

For all beings we dream a world of social and  
environmental justice and celebration

# Copper River Wilderness Rafting 2012

**EYAK PRESERVATION COUNCIL**

PO Box 460, Cordova, Alaska 99574 907.424.5890

[www.redzone.org](http://www.redzone.org) [eyak@redzone.org](mailto:eyak@redzone.org)



Photo: Jeremy Storm

# A Life Changing Opportunity

To spend 10 days and 110 miles on the Copper River is literally life changing. The River carries us between towering mountains draped with waterfalls and hanging glaciers. We drift and explore by day, and at night dream by campfires alongside the ever-flowing river. Bald eagles soar overhead, and brown bears

*We drift and explore by day,  
and at night dream by campfires  
alongside the ever-flowing river.*

and wolves roam the riverbanks. Near trip's end we come to the Copper River Delta where sounds of thunder fill the air – here living glaciers calve enormous icebergs into the river while we bob alongside these giant blue jewels. By the end of our trip we are sun-burned, wind-buffed, rained upon and heart-warmed. We are filled with the river's spirit, and with renewed energy and joy we continue the healing work and celebration of our lives.

## EXCURSION GOAL

The goal of the Eyak Preservation Council's (EPC) Wilderness Rafting adventure is to raise awareness of environmental and Indigenous cultural issues in the Copper River Watershed, Prince William Sound and the Chugach National Forest, and show how these issues are connected to the global community. You will be informed, inspired and renewed through our shared wilderness experience.

## ABOUT EPC'S RAFTING TRIP

EPC has been guiding educational and inspirational rafting excursions for environmental-, cultural-, and social-activists, journalists, scientists, writers, musicians and other spirited folk since 1997. Our purpose has been to share our homeland and wilderness lifestyle with others committed to a world of healthy cultures and environments.

Out on the Copper River we enter into an amazing flow of the celebration of life. The river carries us to exquisite camps of

heart-and mind-opening beauty. Every morning and evening we cook and eat and sing around the fire, sharing our life stories, all the while refreshed and encouraged by the song of the river.

Catalyzed by this adventure, you will want to help protect the Copper River's wild beauty, its wild creatures and its abiding subsistence cultures. And you will be all the more encouraged to love and celebrate your own home on earth and sing the song of healing.

EPC's leaders have been active in environmental and cultural affairs throughout Prince William Sound and the Copper River region, and indeed nationally and internationally, for decades. In the midst of crises and adversity we have unfailingly practiced humor and creativity. We love to help preserve vital wilderness habitat for salmon and all wild creatures, which in turn supports healthy Indigenous lifestyles and cultures.

Our trips are small-group, comfortable wilderness experiences for individuals and groups with sincere interest in environmental and cultural preservation – and great good fun. Throughout the rafting trip we explore the river and its Native and natural history, and meet our fellow wild creatures. We will make our home on this beautiful wilderness river. Prior outdoor experience is helpful but not necessary.



The sections of the Copper River we most often run are Class II, and the rafting experience is for the most part laid back and mind-blowing. Good humor and the safety of one and all are our priorities as we share with you this amazing part of our wilderness home.

The rafts we travel in are big, safe and comfortable. Our guides have many years of rafting and outdoor wilderness experience. And we prepare wonderful food, play beautiful music, tell scandalous stories, and even give massages.



Photo: Jeremy Storm

# The Intinerary

**T**his year's dates will take place between mid-July and late August. We are planning on two trips this summer, so join in soon!

**N**ote that because of travel days, and preparation day before and wind-down after, a full 2 weeks must be scheduled for your Alaska adventure. There are only 6 spots per trip – get on board!

## DAYS 1 AND 2:

The experience begins with viewing the region's rugged majestic beauty when arriving in Cordova either by sea or air. Here you will be picked up and the gathering begins with a gourmet welcome dinner at

our Eyak Lake House. You're introduced to the other participants and trip leaders, and talks are held about the trip, gear, and safety.

## DAYS 3 AND 4:

We set out from Cordova to the put-in location at Chitina by means of vans, ferry, and bush flights. The view along the way of glaciers, mountains and the many braids of the mighty Copper River will stoke your anticipation.



## DAYS 4 - 12:

From the put-in at Chitina, time is left behind. Days typically begin with a wilderness gourmet breakfast before heading out onto the river or into the surrounding landscape for a hike. Dinner is cooked on open drift-wood fires.

Evenings at camp are spent around the fire listening to the sounds of the wilderness, sharing stories and lots of music. We encourage you to bring an instrument!

## DAY 13:

The final day of rafting, and our arrival at the take-out. Our Cordova team will pick us up and return us to the Eyak Lake House for hot showers and a final group dinner, music, and sharing favorite memories of our time together.

## DAY 14:

Homeward bound, you are brushed by the river, with salmon spirit in your heart. We give thanks to you for joining us as one tribe.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE EXPERIENCE

- Wilderness views of glaciers, mountains and the wild animals of the Copper ~ eagles, bears, seals and more...
- Exquisitely scenic campsites
- Breathtaking views, spectacular hiking and relaxation on pristine river banks
- Delicious wild Copper River salmon and incredible gourmet meals
- Inspirational environmental and cultural learning
- Experienced, knowledgeable guides, including Captain David Grimes and EPC Founder, Dune Lankard

# About the Copper River



Rising primarily out of the extraordinary Wrangell and St. Elias Mountains – which include some of the highest coastal mountains in the world – the glacial Copper River is a magnificent 300-mile long river in south-central Alaska. The Copper River drains a total of 24,000 square miles and cuts through the beautiful Chugach

*We travel on the back of a magnificent glacial river which carries us to exquisite camps of heart-and mind-opening beauty.*

Mountains on its way to the Copper River Delta and Gulf of Alaska. It is the tenth largest river in the United States and is considered to be Alaska's swiftest big river – as well as one of its coldest and siltiest since most of its tributaries issue directly from glaciers and ice-fields. The Copper has 13 major tributaries, including the remarkable Chitina River.

The Copper River is well known for its Delta, which encompasses over 700,000 acres of fresh and saltwater wetlands, and is the largest contiguous and roadless

wetlands on the Pacific coast of North America. The Delta is world-class critical habitat for all sorts of migratory birds and numerous other creatures. The annual shorebird migrations are the largest in the world. And the Delta region hosts the world's greatest abundance of beaver, sea otters and nesting trumpeter swans.

The Copper River Delta is the biological heart of a landscape of massive glaciers, tundra and boreal rainforest, lying within the second largest National Forest in the United States (Chugach National Forest). Wild Copper River salmon, among the most highly prized stocks in the world, are the fundamental species of the Delta, linking diverse, separate and even distant ecosystems.

Brown and black bears, wolves, bald eagles, harbor seals, killer whales, salmon sharks, and Steller sea lions (federally listed as endangered), are just a few of an estimated

100 species closely linked with wild Copper River salmon. The Native Athabaskan Eyak people have practiced a wild-salmon way of life on the Alaska coast and the Copper River Delta for over 3500 years.

Wild Copper River salmon provide a critical food source and are at the heart

of the traditional Eyak subsistence culture passed down through generations. Wild Copper River Salmon are also one of the primary contributors to the economic health of the Cordova's fisheries.

From early in the 20th century, the region has been targeted for resource extraction. Abundant natural resources (timber, oil, gas, coal, wildlife, seafoods) of the Copper River and Prince William Sound watersheds continue to make it especially vulnerable to destructive development.

The need to preserve culture and wild salmon habitat is critically apparent. And the connection between cultural and environmental preservation— social and environmental justice — is sorely overlooked and often misunderstood within the context of this struggle.



Photo: Benson Lee



## COSTS & ALL THE DETAILS

**This is a not-for-profit educational program, and the suggested donation for participation is \$2700 to \$3500 per person, which offsets program costs.**

Your donation covers transportation to and from the Cordova airport or ferry terminal, welcome and closing dinners at EPC's Eyak Lake House, bush plane travel, and all guides, food and beverage on the river. It does not include airfare to and from Anchorage or Cordova, or accommodations prior to or following your overnights at the Eyak Lake Home.

Our staff will provide you with a detailed gear list and information regarding accommodations in Cordova and Anchorage. Cordova does not have a road to the outside world, and is reached daily from Anchorage, Juneau, or Seattle on Alaska Airlines and/or ERA Aviation. The Alaska Marine Highway also provides scheduled ferry service from the south-central ports of Whittier and Valdez in Prince William Sound.

Our wilderness raft adventures helps support EPC in a multitude of ways. And you, as a participant, become an emissary for this celebrated pristine wild salmon ecosystem.