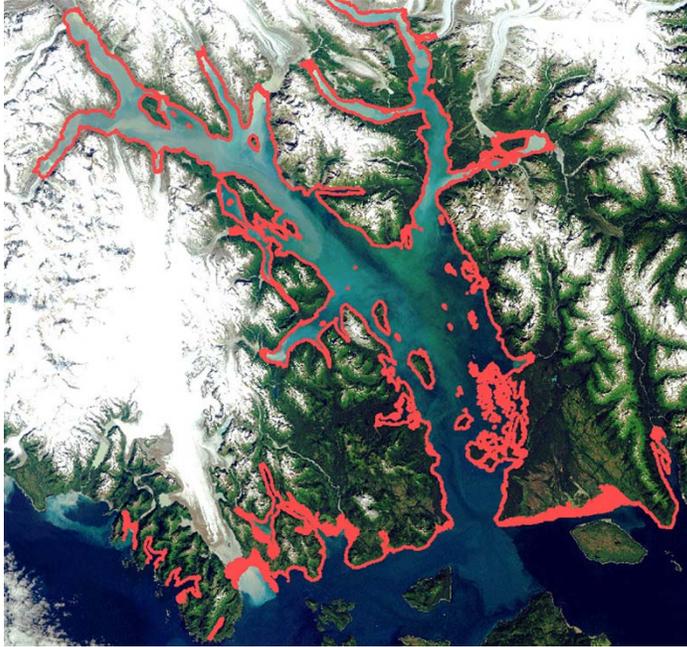


Student Resource 3: Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve



About the Park

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve is a vital part of America's national system of parks and other preserved resources. The park is located in Southeast Alaska and contains 3.3 million acres. It preserves tidewater glaciers, superlative scenic grandeur, historic value, exquisite wilderness and marine resources, and unique opportunities for the study of glaciers and associated terrestrial and marine plant and animal community succession processes forever.

The international significance and value of the park has been

recognized by its designation as both a Biosphere Reserve in 1986 and a World Heritage Site by the United National Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In fact, most of the park is designated as wilderness, including rare marine wilderness areas.



Significance of the Park

The primary significance of Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve can be summarized as:

- ✓ **Tidewater Glaciers:** The park encompasses the complete spectrum of glaciation.
- ✓ **Biological Succession:** the park offers an outstanding opportunity to observe and study the responses of plant and animal communities to the glacial regime.
- ✓ **Scientific Study:** the park provides opportunities for scientific study of glacial behavior and resulting movements and developments of flora and fauna, and of certain relics of ancient interglacial forests.
- ✓ **Fish and Wildlife Habitats and Migration Routes:** the park is a significant feeding, migration and/or habitat for humpback, orca and minke whales, harbor seals, Steller sea lions, brown and black bear, moose and colonial seabirds.
- ✓ **Historic Interest:** the park recognizes visits by explorers and scientists since the early voyages of Vancouver in 1794 who have left valuable records of such visits.
- ✓ **Wilderness:** Glacier Bay National Park Wilderness encompasses approximately 2,770,000 acres that provide outstanding wilderness recreational opportunities.
- ✓ **World Heritage Site:** the park area is the southern and primary coastal component of a 25,000,000-acre World Heritage Site.

- ✓ **Biosphere Reserve:** the park is a primary component of the Glacier Bay/Admiralty Island Biosphere Reserve.
- ✓ **Alsek River:** the park area contains significant segments of the Alsek and Tatshenshini Rivers, having outstanding pre-historic, historic and recreational significance.
- ✓ **Tlingit Homeland:** The park is recognized as an ancestral homeland for the Huna Tlingit.
- ✓ **Marine Sanctuary:** the park marine waters afford opportunities for study of major elements of marine biological science.



Mission Statement

It is the mission of the National Park Service to achieve, maintain and communicate Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve's status as a superlative Park, Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site. NPS will manage use to provide a unique, inspirational visitor experience while protecting the area's marine, glacial and terrestrial ecosystems. NPS will recognize and perpetuate Park values, including those associated with the Tlingit

homeland, wilderness and solitude.

Purpose

The purposes of Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve are to preserve its accessible tidewater glaciers, superlative scenic grandeur, historic value, and unique opportunities for the study of glaciers and associated plant and animal community succession processes. The area is preserved to protect fish and wildlife populations and their habitats, unaltered and undisturbed ecosystems and opportunities for scientific research, and wilderness resource values and related recreational opportunities.

In the preserve, the following practices are allowed as long as they are consistent with park purposes and values and the opportunity for study of marine resources:

- hunting (in the northern Reserve) and subsistence uses by qualified local residents
- activities necessary to support the Dry Bay commercial fishery.





Glacier Bay Resource Management/ Research Program

The 1916 Organic Act, which created the National Park Service, requires parks "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein." A comprehensive program of scientific research and monitoring is thus required to ensure that Glacier Bay's natural and cultural resources are adequately protected. Some of these studies are focused on specific resource concerns, such as

the effects of vessels on marine life or the impacts of shoreline camping on nesting birds. Other studies are broader in nature and intended to better understand the complex marine and terrestrial ecosystems of this large wilderness park. Such understanding is necessary in order to separate natural change from changes which are caused by human activities.

While some research projects at Glacier Bay are conducted by park staff, many are performed by scientists from other agencies or institutions under working agreements with the National Park Service. The park's Resource Management Division cooperates with scientists from the USGS Alaska Science Center in the design and implementation of several research and monitoring projects designed to insure that the latest scientific information is available to park managers. The importance of science-based management is widely recognized throughout the national park system and is incorporated into Glacier Bay National Park's mission statement.

Besides management-directed science, a variety of other studies are also conducted by researchers from various federal and state agencies and universities, as well as by some independent researchers. NPS policies state that in addition to using science as a means to improve park management, parks can and should be centers for broad scientific research and inquiry. Science in the park thus encompasses an array of disciplines in a variety of natural, cultural and social science investigations. All research, however, results in a better understanding of the park's natural and cultural environment and will ultimately benefit the National Park Service's ability to preserve and protect our national heritage.

Sources and More Resources

Strategic Plan 2000-2005

<http://data2.itc.nps.gov/parks/glba/ppdocuments/GLBAstrategicPlan.pdf>

Preserving and Protecting Glacier Bay National Park

<http://www.nps.gov/glba/InDepth/learn/preserve/index.htm>

Basic Park Regulations <http://www.nps.gov/glba/InDepth/visit/regs.htm>

Resource Management/Research

<http://www.nps.gov/glba/InDepth/learn/preserve/projects/index.htm>