

VALDEZ, ALASKA

Summer Trail Map Guide



Valdez Parks & Recreation

City of Valdez

PARKS & RECREATION

www.ci.valdez.ak.us/parks

TRAIL MAP BOOKLET - UPDATED : APRIL 2015



Helpful Hints for Hikers

DRESS IN LAYERS:

Weather can change and temperatures drop quickly. It's always wise to be prepared! Be sure to wear appropriate foot gear and pack extra socks. In this damp climate, cotton can be your worst enemy. Moisture-wicking and breathable yet waterproof fabrics work best. Good choices would be; polypropylene, light wool, and Gore-tex.

TELL SOMEONE WHERE YOU ARE GOING:

Be sure someone knows where you are going, how long you plan on being gone for, and check in with them once your venture is completed.

HIKE IN A GROUP:

Hiking in numbers is best. Conversation helps to keep wild game away and you never know if you'll need a helping hand during your woodland adventure.

BRING ENOUGH WATER & STAY HYDRATED:

Packing plenty of water is essential. Alaskan streams might appear to be wonderful drinking water, but there is always the risk of bacterial ingestion which can lead to extreme illness.

BRING A FIRST AID KIT:

You never know when an accident will happen!

PROTECT YOUR SKIN:

Alaska is known for its powerful rays so be sure to wear and bring along sun screen. Bug repellent is a must-have to keep mosquitoes away and help provide you with a much more comfortable trek.

STEER CLEAR OF THESE PLANTS:



Heracleum Lanatum

Common Names:

Cow Parsnip, Wild/Eskimo Celery or Poochki

If you find this plant while hiking, be careful about brushing against it. The sap produced by this perennial herb contains phototoxins. Skin contact with the combination of sunlight creates painful blisters. If you do get the sap on your skin, wash it off as soon as possible. Cow Parsnip is common in many parts of Alaska.



Oplopanax Horridus

Common Names:

Devil's Club or Alaskan Ginseng

Their berries hold a toxin and are not edible. Walking through devil's club is an ugly prospect, especially in shorts, thin pants, or open toed shoes. The small thorns can become embedded under your skin causing sharp pain in the effected area. This species usually grows in moist, dense forest habitats and thrives in Valdez.

Special Thanks:

A special thanks and recognition needs to be extended to Jim Shephard, a long-time Valdez resident. Jim's tireless dedication and effort have made this publication possible. Without Jim spending hours of his own time restoring, mapping, marking, measuring and recording the information contained in this booklet, our Valdez Trails would not be of the high quality they are, so enjoy! And if you happen to see Jim, tell him "Thanks!"

If you are interested in volunteer opportunities on our beautiful trails, please call Parks and Recreation.

USEFUL CONTACTS:

Police, Fire, EMS
9-1-1 (Emergency)
835-4560 (Dispatch)

Parks and Recreation
(907)835-2531



[Facebook.com/ValdezAlaskaFun](https://www.facebook.com/ValdezAlaskaFun)

Valdez Convention and Visitor's Bureau

www.valdezalaska.org
(907)835-INFO



CAUTION:

TRAIL CONDITIONS MAY VARY - HIKE AT YOUR OWN RISK.

TRAILS MARKED WITH THE PARKS & RECREATION
LOGO ARE MAINTAINED BY THE CITY OF VALDEZ
PARKS MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT.





DOCK POINT TRAIL

TIME: 30 min. R.T.
DIFFICULTY: Easy
DISTANCE: .83 mi. R.T.
ELEVATION GAIN: 50 ft



0 105 210 420 630 840 Feet



Description

The Dock Point Trail, although rather short, is one of the prettiest for its size. Hikers can enjoy close up views of a grass and wildflower meadow from the comfort of a dry boardwalk. Spruce trees and ground dogwood offer excellent photographic opportunities. The West and East overlooks provide views of Harbor Cove and the Port of Valdez. An eagle's nest located on one of the Mineral Creek Islands can be seen from the north side of the trail. Bring the whole family and the dog, this trail is a must!



Directions:

This trail begins at the end of a large parking and picnic area located off Kennicott Ave across the road from the Small Boat Harbor's boat launch ramp. After going past the gate, turn right at the hillside trail sign and hike up a short, steep hill. The trail will then drop down to a small meadow from which two boardwalks lead to the East and West Overlook viewing platforms. The trail then gradually descends, curving around until it connects to a lower road where it remains flat all the way back to the gate. As the trail is circular, one may elect to turn left at the hillside trail sign and hike the loop clockwise to avoid the first steep climb.



Distance & Time:

DISTANCE: 0.83 miles round trip
TIME: 30 minutes round trip
DIFFICULTY: Easy

Leave No Trace....

Take only Photographs,
Leave only Memories.



OVERLOOK TRAIL

TIME: 25 min. R.T.
DIFFICULTY: Easy
DISTANCE: 0.4 mi. R.T.
ELEVATION GAIN: 75 ft





Description

This short, recently improved hiking trail is a quick easy way to experience breathtaking views of Town and the Port of Valdez. Wooden steps and railings make the steep sections of this trail easier to navigate. Between the panoramic views, hikers walk through a fireweed and salmonberry field and a willow—alder scrub forest. There is a picnic pavilion at the top of the hill, excellent for a picnic lunch or to rest and take in the fresh ocean air. If you hike only one trail in Valdez, choose this one.

Directions:

This trail begins at the northwest corner of the Northern Parking lot of the Civic center. There are several quick flights of wooden stairs until the ridge of the Civic Center hill is reached. From here there are excellent views of the Port of Valdez, Ruth Pond, and Civic Center. Following the ridge to the Overlook picnic shelter, the view opens up towards the mountains as well and there are stunning views of the town of Valdez. From the picnic shelter, you go down a short flight of stairs and enter a willow-alder scrub forest. From here the trail is pretty flat and until it bends backwards toward the civic center and descends to the northeast corner of the Northern Parking lot.



Distance & Time:

DISTANCE: 0.4 miles round trip

TIME: 25 minutes round trip

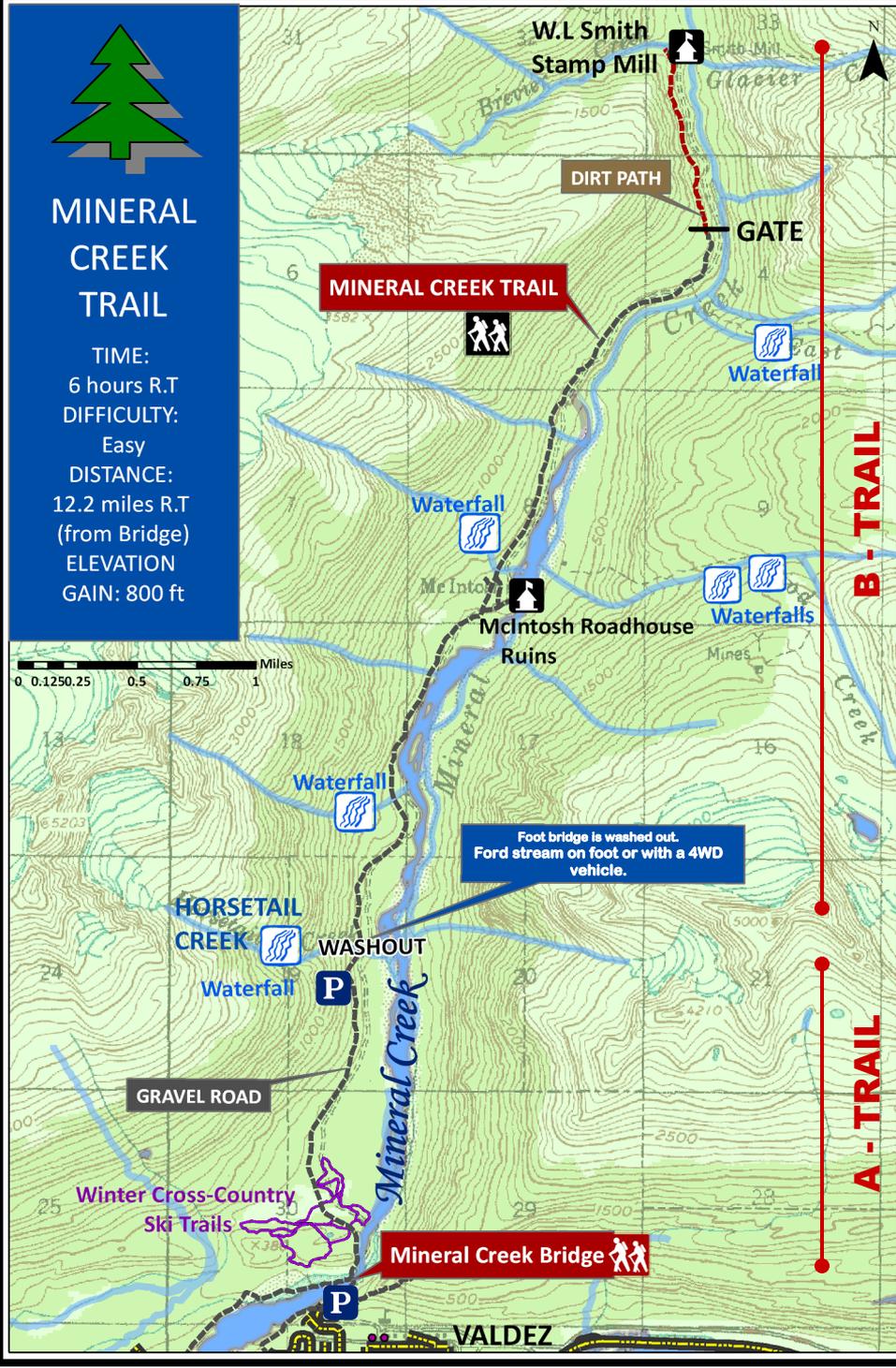
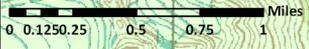
DIFFICULTY: Easy





MINERAL CREEK TRAIL

TIME:
6 hours R.T
DIFFICULTY:
Easy
DISTANCE:
12.2 miles R.T
(from Bridge)
ELEVATION
GAIN: 800 ft



MINERAL CREEK TRAIL



DIRT PATH

GATE

Waterfall

Waterfall

McIntosh Roadhouse Ruins

Waterfalls

Waterfall

Foot bridge is washed out. Ford stream on foot or with a 4WD vehicle.

HORSETAIL CREEK Waterfall

WASHOUT

GRAVEL ROAD

Winter Cross-Country Ski Trails

Mineral Creek Bridge



VALDEZ

B - TRAIL

A - TRAIL





Description:

Mineral Creek Valley is one of the most scenic valleys in all of Valdez. A rough gravel road begins at the upper end of Mineral Creek Drive and runs for a distance of approximately 5.5 miles before ending at a gate, after which the trail becomes a dirt footpath. With mountains rising to over 5,000 feet and cascading waterfalls on each side, the scenic vistas are spectacular even on a cloudy day. It is a beautiful walk or bicycle - just be aware that motorized traffic is allowed and many locals enjoy driving their 4-wheelers down the gravel road portion of the trail. It is

also possible to ford the washout 1.5 miles up the road at Horsetail Creek with a 4WD vehicle but rockslides further along the trail are impassible. A parking area before the Horsetail Creek waterfalls makes this a good place to stop driving and continue on foot. Two miles past Horsetail Creek, a short trail to the right leads down to the river where a small tram was used years ago to service the McIntosh Roadhouse (circa 1912), which was located on the other side of Mineral Creek. The main trail continues up the valley 2.7 miles to the W.L. Smith Stamp Mill. This mill was built in 1913 and used in conjunction with the Mountain King Mine, which was located about 3,000 feet above sea level on the east side of Mineral Creek.

Directions:

The "trail" part of the Mineral Creek Trail begins 5.5 miles from the Mineral Creek Bridge where a gate marks the end of the gravel road and the beginning of a dirt path. From the gate, the trail leads up the valley for approximately eight tenths of a mile before reaching the W.L. Smith Stamp Mill. Care should be used along portions of this trail as the foot path is narrow at times. As the canyon opens up, evidence of recent gold mining activities can be seen along the banks of the river. Various old trails lead up both sides of the valley to the once active mines.

Distance & Time:

DISTANCE: 12.2 miles round trip (from Mineral Creek Bridge)

TIME: 6 hours round trip (on foot)

DIFFICULTY: Moderate; If driving, 4-wheelers recommended after Horsetail Creek. No RV's or trailers. There are No Turn Around Points.





Description:

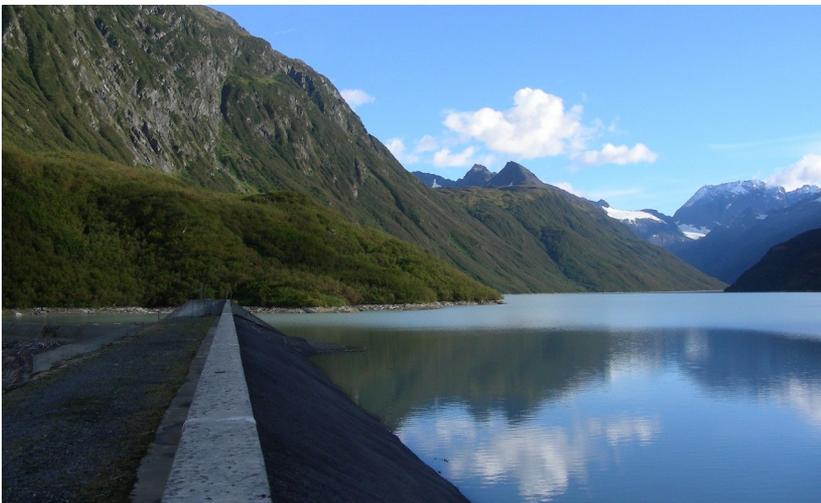
This trail was formerly known as the Solomon Gulch Trail. It begins in a beautiful coastal spruce forest and climbs steadily upward before it merges with the Trans Alaska Pipeline Service (TAPS) road (the actual pipeline is buried beneath the ground in this section). After crossing Solomon Gulch Creek it departs from TAPS and continues on up to Solomon Gulch. In 1915, an aerial tramway 5.25 miles long was put into operation and ran from the ocean beach, up Solomon Gulch, to the Midas Mine (Jumbo Claim). More than 1,000,000 pounds of copper was produced before closing down in 1919. The tram was powered by a local hydroelectric plant on Solomon Gulch. The present dam and power station were finished in 1982 and supply power to the Copper Valley areas during the summer months.

Directions:

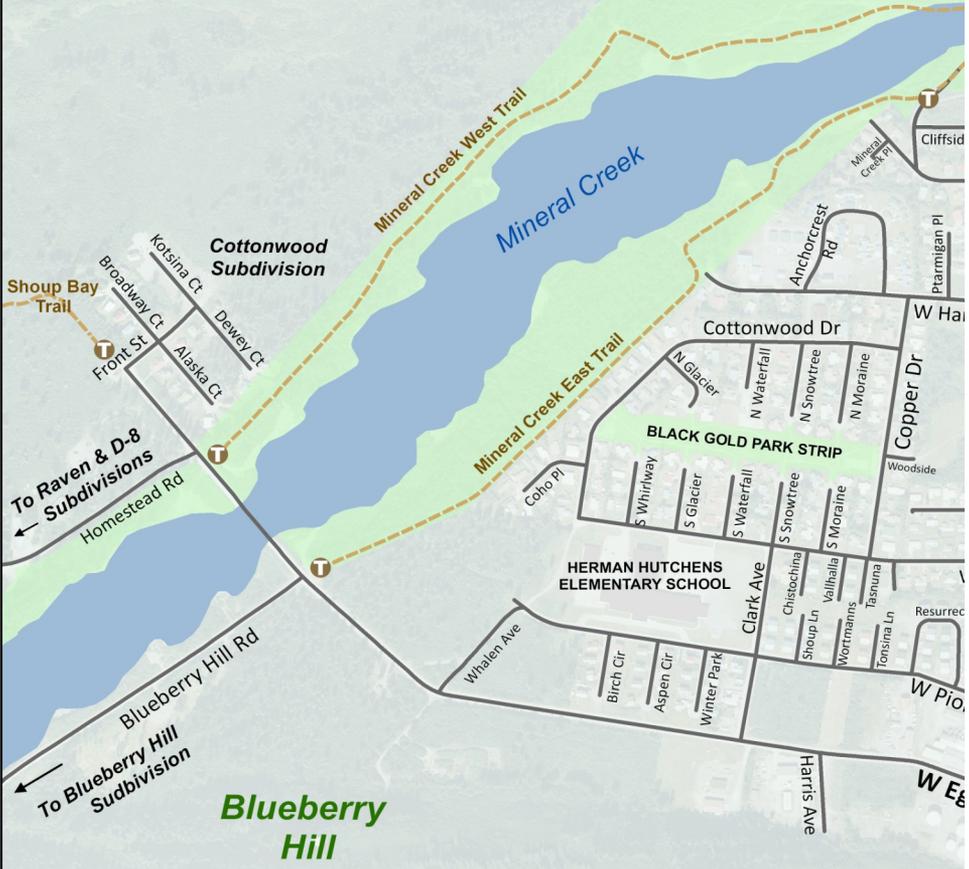
This trail begins 4.6 miles down Dayville Road just before Allison Point (parking is on the left). The trail starts up a steep hill before joining the Alyeska Pipeline Maintenance Road. There is a sign-in sheet at the gate. The trail follows the road 0.8 miles up another steep hill and then down to a bridge over Solomon Gulch. A short 0.13 mile trail to the left leads to a viewing area for the Port of Valdez. The large penstocks overhead carry water to the new power station at the bottom of the gulch and are made from surplus Trans Alaskan Pipeline pipe. After passing under the penstocks, follow the hiking trail sign and turn right (away from the road and up the hill). The trail winds through a pipe storage yard and crosses another bridge before reaching Solomon Lake and its two dams. By looking up the lake, the access road to the mines can be faintly seen on the left side. Interpretive signs are located along the way.

Distance & Time:

DISTANCE: 3.8 miles round trip
TIME: 2-2.5 hours round trip
DIFFICULTY: Moderate



City of Valdez STREET MAP

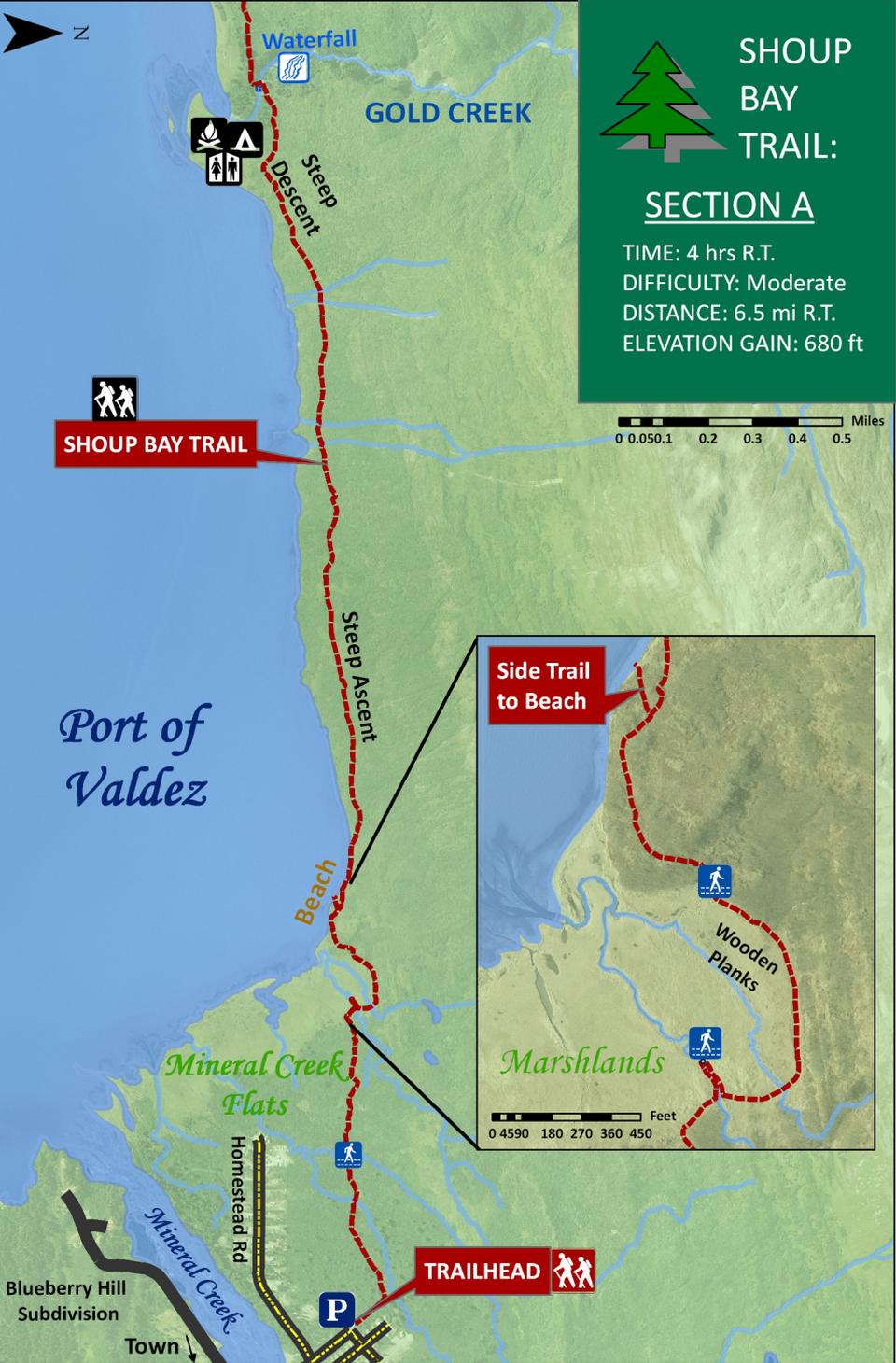


Legend

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Visitor Information Center / VCVB | 9 Valdez Museum |
| 2 Courthouse & State Offices | A Valdez Museum Annex (Old Town Exhibit) |
| 3 Ferry Terminal | + US Post Office |
| 4 Harbor Master | P Valdez Pool |
| 5 Library | 🚤 Boat Launch |
| 6 Maxine & Jesse Whitney Museum | H Hospital |
| 7 Peter Toth Indian Carving | ff Public Restrooms |
| 8 Teen Center | T Trail Head |
| 9 City Hall - Police & Fire Dept | ⊗ Pocket Plaza |

Town Mountain

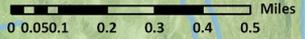




SHOUP BAY TRAIL:

SECTION A

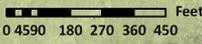
TIME: 4 hrs R.T.
DIFFICULTY: Moderate
DISTANCE: 6.5 mi R.T.
ELEVATION GAIN: 680 ft



SHOUP BAY TRAIL



Side Trail to Beach



TRAILHEAD

Port of Valdez

Mineral Creek Flats

Marshlands

Waterfall

GOLD CREEK

Steep Descent

Steep Ascent

Beach

Wooden Planks

Mineral Creek

Homestead Rd

Blueberry Hill Subdivision

Town



Description:

Section A of the Shoup Bay Trail runs from the trail head to Gold Creek Bridge. This scenic tract traverses the West Mineral Creek flats along the base of the Chugach Mountains, and down to Gold Creek. In 1914, the Budd Mining Company made preparations to start hydraulic operations in the basin above the falls as it was believed that gold existed in paying quantities. However, during the summer of that year, all work stopped because of a proposed change of ownership.

Directions:

The trail starts from the parking area located at the end of West Egan Drive. The path is wide and easy, with several bridges and boardwalks in places. Twisting through a thick alder forest , the trail opens out onto the grasslands after eight tenths of a mile, with a patchy boardwalk built around the edges to help with trail flooding. 1.1 miles from the trailhead, a short side trail to the left leads down to a beach with excellent views of the Alyeska Pipeline Terminal while the main trail begins a steep ascent along the side of the mountain. After crossing two small streams (caution: water levels change with weather conditions), the trail offers views of Valdez town to the east and Port Valdez to the south and west. A steep descent brings hikers to Gold Creek camping area. The trail to the left before the bridge leads to a fire pit, restroom and bear-proof food storage lockers.

NOTE: The Gold Creek riverbed is prone to flooding and the stream channel changes often. At times, the Valdez-side entrance to the Gold Creek Bridge can be difficult to reach.

Distance & Time:

- DISTANCE:** 6.5 miles round trip
- TIME:** 4 hours round trip
- DIFFICULTY:** Easy to Moderate





SHOUP BAY TRAIL: SECTION B

TIME:
10 hours R.T
DIFFICULTY:
Difficult
DISTANCE:
12.6 mi. R.T.
ELEVATION GAIN:
1100 ft

Gold Creek Bridge



SHOUP BAY TRAIL



Steep Ascent

DIVIDE

Cliff Mine

State Park Cabins

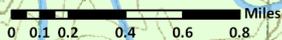


Kittiwake Rookery

Shoup Glacier

Shoup Bay

Port of Valdez



Description:

Section B of the Shoup Bay Trail runs from the Gold Creek Bridge to the north end of Shoup Bay. Starting from the bridge, the trail runs through a grove of spruce trees. The trail is both gradual and steep as it climbs to the divide overlooking Shoup Bay. Be aware that sections may be very muddy and difficult to follow at times due to overgrowth. Spectacular views of Shoup Bay and Shoup Glacier can be seen from the divide. The trail continues along the east side of Shoup Bay until an inner bay is reached. At this point there are views of the Kittiwake Rookery and State Park Cabins.



To reserve the State Park Cabins in Shoup Bay call: (907) 269-8400.

Directions:

This section of the trail begins at the Gold Creek Bridge. From the bridge take the right hand fork for 3.2 miles until the divide is reached. The trail is quite steep in places and, depending upon the weather, can be very muddy. It also can be difficult to follow due to the extensive growth of vegetation. Descending from the divide via a series of switchbacks, the trail runs along the east side of Shoup Bay. A section of stairs is reached 1.6 miles from the divide. The trail continues to descend, strategically marked with tall rock piles (cairns), and crosses Uno Creek. Though hikers may find themselves weaving through brush in this final section, the trail continues into the inner bay and cabins. The distance from the stairs to the inner bay is 1.4 miles.



Distance & Time:

DISTANCE: 12.6 miles round trip

TIME: 10 hours round trip

DIFFICULTY: Difficult



“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”

John Muir

History:

The original “Pack Trail” was a trail from the Port of Valdez to Eagle, Alaska built in 1898 by the US Army to provide an “All-American” route to the Klondike Goldfields. When the gold rush ended, the Army kept the trail open to connect its posts, Fort Liscum in Valdez and Fort Egbert in Eagle. By 1910, it had grown into one of the most important access routes to interior Alaska and at that time it was upgraded into a wagon road. These upgrades were overseen by US Army General Wilds P Richardson, for whom the final “Highway” was named. Because the wagon road and eventually the Richardson Highway were chosen to follow alongside the Lowe River instead of over the mountain, this part of the pack trail was abandoned. It remained forgotten for nearly 90 years until it was relocated and cleared in 1997 and 1998. The clearing was done with hand tools in order to retain something of the original spirit of 1899. Glimpses of the original telegraph line (installed in 1900) can still be seen along the trail. In the fall of 2006, severe floods damaged the trail and washed out several important bridges, as well as portions of the Richardson Highway through Keystone Canyon.

Directions:

The Southern Trailhead is halfway along the Old Richardson Highway loop, which begins approximately 12 miles from downtown Valdez. The trail head is on the north side of the road, setback in the trees. There is parking alongside the road by the trailhead or there is a wide, flat area that can be used for parking where the old Richardson Highway Loop and the Richardson Highway intersect. The trail begins with an ascension through a lovely Spruce and Hemlock forest. At 0.5 miles the path reaches a set of switchbacks which were built to maintain a suitable grade for pack horses and sled dogs. Views of the Lowe River valley can be observed from this location. Continuing through forest, the trail opens to the right with a view across Keystone Canyon. There is a short ascent before entering into the Horsetail Falls valley where the trail crosses a small footbridge and continues on to an overlook of Horsetail Falls. From here, the trail begins its descent. A guide rope assists hikers climbing up and down a short, very steep section of trail destroyed by multiple avalanches. After 2.3 miles the trail joins the Goat Trail. At this intersection, turn right and descend the remaining 0.3 miles to the Bridal Veil Falls parking area.

NOTE: One may elect to park at the Bridal Veil Falls viewing area and start at the North Trailhead, go up the steep section first and hike down to the Old Richardson Highway.

Distance & Time:

DISTANCE: 2.6 miles one way

TIME: 2 hours one way

DIFFICULTY: Easy to Moderate

(It is easier to start at Bridal Veil Falls and hike down to the Old Richardson Hwy).



GOAT TRAIL

TIME: 2 hrs R.T.

DIFFICULTY: Moderate

DISTANCE: 3.2 mi. R.T.

*1.6 mi. to S Viewing Area

ELEVATION GAIN: 500 ft



WAGON ROAD

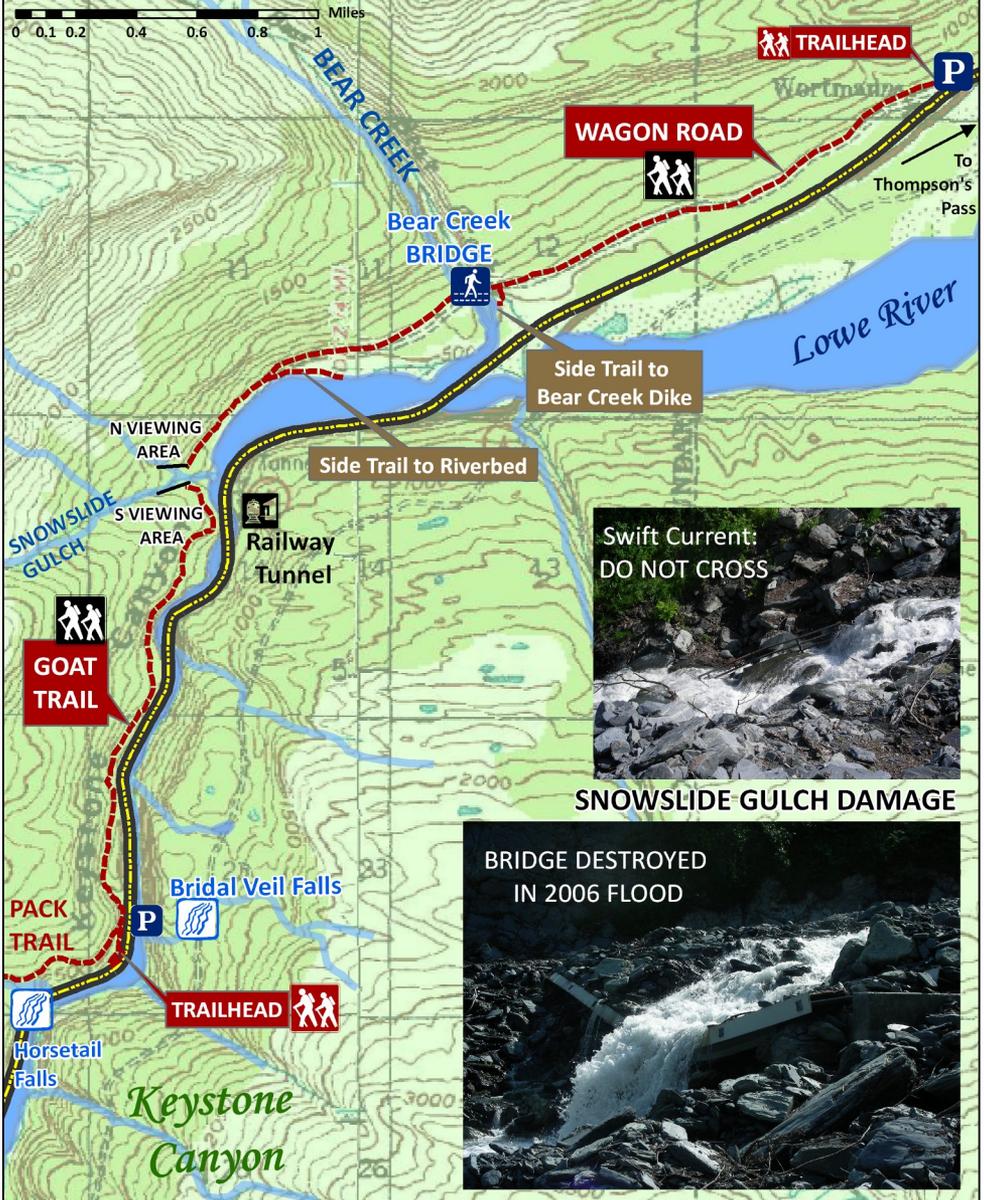
TIME: 4 hrs R.T.

DIFFICULTY: Easy

DISTANCE: 6.6 mi. R.T.

*3.3 mi. to N Viewing Area

ELEVATION GAIN: 350 ft



Goat Trail & Wagon Road History:

Because of the increased use of the 1899 Pack Trail, it was upgraded in order to accommodate sleds, wagons, and eventually automobiles. By 1905, The Valdez Transportation Company was offering a nine-day stagecoach trip to Fairbanks for \$150. In 1913, the first automobile traveled from Valdez to Fairbanks over the improved trail, even though the Goat Trail section was difficult to maintain due to snow and rock slides. The Snowslide Gulch area posed a particular problem as massive snow slides would periodically destroy or severely damage its bridge. The Bear Creek Bridge, the last of the four main trail bridges, was built in 1943 and still remains today. This 300-foot steel arch bridge is a good example of World War II construction. The Goat Trail/Wagon Road was in use as late as 1952 when a major flood destroyed the 317-foot long Lowe River Bridge, located just upstream from the mouth of Keystone Canyon. What remains of the concrete piers can still be seen in the river. Once a through-trail, the Goat Trail and Wagon Road are now considered two separate trails because of the destruction of the bridge at Snowslide Gulch during the floods of 2006.

GOAT TRAIL Directions:

From the west end of the parking area at Bridal Veil Falls, walk about 200 yards toward Valdez and veer right to enter the Goat Trail. Walk 0.3 miles to the intersection of the Goat Trail and Pack Trail. Turn right. Interesting flowers are often found on the rock cliff just past this point. The Goat Trail continues on through Alder and Spruce. There are two rather exposed trail sections high above the Lowe River which offer excellent views of Keystone Canyon, although **care is advised when on these sections**. The southern Snowslide Gulch viewing area is reached at 1.6 miles. **The 2006 flood destroyed the DOT foot-bridge, crossing at this point is prohibited**. DOT has no current plan to replace this bridge. However, excellent views of the Lowe River Flats can be seen from this location.

Distance & Time:

DISTANCE: 3.2 miles round trip

TIME: 2 hours round trip

DIFFICULTY: Moderate

WAGON TRAIL Directions:

A small sign marks the entrance to the Wagon Road at the mile 18 turnout on the Richardson Highway. At the entrance, the small path weaves for 0.2 miles through a forested area until it intersects the Wagon Road. Turn left at the "Trail" sign. 1.5 miles later, a small 10-minute side trail branches off to the left and down to the Bear Creek Dike. The main trail continues over the Bear Creek Bridge and begins to climb steadily upward. Look for the ruins of the old Lowe River Bridge; two concrete piers should be visible. One mile from the Bear Creek Bridge, another short trail to the left drops down to the riverbed. The Wagon Road continues up with several nice viewpoints before reaching the north Snowslide Gulch viewing area. Although at one time a bridge connected both sections of the Goat Trail and Wagon Trail, **crossing at this point is now prohibited**. Turn around here and return to the Trailhead at Mile 18 on the Richardson Highway.

Distance & Time:

DISTANCE: 6.6 miles round trip

TIME: 4 hours round trip

DIFFICULTY: Easy





**HIKE
ALASKA'S
WILD
KOUNTRY**

**Hike, bike,
walk, or run
the trails in
and around
Valdez!**

**Return the
card during
the HAWK
challenge
and get a
chance to
win prizes!**

THE MORE TRAILS YOU HIKE...
**THE MORE CHANCES YOU
 HAVE TO WIN!**

Hike Alaska's Wild
 Kountry

HAWK CARD

Enjoy Valdez Parks &
 Recreation
 maintained trails.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Be Safe!
 Be Bear Aware!
 Leave no Trace!
 Take only
 photographs...
 Leave only
 footprints...



Once you've filled out your
 card – drop it off at the
 Parks & Rec. Office in the
 Civic Center by Labor Day.

Trail Name	Date Hiked
Dock Point Trail	
Overlook Trail	
Mineral Creek A Trail	
Mineral Creek B Trail	
John Hunter Memorial Trail	
Shoup Bay A Trail	
Shoup Bay B Trail	
Keystone Canyon Pack Trail	
Goat Trail	
Wagon Road Trail	
Total number trails hiked:	

You can also register and log your
 hikes on our website:
www.ci.valdez.ak.us/HAWKtrailscard

www.facebook.com/ValdezAlaskaFun
#HAWKTrail



Remember...this IS Alaska and there are **BEARS** all around you! However, if you hike smart and use common sense, you should be able to safely enjoy all that Valdez has to offer!

BE BEAR AWARE!

BE A NOISY HIKER

Sing, talk, clap your hands, wear a bell.

GIVE BEARS SPACE

Watch & photograph from a safe distance.

RESPECT A BEAR'S MEAL

Stay away from deceased animals.

KEEP A CLEAN CAMP

Cook at least 100 ft from camp & store food away from your camp in well sealed containers.



For more information on bear safety, visit our website: www.ci.valdez.ak.us/parks