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# Chuck River Wilderness

In order to protect old-growth forests and riparian habitat, Congress designated these 74,900 acres as the Chuck River Wilderness in 1990. This section adjoining the Tracy Arm—Ford's Terror Wilderness completes the protection of the spectacular Endicott Arm. Situated 70 miles south of Juneau at the head of Windham Bay, this area can be accessed by motorboat from Stephens Passage or floatplanes from Juneau or Petersburg. It is strategically managed to continue the preservation of this undeveloped, enduring ecosystem for the enjoyment of present and future generations.



## Wilderness Laws

The Wilderness Act, ANILCA, and the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan of 2008 (TLMP) give direction to designated wilderness areas in the Tongass National Forest. The Wilderness Act, ANILCA and/or TLMP **prohibit** the following:

- ◆ Commercial enterprise (except for outfitter and guides)
- ◆ Permanent and temporary roads
- ◆ Use of motor vehicles and motorized equipment (except motorboats, and fixed wing airplanes)
- ◆ Mechanized form of transport (i.e. bicycles, wheelbarrows)
- ◆ Damaging of live trees
- ◆ Construction of structures and installations
- ◆ Landing of helicopters

Under ANILCA and TLMP temporary structures are allowed but are limited to a 14-day stay at any one location. TLMP also mandates a **group size limit of no more than 12 persons** for commercial or general public use within this wilderness. These regulations are established for the wilderness character to remain undeveloped, natural and untrammelled for future use.

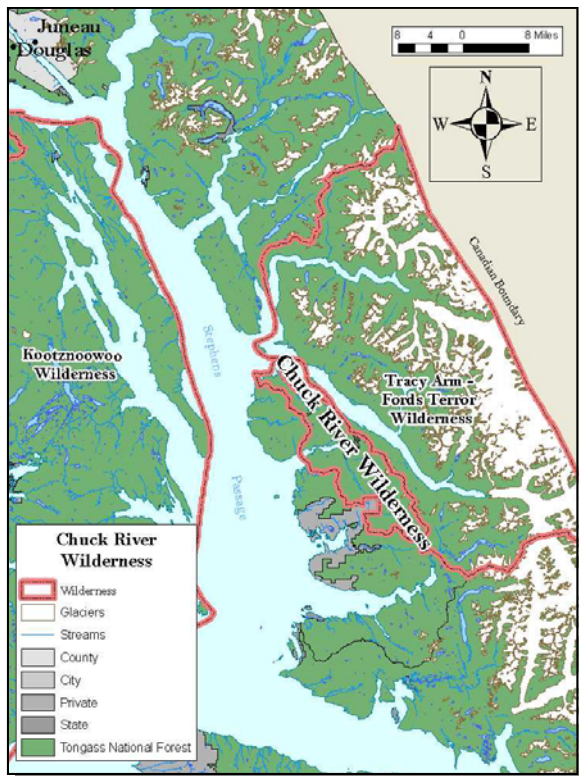
## Wilderness Character

Chuck River reflects the rise of wilderness appreciation in modern society. The local Tlingit enjoyed the bounty of nature by trapping and fishing in Windham Bay. Settlers arrived in the 1890's seeking gold. They dug mines into the mountains, laid roads through the forests and built structures along the shore. The mining boom subsided around the 1920's, people moved on and their developments fell into disrepair. In the 1980's, timber resources were marked and potential roads were staked. But before it was logged, the American people embraced a new value—that of wilderness in Alaska. Today this wilderness patiently rewinds its weather-beaten ruins as people treasure its tranquility, scenic beauty, aged forests, healthy fish runs, hunting opportunities, and protected anchorages.

## Facilities

There are no longer established hiking trails along the Chuck River, or public recreation cabins, but this wilderness can offer a sense of solitude and remoteness once away from the shorelines of Windham Bay.





## Threats and Benefits

While designated wilderness areas have the most protections of any other public lands, there are still threats that degrade the wilderness resource. Violating permits and illegal outfitting and guiding, threatening wildlife by improper viewing and illegal hunting, and resource damage by littering and damaging of flora are the major threats to this wilderness. Building awareness and a better understanding of designated wilderness areas is the key foundation to ensure that these areas stay wild.

Along with providing excellent recreational opportunities, designated wilderness areas protect natural ecosystems from being manipulated or developed. They provide us with clean air and clean water, and allow the natural processes to continue without the permanent presence of humans. As the current laws continue to give management direction, no wilderness on the Tongass will have a commercial timber harvest or construction of permanent roads. Due to the action of Congress in 1990, the Chuck River Wilderness will remain protected for future generations.

## Wilderness Challenges

People are lured into Alaska for its beauty and excitement but remember it is also very unforgiving. Chuck River Wilderness is within a temperate rainforest where the average summer temperatures are between 45-65°F. Be prepared with the appropriate clothing, safety equipment, shelter supplies, and water purifying devices for a cool and frequently overcast climate. This wilderness also contains black bears so store food and trash properly. During the summer months, be especially careful around salmon spawning streams.

## Leave No Trace

Tongass National Forest is the largest, intact coastal rainforest in America. The Chuck River Wilderness is a piece of this treasure and is set aside for all visitors – now and in the future. To insure that this area is left unimpaired for future use, practice the following Leave No Trace principles.

- ◆ Plan ahead and be prepared for extreme weather conditions, and emergencies.
- ◆ Travel and camp on durable surfaces. Chuck River Wilderness is managed as a pristine area. Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails and avoid places where impacts are just beginning.
- ◆ Dispose of waste properly. **Pack out** all trash, leftover food, and toilet paper. At appropriate conditions dispose of human waste in the intertidal zone. If camping in upland forests dispose of solid waste by digging a cathole 6 to 8 inches deep located at least 200 feet from water or campsite.
- ◆ Leave what you find. A mining camp and an old settlement are the two historical sites in this wilderness. Examine but do not touch the historical structures and artifacts. Do not build structures or furniture with live trees.
- ◆ Minimize campfire impacts. Use a lightweight stove when possible. When a campfire is necessary, keep fires small. Build a fire below mean high tide, or when in a forested area, build a mound fire or use a fire pan to avoid damaging the ground vegetation. Stay away from boulders or tree bases to avoid long lasting black scars.
- ◆ Respect wildlife and other visitors in the surrounding area.

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