

Chugach State Park Complete Atlas

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All major trails, difficulty ratings, parking fees, seasonal closures & wildlife calendar for Alaska's most visited state park.

■ Region:	Anchorage & Southcentral Alaska
■ Updated:	2024 Season
■ Cost:	Free Resource
■ Website:	AnchorageHikes.com

Chugach State Park Atlas and Guide

Located just east of Anchorage, Alaska, Chugach State Park is a vast and breathtaking wilderness area that offers unparalleled outdoor recreational opportunities. As the third-largest state park in the United States, Chugach spans an impressive 495,000 acres, providing a diverse range of landscapes, wildlife, and trails to explore.

Park Overview

Chugach State Park was established in 1970 to protect the unique and fragile ecosystems of the Chugach Mountains. The park is managed by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, in partnership with local communities and stakeholders. For more information, contact the park's headquarters at (907) 269-8400 or visit their website at www.alaskastateparks.org.

Trailhead Directory

Chugach State Park features several trailheads, each offering access to unique and exciting trails. The following directory provides an overview of the park's main trailheads, including parking information and fees:

- **Glen Alps Trailhead:** Located at the end of Glen Alps Road, this trailhead is the most popular entry point to the park. A \$5 day-use fee applies, and parking is available for over 100 vehicles. The Glen Alps Trailhead provides access to the iconic Flattop Mountain Trail, among others.
- **Prospect Heights Trailhead:** Situated off Prospect Heights Drive, this trailhead offers free parking and access to the Wolverine Peak Trail. The trailhead is less crowded than Glen Alps, but still offers stunning views of the surrounding mountains.
- **Eagle River Nature Center Trailhead:** Located at the end of Eagle River Road, this trailhead charges a \$5 day-use fee and provides parking for over 50 vehicles. The Eagle River Nature Center is a hub for backcountry access, with trails leading into the park's wilderness areas.
- **Eklutna Lake Trailhead:** Approximately 30 minutes north of Anchorage, Eklutna Lake offers camping, biking, and hiking opportunities. A \$5 day-use fee applies, and parking is available for over 100 vehicles.
- **Bird Creek Trailhead:** Situated at the south end of the park, the Bird Creek Trailhead provides access to advanced routes and stunning views of Turnagain Arm. Parking is limited, and a \$5 day-use fee applies.
- **Potter Creek Trailhead:** Located near the coastal town of Potter Creek, this trailhead offers access to moose habitat and stunning coastal views. Parking is limited, and a \$5 day-use fee applies.

Trail Difficulty Ratings

Chugach State Park features over 20 trails, ranging from easy to expert. The following trails are rated according to their difficulty, with distances and ratings provided:

1. **Flattop Mountain Trail:** 2.5 miles, Moderate
2. **Wolverine Peak Trail:** 4.5 miles, Hard
3. **Eagle River Trail:** 12 miles, Moderate
4. **Eklutna Lake Trail:** 12 miles, Easy
5. **Bird Creek Trail:** 4 miles, Expert
6. **Potter Creek Trail:** 2 miles, Easy
7. **Raven Creek Trail:** 4 miles, Moderate
8. **South Fork Eagle River Trail:** 6 miles, Hard
9. **North Fork Eagle River Trail:** 8 miles, Expert
10. **Thunder Bird Creek Trail:** 3 miles, Moderate
11. **Willow Creek Trail:** 2 miles, Easy
12. **Crown Point Trail:** 2 miles, Moderate
13. **McHugh Creek Trail:** 4 miles, Hard
14. **Turnagain Arm Trail:** 6 miles, Moderate
15. **Indian Creek Trail:** 3 miles, Easy
16. **Ship Creek Trail:** 2 miles, Moderate
17. **Glen Alps Ridge Trail:** 4 miles, Hard
18. **O'Malley Peak Trail:** 4 miles, Expert
19. **Ptarmigan Peak Trail:** 3 miles, Moderate
20. **Willow Peak Trail:** 2 miles, Easy

Parking and Fees

Chugach State Park charges a \$5 day-use fee at most trailheads, with the exception of the Prospect Heights Trailhead. An annual pass is available for \$60, and the America the Beautiful pass is also accepted. Parking fees apply at the following trailheads:

- Glen Alps Trailhead: \$5 day-use fee
- Eagle River Nature Center Trailhead: \$5 day-use fee
- Eklutna Lake Trailhead: \$5 day-use fee
- Bird Creek Trailhead: \$5 day-use fee
- Potter Creek Trailhead: \$5 day-use fee

Seasonal Closures and Conditions

Chugach State Park experiences seasonal closures and conditions that affect trail access. The following information provides an overview of trail closures by season:

- **Winter Closures:** December to March, many trails are closed due to snow and ice. The Glen Alps Trailhead and Eagle River Nature Center Trailhead remain open, but access may be limited.
- **Spring Mud Season:** April to May, many trails are closed due to muddy conditions. The Eklutna Lake Trail and Bird Creek Trail are particularly affected during this time.
- **Summer:** June to August, all trails are open, but be aware of bear activity and potential trail closures due to maintenance.
- **Fall:** September to November, trails may be closed due to hunting season or maintenance. Check with park officials before heading out.

Wildlife Calendar

Chugach State Park is home to a diverse range of wildlife, including:

- **Moose Calving:** May to June, moose are active in the park, and visitors should be aware of their presence.
- **Brown Bear:** April to October, brown bears are active in the park, and visitors should take necessary precautions.
- **Dall Sheep:** Year-round, Dall sheep can be spotted in the park's mountainous regions.
- **Salmon Runs:** July to September, salmon runs occur in the park's streams and rivers.
- **Ptarmigan:** Year-round, ptarmigan can be spotted in the park's alpine regions.

Rules and Regulations

Chugach State Park has several rules and regulations in place to protect the environment and ensure visitor safety:

- **No Motorized Vehicles:** Motorized vehicles are not allowed on most trails, with the exception of designated roads and parking areas.
- **Fire Restrictions:** Fires are only allowed in designated campsites and must be fully extinguished before leaving.
- **Camping Rules:** Camping is only allowed in designated campsites, and visitors must follow all regulations and guidelines.
- **Leave No Trace:** Visitors must follow the Leave No Trace principles to minimize their impact on the environment.

Facilities

Chugach State Park features several facilities, including:

- **Eagle River Nature Center:** A visitor center offering information, exhibits, and educational programs.
- **Glen Alps Restrooms:** Restrooms and potable water are available at the Glen Alps Trailhead.
- **Eklutna Lake Campground:** A campground offering 60 campsites, potable water, and restrooms.

In conclusion, Chugach State Park is a unique and breathtaking wilderness area that offers unparalleled outdoor recreational opportunities. With its diverse range of landscapes, wildlife, and trails, the park is a must-visit destination for any outdoor enthusiast. By following the rules and regulations, being aware of seasonal closures and conditions, and respecting the environment, visitors can enjoy a safe and memorable experience in this incredible park.