

## Park History

Thomas and Robert Swan came across Chena Hot Springs in 1905. When local Fairbanks residents learned of this resource, they requested access, and the U.S. War Department built a trail to the hot springs in 1913. Today, part of the Yukon Quest, an annual 1,000-mile sled dog race, is run on the old trail.

The area around the springs attracted attention from gold prospectors and loggers as well. The Chena River became a central mode of transportation, carrying people to the hot springs and timber to the rapidly growing city of Fairbanks. With the advent of World War II, large numbers of servicemen settled in the Fairbanks area and developed the wild lands.

In 1967, Alaska legislators designated 15,360 acres as the Chena River State Recreation Area. One year later, oil was discovered in Prudhoe Bay and lands were rapidly parceled out and developed. Alaskans fought to preserve the remaining wild lands and their natural resources, and in 1975, 240,000 acres were added to the recreation area.

## For More Information:

### Northern Area Office

3700 Airport Way  
Fairbanks, AK 99709  
(907) 451-2695

# Chena River State Recreation Area



For additional information visit  
[www.alaskastateparks.org](http://www.alaskastateparks.org)



Alaska State Parks

## A Park for All Seasons

Chena River State Recreation Area (SRA) encompasses 397 square miles of forests, rivers, and alpine tundra. You can hike, bike, dogsled, ski, horseback ride, skijor, snowmachine, 4-wheel, or snowshoe on over 100 miles of maintained trails.



## Winter Recreation

Winter's cold grip doesn't put an end to recreational opportunities—instead park users snowmachine, ski, and dogsled on the winter trails. Public-use cabins are spaced so that skiers can reach them in a day, and local mushers use the area to train for dog sled races.

## Water Recreation

The meandering, class I-II Chena River flows through the park, and is an ideal place for kayaking, canoeing, fishing, swimming, or sunbathing. River access roads (located at mileposts 31.6, 28.6, 28.0, and 27.0) and four bridges provide several choices for launching and ending float trips.

## Wildlife

Are you looking for wildlife? Chena River SRA abounds with wildlife including moose, bears, lynx, and a multitude of birds. During winter, snowshoeing is a great way to follow animal tracks along the many accessible trails. Don't forget your camera!



Photo courtesy of Britt Coon



Photo courtesy of Robert Angell



Photo courtesy of Robert Angell



Photo courtesy of Robert Angell

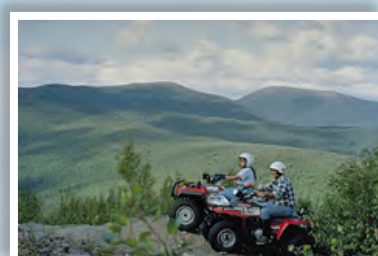
Background photo courtesy of Robert Angell

# Chena River SRA Highlights

## Geologic Formations

The Chena River, flanked by panoramic alpine ridges and towering landforms, cuts through this recreation area. The valley is anchored by Chena Dome (4,421 feet) to the north and the granite tors to the south. The granite tors' weathered, craggy spires of intrusive granite rise above their surroundings. The two-toned Angel Rocks on the east side are the exposed tips of a large granite mass underlying the Chena River area.

Enjoy these spectacular formations and breathtaking views from the expansive trail system and throughout Chena River SRA.



## Snowmachine & Off-Road Vehicle Use Areas

Snowmachiners and off-road vehicle users delight in the abundant riding opportunities in Chena River SRA.

Chena River SRA is open to snowmachines in all areas north of the Chena River, west of the south fork valley, and north of the east fork valley when snow depth is adequate to protect underlying vegetation. For information regarding winter openings call the Public Information Center in Fairbanks at (907) 451-2705 or visit [www.alaskastateparks.org](http://www.alaskastateparks.org), under the "Current News" link.



## Fishing, Hunting, & Trapping

Cast a fishing line into the Chena River and there's a good chance you'll hook an arctic grayling. Since fishing in the Chena River is catch-and-release only, make sure to gently place the fish back into the water. You can keep fish caught in four ponds along Chena Hot Springs Road. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) stocks ponds at mileposts 30, 42.8, 45.5, and 47.9.

An abundance of small game animals bring trappers and hunters to the park during the winter months. Sport hunting within the park includes moose, bear, rabbit, grouse, ptarmigan, and fur bearing animals. Park officials advise sportsmen to familiarize themselves with ADF&G regulations.

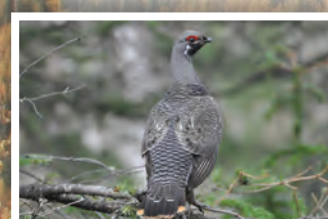


Photo courtesy of Gina Smith



Photo courtesy of Rickett's Fishing

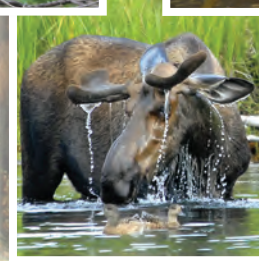


Photo courtesy of Robert Angell

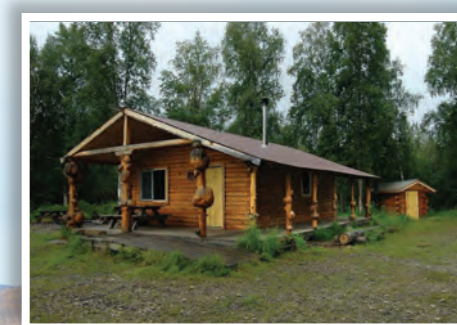


Photo courtesy of Robert Angell

## Public-Use Cabins

Chena River SRA has eight public-use cabins available by reservation online. Cabins are equipped with plywood sleeping platforms, shelves, a wood stove, kitchen counter, a table and benches, and an outdoor latrine.



## Campgrounds

Located at milepost 27 on Chena Hot Springs Road, the **Rosehip Campground** is an ideal base camp for exploring Chena River SRA. There are 37 campsites. A hand-carry boat launch on the Chena River makes water activities readily accessible.

Located at milepost 39, the **Granite Tors Campground's** 24 campsites are the perfect place to stay while hiking the Granite Tors Trail.

Located at milepost 43, the **Red Squirrel Campground and Picnic Area's** five campsites accommodate tent and RV campers.

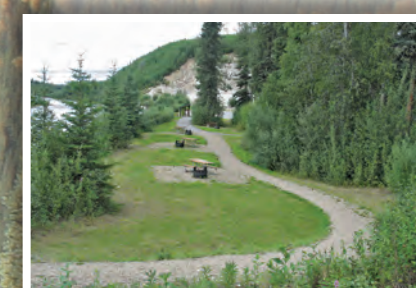


Photo courtesy of Robert Angell

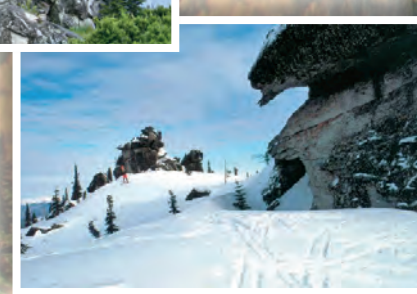


## Group-Use Area

The **Twin Bears Camp** is located at milepost 30 on Chena Hot Springs Road. Recreational activities abound, including volleyball, horseshoes, basketball, baseball, swimming, canoeing, fishing, and cross-country skiing. Thirteen primitive cabins, a recreation hall, dining hall, and lodge are available to rent. Picnic sites and a group-use area are also available. The camp is run by park concessionaire Fairbanks Rescue Mission (907-452-5343).



Photo courtesy of Lucy Baranko





# Trail Descriptions

**Compeau Trail** 1  
**Access:** milepost 29.9  
**Travel means:** multi-use  
**Distance:** 18 miles one way  
This trail provides year-round access to the Colorado Creek Cabin and views of the Chena River Valley, Alaska Range, and White Mountains.

**South Fork Trail** 2  
**Access:** milepost 31.4  
**Travel means:** winter multi-use  
**Distance:** 6.75 miles one way  
The South Fork Trail crosses the frozen Chena River twice to reach the Nugget Creek Cabin.

**Colorado Creek Trail** 3  
**Access:** milepost 31.6  
**Travel means:** winter multi-use  
**Distance:** 5.8 miles one way  
Follow this trail on snowmachines, dogsleds, or on cross-country skis to reach the Colorado Creek Cabin or for an invigorating outing.

**Chena Hot Springs Trail** 4  
**Access:** milepost 26.6  
**Travel means:** winter multi-use  
**Distance:** 30 miles one way  
This trail is excellent for dog sledding and snowmachining and parallels Chena Hot Springs Road.

**Stiles Creek Trail** 5  
**Access:** milepost 31.6 or 36.5  
**Travel means:** multi-use  
**Distance:** 15 miles one way  
Year-round scenic views of Chena Dome, the granite tors, and Colorado Creek are available from the Stiles Creek Trail.

**Mist Creek Trail** 6  
**Access:** milepost 36.5 across from the shooting range  
**Travel means:** foot, horseback ride, snowshoe, ski  
**Distance:** 6 miles one way  
Follow the Mist Creek Trail to the Nugget Creek Cabin. Hikers must cross the river to get to the trail. This route is for experienced hikers only.

**Granite Tors Trail** 7  
**Access:** milepost 39.5  
**Travel means:** foot  
**Distance:** 15-mile loop  
The Granite Tors Trail travels through boggy lowlands and up to the Plain of Monuments, an area dominated by towering granite tors (rock outcroppings up to 100 feet high).

**East Fork Trail** 8  
**Access:** milepost 45.5  
**Travel means:** winter motorized  
**Distance:** 7 miles one way  
This trail provides opportunities to enjoy the beautiful winter scenery.

**Angel Rocks Trail** 9  
**Access:** milepost 48.9  
**Travel means:** foot  
**Distance:** 3.5-mile loop  
This short day hike heads up a moderately steep ascent to Overlook Rock. It passes granite tors and interesting plant communities.

**Angel Rocks to Chena Hot Springs Trail** 10  
**Access:** milepost 48.9 (shares with Angel Rocks Trail)  
**Travel means:** foot  
**Distance:** 8.3 miles one way  
From the Angel Rocks loop, this trail travels through mixed spruce and birch forests, and along a ridge above tree line to reach Chena Hot Springs. Eye-catching views include the Chena River, Alaska Range, granite tors, Chena Dome, and Far Mountain.

**Chena Dome Trail** 11  
**Access:** milepost 49.1 and 50.5  
**Travel means:** non-motorized  
**Distance:** 30-mile loop  
The Chena Dome Trail is a strenuous hike that circles the entire Angel Creek drainage and provides excellent views, wildflowers, alpine areas, and berries.

**Angel Creek Trail** 12  
**Access:** milepost 50.5  
**Travel means:** winter motorized  
**Distance:** 6.8 miles one way  
The Angel Creek Hillside Trail provides access to two public-use cabins and hours of scenic recreation.

**Angel Creek Hillside Trail** 13  
**Access:** milepost 50.5  
**Travel means:** multi-use  
**Distance:** 11 miles one way  
This year-round trail follows hillside contours and has an average grade of 8%. Spectacular views of the Angel Creek Valley can be seen along this trail.



## Park Rules

- Bicycles** are allowed on trails that are open to off-road vehicles. They are prohibited on the Angel Rocks and Granite Tors trails, but may be used on the Chena Dome Trail.
- Horses, mules, burros, and llamas** are allowed except on the Granite Tors Trail. Groups using ten or more animals must obtain a special-use permit. Tethering animals within 100 feet of fresh water and loose herding are prohibited.
- Motor vehicles** are generally restricted to roads and parking lots. Off-road vehicles are permitted on designated trails.
- Snowmachines** may be used when snow depth is sufficient, except in the southeastern portion of the park.
- A fee or an annual pass** is required at designated parking areas and for overnight use of developed campsites. Camping within the park is limited to 15 consecutive days.
- Fires** must be confined to fire pits, gravel bars, or gravel pits. Use a portable stove for cooking in the backcountry.
- Dead wood** lying on the ground may be gathered for a campfire where campfires are allowed.
- Discharge of firearms** is prohibited except for lawful hunting or trapping. Target shooting is only allowed at the developed shooting range at mile 36.4 of Chena Hot Springs Road.
- Pets** must be on leashes at developed facilities such as campgrounds and picnic areas and may not create excessive noise. Leashes are not required in undeveloped areas, but pets should be kept under control at all times. Be aware of trapping activities within the park boundaries.



Photo courtesy of Chris Degernes



Photo courtesy of Robert Angell



Photo courtesy of Robert Angell



Photo courtesy of Robert Angell



Photo courtesy of Anne Aleshire

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