

Park History

The creation of Chugach State Park is a remarkable example of the power of a good idea and grassroots organization. In the mid-1960s the encroaching city was beginning to take its toll on the mountains above Anchorage. Traditional access roads to the mountains were being blocked by homestead sales. Growing concern of these threats came to a head with the tentative sale of logging rights to the Bird and Indian valleys. In 1969 citizens sprang into action and formed the Chugach State Park Ad Hoc Committee. The group spoke with one voice to preserve the rugged, natural skyline of Anchorage, and gained broad support from the community. The committee lobbied for the available 490,866 acres in hopes of securing a large chunk of land for the proposed park. They got every inch.

In 1970 Governor Keith Miller signed the bill creating Chugach State Park. Thanks to the efforts of concerned and organized citizens, the wild Chugach will always be part of the Alaskan experience.

For More Information:

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Potter Section House
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www.alaskastateparks.org
csp@alaska.gov
Like "Chugach State Park" on Facebook

- **Alaska State Trails maps**
www.alaskastatetrails.org
- **50 Hikes in Chugach State Park**
Shane Shepherd & Owen Wozniak
- **55 Ways to the Wilderness in Southcentral Alaska**
Helen Nienhueser & John Wolfe
- **Naturalist's Guide to Chugach State Park**
Jenny Zimmerman
- **Add "Chugach State Park" as a Facebook friend**

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation provides outdoor recreation opportunities and conserves and interprets natural, cultural, and historic resources for the use, enjoyment, and welfare of the people.



Turnagain Arm
For additional information visit
www.alaskastateparks.org



Welcome to Chugach State Park



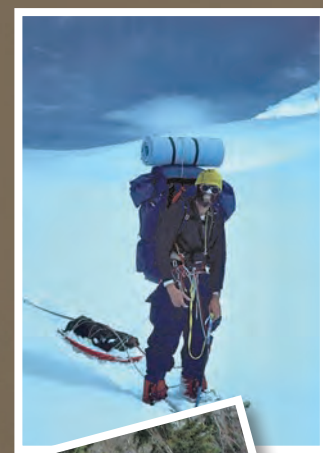
Beyond the foothills at the city's edge lies Chugach State Park—a half-million acres of accessible hiking, biking, skiing, hunting, camping, wildlife viewing, snowmachining, packrafting, kayaking, ATVing, climbing, and much more.

Here you can pick berries along a high alpine meadow under the midnight sun, or watch a 6-foot-tall bore tide rush past at 15 mph from Bird Point.

The park's varied terrain is the perfect backdrop for your next adventure—just choose a starting point, grab your essentials, and let the fun begin!



- ATVing
- Backpacking
- Berry Picking
- Biking
- Bird Watching
- Camping
- Canoeing
- Climbing
- Dog Mushing
- Exploration
- Fishing
- Glacier Traversing
- Hiking
- Horseback Riding
- Hunting & Trapping
- Kayaking



- Mountaineering
- Photography
- Picnicking
- Public-Use Cabins
- Packrafting
- Paragliding
- Relaxation
- Running
- Skiing
- Snowmachining
- Snowshoeing
- Solitude
- Tracking
- Volunteering
- Whale Watching
- Wildlife Viewing

Bird Point

Wildlife

Wildlife of all shapes and sizes can be found throughout the park, from high-alpine marmots, to reclusive, forest-dwelling lynx. Keep your cameras and binoculars handy—you never know what you'll see.



Marmot
Steve Neel

Moose

Moose generally ignore humans. Still, every year moose cause more injuries in Alaska than bears. These situations can be avoided by showing moose a little courtesy. If a moose approaches you, BACK OFF IMMEDIATELY. If you see a moose's ears laid back and back hairs raised (much like a dog or a cat), it's warning you to stay away. An agitated moose may also lick its lips. If you see a moose calf and no mother, be careful—you may have accidentally stepped between them and this is not a good place to be.



Moose

Bears

Alaska is bear country, but that doesn't mean you have to be "bearanoid." Follow these tips and you'll make our parks safer for both humans and bears.

- Make noise. You don't want to surprise a bear.
- Buddy up. You are safer in a group in bear country.
- Use your senses and stay aware. Do not use headphones.
- Move cautiously, especially along creeks, on blind corners, and in highly vegetated areas. High speed = high chance of surprise
- Keep your pets on a leash or leave them at home.
- Carry bear spray, have it readily available, and know how to use it.
- Don't feed bears. Handle food, fish, and other attractants responsibly.
- If you're camping, know the safe ways to cook and store your food.
- Pay attention to posted signs about bear activity.
- Never run from a bear!
- Learn more about bear behavior at www.alaskabears.alaska.gov.



Brown Bear

Need to Know

Ready to conquer the Chugach? Not so fast—there are a few things you need to know first.

Outdoor Skills

This brochure does not tell you everything you need to know about venturing into the Chugach. Get informed, take a class, or bring an experienced friend.

Tell a friend where you're going, who you're going with, and when you'll return. This is VERY important if something unexpected happens.

Mudflats

Mudflats in the intertidal areas along Turnagain Arm are dangerous. While the mudflats may invite exploring, their seemingly solid surface can suddenly become like quicksand. People and animals trapped in the mud have drowned in the rapidly rising tides, despite rescue efforts. **Please stay off of the mudflats.**

Avalanches

Avalanches can occur anywhere, but gullies, steep snow-covered slopes, and areas below steep ridges are particularly susceptible. The majority of avalanches happen after heavy, sustained snowfalls, although they can happen at any time of year. Get informed of the warning signs, techniques, and gear needed to protect yourself from avalanche danger. Take an avalanche class.



Hypothermia

A stiff breeze can be as deadly as anything in the Chugach if you are unprepared. Hypothermia, or cooling of the body's temperature, can happen any time of year. Hypothermia directly affects the brain and causes poor judgment. Victims are often unable to help themselves, so know the symptoms: intense shivering, fatigue, stumbling, slurred speech, and irrationality.

To prevent hypothermia: dress in layers (avoid cotton) with wind and water resistant outerwear; wear a hat; snack often; drink plenty of water; and stay dry by removing layers if you begin to sweat.

Learn how to treat hypothermia. This knowledge could save your life or the life of a friend.

River Forging

Many trails in the Chugach have un-bridged river crossings that have to be forded. When crossing, keep your waist and chest straps unbuckled, and NEVER go barefoot. Be prepared and learn the techniques for fording before you get to the backcountry.



Giardia

The Chugach's sparkling mountain streams might look clean, but they could be contaminated by *Giardia*. Also known as "beaver fever," this

parasite can be carried by any mammal and found in nearly any water source—even late summer snow banks. Thankfully, *Giardia* is easy to avoid. You can purify drinking water using a pump filter, chemical treatments, or by boiling for two minutes.

Perilous Plants

There's no poison ivy in Alaska, but we do have cow parsnip. This large perennial contains a chemical that can make skin hypersensitive to sun, causing a painful, blistered burn. Wear long pants and sleeves when hiking through cow parsnip—especially on sunny days.



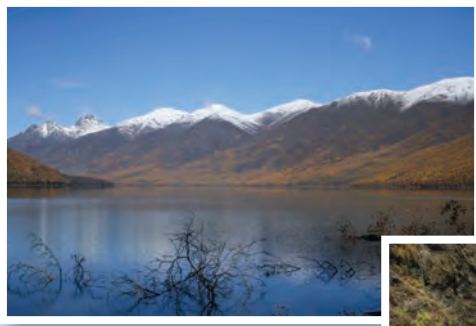
Eagle River

Chugach State Park

There are plenty of ways to get into the wild throughout Chugach State Park—here are a few highlights.

Eklutna Lake 1

Flanked by the towering Chugach Mountains, Eklutna Lake's mirror-like surface stretches for miles. You can hike, bike, boat, snowmachine, ski, sightsee, and ATV. Numerous developed and backcountry camping options make this an ideal location to set up base-camp and explore the park. **Directions:** Take the Glenn Highway to the Eklutna exit at milepost 26.5.



Eklutna Lake



Thunder Bird Falls

Thunder Bird Falls 2

The 200-foot-tall Thunder Bird Falls can be viewed at the end of a pleasant one-mile hike. The trail passes through birch and cottonwood groves bordering Eklutna Canyon. In the winter, the falls often freeze, producing a natural ice sculpture. **Directions:** Take the Glenn Highway to the Thunder Bird Falls exit at milepost 25.2.

Eagle River Nature Center 3

Nestled among 7,000-foot peaks, the Eagle River Nature Center offers a variety of programs and activities for the general public, as well as a cabin and two yurts for rent. Ten miles of trail are maintained throughout the year for public use and guided nature walks are given seasonally. For more information visit www.ernc.org or call (907) 688-0908. **Directions:** Take the Glenn Highway to the Eagle River Loop exit at milepost 11.6. Turn right on Eagle River Road.



Eagle River Nature Center



South Fork Eagle River Trail

South Fork Eagle River Trailhead 4

If you're in the mood for an invigorating day hike, the South Fork Eagle River Trail is just the place. This 5.5-mile (one way) hike traverses a beautiful alpine valley, crosses a boulder field, and ends on a high ridge overlooking Eagle and Symphony lakes—a pair of pristine mountain pools each with their own distinct color. **Directions:** Take the Glenn Highway to the Eagle River Loop exit at milepost 11.6. Turn right on Hiland Road and follow signs.



Moose at Glen Alps
Photo by Eberhard Brunner



Flattop

Glen Alps Trailhead 5

The Glen Alps Trailhead has something for everyone: access to the Hillside Trail System; views of Turnagain Arm and the Anchorage Bowl; mountain biking on the Powerline Pass Trail; and Alaska's most popular summit, Flattop Mountain. **Directions:** Off the Seward Highway, take O'Malley Road toward the mountains. Turn right on Hillside Drive. Turn left on Upper Huffman Road and follow signs.



Potter Section House

Potter Section House State Historic Site 6

The Potter Section House is Chugach State Park's main headquarters and is a great place to get information and your annual park pass. The restored Alaska Railroad section house and historic site offer outdoor interpretive displays and vintage railroad hardware. **Directions:** Take the Seward Hwy to milepost 115.2.



Mountain Goat, Turnagain Arm



Dall's Sheep, Turnagain Arm

Turnagain Arm Trail 7

The Turnagain Arm Trail parallels the coastline from Potter to Windy Corner. The 9.4-mile (one way) trail leads through spruce forests, birch and alder groves, and flower-filled meadows. Thanks to its south-facing slope, the trail is clear of snow in early spring and a favorite first hike of the year. Scenic overlooks provide views of the Chugach Mountains to the north and the Kenai Mountains across Turnagain Arm. **Directions:** Take the Seward Highway to trailheads at milepost 115.1, 111.9, 108.1, or 106.7.



Bird Point

Bird Point 8

Take in the sights at Bird Point, a popular wayside along Turnagain Arm. A large viewing area with interpretive displays and telescopes gives a panoramic view of Turnagain Arm. Bears, Dall's sheep, mountain goats, and beluga whales are commonly seen. This is also a great place to observe the bore tide, a rare, wave-like tidal flow that does not occur anywhere else in the United States. The wayside provides access to the Gidwood to Indian bike path, a scenic 13.3-mile (one way) paved path that parallels the Seward Highway. **Directions:** Take the Seward Highway to milepost 95.



Chocolate lily

Crow Pass 9

The Crow Pass Trail from Girdwood to Eagle River follows the Iditarod National Historic Trail route and is considered to be one of the best hikes in Chugach State Park. This challenging, 25-mile trail crosses a variety of terrains and offers diverse sights along the way, including glaciers, waterfalls, wildflowers, wildlife, gorges, sapphire tarns, and stunning alpine vistas. **Directions:** Girdwood—Take the Seward Highway and turn left onto the Alyeska Highway. Turn left onto Crow Creek Road. Eagle River Nature Center—Take the Glenn Highway to the Eagle River Loop exit at milepost 11.6. Turn right on Eagle River Road.

Public-Use Cabins

There are two public-use cabins at Eklutna Lake, two at Bird Creek, and one public-use cabin and three yurts at Eagle River Nature Center. Cabins have a fee and reservations are required. For more information about public-use cabins visit <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/cabins/>.



Serenity Falls Hut, Eklutna

Campgrounds

Each campground in Chugach State Park has wooded campsites with fire rings, picnic tables, and nearby water and latrines. Campground hosts can answer questions, and firewood may be available near the host's site for a small fee. All campgrounds are ADA compliant.

- 1 Eklutna Lake Campground
- 2 Eagle River Campground
- 3 Bird Creek Campground



Fees

Fees are charged for the use of some developed facilities in Chugach State Park. Fees can be paid at the time of use, or frequent visitors can save money by purchasing an annual parking pass. Annual passes can be purchased at the Chugach State Park Office (mile 115 Seward Hwy) and at the DNR Public Information Center (550 W 7th Ave, Suite 1260, Anchorage). Passes can also be ordered online at <https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/Passes.cfm>.