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Department of
Agriculture



Forest Service
Alaska Region

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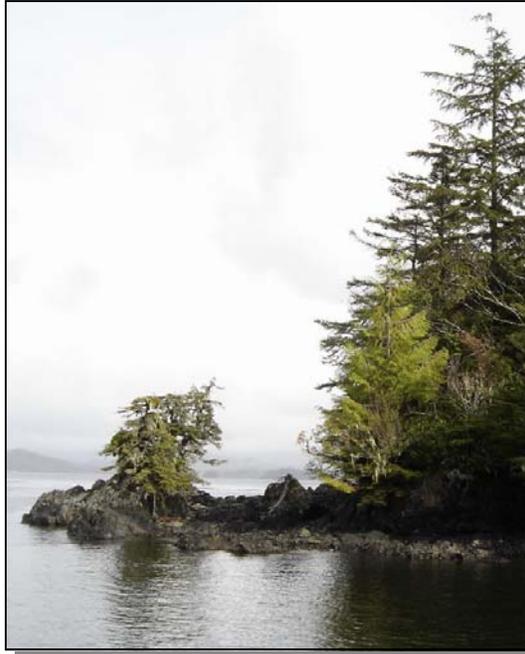
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www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass



Maurelle Islands Wilderness

In 1980, the United States Congress designated 4,937 acres as the Maurelle Islands Wilderness. Located off the western shore of Prince of Wales Island, this wilderness area can be accessed by boat or floatplane. Embrace in the fact that it is strategically managed to continue the preservation of this undeveloped, enduring ecosystem for the enjoyment of present and future generations.



Wilderness Laws

The Wilderness Act, ANILCA, and the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan of 2008 (TLMP) give direction to designated wilderness areas in the Tongass National Forest. The Wilderness Act, ANILCA and/or TLMP **prohibit** the following:

- ◆ Commercial enterprise (except for outfitters and guides)
- ◆ Permanent and temporary roads
- ◆ Use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment (except snowmobiles, motorboats, and fixed wing airplanes)
- ◆ Mechanized form of transport (i.e. bicycles, wheelbarrows)
- ◆ Damaging of live trees
- ◆ Construction of structures and installations
- ◆ Landing of helicopters

Under ANILCA and TLMP temporary structures are allowed but are limited to a 14-day stay at any one location. TLMP also mandates a group size limit of no more than 12 persons for commercial or general public use within this wilderness. These regulations are established for the wilderness character to remain undeveloped and natural for future use.

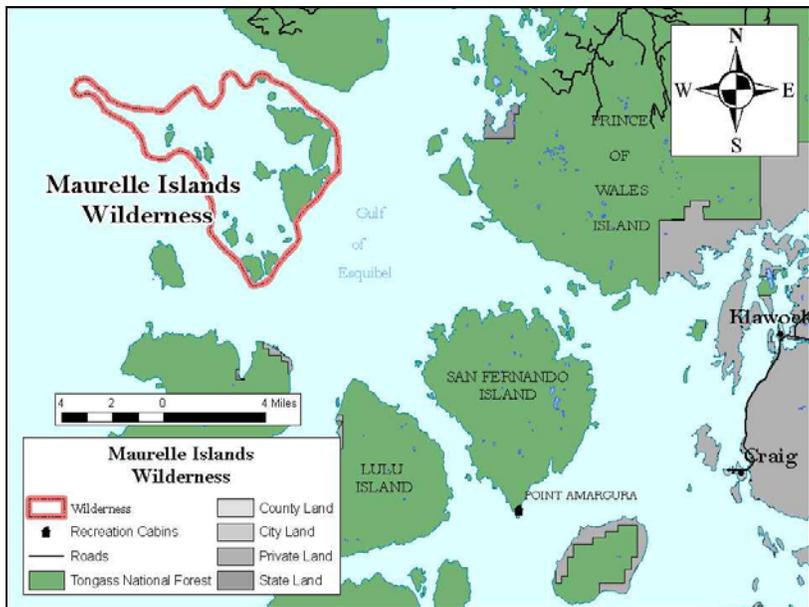
Wilderness Character

Being only 20 miles northwest of Craig, the Maurelle Islands might be the best option for a wilderness trip. A group of nearly 30 islands makes up this wilderness area, offering several small coves for protection from the pacific winds and waves. Navigating through these island passages could offer excellent ocean viewing of humpback whales, sea otters, and seals and although in limited numbers on the larger islands, viewing of black bears, black tailed deer, and wolves are possible. Explore these islands on foot, and you will find stands of stunted Sitka spruce and western hemlock tortured by the wind that thickly cover most of the landscape. This wilderness area has a historical use of subsistence, and fishing vessels also enjoy these protected coves so be aware that solitude might not be included in this wilderness experience. For being the smallest wilderness area on the Tongass National Forest, it offers the excellent opportunities for exploration, self discovery, and a fantastic southeast Alaska scenery.

Facilities

There are no established hiking trails or public recreation facilities in the Maurelle Islands Wilderness.





Leave No Trace

Tongass National Forest is the largest, intact coastal rainforest in America. The Maurelle Islands 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. Maurelle Islands Wilderness is managed as a pristine area. Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails and avoid places where impacts are just beginning.
- ◆ 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 cathole 6 to 8 inches deep located at least 200 feet from water or campsite.
- ◆ Leave what you find. There are a few cultural and historical sites in this wilderness. 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.

Wilderness Challenges

People are lured into Alaska for its beauty and excitement but remember it is also very unforgiving. Maurelle Islands Wilderness is within a temperate rainforest where the average summer temperatures are between 35-60°F. 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 black bears so store food and trash properly. If getting dropped off, know that strong winds and rain can delay pickups, and make campfires difficult to start and maintain.

Threats and Benefits

While designated wilderness areas have the most protections of any other public lands, there are still threats that degrade the wilderness resource. Damaging of cultural and historical sites, trash pollution, and resource damage by human use and the spread of invasive species are the major threats to this wilderness. Building awareness and a better understanding of designated wilderness areas is the key foundation to ensure that these areas stay wild.

Along with providing excellent recreational opportunities, designated wilderness areas protect natural ecosystems from being manipulated or developed. They provide us with clean air and clean water, and allow the natural processes to continue without the permanent presence of humans. As the current laws continue to give management direction, no wilderness on the Tongass will have a commercial timber harvest or construction of permanent roads. Due to the action of Congress in 1980, the Maurelle Islands Wilderness will remain protected for future generations.

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