

Wilderness.net's Karta River Wilderness Fact Sheet



Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Karta River Wilderness in 1990 and it now has a total of 39,917 acres. All of the wilderness is in Alaska and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

Karta Bay, one of the western extensions off the head of Kasaan Bay, forms the eastern border of the Karta River Wilderness on east-central Prince of Wales Island. The area includes the drainage of the Karta

River system (which empties into the southwest corner of Karta Bay) and two major lakes, Salmon and Karta. Fire burned the area around the turn of the century, but second-growth spruce, cedar, and hemlock stand an average of 60 feet tall. One of Alaska's more recent additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System, Karta River Wilderness is best known for large salmon runs and the scenic quality of the large river drainage system. Wildlife fills the area, including wolves, black bears, black-tailed deer, beavers, otters, minks, martens, and weasels. Trumpeter swans and various other waterfowl are commonly seen on the river. Native Alaskans, particularly the Haida, historically lived around the bay and utilized the rich food sources of this area. The 5-mile Karta River Trail follows the Karta River up from Karta Bay to Salmon Lake, allowing excellent access to the river for steelhead, sockeye and coho salmon runs. Three Forest Service rental cabins are located in the Karta Wilderness: Karta River, Karta Lake, and Salmon Lake, and all are accessible via floatplane. Boat access is available for the Karta River cabin. The Karta River Wilderness is one of Prince of Wales Island's easier Wildernesses to access.

Leave No Trace

How to follow the seven standard Leave No Trace principles differs in different parts of the country (desert vs. Rocky Mountains). Click on any of the principles listed below to learn more about how they apply in the Karta River Wilderness.

1. [Plan Ahead and Prepare](#)
2. [Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces](#)
3. [Dispose of Waste Properly](#)
4. [Leave What You Find](#)
5. [Minimize Campfire Impacts](#)
6. [Respect Wildlife](#)
7. [Be Considerate of Other Visitors](#)

For more information on Leave No Trace, [Visit the Leave No Trace, Inc. website.](#)

Area Management

The Karta River Wilderness is part of the 109 million acre National Wilderness Preservation System. This System of lands provides clean air, water, and habitat critical for rare and endangered plants and animals. In wilderness, you can enjoy challenging recreational activities like hiking, backpacking, climbing, kayaking, canoeing, rafting, horse packing, bird watching, stargazing, and extraordinary opportunities for solitude. You play an important role in helping to *"secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness"* as called for by the Congress of the United States through the Wilderness Act of 1964. Please follow the requirements outlined below and use Leave No Trace techniques when visiting the Karta River Wilderness to ensure protection of this unique area.

General Wilderness Prohibitions

As noted in the Wilderness Act, motorized equipment and mechanical transport are generally prohibited on all federal lands designated as wilderness. In Alaska, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA) allows airplanes, motorboats, and snowmobiles to be used to access wilderness areas for traditional activities and travel to villages and home sites. **The use of helicopters by the general public to access wilderness areas is prohibited.** ANILCA permits local residents to use motorboats, snowmobiles, and other means of traditionally employed surface transportation for subsistence purposes. Lastly, these types of transportation may be used specifically for hunting or fishing along with use of existing cabins or other facilities. Temporary structures may be approved for construction for hunting or fishing if found to be within keeping of the character for a specific wilderness area. All of these uses are subject to reasonable regulation, since the Wilderness Act gives the Forest Service the responsibility to protect wilderness resources and preserve wilderness character.

Since allowed activities within each wilderness may vary, please contact the Forest Service office for more specific information regarding questions you may have.

Fees

The following user fee system(s) have been implemented for this wilderness: CABIN RENTAL. Fees are most often used to offset the operating costs of a permit system or to help fund management activities such as trail maintenance. Contact the national forest office or visit the websites listed below for more specific information on this fee system.

Contacts

Craig Ranger District

900 MAIN STREET

PO BOX 500

CRAIG, AK 99921

Remarks: Office Hours M-F 8-4:30 907-826-3271

Phone: 907-826-3271

Links to Other Websites

[Tongass National Forest, Karta River Wilderness Brochure](#)

Links on Wilderness.net

[National, Regional and Local Wilderness Organizations \(NGOs\)](#)

A listing of societies, organizations, coalitions and other wilderness-related advocacy and stewardship groups.

[Career and Volunteer Opportunities](#)

A listing of sites providing information about wilderness- and environmentally-related career and volunteer opportunities.

Applicable Wilderness Law(s)

Law	Date	Acreage Change (in acres)
Public Law 101-626	November 28, 1990	38,046
Tongass Timber Reform Act - Public law 101-626 (11/28/1990) To amend the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, to protect certain lands in the Tongass National Forest in perpetuity, to modify certain long-term timber contracts, to provide for protection of riparian habitat, and for other purposes		

— [download 101-626](#)