

Forest service carves new experimental forest out of Tongass NF

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As water flows through the glacially carved landscape, it takes with it materials derived from the bedrock, wetlands and forest soils, exporting carbon and nutrients to enhance the productivity of the marine ecosystem. Credit: USDA Forest Service

The USDA Forest Service established a new experimental forest in Alaska on June 25. The 25,000-acre Héen Latinee Experimental Forest is located inside the Tongass National Forest, and is easily accessible by road from Juneau, Alaska. It is part of the largest temperate rain forest in the world.

The Héen Latinee (heen la-tee'-nee), a Native American Tlingit name that means "River Watcher," will be managed jointly by the Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Research Station and the [Alaska](#) Region. The new experimental forest provides an outstanding setting to conduct

nationally-significant scientific research on how coastal temperate rain forests function. The experimental forest reaches from ridge to reef, from glacier to marine environment, over a short distance, allowing for studies crossing many different ecosystems. Héén Latinee is part of a nationwide network of more than 80 experimental forests and grasslands across the country.

A central focus of research will be to investigate how [climate change](#) affects a variety of forest-related resources. Those resources include: timber; carbon sequestration and dissolved carbon flux from land to ocean margins; salmon habitat and production; and recreational opportunities and their environmental needs and consequences.



From the glaciers of the Juneau icefield to the estuaries of the Lynn Canal, the Héén Latinee Experimental Forest offers opportunities for research in a variety of ecotones. Credit: USDA Forest Service

"The station will use this important experimental site to understand the impact of climate change on ecosystems in Southeast Alaska," explained PNW Research Station Director Bov Eav. "When linked to the other experimental forests, it will contribute to the knowledge of the impacts of climate change on forested ecosystems, nationwide."

"We anticipate that Héén Latinee will become a center for temperate rain forest ecosystem research where the coastal glaciers, rain forests, streams, and estuaries are studied as integrated, coupled systems, that provide us with the wood, energy, and food that we need," says Rick Edwards, lead scientist at the Héén Latinee Experimental Forest.

The nation's newest experimental forest also will provide a place for researchers and managers to understand the effects of climate change on temperate [rain forest](#) systems. Knowledge gained at the forest will help local land managers, communities, and Native Tribes in Alaska understand and manage for climate change. This experimental forest sets the stage for joint research activities between government agencies, universities, and other nongovernmental cooperating organizations.

Source: USDA Forest Service ([news](#) : [web](#))

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