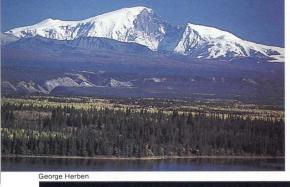
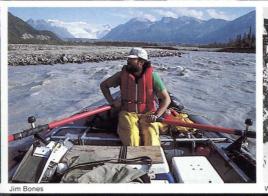
Wrangell-St. Elias

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve Alaska











Mt Sanford is one of sevcanoes, whereas Mt eral peaks in the Wrangells Wrangell itself is still that can be viewed from active. nearby highways. Mts. Blackburn, and Sanford are dormant vol

The Chitistone River flows through a many-hued, glacier-carved gorge and turns into a 300-foot water

If any single species syr oolizes the park's wildlife it is Dall sheep, which inhabit the interior high-

The profusely braided Ch tina River flows from the Chitina and Logan glaciers on the park's eastern oundary to the Copper River on the western

boundary. The might Copper, which starts on the north side of the Wrangells, empties into the Gulf of Alaska.

Boating is among the many advent ways to explore Wrangell-St. Elias. Here a boater kes his way on the Kennicott, a minor river in

comparison with the Copper, Chitina, and Chisana. Kayakers increasingly are plying bays and inlets near Yakutat

Men build a railroad bridge across the Kuskulana River in 1910. Today travelers on the road to McCarthy cross this bridge

Cover: The Kennicott and Root glaciers sweep down from Mt. Blackburn and Regal Mountain in the Wrangells

A Preeminent Mountain Wilderness

Incredible. You have to see Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve to believe it - and even then you are not too sure. The number and scale of everything is so enormous. Peaks upon peaks. Glaciers after glaciers. If you follow any of the many braided rivers and streams to their source, you will find either a receding glacier, an advancing glacier, or a tidewater glacier. Several mountain ranges converge here, and the park includes 9 of the 16 highest peaks in the United States. The total acreage makes this the largest U.S. national park, the size of six Yellowstones. And beyond all that, it contains a representative sampling of Alaska's wildlife and old mining sites indicative of man's early explorations here. Hike into these mountains, float the rivers, ski across the glaciers, fly over the area, and see geology in the making. Amid the splendid isolation comes a feeling of discovery, a feeling that you might be the first person to see such sights.

There are so many peaks that you quickly abandon the urge to learn their names and just settle back and appreciate their beauty, their size, their ruggedness. Few roads mean that many travelers will not enter the park

itself, but even then some of its major peaks, including Blackburn, Sanford, Drum, and Wrangell, can be seen from nearby highways. Position yourself in one spot and watch the sun, clouds, and storms play hide and seek with a single peak or ridge. The mood changes by the minute.

Three major mountain ranges meet here: The Wrangells huddle in the northern interior, the Chugach guard the southern coast, and the Saint Elias Mountains rise abruptly from the Gulf of Alaska, thrusting northward past the Chugach and on toward the Wrangells. The Wrangells are volcanic in origin, but only Mount Wrangell remains active with vents of steam near its summit. It last erupted in 1930. Other major, but smaller, ranges include the Mentastas and Nutzotins on the northeast side of the park. With adjoining Kluane National Park in Canada, all these ranges form the premier mountain wilderness in North America. The high country is covered with snow the year round, resulting in extensive icefields and glaciers. The Bagley Icefield near the coast is the largest subpolar icefield in North America and spawns such giant glaciers as the Tana, Miles,

Hubbard, and Guyot. The Malaspina Glacier flows out of the St. Elias Range between Icy Bay and Yakutat Bay in a mass larger than the State of Rhode Island. It carries so much glacial silt that plants and trees take hold on its extremities, grow to maturity, and topple over the edge as the glacier retreats. Flowing from the glaciers are a multitude of meandering rivers and braided streams. The Copper River, the largest, forms the western boundary of the park starting in the Wrangells and emptying into the Gulf of Alaska in Chugach National Forest. In the early 1900s the Kennecott Mining Co. transported copper from its mines near McCarthy by railroad along the Chitina and Copper rivers to ships at Cordova. Ore was extracted from these highly productive mines between 1911 and 1938 and lured many people to the area, if only temporarily. Similarly gold was transported from the Nabesna area. Today mining still occurs on private lands within the park, and you can see evidence of earlier mining, including the ruins of the Kennecott mines, which have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Indian villages expanded and a number of new towns sprang up in mining's heyday. Copper Center,

Land Distinctions

Some areas within including the Kennecott townsite and Native corporation lands. are private. Native lands may be entered by per mit. Please respect the privacy of owners. See maps at park headquarters or ranger stations for information about these prop-erties. Wrangell-St. Elias was proclaimed a national nonument on December , 1978, and established as a national park and pre serve on December 2, 1980, with 13,200,000 acres. See Activities (right) for hunting and trapping differences be ween park and preserve Wrangell-St. Elias and adjoining Kluane Nationa Park in Canada were designated a World Heritage Site on October 24, 1979.

The park, in southcentral from Anchorage via Glenn Highway (Alaska 1). At Glennallen, Glenn Highway meets Richardson Highway, which skirts the park's western boundary en route to Valdez, a coastal city served by the

> Alaska Ferry. The Tok Cutoff coming south from Alaska Highway borders the northwestern corner From these highways two unpaved roads penetrate

the park. The Chitina-McCarthy Road extends 61 miles from Chitina to the Kennicott River just west of McCarthy. The road follows the old Cop per River and Northwestern Railroad route. Highclearance, two-wheel drive vehicles usually can



make the trip in summer but because the road is not regularly maintained, ask for current conditions before starting he trip takes about four hours and ends at the Kennicott River. You then must hand-power a cable tram across the river to McCarthy and the privately owned historic Kennecott mining com plex. The northern portion of the park can be reached via the Nabesna Road.

From Slana on the Tok to Nabesna, an inactive privately owned mining community. Check at the Slana Ranger Station for the latest road conditions Aircraft may be used within the boundaries except to support The second second subsistence hunting and fishing within the par

Charter aircraft are available in most communities, including Anchorage, Fairbanks, Northway, Glennallen, Cordova Valdez, Tok, and Yakuta Cordova and Yakutat are served daily by commer cial jets. In the summer, regularly scheduled buses run between Anchorage and Valdez with stops in Glennallen. Several companies provide river

and backcountry guide

services.

Check on accommodaake reservations in advance, for there are few establishments and their seasons vary considerably. Motels, restaurants, and roadhouses provide standard touristtravel services in major

nmunities along the highways near the park and in the coastal comunities of Yakutat, Val dez. and Cordova. Rustic accommodations are provided at privately

Lodging, Services

operated fishing camps guide cabins, and fullservice lodges in various parts of the park. For a ist, write to the park.

The Bureau of Land Man agement and the State of Alaska run campgrounds along the Richardson Highway, Tok Cutoff, and Edgerton Highway.

Activities

Travel services and facili-

Besides sightseeing, major activities consist of backpacking, hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, mountaineering, river run ning, kavaking along the coast, and crosscountry skiing. No matter which activity you pursue, be sure to read Precautions (right)

Most backpackers and dayhikers start from points along the Slana-Nabesna or Chitina-McCarthy roads. There are few trails, so most hiking is across what appears to be prev-iously untraversed terrain

You may tent-camp anyaries except on private property. Car camp-grounds are located along nearby highways.

The park's many glaciers icefields, rivers, and steep rock walls present endless challenges for mountain eers. Mounts Drum, San ford, Blackburn, and St. Elias are favorites for climbing expeditions

The Copper and Chitina rivers offer excellent raft ing and kayaking oppor-tunities. The 77-mile trip down the Copper from Chitina to the Gulf of Alaska takes rafters through some of the park's most rugged terrain Kayakers increasingly are exploring the bays, inlets. and coast in the Yakutat and Icy Bay areas.

Weather

The weather here is like

cloudy and cool, but clear

hot days are not uncom

mon in July, the warmest

month. August and Sep-

tember tend to be cool

and wet, but with fewer

mosquitoes than July. Fall can be delightfully

clear, but the season is

short. Winters are cold

and dark, with tempera-

tures dropping to -50°F

Though the average snow

cover in winter is two feet

davs are often clear. In

the spring, clear skies

and warming tempera-

auickness.

increasingly longer days

tures break winter's hold

on the land with dramatic

Alaska. Summers are

The months of March. and Ma severe cold weather but with the lowlands still snow-covered, are the best ones for crosscountry skiing.

Within the national park. local rural residents may carry out traditional subsistence hunting, trapping and fishing activities. This policy recognizes a longstanding reliance on wild life, fish, and plant materials for subsistence in rural Alaska.

Within the national preserve, the same local subsistence uses are permit ted as are sports hunting trapping, and fishing for those from other places. You must have an Alaska license to hunt, fish, or trap. Be sure not to tres-pass on private property.

Remember, the weather can change by the minute and make trips longer. Plan for delays.

This is a park for wilderties are limited. Visitors are mostly on their own here and thus must be

highly self-motivated and self-sufficient.



Skiers on the Malaspir Glacier head toward Mt. St. Elias, at 18,008 feet second highest peak in the United Sta

With massive Hubbard Glacier as a backdrop, camping in Disenchant ment Bay is, if nothing else, enchanting. The glacier, which flows out

of the St. Elias Mountains in Canada into the United States, is surging into the bay

Cover photo by George Herber

Chitina, Gulkana, and Chistochina are among the old Athapascan settlements. Yakutat, on the coast, is a traditional Tlingit fishing village.

Though the vegetation may seem sparse, especially in the interior, the park contains a variety of wildlife. Dall sheep and mountain goats patrol the craggy peaks. Herds of caribou feed on the lichen and low woody plants around the Wrangells. Moose browse in sloughs and bogs in the coastal lowlands and in brushy areas, which also attract brown/grizzly bears. Black bears roam throughout the park. Bison were released in the Copper and Chitina River valleys in 1950 and 1962 respectively and remain as separate herds today. Many rivers, streams, and lakes provide spawning grounds for salmon and other fish. The Copper River drainage and the Malaspina forelands are major flyways for migratory birds and include prime nesting sites for trumpeter swans. The coastal areas are habitat for marine mammals, including sea lions and harbor seals.

Enough superlatives; explore the park and discover them yourself!

Precautions, Notes

Assistance may be days traordinarily careful in this vast region. You must possess proper survival gear and skills to handle moun tainous terrain

Backcountry hikers must be self-sufficient, carry enough food to cover un expected delays, and be prepared for the wilder ness. Rain gear and woo or pile clothing are essen-tial. Ask Park Service rangers or local residents about weather conditions and the reasonableness of trying to reach certain points. From experience they know the difficulties of dealing with the weather and terrain

Walking across the spruce muskeg with a pack can take much more time than expected. From a distance the landscape may look a foot in it and you quickly find out the land tests your endurance as you hop from tussock to tussock and try to avoid hidde pools of water. You can be knee deep in water or flat on your back before you know it.

Hikers must be familiar with safe techniques for crossing rivers and streams. Many are impass able, even for experts. Others can change from trickling creeks to raging torrents quickly, so be especially cautious. Only ose with expertise in cold weather camping and survival techniques should attempt winter camping.

All-terrain vehicles may be used on designated

routes. You must obtain a them. Snowmachines horses, and dog-team may be used without a permit

For further information, visit the headquarters at mile 1051/2 Richardson Highway near Copper Center, or write or call Wrangell-St. Elias Na-tional Park and Preserve P.O. Box 29. Glennallen AK 99588, 907-822-5235

In season, you also may contact: Nabesna Rang-er Station, P.O. Box 885, Slana, AK 99586, 907-822-5238 Chitin Ranger Station, P.O. Box 110, Chitina, AK 99566, 907-823-2205 Yakutat Ranger Station, P.O. Box 137 Yakutat. AK 99689, 907-784-3295

☆ GPO: 1986-491-417/4011

Wrangell-St. Elias

Map Warning Do not use this map for hiking. Obtain Geological Survey topographical maps and study them before you head out. No

matter the season, we suggest you leave your itinerary with someone and contact that person upon your return.



