Welcome to Hatcher Pass East Management Area

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The Hatcher Pass East Management Area truly is a winter wonderland. Here, snow can arrive as early as September and may stay as late as June or July. This long winter season means that winter sport enthusiasts are able to enjoy their favorite types of winter recreation in early autumn and long after spring mud has replaced the snow on Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley.

Whether you’re into skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, snowmachine, dog mushing, or post holing, Hatcher Pass is the place to be when the snow starts falling. So get your winter gear and come out to enjoy an exhilarating adventure in one of the most scenic, road-accessible destinations in the state.

Recreational Winter-Use Boundaries

New regulations for the Hatcher Pass Management Area took effect in January 2013. These regulations changed the designated areas for motorized and non-motorized winter recreation.

It’s always a good idea to check the boundaries for motorized and non-motorized winter recreation before heading out. Go to http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/themes/hatcherpass boundaries.htm for current recreational use boundaries and help make your day in the snow more pleasant for everyone.

Highlights

Backcountry Skiing and Snowboarding

Hatcher Pass offers numerous opportunities for backcountry skiing and snowboarding with many terrains that only experienced winter recreationists should attempt. If playing in the backcountry is your thing, be sure to check avalanche conditions before you go.

Backcountry snowboarders and skiers can often find snow above the Summit Lake area from early October through early June. However, this corridor is also open to snowmachine use.

Avalanche Safety

If you choose to play in this winter wonderland, know that there are inherent risks—avalanches can occur in most of Hatcher Pass. It pays to be prepared.

Variables such as slope angle and aspect, the quality of the snow pack, and wind all affect the level of avalanche hazard. Be familiar with assessing these parameters and evaluating the avalanche hazard before venturing into avalanche terrain. Each member of your party should carry an avalanche beacon, a probe, and a shovel, and know how to use them.

Never travel alone.

For more information on avalanche safety and conditions at Hatcher Pass, go to http://www.hatcherpassavalanchecenter.org.

Snowmachining

Hatcher Pass is one of the best snowmachine areas in Southcentral Alaska and offers the most scenic, too. Groomed trails and backcountry areas allow for a wide range of thrilling snowmachining adventures for riders of all skill levels. Non-riders can gain early training opportunities for local ski clubs and school teams.

Avalanche Safety

Avalanche safety is everyone’s responsibility. Be sure to:

• Know Alaska’s snowmachine laws and regulations
• Be familiar with and report avalanche
• Check-your snowmachine and equipment
• Make sure all of your equipment and clothing are appropriate
• Check weather, snow, and ice conditions
• Tell someone specifically where you are going and when you expect to return
• Don’t neglect your avalanche beacon

All snowmachines must be currently registered to ride on public lands. This law is enforced and you may be fine for snowmachine-related project grants. For more information, go to the SnowTrac link at http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/snowtrac.htm

Skiing

Skiing is a fabulous time in Hatcher Pass with some of the best snow conditions in the state. The skiing season often starts in October with the cross-country skiing trails in the Independence Bowl being the first in Southcentral Alaska to be set, groomed, and marked. These trails provide early training opportunities for local ski clubs and school teams.

Popular cross-country ski trails include Gold Mine Trail, Anchorage Road, Reed Lakes Trail, and the road to Independence Mine State Historical Park. Ski trails are also set in the open alpine meadows directly east of Independence Mine. Anchorage and Independence Mine trails are usually groomed and marked.

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**Hatcher Pass East Management Area Winter Recreation Map**

Projected Coordinate System: NAD 83, State Plane Alaska, Zone 4

**Distance**: 18 miles

**Elevation**: 2,000 feet

This trail starts at the Gold Mint Trailhead and parallels the paved Hatcher Pass Road for about 2 miles before it crosses the road. Once across the road, the trail follows the unplowed road up and over the pass, then descends toward Willow to where the road is once again maintained near mile 3.4. This groomed and signed trail is an easy ride with beautiful scenery and lots of off-trail snowmachining once you cross the pass. From Independence Road, to where the trail crosses the Hatcher Pass Road near mile 16.8, it is a confined corridor where snowmachines must remain on the trail. Please stay on the trail at all times and respect other users.

The Fishhook Trail at mile 16.5 of the Hatcher Pass Rd is only minutes away from the pass and unrestricted riding west of the pass. Snowmachines must remain on the trail either direction from mile 17 and the Hatcher Pass summit.

**CAUTION**: Non-motorized use of this trail between Fishhook Trail and Archangel Road is NOT ADVISED due to steep hills, blind turns, and fast-moving snowmachines. Both motorized and non-motorized trail users must be careful between mile 17 and the Hatcher Pass summit.

**Non-Motorized Winter Trails**

**Independence Road Winter Ski Trails**

**Access**: Independence Road parking area

**Travel Means**: foot, snowshoe, ski, snowboard, and sledding

**Distance**: This trail network contains approximately 3 miles of groomed trail.

**Elevation**: 1,000 feet

Independence Mine State Historical Park is closed to snowmobiling in winter however, similar visitors may park in the Independence Bowl parking area below the gate and ski or snowmobile into the park. Winter recreation opportunities include skiing, backcountry snowmobiling, snowboarding, and cross-country skiing on groomed trails or on deep powder. The Visitor Center is closed from Labor Day weekend through mid-June.

**Paradise Ski Run**

**Access**: MP 14 of Hatcher Pass Road

**Travel Means**: ski and snowboard

**Distance**: 2 miles

**Elevation drop**: 2,000 feet

Beginning at Mile 16 on the Hatcher Pass Road and ending at Mile 12, this trail is popular with both alpine skiers and snowboarders. However, it is a steep freestyle run and not recommended for novices. Ski or snowboard below all groomed terrain.

**NOTE**: Vehicles shutting skiers and snowboarders should not turn around or park along Hatcher Pass Road between mile 14.4 (Independence Trailhead) and mile 16.8 (Independence Mine parking area) due to avalanche danger in this area.

**Gold Mint Trail**

**Access**: Gold Mint Trailhead

**Travel Means**: foot, snowshoe, ski

**Distance**: 16 miles round trip

**Elevation**: 1,000 feet plus gain

The Gold Mint Trail follows the west bank of the Little Susitna River until it reaches the glacier-rimmed valley near the end where the trail steepens. Many winter visitors enjoy skiing up the Gold Mint Trail or heading up into the mountains and going off-trail to explore the high valleys and deep powder.

**NOTE**: Snowmachines are permitted to park during the winter as a staging point for the Hatcher Pass Trail to Archangel Road and Hatcher Pass.

**Archangel Road Non-Motorized Winter Trail**

**Access**: Archangel Trailhead

**Travel Means**: foot, ski, snowshoe

**Distance**: 4 miles to the Ferne Mine gate (private)

**Elevation**: 1,000 feet

Archangel Road usually closes to highway vehicles after the first snowfall; however, becoming a winter recreation trail. Parking is available at the pullout along Hatcher Pass Road at the Archangel Road junction. The flat, gentle terrain is ideal for novice level cross-country skiing, walking, and snowshoeing. For the first two miles, the trail has separated uses. Non-motorized users must stay on the left trail, snowmachines on the right. Once beyond the Creek Valley, both sides of the trail are open to snowmachines. This trail is often groomed for winter recreation.

**Access**: Hatcher Pass Road Trailhead

**Travel Means**: ski and snowboard

**Distance**: 2 miles

**Elevation**: 2,000 feet

Beginning at Mile 16 on the Hatcher Pass Road and ending at Mile 12, this trail is popular with both alpine skiers and snowboarders. However, it is a steep freestyle run and not recommended for novices. Ski or snowboard below all groomed terrain.

**NOTE**: Vehicles shutting skiers and snowboarders should not turn around or park along Hatcher Pass Road between mile 14.4 (Independence Trailhead) and mile 16.8 (Independence Mine parking area) due to avalanche danger in this area.

**Aviation Access**

**Access**: 8 miles round trip

**Elevation**: 1,000 feet

The Gold Mint Trail follows the west bank of the Little Susitna River until it reaches the glacier-rimmed valley near the end where the trail steepens. Many winter visitors enjoy skiing up the Gold Mint Trail or heading up into the mountains and going off-trail to explore the high valleys and deep powder.

**NOTE**: Snowmachines are permitted to park during the winter as a staging point for the Hatcher Pass Trail to Archangel Road and Hatcher Pass.

**Archangel Road Non-Motorized Winter Trail**

**Access**: Archangel Trailhead

**Travel Means**: foot, ski, snowshoe

**Distance**: 4 miles to the Ferne Mine gate (private)

**Elevation**: 1,000 feet

Archangel Road usually closes to highway vehicles after the first snowfall; however, becoming a winter recreation trail. Parking is available at the pullout along Hatcher Pass Road at the Archangel Road junction. The flat, gentle terrain is ideal for novice level cross-country skiing, walking, and snowshoeing. For the first two miles, the trail has separated uses. Non-motorized users must stay on the left trail, snowmachines on the right. Once beyond the Creek Valley, both sides of the trail are open to snowmachines. This trail is often groomed for winter recreation.

Current registration is required by law and supported by the statewide SnowTRAIL Snowmobile Trail Grant Program. Motorized areas are open to snowmobiles only when snow conditions are sufficient to prevent undermining vegetation. See www.alaskastateparks.org for current snow condition reports and motorized-use openings information.