Welcome to the Chugach

Located in Southcentral Alaska, this is America’s most northerly national forest. This stunning landscape stretches from the sea to snowy peaks in an area the size of New Hampshire. It is one of the few places where glaciers are still carving valleys from the rock of the earth.

One third of the Chugach is bare rock and ice. The remainder is a diverse and majestic tapestry of land, water, plants, and animals. In fact, diversity is what makes the Chugach unique among national forests. The mountains and glacial rivers of the Kenai Peninsula, the fiords and glaciers of Prince William Sound, and the emerald wetlands and jagged peaks of the Copper River Delta are all a mecca for adventurers and nature enthusiasts the world over.

People have lived in this landscape for millennia. Their will and determination changed this land and influenced its history. For more than 10,000 years, Eskimos and Indians have inhabited the Chugach National Forest. Athabascan Indians migrated from the Interior of Alaska to Cook Inlet, where their descendants still live. Eskimos lived in several villages in Prince William Sound—the villages of Chenega and Tatitlek are still inhabited. Eyak Indians made the Copper River their home and their descendants reside there today.

The Chugach has attracted the attention of many cultures. The Spanish sought to expand their empire here; Russians sought fur; and the English were in search of a northwest passage to the Pacific. Americans, too, have looked to Alaska for whale and petroleum oil, fish, gold, copper, coal, furs, timber, and strategic defense. Much of the Chugach’s history is tied to gold and copper. In 1888, a discovery at Resurrection Creek led to the settlement of Hope and other communities that sprang up to meet the needs of miners. The Copper River and Northwestern Railway built in 1906-1911 linked the Kennecott Mines—the richest copper mine in the world—with Cordova’s port.

Today, the Chugach is in the “backyard” of half of Alaska’s residents, and is a once-in-a-lifetime destination for a million visitors each year. Whether camping out with family and friends, enjoying a glacier cruise in Prince William Sound, hiking to the high alpine, or watching the migration of a million shorebirds, you can find your own special place here. In addition to the magnificent landscape and wildlife, you’ll see Alaskans living and working in the national forest.

I invite you to take in the wonders of this magical place and enjoy the wild lands, wild fish, wildlife, and wild ice of the Chugach National Forest.
Visitor Centers

The Chugach National Forest is a vast and inspiring mix of glaciers, mountains, rainforest, and wild coastline—and backyard to half of Alaska’s population. Yet only a small fraction of Alaska’s residents are fully aware of its wonders and opportunities. In fact, many children and families from Anchorage neighborhoods have never even set foot in the forest.

In 2008, the Chugach National Forest designated itself a Children’s Forest, a symbolic designation that creates exciting, new, and innovative opportunities for connecting Alaska’s youth and communities with the outdoors. Led by Alaska Geographic and the Chugach National Forest, this ground-breaking program works in partnership with Alaska’s communities, educators, nonprofits, and public lands to offer a wide range of innovative programs designed to engage Alaskans of all ages with their natural world.

Youth expeditions set out on week-long learning adventures that travel to some of Alaska’s wildest places. The Chugach Conservation Corps employs high school students to build trails and enhance the visitor experience throughout the forest. Students complete film, radio, and media projects related to their time in the Alaska outdoors. Learn more at www.chugachchildrensforest.org

Begich, Boggs Visitor Center

Built on the remnants of a terminal moraine left by Portage Glacier on Portage Lake, this world-class facility houses 17,000 square feet of interactive exhibits and a 200-seat theater, as well as the Portage Valley Learning Center. The center is staffed with knowledgeable Forest Service interpreters that can answer your questions, assist with trip planning, and provide programs on the natural and cultural wonders of Portage Valley and the Chugach National Forest.

**Hours**
- **Summer:** 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily
- **Winter:** Check website.

**Activities**
- Information, award-winning film and exhibits, ranger-led programs and guided hikes, and the Alaska Geographic Bookstore

**Fees**
- **Movie and Exhibit:** $4.00 summer
- **Children 15 and under:** Free
- America the Beautiful and Golden Passes are honored

**Begich, Boggs Visitor Center**
- 800 Portage Lake Loop, Portage Valley, AK
- (907) 783-2326

Crooked Creek Information Site

Nestled at the head of Valdez Arm, the Crooked Creek Information Site is poised between the marine world of Prince William Sound and the forest of the mainland. This site features spawning salmon, abundant waterfowl, and the occasional hungry black bear.

**Hours**
- **Summer only:** 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

**Activities**
- Information, viewing platform, ranger programs, and the Alaska Geographic Bookstore.

**Crooked Creek Information Site**
- Mile 0.5 Richardson Highway, Valdez, AK 99686
- (907) 835-4680 (summer only)
The Eastern Kenai Peninsula in the Chugach National Forest is best known for its spectacular recreational opportunities. Its forested lands, mountains, and rivers are just minutes south of Anchorage, the largest city in Alaska. The peninsula is a haven for visitors and residents alike. A hiker’s paradise, it boasts hundreds of miles of maintained trails. For the fisherman, numerous opportunities exist to reel in “the big one.” So head south to experience one of the forest’s most accessible treasures.

Camping
Numerous camping opportunities exist along the Seward All American Road and National Scenic Byway. Trail River Campground, south of Moose Pass, is located strategically between Seward and Cooper Landing for visitors who want to access recreational vehicles opportunities in both areas. Recently renovated to accommodate modern recreation vehicles and add additional camping sites, the campground also boasts a new day use area along the scenic Kenai Lake shore. A large group site is also available by reservation which has a volleyball area, horseshoe area, covered pavilion with fire grates, and playground equipment. Nearby are Ptarmigan Creek Trail, Victor Creek Trail, and Carter Lake Trail that access the spectacular breath-taking backcountry and offer fishing opportunities in both lakes and streams.

Russian Lakes Trail
The Russian Lakes Trail winds through the Kenai Mountains near Cooper Landing and has scenic overlooks of Russian River, Russian River Falls, and the two backcountry lakes, Upper and Lower Russian lakes. The trail has two trailheads located at the Russian River Campground and near Cooper Lake, and accesses the reconstructed historic Upper Russian Lake Cabin. The backcountry log cabin located near Upper Russian Lake was built by Forest Service employees in 1951. In 2007, portions of the cabin were reconstructed keeping the historic nature intact. The cabin is available for public use through the reservation system.

Resurrection Pass Trail
At nearly 40 miles long, the Resurrection Pass Trail is one of the Eastern Kenai’s most popular trails. It has been designated as a National Recreation Trail. This status recognizes the trail as an important connection between people, local resources, and quality of life. Eight rental cabins lie along the trail. While they are primitive—with no electricity or running water—they are mighty inviting on a multiple-day hike. Book early because they are very popular. (See page 10 for cabin information.) There are plenty of campsites along the trail if you're unable to reserve a cabin.

If 40 miles is just not enough hiking, you can combine this trail with the Russian Lakes Trail (for a nearly 60-mile hike.) Don’t worry, if you are only looking for a short hike there are plenty of spots on the trail that you can hike to and back out in a day.

Don’t Miss...
Outstanding recreational opportunities exist along the Iditarod National Historic Trail, especially along Johnson Pass Trail. The original Iditarod Trail began in the southern port town of Seward and provided a vital link to Nome during the days of the gold rush. The Forest Service is currently re-establishing the trail between Seward and Girdwood.
Prince William Sound

Prince William Sound—where the forest meets the sea—has more than 3,500 miles of intricate coastline, tidewater glaciers, and bountiful marine life. The beguiling blue water is an open invitation to boaters and kayakers to explore this remote land. Nearly two million acres in western Prince William Sound has been designated as the Nellie Juan-College Fiord Wilderness Study Area to preserve its unique wilderness character.

Immense icefields surround this inland waterway and give rise to magnificent tidewater glaciers that tumble into the sea. Icebergs and post-glacial terrain are hallmarks of the landscape, offering a unique glimpse of geology and post-glacial reforestation in action.

Kayaking in the Sound

Enjoy the sound of your paddles dipping into the water as you glide across the waters of Prince William Sound. Kayaking is a wonderful opportunity to be on the water and access remote campsites, but you must take the time to educate yourself and your group. Review tide, bear, and water safety information before heading out. These sites are remote and help is far away. For more information, stop by the Forest Service Information Station in Whittier, the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center, Glacier Ranger Station, or Crooked Creek Information Site in Valdez.

Permits are not required for general camping and travel in the Sound. All campsites are primitive. Whenever possible, contain your camping activities on beach gravel surfaces. Always “naturalize” your campsite before you leave: clean up any bits of garbage, dismantle fire rings, and replace moved rocks or other materials. Two primitive campsites in Blackstone Bay and Culross Passage have been hardened to provide additional durable gravel camping surfaces.

Cruises

If you don’t have a lot of time, a day cruise is an excellent way to see the Sound in a short amount of time. Catch a boat from Whittier or Valdez for some wildlife viewing, whale watching, a glacier tour, or take a quick trip to shore. Cruises range from four hours to several days, and you can choose from large tour boats to smaller cruises tailored to your desires.

Flightseeing

Looking for a birds-eye view of the Sound? Take in a narrated flightseeing tour of some of the most breathtaking natural wonders Alaska has to offer. Imagine flying over 15,000 square miles of fiords and inlets, tidewater glaciers, and rugged mountain peaks. Watch for whales, seals, eagles, otters, sea lions, and black bears. There are opportunities to land in secluded coves and stretch your legs.

Don’t Miss...

The Glacier Ranger District has a map of recommended camping sites for Harriman Fiord and Blackstone Bay available on request. Bear resistant food canisters and portable backcountry toilet systems are also available for loan free of charge.
Copper River Delta

The Copper River Delta is renowned for its vast wetland habitats, mountains, and glaciers. Access to the Delta from other parts of the state are by boat, ferry, or plane only. This area is managed for the conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitats, and the animals have definitely gotten the word. Cordova’s Copper River kings and reds are some of the world’s finest salmon and support important commercial and personal fisheries. Birds flock here to take advantage of lands set aside as nesting grounds and as a refueling and resting stop on their way through the North American flyway.

Birding
The Delta is for the birds—literally. Swans, geese, ducks, shorebirds, and bald eagles are all temporary or permanent inhabitants of the area. The Delta is an integral part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network, which brings together organizations to recognize and protect critical shorebird habitat.

Birding really comes alive in early May with the Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival. The Delta’s tidal flats shimmer with the activity of hundreds of thousands of shorebirds, and hundreds of camera-toting humans watching. As many as five million shorebirds rest and feed here during the spring migration. The Shorebird Festival is an ideal opportunity for bird-watchers to be part of this epic migration. Activities, workshops, and community events are offered throughout the festival.

Alaganik Slough
Alaganik Slough offers visitors an opportunity to explore the wetlands of the Copper River Delta. At Mile 17 on the Copper River Highway, turn off onto a 3.3-mile road that leads to the slough. The boardwalk provides a way to immerse yourself in the coastal wetlands of the Copper River Delta.

Wildlife is most abundant at Alaganik during spring and fall. Visitors may look over the expansive wetlands and sight a variety of animals including trumpeter swans, moose, brown bear, and shorebirds.

Cabins
Scattered around Eastern Prince William Sound and the Copper River Delta are 16 cabins where you can get away from it all. Take a short flight from Cordova and find yourself nestled on the beach in one of our beautiful cabins. The cabins do not have electricity or running water, but if roughing it doesn’t bother you, check them out. Try your hand at beachcombing for glass balls, wild berry picking, digging razor clams, or fishing. (See page 10 for more information.)

Don’t Miss...
Childs Glacier campground and recreation area location at Mile 48 has overnight camping, spectacular glacier viewing, and covered picnic areas. For more information contact the Cordova Ranger District at (907) 424-7661.
Camping in the Chugach

Cabins

There are 41 primitive cabins located throughout the Chugach National Forest.

COST: $25-$45 a night.
STAY LIMIT: 3-7 nights summer; 7 nights winter.
GET THERE: Hike, paddle, charter a plane or boat.
HEAT: Woodstove and/or oil stove. Check before you go: A few cabins have no stove and others require you to bring your own fuel.
BRING: Sleeping bags and pads, cook stove and gear, first aid, water, food, bug repellent, extra food, and clothing.
EMERGENCY: No phones, no radios, and cell phone coverage is not guaranteed. Be prepared.

 Campground Location        # Sites

CAMPGROUND REGULATIONS
STORE all foods, beverages, garbage, pet food, cooking or food storage equipment in a vehicle, food locker, or camper.
FIRES are allowed only in established grates. Cutting live vegetation or standing deadwood is prohibited.
PETS must be on a leash at all times. Please dispose of feces in garbage cans. Secure pet food inside a vehicle.
DO NOT FEED any wild animal, even birds.

Reservations
For cabins and campground reservations call (877) 444-6777 or visit www.recreation.gov

Nightly camping fees range from free for remote sites to $30 depending on campground, and $150 for a large group site.
*Closed for part of 2010 summer season.

Campgrounds

Campgrounds are generally open from mid-May through September. The stay limit is 14 days except for the Russian River Campground, which has a 3-day limit from June 10 through August 20. Most campgrounds have a few sites for large RVs. Quartz Creek and Williwaw are able to handle 60-foot RVs. Backcountry camping is permitted but is limited to 14 days in one area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campground Location</th>
<th># Sites</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>KENAI PENINSULA</strong></td>
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<td>Cooper Creek</td>
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<td>Crescent Creek</td>
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<tr>
<td>Porcupine</td>
<td>24*</td>
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<td>Primrose</td>
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<td>Ptarmigan Creek</td>
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<td>Quartz Creek</td>
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<td>Trail River</td>
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<td><strong>PORTAGE/TURNAGAIN PASS</strong></td>
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<td>Bertha</td>
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<td>Black Bear</td>
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<td>Granite Creek</td>
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<tr>
<td>Williwaw</td>
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<td><strong>COPPER RIVER DELTA</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Childs Glacier</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Childs Glacier (basic tent)</td>
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Campgrounds on the Kenai Peninsula and the Portage/Turnagain Pass area are operated by Alaska Recreation Management under permit from the Forest Service. Childs Glacier Campground is operated by the Forest Service.
Backcountry Guide

BE PREPARED: Carry extra food, water, insect repellent, a map, compass, a pocketknife, waterproof matches, and emergency supplies with you.

DON’T take scented, spiced or smoked foods with you as they attract bears. And don’t drink untreated water—*Giardia* occurs in the forest. Boil all water or use a filter.

PACK OUT: Toilet paper, used pads, tampons and garbage.

PLAN AHEAD: Always let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return. Have a backup plan and a flexible schedule.

TAKE A FRIEND: Traveling alone increases your risk dramatically. Traveling in groups is recommended.

DRESS PROPERLY: Leave your cotton at home; synthetic pile or wool are best. Rain gear is a necessity. Bring a hat and gloves—even in the summer.

STAY BACK: Icebergs are unstable and can roll over at any time. Stay away from the face of tidewater glaciers to avoid large, unexpected waves caused by falling ice.

LEAVE NO TRACE

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors

CHANGING WEATHER: Always take rain gear and warm clothing no matter how nice it looks when you start. Remember weather changes rapidly. Heavy rain or snow and strong winds can occur at any time.

WATCH OUT: Alaska waters are cold even in the summer and avalanches can occur any time of the year. Be aware of your surroundings and know how to evaluate conditions.

For more trail information visit [www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach](http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach)
EASTERN KENAI

Tern Lake
Located at the intersection of the Seward and Sterling highways at Milepost 37. This area hosts a myriad of animals, birds, fish, and unique plants. Common loons, bald eagles, and arctic terns share the area with a variety of songbirds and shorebirds like the northern water thrush, golden-crowned sparrow, and the greater yellowlegs. Beavers, river otters, muskrats, and salmon ply the cold, clear waters of Tern Lake. Moose, Dall sheep, and mountain goats can be seen on the surrounding mountains. Best viewing seasons: spring, summer, and fall.

Moose Flats Day-Use Site
Located at Mile 1.0 on the Portage Highway. This site has a short boardwalk trail along several ponds. It is a good site for observing waterfowl that nest and rear their young in the ponds and river channels. Moose are also frequent visitors to the area and the boardwalk makes a nice observation post. Best viewing seasons: spring, summer and fall.

Williwaw Fish Viewing Platform
Located at Mile 4 of the Portage Highway. Spawning sockeye, chum, and coho salmon arrive in late July and remain throughout early fall. In addition to salmon, visitors may see a variety of local songbirds, bald eagles, and black and brown bears. Best viewing seasons: spring, summer, and fall.

COPPER RIVER DELTA

Hartney Bay
Located at the end of Whitshed Road, approximately 5 miles south of Cordova (not on Forest Service land). From mid-April to mid-May, visitors have the opportunity to view whirling flocks of tens of thousands of shorebirds as they rest and refuel during their long journey northward. The rest of the year brings a wide variety of songbirds and marine mammals such as harbor seals, Steller’s sea lions, and sea otters. In late summer, pink and chum salmon return to Hartney Creek to spawn. Best viewing seasons: spring and fall.

Alaganik Slough
Located at Mile 17 of the Copper River Highway. An accessible boardwalk leads visitors to stunning views of both the expansive wetlands of the Copper River Delta and the surrounding mountains. A wide variety of wetland animals including trumpeter swans, moose, brown bear, and shorebirds can be seen in the area. Best viewing seasons: spring and fall.

WILDLIFE CHECKLIST

Arctic Tern
Bald Eagle
Beaver
Black Bear
Brown Bear
Chum (Dog) Salmon
Coho (Silver) Salmon
Coyote
Dall’s Sheep
Dusky Canada Goose
Grey Wolf
Harbor Seal
King (Chinook) Salmon
Moose
Mountain Goat
Pacific Dunlin
Pink (Humpy) Salmon
Ptarmigan
River Otter
Sockeye (Red) Salmon
Trumpeter Swan
Western Sandpiper

VIEWING SAFETY

KEEP YOUR DISTANCE. If an animal alters its behavior because of your presence, you are too close. Responsible visitors use binoculars and telephoto lenses to observe an animal’s normal behavior.

RESPECT THE ANIMALS. Animals often respond to repeated interference by abandoning homes, nesting sites, and even their young. Remember that we are the visitors.

NEVER FEED WILDLIFE. Animals that become accustomed to human food become problem animals that need to be removed from the area. Don’t leave backpacks, trash, or food where an animal might find it.

DRIVE SAFELY. When you see wildlife, stop to view it from a safe pullout, not from the roadway. Please do not follow an animal at close distance in your vehicle. Be alert for animals crossing the road, especially at dawn, dusk, and at night.
Don’t Have a Bad Bear Day!

The Chugach National Forest is bear country. It is your responsibility to BE BEAR AWARE!

- Watch for signs of bears such as tracks and scat.
- Make noise to avoid surprising bears in the area.
- Travel in groups. Groups are noisier and easier for bears to detect and avoid.
- Never approach a bear. This aggressive behavior on your part forces a bear to react. Harassing bears is illegal and very dangerous.
- Dogs can increase your risk of a serious bear encounter. Consider leaving them at home, or use a restraint.
- Store food, trash, and personal hygiene products by hanging them from trees or by using bear-resistant food containers. Never store them in your tent. Bear resistant canisters are available for loan, call (907) 783-3242 for more information.
- Cook and store food at least 100 yards from your tent.

FISHING IN BEAR COUNTRY

Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Be knowledgeable about bear behavior and the area where you will be fishing.
- Avoid fishing during low light conditions when visibility is decreased.

Stay Alert While Fishing
- Keep stringers and belongings with you at all times.
- Splashing fish attract bears. If a bear is close enough to notice splashing—stop fishing.
- Do not let a bear get a hooked fish. Cut the line.

Handle Your Catch Properly
- Bleed your fish into the water immediately.
- Toss all fish waste into deep, fast-moving water.
- Cut carcasses into small pieces that can easily be carried by the current.

Attention Anglers at the Russian River! When fishing along the banks of the Russian River or hiking along the Russian River Anglers Trail ALL food, beverages or any smelly items that might attract a bear MUST be in your possession at all times.

Learn more about bears and bear safety. Pick up a copy of Bear Facts or Living in Harmony with Bears at any Forest Service office.
HIKING HIGHLIGHTS
A variety of trails exist in the Chugach National Forest, from short, easy day hikes to more strenuous, multi-day adventures.

Spencer Glacier Whistle Stop: Access is 60 miles south of Anchorage via the Alaska Railroad. As the first in a series of Whistle Stops along the Alaska Railroad, visitors can enjoy access into the backcountry of the Chugach National Forest. Currently a 1.3-mile accessible trail leads visitors to a viewing area offering spectacular views of Spencer Glacier and Lake. Visitors can arrange their trips through the Alaska Railroad at www.akrr.com

Trail of Blue Ice: Access is from Portage Valley at Moose Flats Day Use Site, Explorer Glacier, Black Bear Campground, Williwaw Campground, and Fish Viewing Platform, or the lakeshore parking lot at the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center. This is the newest trail in Portage Valley and is still under construction in some places, but the segments that are complete are worth the hike. A 2-mile section leads from the lakeshore parking to Black Bear Campground. At the other end of the valley, a 1-mile trail leads from Explorer Pond to the Moose Flats Day Use site. All sections are accessible and great fun for a family outing.

Copper River Trail: Begins at the Million Dollar Bridge viewing platform on the Copper River Highway. It is an easy 0.8-mile trail with no elevation gain. It follows an old road along the Copper River where you can catch some spectacular glimpses of the glacier. The trail then heads into thick vegetation and parallels the river until it connects with the Childs Glacier Recreation Area.
As the primary nonprofit education partner of the Chugach National Forest, Alaska Geographic connects people to Alaska’s magnificent wildlands through experiential education, award-winning books and maps, and by directly supporting the state’s parks, forests, and refuges. Over the past 50 years, Alaska Geographic has donated more than $20 million to help fund educational and interpretive programs throughout Alaska’s public lands.

Alaska Geographic operates 48 bookstores across the state, including four locations in the Chugach National Forest: Begich, Boggs Visitor Center in Portage Valley, the Crooked Creek Information Site in Valdez, and the Ranger District Offices in Girdwood and Cordova. Your purchases at these locations directly support the Chugach National Forest—a portion of every sale helps fund educational and interpretive programs throughout the forest.

To find out more, become a member, or browse our wide selection of Alaska books, maps, and films, stop by any Alaska Geographic bookstore or visit our website at www.alaskageographic.org.
## Contact Information

**Chugach National Forest**  
3301 C Street, Suite 300  
Anchorage, AK 99503  
(907) 743-9500  
www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach  
mailroom_r10_chugach@fs.fed.us

**Cordova Ranger District**  
P.O. Box 280  
Cordova, AK 99574  
(907) 424-7661

**Glacier Ranger District**  
P.O. Box 129  
Girdwood, AK 99587  
(907) 783-3242

**Seward Ranger District**  
P.O. Box 390  
Seward, AK 99664  
(907) 224-3374

**Alaska Public Lands Information Center**  
605 W. Fourth Avenue  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
(907) 271-2737  
www.nps.gov/aplic

## Chugach National Forest Visitor Centers

- **Begich, Boggs Visitor Center**  
  800 Portage Lake Loop  
  Portage Valley  
  (907) 783-2326

- **Crooked Creek Information Site (summer)**  
  Mile 0.5 Richardson Highway  
  Valdez  
  (907) 835-4680

## Other Contacts in Southcentral Alaska

- **Chugach State Park**  
  (907) 269-8400

- **Kenai National Wildlife Refuge**  
  (907) 262-7021

- **Kenai Fjords National Park**  
  (907) 224-2132