



# Evaluation of the Sensitivity of Inventory and Monitoring National Parks to Nutrient Enrichment Effects from Atmospheric Nitrogen Deposition

## *Southeast Alaska Network (SEAN)*

Natural Resource Report NPS/NRPC/ARD/NRR—2011/328



**ON THE COVER**

Some ecosystems, such as arid terrestrial, subalpine meadows, remote high elevation lakes, and wetlands, are sensitive to the effects of nutrient enrichment from atmospheric nitrogen deposition.

Photograph by: National Park Service

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This report received peer review by subject-matter experts who were not directly involved in the collection, analysis, or reporting of the data. Data in this report were collected and analyzed using methods based on established, peer-reviewed protocols and were analyzed and interpreted within the guidelines of the protocols.

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## **Southeast Alaska Network (SEAN)**

National maps of atmospheric N emissions and deposition are provided in Maps A and B as context for subsequent network data presentations. Map A shows county level emissions of total N for the year 2002. Map B shows total N deposition, again for the year 2002. Regional deposition data are not available for Alaska, but N deposition would be expected to be very low throughout most, but not necessarily all, of Alaska. There are five active NADP/NTN wet deposition monitoring sites in Alaska: Poker Creek, Juneau, Denali National Park, Gates of the Arctic National Park, and Katmai National Park, with data collected since 1980 at Denali and since 1993 at Poker Creek. The other three monitoring sites have been added within the last decade. There are also CASTNET dry deposition measurements at DENA and Poker Flats. At all monitored sites in Alaska, wet N deposition has consistently been less than 1 kg N/ha/yr, and it has been less than 0.5 kg N/ha/yr at all monitored sites except Juneau. The dry N deposition measurements by CASTNET have also been low, below about 0.25 kg N/ha/yr for each site and year measured. Thus, the sparse available atmospheric N deposition data for Alaska are consistent with the general understanding that atmospheric deposition tends to be very low at national park lands within Alaska. It can be assumed that N deposition in each of the Alaskan networks would be lower than 1 to 2 kg/ha/yr, on average, across each of those networks.

There are three park units in the Southeast Alaska Network: Glacier Bay (GLBA), Klondike Gold Rush (KLG), and Sitka (SITK). Only GLBA is larger than 100 square miles.

Total annual N emissions, by county, are shown in Map C for lands in and surrounding the Southeast Alaska Network. County-level emissions within the network are uniformly less than 1 ton per square mile. Map D is not shown because there are no point source emissions of oxidized (nitrogen oxides,  $\text{NO}_x$ ) or reduced (ammonia,  $\text{NH}_3$ ) N in this network. Urban centers within the network and within a 300 mile buffer around the network are shown in Map E. There are no urban centers larger than 50,000 people, and only one urban center larger than 25,000 people.

Map F is not shown because there are no regional N deposition data available. Based on the near total absence of population centers and lack of point sources, we expect total N deposition throughout this network to be less than 1 to 2 kg N/ha/yr.

Land cover in and around the network is shown in Map G. The predominant cover types within this network are generally forested and perennial ice and snow.

Map H shows the distribution within the parks that occur in this network of the five vegetation types thought to be most responsive to nutrient N enrichment effects (arctic herbaceous, alpine, grassland and meadow, wetland, and arid and semi-arid). The only park of any magnitude is GLBA. The predominant sensitive vegetation types in this park are alpine and wetland vegetation.

Park lands requiring special protection against potential adverse impacts associated with nutrient N enrichment from atmospheric N deposition are shown in Map I. Also shown on Map I are all federal lands designated as wilderness, both lands managed by NPS and also lands managed by other federal agencies. The land designations used to identify this heightened protection included

Class I designation under the CAAA and wilderness designation. There are no Class I areas within this network, but a large percentage of the overall network area is designated wilderness.

Network rankings are given in Figures A through C as the average ranking of the Pollutant Exposure, Ecosystem Sensitivity, and Park Protection metrics, respectively. Figure D shows the overall network Summary Risk ranking. In each figure, the rank for this particular network is highlighted to show its relative position compared with the ranks of the other 31 networks.

The Southeast Alaska Network ranks in the lowest quintile, among networks, in N Pollutant Exposure (Figure A). Nitrogen emissions and expected N deposition within the network are both very low. The network Ecosystem Sensitivity ranking is also very low, within the lowest quintile among networks (Figure B). This is because there is limited vegetation in the I&M parks that occur in this network that includes vegetation types expected to be especially sensitive to nutrient enrichment effects from N deposition, and there are no high-elevation lakes. This network ranks in the top quintile in Park Protection, having substantial amounts of protected lands (Figure C).

In combination, the network rankings for Pollutant Exposure, Ecosystem Sensitivity, and Park Protection yield an overall Network Risk ranking that is in the lowest quintile among all networks (Figure D). The overall level of concern for nutrient N enrichment effects on I&M parks within this network is considered Very Low.

Similarly, park rankings are given in Figures E through H for the same metrics. In the case of the park rankings, we only show in the figures the parks that are larger than 100 square miles. Relative ranks for all parks, including the smaller parks, are given in Table A and Appendix B. As for the network ranking figures, the park ranking figures highlight those parks that occur in this network to show their relative position compared with parks in the other 31 networks. Note that the rankings shown in Figures E through H reflect the rank of a given park compared with all other parks, irrespective of size.

All three parks in this network rank in the lowest quintile for Pollutant Exposure (Figure E, Table A). Ecosystem Sensitivity is ranked in the second lowest quintile for GLBA but somewhat higher for the two smaller parks (Figure F, Table A). GLBA is in the highest quintile in Park Protection (Figure G), whereas the other two parks are in the middle quintile for this theme (Table A).

The combined Summary Park Risk ranking places GLBA in the second lowest quintile among parks (Figure H). Thus, this park appears to have a Low risk of nutrient N enrichment effects. The risk for the other two parks is considered Very Low (Table A).

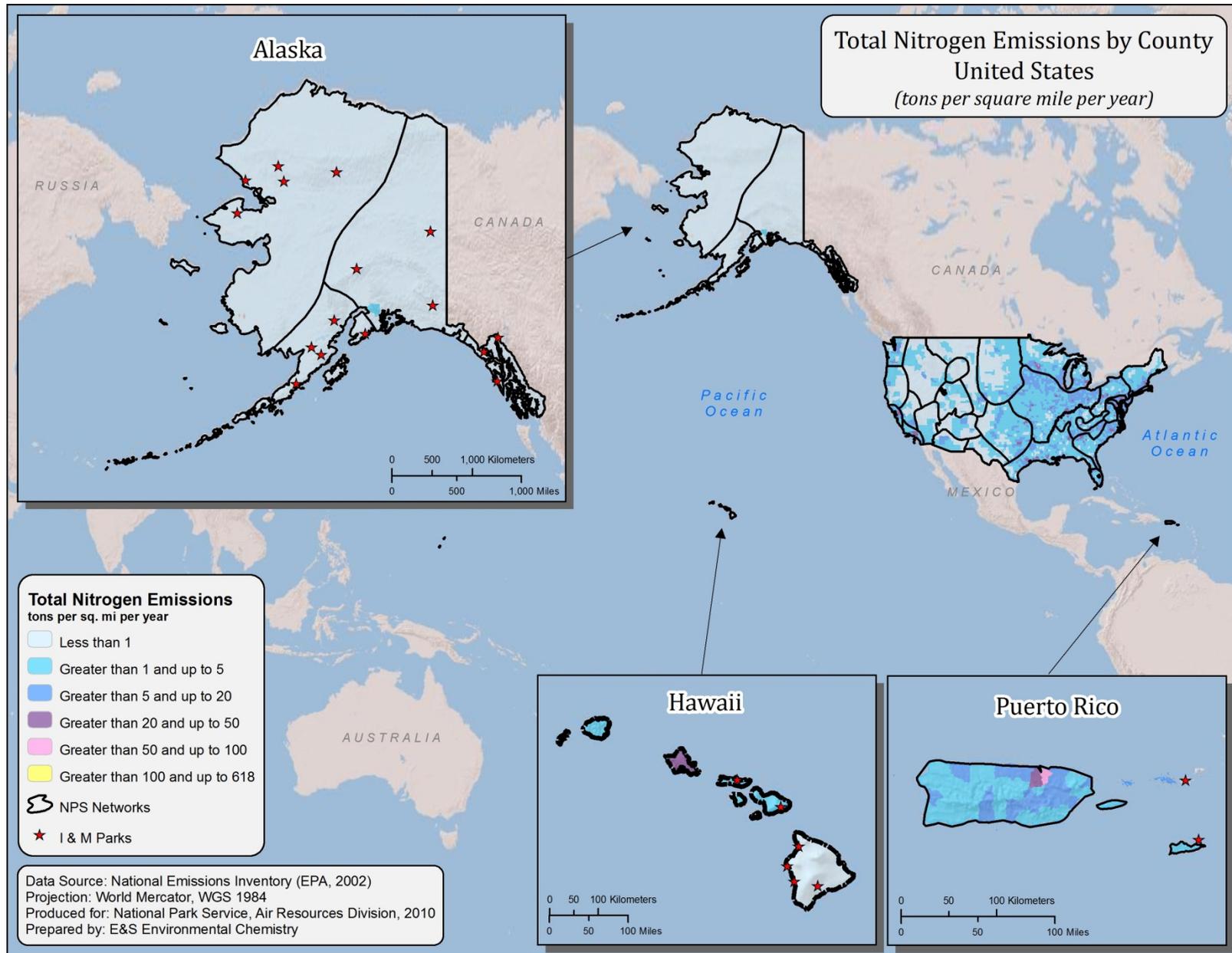
**Table A.** Relative rankings of individual I&M parks within the network for Pollutant Exposure, Ecosystem Sensitivity, Park Protection, and Summary Risk from atmospheric nutrient N enrichment.

I&M Parks <sup>2</sup> in Network	Relative Ranking of Individual Parks <sup>1</sup>			
	Pollutant Exposure	Ecosystem Sensitivity	Park Protection	Summary Risk
<b><i>Glacier Bay</i></b>	Very Low	Low	Very High	Low
Klondike Gold Rush	Very Low	High	Moderate	Very Low
Sitka	Very Low	Moderate	Moderate	Very Low

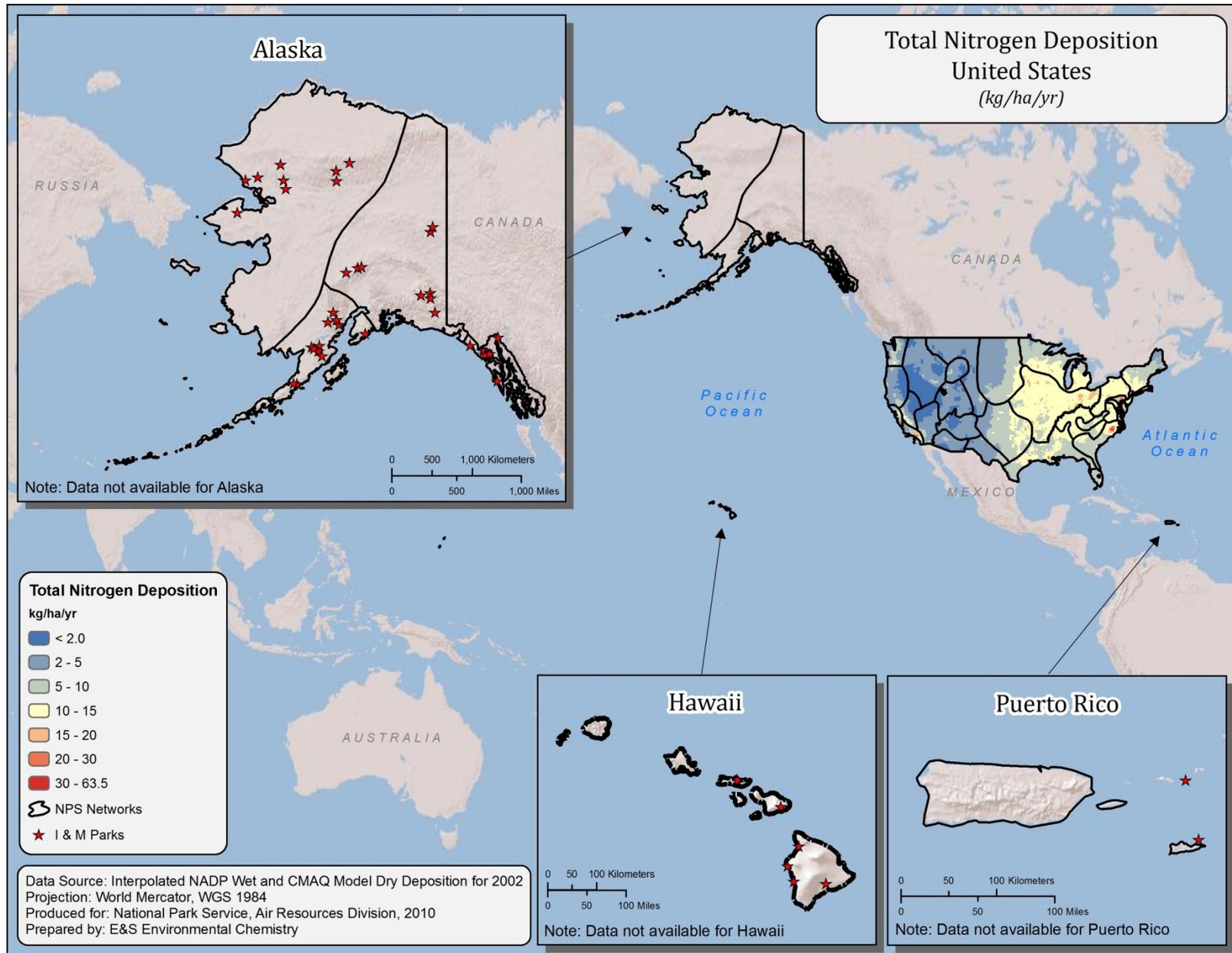
<sup>1</sup> Relative park rankings are designated according to quintile ranking, among all I&M Parks, from the lowest quintile (very low risk) to the highest quintile (very high risk).  
<sup>2</sup> Park name is printed in bold italic for parks larger than 100 square miles.

- Map A. National map of total N emissions by county for the year 2002. Both oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO<sub>x</sub>) and reduced (ammonia, NH<sub>3</sub>) forms of N are included. The total is expressed in tons per square mile per year. (Source of data: EPA National Emissions Inventory, <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/2002inventory.html>)
- Map B. Regional deposition data are not available for Alaska. Total N deposition throughout most areas in Alaska is expected to be low, below about 2 kilograms of N per hectare per year. Total N deposition for the continental United States is presented for context here for the year 2002, expressed in units of kilograms of N deposited from the atmosphere to the earth surface per hectare per year. Wet and dry forms of both oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO<sub>x</sub>) and reduced (ammonia, NH<sub>3</sub>) N are included. For the eastern half of the country, wet deposition values were derived from interpolated measured values from NADP (three-year average centered on 2002) and dry deposition values were derived from 12-km CMAQ model projections for 2002. For the western half of the country, both wet and dry deposition values were derived from 36-km CMAQ model projections for 2002. NADP interpolations were performed using the approach of Grimm and Lynch (1997). CMAQ model projections were provided by Robin Dennis, U.S. EPA.
- Map C. Total N emissions by county for lands surrounding the network, expressed as tons of N emitted into the atmosphere per square mile per year. The total includes both oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO<sub>x</sub>) and reduced (ammonia, NH<sub>3</sub>) N. (Source of data: EPA National Emissions Inventory, <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/2002inventory.html>)
- Map E. Urban centers having more than 10,000 people within the network and within a 300-mile buffer around the perimeter of the network. (Source of data: U.S. Census 2000)
- Map G. Land cover types in and around the network, based on the National Land Cover dataset. (Source of data: National Land Cover Dataset, [http://www.mrlc.gov/nlcd\\_multizone\\_map.php](http://www.mrlc.gov/nlcd_multizone_map.php))

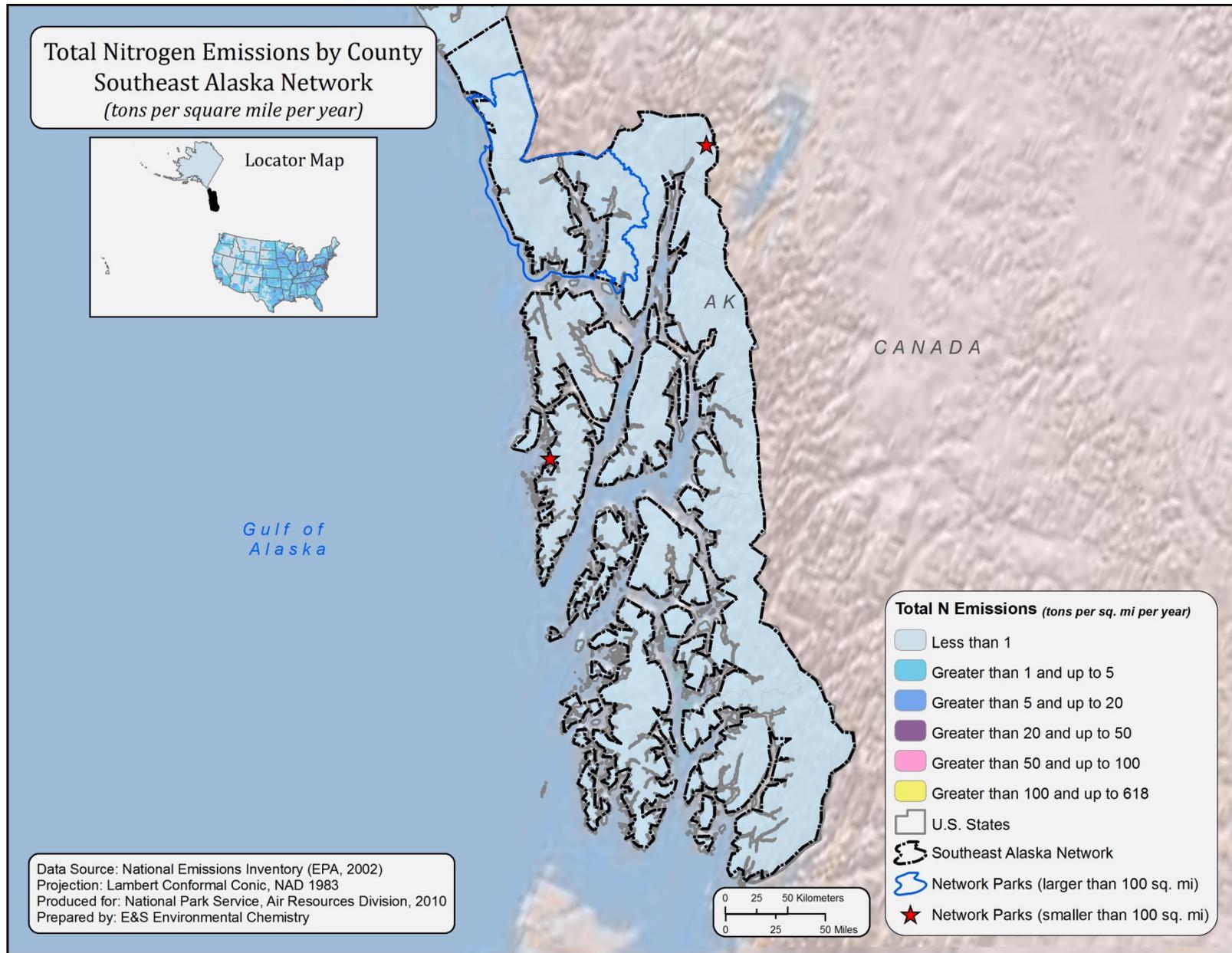
- Map H. Distribution within the larger (larger than 100 square miles) parks that occur in this network of the five terrestrial vegetation types thought to be most sensitive to N-nutrient enrichment effects: arctic, alpine, grassland and meadow, wetland, and arid and semi-arid. (Source of data: See Appendix A)
- Map I. Lands within the network that are classified as Class I or wilderness area. (Source of data: USGS 2005 [National Atlas; <http://nationalatlas.gov>] and NPS)
- Figure A. Network rankings for Pollutant Exposure, calculated as the average of scores for all Pollutant Exposure variables.
- Figure B. Network rankings for Ecosystem Sensitivity, calculated as the average of scores for all Ecosystem Sensitivity variables.
- Figure C. Network rankings for Park Protection, calculated as the average of scores for all Park Protection variables.
- Figure D. Network Summary Risk ranking, calculated as the sum of the averages of the scores for Pollutant Exposure, Ecosystem Sensitivity, and Park Protection.
- Figure E. Park rankings for Pollutant Exposure for all parks larger than 100 square miles. Ranks for each park were calculated relative to all parks, regardless of size, as the average of scores for all Pollutant Exposure variables.
- Figure F. Park rankings for Ecosystem Sensitivity for all parks larger than 100 square miles. Ranks for each park were calculated relative to all parks, regardless of size, as the average of scores for all Ecosystem Sensitivity variables.
- Figure G. Park rankings for Park Protection for all parks larger than 100 square miles. Ranks for each park were calculated relative to all parks, regardless of size, as the average of scores for all Park Protection variables.
- Figure H. Park rankings for Summary Risk for all parks larger than 100 square miles. Ranks for each park were calculated relative to all parks, regardless of size, as the average of scores for all Summary Risk variables.



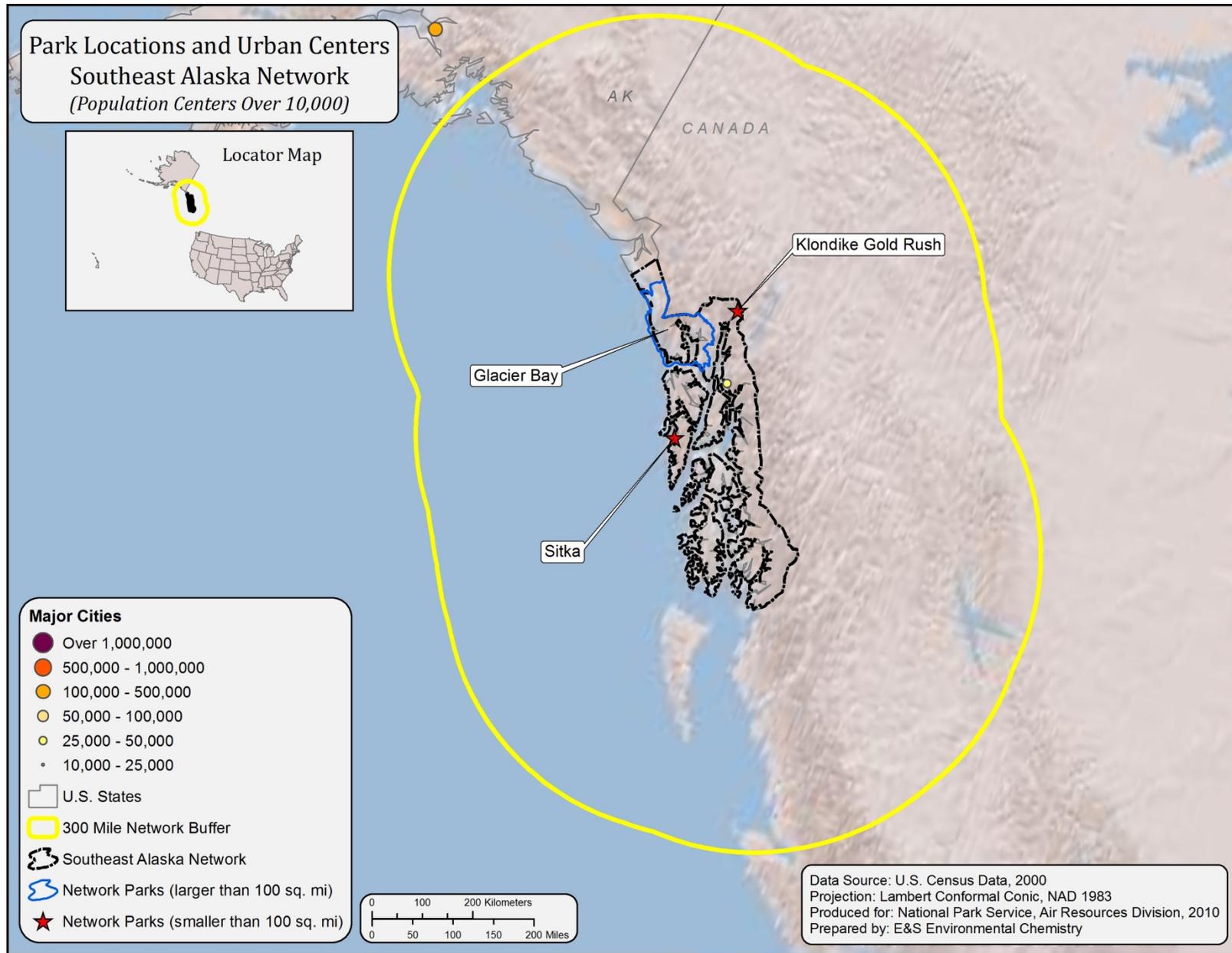
Map A



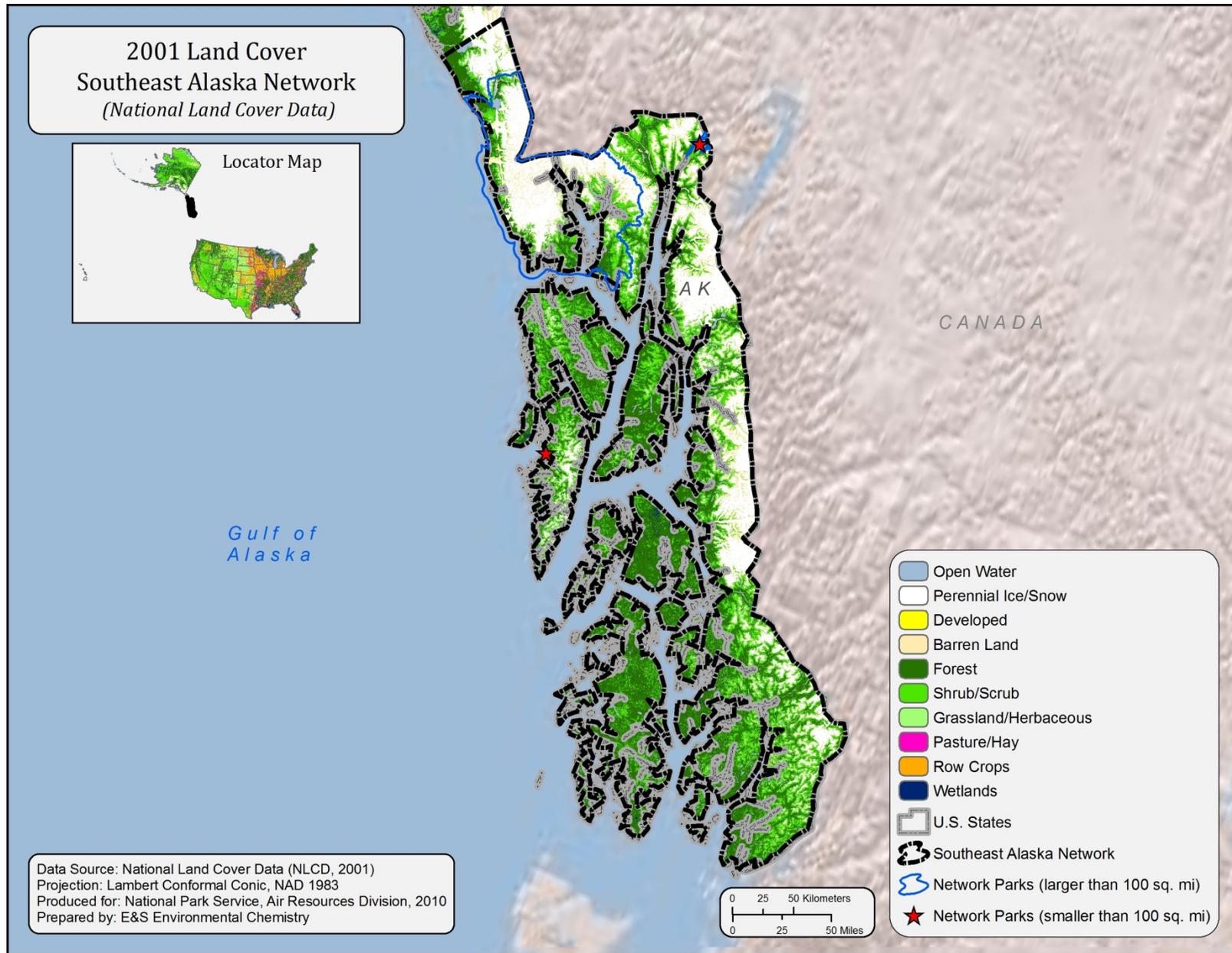
Map B



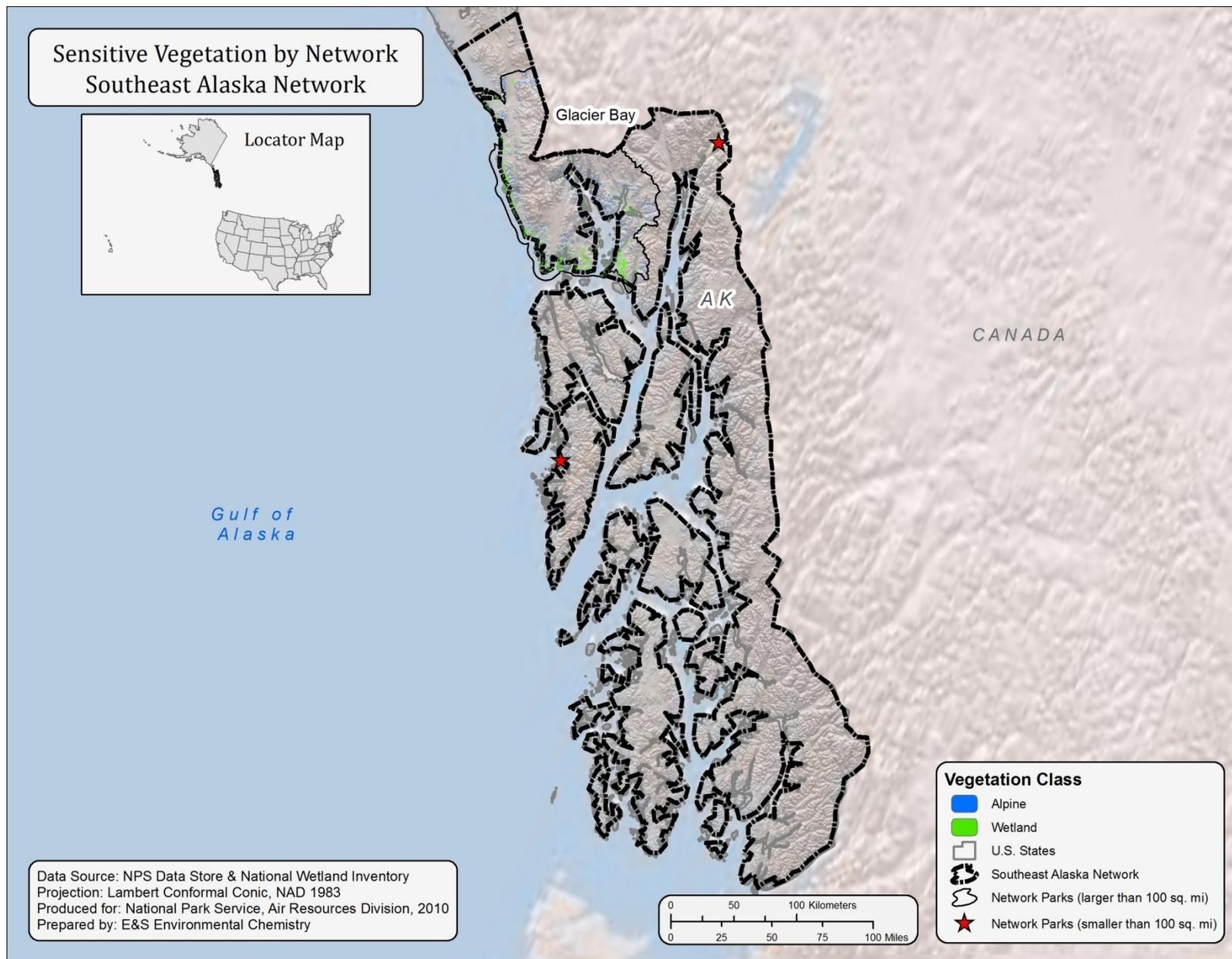
Map C



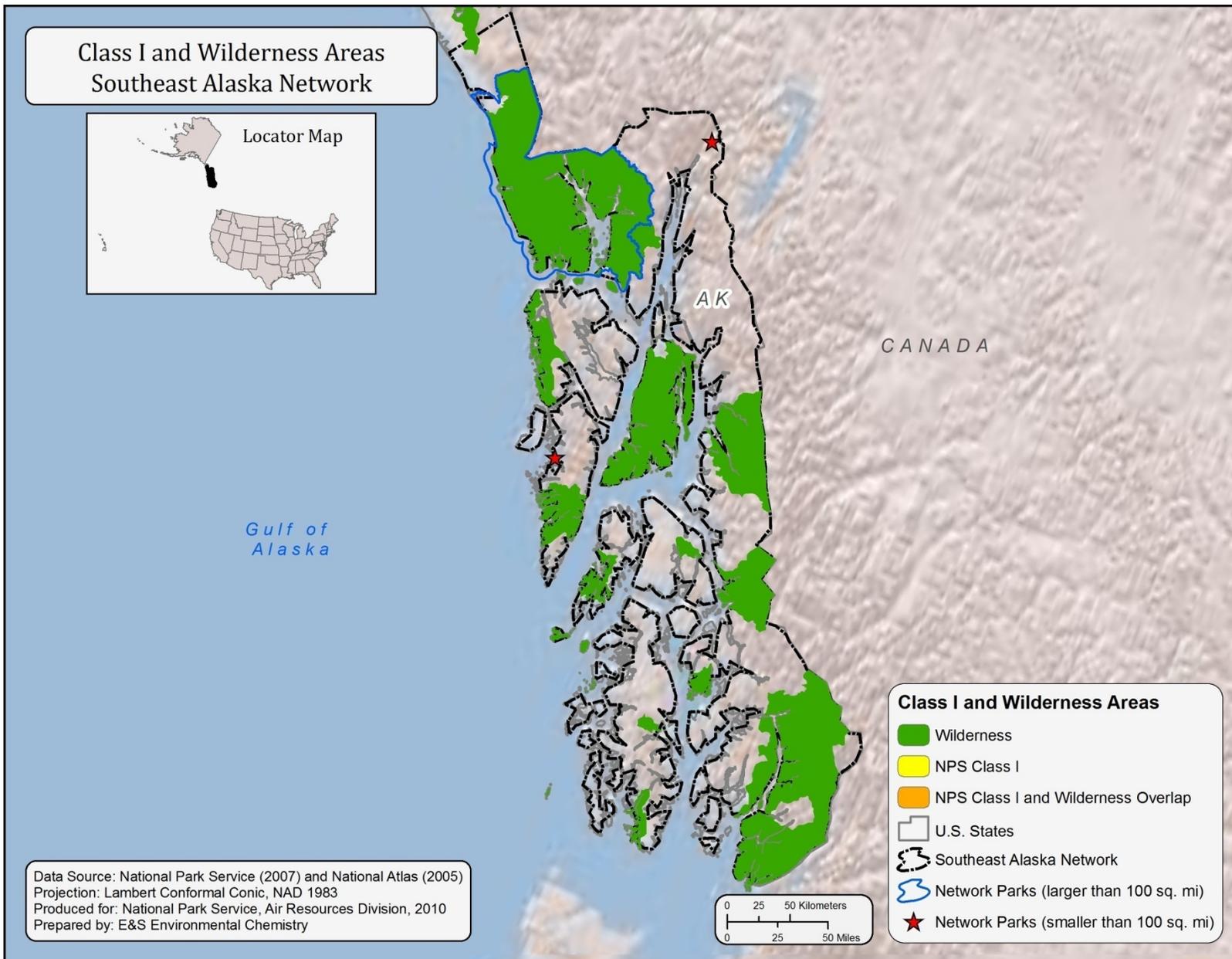
Map E



Map G



Map H



Map I

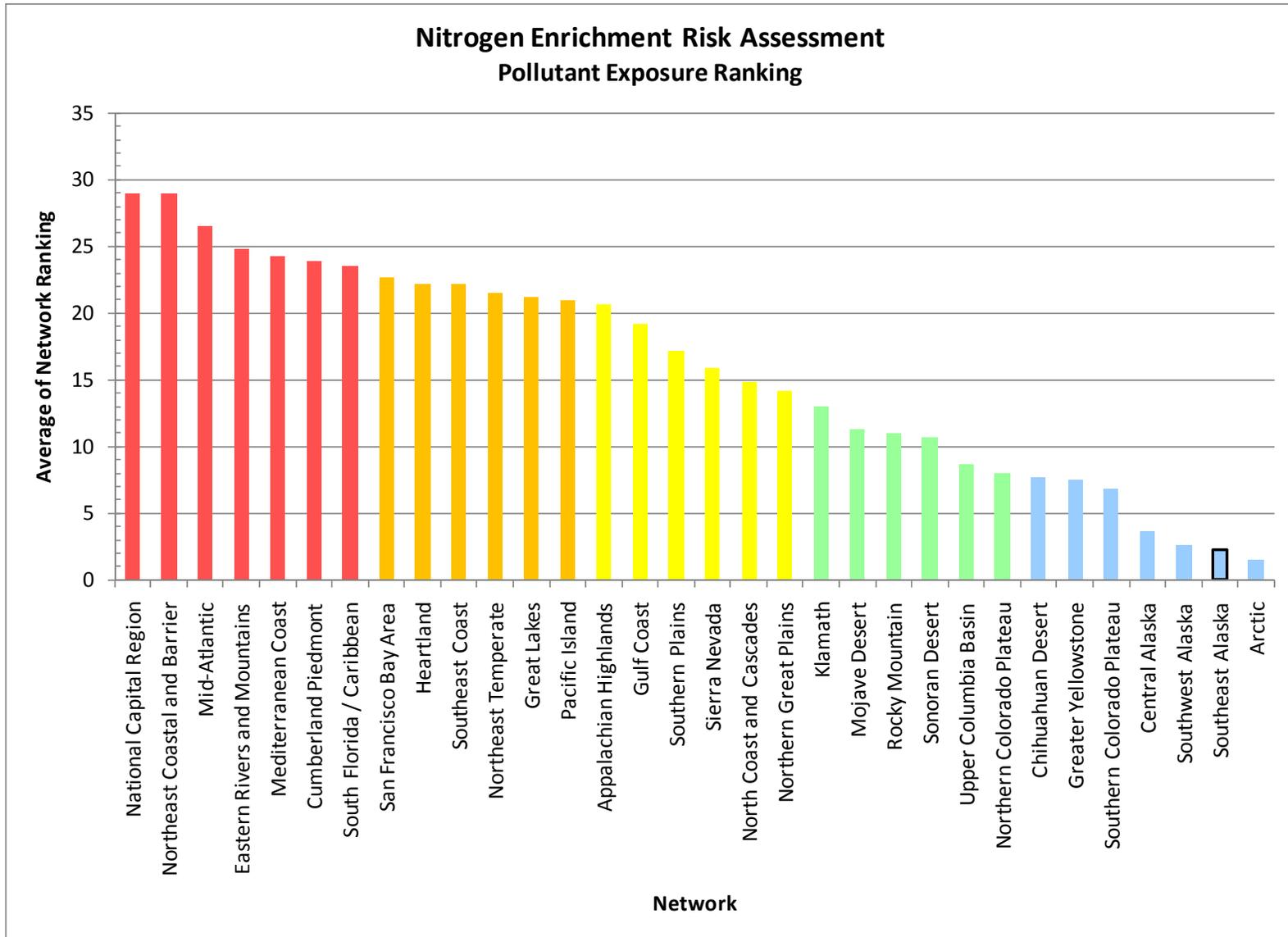


Figure A

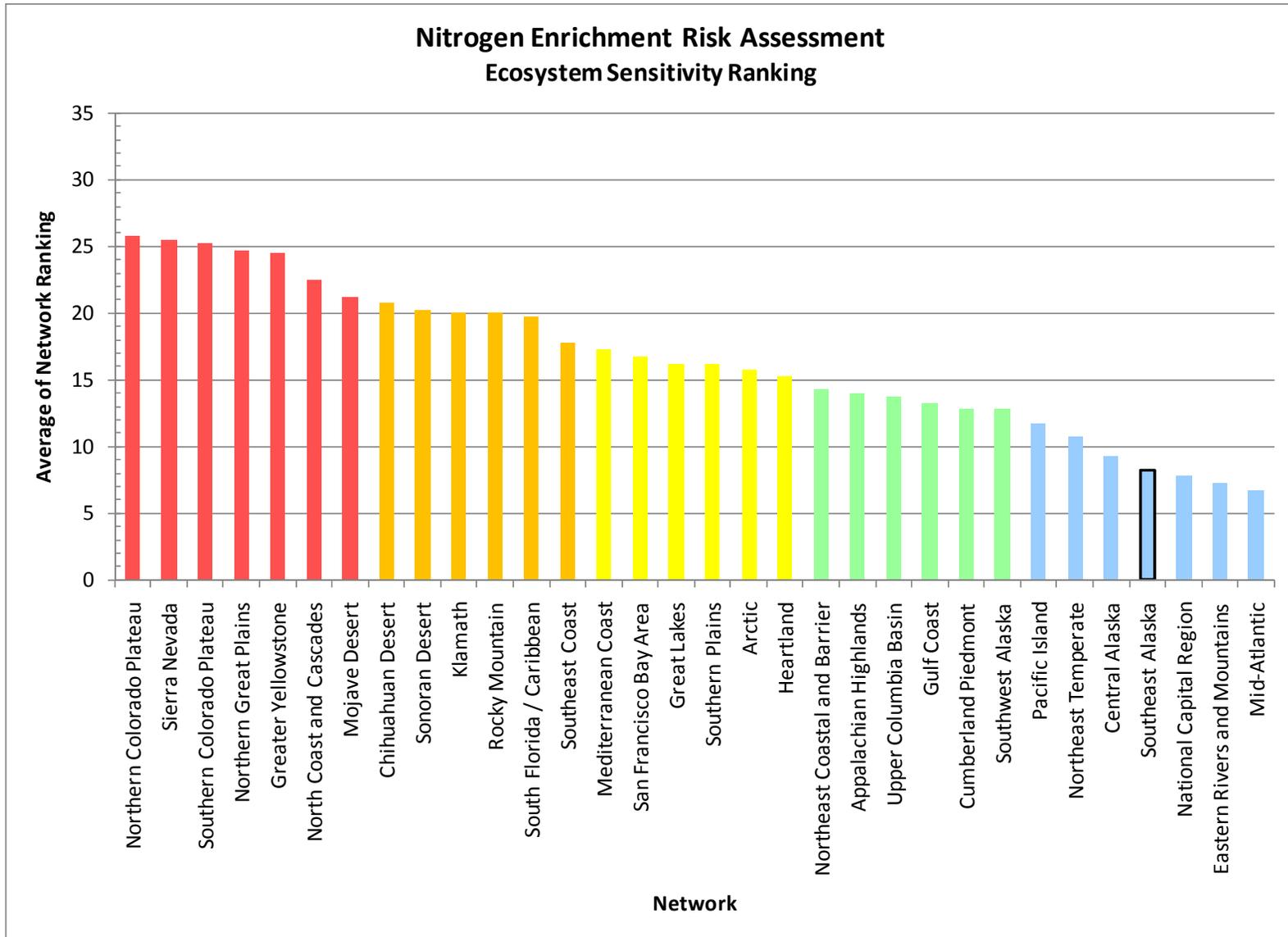


Figure B

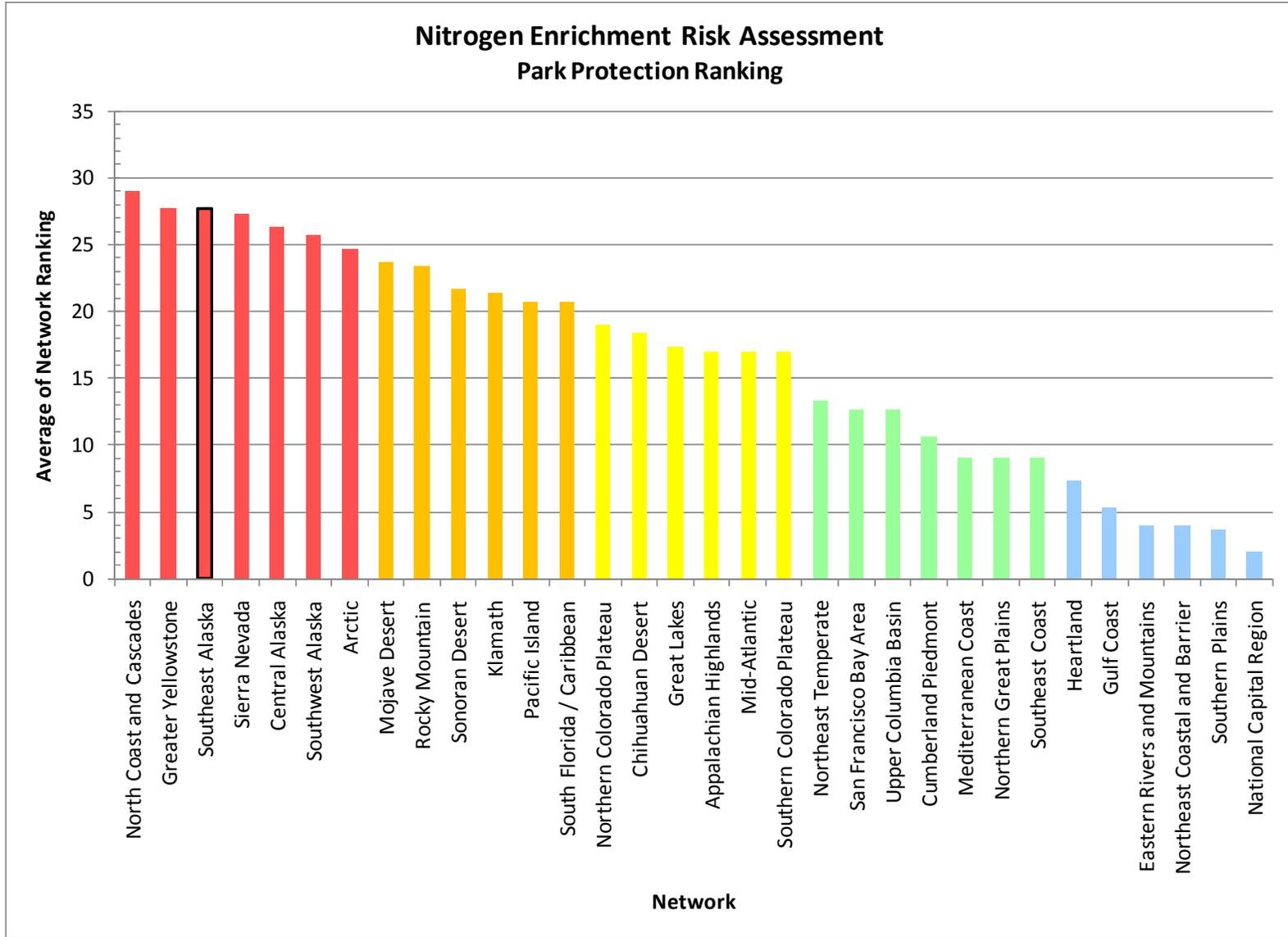


Figure C

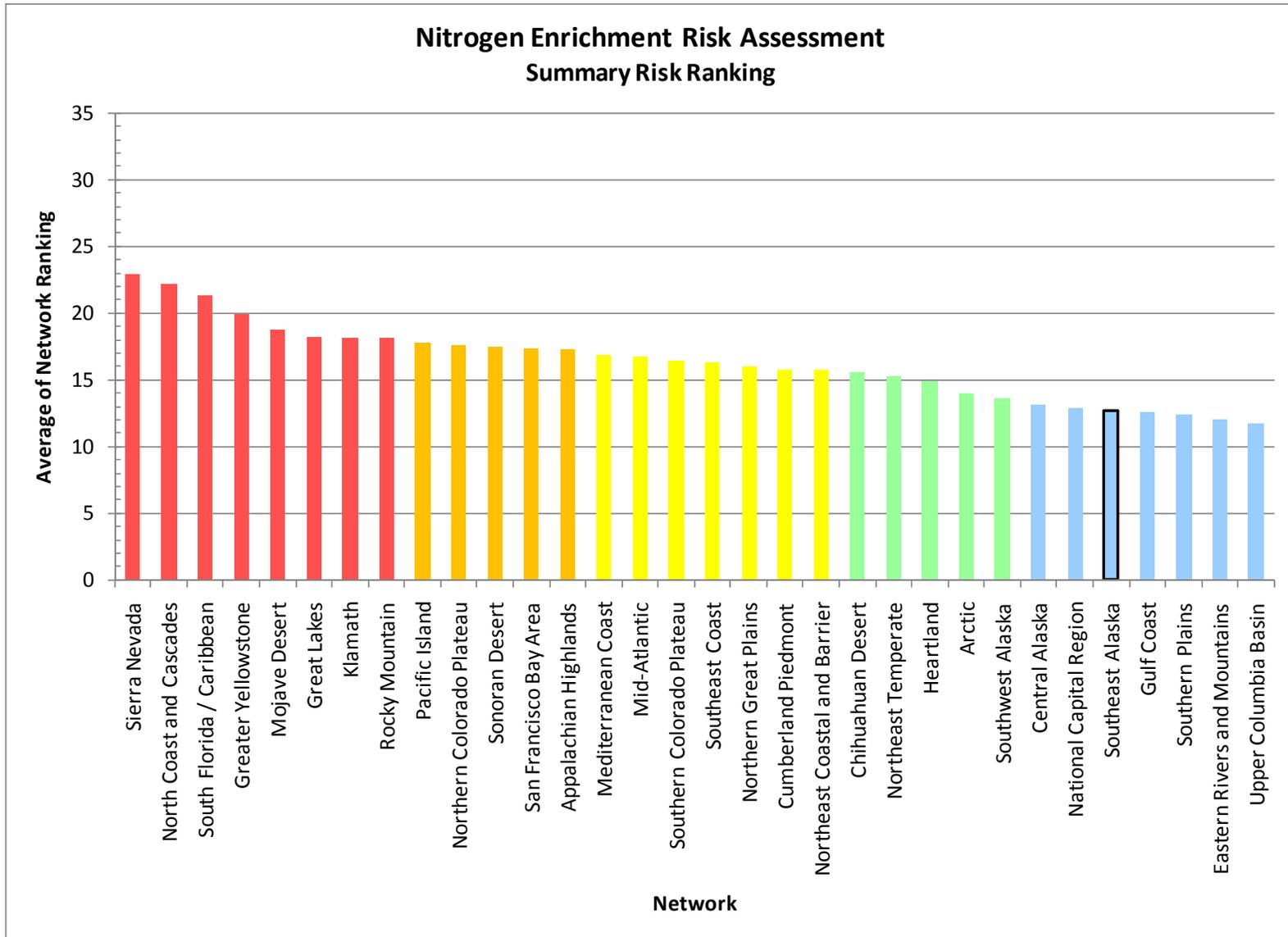


Figure D

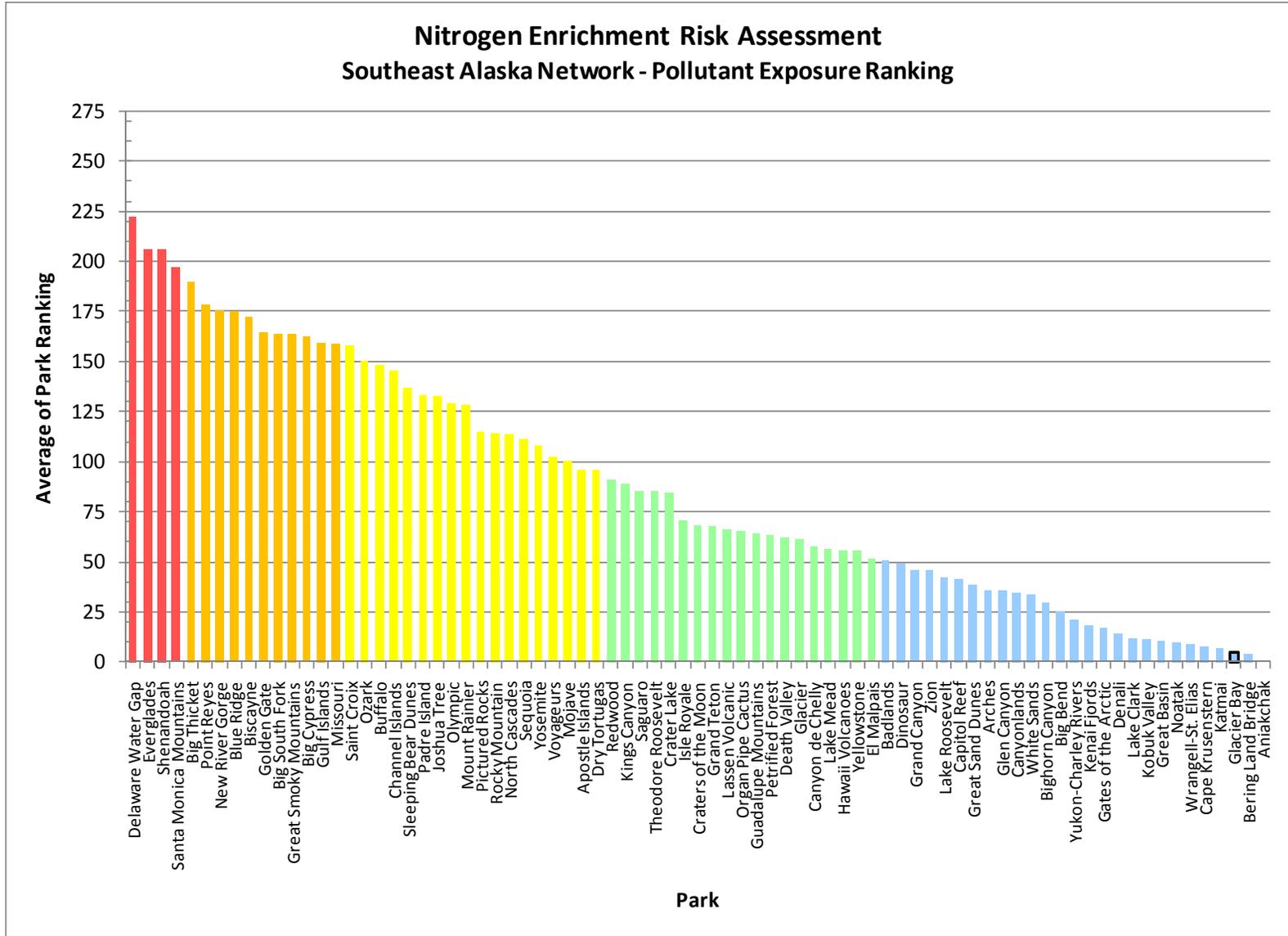


Figure E

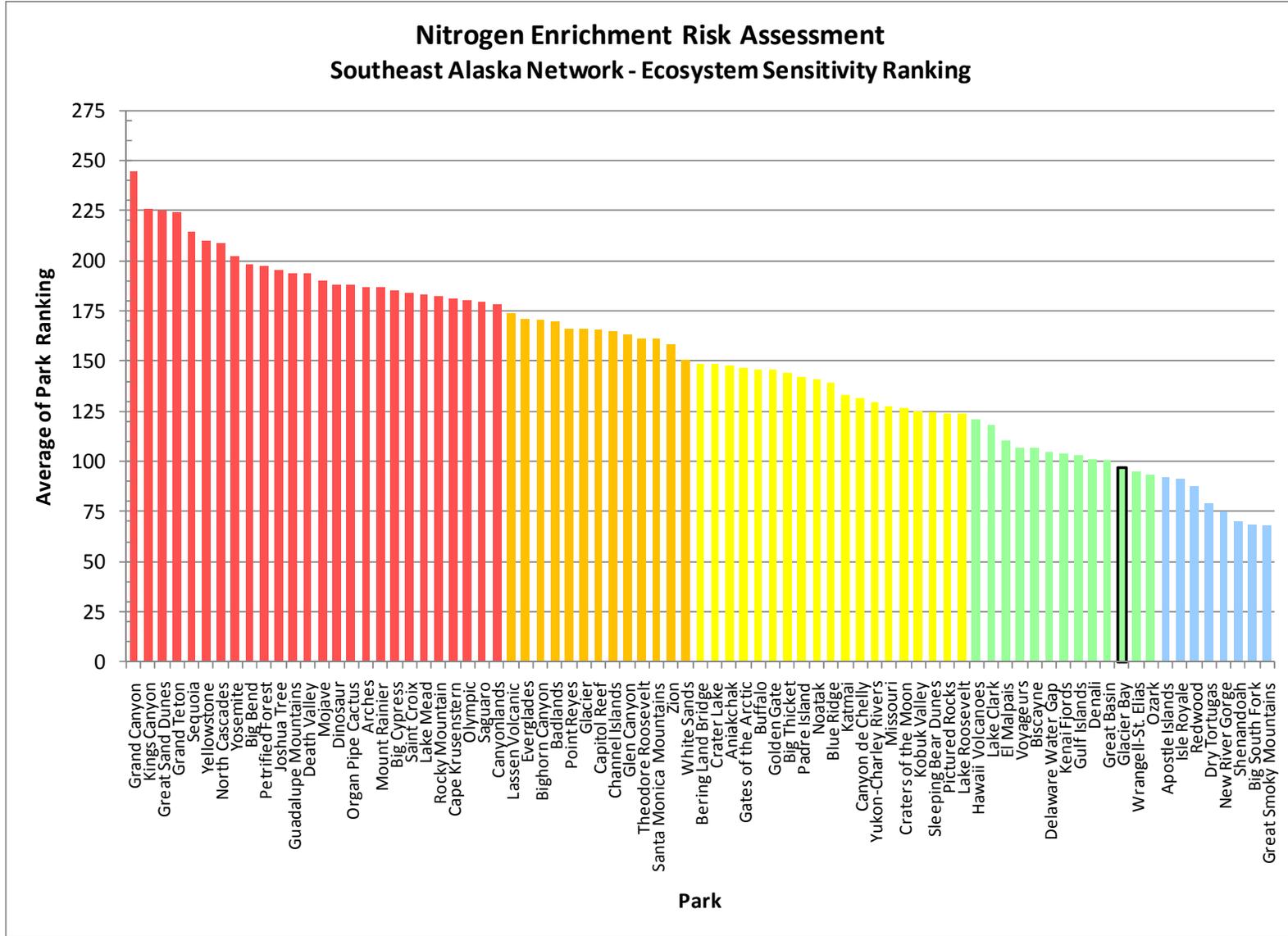


Figure F

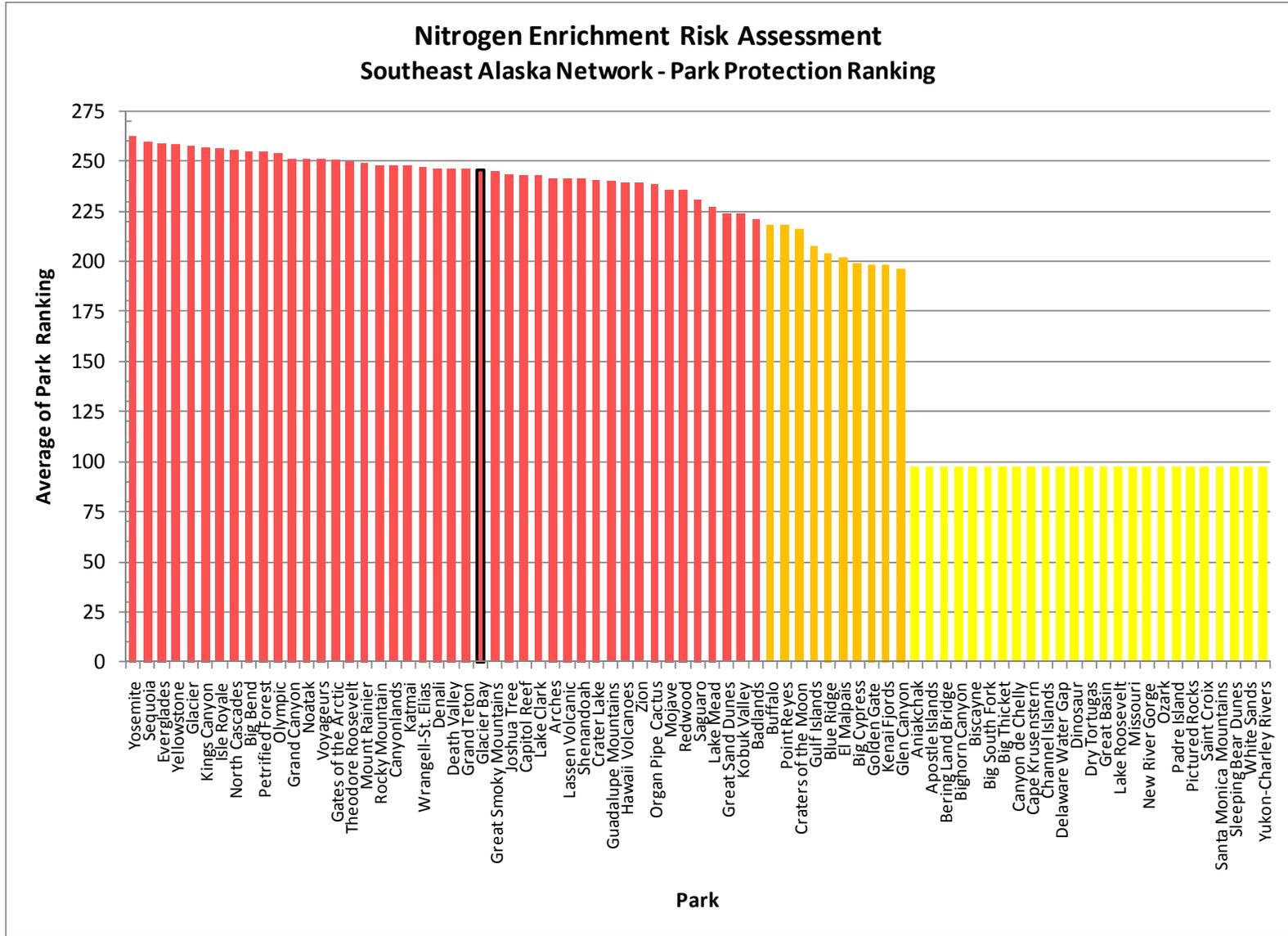


Figure G

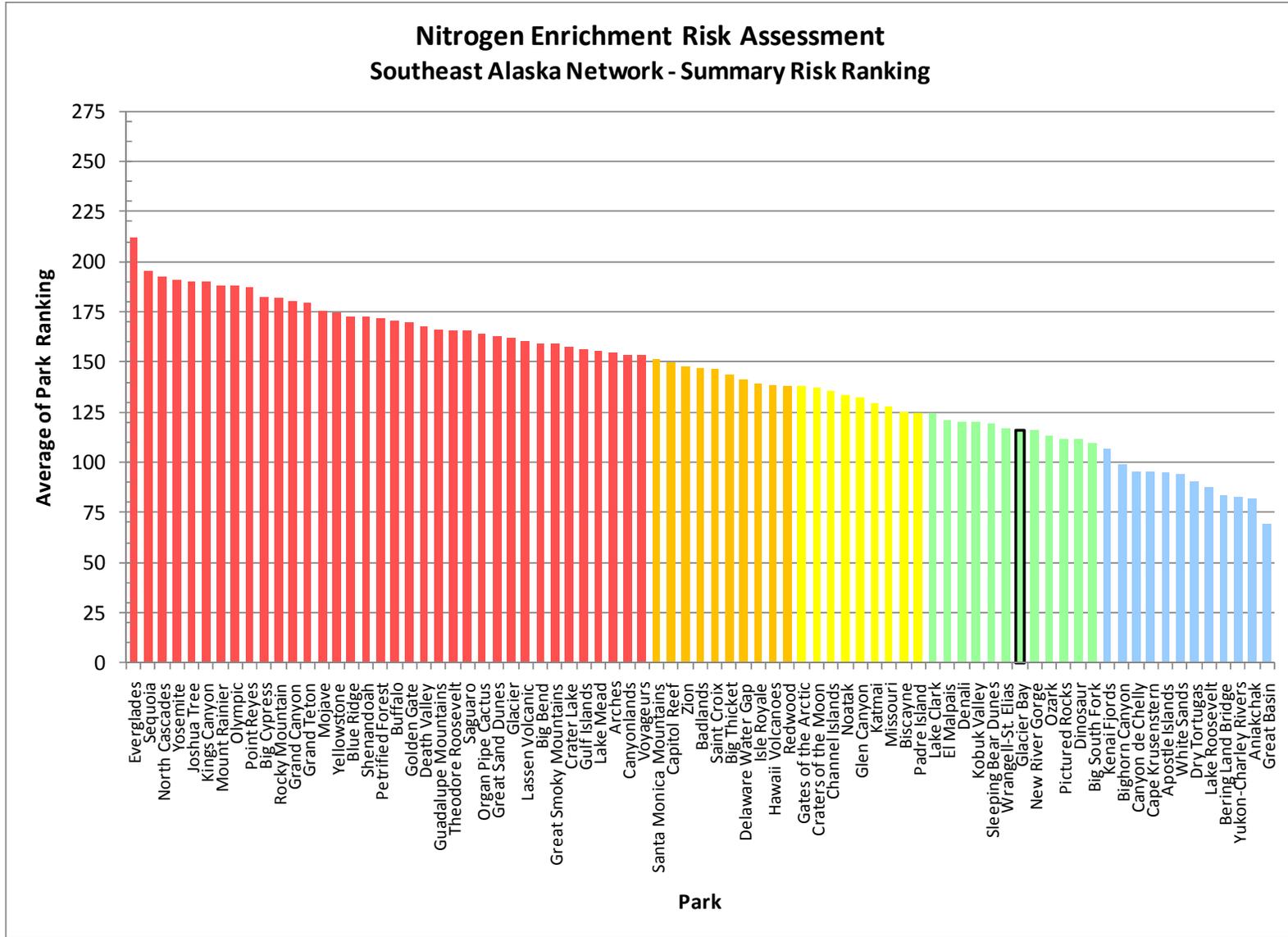


Figure H



The Department of the Interior protects and manages the nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its special responsibilities to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated Island Communities.

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**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**



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