

ALASKA

Ecosystem partnership formed

Working closely with the Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey (BRD), Wrangell-St. Elias Na-

tional Park and Preserve has helped form the Prince William Sound-Copper River Natural and Cultural Resources Cooperative, an ecosystem partnership. The cooperative includes the primary federal, state, and native resource managers for the ecoregion. The park has led the cooperative in the realm of geographic information systems by sponsoring training and providing spatial data sets to cooperative members.

Participation in the cooperative has strengthened the relationship between the park and the BRD. The cooperative has also helped depolarize formerly troublesome relationships between some of the partners. This improvement in relationships paves the way for cooperation to address the priority issues for Wrangell-St. Elias and the region—burgeoning tourism and a catastrophic spruce beetle infestation that has killed trees on more than 600,000 acres (an area the size of Rhode Island).