



At home in wilderness



The wildness of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve is uncompromising, its geography awe-inspiring. Mount Wrangell, namesake of one of the park's four mountain ranges, is an active volcano. Hundreds of glaciers and ice fields form in the high peaks, then melt into rivers and streams that drain to the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea. Ice is a bridge that connects the park's geographically isolated areas.

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) of 1980 allows the subsistence harvest of wildlife within the park, and preserve and sport hunting only in the preserve. Hunters find Dall's sheep, the park's most numerous large mammal, on mountain slopes where they browse sedges, grasses, and forbs. Sockeye, Chinook, and Coho salmon spawn in area lakes and streams and are caught in the Copper River with fish wheels, dip nets, and rod and reel. In the park's southeastern corner, Tlingit people har-

vest harbor seals, which feed on fish and marine invertebrates. These species and many more are key foods in the subsistence diet of the Ahtna and Upper Tanana Athabaskans, Eyak, and Tlingit peoples. Local, non-Native people also share in the bounty.

Long, dark winters and brief, lush summers lend intensity to life here. The sounds of migrant birds, including trumpeter swans, thrushes, and warblers, enliven long summer days.

In late summer, black and brown bears, drawn by ripening soapberries, frequent the forests and gravel bars. Human history here is ancient and relatively sparse, and has left a light imprint on the immense landscape. Even where people continue to hunt, fish, and trap, most animal, fish, and plant populations are healthy and self-regulating. For the species who call Wrangell-St. Elias home, the park's size and remoteness ensure a naturally functioning ecosystem.

INHABITED WILDERNESS

SHARING EARTH'S BOUNTY



The living cultures of south central Alaska include the Upper Ahtna, or 'Headwaters People' (Tat'ahwt'aenn). Their identity is embedded in the earth, water, and ice of the upper Copper River region, where they draw upon traditional ecological knowledge to hunt, gather, trap, and fish. Their knowledge, born of discipline and wisdom passed down through generations, contributes to an economy based on sharing natural resources. This differs from the market economy that prevails elsewhere in the United States.

During winter the Upper Ahtna people traditionally hunted Dall's sheep, caribou, and moose, and trapped small mammals in the uplands. In summer they moved to fish camps. They built fish traps in slow-moving, flat-bottomed creeks.

In the Copper River's fast-moving waters, people used dip nets to harvest salmon before they adopted fish wheels in the early 1900s. The fish wheel's arms are like spokes on a wheel. As the current propels the paddles, revolving baskets

lift the fish from the water. In summer, you'll see many of these wheels along the river edges.

As newcomers began to arrive in the late 1800s, new economic opportunities emerged. Some Ahtna people began to work for money, but they also continued to harvest natural resources to provide for their families. Although some Alaska Natives now live in cities, they also continue to participate in the traditional sharing economy.

PHOTOS, TOP LEFT TO RIGHT: BLUEBERRIES—NPS / BARBARA CELLARIUS; CARIBOU—CREDIT; DALL'S SHEEP—CREDIT; LUPINE—NPS; TRUMPETER SWAN—© TIM DREW; SOAPBERRY—© EDDIE KING; BROWN BEAR—CREDIT
BACKGROUND: ICY BAY AND MOUNT ST. ELIAS—NPS / NEAL HERBERT

PHOTOS, ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: CHARLEY SANFORD FAMILY, UPPER AHTNA; NATIONAL ARCHIVES; COHO SALMON—USFWS / TIM KNEPP; FISH WHEEL—MICHAEL QUINTON; CLEANING SALMON—© KATHERINE MCCONKEY; MOOSE—CREDIT; RED FOX—CREDIT; DOG SLEDDING TEAM—ALASKA STATE LIBRARY P178-097; COPPER ORE—NPS / MELINDA SCHMITT; TOURING KENNECOTT MILL—NPS / JAMIE HART

PROSPECTING FOR WEALTH



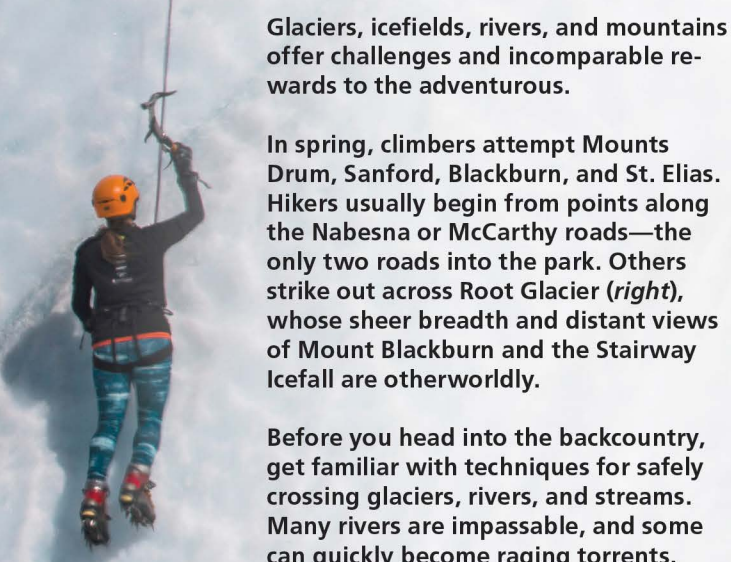
After the Klondike gold strike in 1896, thousands of prospectors poured into Alaska. Many headed to Chisana and Nabesna, but found only small amounts of gold. The discovery of copper deposits in the Chitina River valley drew investors who formed a syndicate to develop a mine. To transport the ore they built a railroad, completed in 1911. It linked Kennecott mine to Cordova and from there to profitable markets.

At its peak of operation the company employed 600 people, many of them immigrants who worked seven days a week

while living in crowded, rough bunkhouses. By 1938, when the mine closed, workers had extracted ore with a market value of about \$200 million at that time.

Although Kennecott mine and mill closed, the community continues to thrive. Restoration crews bring life to relics of a time of industrial growth, expanded markets, global migration, and innovation. At Kennecott you can walk in the footsteps of mill workers and their families, and contemplate what made this rugged place home.

ENTER ANOTHER WORLD



Glaciers, icefields, rivers, and mountains offer challenges and incomparable rewards to the adventurous.

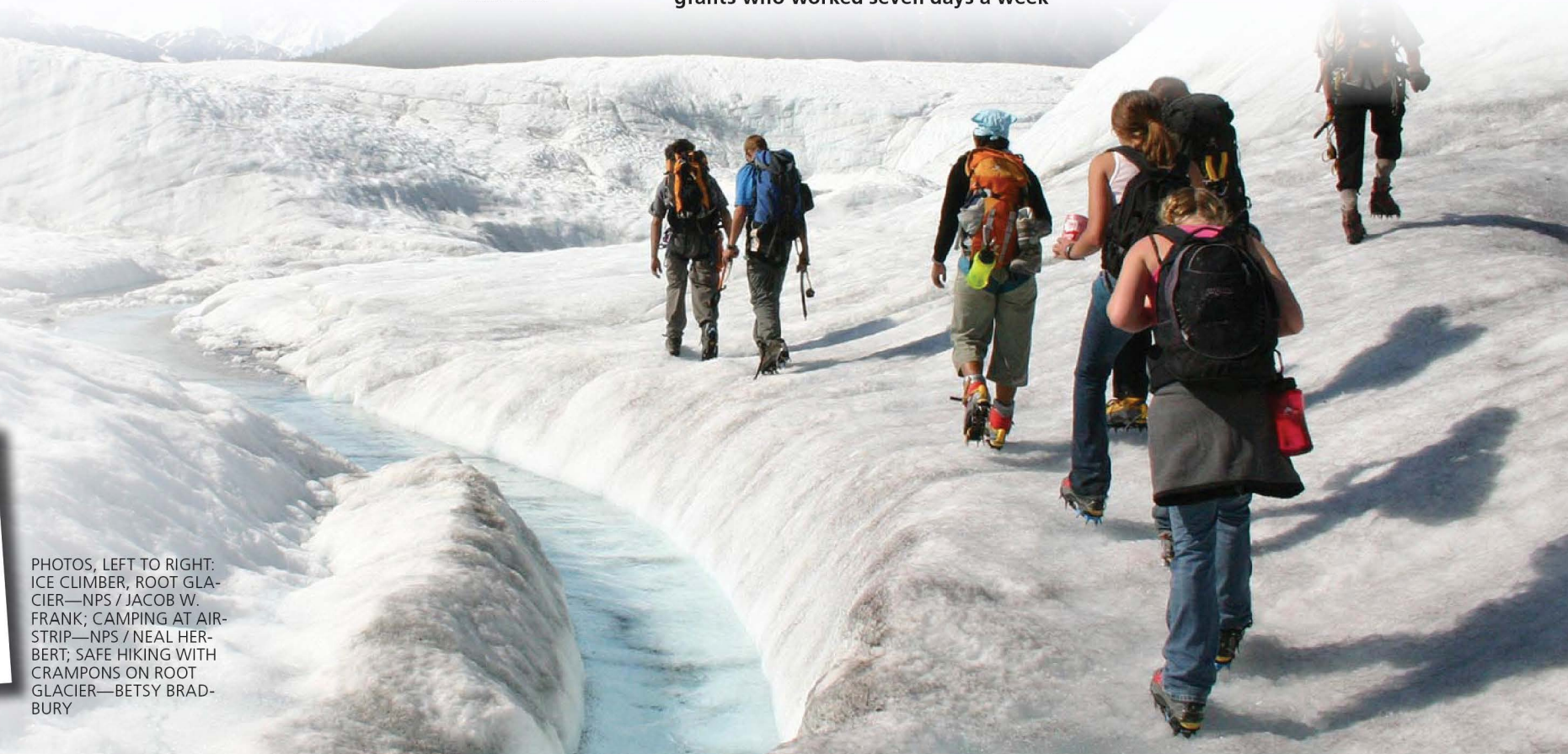
In spring, climbers attempt Mounts Drum, Sanford, Blackburn, and St. Elias. Hikers usually begin from points along the Nabesna or McCarthy roads—the only two roads into the park. Others strike out across Root Glacier (right), whose sheer breadth and distant views of Mount Blackburn and the Stairway Icefall are otherworldly.

Before you head into the backcountry, get familiar with techniques for safely crossing glaciers, rivers, and streams. Many rivers are impassable, and some can quickly become raging torrents.

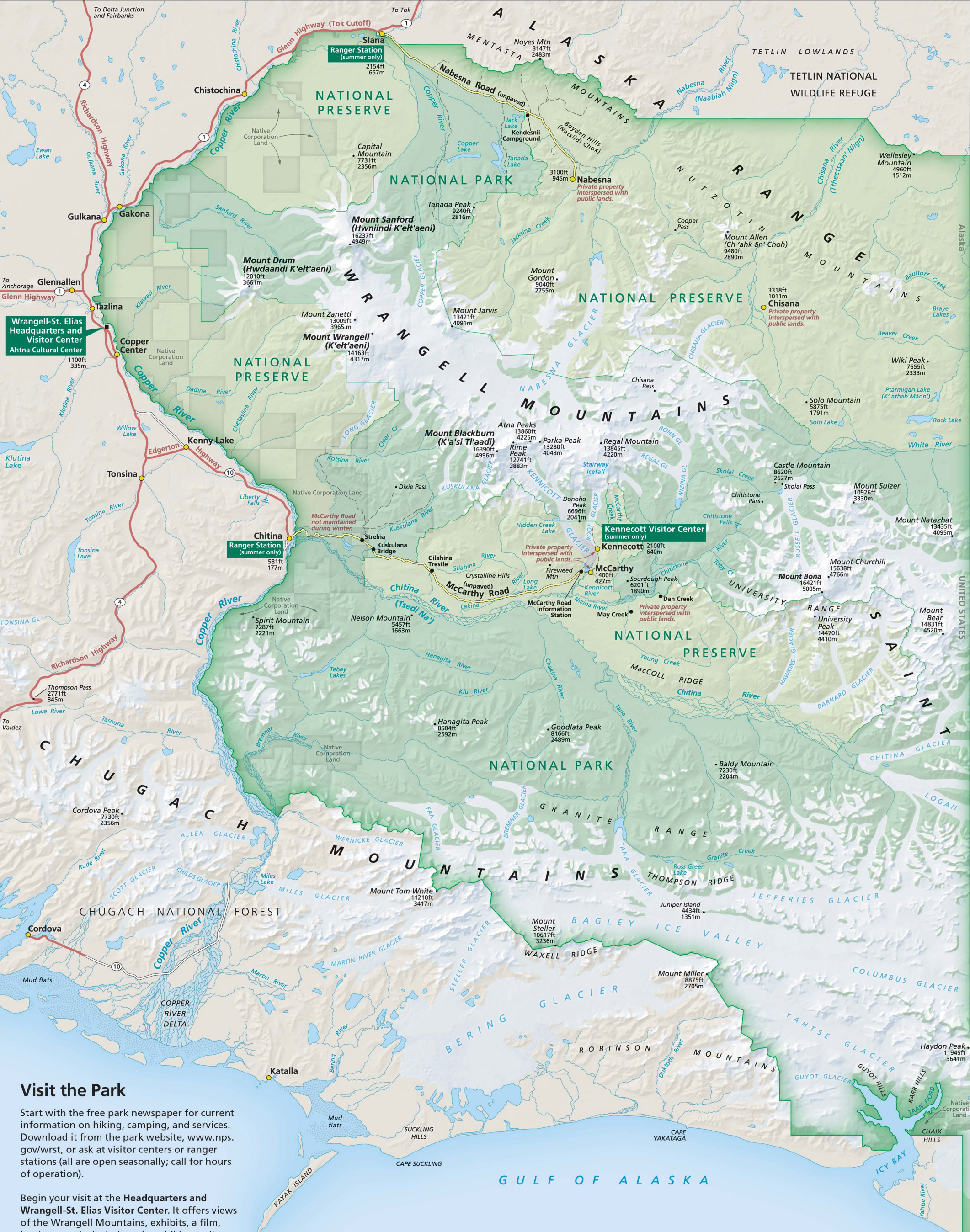
Float the Copper River from Chitina to the Gulf of Alaska, near Cordova, to see some of the park's most rugged terrain. Sea kayakers may opt to paddle in Icy Bay and Yakutat areas. Crosscountry skis offer yet another way to explore in winter and spring. Campers find August and September cool, with fewer mosquitos. For bird's eye views, you may fly or charter a plane.



PHOTOS, LEFT TO RIGHT: ICE CLIMBER, ROOT GLACIER—NPS / JACOB W. FRANK; CAMPING AT AIR STRIP—NPS / NEAL HERBERT; SAFE HIKING WITH CRAMPONS ON ROOT GLACIER—BETSY BRADBURY



Explore Wrangell-St. Elias



Alaska Native Place Names			
English place name	Native place name	Language	Meaning
Boyden Hills	Natsidi Chox	Ahtna	Big Lowland One
Chisana River	Ttheetsaan' Niign	Upper Tanana	Rock River
Chitina River	Tsedi Na'	Ahtna	Copper River
Grand Wash	Tsaa Heeni	Tlingit	Seal Creek
Hubbard Glacier	Sit' Tlein	Tlingit	Big Glacier
Malaspina Glacier	Sit' Tlein	Tlingit	Big Glacier
Mount Allen	Ch 'ahk an' Choh	Upper Tanana	Big Burn
Mount Blackburn	K'a'si T'aadi	Ahtna	The One at Cold Headwaters
Mount Drum	Hwdaandi K'elt'aeni	Ahtna	Downriver K'elt'aeni
Mount St. Elias	Was'eitushaa	Tlingit	Mountain Inland of Was'e
Mount Sanford	Hwiniindi K'elt'aeni	Ahtna	Upriver K'elt'aeni
Mount Wrangell	K'elt'aeni	Ahtna	The One that Controls Weather
Mount Wrangell (when smoking)	Uk'eledi	Ahtna	The One with Smoke on it
Nabesna River	Naabiah Niign	Upper Tanana	Along the Muddy River
Ptarmigan Lake	K' atbah Mann'	Upper Tanana	Ptarmigan Lake

Preserving Wilderness



World Heritage Site



Congress protected 9.6 million acres of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve as Wilderness under the 1964 Wilderness Act. For information about the National Wilderness Preservation System, visit www.wilderness.net.

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Canada's Klane National Park and Reserve, and Tatshenshini-Alsek Provincial Park are all part of a 24-million-acre World Heritage Site—one of Earth's largest internationally protected ecosystems.

Visit the Park

Start with the free park newspaper for current information on hiking, camping, and services. Download it from the park website, www.nps.gov/wrst, or ask at visitor centers or ranger stations (all are open seasonally; call for hours of operation).

Begin your visit at the **Headquarters and Wrangell-St. Elias Visitor Center**. It offers views of the Wrangell Mountains, exhibits, a film, bookstore, picnic shelter, short hiking trails, park information, and seasonal ranger talks and walks.

Kennecott Visitor Center, housed in the historic Blackburn School, is your information hub for Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark. It offers mountain and glacier views, exhibits, a film, seasonal ranger talks and walks, and information on historic structures and hiking trails. **Slana** and **Chitina Ranger Stations** are gateways to the two park roads. They provide backcountry trip planning, road updates, and area information. **Yakutat Ranger Station** is an access point for Mount St. Elias, Hubbard Glacier, and over one hundred miles of remote coastline.

Safety Opportunities for rescue and evacuation in the backcountry are slim; response time can be slow. Adequate preparation, experience, and knowledge of extreme wilderness travel and survival skills are essential. Always carry extra rations and gear for emergencies or weather-related delays. • Before you head into the backcountry, fill out a backcountry itinerary at a visitor center or ranger station. Tell a friend or family member about your route and expected return date and time. • This is bear country! Get a bear safety brochure at a visitor center or ranger station. Make noise. Stay with a group. Bear-resistant food containers, available at visitor centers, are required for all back-

country camping. We strongly suggest that you carry bear spray. • Do not approach moose, which injure more people than bears. • Explosives, toxic chemicals, and residue may be present in mining areas. • For firearms regulations check the park website.

Emergencies call 24-hour NPS Dispatch 907-683-9555 or 911

Private Land Private property and Native Corporation Lands lie within the park and preserve boundaries. Do not trespass. Respect all landowners' rights.

Accessibility We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For information go to a visitor center, ask a ranger, call, or check our website.

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. To learn more, visit www.nps.gov.

More Information
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Getting Around the Wrangell Mountains

