

Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center's
Wilderness Investigations
High School

Wilderness Profile #4
Maurille Islands Wilderness

Common Core Standard Connections

Standards addressed will vary depending on how the teacher chooses to approach the lesson and/or activities.

Teacher background:

This group of 30 small islands is especially important as the effects of climate change come into play. Located south of Juneau and nestled near the coast the highest point rises just 400 feet above sea level. Designated by Congress in 1980 the Maurille Islands Wilderness covers 4,937 acres. Mature Sitka spruce and western hemlocks cover most of the islands. An abundant population of marine mammals, seabirds, bald eagles and numerous large mammals call these islands and the waters around them home at least part of the year. Generations of native peoples have used the area for hunting and gathering and, later, sea going ships seeking protective anchorage found safe harbor. The U.S. Forest Service administers this rainforest wonderland.

Instructions for the teacher:

To help students become familiar with the Maurille Islands Wilderness choose one or more of the following:

- Use information from *Teacher Background* and the *Student Information Sheet* to prepare and present a mini-lesson about this wilderness.
- If students have already started their *U.S. Wilderness Area Field Guide* (started in Wilderness Profile #1) have them add entries for the Maurille Islands Wilderness by choosing items from the list below:
 - Photocopy the *Student Information Sheet*, have students go through it and then conduct a discussion about the information found there.
 - Using the *Student Information Sheet*, have students choose one of the following creative projects:

- The Maurille Islands Wilderness is temperate rainforest. Have students research this type of rainforest and compare/contrast with other rainforest types.
 - After studying the Maurille Islands Wilderness, develop a presentation (poster, PowerPoint, comic strip, etc.) that features appropriate and popular wilderness activities for this place.
 - Create a travel plan for getting to and from the school location to the Maurille Islands Wilderness. Determine the best mode of travel (plane, car, train, bus or some combination) and then estimate a trip cost.
 - Use the wilderness map, included with *Wilderness Investigations*, and have students locate Alaska and the Maurille Islands Wilderness. Provide blackline maps of the state. Have students identify and label important state features and draw in/label this wilderness.
 - Have students choose one of the common animals of the Maurille Islands Wilderness (found on the *Student Information Sheet*) and have them research information about the animal. Next, using their research findings have them prepare a podcast to share what they've learned.
- Sea kayaking is a popular type of recreation and transportation in the Maurille Islands Wilderness. Have students research sea kayaking and the gear needed for a safe and enjoyable wilderness experience.
 - Create a *U.S. Wilderness Area* classroom display or place on class webpage. Continue to add information as new areas are focused on.
 - Just a few wilderness areas are focused on as part of *Wilderness Investigations*. Have students choose non-focused areas to research, present and post on the bulletin board.
 - For more information about the Maurille Islands Wilderness go to www.wilderness.net.

Wilderness Profile #4
Maurille Islands Wilderness
Student Information Sheet



Maurille Islands Wilderness Rain Forest
(from Wilderness.net; Image #2890)

What's the story?

- Designated as Federally protected wilderness in 1980 by Congress.
- Managed by the U.S. Forest Service the area has a total of 4,937 acres.
- Located in Alaska along the coast south of Juneau.
- The 30 small islands, dots of land really, rise just 400 feet above sea level at their highest point.
- An abundant marine mammal population is found in wilderness waters at least part of the year, and includes the humpback whale, sea otter, Stellar's sea lion, and seal.
- Shorelines are generally rocky but the occasional windswept beach can be found. Boating in the wilderness is potentially dangerous but sea kayaking is popular.

- Tall stands of temperate rainforest cover most of the islands. Sitka spruce and western hemlock are the most common tree.
- The area receives copious amounts of rain and this makes this wilderness a challenging yet magical place to spend time.
- Besides sea mammals other animals can be found on the islands: black bear, black-tailed deer, wolves, assorted seabirds and bald eagles.
- Indigenous people have used the area historically to hunt and gather items for food, to be used as clothing, for building boats, and so forth.
- Camping is allowed in the wilderness as are the use of motorized boats and small floatplanes. There are no developed facilities or trails in the Maurille Islands Wilderness.