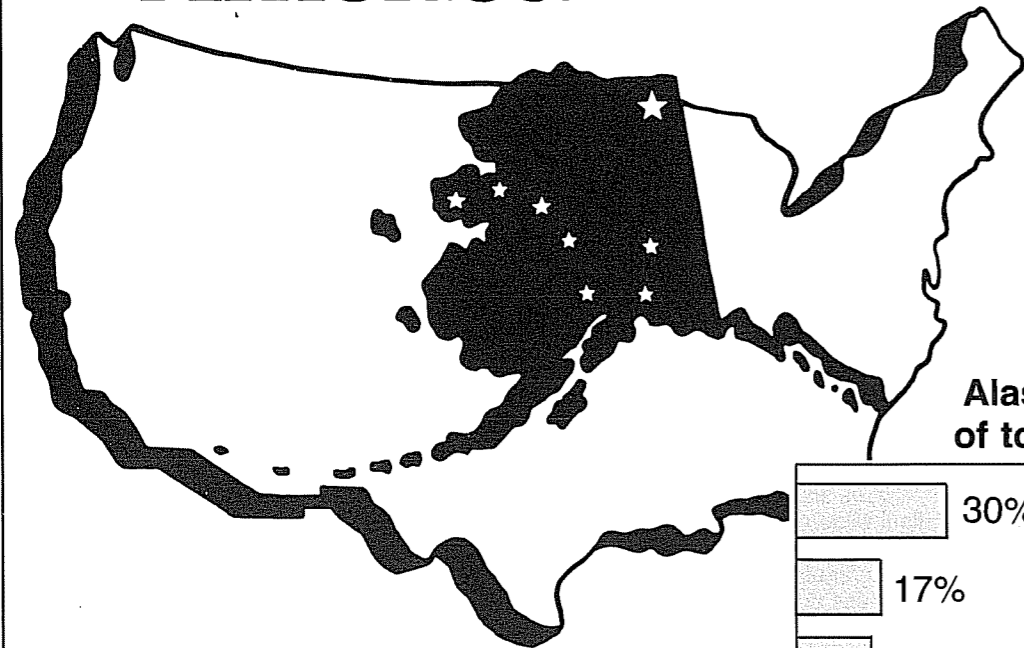
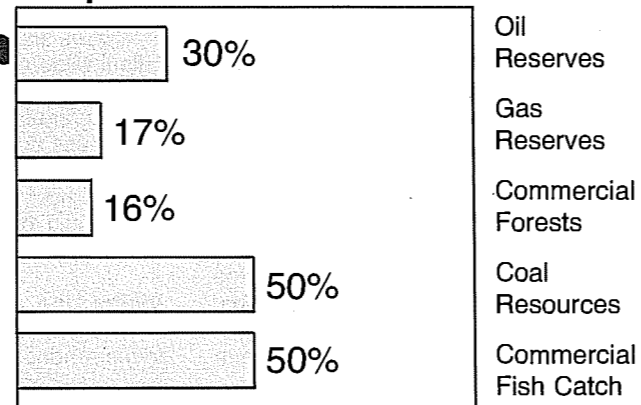


# What Alaska Can Do For America



Alaska's percentage of total U.S. resources



Beneath Alaska's vast climatic and geologic diversity lies much of the future wealth and security of the United States. The 49th state is indisputably a land of tremendous resource potential, abounding in rich opportunity. With its endowment of resources, Alaska has the means — and the raw materials — to keep open the door to a prosperous and secure America.

Other than native lands, it is on federal and state lands that most future resource development will occur. However, an ever-increasing portion of this land is being withdrawn from resource development with Alaskans bearing the brunt of the economic impacts.

Alaska now has 70% of all national park lands and 90% of all national wildlife refuge lands. It also bears 62 percent of this nation's designated Wilderness. This tremendous acreage of withdrawals embraces many valuable resources needed by Alaska to develop flourishing industries to support itself and its people.

If you agree that our country needs to encourage multiple uses and sensible development on the remaining lands in Alaska opened to resource development, write your Congressional representative today.

 **Resource Development Council**  
for Alaska, Inc.  
Box 100516, Anchorage, Alaska 99510

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# Resource Review

Winter 1989



At 500,000 visitors annually, Portage Glacier near Anchorage is the most visited attraction in Alaska. Since Portage is not designated Wilderness, it offers practical access and facilities featuring a variety of opportunities and experiences.

# Wilderness

Part II

By Carl Portman

## How much is enough?

Exceptional resource values and unique characteristics of Alaska deserve protection. Wilderness is certainly an ingredient in preserving these values and keeping Alaska unique. But too much of anything, including wilderness, has diminishing social benefit.

The crown jewels of Alaska were acknowledged by Congress in 1980 when it established 104 million acres of conservation system units in the state through the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). These units, which are equivalent in size to California, comprise 70 percent of the nation's national parks and 90 percent of its wildlife refuges. They are greatly restricted and tightly regulated to assure strict environmental protection.

Continued to page 2

# How much wilderness is enough?

(continued from cover)

Breaking it down, Alaska has some 33 million acres of designated Wilderness in national parks, 18.6 million acres in national wildlife refuges and some 5.4 million acres in national forests.

Designated Wilderness is not just a term that means an uninhabited piece of land. It means development of any sort is statutorily prohibited. No commercial activity of any type is permitted, including the construction of public and private recreation facilities. With some exceptions, roads are also banned in addition to new access trails and cabins. Resource development, including hydroelectric generation, timber harvesting, commercial fishing and oil development is prohibited. Even the use of chainsaws and portable electric generators are not allowed in most cases. Only the most primitive recreation activity is permitted.

A number of ANILCA provisions give federal land managers some discretion in administering federal Wilderness in Alaska. For the most part, however, wilderness policies are so strict and inflexible that some provisions, such as those addressing access and inholder rights, are of little help.

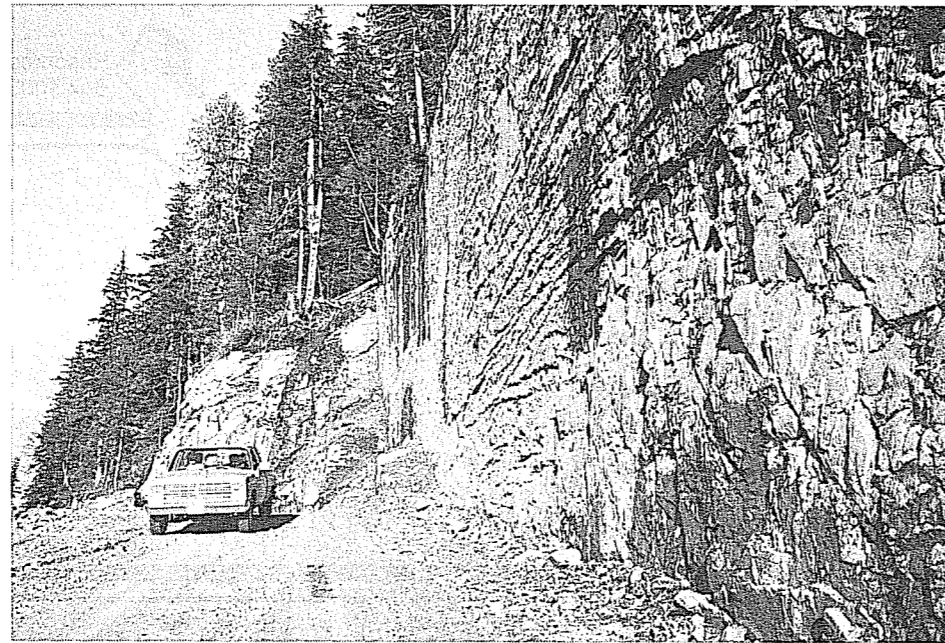
Alaska now contains 62 percent of all federal designated Wilderness in the United States, prompting many business leaders and politicians to ask, "how much additional wilderness can Alaska's economy endure?"

In about 40 days the Secretary of the Interior will send a recommendation to the President of the United States on whether or not additional wilderness should be designated in Alaska units of national parks and wildlife refuges. The President will in turn forward a recommendation to Congress.

The Resource Development Council filed extensive comments on each of the 13 draft environmental impact statements on wilderness additions in Alaska's national parks. RDC asserts new wilderness additions proposed by the Park Service are unwarranted and unjustified in a state where so much natural and designated Wilderness already exists.

Earlier this month in Fairbanks, RDC urged the Alaska Land Use Council to send a recommendation to the Secretary of the Interior that no additional lands in these units be designated as Wilderness. RDC maintained that the Park Service provided no substantial rationale in its recommendation for adding six million acres of designated Wilderness to Alaska park lands.

"The Park Service policies are such that wilderness and areas not designated as wilderness are managed to the same high standards," explained RDC President Shelby Stastny. "The lands in question are more than adequately protected by the na-



In Alaska, nearly all popular recreation areas exist because of access and facilities provided by mining, logging and commercial tourism operations. Designated Wilderness not only bans all resource development, the economic life-line of Alaska's economy, it also prohibits public or private recreation facilities, new roads and access trails, commercial fishing, hydroelectric generation and motorized vehicles.

tional park designation," Stastny added. "It is not clear that an additional layer of protection is needed."

The recommendations are based on environmental impact statements which tend to be more descriptive than evaluative and analytic, the RDC testimony pointed out. As a result, RDC found little evidence other than subjective opinion for determining the true costs or benefits of adding more wilderness to the park units under review.

A host of individuals and organizations agreed with RDC that the recommendations provide no clear rationale for increasing wilderness acreage. The State of Alaska was generally critical in its comments addressing the wilderness proposals. The Citizens Advisory Commission on Federal Areas has been even more critical of the wilderness proposals. In addition, the Land Use Advisory Committee advanced a "no more wilderness" resolution, a position adopted by the ALUC in Fairbanks.

According to RDC executive director Becky Gay, "Wilderness designations promote stiff and inflexible management." Gay explained that although non-designated park lands are managed to the same high standards as designated lands, "the present defacto wilderness management at least provides a somewhat more responsive and flexible system, allowing management revisions that are sometimes necessary when an unexpected need arises." Gay added, "Wilderness effectively forecloses on future opportunity."

RDC recognizes that various provisions within ANILCA are supposed to guarantee residents access and use of their private islands in the vast sea of wilderness zones. However, as a practical matter, Gay said the wilderness designations make life much more difficult for inholders, increasing stringent regulations and procedures which greatly restrict and tightly regulate access and activities.

Throughout the state there exists a general, cumulative overlay of land management schemes with the ability to severely frustrate development of every human kind. Wilderness is the worst example, Gay warned.

"Take a close look at the contiguous or adjacent conservation units presently in the Alaskan arctic," Gay said. "Combine them with the latest wilderness recommendations and a proposal to designate the vast National Petroleum Reserve a wildlife refuge and one can reasonably assume a move is underway to lock out multiple-use opportunity in America's arctic lands."

For instance, it is presently impossible to cross north to south on the Alaska Peninsula or the Aleutian Chain without crossing a conservation system unit. With the exception of the narrow trans-Alaska pipeline corridor, it is impossible to cross the vast mainland of Alaska from south to north without entering at least one highly restrictive conservation unit.

Alaska wilderness designations cover some 56 million acres, enough to lock-up the entire state of Minnesota.

At the ALUC Fairbanks meeting, RDC urged the federal agencies to accept the concept that wilderness proposals for one park are not independent of other existing and potential wilderness designations. "Wilderness designations must not be considered in isolation since a sizeable percentage of Alaska's productive lands have been withdrawn from multiple use, diminishing our timber and mineral base," Stastny said. "Fifty-six million acres of designated wilderness would be the 11th largest state, between the size of Oregon (62.1 million acres) and Utah (54.3 million acres)," Stastny noted.

"The time has come to consider the cumulative effect of additional wilderness designations on the opportunities to explore for and develop Alaska's vast natural resources," Stastny continued. "The cumulative effect on economics and national security has not been addressed in the environmental impact statements. Yet the prospects are frightening when the cumulative effects of designated Wilderness are contemplated on the economic activities of tourism, mining, timber harvesting and energy resource development."

Although the national parks are already withdrawn from multiple use and are not available for economic or resource development, RDC believes wilderness designations within the parks pose a serious threat to potential community and resource development adjacent to park boundaries. And although Title XI of ANILCA allows for crossing CSUs, the fact is, it has not been done through that provision.

## Mining

Despite provisions in ANILCA which guarantee access and various property rights, inholders and miners within Alaska's national parks have experienced great difficulty and frustration in using their property since 1980. RDC disagrees with the Park Service that a wilderness designation does not adversely affect the ability of a miner to work a valid existing claim. Wilderness designations bring increasingly stringent regulations on a mining operation, increasing costs while reducing profits and the actual viability of the operation — in turn threatening the livelihood of the people working the claim.

"Experience has clearly shown it is extraordinarily difficult to develop any mining claims near wilderness areas due to the level of regulatory gridlock, a terrible amount of bureaucratic inertia and reluctance to permit," said Jim Burling of the Pacific Legal Foundation. "Equally serious in the private sector is the reluctance to invest in mining properties inside or near wilderness areas," Burling added. "Most investors are understandably gun-shy."

RDC is also concerned with the adverse fallout wilderness designations could have on mine development through the enforcement of regulations aimed at protecting the wilderness character of lands surrounding a mining claim. It is not hard for RDC to imagine how the viability of mining operations could be damaged by viewshed or buffer zone regulations.

## Visitor Use

In regard to visitor use, Alaska's growing tourism industry could be seriously affected by new wilderness designations, which pre-

clude destination tourism site development and practical access.

"Considering 33 million acres of national park lands in Alaska are already designated Wilderness, the Park Service has failed to demonstrate in an objective manner why wilderness values should take precedence over other activities on the remaining lands," said RDC's Gay. "Why shouldn't tourism operations catering to a much wider variety of park users have precedence over primitive recreation on the remaining lands?" she asked.

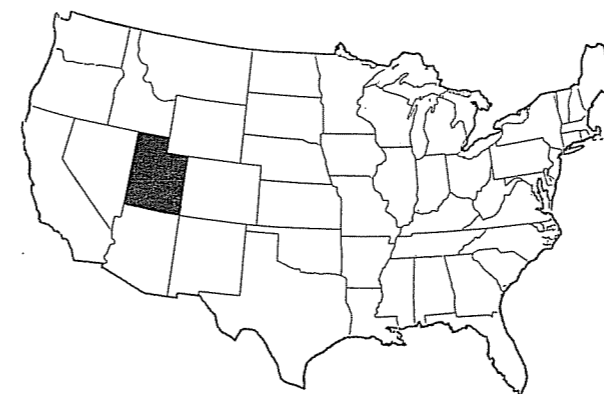
There is a serious need for new roads, visitor centers and campgrounds in Alaska's national parks to relieve pressure brought about by increasing numbers of tourists. At an anticipated growth rate of five percent annually, the number of tourists expected to visit Alaska will exceed two million by the year 2000. World-class visitor center complexes offering a variety of recreational opportunities to a wide segment of the public are likely to play a major role in the successful development of the international tourism market in Alaska.

The Park Service environmental impact statements do not adequately address the impacts of the new wilderness proposals on such needed facilities, RDC contends, since they virtually ignore visitor demand.

After a thorough analysis of the wilderness issue, the Alaska Land Use Council adopted a position against adding more wilderness to Alaska's national parks. The Council will soon advance its "no more wilderness" recommendation to Interior Secretary Don Hodel.

Editor's Note: Write Secretary Hodel, Congress or your favorite newspaper regarding your views on additional Wilderness in Alaska. Your voice is needed.

## FEDERAL WILDERNESS IN THE STATE OF ALASKA

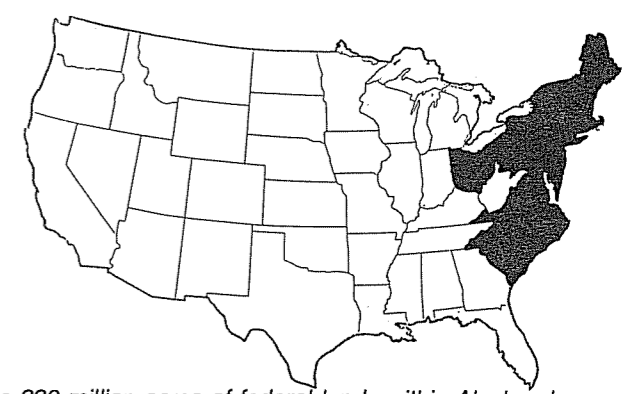


If Alaska's 56 million acres of designated Wilderness were made into one state, it would be the 11th largest state in America.

### Comparative state acreage:

10. Oregon .....	62 million acres
11. Alaska designated Wilderness .....	56
12. Utah .....	54
13. Minnesota .....	54
14. Idaho .....	53
15. Kansas .....	52

## ALL FEDERALLY-OWNED LANDS IN ALASKA



The 220 million acres of federal lands within Alaska alone would comprise the second largest state in the union. This acreage, a large portion of which severely restricts or prohibits economic development and public access, is comparable in size to the following combination of 15 states:

Maine	Connecticut	Delaware
New Hampshire	New York	Maryland
Vermont	New Jersey	Virginia
Massachusetts	Pennsylvania	North Carolina
Rhode Island	Ohio	South Carolina