



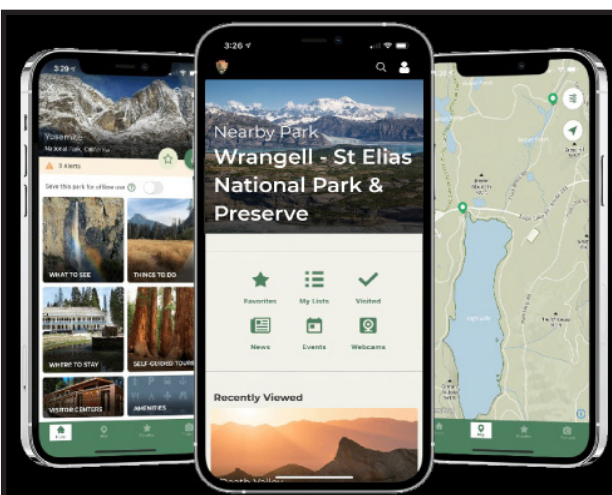
# The K'elt'aeni

The Official Guide of Wrangell-St. Elias  
National Park and Preserve  
2021



Yakutat coast, Alaska

*Park visitor centers and ranger stations are providing limited services due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Trail and road information, trip-planning assistance, and permits are available via window services (Copper Center, Slana, & Chitina) or Dial-A-Ranger (all locations including Kennecott). See details on page 10.*



The National Park Service App is the official app for all 420+ national parks. The App including interactive maps, saved data for offline use when in a remote area with no internet service, accessibility, self-guided tours, things to do, where to stay, shareable digital postcards, passport stamp locations, points of interest and operating hours and seasons. Download the official NPS mobile app before your next visit or take a virtual tour of the park.



Apple devices



Android devices

The National Park Service was established on August 25, 1916 “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife. . . and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

Authorized by Congress in 1980, Wrangell-St. Elias preserves some of the largest rivers, glaciers, mountains, and wilderness in America.

The name of the park newspaper, K'elt'aeni (kel-TAH-nee), is an Ahtna word for the Wrangell volcano that means “The one that controls the weather.”

**Superintendent** Ben Bobowski

**Mailing Address** PO Box 439 Mile 106.8 Richardson Hwy Copper Center, AK 99573

**Visitor Centers & Ranger Stations:** Copper Center, Kennecott, Slana, Chitina, Yakutat

**E-mail** wrst\_info@nps.gov

**Park Phone** 907-822-5234

**Park Website** www.nps.gov/wrst

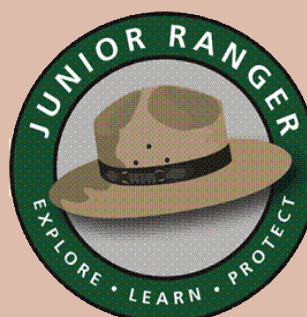
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Youth and people of all ages can become a Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve **Junior Ranger**. Go online for the Junior Ranger Activity Book. Complete the required sections, state the official pledge and mail the book in to earn your own badge and certificate. Visit the park website at [nps.gov/wrst/learn/kidsyouth](https://www.nps.gov/wrst/learn/kidsyouth)

# Information and Services

## Accessibility

The Visitor Centers at Copper Center, Kennecott and Slana are wheelchair accessible.

## Administration Offices

If you have a business-related question or you need to reach a specific employee, please call the park administration offices at 907-822-5234.

## ATMs & Banks

ATMs and banking facilities can be found in Glennallen, Kenny Lake, Chitina and McCarthy.

## Backcountry Permits

Permits are not required for the backcountry. However, we highly recommend that you complete a backcountry itinerary form available by email at [wrst\\_backcountry@nps.gov](mailto:wrst_backcountry@nps.gov)

## Collecting

Some items may be collected including berries, mushrooms, plants, driftwood, seashells, and small rocks. Recreational gold panning is allowed. Items may only be collected for personal use and may not be sold. Items that may NOT be collected are silver, platinum, gemstones, fossils, antlers, horns, cave formations, archeological items, and threatened/endangered species. Rules may vary for subsistence users.

## Entrance Fees

There are no entrance fees for the park. We do not sell or issue any interagency passes.

## Firearms and Hunting

Firearms are allowed in the park but not allowed inside any federal buildings. Sport hunting is allowed on preserve lands and requires a state hunting license. Federal Subsistence hunting is allowed by eligible local, rural residents on both-park and preserve lands.

## Fires

Small camp fires are permitted, except during state restrictions. If you choose to have a fire, destroy the fire ring, scatter the ashes, and insure the next camper will not see your impact. Only collect dead and downed wood.

## Fishing

Sport fishing is allowed with a state fishing license.

## Encountering a Bear

- If the bear is unaware of you, detour away quietly.
- If the bear sees you, stop where you are. Wave your arms and talk to the bear in a calm voice. Retreat slowly, keeping the bear in sight.
- If the bear follows you, stand your ground. DO NOT RUN.
- If contact by a grizzly bear is imminent, play dead. Lie flat on the ground, face down and legs apart. Protect your neck. Leave your pack on to protect your back and strive to remain face down. If the attack is prolonged, fight back vigorously.
- If it's a black bear, do not play dead. Fight back vigorously.
- **Please report all bear encounters to a park ranger.**

## Food Storage

When camping in the park, appropriate food storage is required. If car camping, keep all food inside your car. If camping in the backcountry, please bring your own NPS-approved bear-resistant food container (BRFC), which can be rented or purchased at outfitter or gear stores. A limited number of BRFC's may be available to borrow for free at park visitor centers.

## Carry Bear Spray

**We strongly recommend that you carry bear spray.** Bear spray containing capsaicin, a red pepper extract, is an effective, non-lethal deterrent against attacks by aggressive wildlife. Sprays have a maximum range of about 18 - 24 ft. (6 - 8 meters).

Caution: If discharged upwind or in a vehicle, they can disable the person using them.

## Gas Stations

Gasoline is available in Glennallen, Tazlina, Copper Center, Kenny Lake and Chitina. There is no gas available in Slana or McCarthy.

## Grocery Stores

There is a grocery store in Glennallen, and convenience stores in Copper Center, Kenny Lake and McCarthy.

## Junior Ranger

Kids of all ages can have fun earning a badge and certificate. A free booklet is available online and at visitor centers.

## Lodging

There is private lodging within and around the park. For a list of lodging options, go to the Glennallen Chamber Visitor Center at the intersection of Hwys 1 and 4 in Glennallen.

## Pets

Pets are permitted on trails and in the backcountry. Dogs must be leashed and under control by their owner at all times. Please clean up after your dog.

## Phones

Cell phone coverage is extremely limited. There are phones available for local calls at the Wrangell-St. Elias Visitor Center and Slana Ranger Station, and a pay phone in McCarthy.

## Post Office

There is a post office in Glennallen, Copper Center, Slana, and Chitina. Stamps are not sold in park visitor centers.

## Potable Water

There is drinking water available at the Wrangell-St. Elias Visitor Center and Slana Ranger Station. There is no public, treated drinking water available in Chitina, McCarthy, or Kennecott. There is bottled water for sale in local stores.

## Recycling

Recycling containers are provided at some park locations.

## Showers and Laundry

There are no public showers or laundry facilities within the park. Showers and laundry may be available for a fee from private businesses.

## Social Media

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Flickr! Go to [www.nps.gov/wrst](http://www.nps.gov/wrst) to view park information.

## Suspicious Behavior

Please contact a park ranger if you see suspicious or questionable behavior. Do not approach suspicious individuals. Call 911 if threatened or in an emergency.

## Wi-Fi/Internet

Free wireless internet is available at the visitor centers in Copper Center, Chitina and Slana. Many lodges and private campgrounds provide wireless access.

## World Heritage Site

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve and Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve in the U.S. and Kluane National Park and Tatshenshini-Alsek Provincial Park in Canada are recognized by the United Nations as an internationally protected ecosystem. Together, these four units conserve 24.3 million acres, one of the largest protected areas in the world.

## Yakutat coastal area


Accessible by plane or boat via commercial services.

## Park Brochure

Available in English, German, French, Spanish, Korean and Chinese to download from the park website at [nps.gov/wrst](http://nps.gov/wrst), via mail by sending your request to Wrangell-St Elias National Park & Preserve, PO Box 439, Copper Center, AK 99573, or email at [wrst\\_info@nps.gov](mailto:wrst_info@nps.gov)



Park Brochure & Map (unigrid)



## Alaska Geographic

*Wrangell-St Elias's Nonprofit Education Partner*

**Bookstore**  
Browse an extensive collection of books, maps, guides, films and gifts at any of Wrangell-St Elias's bookstores or many other locations around Alaska.

**Publisher**  
Enjoy publications that otherwise would not exist. Funds earned through the educational bookstores support the development of new publications.

**Educator**  
Learn in Alaska's wildest classrooms by participating in programs like field seminars, teacher trainings, or other programs we support like Junior Ranger and ranger led talks.

**Supporter**  
Share the results. Proceeds from sales and donations have paid for the printing of this visitor's guide, select exhibits, and many other educational projects and services at Wrangell-St Elias and around Alaska.

Be a part of it all by becoming a member at any of our bookstores, online, or by calling 1-866-AKPARKS. Members receive a 15% discount on purchases and other exclusive benefits.

[www.alaskageographic.org](http://www.alaskageographic.org)

# The North District/Nabesna Area



Skookum Volcano/NPS

THERE IS MUCH TO SEE IN THE NABESNA AREA, LOCATED IN THE NORTHERN END OF the park. Here you will find the site of Alaska's last great gold rush, wildlife, stunning scenic views, historic homesteads, and connections to World War II. Come experience the outdoor recreation opportunities set within geologic formations and stunning views of the Wrangell Mountains.

The 42-mile Nabesna Road is set within spectacular scenery and offers multiple recreational opportunities including hiking, camping, backpacking, flightseeing, and wildlife-viewing. Amenities and window services are available at the Slana Ranger Station during the summer. We hope you enjoy your visit!

## Camping along the Nabesna Road

Some of the best camping areas in the northern part of the park are along the Nabesna Road. Here you will find pull-outs along the roadside that are perfect for a small RV, camper trailer, or tent camping. Please note that many of these sites are close to the road and can be a little dusty when traffic passes. The Nabesna area also hosts the only National Park Service owned and operated campground in the park. The Nabesna Road boasts spectacular scenery, majestic views of the Wrangell Mountains, wildlife viewing, and hiking opportunities.

### Rufus Creek, mile 6.1

This site has a picnic table and is located next to a creek. There are no vault toilets.

### Kettle Lake, mile 16.6

This site has a picnic table and a view of the Wrangell Mountains. There are no vault toilets. Follow game trails across the tundra to a small lake.

### Dead Dog Hill, mile 17.8

This site has a picnic table and a vault toilet. There are views of the Mentasta Mountains and wetlands for viewing migrating and nesting waterfowl.

### Rock Lake, mile 21.8

This site has a picnic table and a vault toilet. It looks out on a mountain lake and the Wrangell Mountains.

### Kendesnii Campground, mile 27.8

This camping area, which was constructed in 2012, has 10 designated campsites, each with a picnic table and a fire ring. There are vault toilets available. Each site can accommodate a small to medium RV or other vehicles. It is free and open year-round, but access is limited in winter. No reservations are required. The area is surrounded by trees and shrubs, and far enough from the road to avoid dust. There are picnic sites near the shoreline of the lakes and short hiking trails. Enjoy canoeing, viewing waterfowl, and fishing for grayling. An Alaska state fishing license is required for all anglers age 16 or older.

### Jack Creek, mile 35.3

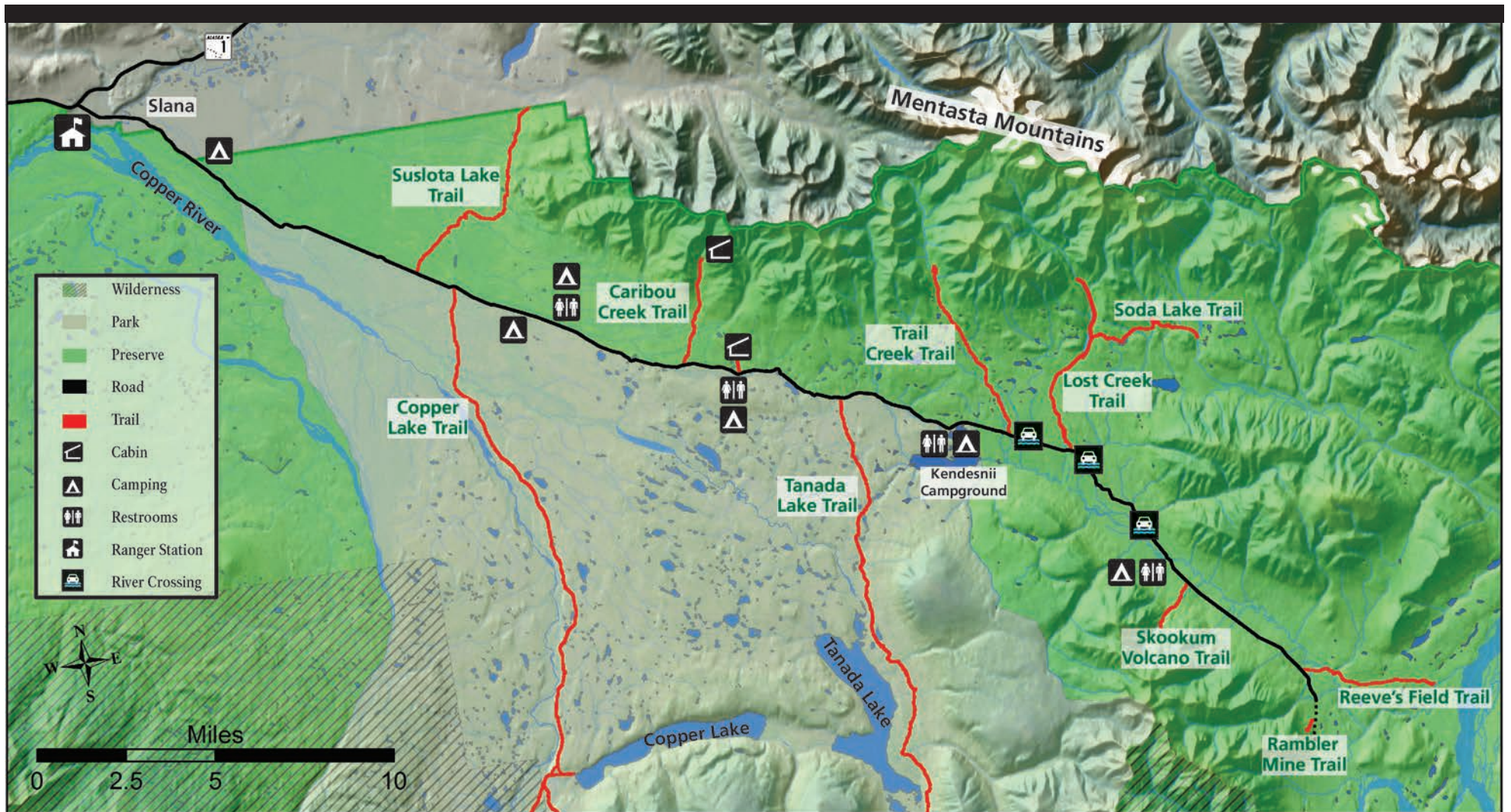
This area has picnic tables and a vault toilet. There is room for up to three vehicles. The road beyond mile 29 receives less traffic so this is often a place to camp in solitude. There are game trails to follow and you may be able to view Dall's Sheep.

## Popular Day Hikes in the Nabesna Area

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL LENGTH	DIFFICULTY	TRAIL DESCRIPTION	TRAILHEAD LOCATION
Caribou Creek Trail	3 miles/4.8 km one way	Easy/Moderate	The trail gains about 800 feet (0.2 km) with some stream crossings along the way. Trail may be muddy.	Trailhead is located at mile 19.2 on the Nabesna Road. Parking is located about 1/4 mile from the trailhead at mile 18.9.
Trail Creek Trail	6 miles/9.6 km one way	Easy/Moderate	The trail gains some elevation as it goes through woods and then enters a creek drainage. After 6 miles, trail becomes a route to a pass. Moderately difficult due to walking in rocky creek bed and climbing tundra hills. Total elevation gain to the pass: 3,000 feet (1 km).	Trailhead is located at mile 29.8 on the Nabesna Road, where Trail Creek crosses the road. Parking is along the road. Do not park within the creek drainage.
Lost Creek and Soda Lake Trails	7 miles/11.2 km one way	Easy/Moderate	The trail gains some elevation as it goes through woods and then enters a creek drainage. After 7 miles, trail becomes a route to a pass. Moderately difficult due to walking in rocky creek bed and climbing tundra hills. Total elevation gain to the pass: 3,000 feet (1 km).	Trailhead is located at mile 31.2 on the Nabesna Road, just after Lost Creek crosses the road. Parking is located at the trailhead.
Skookum Volcano Trail	2.5 miles/4 km one way	Moderate/ Difficult	The trail gains about 1,800 feet (0.6 km) with some difficult footing along the way. The trail climbs through geologic formations with stunning views. Look for Dall's Sheep.	Trailhead is located at mile 36.2 on the Nabesna Road. Parking is located at the trailhead.

All trails in the Nabesna area eventually turn into routes. You are welcome to explore these routes, but please be prepared for remote hiking where help may not be readily available. More detailed descriptions of each trail are available on the park website or at park visitor centers. Hikers should be well-prepared and carry food, water, map, extra clothing, rain gear, and sun protection. Many trails require route-finding and hiking may become strenuous. Bears may be present. You must properly contain your food. Do not leave food or backpacks unattended at any time. Carrying bear spray is recommended. However, please learn how to properly use bear spray if you choose to carry it. The removal of artifacts from historic sites and the destruction of historic buildings are prohibited. **Please respect Private Property; watch for signs to avoid trespassing.**

# Nabesna Road Guide



THE NABESNA ROAD OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE INTERIOR ALASKA AND THE NORTHERN AREAS of the park. The road begins at mile 60 of the Glenn Highway (Tok Cutoff), and soon becomes gravel as it winds 42 miles into the park. The drive is an adventure with views of the Wrangell, Mentasta, and Nutzotin Mountains. Along the way you'll find campsites, scenic vistas, hiking routes, and opportunities for wildlife viewing. But you won't find many people here. So if you like taking a road less traveled, the Nabesna Road may be right for you.

Before beginning your trip, stop at the Slana Ranger Station to **check on current road conditions**. Generally, the road is passable by two-wheel drive vehicles. At times, high-clearance and four-wheel drive are recommended beyond Mile 29, where you encounter the first of three creek crossings. Following a heavy rain, these intermittent stream crossings can become impassable due to high water and deep channels. Please be aware that private property adjoins many parts of the road. Ask a ranger for information on area services.



The Nabesna Road Audio Tour is a narrated tour that is available to download from the QR code or from the park website to play on your phone while driving:

[nps.gov/wrst/learn/photosmultimedia/audio-tours.htm](https://nps.gov/wrst/learn/photosmultimedia/audio-tours.htm)

## Nabesna Road Basics

- Begins at mile 60 of the Glenn Highway (Tok Cutoff), in Slana, AK.
- 42 miles, allow 1.5 hours EACH WAY.
- **Unpaved and maintained by the Alaska state DOT. Washouts are common.**
- This is a remote area with **limited** services. **FUEL** is available in Chistochina (28 miles south) or in Tok (64 miles north). **NO FUEL** is available in Slana.
- Drive slowly, carefully, and courteously.
- We recommend that you carry a full-sized spare and an adequate jack.
- **Private land** adjoins many parts of the road. Please respect private property.
- Cell phone coverage is very limited.

**⚠️** This road was built to access the Nabesna Gold Mine, which operated from 1925 - 1945. Limited, small scale mineral extraction has occurred since then. The Nabesna Mine and its structures are privately owned and situated on private property. Please respect this private property. Park visitors should avoid the Nabesna Mine area altogether. **The mine tailings extend onto adjacent park lands and these tailings contain high levels of metals and are acidic. Surface waters and the ground in the area contain contaminants of potential concern (COPCs) including arsenic, cadmium, chromium, mercury, nickel, and lead. Environmental exposure may be hazardous - Wash hands and pet's paws for your safety.**

**🚙** Off Road Vehicles (ORVs) are permitted in Wrangell-St. Elias. Recreational ORV users must obtain a permit. The following trails are open to recreational ORVs: Trail Creek Trail, Lost Creek Trail, and Soda Lake Trail. All trails are open to subsistence ORVs (limited to local, rural residents).

The Nabesna Road begins at mile 60 of the Tok Cutoff. Look for the mile-marker posts and follow along with this guide.

## Mileposts

### 0.2 Slana Ranger Station

**🏠** Information about the park, road conditions, local area, permits and the Alaska Geographic bookstore. Window services or Dial-a-Ranger (907) 822-7401.

### 1.0 Original Slana Roadhouse (private property)

The building is visible on the south side of the road. This roadhouse was built in the 1930s, but there has been a structure here since 1912. It served travelers on the trail to Chisana, the site of Alaska's final gold rush. It is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The roadhouse is privately owned and is not open to the public.

### 1.7 Slana River Access

Rafters often begin trips down the Copper River here. The confluence of the Copper River and the Slana River is less than a mile downstream. The Slana River begins in the Mentasta Mountains, seen to the north.

### 2.7 Change in Land Status - Entering Federal Land

On the south side of the road, the boundary of the "National Preserve" begins.


#### 4.0 Junction with “4-Mile” Road

This road leads into the Slana Settlement, created in 1983 when the BLM opened over 10,000 acres to homesteading. It was one of the last opportunities for homesteading on federal land. Eight hundred claims were filed, but most were soon abandoned. Many tried to live in hastily-built cabins and tents, but Alaskan winters took their toll with temperatures down to -60°F (-51 C). Jobs were scarce and the climate was not suited to farming. Today, about 50 people live in the settlement on private property.

#### 5.6 Change in Land Status - Preserve to Park

The north side of the road is “National Preserve” whereas the south side is “National Park.” Sport hunting is allowed in the preserve but not in the park. Subsistence hunting by local, rural residents is allowed in both the park and preserve.


#### 6.1 Rufus Creek Wayside

 This is a primitive camping spot and rest area. There are no vault toilets here.

#### 11.2 Suslota Lake Trail

This trail is primarily a subsistence ORV trail and is generally not suitable for hiking.

#### 12.2 Copper Lake Trail


 Only the first 2.5 miles of this 12-mile trail are generally suitable for hiking, then the trail crosses Tanada Creek and is primarily a subsistence ORV trail.

#### 15-18 Views of the Wrangell Mountains




Over the next few miles, enjoy the splendid views of the Wrangell volcanoes. Mt. Sanford (16,237 ft./5 km) is the tallest mountain that can be seen from the Nabesna Road. To the left of Sanford is the rounded, icy dome of Mt. Wrangell (14,163 ft./4.3 km). It is the park’s only active volcano and occasionally steam can be seen rising from the summit. Wrangell’s broad sloping profile is an excellent example of a shield volcano. The jagged summits of Tanada Peak to the left of Mt. Wrangell and Capital Mountain to the right of Mt. Sanford are actually eroded remnants of once massive shield volcanoes.

#### 16.6 Kettle Lake Wayside


 This is a primitive camping spot and rest area. There are no vault toilets here.

#### 17.8 Dead Dog Hill Rest Area


 This is a great site to take a break for wildlife viewing or bird watching. There are views of wetlands, a small lake, and boreal forest. Moose are seen here and caribou migrate through this area in the spring and fall. There is a vault toilet at this primitive camping site and rest area.

#### 18.9 Parking for the Caribou Creek Trail

#### 19.2 Caribou Creek Trail

 Park at the gravel pit at mile 18.9. The easy/moderate hiking trail is approximately 3 miles long and offers views of the Wrangell Mountains, lakes and rivers.

#### 21.8 Rock Lake Wayside

 This is a primitive camping spot and rest area. There is a vault toilet here. The easy hiking trail is approximately 1/4 mile long and departs from the north side of the road.


#### 24.5 Tanada Lake Trail

This trail is primarily a subsistence ORV trail and is generally not suitable for hiking.

#### 24.7 Watershed Divide (3,320 ft)

You have reached the highest point on the Nabesna Road, and crossed a major watershed divide. All waters flowing west from the divide are carried by the Copper River to the Gulf of Alaska. All waters flowing east enter the Nabesna River, and out of the park to the Tanana River, the Yukon River, and ultimately the Bering Sea.

#### 27.8 Kendesnii Campground

 Ten campsites, picnic tables, fire rings, and two vault toilets provide a nice spot for camping. Campground is first-come, first-served and is free. There are picnic sites near the shoreline of the lakes and short hiking trails. Enjoy canoeing, viewing waterfowl, and fishing for grayling.

#### 28.1 Change in Land Status - National Preserve


Both sides of the road are now “National Preserve.”

**BEFORE YOU CONTINUE:** Road conditions can deteriorate beyond this point. Trail Creek (Mile 29.8), Lost Creek (Mile 31.2), and Boyden Creek (Mile 34.3) may be flowing across the road. Generally, these creek beds are dry, but during spring run off or following prolonged rain, high-clearance and/or four-wheel drive may be necessary. Carefully evaluate all crossings




before driving across.


#### 29.8 Trail Creek Trail

 Trailhead is located where Trail Creek crosses the road. Parking is along the road. Do not park within the creek drainage. The trail is approximately 6 miles long and allows quick access to the backcountry. The trail ends within the creek drainage, but you can continue hiking another 4 miles to reach the pass.


#### 31.2 Lost Creek and Soda Lake Trails

 Trailhead is located just after Lost Creek crosses the road. Parking is located at the trailhead. The trail is approximately 7 miles long, but you can continue hiking another 3 miles to the pass. Trail gives you scenery, alpine tundra, flowers, and the chance to see Dall’s Sheep.


#### 35.3 Jack Creek Rest Area

 Several nice campsites with picnic tables and fishing along Jack Creek. There is a vault toilet at this rest area. Look for Dall’s sheep in this area. These bright white, wild sheep inhabit high altitude ridges, meadows, and extremely rugged terrain. Sheep use these areas for feeding, resting, and to escape predators. Although they usually stay at higher elevations, in this area they are known to descend to springs and mineral licks. Careful observers can usually spot small flocks on the mountainsides over the next few miles.

#### 36.2 Skookum Volcano Trail

 The Skookum Volcano Trail/route is 2.5 miles one-way to a beautiful high pass. This trail leads through an extinct, deeply eroded volcanic system with fascinating geology. The elevation at the trailhead is 3,000’ and rises to an elevation of 4,800’ at the pass. Hikers can explore other routes or expand this hike into a multiple-day trip.

#### 40.2 Reeve’s Field Trail

 This 4.2 mile trail leads to views of the Nabesna River. The Reeve’s Field airstrip is no longer here, but this area holds important historical significance. During 1941, trucks hauled equipment from Valdez to a rustic strip along the river. Pilot Bob Reeve cut everything into pieces, loaded it into his Boeing Trimotor, flew them to Northway, about 40 miles north, and then had them re-welded. This effort was organized to build the Northway Airport, a critical stopover in ferrying lend-lease aircraft to the Soviet Union during WWII. By November, he had transported all the materials for a full-scale airport. It was good timing, since one month later, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor gave Northway new relevance, and it became a critical element in the defense of Alaska.


#### 42.0 The End of the Road!

The maintained portion of the Nabesna Road ends at the Devil’s Mountain Lodge, which is private property. Please respect this property and their privacy. Do not park on the airstrip, which is private property.

#### 42.25 Parking

Approximately a 1/4 mile beyond the lodge, there is a gravel public parking area on the right. Explore further by foot or bike travel only. Do not drive any further since the road is not maintained and very difficult for a tow truck to pull out your vehicle.

#### 42.5 Rambler Mine Trail

 Approximately 1/4-mile past the parking area, a trail leads south towards the remains of the abandoned Rambler Mine. The one-mile trail is steep, but the effort rewards you with superlative views of the Nabesna River and Nutzotin Mountains.

# The South District/Kennecott Area



Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark/NPS

THE KENNECOTT MILL TOWN AND MINES ARE EXTRAORDINARY HISTORIC RELICS from America's past. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 and designated as a National Historic Landmark since 1986, Kennecott is considered the best remaining example of early 20th Century copper mining.

Kennecott is set within spectacular scenery and offers multiple recreational opportunities including hiking, camping, backpacking, flightseeing, and glacier-trekking. You are invited to explore the mill town on a self-guided walk or tour the buildings with a NPS-concessionaire. For information or to help plan your visit, you can Dial-A-Ranger at (907) 205-7106. Amenities, shuttles, and visitor services are only available during the summer. We hope you enjoy your visit!

## Camping along the McCarthy Road & in Kennecott

Most camping is located at the beginning and end of the McCarthy Road. There are no National Park Service operated campgrounds in this area of the park, although you will find privately-owned campgrounds. The McCarthy Road boasts spectacular scenery, views of the Copper and Chitina Rivers, wildlife viewing, and historic structures. There is private property located along the McCarthy Road and within Kennecott. Please take care not to camp or hike on private property.

### Copper River Campground, mile 1.6

This is a non-Park Service primitive campground. It is located just after crossing the bridge. This area has 12 sites for a fee, picnic tables, fire pits, and vault toilets.

where you can camp for a fee (primitive camping), or there is a nearby developed private campground with designated sites.

### Kennicott River, mile 59.4

This is the end of the McCarthy Road. There are privately-owned parking areas

### Jumbo Creek Camping Area, 1.4 miles past Kennecott Mill Town

This primitive camping area has no amenities. It is reached via foot travel only. Water is available from nearby streams and there are bear boxes for storing food.

## Popular Day Hikes in the Kennecott Area

TRAIL NAME	TRAIL LENGTH	DIFFICULTY	TRAIL DESCRIPTION	TRAILHEAD LOCATION
Wagon Road	4.5 miles/7.2 km one way	Easy/Moderate	This road takes you through aspen/spruce forest while it parallels the road from McCarthy to Kennecott. You may hike one way and opt to take a shuttle back. Respect private property and watch for local vehicles.	Trail departs from McCarthy. Follow the road north from the McCarthy Museum toward Kennecott for approximately 1,000 feet (0.3 km). Take the first turnoff to the left.
Root Glacier Trail	2 miles/3.2 km one way	Easy/Moderate	This trail takes you to the Root Glacier. Trail crosses seasonal streams - use caution when crossing. If hiking on the glacier, crampons are highly recommended.	The trail departs from Kennecott Mill Town, located 5 miles from McCarthy. After about 1.5 miles, turn left to reach the Root Glacier.
Bonanza Mine Trail	4.5 miles/7.2 km one way	Difficult/Strenuous	The trail gains 3,800 feet (1.1 km) in 4.5 miles with some difficult footing along the way. There are stunning views once above treeline and abandoned mine buildings.	Trail departs from Kennecott Mill Town, located 5 miles from McCarthy. Trail spurs off from the Root Glacier Trail. About 1/2 mile from the visitor center, stay to the right to get to Bonanza/Jumbo Mines. Approximately one mile up the hill there is a directional sign to either the Bonanza or Jumbo Mines; stay to the <b>right</b> to reach Bonanza Mine.
Jumbo Mine Trail	5 miles/8 km one way	Difficult/Strenuous	The trail gains 3,300 feet (1 km) in 5 miles with some difficult footing along the way. There are amazing views once above treeline and abandoned mine buildings.	Trail departs from Kennecott Mill Town, located 5 miles from McCarthy. Trail spurs off from the Root Glacier Trail. About 1/2 mile from the visitor center, stay to the right to get to Bonanza/Jumbo Mines. Approximately one mile up the hill there is a directional sign to either the Bonanza or Jumbo Mines; turn <b>left</b> to reach Jumbo Mine.
Erie Mine Trail	4 miles/6.4 km one way	Easy/Moderate	This trail takes you through aspen/spruce forest, along the edge of the Root Glacier. There are great views of the Stairway Ice Fall. This trail does NOT take you to the actual Erie Mine - it ends 3,000 ft below the mine.	Trail departs from Kennecott Mill Town, located 5 miles from McCarthy. Trail spurs off from the Root Glacier Trail. After about 1.5 miles, continue straight past the turnoff to the Root Glacier.

All visitors must park their vehicles at the Kennecott River footbridge. Walk, bike or take a shuttle to McCarthy or Kennecott to access these trailheads. More detailed descriptions of each trail are available on the park website or at park visitor centers. Hikers should be well-prepared and carry food, water, map, extra clothing, rain gear, and sun protection. Most trails take you into remote areas and the hiking may become strenuous. Many trails require route-finding. Bears may be present. You must properly contain your food. Do not leave food or backpacks unattended at any time! Carrying bear spray is recommended. Removal of artifacts from historic sites is prohibited.

**⚠️ Heavy metals such as lead, arsenic, mercury, and copper are consistently present in the mine tailings and throughout the site. These are harmful to your health and especially to children under the age of 6 and pregnant women. Stay on established roads and trails. Avoid skin contact with the ground, artifacts, buildings, wood remnants, and tailings that may contain hazardous heavy metals. Wash hands before eating or putting anything in your mouth. Wash harvested berries before eating. Also, clean your pet's paws for safety.**

## End of the McCarthy Road

### McCarthy Road Information Station - Mile 58.6

Posted information about the Kennecott area can be found here. This site has day-use parking, restrooms, and the West Glacier trailhead. No overnight parking or camping is allowed. This information station is usually not staffed.

### Parking

All vehicles must park at one of the designated parking lots near the end of the McCarthy Road. Vehicle access into McCarthy and Kennecott is for local residents only. Free public day-use parking is available at the McCarthy Road Information Station, located a half-mile from the end of the road. Day-use and overnight parking is available for a fee in one of the private parking lots located closer to the footbridge at the end of the road.

### Camping & Dining Options

There are a few private campgrounds located near the end of the road and some dining options can be found in McCarthy. Contact businesses for info.

## End of the McCarthy Road

Services within the last 1/2 mile of the road, west of the Kennicott River



## McCarthy and Kennecott

### Kennecott River Footbridges

There are two footbridges that span the Kennicott River at the end of the McCarthy Road, which provide access for visitors into McCarthy. Before parking, drop off passengers and luggage directly in front of the footbridge. There you will find hand carts to help haul your luggage across the river.

### Shuttle Services

Once you cross the first footbridge over the Kennicott River, there are private shuttles that takes passengers into the town of McCarthy and/or to Kennecott mill town. Typically, the shuttle runs daily, once or twice an hour during the summer, although shuttle times may vary. The shuttle does not operate in winter. You are welcome to walk or ride your bike, but be advised that from the Kennicott River, it is a half-mile to McCarthy and 5 miles to Kennecott. There are NO Park Service-operated shuttles in McCarthy or Kennecott.

### Lodging

There are accommodations at the end of the McCarthy Road west of the footbridge and within the towns of McCarthy and Kennecott. Lodging on the other side of the Kennicott River footbridges generally provide transportation for their guests. Contact the lodges directly to arrange shuttle service.

### ATVs and Motorcycles

It is against state law to take any type of motorized vehicle across the Kennicott River footbridges. ATV access to Kennecott is limited to private property owners and their guests in the process of accessing their property. If you've brought your personal ATV or motorcycle, please leave it parked near the end of the McCarthy Road.

### Camping

There are no established NPS campgrounds in McCarthy or Kennecott. There is a primitive camping area with no amenities located about 1.4 miles north of Kennecott town. Please Dial-A-Ranger at (907) 205-7106 for camping info.

### Dining Options & Potable Water

There are limited options for obtaining food on the west side of McCarthy, in downtown McCarthy, and in Kennecott. There are no drinking fountains in McCarthy or Kennecott, so it is best to bring your own water.

### Kennecott Visitor Center

The Kennecott Visitor Center, in the historic Blackburn School building, is located in the beginning of the Kennecott mill town. Because of limited services due to the covid pandemic, the visitor center is not open. For assistance, please Dial-a-Ranger at (907) 205-7106.

### Kennecott Mill Tours

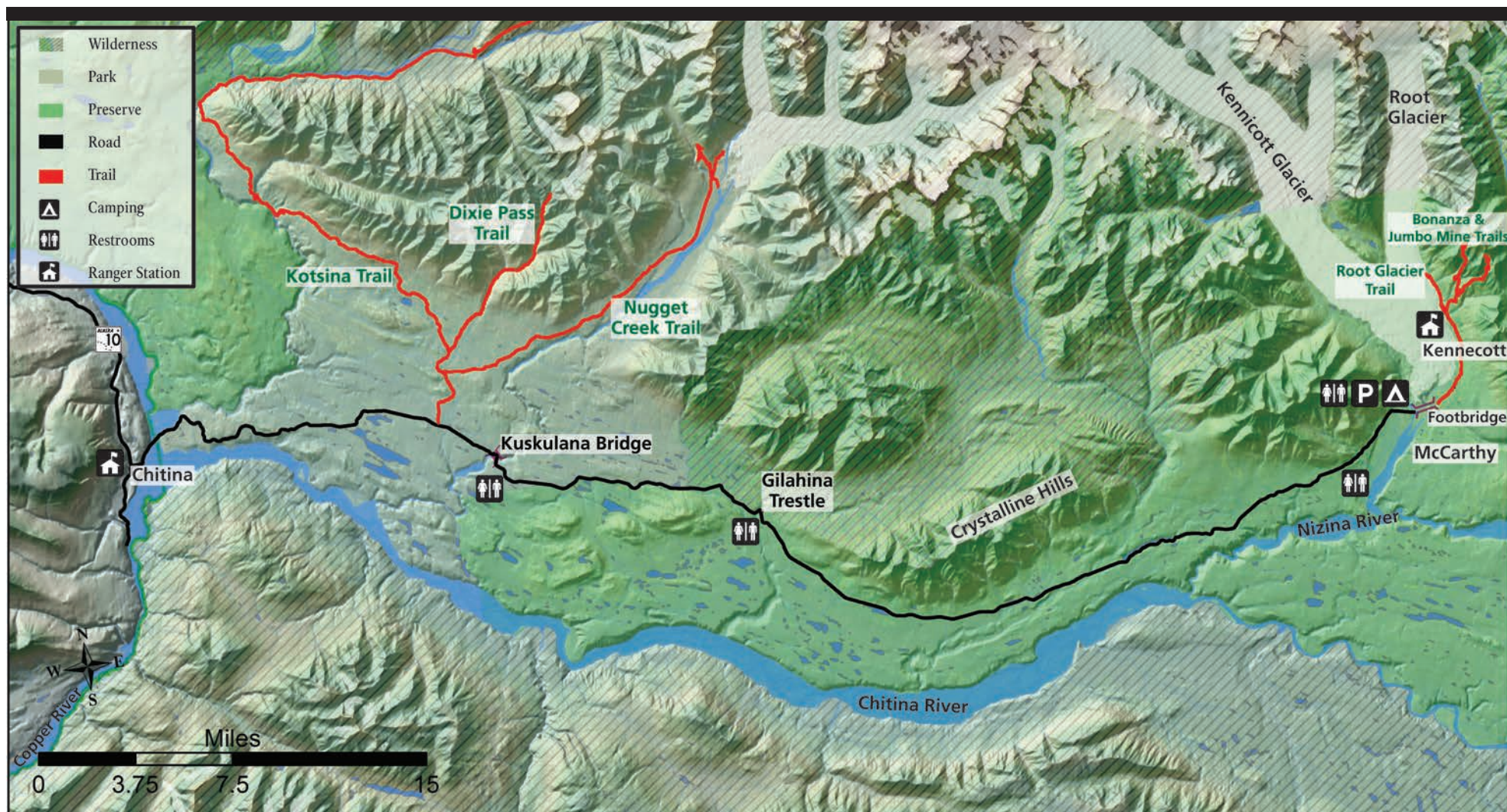
The only way to see inside the historic Kennecott mill building is through a tour by a private company. Contact the NPS-consessionaire, St. Elias Alpine Guides, at [www.steliasguides.com](http://www.steliasguides.com) for more information.

## McCarthy and Kennecott

Services east of the Kennicott River



# McCarthy Road Guide



THE 60-MILE MCCARTHY ROAD winds deep into the heart of Wrangell-St. Elias. Once the gateway to mining operations, it is now your gateway to spectacular scenery, vast wilderness, and adventure. For those willing to leave the pavement behind, this road provides access to many natural and historic wonders of our largest park.

Today's road originated in 1909 as a railway constructed to support the Kennecott Copper Mines. When large scale mining ended in 1938, most of the rails were salvaged for scrap iron. In 1971 a new bridge was constructed over the Copper River and the rail bed was covered with gravel, creating today's surface of the McCarthy Road.

Narrow and winding, the road still reflects its railway origins. In places, remnants of railroad ties may surface along with the occasional spike, creating unexpected hazards. Although traffic and weather often result in ruts and washboarded surfaces, under normal summer conditions, high-clearance vehicles can make the trip. Please allow faster vehicles to pass by using turnouts. Due to the narrow road and limited visibility, we do not recommend that large RVs drive on the McCarthy Road.

The McCarthy Road Audio Tour is a narrated tour that is available to download from the QR code below or from the park website to play on your phone while driving:

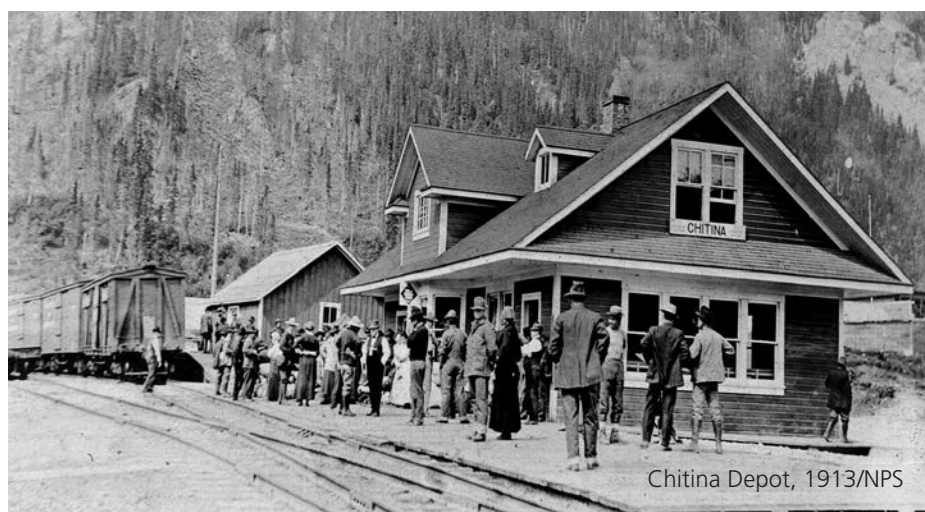
[nps.gov/wrst/learn/photosmultimedia/audio-tours.htm](https://nps.gov/wrst/learn/photosmultimedia/audio-tours.htm)



## McCarthy Road Basics

- Begins at mile 33 Edgerton Highway, in Chitina, AK.
- 60 miles, allow 2 hours EACH WAY.
- **Unpaved and maintained by the Alaska state Dept. of Transportation. Rough road conditions and potholes are common.**
- This is a remote area with **limited** services. **FUEL** is available in Kenny Lake and Chitina. **NO FUEL** is available in McCarthy.
- Drive slowly, carefully, and courteously.
- We recommend that you carry a full-sized spare and an adequate jack.
- **Private land** adjoins many parts of the road and in the McCarthy/Kennecott area. Please respect private property.
- Cell phone coverage is very limited.

The McCarthy Road begins in Chitina, AK. Look for the mile-marker posts and follow along with this guide




Chitina Depot, 1913/NPS

## The Town of Chitina

Pronounced, "Chit-Na," this railroad town sprang to life in 1910. Chitina was once bustling as the major stopover and service point for the trains that carried ore from Kennecott to ships in Cordova. The railroad is gone, but today Chitina is busy during the summer fishing season and serves as a gateway to the park. Restrooms and informational panels can be found at the downtown wayside. There are restaurants, shopping, lodging and gasoline (no diesel, credit cards only).

## Chitina Ranger Station

 This log cabin, which was constructed in 1910 by the Ed S. Orr Stage Company to house its local superintendent, serves as an enduring reminder of Alaska's colorful history. One of Chitina's oldest surviving buildings, it was rehabilitated by the National Park Service and now serves as a visitor contact station. Directions: Upon entering town, turn left at Hotel Chitina, go to end, on left. For visitor information, Dial-a-Ranger at (907) 823-2205.

## State Wayside - The Beginning of the McCarthy Road

This is the start of the McCarthy Road. It is a paved pull-out with vault toilets and exhibit panels.




## Mileposts

### 1.4 The Copper River

As you drive across the Copper River Bridge, you can see the confluence of the Copper and Chitina Rivers. Several small pull-outs provide views of the rivers. Do not stop in the middle of the bridge for photos. After the bridge, the road becomes gravel. The large snow covered mountain visible to the north is volcanic Mount Drum (12,010'), part of the Wrangell Mountains.

### 1.6 Copper River Campground - south side of the road

 This is a private primitive campground. It is located just after crossing the bridge. This area has 12 sites, picnic tables, fire pits, and vault toilets.

### 1.6 Copper River Easement & Fishwheels - north side of the road

An easement is an area of land where visitors are granted the right to cross private property. The National Park Service has an easement here where you can access and view the Copper River. Please follow the easement markers and respect the private property that you are crossing. Visitors can use a small site along the Copper River where they may park a vehicle, load and unload rafts, and temporarily camp for up to 24 hours. This is an excellent place to view the river and to witness Alaskans catching red, silver, and king salmon with dipnets and fishwheels.

### 5.0 Chitina River Scenic Vista

Stop here and enjoy the view. The Copper River and its tributaries (including the Chitina River) drain an area of approximately 24,000 square miles. Much of this drainage basin lies within the park and 35% of parklands is covered by glaciers. Because of this glacial influence, high water in the park's large rivers occurs during the snowmelt of spring, rain and summer hot spells that cause rapid ice melting. Low water usually occurs in winter when everything is frozen.

### 10.1 Strelna Lake

A pull-out on the north side of the road provides access to a 1/3-mile trail to Strelna Lake. The Alaska Department of Fish & Game stocks this lake with rainbow trout, although you can find other fish here as well.


### 10.6 Silver Lake

A short trail on the south side of the road provides access to Silver Lake for fishing. The Alaska Department of Fish & Game stocks this lake with rainbow trout, and you may find other fish as well.

### 12.0 Sculpin Lake

A pull-out on the north side of the road provides access to a 1/4-mile trail to Sculpin Lake. The Alaska Department of Fish & Game stocks this lake with rainbow trout.

### 14.5 Kotsina Trail - Backcountry Trailheads

 The Kotsina Trail departs from the north side of the McCarthy Rd and provides access to backcountry hiking routes. Take this trail 2.5 miles to the Nugget Creek trailhead or 3.8 miles to the Dixie Pass trailhead. The first part of this trail is a road, but it is not maintained and may not be passable for low clearance vehicles. It is a better option to park your car at the McCarthy Road and hike up the road to the trailheads.

### 15.9 Change in Land Status - Entering Federal Land

The road is now entering land managed by Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve.

### 17.2 Kuskulana River Bridge

A spectacular achievement, the Kuskulana Bridge was constructed during the winter of 1910. Imagine riding high in a heavily loaded ore train across the two icy rails. Perched 238 feet above the raging Kuskulana River, this single-lane railroad bridge is for many the most hair-raising part of the entire drive. The muddy Kuskulana River reflects its origins from melting glaciers that drain Mt. Blackburn.

This is a one-lane bridge. Watch for oncoming traffic. **Please do not stop in the middle of the bridge for pictures.** We encourage you to park in the pull-outs at either end of the bridge and get out of your vehicle to enjoy the views or walk under the bridge.


### 17.3 Kuskulana Bridge Wayside

This rest area has vault toilets and is a gravel pull-out.

### 29.0 Gilahina Trestle Wayside

This wooden structure was originally 890 feet long and 90 feet high, required one-half million board feet of timber, and was completed in eight days in the winter of 1911. Due to the rugged landscape, over 15% of the entire railway was built on trestles such as this. This rest area offers vault toilets and a gravel pull-out. There is a short 1/2 mile hiking trail that departs from this rest area. Please do not climb on the trestle.

### 34.8 Crystalline Hills and Trail

 These hills on the north side of the road are an excellent place to see Dall's Sheep. Take a moment to pull over and look up into the hills. Watch for bright white spots on the hillsides - these may look like patches of snow, but they could actually be sheep! If you need to stretch your legs, try the 3.2 mile loop hike.

### 44.0 Change in Land Status - Entering Non-Federal Land

The road is entering privately-managed land. Stay on road, respect private property.

### 45.5 Long Lake

Each year, an average of 18,000 sockeye salmon struggle up the silty Copper and Chitina Rivers to spawn in this lake. This is a unique run; salmon begin entering the lake as late as September and spawning continues until April in some years.

### 55.2 State Wayside

This wayside is a gravel pull-out and has vault toilets and exhibit panels.

### 58.0 Change in Land Status - Entering Federal Land

The road is now entering land managed by Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve.

### 58.6 McCarthy Road Information Station

This National Park Service information station contains posted information (not staffed). Day-use parking is available as well as vault toilets, updated bulletin boards, and the West Glacier trailhead. No overnight camping or parking is permitted.

### 59.4 Kennicott River & Parking - The End of the Road!

You've made it to the end of the road, but in many ways, your adventure is just beginning. All visitors must leave their vehicles at the end of the road and walk, bike, or take a shuttle into McCarthy and Kennecott.


### McCarthy - 1/2 mile from the footbridge

Homesteaded in 1906, McCarthy quickly grew into a lively community with a story all its own. McCarthy served as the supply and recreation stop for the entire Kennecott mining district. Town history is well portrayed by the local museum and guide services. Today, McCarthy retains much of its original flavor. Accommodations, dining, guide services, flightseeing, and air taxis are some of the services available here.


### Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark - 5 miles from the footbridge

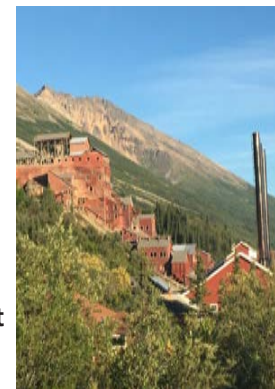
Like a time capsule, the impressive structures and artifacts left behind when the mines were depleted represent an ambitious time of exploration, discovery, and technological innovation. Currently, the National Park Service is stabilizing and rehabilitating many of the old buildings.

### Kennecott Visitor Center

 Located within the historic landmark. This is where most hiking trails depart - trails lead to the Root Glacier and up the mountains to spectacular views and historic mining structures. Because of limited services due to the covid pandemic, the visitor center is not open. For assistance, Dial-a-Ranger at (907) 205-7106.

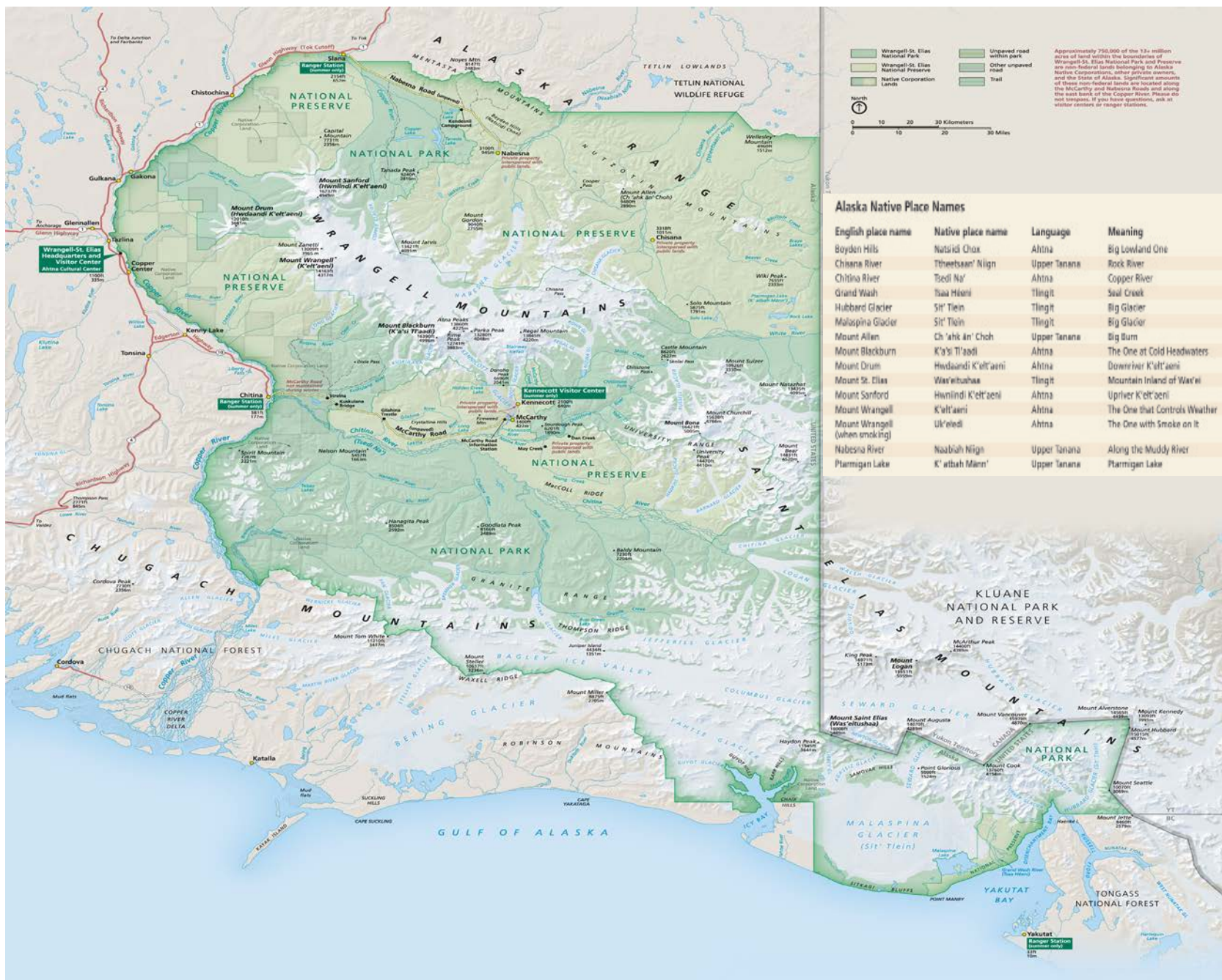
### Jumbo Creek Camping Area - 1.4 miles from Kennecott

 This primitive camping area has no amenities. It is reached via foot travel only. Water is available from nearby streams and there are bear boxes which are required for storing food.



Kennecott mill town/NPS

## Map of entire park



### **The following Wrangell-St. Elias locations will have visitor services this summer:**

**Slana Ranger Station:** May 24th-September 25th; 9:00am-5:00pm; window services; Dial-A-Ranger at (907) 822-7401; and Alaska Geographic sales.

**Copper Center:** May 14th-September 19th; 9:00am-5:00pm; Crown of the Continent film shows in the theater hourly; Exhibit Hall open; window services; Dial-A-Ranger at (907) 822-7250; and Alaska Geographic sales.

**Chitina Ranger Station:** May 28th-September 6th; 9:00am-5:00pm; window services; and Dial-A-Ranger at (907) 823-2205.

**Kennecott:** May 28th-September 17th; 9:00am-5:00pm; Crown of the Continent & Kennecott Mill films shown in the General Store/Warehouse; exhibit buildings open; and Dial-A-Ranger at (907) 205-7106.