

Bering Glacier

Research Natural Area

The Bering Glacier, the largest and longest glacier in North America, covers an astonishing 2,000 square miles (5,000 kilometers). It also is North America's largest surging glacier, which can cover several hundred feet in one day, and makes up 15-20 percent of Alaska's frozen fresh water. The Bering Glacier's stunning and unique terrain is part of a publicly-owned landscape of such exceptional natural, scientific and recreational value that it has been designated a Research Natural Area (RNA).



The area was designated for special protections in 2007 by the Bureau of Land Management in order to:

- Preserve habitats associated with the glacial environment and the retreating glacier in order to continue to provide opportunities for research. *The harsh conditions and frequently changing environment are thought to have encouraged evolution of unique plants and animals.*
- Protect wetlands that provide important habitat for migrating birds. *The area provides a variety of aquatic habitats, is a seasonal home or migratory staging area for numerous birds, and is a year-round home to various mammals and fish. The glacier provides an essential source of fresh water and nutrients to estuaries.*
- Provide continued primitive recreation experiences.
- Manage and protect anadromous fisheries habitat to support continued, long-term and sustainable fishing. *The area supports strong runs of coho salmon.*

Public Lands Doomed to Development?

The Bureau of Land Management is on the verge of opening approximately 257,000 acres of the Bering Glacier area to industry and development. This action will be the first of many to turn thousands of acres of public treasures in Alaska over to private industry. Since 2007, the Bureau of Land Management has identified high-value public lands for protection for their outstanding natural values and but has opened these same lands to private industry and development interests.



These public lands, already identified for their significance, are deserving of strong and lasting protections. The Bureau of Land Management must take steps toward balanced and responsible management of public lands in Alaska. This means that some places must be kept off limits.

We ask that the Bureau of Land Management take a time-out on making such rash and reckless decisions on our public lands until there is proper time to determine the strongest possible protections for our national treasures in Alaska.

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