



Community Newsletter Summer 2024



Tent camping under Mt. Sanford. NPS / Wittmer

Dear neighbors & community members,

It is hard to believe that summer solstice is already here! We continue to engage local youth, work with the Subsistence Resource Commission on subsistence planning and management, collaborate with tribal partners and non-profit organizations, propose and manage grant funded projects, conduct scientific research, learn from traditional ecological knowledge shared with us by our tribal partners and engage in numerous planning efforts. Thoughtful and effective stewardship of 13.2 million acres is complicated yet important work and it is successful because of the engagement of our local communities and partners. Thank you for attending meetings, submitting public comments, and participating in or hosting special events.

And there's more to come as we continue to participate with the McCarthy Road Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study, develop a Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark Management Strategy for National Park Service-managed lands, and the Environmental Investigations for the Nabesna and Kennecott Mines.

This summer, we welcome back returning seasonal employees as well as new employees. We serve residents and visitors who seek inspiration, recreation and education, as well as those who come for traditional activities, subsistence and scientific study. We strive to cooperate with local communities, tribal members and others to protect the natural and cultural resources in these special places for this and future generations to experience and enjoy.

Thank you for all the ways, as our neighbors and fellow community members, that you join us in these efforts.

Warm regards,
Ben

Interpretation and Education Visitor Services, Summer 2024

Wrangell-St. Elias Visitor Center, Copper Center

May 13 - September 15, daily, 9am-5pm.
Theater and Exhibit Hall, interpretive programs, trip-planning, permits, Alaska Geographic park store sales. [Ahtna Cultural Center](#).

Kennecott Visitor Center

May 24 - September 6, daily, 9-11:30am, 1:30-4:30pm.
Exhibits, interpretive programs, trip-planning, Alaska Geographic sales.

Slana Ranger Station

May 24 - September 21, daily, 9am-5pm.
Exhibits, trip-planning, permits, Alaska Geographic sales.

Chitina Ranger Station

May 24 - August 31, Fridays and Saturdays, hours vary (staffing dependent).
Exhibits, trip-planning.



Park staff welcome visitors to the visitor center in Copper Center. NPS

Check the website for updates on the hours of operations and news releases:
www.nps.gov/wrst/planyourvisit/conditions.htm

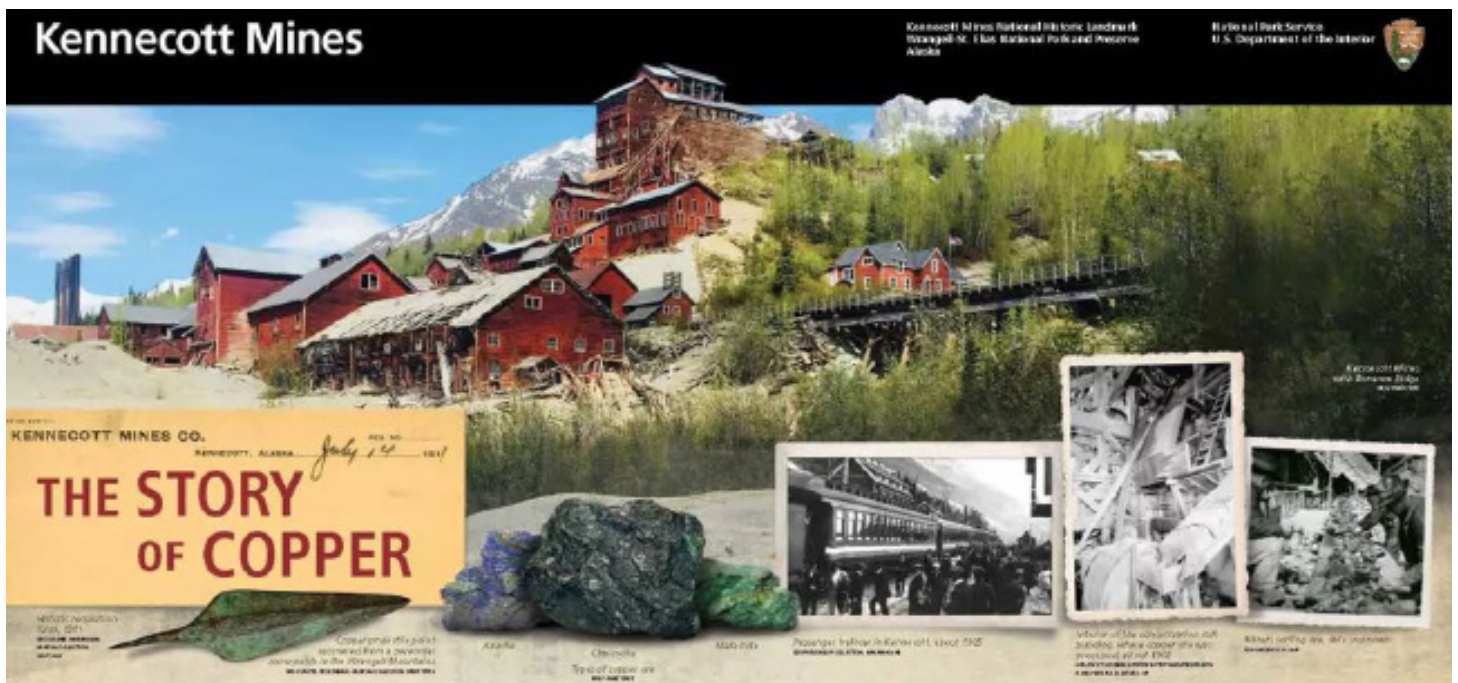
NEW BROCHURE

Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark

NPS ungrid-style brochure available at visitor centers and ranger stations this summer, or view it on the park website:



www.nps.gov/wrst/planyourvisit/upload/Kennecott-Unigrid-Brochure



Ahtna Youth Interns Learn Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Welcome Visitors to the Ahtna Cultural Center

This project, funded through the Indian Youth Service Corps Program and Bureau of Indian Affairs was a success in 2022 and 2023 and is back for 2024! Four internship positions and a program coordinator position are working at the Ahtna Cultural Center, attending traditional ecological knowledge culture camps, and learning customary and traditional uses of the landscape.



2023 Ahtna Youth Interns work with Edward GreyBear on an archeology project. NPS

Youth Conservation Corps 2024

Youth between the ages of 16-18 are participating in Wrangell's Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) program. This year's 7 YCC participants are working on the Jumbo Mine Trail and Caribou Creek Cabin, learning outdoor leadership skills, helping at Junior Angler events, and gaining valuable professional skills for future employment. Learn more about the YCC on the park website: www.nps.gov/wrst/learn/management/ycc.htm



The 2024 YCC crew at the main visitor center Bluff Overlook in Copper Center. NPS / William Savok

Other Youth Programs This Year

Community members joined Wrangell Institute for Science and the Environment (WISE), NPS, and other agency staff for the 2024 Winter Fun Day in January. More opportunities to engage youth this summer include Junior Ranger tables at local events, the Yakutat Tern Festival, Earth Discovery Day, Copper River Stewardship Program, and the Youth Environmental Summit.



The 2024 Winter Fun Day at the Exhibit Hall. NPS

Wrangell-St. Elias Volunteers

Pioneers of Alaska and Recreational Aviation Foundation (RAF) volunteers return to Wrangell-St. Elias again this summer to assist with clearing and improvements at the Peavine airstrip. Also, park volunteers Charlotte Henson and Margie Steigerwald are returning to Kennecott this summer to assist with visitor services.



Recreational Aviation Foundation (RAF) volunteers at the May Creek airstrip. NPS / Osborne

Public Affairs

Are you interested in knowing what's going on in the park? Follow us on our social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and You Tube. Social media posts vary from safety messages to park research updates. The Wrangell-St. Elias website also has up-to-date information about hunting, fishing, trip planning, ORV use, research in the park, and more!

Local audiences can also take advantage of the opportunity to join the "Locals Listserv" by requesting a subscription by email at wrst_public_affairs@nps.gov. Put "Locals Listserv" in the subject line and include your name, email address, and if you have an organizational or business affiliation. The Listserv shares news releases, research project descriptions, and biannual park newsletters. Members can unsubscribe at any time. There are currently over 400 Listserv members.

Recent cultural heritage and research in the park pages on the Wrangell-St. Elias website:



PLACE
Mount St. Elias - Was'eitushaa
Wrangell - St. Elias National Park & Preserve



Mount St. Elias southeast ridge view
NPS

www.nps.gov/places/mount-st-elias-was-eitushaa.htm



ARTICLE
Sit' Tlein (Malaspina Glacier) Research
Wrangell - St. Elias National Park & Preserve



Sit' Tlein (Malaspina Glacier) in Southeast Alaska (circled in red) is the largest piedmont glacier in the world. It is located in close proximity to the town of Yakutat, within Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve.
NPS

www.nps.gov/articles/sit-tlein-malaspina-glacier-research.htm

Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) NEW Permit System on the park website



*Subsistence and
Recreational online
fillable forms:*

[www.nps.gov/wrst/playourvisit/
motorized-vehicle-use.htm](http://www.nps.gov/wrst/playourvisit/motorized-vehicle-use.htm)



4-wheeler ORV and 6-wheel side-by-side ORV with trailer. NPS

Winter 2023/2024 Lecture Series, Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment (WISE)

Mercury in Lake Trout- How does it get there? With Krista Bartz, National Park Service and Sarah Laske, U.S. Geological Survey.

Glacier Research in Southern Alaska with Mike Loso, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park.

Pacific Crest Trail Coddiwomple Part 2 documentary video with Ray Voley.

Gulkana River Arctic Grayling with Corey Schwanke, Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

To watch recordings of the lecture series, visit their website: www.wise-edu.org/science-lecture-series.html

For more info, contact the park partner, WISE at (907) 822-3575.

website: www.wise-edu.org

email: contact@wise-edu.org

The Wrangell-St. Elias Visitor's Trip-planning Guide

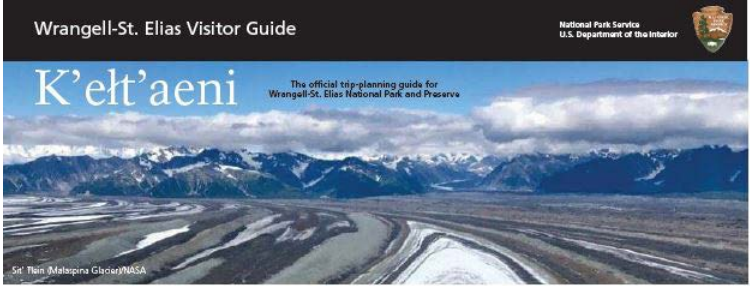
The official newspaper and visitor's guide to Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve is a great resource for trip planning, park facilities and visitor contact stations, the mile post guide to park roads and points of interest, maps, and hiking trails.

The name of the newspaper, K'elt'aeni, is the Indigenous Ahtna name for Mount Wrangell, meaning "the one that controls the weather."

www.nps.gov/wrst/learn/news/park-newspaper-the-k-elt-aeni.htm



Scan the QR Code to the park website to read the current issue and check out archive issues from past years.



Wrangell-St. Elias Visitor Guide
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

K'elt'aeni
The official trip-planning guide for
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

Sit' Tlein /Malaspina Glacier/WASA

WELCOME to Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve in Alaska, America's LARGEST national park encompassing 13.2 million acres!

The park contains the largest wilderness area in the National Wilderness Preservation System at over 9.4 million acres. With four mountain ranges, Wrangell, Chugach, St. Elias and the eastern part of the Alaskan Range, the park features nine of the sixteen highest peaks in the United States, with the tallest mountain in the park being Mt. St. Elias (Was'eltushaa, its Indigenous name in Tlingit) near the coast at 18,008 ft. (5.5 km).

The park also features one of the largest concentrations of glaciers in the world. The Nabesna Glacier, at 53 miles long (85 km), is the longest valley glacier in North America and the world's longest interior valley glacier. Malaspina Glacier, (Sit' Tlein in Tlingit), is larger than the state of Rhode Island and is one of the largest non-polar piedmont glaciers in the world. Also along the coastal part of the park, the Hubbard Glacier (also called Sit' Tlein in Tlingit) is one of the largest and most active tidewater glaciers in North America.

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve was established on December 2nd, 1980 under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and since 1993 has been part of a World Heritage Site with Glacier Bay National Park in Alaska, and two national parks in Canada, Tschshshmi-Alask Provincial Park and Klane National Park. The National Park Service was established on August 25, 1916 "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

The name of the newspaper, K'elt'aeni (kel-TAH-nee), is the indigenous Ahtna name for Mt. Wrangell that means "The one that controls the weather."

Mailing Address PO Box 439 Mile 106.8 Richardson Hwy, Copper Center, AK 99573

Visitor Centers & Ranger Stations: Copper Center, Kennecott, Slana, and Chitina

Like us on Facebook [facebook.com/WrangellStEliasNPP](https://www.facebook.com/WrangellStEliasNPP)

Tweet us on Twitter twitter.com/WrangellStENPS

Follow us on Instagram [instagram.com/wrangellstnps](https://www.instagram.com/wrangellstnps)


Find park images on Flickr [flickr.com/photos/wrst](https://www.flickr.com/photos/wrst)



View videos on YouTube [youtube.com/user/WrangellNPS](https://www.youtube.com/user/WrangellNPS)

E-mail wrst_info@nps.gov

Park Phone 907-822-5234

Park Website www.nps.gov/wrst

Superintendent Ben Bobowski → 



Youth and people of all ages can become a Wrangell-St. Elias Junior Ranger. Pick-up a Junior Ranger Activity Book at any visitor center or print it online. Complete the required sections, return it to any visitor center, state the official pledge and earn your badge! Learn more on the park website at: www.nps.gov/wrst/learn/kidsyouth

For more information, contact Jamie Hart, Acting Team Lead for Interpretation and Education, Jamie_Hart@nps.gov or 907-707-9734.

NEW Center for Shared Stewardship Pilot Program is underway!

The Center for Shared Stewardship (CSS) is a new Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve initiative with the overall purposes of building enduring partnerships, sharing knowledge about landscape change, and co-sponsoring discourse-oriented events. The pilot program will engage communities through facilitated dialog on natural and cultural resources within the park. Through partnerships and broad representation, the Center for Shared Stewardship (CSS) will attempt to bridge Indigenous knowledge systems, western science, and the diverse traditional knowledge of non-Indigenous persons who live with and experience park resources. We view these conversations as opportunities to build rapport with community residents through park-community conversations that are focused on reciprocal relationships and shared values. For more information contact our CSS program coordinator, Mike Loso at Michael_Loso@nps.gov.

Yakutat Tern Festival!

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve is proud to have participated in Yakutat Nature Society's Tern Festival May 29 – June 2, 2024. Park staff participated with numerous youth engagement activities alongside partners from Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment (WISE). Each day, time was spent with local youth exploring nature, cleaning up beaches, making art and learning about aerodynamics of birds! It was a great way to connect to the community of Yakutat.



Wrangell-St. Elias park staff and WISE members on a boat in the bay. Yakutat community members in the school gymnasium. NPS



Courtesy of www.yakutatternfestival.org/aleutian-terns:

"Aleutian Terns are of special interest because we know very little about them and their breeding range is limited to Alaska and Eastern Siberia. They nest on the outer coast of Alaska from Glacier Bay to Barrow. They are by all accounts a rare bird, with a global population estimated at approximately 30,000 individuals. The breeding population estimate for Alaska is 5,500 birds."

Congratulations to the 2024 Yakutat Tern Fest Art Contest Winner Savannah LeCornu. Courtesy of www.yakutatternfestival.org

Lands and Planning

McCarthy Road Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (PEL)

The Federal Highway Administration—Western Federal Lands (WFL) Highway Division, in partnership with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and the National Park Service (NPS), are working together to conduct a Planning & Environmental Linkages (PEL) study for the McCarthy Road. This study will evaluate transportation-related needs and opportunities along the road, identify and evaluate potential improvements, and propose recommendations for future implementation. The PEL study will be completed by summer 2025.



PEL webpage: <https://mccarthyroadpel.com>



PEL Study area: <https://mccarthyroadpel.com>

The first phase of the study – “Assess Needs and Opportunities” – was completed earlier this spring. The Needs and Opportunities Assessment report is available on the study website at www.mccarthyroadpel.com. This report summarizes the data that’s been collected since last summer and input submitted by the public, agencies, Tribes and other stakeholders. The study team held its first public meeting over the winter via an online open house. More than 700 unique visitors accessed the project website, providing input on road corridor conditions, needs, opportunities, and a draft corridor vision, purpose statement and goals.

The next phase of the study – develop and evaluate potential improvement options – is underway. Mark your calendars! The study team will be hosting a series of public open houses this summer to get more public input. What improvement options should be recommended to address the identified road corridor needs? What should be the priorities?

The study team will be hosting a month-long online open house as well as in-person evening public open houses on the following dates this summer:

Glennallen, Tuesday, July 30, 9am to 11am (Location: Copper River School District Office Conference Room, 1967 Aurora Drive, past the post office).

Chitina, Tuesday, July 30, 6 to 8pm (Location: Chitina Community Hall, off the Edgerton Highway).

McCarthy, Wednesday, July 31, 6 to 8pm (Location: the new EMS Hall).

Visit the PEL study website: www.mccarthyroadpel.com to get the most recent newsletter, sign up for email updates, and to learn more. For more information contact: Chief of Lands and Planning Joshua Scott, 907-822-7243, Joshua_scott@nps.gov.

Lands and Planning

McCarthy Road Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (PEL) continued



The study team held informal meet-and-greets with community members in McCarthy and Chitina during its initial site visit in June, 2023.

Kennecott Planning

A review of the 2013 Kennecott Operations Plan (KOP) was completed in the summer of 2023 after public engagement in 2018, 2019, and 2022. The review concluded with a [superintendent's letter](#) and public meeting that outlined the status of each action.

Many actions identified in the 2013 KOP have been completed, some are in process, and some have not yet been addressed, with the status of each action captured in the review. With the completion of the review, there became the need to clarify what, if any, revisions should occur to the 2013 KOP. A draft revised plan was open for public comment from Friday, September 8 – Sunday, December 10, 2023. The comment period was extended by 30 days from November 10 to December 10 due to requests for a longer review period. Feedback suggested that revision of the KOP would be difficult. In short, long-term issues have been difficult to resolve (e.g., transportation) and new issues have arisen since the 2013 KOP was completed, such as the deliberate need for treatment of contaminated sites throughout park-managed lands of the NHL. In response to comments, the park developed and will release this summer for public review a draft Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark Management Strategy for National Park Service-managed lands.

This strategy will:

- Re-align management of NPS-managed lands within the NHL to be consistent with the unique circumstances of managing within subdivisions of a community-designated NHL.
- Re-align expectations of NPS operations to be commensurate with available staffing and funding.
- Reaffirm and update as needed the long-term goals, guidance, and management strategy for NPS portions of the Kennecott Subdivision in the Kennecott Mines NHL.
- Identify strategic implementation planning needs.

This strategic plan does not apply to private landholdings within the community designated NHL. The strategy will be released for public review in the summer of 2024.

For more information contact: wrst_planning_kennecott@nps.gov

Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark Management Strategy

Emergency Response Planning is Receiving Financial Support!

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park has partnered with a team of researchers from Penn State University, Oregon State University, and the University of Vermont to assist all of us in better understanding our preparedness should we need to consider an evacuation from the park along the McCarthy Road. Through the collection of data and the development of simulation models we hope to improve our collective understanding and preparedness. The three-year project will begin mid to late summer 2024 and include the following:

- 1) Identification of potential natural hazards; vulnerability assessment of roads, evacuation capacity, resources and infrastructure; draft a list of disaster scenarios to consider in the simulation. (Year 1)
- 2) Quantification of information gaps in visitor and resident populations on emergency evacuation information and perception. Determination of the differences in visitor and resident populations, including variations in communication channels and subsequent decision-making processes. (Year 2)
- 3) Construct simulation models of various communication strategies and disaster scenarios to increase life-safety. (Year 2)
- 4) Identification of best practices for communicating through information channels and expectations for emergency managers to consider for informing resident and tourist population groups on emergency evacuation dynamics. Drafting an emergency evacuation and strategic plan for emergency evacuation, risk Preparedness and Resilience Planning. (Year 3)

Members of the research team and park staff met with available community emergency response representatives to discuss the project scope. Community engagement will occur during the project, particularly with those who are serving in emergency response roles for our local communities. We will make announcements and have outreach in the months ahead as the project unfolds.

Transportation Planning is Receiving Financial Support!

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve has received funding to develop a comprehensive transportation plan for NPS visitors to the private roads of the Kennecott Subdivision within the community-established Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark.

In review of the 2013 Kennecott Operations Plan it is clear that transportation type (e.g., vehicles, ORVs, ebikes, horses, etc), use, circulation patterns and parking have been recognized as a long-standing need to clarify NPS visitor transportation management policy and operations in the area, including alternative transportation options and parking. This effort will also address a longstanding desire for a pedestrian connection and transportation access between McCarthy and Kennecott. This sort of trail would help avoid safety issues between pedestrians and vehicular traffic. This plan process will seek public engagement and begin next year during the summer of 2025.



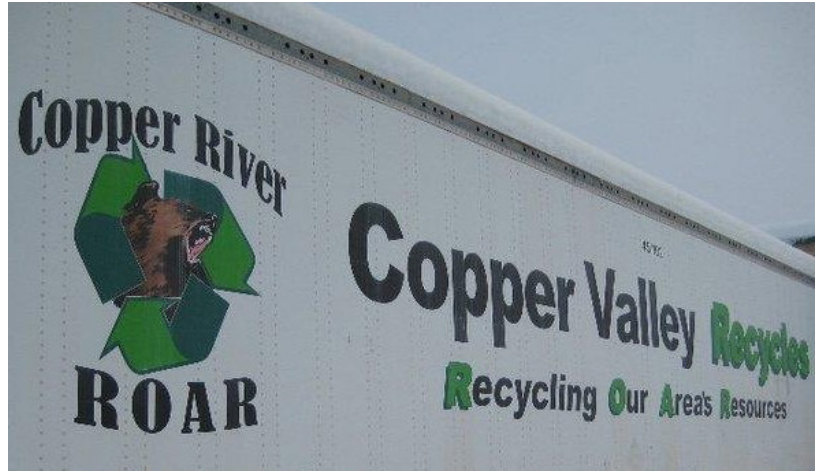
Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark. / NPS

Sustainability

Each year in March, Wrangell-St. Elias park staff assist with organizing the recyclables in Glennallen at ROAR, Recycle Our Area's Resources. We consolidate aluminum cans and different paper into super-sacks for transport to an Anchorage recycling facility.



Park staff at ROAR. NPS



ROAR Recycling Center in Glennallen. NPS



Park recycling trailer at HQ. NPS



Recycling containers in park offices. NPS



The park's Green Team has developed a Recycling Plan with a phased approach to be implemented over the next few years. Other goals the Green Team is working on include the following: upgrades and plans involving sustainable facilities, installation of low flush toilets, LED lighting, water heaters, heating systems, cogeneration generator systems, water filling stations at several visitor centers/ranger stations and installing solar panels.

Visitor and Resource Protection



Rangers practicing steep angle search and rescue techniques in Kennecott. NPS



Law Enforcement in training to measure sheep horns. NPS



Ranger on a backcountry patrol showing how to cross a stream safely. NPS

Visitor and Resource Protection rangers provide emergency medical response, search and rescue, public use management, and law enforcement services. We emphasize education of regulations and their enforcement, while also relaying information about practices that protect visitor safety and public resources.

Wrangell-St. Elias relies on volunteer support for some emergency service functions such as search and rescue and emergency medical services. A special thank you to all the community members that have volunteered time and energy to help us accomplish our visitor and resource protection roles. There are multiple EMS and SAR trainings planned for this summer and we highly encourage our volunteer community to join us. You are valuable partners in the work we do -- Thank You!

This season, the Kennecott District Visitor and Resource Protection team plans to patrol in both the North District of the park as well as the Kennecott Valley. In the North District, we will be patrolling trails, helping visitors along the Nabesna Road, and later in the season, conducting hunting patrols.

Parkwide, our rangers will be conducting patrols and collecting data on backcountry resource conditions. They will also be conducting preventative search and rescue activities by talking with visitors about ways to stay safe in the backcountry and assisting visitors with backcountry trip planning.

To report an emergency or violation on NPS managed land, call the Alaska Regional Communication Center (ARCC) at 907-683-2276. This number reaches our 24/7 NPS dispatch. Please only call them to report an emergency or violation.

We are excited for another summer season and hope to see you out in the park! For Backcountry Safety tips, visit:

www.nps.gov/wrst/playourvisit/backcountry.htm

Environmental Investigations for the Nabesna and Kennecott Mines



Nabesna Mine

www.nps.gov/wrst/learn/management/nabesna-mine-site-environmental-investigation-project.htm

The NPS is conducting the Remedial Investigation (RI) at the Nabesna Mine site and the Kennecott Mines and Mill Town site under CERCLA. An RI is the in-depth study of a contaminated site conducted to characterize the nature and extent of contamination and assess whether the contamination presents a significant risk to human health or the environment.

Due to the complexity of the mine sites, the RI includes multiple phases of field work that will include sampling of environmental media (e.g., air, soil, groundwater, surface water, and sediment) to support the evaluation of hazardous substances stemming from the historic mining and ore processing operations decades ago. Visit the park website links for project milestones and progress updates.

Kennecott Mines

www.nps.gov/wrst/learn/management/kennecott-mines-and-mill-town-site-environmental-investigation-project.htm



Resource Stewardship and Science

Copper River Salmon In-Season Teleconferences

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve is partnering with Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission to host weekly teleconferences about Copper River salmon fishing during summer 2024. Modeled after a successful program on the Yukon River, the goal of these calls is to provide a venue for Copper River-area residents and Tribal citizens fishing up and down the river to share firsthand knowledge about what is happening on the river with one another and agency staff. The calls will begin on June 20 and continue into August. They will take place each Thursday at 11 AM (Alaska time), except for July 4th holiday.

Join by phone: 1-719-359-4580 or from a computer using the following Zoom link
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87998112979?pwd=aulvIcrVOfaBiS4W24MQrwlZQhcAxM.1>

Meeting ID: 879 9811 2979

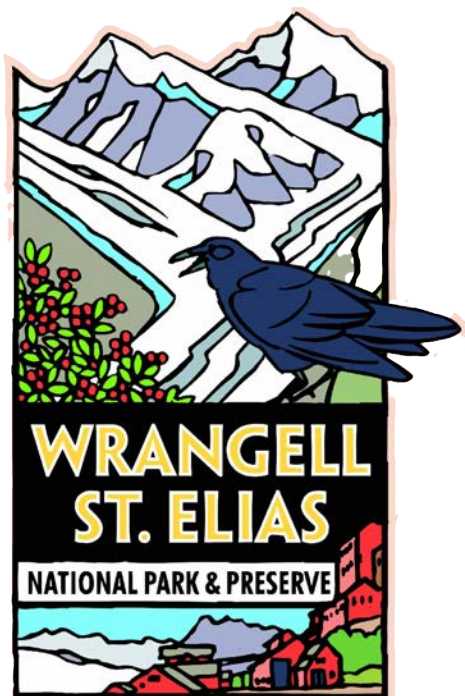
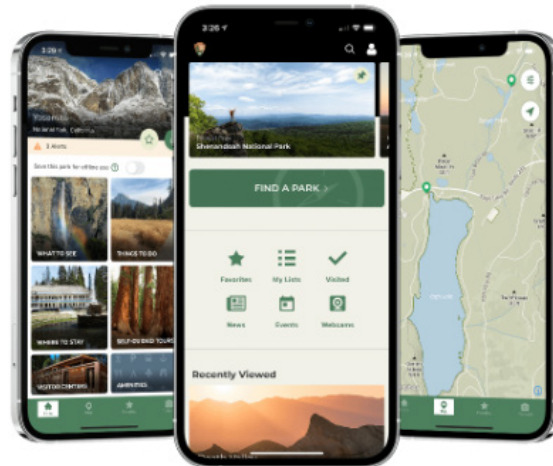
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For additional info email WRST_subistence@nps.gov or call Barbara Cellarius at 907-822-7236.



Clockwise, left to right: People fishing with dip nets near the Chitina McCarthy Bridge, salmon drying in a smoke house, fish wheel along the edge of the Copper River. NPS / Cellarius

The National Park Service (NPS) mobile App [go.nps.gov/app](https://www.nps.gov/app) is available for visitors to national parks across the country. Created by park rangers with visitors in mind, the NPS App gives the public up-to-date information about all 428+ national park sites (including Wrangell-St. Elias) in one easy-to-use app. Visitors can download the NPS App in the iOS App Store and Google Play Store to plan a trip, view interactive maps, find things to do and places to visit. Also, download the park app for use in remote areas of the park where there is no internet service.



Interested in knowing what's going on in the park? Follow us on our digital media platforms:

Park Website

www.nps.gov/wrst

Facebook

facebook.com/WrangellStEliasNPP

X (Twitter)

twitter.com/WrangellStENPS

Instagram

instagram.com/wrangellsteps

Flickr

flickr.com/photos/wrst

YouTube

youtube.com/user/WrangellNPS

Visit the Park Store at akgeo.org

