of spruce and marshes, alpine meadows, and tundra plains backed by ever-changing mountain scenes.

Access: Air charters from Anchorage, Kenai, or Iliamna. Lodging, from primitive to modern, is offered by private operators in the park and preserve. **Approximate Size:** 4 million acres. **For Information** contact: Superintendent, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, 4230 University Drive, Suite 311, Anchorage, AK 99508-4626; 907-271-3751; www.nps.gov/laci; or Field Headquarters, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, #1 Park Place, Port Alsworth, AK 99653-9999; 907-781-2218.



Noatak 12

Noatak National Preserve, in the western Brooks Range, encompasses over 250 miles of the Noatak River and protects the largest untouched mountain-ringed river basin in the United States. It provides a benchmark for measuring future environmental health. Recognizing the value of this vast wilderness, the preserve has been named an International Biosphere Reserve. The river basin provides outstanding opportunities for scientific research, environmental education, and subsistence and recreational activities.

Above the Arctic Circle, the Noatak River flows from glacial melt atop Mount Iglikpak in the Brooks Range out to Kotzebue Sound. Along its 425-mile course the river has carved out the Grand Canyon of the Noatak. The preserve is in a transition zone between the northern coniferous forests and tundra biomes. The river basin contains most types of arctic habitat, as well as one of the finest arrays of flora and fauna. The Western Arctic caribou herd, numbering approximately 450,000, migrates to and from its calving grounds through the broad expanse of the preserve. Other large mammals include brown bears, moose, wolves, lynx, and Dall sheep. More than 150 songbird species migrating from Asia and the tip of South America yearly pass through the preserve, providing spectacular bird-watching. The Noatak River supports arctic char, whitefish, grayling, and salmon. The slow-moving, gentle Noatak River offers excellent fishing, canoeing, and kayaking. Opportunities for wilderness backpacking and photography are plentiful.

Access: Daily jet service from Anchorage to Kotzebue. Scheduled air service to nearby villages, and chartered air taxis for remote landings in the park. In summer, with advance arrangement, a boat charter is available. **Approximate Size:** 6.5 million acres. **For Information** contact: Superintendent, Noatak National Preserve, P.O. Box 1029, Kotzebue, AK 99752-1029; 907-442-3890; www.nps.gov/noat.



Sitka 13

Sitka is one of Alaska's most scenic and historic cities. Sitka National Historical Park preserves the site of the 1804 fort and battle that marked the last major resistance of the Tlingit Indians to Russian colonization. Alaska's economic and cultural capital for half a century, Sitka was the headquarters for the Russian-American Company's fur and other trading operations. The park displays a fine collection of totem poles, and visitor center exhibits illustrate the art and traditions of the Tlingit people. The park also contains Alaska's premier historic structure, the restored 1842 Russian Bishop's House.

The Tlingit long ago followed the salmon streams southward to settle on this island-dotted coast at "Shee Atika," as they called Sitka. They enjoyed a rich culture, esthetically and spiritually, in a world of natural abundance. This was interrupted by the Russian-American Company under Alexander Baranov's determined leadership. The 1804 Battle of Sitka ended when the Tlingit ran out of ammunition and withdrew. Baranov burned their fort and built a new town he named New Archangel.

Access: By ferry, commercial cruiseships, and daily jet service. **Size:** 106 acres. **For Information** contact: Superintendent, Sitka National Historical Park, 106 Metlakatla Street, Sitka, AK 99835-7665; 907-747-6281; www.nps.gov/sitk.



Wrangell - St. Elias 14

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve abuts Canada's Kluane National Park. With its neighbors to the south, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve and Tatshenshini-Alsek Park in British Columbia, this 24-million-acre wilderness is a World Heritage Site and the world's largest internationally protected area. This is North America's mountain kingdom. Here the Wrangell, St. Elias, and Chugach mountain ranges converge. The park and preserve contains North America's largest assemblage of glaciers and its greatest collection of peaks more than 16,000 feet in elevation. One glacier, the Malaspina, is larger than the state of Rhode Island. Mount St. Elias, at 18,008 feet, is the second highest peak in the United States.

The area abounds in opportunities for wilderness backpacking, lake fishing, car camping, river running, cross-country skiing, and mountain climbing. In both stature and numbers, Dall sheep populations of the Wrangells are considered the world's finest.

Access: Park headquarters in Copper Center is 210 miles east of Anchorage by road. Two primitive roads enter the park. Under normal summer conditions most two-wheel-drive vehicles can make the 59-mile trip from Chitina to McCarthy and the historic Kennecott townsite and the first 29 miles of the Gilana-to-Nabesna Road. Air taxis provide access to more than 200 bush airstrips throughout the park and preserve. **Approximate Size:** 13 million acres. **For Information** contact: Superintendent, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, P.O. Box 439, Copper Center, AK 99573-0439; 907-822-5234; www.nps.gov/wrst.



Yukon - Charley Rivers 15

Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve contains 115 miles of the historic Yukon River and the entire 88-mile Charley River basin. Old cabins and relics recall the Yukon's importance in the gold rush era. Archeological and paleontological sites in the preserve provide knowledge of both thousands and millions of years in the past.

The two rivers are quite different. The broad and swift Yukon flows with glacial silt. The smaller Charley flows crystal clear and is considered one of Alaska's finest recreational streams. They merge between the early-day boom towns of Eagle and Circle. Cliffs and bluffs along the two rivers provide nesting habitat for peregrine and gyrfalcons. Beyond the riverbanks, grizzly bears, Dall sheep, and moose may be seen. Floating the Yukon—by raft, canoe, or powerboat—is a popular way to see wildlife and scenery. The Charley River demands more advanced river skills.

Access: By Taylor Highway (summer only) to Eagle or Steese Highway from Fairbanks to Circle. Scheduled flights serve both towns from Fairbanks. **Approximate Size:** 2.5 million acres. **For Information** contact: Superintendent, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, P.O. Box 167, Eagle, AK 99738-0167; 907-547-2233; www.nps.gov/yuch.



National Wild and Scenic Rivers

Natural and free-flowing rivers born in cold mountain lakes or nurtured by runoff from remote highlands provide travel corridors through some of Alaska's most spectacular geography. Crags and peaks, narrow canyons, rolling tundra-cloaked hills, or forested slopes present constantly changing panoramas on a float trip.

Congress established the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System to preserve in a free-flowing condition rivers of remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar value. All or part of the 25 rivers in the system in Alaska are designated as wild, scenic, or recreational. The National Park Service administers 13 of these, all designated "wild." Because of their classifications, only minimal development will be allowed along the banks of these rivers. Included are the Alagnak, Alutna, Aniakchak, Charley, Chilikadrotna, John, Kobuk, Mulchatna, Noatak, Koyukuk (North Fork), Salmon, Tinayguk, and Tiikakila Rivers.

Access: See access and other information under the areas in which these rivers occur: Alagnak [Katmai], Alutna, John, Kobuk, Koyukuk (North Fork), and Tinayguk [Gates of the Arctic]; Aniakchak [Aniakchak]; Charley [Yukon-Charley Rivers]; Chilikadrotna, Mulchatna, and Tiikakila [Lake Clark]; Noatak [Gates of the Arctic and Noatak]; and Salmon [Kobuk Valley]. Visit www.nps.gov/rivers/wildriverslist.html#ak on the Internet for more information.



Aleutian World War II 16

In 1996 Congress designated the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area to interpret the history of the Unangan or Aleut people and the defense of the Aleutians and the United States in World War II and to educate and inspire present and future generations about it. The 1942 bombing of Unalaska by Japan precipitated the internment of 880 Aleuts in derelict cannery buildings in Southeast Alaska. This area encompasses the nation's highest-elevation coastal defense site. The Unalashka Corporation privately owns this cultural landscape of World War II era command centers, bunkers, and trails. The gun mounts and lookouts are among the most intact in the nation. The Corporation is planning a World War II visitor center with extensive displays of artifacts from the war.

Access: Daily jet service from Anchorage to Unalaska. Ferry service is seasonal. **Size:** 134 acres. **For Information** contact: Unalashka Corporation, P.O. Box 149, Unalaska, AK 99885-0149; www.nps.gov/akso/aleu.



Inupiat Heritage Center 17

The Inupiat Heritage Center in Barrow, Alaska, preserves and promotes traditional Inupiat culture and history through exhibits, collections, research, education and outreach. As an affiliated area of the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, New Bedford, Massachusetts, the center commemorates the contribution of Alaska Natives to the history of commercial whaling in the United States. The center and the park collaborate on cultural exchange programs between Barrow and New Bedford to produce exhibits, conferences, and educational materials and to sponsor visiting scholars and cultural demonstrators. The center's exhibits and cultural events are open to the public.

Access: Daily jet service from Anchorage and Fairbanks to Barrow, which offers lodging, restaurants, and tours of the town and vicinity. Song and dance demonstrations are often presented in summer. **For Information** contact: 907-852-4594; www.nps.gov/akso/inup.

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