

Wilderness.net's Jay S. Hammond Wilderness Fact Sheet



Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Jay S. Hammond Wilderness in 1980 and it now has a total of 2,619,550 acres. All of the wilderness is in Alaska and is managed by the National Park Service.

Description

Here the Aleutian Range meets the Alaska Range in the Chigmit Mountains, an area known as Alaska's Alps. The Lake Clark Wilderness was renamed the Jay S. Hammond Wilderness in 2018 to commemorate Alaska's fourth governor. The mighty rain forest along Cook Inlet rises to alpine tundra and sparkling lakes sheltered by mountain fastnesses. Drainages plunge thunderously down hundreds of waterfalls. Vast numbers of moose, brown and black bears, wolves, wolverines, red foxes, Dall sheep, and caribou make their home here. Slender and 50 miles long, Lake Clark itself reflects tall ragged spires of rock, and salmon and trout run in great numbers. Originally a national monument, Lake Clark's status was changed to National Park and Preserve in 1980, and about two-thirds was designated Wilderness.

Three Wild and Scenic Rivers offer excellent opportunities for travel in the area: 11 miles of the gorgeous Chilikadrotna River with sections of wild white water; 22 miles of the shallow Mulchatna River flowing out of a jewel called Turquoise Lake; and 51 miles of the unsung Tlikakila River, which runs through one of the most fabulous glacial valleys in America. Tlikakila's waters eventually shed into Lake Iliamna, just outside the Wilderness boundary, the only place in the United States where inland seals live.

Two active volcanoes dominate the landscape, visible from the Kenai Peninsula across Cook Inlet: Mount Iliamna (10,016 feet) and Mount Redoubt (10,197 feet). In 2009 Redoubt erupted, spewing ash across Anchorage.

A visitor center exists on Lake Clark itself in the settlement of Port Alsworth, but you'll find no facilities or trails within the Wilderness. Once just a trickle, the number of backpackers has been increasing. Visitors will find few experiences to parallel Lake Clark.

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 Jay S. Hammond 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.](#)

Location

Lake Clark National Park & Preserve is located southwest of Anchorage, Alaska, extending from the west coast of Cook Inlet to the tundra of southwest Alaska.

The Jay S. Hammond Wilderness is not on the road system.

Access to the Lake Clark region is by small aircraft and many air taxi services provide transportation to the park. Float planes may land on the many lakes throughout the area. Wheeled planes land on open beaches, gravel bars, or private airstrips in or near the park. A one to two-hour flight from Anchorage, Kenai or Homer will provide access to most points within the park and preserve.

Area Management

The Jay S. Hammond Wilderness is part of the 110 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 Jay S. Hammond Wilderness to ensure protection of this unique area.

National Park areas are special conservation areas set aside for the use and enjoyment of the public in a fashion that will leave them unimpaired for future generations.

Think of these areas as "outdoor" museums... where you can wander through, interact with the exhibits and experience natural processes firsthand. Not unlike museums, national park areas do not allow activities that would mar or destroy the "collection": taking natural or cultural objects, cutting trees, befouling water, leaving trash or digging up vegetation.

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve has two "museums" adjacent to one another: the park and the preserve. They differ only in that the preserve allows for sport hunting and trapping; the park does not allow these activities.

Violations include:

Destroying vegetation: cutting down trees for structures or firewood and removing tundra for tent pads. Firewood must be dead or down.

Taking objects: removing antlers/horns, skulls, historical objects, artifacts, plants, rocks, etc...

Failing to deal with human waste properly: insufficient distance from water/campsite, not burying it.

Littering/trash: not packing it out, leaving it in campfire rings, improper food storage attracting bears.

Hunting violations: hunting in the park, failing to salvage the meat, taking undersized game.

Harassing or disturbing wildlife.

For more information about regulations, please contact park rangers in Port Alsworth (907-781-2218) or Anchorage (907-644-3626).

Please help us as land stewards to preserve and protect these resources for future generations.

Contacts

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Links to Other Websites

[Alaska Department of Fish and Game Moose Safety Information](#)

[Alaska State Parks Bear Safety Page](#)

[Alaska State Parks Staying Safe in Alaska](#)

[Alaska Volcano Observatory](#)

Provides current information on volcano activity.

[Lake Clark National Park and Preserve](#)

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	2,470,000

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

 [download 96-487](#)

Public Law 115-141 **March 23, 2018** **0**

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 - Public law 115-141 (3/23/2018) To amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to include severe forms of trafficking in persons within the definition of transnational organized crime for purposes of the rewards program of the Department of State, and for other purposes.

NOTE: Changed name from Lake Clark Wilderness to Jay S. Hammond Wilderness.

 [download 115-141](#) - Relevant legislation found on page(s): 313.

Recreational Opportunities

Backpacking, hiking, rafting/kayaking, wildlife viewing, mountaineering and fishing are the primary activities in the Jay S. Hammond Wilderness.

Climate and Special Equipment Needs

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve has two distinct climate areas: the damp coast and the drier interior. The coast is often foggy and wet, with an average annual rainfall of 40 to 80 inches. The interior averages only 17 to 26 inches. The same weather systems that bring precipitation to the coast also bring milder winters; the interior often suffers temperatures as low as -40 degrees F.

Visitors to Lake Clark National Park and Preserve might bask in warm, gentle sunshine, be pummeled by fierce storms, or get soaked by rain. Weather conditions can change rapidly, and the mountainous terrain channels fierce winds. Gusts in the 30-50 mph range are not uncommon.

Frost and snow can occur any time, but are most common from September to early June. Lake Clark typically begins freezing in November and melts in April. Ice conditions dictate whether planes on floats or skis can land.

In general, visitors should be prepared to experience a number of different weather conditions during their stay within the Jay S. Hammond Wilderness. Sturdy raingear and appropriate footwear are a must, and smart travelers make sure to layer clothing.

Safety and Current Conditions

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve is a wilderness park, exceptionally remote and isolated. For any wilderness trip, we caution that visitors and hikers must be knowledgeable and prepared. Adventures in the park demand self-sufficiency and advanced backcountry skills. Help, if any, may

be days away.

Be prepared for the possibility of inclement weather delaying scheduled pick-up, often by several days. Bring extra food and fuel with you.

Learn safe practices to avoid dangerous encounters with wildlife. Animals in the park are not tame, even those that seem "harmless" like porcupines or moose. Resist the temptation to approach or try to feed them.

Always filter or boil your water. Waterborne contaminants such as giardia and cryptosporidium are present.

Snow is possible at any time but most likely to occur from September to June. Bring warm clothing, a sturdy tent, and an appropriate sleeping bag.

Ask in advance about river crossings and other details of your route.

Please consider leaving your itinerary with us at our field headquarters at Port Alsworth before departing into the backcountry, as well as with a friend or family member who can notify us if you are overdue.

If you have additional questions, contact the field headquarters in Port Alsworth at (907) 781-2218.