

USDA Forest Service Alaska Region
Chugach National Forest Recreation Niche
Thursday, March 9, 2005

Niche Statement (for coming decade)

Wild Lands, Wild Fish, Wildlife, and Wild Ice

The Chugach NF has a global responsibility to maintain fully functioning eco-systems, and create an environmental awareness through interpretation and education while providing opportunities to “TOUCH ALASKA”

Settings, Special Places, and Values

“Touching Alaska” is experiencing the grand scale and stunning scenery through a variety of recreation activities. The dramatic sea to peak landscape home of “10,000 glaciers” provides the backdrop for large intact ecosystems supporting diverse fish and wildlife species. Expansive portions of the forest are inaccessible and visitors are at the mercy of weather and tides. Experiencing the vastness of the Chugach NF will change your perception of what is wild forever.

Kenai Peninsula – Wild, yet accessible mountainous terrain, broken by U-shaped valleys, rivers and transportation corridors

Prince William Sound – Wild and undeveloped forested islands in a vast ocean where glaciers tumble to the sea, teeming with abundant marine life. The intricate coastlines provide secluded recreation opportunities and a glimpse of Alaska’s rich cultural past.

Copper River Delta – A fan of vast wetlands formed by the dynamic power of the Copper River, which provides unparalleled wildlife and fish habitats. Mountains and some glaciers on the west delta are accessible while the east delta is extremely remote.

Activities/Opportunities

Providing recreation opportunities that encourage visitors to “Touch Alaska” while maintaining community character and intact eco-systems is of primary importance. Access is often by boat or airplane only, so quality outfitter guides and partners are key to providing access and safe recreation opportunities.

Kenai Peninsula – The center of year-round visitation and development and home of the Iditarod National Historic Trail and intensely visited Russian River. Within this vast area, it includes the majority of the forest trail system (historic transportation routes), developed campgrounds along the Seward Highway All American Road, other roads and the Alaska Railroad. Developed sites support the variety of dispersed recreation opportunities. Begich, Boggs Visitor Center is the cornerstone to visitor information and education on the forest. Public use cabins, snow machines, backcountry skiing, hiking, and fishing the Russian River are popular.

Prince William Sound – Remote summer recreation includes dispersed camps on gravel beaches, remote public use cabins, close-up views of calving glaciers and marine wildlife, sea kayaking, and power boating. This is contrasted by thousands of visitors who are able to “touch Alaska” by cruise ship. Access to outstanding hunting & fishing is by boat or plane.

Copper River Delta – As part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, it provides outstanding viewing of migratory waterfowl and Copper River world famous salmon fishing. It is managed to conserve wildlife, fish and their habitat. Copper River Highway is the only roaded access and developed recreation corridor terminating at Childs Glacier Recreation Area. The focus throughout the Delta is dispersed recreation in remote settings , with few developed sites along the road system, exposing visitors to the power and dynamic nature of the Delta.

Primary Visitors

Locals

Independent Travelers

Package Visitors

South Central Alaskans

World Wide Self Planners

World Wide Vacation Tour Purchasers

SETTING & ACTIVITY [Chugach National Forest Recreation Niche map developed 02/03/200 delineates niche components spatially]		NICHE BRIDGE for the NEXT DECADE (Apply to Recreation Site Facility Master Plan, Step 3, Worksheet 3) Only the site types/dev. scale listed should be added within a setting. Existing facilities should trend to meet these criteria. Unless they are financially sustainable, consider changing or decommissioning them.		
		<u>Kenai Peninsula</u>	<u>Prince William Sound</u>	<u>Copper River Delta</u>
		The center of year-round visitation and development and home of the Iditarod National Historic Trail and intensely visited Russian River. Within this vast area, it includes the majority of the forest trail system (historic transportation routes), developed campgrounds along the Seward Highway All American Road, other roads and the Alaska Railroad. Developed sites support the variety of dispersed recreation opportunities. Begich, Boggs Visitor Center is the cornerstone to visitor information and education on the forest. Public use cabins, snow machines, backcountry skiing, hiking, and fishing the Russian River are popular.	Remote summer recreation includes dispersed camps on gravel beaches, remote public use cabins, close-up views of calving glaciers and marine wildlife, sea kayaking, and power boating. This is contrasted by thousands of visitors who are able to “touch Alaska” by cruise ship. Access to outstanding hunting & fishing is by boat or plane.	As part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, it provides outstanding viewing of migratory waterfowl and Copper River world famous salmon fishing. It is managed to conserve wildlife, fish and their habitat. Copper River Highway is the only roaded access and developed recreation corridor terminating at Childs Glacier Recreation Area. The focus throughout the Delta is dispersed recreation in remote settings, with few developed sites along the road system, exposing visitors to the power and dynamic nature of the Delta.
INFRASTRUCTURE	SITE FUNCTION/ THEME	Sites that meet the needs of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategically placed development along the road corridors from which people disperse into the wild lands. Sites emphasize I&E 	Sites that meet the needs of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remote experiences connected to the water and glaciers Hunting and Fishing 	Sites that meet the needs of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Viewing Wildlife and Scenery Hunting and Fishing Boating
	SITE TYPE/ DEVELOPMENT SCALE	Dev. Scale 3 & 4 Campgrounds Dev. Scale 5 Visitor Center Dev. Scale 1, 2 & 3 Trailheads Dev. Scale 1, 2 & 3 Viewing Sites Dev. Scale 3 Public Use Cabins	Dev. Scale 1 Designated Dispersed Campsites Dev. Scale 3 Public Use Cabins	Dev. Scale 2 & 3 Boat Ramps Dev. Scale 1 Designated Dispersed Campsites Dev. Scale 3 Public Use Cabins Dev. Scale 1, 2 & 3 Trailheads Dev. Scale 2 Campgrounds (only Childs Glacier Rec. Area Dev. Scale 3)
	SITE CAPACITY Low <50 Medium = 50-150 High >150	Campgrounds Medium to Large Trailheads Low to Medium Viewing Sites Low to Medium Public Use Cabins Low	Campsites Low Public Use Cabins Low	Boat Ramps Low Dispersed Campsites Low Public Use Cabins Low Trailheads Low Campgrounds Low Childs Glacier Medium

Programmatic Strategies

The over-all strategy is to rehabilitate developed sites versus building new sites. RV sites will be self-contained. Sites that provide I&E will be prioritized by cost efficiency and the highest number of visitors contacted. The development scale should stay aligned with the experience and values provided by the opportunity. It is important to not deliberately increase the development scale, but keep it in line with the opportunities and experience.

For example: “Toilet buildings will be vault if that’s the appropriate development scale. Water will be centrally located rather than at every site.”