

Nellie Juan–College Fiord Wilderness Study Area



In 1980, Congress designated the Nellie Juan–College Fiord Wilderness Study area (WSA) on the Chugach National Forest. The area encompasses roughly 2 million acres surrounding western Prince William Sound.

The Forest Service manages this area for public use and enjoyment as wilderness. It is intended generally for non-motorized uses, undeveloped landscapes, and outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

Located predominately on the mainland off of Prince William Sound, and only miles from Whittier and Valdez, Nellie Juan–College Fiord WSA provides excellent opportunities for exploration of land and water. Its long list of special places includes Blackstone Bay, Harriman Fiord, Columbia Bay, Port Nellie Juan, Icy Bay, Knight Island, and Naked Island.

Paddle through Prince William Sound and be awed by immense ice fields that surround this inland waterway and give rise to magnificent tidewater glaciers that tumble into the sea. Watch salmon jump in bays near fresh water streams, or see a humpback or killer whale breach into view.

Post-glacial landforms and vegetation succession are hallmarks of the geological and ecological history of the area and are very visible to hikers. Visitors are rewarded by ice and rock formations and a dense temperate rainforest found on the islands and peninsulas. Let these and other opportunities revitalize your soul.

The Wilderness Study Area designation applies only to Chugach National Forest lands. It does not include marine waters.

Benefits of Wilderness

- Supports a robust tourism and recreation economy
- Preserves forests that moderate the climate
- Provides a natural laboratory for research
- Maintains healthy habitat for fish and wildlife
- Offers a place for people to recreate, refresh, and experience Alaska's human and natural heritage

Prince William Sound is real Alaskan wilderness. Average summer temperatures are between 45-65°F. Rain is frequent and the weather can change quickly. Waters are cold year-round, carrying the risk of hypothermia. Bears are common, especially near salmon streams. Glaciers and icebergs can be dangerous. Cell phone reception is rare and even marine radio communication can be spotty. Be prepared with appropriate gear and safety equipment.

Enjoy the challenges of wilderness and be safe!



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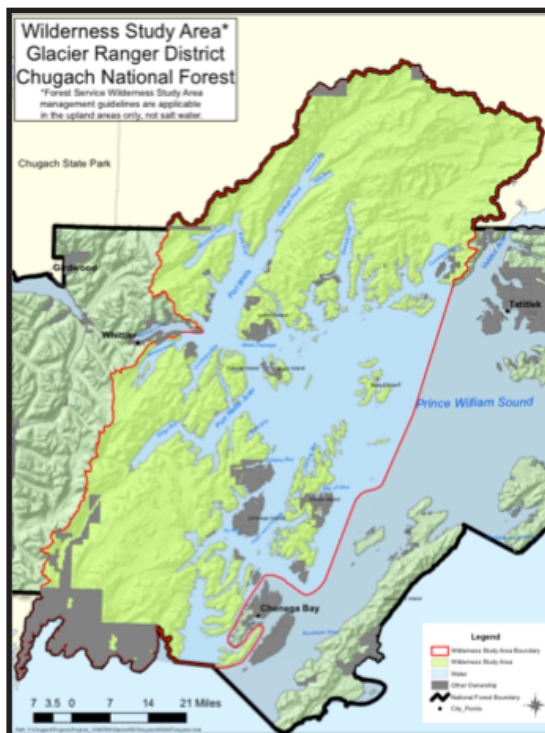
Chugach
National
Forest

Leave No Trace

To ensure that this area is left unimpaired for future use, practice the following Leave No Trace principles:



- Plan ahead and prepare for extreme weather conditions, hazards, and emergencies.
- Clean equipment and gear **before** going to the field to avoid the potential spread of invasive plants, seeds, and European black slugs.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces. When possible, disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.
- Dispose of waste properly. **Pack out** all trash, leftover food, and toilet paper. During appropriate conditions dispose of human waste in the intertidal zone. If camping in upland forests, dispose of solid waste by digging a cat hole 6 to 8 inches deep located at least 200 feet from water or campsite.
- Leave what you find. Examine but do not touch the historical structures or artifacts.
- 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 be considerate of others.



Wilderness Management Direction

The Nellie Juan-College Fiord Wilderness Study Area is managed consistent with the 1964 Wilderness Act, with special Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) provisions. Here are some things to keep in mind while visiting:

Chainsaws, helicopter landings, and permanent structures are generally not allowed

ANILCA provisions allow fish hatcheries, communications sites, and airplane landings in the WSA

Chugach National Forest policy limits group size to 15 people for commercial or general public use

Any commercial activities must be under special use permit with the Forest Service

Regulations in the WSA balance human uses of the land with protecting the area's wilderness character

Taking Care of Wilderness

The Forest Service works to preserve the wild character of the Wilderness Study Area, examples of our projects include:

Monitor and treat invasive species such as dandelions and European black slugs

Work with Gulf of Alaska Keeper and others to remove marine debris from beaches

Monitor local air quality and climate change effects through analysis of lichen tissue at more than 20 study sites

Work with Alaska Geographic and others to bring young people to the area for learning and stewardship projects

Provide education programs on climate change, wilderness stewardship, Leave No Trace camping, and more

Wilderness Facilities

There are four hardened campsites in Blackstone Bay & Culross Passage, six Forest Service recreation cabins, and roughly five miles of maintained hiking trails.