

## Hiking Crow Pass Trail

### Part of the Historic Iditarod Trail

#### History

The Historic Iditarod Trail, which runs from Seward to Nome, was formerly used as a transportation and mail route for early Alaskan settlers. The Crow Pass Trail travels along a small section of this historic trail. A roadhouse for the weary travelers once existed just below the current ford site after Raven Gorge. This section of trail was abandoned when the railway was completed 1918. It was reopened for hiking in 1975 after Girl Scout Troup 83 rebuilt the trail. Presently, Crow Pass Trail is widely considered to be one the best hikes in the Anchorage area.

**Trail Length:** 23.1 miles one-way

**Travel means:** Foot

**Elevation gain:** 2100 ft from Crow Creek Trailhead; 3100 ft from the Eagle River Nature Center

**Difficulty:** Easy to Difficult

*\*Most people take 2-3 days to hike the trail. If you plan to hike it in 1 day, allow a minimum of 12 hours.*

#### Trailhead locations

1. Chugach National Forest (Girdwood, AK): Parking at Milk Creek, Mile 7.1 on Crow Creek Road. No parking fee.
2. Chugach State Park (Eagle River, AK): Parking at the Eagle River Nature Center, Mile 12 of Eagle River Rd. \$5/day parking fee.

**Transportation note:** There is no public transportation or established shuttles to or from either of the trailheads. You must arrange your own transportation.

**Cell Phone note:** Cell phone coverage is spotty to non-existent along most of the trail. You most likely will have some coverage at the Girdwood trailhead, none along the trail, and spotty service (if any) at the Nature Center.

#### Trail Challenges

This trail is longer and more difficult than people realize. Allow yourself sufficient time and be prepared to tackle various obstacles: uphill travel, weather changes (fog, wind, rain, or snow), snow slopes, rock scree, eroded trail, river crossings, dense vegetation and technical sections using ropes and ladders.

**River Crossings:** There are several small river crossings and one major crossing along the trail. The major river crossing is on Eagle River, about mid-way through the hike. Crossing is anywhere from 150-200 feet across, and the river depth can range from just below the knees to waist high. Be aware that the water is coming straight from a glacier and is therefore very cold. The current is

strong, the river bottom is rocky, and it is impossible to see hazards under the water due to glacial silt – so expect to move slowly.

There are white stakes on either side of the ford site to help guide you across the river. While this tends to be the safest place to cross, always check the current river conditions before crossing. Bring extra footwear to help protect your feet (sandals are not recommended) and use a stick or hiking pole for added stability. Unbuckle your backpack straps in case you need to ditch your pack in the event of a fall.

**Hypothermia:** The alpine areas around Crow Pass are often wet, foggy and windy. No matter how good the weather looks, bring warm, rainproof gear. Unprepared hikers are especially vulnerable to hypothermia, even in summer.

**Wildlife:** Both black and brown/grizzly bears are present along this trail, as well as moose. Stay alert and make noise while hiking, keep a clean campsite, store food in bear proof containers, don't prepare/eat food near/in your tent.

**Drinking Water:** Clear and glacial streams are found along this trail. They may look clean, but could contain giardia, a parasite that occurs in mammals. For your safety, boil or filter any drinking water from streams or lakes.

*\*PLEASE NOTE: There is no reliable drinking water source between Turbid Creek and the Ford Site.*

**Fires:** Open fires are prohibited in Chugach State Park unless they are in a metal fire ring provided at a designated campsite, or on the gravel bars of Eagle River. Camp stoves are permitted.

#### Contact Information

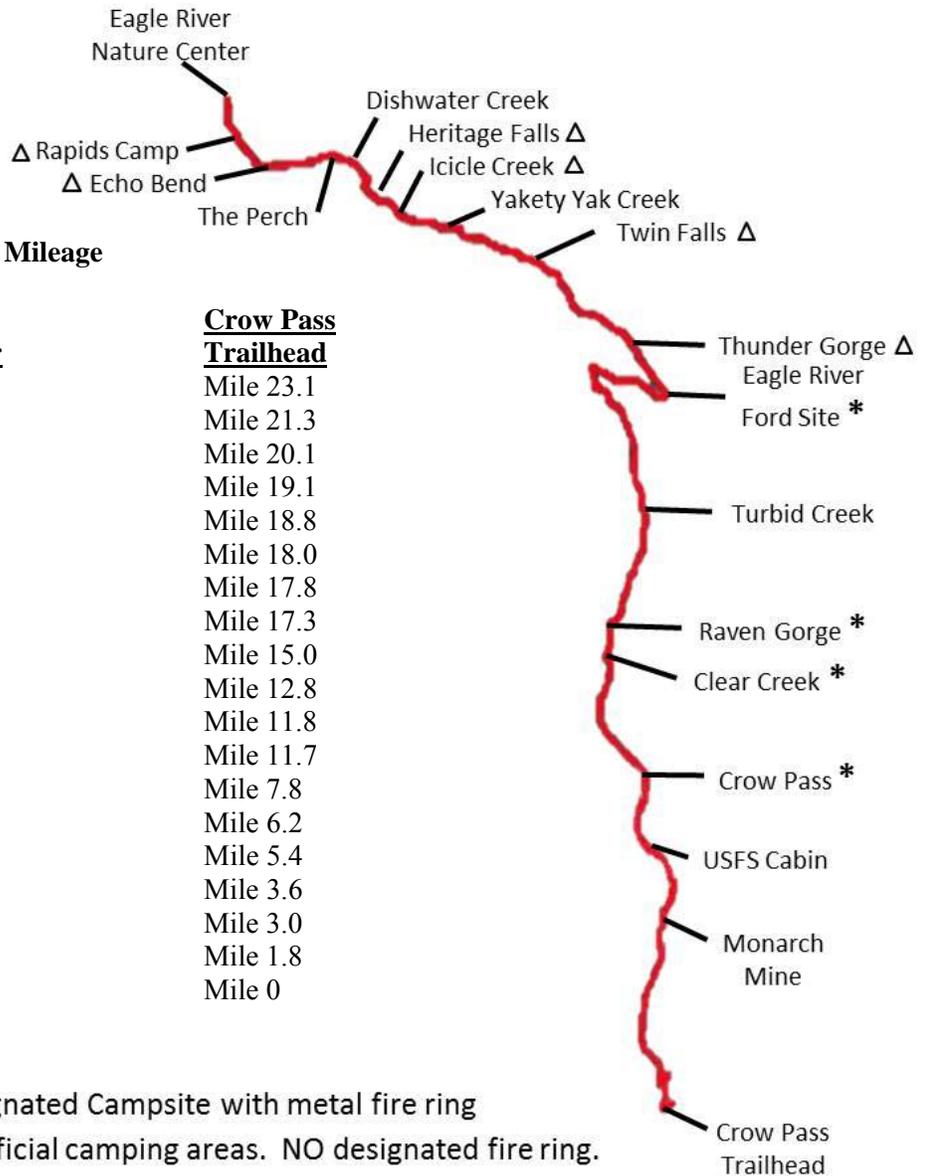
**Eagle River Nature Center:** 907-694-2108. 1 Cabin and 3 Yurts available for reservation year-round, \$65/night. Check availability and reserve online at [www.ernc.org](http://www.ernc.org).

**Chugach State Park:** 907-345-5014.

**USFS Girdwood Ranger Station:** 907-783-3242. Crow Pass Cabin available for reservation June-September, \$35/night. Reservations can be made by calling 1-877-444-6777 or on-line by visiting [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov)

**You can find trail updates on the Crow Pass Trail Facebook page.**

# Crow Pass Trail



**Crow Pass Trail Elevation Profile**

