

# Nellie Juan- College Fiord

## *Wilderness Study Area*

The Nellie Juan- College Fiord Wilderness Study Area encompasses two million acres of the Chugach National Forest in south-central Alaska. Surrounding western Prince William Sound, it is a rugged and vast wilderness of coastal rain forest, scenic lakes, and the towering peaks of the Chugach Mountains. More glaciers reach the ocean here than in any other region of Alaska, filling remote fiords with floating ice. Hundreds of islands dot calm bays. In winter, deep snow blankets the wilderness to the ocean's edge.

The human connection to the land here is also deep. Alutiiq people have inhabited this area for millennia, living on salmon and a wealth of other resources and enriching the land with their culture. Modern tragedies have also highlighted the bond between people and place, including the 1964 Good Friday earthquake and 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Today, several communities sit at the edge of the wilderness, including Whittier, Valdez, Cordova, and the Alutiiq villages of Chenega Bay and Tatitlek. Recreation, tourism, subsistence, fishing and other activities rely on the wilderness and continue connecting people and the land.

Congress established the Wilderness Study Area in 1980 as part of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Although not formally designated as wilderness, the US Forest Service manages the area consistent with the 1964 Wilderness Act and ANILCA provisions.

