

McCarthy Creek

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve



Access: Trail begins in downtown McCarthy, just past the historic hardware store.

Distance: 5 miles one-way, 10 miles round-trip

Time: 4-6 hours round-trip

Maps: Trails Illustrated map of Wrangell-St. Elias, USGS McCarthy 1:63,360 (B6)

Difficulty: Moderate

Highlights: Scenery, solitude, easy access

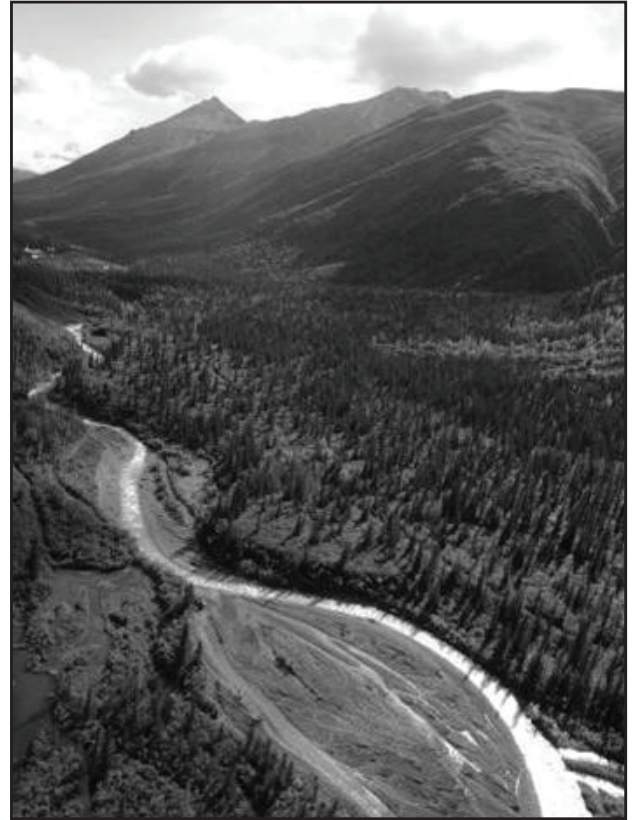
Route: To access McCarthy Creek, walk through town on the main road, past the historic hardware store. When the road ends, turn left onto a short trail to the river. Cross McCarthy Creek via a small footbridge. Climb up the bank to a gravel road. The trail starts at the end of the first steep switchback (approximately 200 yards from the footbridge).

Trail leads through the McCarthy Creek creekbed. After about three miles the river has washed out the route. Walk up and over the slump paralleling the creek to avoid crossing the river. The trail ends at the river, between an old cabin and the area where the original route crossed the river.

At this point, you will need to cross the river or turn around. **Warning:** McCarthy Creek is actually a fairly large river. It is possible to cross at low water but may be treacherous at higher water volumes. Use your best judgment and turn around here if the river looks dangerous. If you chose to cross the river, continue about 300 yards where you will cross back. Shortly thereafter, a trail leads you through an original tunnel left from the mining era. Return via the same route.

Hazards: Floods frequently wash out portions of this route. Use your best judgment regarding safety and current conditions. Creek crossing can be very hazardous at high water volumes. Be prepared to turn back early if necessary.

Notes: If continuing into the upper reaches of the McCarthy Creek drainage, please be aware that private property exists. Please respect private property by not trespassing. Hikers planning multiple-day backpacking trips in this area should seek additional information regarding private property locations.



McCarthy Creek Trail and Route

