



Foundation Document Overview

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

Alaska



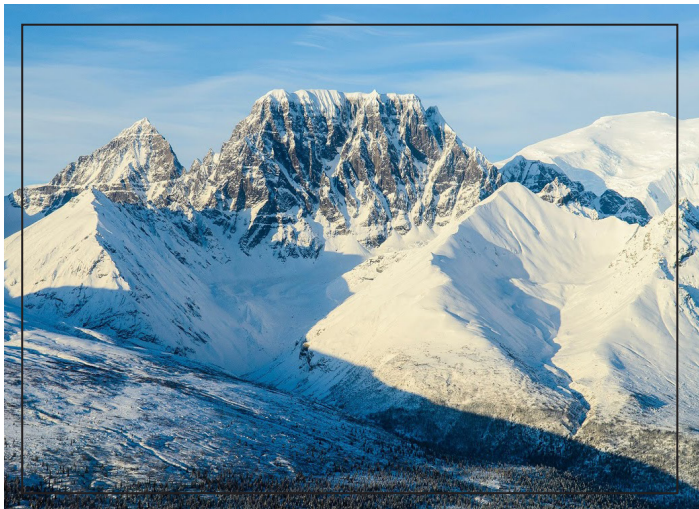
Contact Information

For more information about the *Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve Foundation Document*, contact: wrst_tweet@nps.gov or (907)822-5234 or write to:
Superintendent, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, P.O. Box 439, Copper Center, AK 99573

Purpose



The purpose of WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE is to maintain the natural scenic beauty of the diverse geologic, glacial, and riparian dominated landscapes, and to protect the attendant wildlife populations and their habitats; to ensure continued access for a wide range of wilderness-based recreational opportunities; to provide continued opportunities for subsistence use.



Significance and Fundamental Resources and Values

Significance statements express why Wrangell-St. Elias 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.

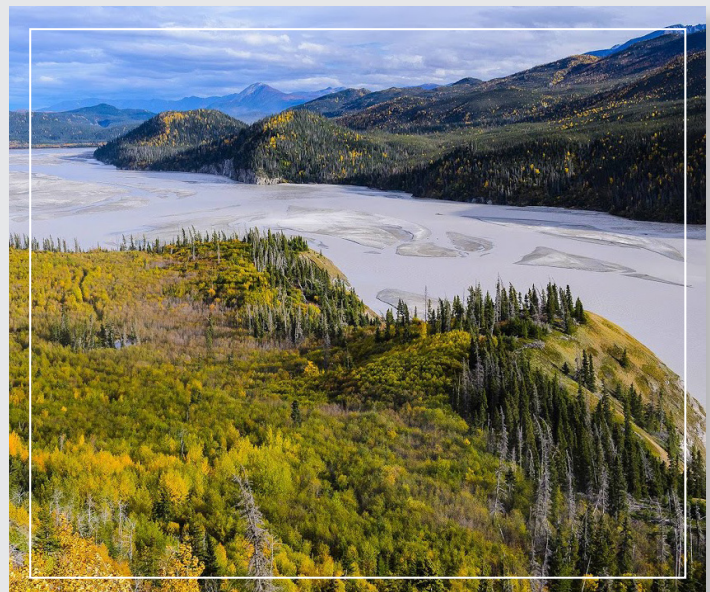
Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining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

Superlative Scenic Beauty: Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve provides superlative scenic beauty.

- Expansive Vistas
- Ecological Resources
- Scenic Wildlands

Active Glacial Complex: Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve encompasses the nation's largest protected active glacial complex.

- Unique Glacial Landscapes
- Glacial Outwash
- Educational Opportunities



Fundamental Resources and Values

Highest Peaks: Encompassing portions of three major mountain ranges, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve contains vast areas of scenic high mountain terrain from sea level to 18,000 feet and includes nine of the sixteen highest peaks in North America.

- Mountains
- Geological Research

Rivers: Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve contains major river systems with more miles (over 1,000) of scenic, free-flowing, glacial rivers in their natural state than are found in any other protected area in the United States.

- Glacial River Systems
- Protected Salmon Habitat
- Educational Opportunities

Ecological Diversity: The vast undeveloped expanse of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve contains diverse aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, ranging from alpine to marine, and providing natural habitat for populations of Alaskan flora and fauna.

- Wildlife
- Unfragmented Habitat
- Educational Opportunities
- Native Species

Wilderness: The Wrangell-St. Elias Wilderness is the largest unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System, encompassing nearly 10 million acres of remote and geographically diverse mountainous landscapes.

- Massive Wilderness
- Wilderness Experience
- Accessibility



Cultural Heritage: Preserved within Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve is abundant evidence of more than 3000 years of cultural and technological development. This long history reveals a range of human adaptations to changing climates, environments, and economic circumstances.

- Pre and Post-Contact Archaeological Resources
- Historic Resources
- Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark
- Ethnographic Resources
- Cultural Landscapes
- Archive/Collections

Living Cultures: Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve is an inhabited area where local communities and traditional human activities remain integrated with the wilderness setting.

- Subsistence
- Other Consumptive Uses
- Ethnographic Resources
- Accessibility



Description

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve was established on December 2, 1980, under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), to maintain the natural scenic beauty of the diverse geologic, glacial, and riparian dominated landscapes; to protect the attendant wildlife populations and their habitats; to ensure continued access for a wide range of wilderness-based recreational opportunities; and to provide continued opportunities for subsistence use.

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve encompasses 13.2 million acres of superlative scenery, abundant wildlife, and fascinating human history. It is the largest unit in the national park system. In conjunction with Kluane National Park in Canada, adjacent to the park/preserve, the two areas encompass the largest parkland in North America. The park/preserve is less than 200 miles east of Anchorage and bordered by two of Alaska's major highways. Visitors may discover lofty snowcapped peaks, extensive glacial systems, active volcanos, large herds of Dall sheep and other wildlife, native history, and relics from many old mining operations.

Today, there is something for everyone in Wrangell-St. Elias. Local, rural residents engage in traditional subsistence hunting and fishing. Mountaineers come for backcountry where they find some of the tallest peaks and most challenging conditions in North America. Scientists come to monitor species of concern, such as Kittlitz's murrelets or Chisana caribou. Sport hunters come to find the finest Dall sheep habitat in the world. Sightseers come to see the spectacular scenery, or to take a flight over the majestic mountains. History buffs come to experience the Kennecott Mill Town or to follow in the footsteps of early stamperders. There are places to take your tent and enjoy a few days away from it all. You can view the Hubbard Glacier on the coastline near Yakutat. Bird watching, hiking, and photography are also popular visitor activities.

Far from the hustle and bustle of other Alaskan destinations, the magnificent scenery and untamed nature of this park allow you to

experience genuine "Wild Alaska" on its own terms. Your possibilities here are endless. Whether immersing yourself in the colorful history of Kennecott, floating a raging river, crossing a glacier, driving one of the park's primitive roads, overwhelming your senses on a scenic flight, or charting your own backcountry trek, the park is ready for those willing and prepared to enter it. Access and services here may seem very limited when compared to traditional National Parks you may have visited in the lower 48. What the area may lack in services, it more than makes up for in friendly people and uncrowded wilderness.

There are two roads that lead into the park: the Nabesna Road and the McCarthy Road. Both roads are dirt roads that are maintained by the State of Alaska. The Wrangell-St. Elias Visitor Center is the main park visitor center. It is located along the Richardson Highway (Hwy 4), which is a paved road that runs through Copper Center, AK. This visitor center is located 10 miles south of Glennallen, Alaska, and approximately 200 miles east of Anchorage, AK and 250 miles south of Fairbanks, AK.

