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# South Baranof Wilderness

In 1980, the United States Congress designated 319,568 acres as the South Baranof Wilderness. Located 20 miles south of Sitka on the southern half of Baranof Island, this wilderness is accessible 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.

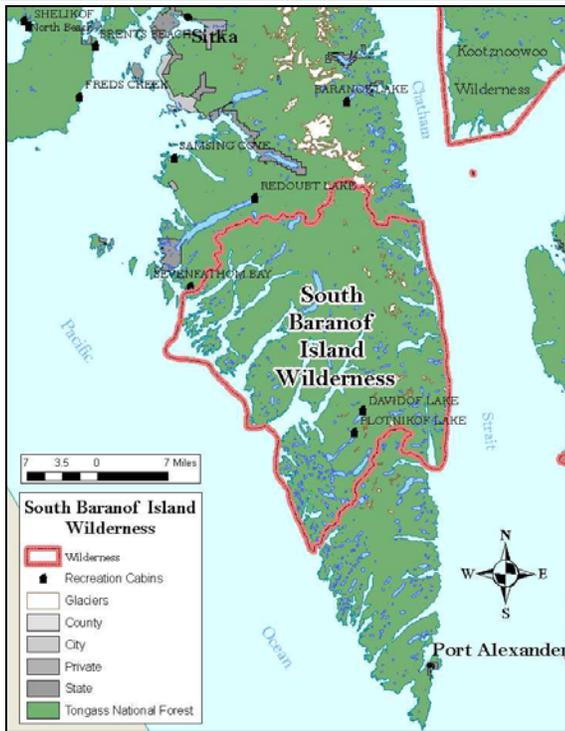
## Wilderness Character

Fjords, glaciated u-shaped valleys, cascading waterfalls, and numerous active glaciers might exhibit the feeling of Norway, but in fact it describes the South Baranof Island Wilderness. Starting within 2 miles of the beach the landscape exponentially rises to glacier covered peaks at 4,000 feet. Peaks, though, are not the only things to feast your eyes on. Breathtaking waterfalls exiting hanging valley lakes spill into steep bowl-shaped cirques at the end of highway long fjords. It might seem like paradise within this wilderness area but remember outside the bays and fjords 100 miles winds come screaming from the open Pacific Ocean. Thus South Baranof Island Wilderness is a perfect safe haven for boats, and for the human spirit.

## Facilities

There are three public recreation cabins that are accessible by foot or floatplane, and one primitive hiking trail in South Baranof Wilderness.





## Wilderness Challenges

People are lured into Alaska for its beauty and excitement but remember it is also very unforgiving. South Baranof Wilderness is within a temperate rainforest where the average annual rainfall is over 200 inches and temperatures range from 25 -65°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 brown bears so store food and trash properly. During the summer months, be especially careful around salmon spawning streams. If traveling by boat, caution should be taken on the open ocean where winds could exceed 100 mph.

## Leave No Trace

Tongass National Forest is the largest, intact coastal rainforest in America. The South Baranof 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. South Baranof 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. Use bathroom facilities when available. At 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. Examine but do not touch cultural or historical structures and 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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## 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. Unauthorized trespass structures, trash pollution from visitors, conflicts between user groups, loss of solitude, and resource damage of flora when constructing illegal trails are the major human problems 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, South Baranof Wilderness will remain protected for future generations.

