



Foundation Document Overview

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve

Alaska

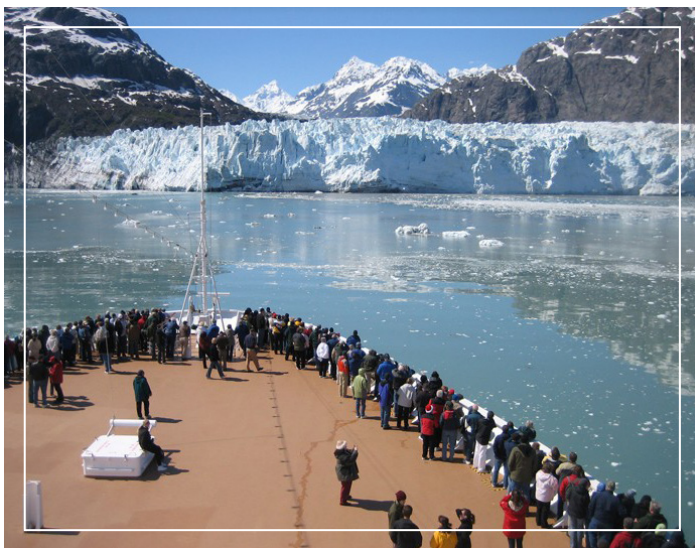


Contact Information

For more information about the *Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve Foundation Document*, contact: glba_administration@nps.gov or (907) 697-2230 or write to:
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The purpose of GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE is to protect a dynamic tidewater glacial landscape and associated natural successional process for science and discovery in a wilderness setting.



Significance statements express why Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

Scientific Investigation: Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve fosters unique opportunities for scientific studies of tidewater glacial landscapes and associated natural successional processes.

- Intact Natural Ecosystems
- Research, Inventory, and Monitoring
- Partnerships
- Park Collections
- Education and Outreach

Prehistoric and Historical Site Records: Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve gathers and protects records of exploration, scientific endeavor and human use, and provides for understanding the landscape through the lens of human experience and study.

- Park Collections
- Point of Reference
- Ethnographic Resources
- Prehistoric and Historic Sites and Structures

Ecological Integrity: Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve protects ecological integrity by preserving a diversity of large, contiguous, intact ecosystems (from the highest peaks of the Fairweather Range to the open Pacific Ocean and sheltered inland fjords) that are strongly dominated by natural processes.

- Intact Natural Ecosystems
- Natural Processes
- Research, Inventory, and Monitoring
- Cultural Processes

Fundamental Resources and Values

Dynamism and Succession: Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve protects a natural biophysical landscape that is continually changing through large-scale natural disturbance followed by the biological succession of plants and animals, and accompanied by an evolving physical environment.

- Physical Landforms
- Natural Ecosystem Processes
- Intact Natural Ecosystems
- Cultural Landscape

Wilderness: Glacier Bay National Park preserves one of the largest units of the national wilderness preservation system, encompassing more than 2.7 million acres of glacially influenced marine, terrestrial, and freshwater ecosystems.

- Intact Natural Ecosystems
- Marine Wilderness
- Natural Conditions
- Inspiration/Challenge
- Scientific Research

Protected Marine Ecosystems: Glacier Bay National Park preserves one of the largest (nearly 600,000 acres) areas of federally protected marine ecosystems in Alaska (including submerged lands) against with other less protected marine ecosystems can be compared.

- Intact Marine Ecosystems
- Habitat Diversity
- Water Quality
- Water Movement
- Reference Information
- Diverse Fisheries Management

Tlingit Ancestral Homelands: Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve lies within two Tlingit ancestral homelands that are of cultural and spiritual significance to living communities today.

- Spiritual and Cultural Landscapes
- Living Traditions
- Partnerships
- Archeological Sites
- Intact Natural Ecosystems
- Sacred Sites

Visitor Experience: Glacier Bay National Park provides diverse opportunities for visitors to experience a dynamic tidewater glacial landscape.

- Visitor Experience
- Scenery
- Natural Conditions
- Intact Natural Ecosystems
- Alaska Native Culture

Alsek River: Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve protects the remote and wild character of the Alsek River as a significant route of discovery and migration through the coastal mountain range to the Pacific Ocean.

- Free-flowing River
- Migration
- Intact Natural Ecosystems
- Archeological and Sacred Sites
- Visitor Experience
- Partnerships

The Preserve – Glacial Outwash Ecosystem: Glacial Outwash Ecosystem: Glacier Bay National Preserve protects a productive, evolving, glacial outwash ecosystem at the terminus of the Alsek River and provides a setting for subsistence uses, commercial fishing activities, and hunting as outlined by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).

- Landform
- Habitat Mosaic
- Diverse and Healthy Biota
- Cultural Landscape



Description

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve was established as a national monument February 26th, 1925, by presidential proclamation. With additional lands added in 1939 and again in 1955. The monument became a national park and preserve under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), to protect areas containing tidewater glaciers, a variety of forest covering consisting of mature areas and youthful trees which have become established since the retreat of ice, a unique opportunity for scientific studies of glacial behavior, and historic interest.

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve is in the panhandle of southeast Alaska. The center of the park is approximately 90 miles northwest of Juneau, the state capital, and about 600 miles southeast of Anchorage, the state's largest city. The primary features that define the perimeter of this 3.2-million-acre area are the Gulf of Alaska to the west, the Chilkat Range to the east, Cross Sound and Icy Strait to the south, and the St. Elias Mountains and Alsek River to the north.

The park is characterized by snowcapped mountain ranges rising over 15,000 feet, coastal beaches with protected coves, deep fjords, 16 tidewater glaciers, coastal and estuarine waters and freshwater lakes, and a mosaic of plant communities ranging from "pioneer species" in areas recently exposed by receding glaciers to climax communities in older coastal and alpine ecosystems.

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve contains the nation's largest protected marine area and part of Earth's largest World Heritage Site. Glacier Bay is about natural change and discovery, from scientific studies unlocking the mysteries of life's return to denuded lands, to the Tlingit rediscovery of their traditional homeland after being driven out by ice. It is also about the discovery and wonder of visitors as they experience and explore a vast and changing landscape.

Bartlett Cove is the only developed area in Glacier Bay National Park. Glacier Bay Lodge, the Park Visitor Center, Visitor Information Station,

exhibits, Park Headquarters, several trails, a public dock, kayak rentals, and walk-in campground provide a variety of services surrounded by the Alaskan wilderness. Park Rangers provide regular guided activities, and also board cruise ships and tour vessels to present information about Glacier Bay and answer questions. As its name implies, Glacier Bay National Park is largely water. Whether on a cruise ship with thousands of other passengers or in a single kayak, most visitors experience Glacier Bay from a boat. Sea kayaking is the easiest and most popular way to travel into Glacier Bay's wilderness under your own power. Kayaks can be brought to the park by ferry, rented locally, or provided on guided trips.

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve lies west of Juneau, AK and can be reached by plane or boat. The Bartlett Cove area can be accessed with your vehicle by taking the ferry from Juneau to Gustavus. There is a road from Gustavus that connects the airfield and ferry dock to park headquarters at Bartlett Cove which is about 10 miles. Air service is available with daily jet service from Juneau to Gustavus (about 30 minutes) in the summer season. Year-round scheduled air service to Gustavus is also provided by a variety of air taxis and charters.

