



# Eagle River Nature Center

Complete Alaska Hiking Guide

*AnchorageHikes.com -- Alaska's #1 Hiking Resource*

## TRAIL STATISTICS

DISTANCE	ELEVATION GAIN	EST. TIME
<b>3-20 miles (multiple trails)</b>	<b>200 ft</b>	<b>1-8 hours</b>
DIFFICULTY	DOGS ALLOWED	BEST SEASON
<b>EASY</b>	<b>Yes - on leash</b>	<b>Year-round</b>

**DIFFICULTY: EASY**

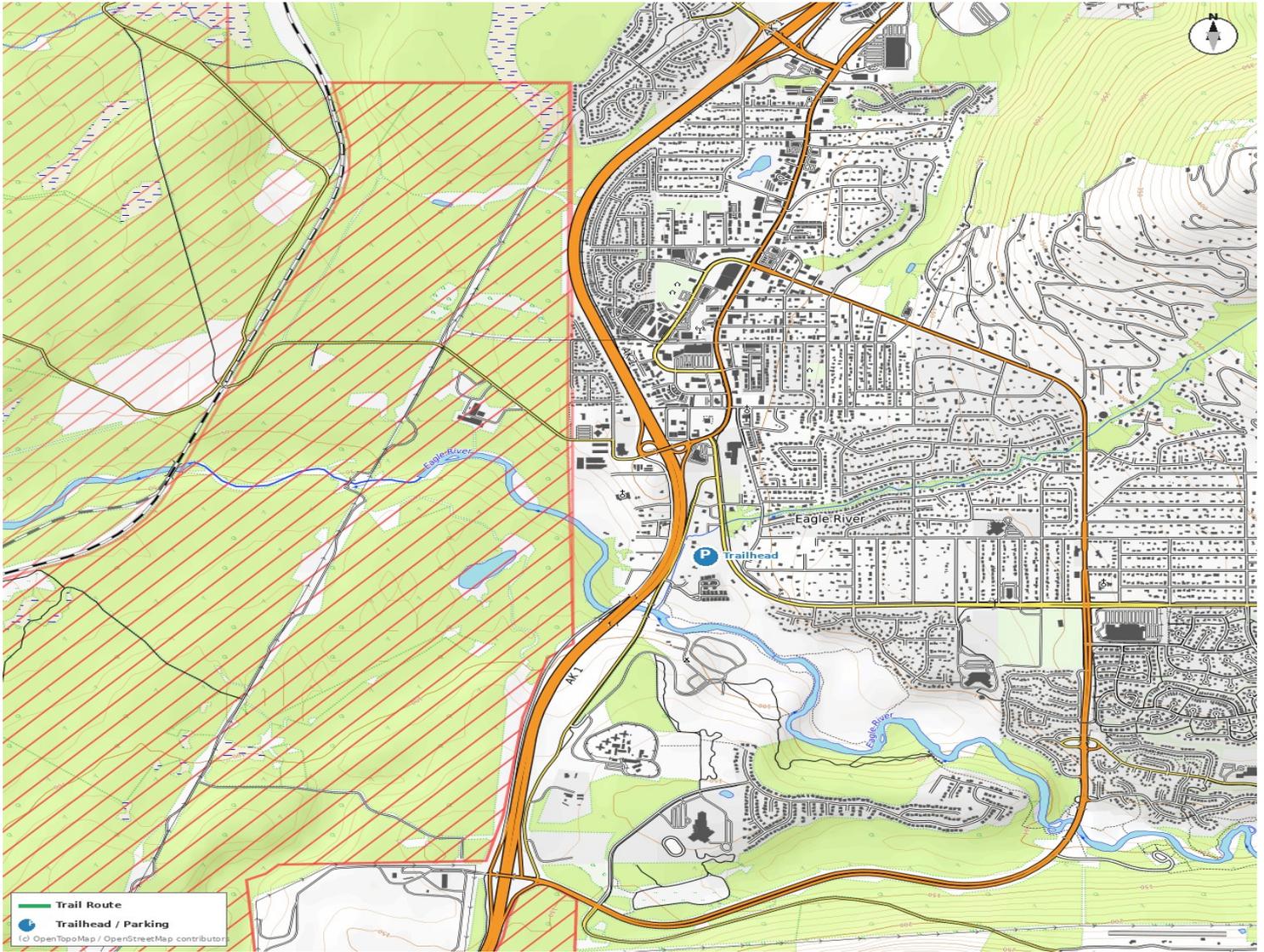
## TRAIL HIGHLIGHTS

- Eagle River views throughout
- Moose, bears, bald eagles common
- Albert Loop: perfect beginner trail
- Backcountry access to Chugach interior
- Nature center with exhibits
- Salmon viewing in season (Aug-Sept)

## IMPORTANT WARNINGS

- ! One of highest bear density areas near Anchorage
- ! Stay on trail -- dense brush = surprise encounters
- ! River levels rise quickly after rain
- ! Backcountry requires bear awareness and navigation skills

# TRAIL MAP -- EAGLE RIVER NATURE CENTER



Map: (c) OpenTopoMap contributors | Data: (c) OpenStreetMap contributors | anchoragehikes.com

**EASY**

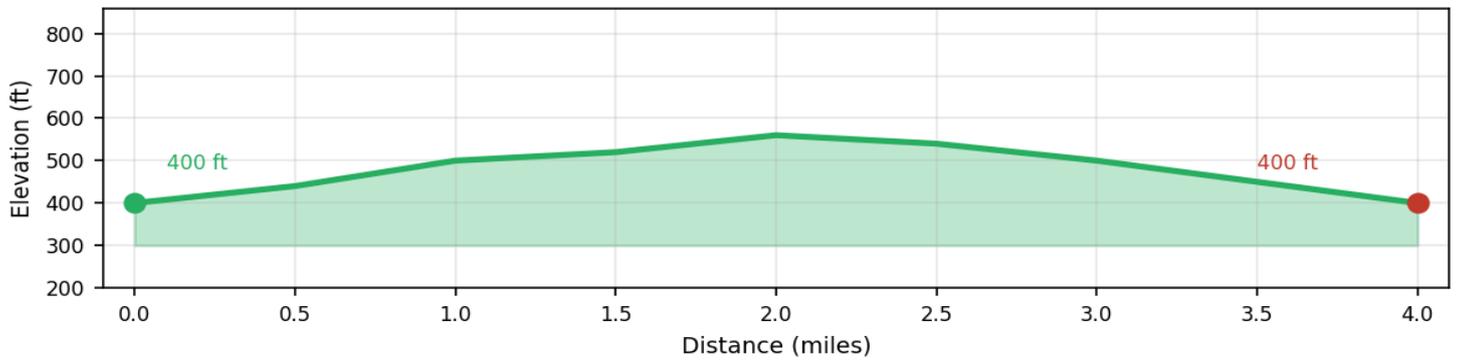
Dist: 3-20 miles (multiple trails)

Elev Gain: 200 ft

Time: 1-8 hours

## ELEVATION PROFILE

### Elevation Profile - Eagle River Nature Center | Gain: 160 ft



## A Guide to the Eagle River Nature Center Trail System

Welcome to the Eagle River Nature Center, your premier gateway to the unparalleled wilderness of Chugach State Park, just a short drive from Anchorage, Alaska. Nestled within a dramatic river valley carved by the glacial meltwaters of the Eagle River, this destination offers a captivating blend of accessible trails and challenging backcountry adventures. Here, ancient old-growth spruce and birch forests ascend steep valley walls, creating a breathtaking backdrop for an immersive Alaskan experience. The Nature Center itself serves as a vital hub for education and conservation, providing visitors with interpretive exhibits, a well-stocked gift shop, and essential facilities before embarking on their journey into the wild. A small parking and entry fee supports the center's mission and trail maintenance, ensuring the preservation of this remarkable natural treasure for generations to come.

### Albert Loop Trail

For a quintessential Alaskan nature stroll suitable for all ages and fitness levels, the Albert Loop Trail is an absolute must. This classic beginner loop, approximately three miles in length with minimal elevation gain, offers a gentle introduction to the region's stunning beauty. The well-maintained path winds gracefully along the banks of the Eagle River, providing continuous views of the vibrant turquoise water and the towering valley walls. Sections of boardwalk traverse sensitive wetland areas, protecting both the ecosystem and your boots. You will pass through magnificent stands of old-growth forest, where ancient trees tell tales of centuries past, their branches draped in moss and lichen. Interpretive signs along the way enrich the experience, shedding light on the local flora, fauna, and geological features. The Albert Loop is perfect for families, casual hikers, and anyone seeking a peaceful communion with nature, offering abundant opportunities for wildlife viewing and photography in a comfortable setting.

### Backcountry Options

Beyond the gentle meanderings of the Albert Loop, the Eagle River Nature Center serves as a launching point for more strenuous and rewarding backcountry expeditions. The most popular and challenging of these is the trail leading to Symphony Lake. This demanding trek, typically 10 to 12 miles round trip, begins relatively flat but soon ascends steeply into the rugged alpine terrain of the Chugach Mountains. Hikers will navigate rocky paths, root-choked sections, and potentially muddy stretches, requiring sturdy footwear and a good level of fitness. The effort is magnificently rewarded with panoramic views of cascading waterfalls, vast wilderness, and ultimately, the pristine, glacier-fed waters of Symphony Lake nestled in a high cirque. This is true Alaskan wilderness, demanding preparedness: carry ample water, wear layers, bring navigation tools, and always pack bear spray. Other connecting trails lead deeper into Chugach State Park, offering experienced hikers even greater solitude and adventure, but always check conditions and plan accordingly.

### Wildlife You Will See

The Eagle River valley is teeming with Alaska's iconic wildlife, offering incredible opportunities for observation. Moose are frequently sighted along the riverbanks, in marshy areas, and often browsing in the forests. Their sheer size is impressive, and while generally placid, always maintain a respectful distance, especially from cows with calves. Black and brown (grizzly) bears inhabit the entire area; bear safety is paramount. Make noise on trails, carry bear spray, and know how to use it. Bear sightings are common, particularly during the late summer and fall when berries are ripe. Bald eagles are a constant presence, soaring majestically overhead or perched atop the

## GEAR CHECKLIST

### Pack List for Eagle River Nature Center

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable trail shoes or boots          | <input type="checkbox"/> Binoculars for wildlife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bear spray (required -- active bear area) | <input type="checkbox"/> Camera                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water (multiple sources but filter)       | <input type="checkbox"/> Bug spray (summer)      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rain jacket                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Layers                  |

### GETTING THERE

From Anchorage: Take Glenn Hwy north, exit at Eagle River, follow Eagle River Rd 12 miles to end. \$5 parking. Nature Center open daily. GPS: 61.3133, -149.5722.

# AnchorageHikes.com

Alaska's #1 Hiking Resource

500+ Trails | Interactive Map | Free App | Works Offline



Scan for live trail conditions & interactive map

**Download more free guides:**

[anchoragehikes.com/free-trail-guides/](https://anchoragehikes.com/free-trail-guides/)