

Alaska's Forests Provide Many Public Benefits



Morel mushrooms are a valuable forest crop

Non-Timber Forest Products

In addition to timber, many non-timber products can be harvested from Alaska's forests. Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) include items such as herbs, sap, mushrooms, berries, and materials for crafts and decorations. In recent years the industry has grown internationally and in the United States. As demand for NTFPs grows, Alaskans have the potential to participate in a viable economic opportunity for their forested lands.

One especially delicious NTFP is Alaskan birch syrup, made by boiling spring-collected sap of birch trees. To make maple syrup, the sap to syrup ratio is 40:1, but according to Alaskan syrup producers birch sap to syrup's ratio is closer to 100:1!



Heckman Lake cabin

Public Recreation Cabins

The Tongass and Chugach National Forests offer 197 remote recreation cabins available for rent by the public. Cabins are located near good fishing, hunting, and terrific scenery. Renters need to hike, fly, or boat to reach the cabins.



Traditional birch basket



Tapping birch trees for syrup

Ruffed Grouse Habitat Improvement

Forests are actively managed to benefit wildlife as well as timber. The Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) have helped fund grouse habitat enhancement projects. For Example, in 1994, The Alaska Division of Forestry (DOF), ADF&G and the RGS started a cooperative effort aimed at improving wildlife habitat in Alaska. Since 1994, project managers in the interior have constructed 7.5 miles of forest roads for hunter access, felled 476 acres of mature aspen in 42 cutting units ranging from 6 to 20 acres, and conducted prescribed burns on 140 acres.



Ruffed Grouse



Controlled burn in the Tanana Valley, in the Interior, for improvement of Ruffed Grouse habitat



Alaska Railroad train passes Spencer Glacier in the Chugach National Forest

Alaska Railroad Whistle Stop Partnership

The Alaska Railroad and the Forest Service have joined together to develop up to six Whistle Stop stations between Anchorage and Seward to provide opportunities for sustainable tourism, to benefit local economies, and to open the heart of the Alaskan backcountry to people of all abilities.

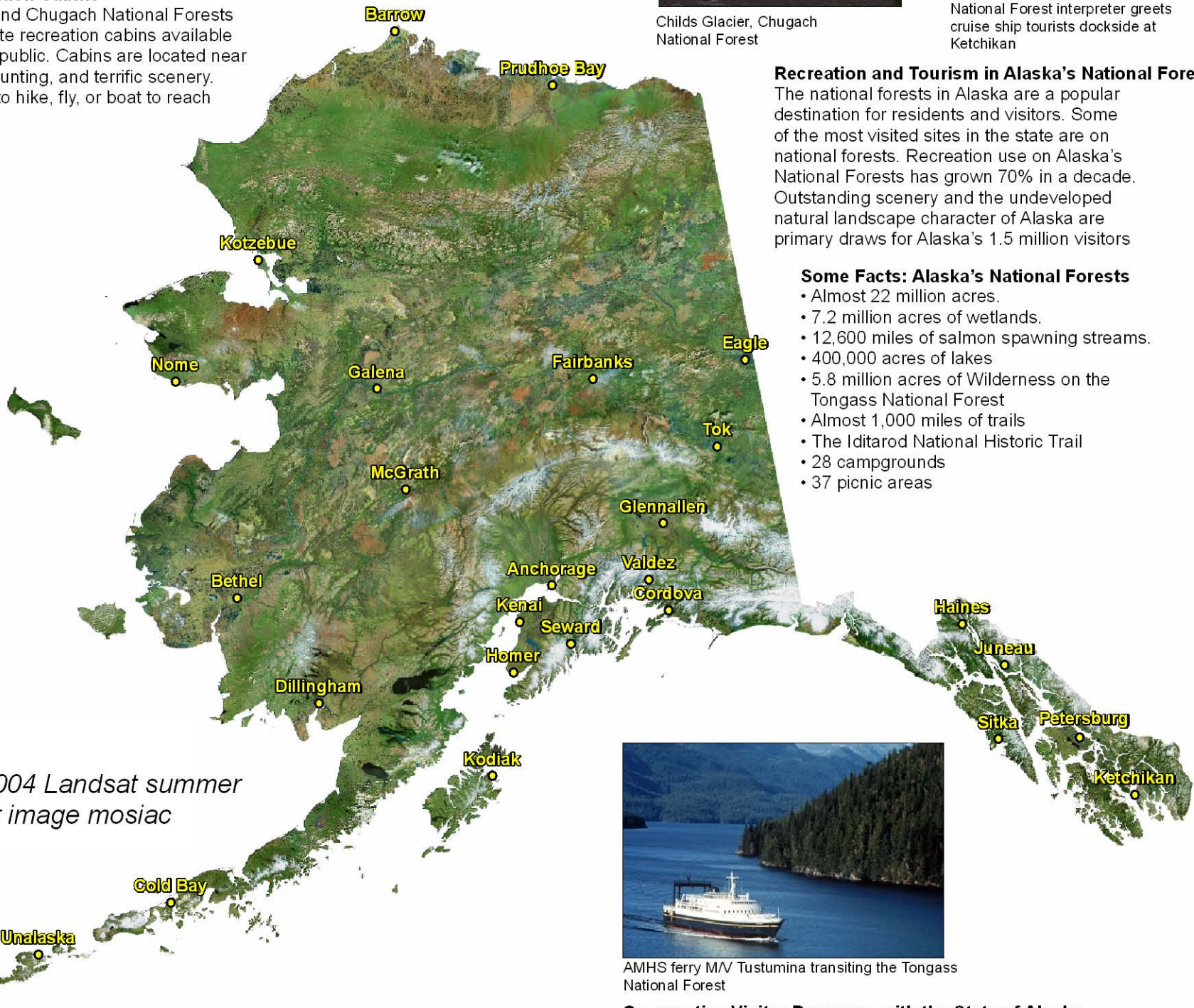
At Whistle Stops, passengers can exit the train to experience wild country on short walks to scenic views or on longer hikes, staying at rustic cabins and campsites. The Alaska Railroad, the Forest Service, and recreation businesses will offer the beauty of Alaska with seamless transportation.



Totem Heritage Center, Ketchikan

Heritage Resources

Alaska's Native people have made their home and life among the bounty of Alaska's forests and sea. Archaeologists know of more than 3,500 historic and prehistoric sites on the Chugach and Tongass National Forests. These sites bear witness to more than 10,000 years of Alaska Native and 250 years of European and American settlement. The Alaska Region has four national historic landmarks and lists 32 sites on the National Register of Historic Places.



Alaska 2004 Landsat summer true color image mosaic



Childs Glacier, Chugach National Forest



Sea kayak rangers, Tongass National Forest



National Forest interpreter greets cruise ship tourists dockside at Ketchikan

Recreation and Tourism in Alaska's National Forests

The national forests in Alaska are a popular destination for residents and visitors. Some of the most visited sites in the state are on national forests. Recreation use on Alaska's National Forests has grown 70% in a decade. Outstanding scenery and the undeveloped natural landscape character of Alaska are primary draws for Alaska's 1.5 million visitors

Some Facts: Alaska's National Forests

- Almost 22 million acres.
- 7.2 million acres of wetlands.
- 12,600 miles of salmon spawning streams.
- 400,000 acres of lakes
- 5.8 million acres of Wilderness on the Tongass National Forest
- Almost 1,000 miles of trails
- The Iditarod National Historic Trail
- 28 campgrounds
- 37 picnic areas



AMHS ferry M/V Tustumina transiting the Tongass National Forest

Cooperative Visitor Programs with the State of Alaska

The Alaska Region has an extensive visitor services program that serves more than one million visitors a year. This includes visitor centers, information centers and interpretive programs aboard the state ferries of the Alaska Marine Highway System. These programs provide opportunities to interpret national forest resources to Alaska residents and visitors. The US Forest Service and the State of Alaska partner on many of these programs, such as the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center in Ketchikan and the resource interpretation program offered on the state ferries of Southeast and Southcentral Alaska.



Interpretive sign at the Mendenhall Glacier visitor's center at Juneau, Tongass National Forest



Scenic Seward Highway, Chugach National Forest

Forest Practices and Multiple Use

The Alaska Forest Resources & Practices Act sets standards for timber harvesting, reforestation, and timber access on all ownerships. Regulations under the Act govern road construction and maintenance, harvesting practices, and reforestation to keep water bodies clean, protect fish habitat, and ensure that forest harvesting is sustainable. The Act also requires public land owners to manage forest land with consideration of important scenic areas and wildlife habitat.



Stream culvert inspection



State of Alaska habitat biologist showing Dolly Varden from Southeast Alaska



Southeast Alaska riparian area in old harvest unit



Subsistence salmon troll fishing, Tongass National Forest



Sitka Black-tailed deer is an important species for subsistence hunting

Fish and Wildlife on Alaska's National Forests

Alaska's forests are among the world's great treasures for fish and wildlife. There are no threatened and endangered species on either forest. Beyond their intrinsic value, fish and wildlife are important for subsistence, recreation, and commercial value. Critical coastal wetlands include the premier Copper River Delta near Cordova and Stikine River Delta near Wrangell, which support millions of migrating shorebirds and are the only nesting ground of the dusky Canada goose. Wildlife viewing areas are a prime attraction for tourism on the two national forests with the Pack Creek Cooperative Management Area on Admiralty Island the only Brown Bear viewing area in the nation managed jointly by federal and state agencies.

Nearly 40% of the state's salmon catch comes from fish produced in the waters of the National forests. Working with the state, the Forest Service has completed over 400 fish projects in the last 50 years to improve fish habitat. The Forest Service has invested more than \$30 million in these projects including 58 fish ladders to improve salmon habitat. Examples of recent multiple partnership doing restoration work are: Resurrection Creek on the Chugach and Sal Creek on Prince of Wales Island on the Tongass. The Resurrection Creek project is restoring stream channel, adjacent floodplain and riparian habitat damaged by early 1900's surface mining. The Sal Creek restoration project is improving the watershed function and fisheries from lands where timber was harvested in the early 1960's. Both projects will result in increased fish and wildlife productivity on public and private lands for sport and commercial benefits.



Nearly 40% of Alaska's salmon catch originate from the waters of the Tongass and Chugach National Forests



Brown bear sow with cubs at Pack Creek, Admiralty Island, Tongass National Forest



Maps produced by the

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