

Welcome to



History

The first recorded crossing of Crow Pass was in 1898 by geologist Walter Mendenhall and his assistant Luther "Yellowstone" Kelly for the U.S. Army geological survey. For many years the trail saw heavy use as part of the historic Iditarod Trail, a winter dogsledding route from Seward to Knik and to the Iditarod goldfields. However, avalanches at Crow Pass were dangerous and prospectors were quick to favor the longer, but less severe Indian Pass route made by the Alaska Road Commission in 1908. After the Alaska Railroad was completed in 1923, both routes were largely abandoned.

In 1896 prospectors struck gold in Crow Creek, which became the most productive placer gold stream in Southcentral Alaska. Monarch Mine operated from 1906 to 1948 on upper Crow Creek and was one of the most productive load gold mining ventures on the Turnagain Arm. Rusted remnants from the mining camp can still be seen off a fork of the trail about 1.25 miles from the Crow Creek Trailhead.



Bruce I. Staser Family, Papers, circa 1956
UAA-HMC-0232

If you visit the ruins, please don't take any "souvenirs"; these historical artifacts should be left in place for others to enjoy.
Background photo courtesy of Frank Kovalchek



For More Information

Chugach State Park Headquarters
Potter Section House
18620 Seward Hwy
Anchorage, AK 99516
(907) 345-5014
www.alaskastateparks.org
csp@alaska.gov

Facebook "Chugach State Park" on Facebook

Eagle River Nature Center
32750 Eagle River Road (Mile 12)
Eagle River, AK
(907) 694-2108
www.ernc.org

Crow Pass Trail

in Chugach State Park



Descending Crow Pass toward Clear Creek,
Mount Yukla in background.
Photo courtesy of Justin Whaley



Alaska State Parks

Welcome

The Crow Pass Trail is widely considered to be one of the best hikes in Chugach State Park, as well as one of Alaska's foremost backpacking experiences. Following the Iditarod National Historic Trail route, the trail crosses a variety of terrains and offers diverse and scenic sights along the way, including glaciers, waterfalls, wildflowers, wildlife, gorges, sapphire tarns, and stunning alpine scenery. You don't want to miss this one!

If you're not up for hiking the whole trail, the four-mile hike from Crow Creek Trailhead to Crow Pass is a great alpine hike with a magnificent payoff. The trail from the Eagle River Nature Center to Glacier Lake, a half-mile east of the Eagle River ford site, offers stunning valley views and is an easy, non-technical hike.

Know Before You Go

Outdoor Skills

This brochure does not tell you everything you need to know about venturing into the Chugach. Get informed, take a class, or invite an experienced friend. Tell a friend where you're going, who you're going with, and when you'll return in case something unexpected happens.

Crossing Eagle River

This trail involves fording Eagle River. The ford site is marked and usually safe for crossing, but it is not to be taken lightly. Make sure you bring extra footwear for the crossing. NEVER cross barefoot. Cold water can cause numbness, making it easy to injure your feet—a disaster in the backcountry.

Check the depth with a walking stick before crossing. If you're unsure, wait for the water to drop and remember that you don't have to cross. Unbuckle your straps in case you need to ditch your pack in the event of a fall.

Hypothermia

The alpine areas around Crow Pass are often wet, foggy, and windy. No matter how good the weather looks, bring warm, rainproof gear. Unprepared hikers are especially vulnerable to hypothermia, even in the middle of summer.

Fires

Open fires are prohibited in Chugach State Park unless in a metal fire ring provided at a designated campsite or on the gravel bars of Eagle River. Backcountry chefs should bring a portable camp stove.

Wildlife

The Eagle River and Raven Creek valleys are major habitats for moose and bears. Stay alert and make sure to announce your presence when hiking the trail. When camping, know the safe way to cook and store your food to avoid attracting bears. Arctic ground squirrels, marmots, Dall's sheep, and mountain goats can also be seen along the trail.

Giardia

Sparkling mountain streams might look clean, but they could be contaminated by *Giardia*. Also known as "beaver fever," this parasite can be carried by any mammal and found in nearly any water source—even late summer snow. Thankfully, *Giardia* is easy to avoid. You can purify drinking water using a pump filter, chemical treatments, or by boiling for two minutes or more.



Photo courtesy of Frank Kovalchek

Photo courtesy of Andrew Kunkle

Trail Description

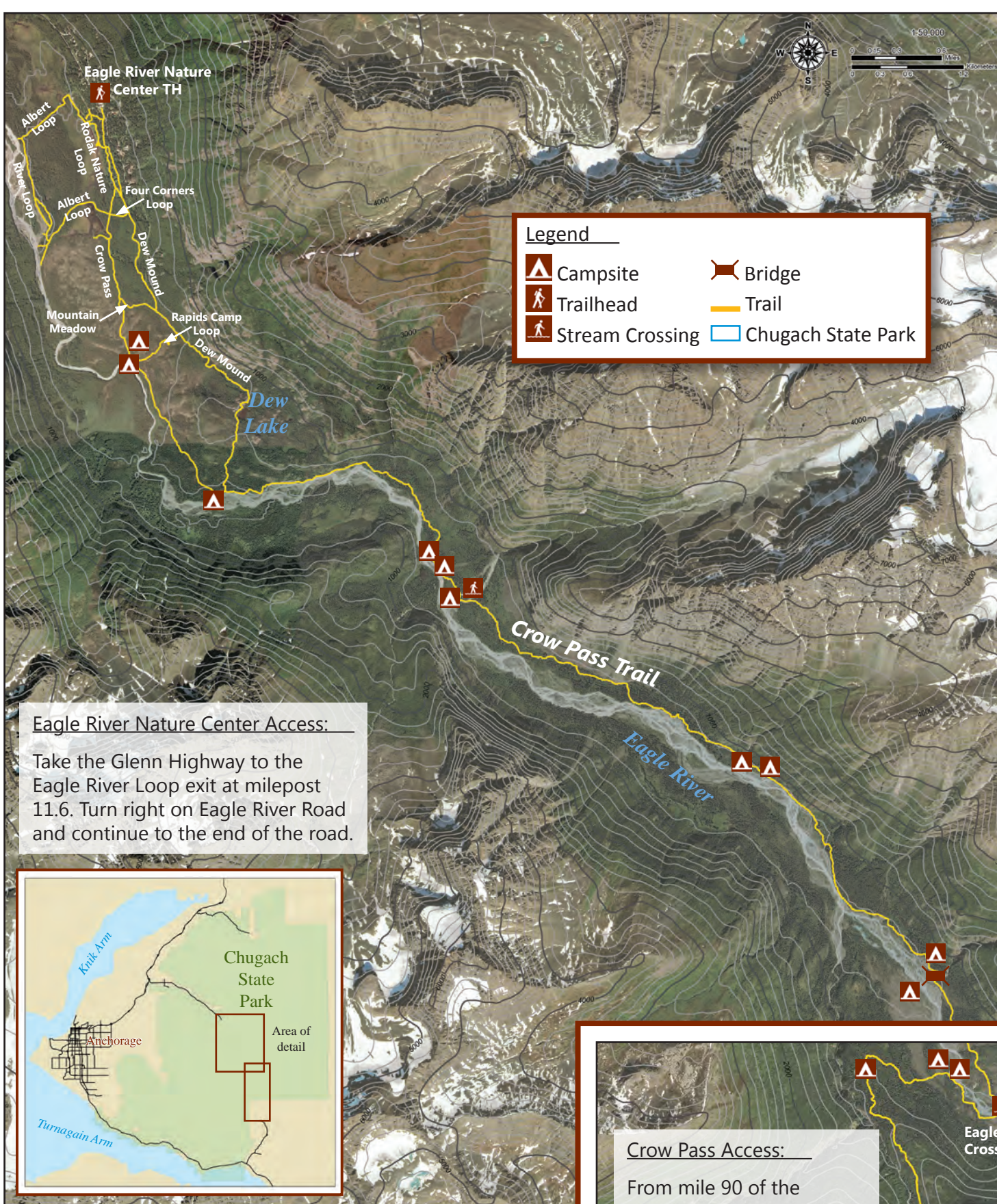
This hike is moderately difficult, with some scrambling and river fording. Prepared beginners can traverse the trail over a few days, as there are plenty of places to camp. Late June through September are the best times to traverse.

Access: Eagle River Nature Center or Crow Pass Trailhead in Girdwood
Travel Means: Foot
Distance: 23.1 miles, one way, as measured by GPS
Elevation Gain: 2,100 ft. from Crow Creek Trailhead; 3,100 ft. from Eagle River Nature Center

From the Crow Creek Trailhead, a series of uphill switchbacks through the brush take you to an old miner's road in an alpine area. Departing from the miner's road, the trail traverses the side of Barnes and Jewel mountains, passes Crystal Lake, and peaks at Crow Pass at 3,550 ft. elevation.

From Crow Pass, the trail dips into the Raven Creek Valley, skirting several rock covered slopes and crossing Raven Creek via a bridge over Raven Gorge. Descending along the hills through tall grasses and fireweed, the trail crosses Turbid Creek by footbridge and swings east into the Eagle River Valley upstream toward the ford site.

After the ford site, the trail parallels Eagle River and crosses Thunder, Twin Falls, and Icicle creeks. The trail provides scenic views of Heritage Falls, then turns west, where the valley widens before reaching Echo Bend and Rapids Camp. From there, the trail departs from the river into stands of spruce, birch, hemlock, and quaking aspen and heads toward the Eagle River Nature Center.



Eagle River Nature Center Access:
 Take the Glenn Highway to the Eagle River Loop exit at milepost 11.6. Turn right on Eagle River Road and continue to the end of the road.



Crossing rivers and streams in the backcountry can be dangerous. Learn the techniques before you head out.

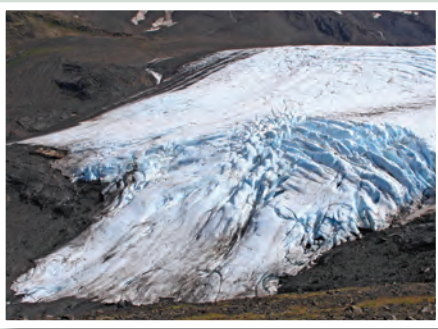


Photo courtesy of Frank Kovalchek
 Do not venture onto Raven Glacier unless properly equipped and trained to handle a crevassed glacier.



Photo courtesy of Justin Wholey



Public-Use Cabin

The Crow Pass Cabin is located on the south shore of Crystal Lake, three miles from the Crow Creek Trailhead. The cabin is managed by the U.S. Forest Service and available for reservation online at www.recreation.gov.



Photo courtesy of Chugach National Forest



Photo courtesy of Richard Dutille



Photo courtesy of Denise Dutille

This map is not intended for navigational purposes