

# Endicott River Wilderness



## Wilderness Character

The Endicott River is situated in a pocket of Alaska's interior, surrounded by a ring of 5,000 foot mountains lies in the heart of the coastal Chilkat Mountains. The summers are hot, the winters cold and the autumn season radiates a thousand shades of gold. Cottonwoods and willows flourish; the spruce are more stunted than their coastal rainforest cousins. From a remnant alpine glacier, the Endicott River winds its way to the sea, carrying the mountain-derived gravels ground to silt. The tracks of wolves, bears and moose intertwine on sand and gravel bars. Here the foot prints of humans are seldom seen.

In 1980, the United States Congress designated 98,729 acres as the Endicott River Wilderness. This Wilderness is situated on the Chilkat Peninsula; nestled between Lynn Canal and Glacier Bay National Park, and includes an area of glaciers spread over the common boundary. Located 45 miles northwest of Juneau and 30 miles south of Haines, the Endicott River Wilderness is most commonly accessed by boat. Visitors come here to hike, hunt in the mountainous landscape, or paddle through its river canyons and camp overnight. The Tongass National Forest manages this undeveloped, enduring set of ecosystems to preserve them for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

## Wilderness Management Direction

Management direction for the wilderness comes from the Wilderness Act, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), and the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended, 2008. The Wilderness Act prescribes the general management direction, but ANILCA provides for some specific exceptions. Direction includes:

- The Wilderness Act prohibits commercial uses with the exception of what may be allowed as necessary for visitor services.
- The Wilderness Act prohibits the use of motorized equipment, but ANILCA Section 1316 can allow for the continued use of traditional equipment directly necessary for the taking of fish and game (subject to regulation and compatibility).
- The Wilderness Act prohibits mechanized form of transport (i.e. bicycles, wheelbarrows), but ANILCA Section 811 can allow for the continued use of traditional equipment used for subsistence activities by rural Alaska residents (subject to regulation and compatibility)
- While the Wilderness Act prohibits the use of aircraft, ANILCA Section 1110 allows for the use of airplanes, motorboats, and snow-machines (during periods of adequate snow cover). Helicopters are not specifically identified in the ANILCA exception and their use is prohibited.
- The Tongass Plan identifies **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 untrammled for future use.



Tongass National Forest



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest Service  
Alaska Region

Tongass National Forest  
Juneau Ranger District  
8510 Mendenhall Loop Road  
Juneau, AK 99801

Phone: 907.586.8800  
Fax: 907.586.8808  
[www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass](http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass)

## Wilderness Challenges

People are lured to Alaska for its beauty and excitement, but environmental conditions can be very unforgiving. Endicott River Wilderness is within a temperate rainforest where the average summer temperatures are between 45-65°F and has an annual rainfall of 92 inches. Be prepared with the appropriate clothing, safety equipment, shelter supplies, and water purifying devices for cool and frequently overcast weather. This Wilderness contains brown and black bears, so store food and trash properly. During the summer months be especially careful around salmon spawning streams. If traveling by boat, be aware of the ocean conditions in Lynn Canal.

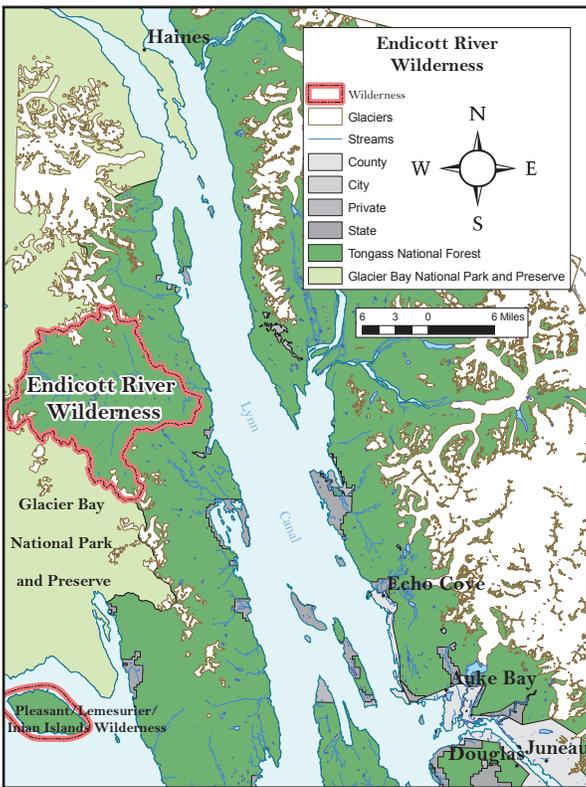
## Leave No Trace

To insure that this area is left unimpaired for future use, practice the following Leave No Trace principles.

- Plan ahead and prepare for extreme weather conditions, hazards, and emergencies.
- Clean equipment and gear **before** going to the field to avoid the potential spread of invasive plants or seeds.
- Travel and camp on durable surfaces. When possible, disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.
- 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 cat hole 6 to 8 inches deep located at least 200 feet from water or campsite.
- Leave what you find. Examine but do not touch the historical structures or artifacts.
- 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 be considerate of other visitors.

## Wilderness Facilities

There are no established hiking trails or public recreation facilities in Endicott River Wilderness.



## Threats and Benefits

While designated wilderness areas have the most protections of any other public lands, here are still threats that degrade the wilderness resource. Threats include littering, harassing wildlife, illegal guiding, damage to vegetation, and introductions of invasive plants. Building awareness and a better understanding of designated wilderness areas is the key foundation to ensure that these areas stay wild.

Along with providing recreational opportunities, designated wilderness areas protect natural ecosystems. They provide us with clean air and clean water, and allow the natural processes to continue without the permanent presence of humans. Due to the action of Congress in 1980, the Endicott River Wilderness will remain protected for future generations.