Welcome to

Chena River
State Recreation Area

For More Information:
Northern Area Office
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Fairbanks, AK 99709
(907) 451-2695

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.
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!
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 torsi 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 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.
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.

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 (907-452-5393).
### Trail Descriptions

#### Common Trail
- **Access**: winter multi-use
- **Travel means**: winter 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 Park Trail
- **Access**: winter multi-use
- **Travel means**: winter multi-use
- **Distance**: 6.75 miles one way

The South Park Trail crosses the frozen Chena River twice to reach the nugget Creek Cabin.

#### Colorado Creek Trail
- **Access**: winter multi-use
- **Travel means**: winter multi-use
- **Distance**: 1.5 miles one way

This trail is excellent for horseback riding and downhill skiing and parallels Chena River Road. Interpretive displays and non-motorized vehicles may be used when snow depth is sufficient.

#### Chena Hot Springs Trail
- **Access**: winter multi-use
- **Travel means**: winter multi-use
- **Distance**: 30 miles one way

This trail is excellent for dog sledding and snowmachining and parallels Chena River Road. Interpretive displays and non-motorized vehicles may be used when snow depth is sufficient.

#### Chena Dome Trail
- **Access**: winter multi-use
- **Travel means**: winter 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.

#### Angel Rocks Trail
- **Access**: winter multi-use
- **Travel means**: winter multi-use
- **Distance**: 3.5-mile loop

This trail is excellent for dog sledding and snowmachining and parallels Chena River Road. Interpretive displays and non-motorized vehicles may be used when snow depth is sufficient.

#### Chena Hot Springs Trail
- **Access**: winter multi-use
- **Travel means**: winter multi-use
- **Distance**: 6 miles one way

This trail is excellent for horseback riding and downhill skiing and parallels Chena River Road. Interpretive displays and non-motorized vehicles may be used when snow depth is sufficient.

#### Angel Rocks Loop Trail
- **Access**: winter multi-use
- **Travel means**: foot
- **Distance**: 2.5 miles one way

This trail is excellent for horseback riding and downhill skiing and parallels Chena River Road. Interpretive displays and non-motorized vehicles may be used when snow depth is sufficient.

#### Angel Rocks to Chena Hot Springs Trail
- **Access**: winter multi-use
- **Travel means**: foot
- **Distance**: 3.5-mile loop

This trail is excellent for horseback riding and downhill skiing and parallels Chena River Road. Interpretive displays and non-motorized vehicles may be used when snow depth is sufficient.

#### Stiles Creek Trail
- **Access**: winter multi-use
- **Travel means**: foot
- **Distance**: 45 miles one way

This trail is excellent for horseback riding and downhill skiing and parallels Chena River Road. Interpretive displays and non-motorized vehicles may be used when snow depth is sufficient.

### Park Rules

- **Bicycles**: allowed on trails that are open to off-road vehicles. Trail signs provide information about designated areas. Bicycles are not allowed on trails that are closed to non-motorized use.
- **Horses, mules, burros, and llamas**: allowed except on the Chena Hot Springs Trail. Groups using 10 or more animals must obtain a special-use permit. Tethering animals within 100 feet of water and herding of animals within 100 feet of water is prohibited.
- **Motor vehicles**: are allowed on designated roads and parking areas. Off-road vehicle use is prohibited.
- **Snowmobiles**: may be used when snow depth is sufficient, except in the southeastern portion of the park. Snowmobiles are not allowed on trails.
- **A fee or an annual pass is required at designated parking areas and for overnight use of developed campsites. Snowmobiling within the park is limited to 15 contiguous roads.
- **Fire**: must be confined to fire pits, gravel beds, or gravel areas. Use a portable stove for cooking in the backcountry.
- **Dead wood**: may be piled on the ground for gathering firewood.
- **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-leash at developed facilities such as campgrounds and picnic areas and may be off-leash on motorized trails. Pets are allowed on trails that are open to non-motorized use. Tethering of animals within 100 feet of water is prohibited. Tethering of animals within 100 feet of water is prohibited. Pets are allowed on trails that are open to motorized use. Tethering of animals within 100 feet of water is prohibited.