



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



WELCOME TO

ALASKA'S NATIONAL FORESTS

where *Nature,
People,
& Tradition*
come together

**ALASKA REGION
FACT BOOK**



LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We recognize the aboriginal ties of the Alaska Native peoples to what are now known as the Chugach and Tongass National Forests. Since time immemorial, Alaska Native peoples have maintained a deep connection to the lands and waters of Alaska and the critical resources that sustain their ways of life.



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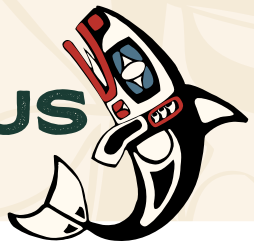
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ALASKA'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES



Since time immemorial, Alaska Native peoples have lived throughout the vast land that became the 49th state. They are diverse in cultures, languages, life ways, art forms, and histories, but share many core values that have guided them for millennia.

Alaska Native peoples are many nations and tribes, with ancient traditions that continue to be practiced today and adapted for the modern world.



Traditional Way of Life

A traditional subsistence way of life of hunting, fishing, and gathering food has enabled Indigenous Alaskans to thrive in challenging environments. Subsistence includes shelter, clothing, transportation, artisanry, and other uses of renewable resources essential to Native physical, economic, traditions, and cultural existence (*per the Alaska National Interests Lands Conservation Act section 801*).

180,000+
TRIBAL
CITIZENS

229
FEDERALLY
RECOGNIZED TRIBES

20% of Alaska's general population is American Indian or Alaska Native, the highest rate for this ethnic group of any state.



Tribal Nations' Connection to the Forest

For thousands of years, Alaska Native peoples have lived on the lands known today as the Tongass and Chugach National Forests.

- The Dena'ina, Sugpiaq (also referred to as Alutiq), and Eyak peoples' traditional territories include the Chugach National Forest.
- The Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples' traditional territories include the Tongass National Forest.
- Today, as in the past, Indigenous cultures are intertwined with the resources of the forests.



TRIBAL GOVERNANCE

Tribal governments are an important and unique member of the family of American governments. The U.S. Constitution recognizes that Tribal Nations are sovereign governments with the authority to self-govern.

- 574 sovereign Tribal Nations (called tribes, nations, tribal nations, bands, pueblos, communities, or Native villages) have a formal relationship with the U.S. government.
- These tribal governments are legally defined as federally recognized tribes. 229 of these Tribal Nations are located in Alaska; the remaining tribes are located in 35 other states.
- The U.S. government has a federal trust responsibility to protect the safety and well-being of the tribes and tribal citizens.

Tribal Nations consult government to government with the federal government to discuss matters of importance.

- Consultation is a formal meeting of decision makers from both sides – usually a tribal president and a line officer from a federal agency.
- Less formal collaborative meetings are also essential to healthy tribal relations.

Tribal governments maintain the power to determine their own governance structures.

- Regular elections are conducted in which tribal presidents and tribal councils are elected.
- Self-government is essential for tribal communities to continue to protect their unique cultures and identities.

Adapted from the National Congress of American Indians.

Southcentral Alaska Federally Recognized Tribes

Chenega IRA* Council
Chickaloon Native Village
Native Village of Eklutna
Native Village of Eyak
Kenaitze Indian Tribe
Knik Tribal Council
Nanwalek IRA* Council
Ninilchik Traditional Council

Port Graham Village Council
Salamatoff Tribal Council
Seldovia Village Tribe
Tatitlek Village IRA* Council
Qutekcak Indian Tribe

**Indian Reorganization Act of 1934*

Southeast Alaska Federally Recognized Tribes

Angoon Community Association

Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

Chilkat Indian Village

Chilkoot Indian Association

Craig Tribal Association

Douglas Indian Association

Hoonah Indian Association

Hydaburg Cooperative Association

Organized Village of Kake

Organized Village of Kasaan

Ketchikan Indian Community

Klawock Cooperative Association

Metlakatla Indian Community

Petersburg Indian Association

Organized Village of Saxman

Sitka Tribe of Alaska

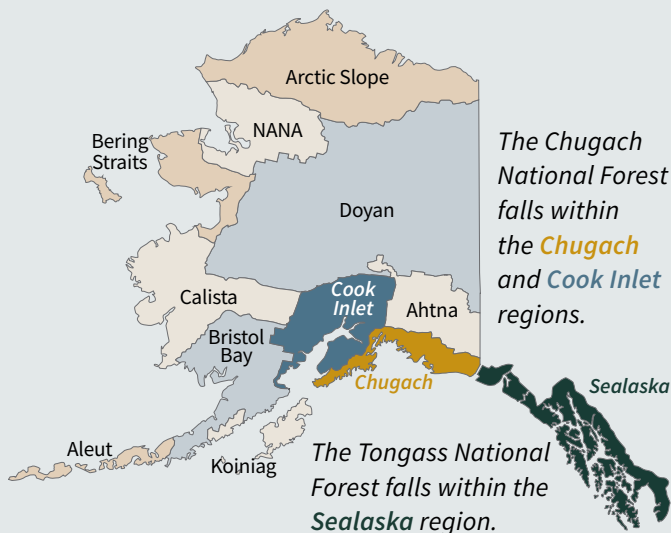
Skagway Traditional Council

Wrangell Cooperative Association

Yakutat Tlingit Tribe

Alaska Native Regional Corporations

The Alaska Native Regional Corporations were established in 1971 when U.S. Congress passed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). Learn more about the law on page 20.



ALASKA GOVERNMENT

- Alaskans elect a governor and a lieutenant governor to four-year terms, renewable once.
- The governor appoints the heads of 14 state departments.
- The Alaska State Legislature includes a Senate with 20 members and House of Representatives with 40 members.



Alaska has only two levels of local government: cities and boroughs.

- A city generally exercises its powers within an established boundary that encompass a single community.
- Under the state's constitution, a city is also part of the borough in which it is located.
- A borough is an intermediate-sized government, larger than cities similar to counties in other states.
- Alaska has 18 organized boroughs and a single "unorganized borough" that includes all areas of the state not included in an organized borough.



Alaska's residents and government entities often have to work together and make decisions on complex and major issues important to community sustainability, economic health, subsistence, and land management.

ALASKA EARLY HISTORY



The name
Alaska is
derived from
Aleut *alaxsxa*
or
alaxsxîx̂
both meaning
“mainland” or
“great land”.



May 2, 1927
The Alaska flag
was adopted as
the official symbol
of the Territory.



Jan. 3, 1959
Alaska was
admitted to the
union as the 49th
state, becoming
the largest state
in the U.S.

15,000+ Years Before Present

Indigenous people lived
and occupied territories as
evidenced by oral history and
archeological findings.

1700s

Early Western explorers
encounter long-standing complex
Indigenous societies in place
since time immemorial.

1741

A Russian expedition led by Vitus
Bering arrived in what is now the
State of Alaska.

1867

The Russian Empire sold the
Alaska Territory to the U.S. for
\$7.2 million. The Indigenous
peoples were not recognized or
consulted in the transaction.

1888-1900

Nearly 200,000 people traveled to
Alaska in search of gold.

Aug. 20, 1902

The Alexander Archipelago Forest
Reserve was established.

1907

The Chugach and Tongass
National Forests were established
by proclamation.

1915

The Alaska Native Brotherhood
and Alaska Native Sisterhood were
established.

1945

Elizabeth Peratrovich championed
the passage of Alaska's landmark
Anti-Discrimination Act.

1968

Oil was discovered in Alaska's
North Slope.

ALASKA LANDSCAPE



12,000+ rivers
3 million+ lakes

The Yukon River, almost 2,000 miles long, is the third longest river in the U.S.



100,000+ glaciers

There are more active glaciers and ice fields in Alaska than in the rest of the inhabited world.



6,640 miles of coastline
33,904 miles of shoreline

Alaska has more miles of shoreline than all the other 49 states combined.



90 potentially active volcanoes and 50,000+ earthquakes a year

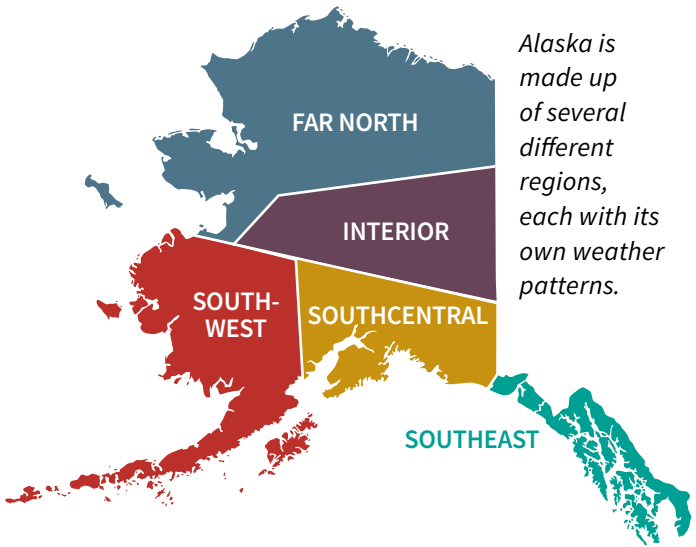
The 9.2 magnitude Good Friday earthquake rocked Alaska in 1964 and remains the second most powerful earthquake in history.



12 of the 20 highest peaks in the U.S.

At 20,310 feet, Denali is the highest peak in North America.

ALASKA WEATHER

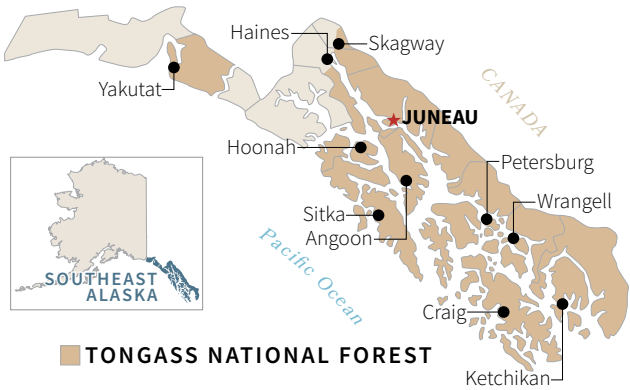


Alaska is made up of several different regions, each with its own weather patterns.

One of the more interesting and challenging aspects of living and working in Alaska is the weather.

- **SOUTHEAST** Alaska sees more steady temperatures throughout the year with the coldest average temperatures reported being in the low 20s F and the highest in the low to mid 60s F.
- The **SOUTHCENTRAL** part of the state tends to experience more steady temperatures throughout the year.
- The **SOUTHWEST** region of the state typically sees very cold temperatures in the early part of the year but then it warms up through the rest of the year with temperatures ranging from the 20s to 60s F.
- The **INTERIOR** of Alaska sees much more extreme weather with January and February being the coldest months, falling to -18 and -15 F respectively. However, June and July are very warm and pleasant with temperatures in the low 70s.
- The **FAR NORTH** of Alaska is quite cold. January temps can range from -19 on the low side to -8 on the high side. August tends to be the warmest month with a high of about 41 F.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA



Southeast Alaska, also called the Alaska Panhandle, is the southeastern part of the state. This part of Alaska is a temperate rainforest and known for beautiful scenery.

- Much of the panhandle is part of the Tongass National Forest, which is the largest national forest in the U.S.
- It is located west of the northern half of the Canadian province of British Columbia.

Culture

Since time immemorial, Indigenous peoples have maintained their spiritual ownership of the lands that make up Southeast Alaska. This area is the homeland of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples.

Cities and towns

- The big cities in Southeast Alaska are Juneau, Ketchikan, and Sitka.
- Other towns are Petersburg, Wrangell, Angoon, Craig, Klawock and Skagway.
- There are many small towns and villages with less than 100 people in them.



Geography

Southeast Alaska is the northern end of the Inside Passage coastal route, which is a way to get to Alaska from the Puget Sound by boat or ship without having to go out in the open ocean.

- The majority of Southeast Alaska is made up of the Alexander Archipelago, a chain of more than 1,000 islands. The largest are Prince of Wales Island, Chichagof Island, Admiralty Island, and Baranof Island.
- 35,138 square miles of land area. This is only 6.14% of Alaska's land area, but the Panhandle is bigger than Maine, and almost as big as the state of Indiana.
- 72,286 people live in the panhandle as of the 2020 census population. About 44% of them live in the city of Juneau.

Industry

The largest employers in Southeast Alaska are the state and federal governments, due to Juneau being the capital of the state. The largest private industries are tourism, commercial fishing, healthcare, and mining. The timber industry is small but still culturally and economically important to some Southeast communities.

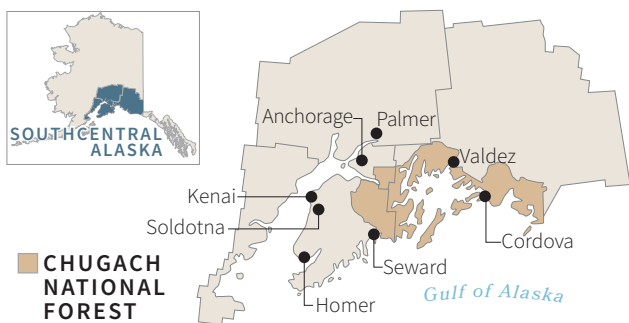
Transportation

Most towns in Southeast Alaska are located on islands—and glaciers and mountains make even mainland towns de facto islands—all Southeast communities except Hyder, Skagway, and Haines have no roads that connect to the continental highway transportation system.

- Airplanes and boats are the major means of transport.
- The Alaska Marine Highway is a crucial connection for communities in Southeast Alaska.



SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA



Southcentral Alaska is the most easily accessible region and is a recreational paradise of glaciers, fjords, road-side lakes, clamming beaches, and salmon streams.

The area encompasses the Chugach National Forest, several national parks, farmlands, fishing towns, and the largest city in the State.

Culture

Indigenous peoples have lived in Southcentral Alaska since time immemorial and include tribes of the Eyak, Dena'ina and Alutiiq/Sugpiaq people.

Geography

- 54% of the people in Alaska live in or near Anchorage, the largest city in Alaska.
- The area includes Cook Inlet, the Matanuska-Susitna Valley, the Kenai Peninsula, Prince William Sound, and the Copper River Valley.
- Kenai Peninsula, a scenic and fly-fishing paradise, and Kenai Fjords National Park are in the southwest part of the southcentral region.
- Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, in the western part of the region, contains nine of the 16 highest peaks in the U.S.

Industry

Tourism, fishing, and petroleum are the biggest businesses.

Transportation

- Served by all the state's major highways, the Alaska Railroad, and the Alaska Marine Highway (ferry) System.
- Anchorage is the hub of a busy transportation network linking large areas of the state.





ALASKA'S NATIONAL FORESTS

Alaska contains 17 percent of all U.S. Forest Service lands and hosts two of the largest national forests in the nation.



TONGASS National Forest

Stretches over more than 80% of the 500-mile-long southeast Alaska Panhandle.



CHUGACH National Forest

Makes a 210-mile arc around Prince William Sound in southcentral Alaska.

Alaska's National Forests are managed for multiple use and encompass a total of 21.9 million acres, and:

- 7,200,000 acres of wetlands
- 57,000 miles of streams
- 12,600 miles anadromous fish streams
- 400,000 acres of lakes
- Over 200 public recreation cabins and shelters
- Nearly 1,200 miles of trails
- Over 3,500 miles of road
- Nearly 1,500 special use permits
- Dozens of mines with operating plans

TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

The Tongass National Forest was established in 1907 and is the nation's largest national forest spanning nearly 17 million acres. Other key facts include:

- It is the largest intact temperate rainforest in the world and less than 8% of the land is developed.
- Stretches nearly 500 miles north to south and is twice the size of Maryland.
- It features 145 public recreation cabins and nearly 600 miles of trails.
- About 11,000 miles of saltwater shoreline and more than 1,000 islands.
- Contains Prince of Wales Island, the third largest island in the U.S.
- Contains two national monuments: Admiralty Island and Misty Fjords.
- Includes nine Ranger Districts – Craig, Hoonah, Juneau, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Sitka, Thorne Bay, Wrangell, and Yakutat.



The Tongass National Forest sustains Alaskan communities and culture by creating jobs and bringing revenue through tourism, recreation, watersheds, fisheries and sustainable resource management, while protecting and maintaining some of the most diverse and beautiful ecosystems in the world.



The name “Tongass” was derived from the Taant’á Kwáan, which means Sealion people, and who were sometimes referred to as Tongass people.

Economy

- 75% of Southeast Alaska commercial salmon catch is produced by Tongass rivers, lakes, and streams, translating to 40 million salmon, with a dockside value of over \$68 million annually (2020).
- The Hecla Greens Creek Mine on the Tongass is the nation’s largest silver producer and is unique in that it operates within a National Monument.
- Nearly a quarter of the economy in Southeast Alaska is associated with tourism and recreation, most of which features aspects of the Tongass.

Landscape Features

- The Tongass contains a variety of trees, with a canopy of yellow cedar, spruce, and hemlock.
- Well over half of the forest is covered by rock, wetlands, ice, and water rather than trees.

Wildlife

- There are no threatened or endangered species on the Forest.
- There are more brown bears on one island (Admiralty) than the entire lower 48 combined.
- The concentration of bald eagles in the Tongass is higher than any other region on earth.
- All five species of Pacific salmon rely on the waters of the Tongass for spawning.



CHUGACH NATIONAL FOREST

The Chugach National Forest was established in 1907 and is the northern- and westernmost U.S. national forest. Other key facts include:

- Stretches from Prince William Sound to the Kenai Peninsula — an area the size of New Hampshire.
- Offers 41 public use cabins and more than 500 miles of trail.
- It is the only national forest with Dall sheep.
- Offers many scenic and recreation activities and is home to the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center and Crooked Creek Information Center.
- Contains the Copper River Delta, one of the most essential shorebird habitats in the world.
- Includes three Ranger Districts – Seward, Glacier and Cordova.



The Chugach National Forest is where distinctive cultures, customs, and ways of life converge — urban and rural residents alike come for subsistence, recreation, work, and adventure. It is the backyard of half of Alaska's people.



The name “Chugach” comes from the Chugach Sugpiaq people’s word “Cuungaaciiq,” one of the original names for the land. There are several theories on the origin of the name Chugach, including it being derived from the Native word chu-ga chu-ga (hurry hurry).

Economy

- Salmon harvest on the forest accounts for \$19 million annually and 3,000 jobs.
- Recreation opportunities on the Forest fund 1,000 community jobs worth more than \$12 million annually.
- More than 250 permits for small business outfitter & guides, event and filming, and land use permits are issued every year.

Subsistence

- The Forest provides an average of 203 pounds of fish and wildlife per person per year, for qualified rural residents.
- Spruce Bark Beetle strategy and hazardous fuels reduction work on the Forest helps provide firewood to local communities.

Landscape and Wildlife

- The 700,000-acre delta of the Copper River is the largest contiguous wetland on the western coast of the United States bringing in millions of waterfowl and shorebirds every year.
- The Forest maintains and monitors artificial and natural nest islands for the Dusky Canada Goose – a species of conservation concern in Alaska.





STATE AND PRIVATE FORESTRY

State and Private Forestry programs provide technical, educational, and financial assistance to landowners, resource managers, cities, and communities.

Its primary goal is to maintain and improve the health, sustainability and productivity of Alaska's urban and rural forests and related economies.

Programs are delivered through a partnership between the State of Alaska and the USDA Forest Service, in cooperation with many private and other government entities.

Program goals include increasing cost-effectiveness through the use of partnerships in delivery, increasing values through sustained productivity of urban and rural forests, and using voluntary and non-regulatory approaches.

Key Issues

- Invasive and exotic species
- Natural resource management
- Environmental, social and economic impacts
- Climate-related forest health problems
- Research on climate change
- Renewable energy opportunities
- Wildland fire

Program Highlights

- Forest Stewardship Education
- Conservation Education
- Cooperative Fire Protection
- Forest Health Protection
- Forest Legacy
- Landscape Scale Restoration
- Urban and Community Forestry



PACIFIC NORTHWEST RESEARCH STATION

The Pacific Northwest Research Station's mission is to generate and communicate scientific knowledge that helps solve problems and inform choices about challenging natural resource management issues.

The station is headquartered in Portland, Oregon and is organized into five science programs with personnel in the three Pacific Northwest states: Alaska, Oregon, and Washington.

Alaska Research

- The research station maintains research and development laboratories in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Sitka.
- Research informs the management of Alaska's large and diverse forest resource ranges, from temperate coastal rain forests in the southeast to boreal forests in the north.
- Long-term research in Alaska is conducted on three experimental forests (Bonanza Creek, Héén Latinee, and Maybeso), and one research watershed (Caribou-Poker Creeks).

Focus Areas



Aquatic and
land interactions



Climate change
and salmon habitat



Boreal ecology



Wildlife and
wildlife habitats



Carbon
Monitoring



Wood utilization

ANCSA

Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act

- President Richard Nixon signed the ANCSA into law on Dec. 19, 1971.
- The Act divided the state into twelve distinct regions based on “common heritage” and mandated the creation of Alaska Native corporations—for-profit entities to be owned and controlled entirely by the enrolled Alaska Native shareholders living within each regional boundary.
- ANCSA transferred 44 million acres of land and \$962.5 million to the twelve regional corporations and hundreds of village corporations owned and controlled by Alaska Native peoples, in exchange for ending all claims to additional lands based on aboriginal title.
- It is the largest land settlement of its kind in U.S. history.
- According to ANCSA, village corporations were to select lands on which any part of the village was located, and in most cases received the surface rights to those lands. In contrast, regional corporations were to select lands from within the larger regional boundaries defined in ANCSA and received all sub-surface mineral rights.
- At the time Congress passed ANCSA, the Metlakatla Indian Community opted out of the settlement agreement and chose to remain as the only federally designated Indian Reserve in the State of Alaska.
- In 1975, ANCSA was amended to add a thirteenth regional corporation for Alaska Native peoples who no longer resided in Alaska. It did not receive land conveyances and was dissolved in 2013.



ANILCA

Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act

Signed by President Jimmy Carter in 1980, ANILCA is a federal law passed as a direct result of Section 17(d) (1) of ANCSA, which gave the Secretary of the Interior ninety days after ANCSA became law to withdraw from development any lands necessary “to insure that the public interest in these lands is properly protected” and made these lands “available for potential congressional designation as National Parks, Wildlife Refuges, Wild and Scenic rivers, or National Forests.”

At 157 million acres, ANILCA remains the single largest expansion of protected lands in history, more than doubles the size of the National Park System, and is often considered the greatest public land legislation in American history.

The Act provided for the establishment of:

- 3.4 million additional acres of National Forest land:
 - Chugach National Forest: Nearly 2 million acres were added.
 - Tongass National Forest: Nearly 1.5 million acres were added.
- 10 new National Parks.
- 9 new National Wildlife Refuges.
- 35 designated Wilderness Areas covering more area than the states of New York and Ohio combined.
- ANILCA also created a local hiring authority for federal land management agencies like the Forest Service, which allows eligible applicants to substitute an intimate understanding of the environmental challenges and cultural backgrounds in Alaska for job-related work experience.
- The Act also provides the opportunity for rural residents to continue to engage in a subsistence way of life, as it protects the resources related to subsistence needs, in addition to historic and archaeological sites, rivers, and lands.



TTRA

Tongass Timber Reform Act of 1990

The TTRA amended the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), with the primary intention to increase the protection of the Tongass National Forest—specifically old-growth forest—from logging.

- The Act was signed into law by President George H. W. Bush on Nov. 28, 1990, and established six new Wilderness areas and created 12 special areas closed to commercial timber harvest.
- Before TTRA was passed, the Forest Service was mandated by law to spend at least \$40 million a year to supply 450 million board feet of Tongass timber annually to pulp mills in Southeast Alaska. TTRA repealed this requirement, which was economically unsound.
- TTRA also safeguarded clean water and riparian habitats, conserved old growth of the Tongass, and required a mandatory no timber harvest zone within 100 feet of most salmon streams.
- In addition, TTRA required a biennial report to include the impact of timber management on subsistence resources, wildlife, and fisheries habitats.

PRONUNCIATIONS

— Tongass National Forest — [TONG-iss]

Angoon [ann-goon]

Chilkat [chill-cat]

Chilkoot [chill-coot]

Haida [high-dah]

Hoonah [hoon-ah]

Hydaburg [hi-duh-berg]

Juneau [joo-no]

Kake [cake]

Kasaan [kah-saan]

Ketchikan [ketch-eh-can]

Klawock [cluh-wok]

Metlakatla [Met-lah-CAT-lah]

Sitka [sit-kah]

Tlingit [kling-it]

Tsimshian [sim-shin]

Wrangell [rang-guhl]

Yakutat [YAK-uh-tat]

— Chugach National Forest — [CHEW-gatch]

Alutiiq [al-yoot-EEK]

Chenega [cheh-knee-gah]

Chickaloon [chick-a-loon]

Dena'ine [de-nine-na]

Eklutna [eh-KLOOT-nah]

Eyak [ee-yahk]

Kenaitze [keen-eye-tzee]

Knik [kuh-nick]

Nanwalek [nan-wall-ech]

Ninilchik [ni-nil-chick]

Salamatoff [sa-lam-a-toff]

Seldovia [sell-dough-via]

Seward [soo-word]

Sugpiaq [soogg-pee-ahk]

Tatitlek [ta-tit-lek]

Qutekcak [K'toochek]

ACRONYMS

ANCSA: Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act

ANILCA: Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act

CNF: Chugach National Forest

DR: District Ranger

EF: Experimental Forest

Matsu: Matanuska-Susitna Valley

MGVC: Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center

PNWRS: Pacific Northwest Research Station

POW: Prince of Wales Island

PWS: Prince William Sound

R10: Region 10 - Forest Service Alaska Region

RF: Regional Forester

RO: Regional Office

RW: Research Watershed

SASS: Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy

SEADC: Southeast Alaska Discovery Center

SO: Supervisor's Office

Southeast: Southeast Alaska, colloquially

SPF: State and Private Forestry

TNF: Tongass National Forest

TTRA: Tongass Timber Reform Act

WO: Washington Office

ALASKA TERMS

“Down South”: Lower 48 states

“The Ferry”: Alaska Marine Highway System

“Outside”: Not Alaska



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