

Wilderness.net's Maurelle Islands Wilderness Fact Sheet



Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Maurelle Islands Wilderness in 1980 and it now has a total of 4,814 acres. All of the wilderness is in Alaska and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

The Maurelle Islands, a group of nearly 30 dots of land rising less than 400 feet above the waves at their highest point, are best known for the abundance of marine mammals that populate their waters: humpback

whales; sea otters; Steller's sea lions; and seals. Windswept beaches occasionally break the rocky shoreline. Tall stands of Sitka spruce and western hemlock, often tortured by the wind, thickly cover most of the islands. Numerous rocky shoals make boating around the Maurelles potentially dangerous, but the sea kayaking can be worth the risk. Black bears, black-tailed deer, and wolves inhabit the larger islands in limited numbers. Seabirds and bald eagles are commonly seen. The Maurelle Wilderness has an historic use of subsistence, generally by native peoples from Klawock and the western shore of Prince of Wales Island. It is also a stopover for fishing vessels as a protected anchorage. Motorized boats and small floatplanes are permitted to land, and camping is allowed. Strong winds and rain can delay pickups for those who have been dropped off, and make campfires difficult to start and maintain. There are no developed facilities or trails in the Maurelle Islands Wilderness, but lots of opportunities for exploration.

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 Maurelle Islands 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 Maurrelle Islands 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 Maurrelle Islands 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.

Contacts

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Links to Other Websites

[Tongass National Forest, Maurrell Islands 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 96-487	December 2, 1980	4,424
Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act - Public Law 96-487 (12/2/1980) Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act		

 [download 96-487](#)