

Podcast Script: USFS "Alaska Forest Reflections"  
Mark Kelley"  
Date: 9 June 2011

**MUSIC UP:**

***NARRATOR: "FOREST REFLECTIONS, A SERIES OF STORIES BY PEOPLE WHO HAVE LIVED, WORKED AND PLAYED IN ALASKA'S NATIONAL FORESTS, SHARING THEIR MEMORIES OF FAVORITE FOREST PLACES FOR THIS 2011 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FORESTS."***

**MUSIC FADE:**

"I'm Mark Kelley, a wildlife nature photographer based in Juneau, Alaska. And my favorite place in Alaska National Forest is Anan Creek. It has one of the largest pink salmon runs of any stream in Alaska, and with that comes a river full of bears...both black and brown bears. "(The) Forest Service maintains a viewing platform and photo blind, right at creek level right where all these bears feed. The blind provides access to get the most amazing photos, or just to watch bears in your face. The place is set in an immense wilderness and there's more than fifty bears fishing the creek, starting in early July going until late August. It's just Bearville.

"The bear viewing platform sits on the side of a cliff with different levels cascading down the hillside. The salmon get trapped at the bottom of this ravine, trying to get up the waterfall at the end of the ravine...and it's here, trapped in front of the waterfalls, the bears come out of the rocks to feast on salmon.

"Dream of an old-growth forest, and you have Anan Creek. The spruce surrounding the creek and bear-infested ravine are giant, they drip with moss and bunches of bald eagles, sitting in the branches, kind of like ornaments. The creek flows into an estuary with seals, weasels, blue herons, otters, minks...just a whole abundance of wilderness...kind of a wilderness heaven.

"But the bears are what you come to photograph, or to see. There's no road access to this place, it's really out there, you can only get there by boat or float plane. The Forest Service limits access to the place so it doesn't get overcrowded. You can have up to sixty people a day and usually not that many show up, starting on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and until the bears disappear towards the end of August. Most people visit by boat from Wrangell or Petersburg, some float plane in from Ketchikan. There's a really nice cabin, the Forest Service maintains it, at the end of the trail up to the bear viewing platforms. It's hard to get a reservation because the demand is so high, usually you have to wait six months, and that night, you call, and it's usually already taken, but if you can get it, it's a wonderful place to stay.

"Besides the incredible access to wildlife, what makes this place so unique is it's the only place I know in Alaska where you can see black bears and brown bears on the same stream, in the same place, and in the same day. These two bears usually can't stand each other, but here at Anan, they put up with each other because the resource is so great. It's the classic salmon stream where you can walk across the backs of the salmon in mid-July to mid-August.

"The brown bears are the dominant animals, so they usually displace the black bears, it's

really fun to watch the two-step the bears perform to fish, eat and avoid each other.

"If you ever wish to visit a totally wild place, and get really close to bears in a relatively safe environment, Anan's the place. I never met a person that wasn't totally blown away after a stay at Anan.

I've been all over the state of Alaska photographing wildlife, and I pick this as probably my top destination, and I only discovered it last year after shooting here for thirty years, and I'm planning on going back every year."

**MUSIC UP:**

**NARRATOR: "FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR NATIONAL FORESTS AND THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FORESTS, PLEASE VISIT THE LINKS PROVIDED AT [WWW.MYALASKAFOREST.COM](http://WWW.MYALASKAFOREST.COM).**

**ALASKA FOREST REFLECTIONS IS PRODUCED FOR THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE, ALASKA REGION, PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE.**

**IN JUNEAU, I'M BOB BELONGIE FOR THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE.**

**MUSIC OUT.**