

Root Glacier/Erie Mine Trail

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve



Access: Trail departs from Kennecott Mill Town. You can access Kennecott from McCarthy - walk the road between McCarthy and Kennecott (an extra 4.5 miles), take the commercial shuttle, or ride a bike. **This trail does NOT access the Erie Mine.**

Distance: 4 miles round-trip from Kennecott to the glacier or 8 miles round-trip to the Erie Mine tram cables.

Time: 2-6 hours (or longer, if desired)

Maps: USGS Maps, McCarthy 1:250,000, McCarthy (B-6), (C-6) 1:63,360

Difficulty: Easy to Moderate. Terrain is relatively level with moderate elevation gain and loss.

Highlights: Glacier viewing, mining artifacts, views of Mt. Blackburn, Regal Mountain, and Donaho Peak.

Route: From the Kennecott Visitor Center, walk through the Kennecott Mill Town, north towards the Root Glacier. About a half-mile beyond the visitor center, the road will split. Stay straight. (The right hand trail leads to Jumbo and Bonanza Mines.) The trail will soon cross over Bonanza Creek and Jumbo Creek and then wind its way through the lateral moraines of the Kennicott and Root Glaciers.

Approximately 1.5 miles after leaving Kennecott, the trail reaches the Root Glacier access trail. (Primitive campsites, along with an outhouse and food lockers, are available in this area.) To access the glacier, turn left at the sign and follow the trail as it winds down the moraine to the toe of the glacier. This trail crosses Amazon Creek, which is a seasonal stream. Depending on recent rainfall or spring melt, you may need to cross this stream and your feet may get wet. If you decide to walk on the glacier, use extreme caution. The ice can be very slippery and dangerous. The use of crampons is strongly recommended.

The Erie Mine Trail continues past the turn to the Root Glacier, running parallel to the glacier for approximately 2.5 more miles. The trail continues in and out of brush and along the top of the moraine, above the glacier. Towards the end of this trail, the Erie Mine Bunkhouse building will be visible high above on the hillside, to the right of the trail. Near the end of the trail, the Root Glacier is below on the left, and the Stairway Icefall is further up valley. **Please note that this trail does NOT take you to the Erie Mine. It ends approximately 3000 feet below the mine and bunkhouse.**

Hazards: The Root Glacier can be very slippery and dangerous. Crampons are strongly recommended. Avoid walking along the edge of Root Glacier as rotting ice and swift, cold water are potentially dangerous. Bears are present along the entire route. For maximum safety, travel in groups, be noisy when you are walking, and never give any food to a bear.

Notes: If you are camping at the Jumbo Creek Camping Area or Donaho Basin, please ensure that your food is stored in the bear-resistant food boxes. You may also borrow Bear Resistant Food Containers from the Kennecott Visitor Center.



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