

Wilderness.net's Misty Fiords National Monument Wilderness Fact Sheet



Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Misty Fiords National Monument Wilderness in 1980 and it now has a total of 2,143,920 acres. All of the wilderness is in Alaska and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

Misty Fiords National Monument includes 2,294,343 acres on the southern tip of the Alaska Panhandle, all but about 156,000 acres near the middle have been designated Wilderness. Misty Fiords is part of a vast coastal rain forest and the cloud-shrouded monument can receive 160 inches of rain annually. The region is marked by deep valleys with steep slopes and sharp intervalley ridges formed by volcanism and carved by glaciation. The slopes appear to be an unbroken carpet of cedar, spruce and hemlock, but the forest floor stands open at numerous muskegs dominated by sphagnum moss. Ridges rise above the timberline to alpine heaths and grasses. Numerous steep-walled inlets of the sea called fjords offer excellent sea-kayaking opportunities, although 25-foot changes in the tides and frequent storms can make boating challenging. Ideal beach camps may be underwater two hours after pitching a tent. Behm Canal, the longest waterway into the Wilderness, runs for over 100 miles and old lava flows and extensive glaciers add to the wonder. Tongass National Forest maintains 11 recreational cabins in the Misty Fiords National Monument Wilderness, 9 on inland freshwater lakes and 2 on saltwater. Advance cabin registrations are required. About 15 miles of wet trails punch into the interior. Winter skiing continues to become increasingly popular, but the avalanche danger often rates as high. Both brown and black bears, mountain goats, and black-tailed deer are common sights. Moose, martens, wolves, wolverines, and river otters may be found in abundance. All five species of salmon share the waters with sea lions, harbor seals, killer whales, and porpoises. Migratory birds, from hummingbirds to trumpeter swans, fill the skies.

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 Misty Fiords National Monument 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](#)

Area Management

The Misty Fjords National Monument 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 Misty Fjords National Monument 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.

Wilderness-Specific Regulations

Wilderness managers often need to take action to limit the impacts caused by visitor activities in order to protect the natural conditions of wilderness as required by the Wilderness Act of 1964. Managers typically implement 'indirect' types of actions such as information and education measures before selecting more restrictive measures. When regulations are necessary, they are implemented with the specific intent of balancing the need to preserve the character of the wilderness while providing for the use and enjoyment of wilderness.

The following wilderness regulations are in effect for this area. Not all regulations are in effect for every wilderness. Contact the Forest Service office or visit the websites listed on the 'Links' tab for more specific information about the regulations listed.

ALL VISITORS

-- Group size is limited to no more than 12 people per party.

-- Pack out all debris, garbage, or other waste.

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

Ketchikan - Misty Ranger District
3031 TONGASS AVE
KETCHIKAN, AK 99901

Phone: 907-225-2148

Links to Other Websites

[Tongass National Forest, Misty Fiords National Monument 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 96-487	December 2, 1980	2,136,000

Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act - Public Law 96-487 (12/2/1980) Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act

— [download 96-487](#)