



## Hiking Trail

**Difficulty:** Moderate / Strenuous

**Total Elevation Gain:** Approx. 2450 ft.

**Special Features:** Excellent views, granite outcrops, rock climbing area for experienced and equipped climbers.

### Trail Description:

A 15 mile loop trail going in a clockwise direction from east to west with access to alpine tundra, unusual rock formations and views of the Alaska Range and Chena River Valley. The tors are large granite outcroppings that formed millions of years ago when molten rock pushed upward, cooling before it reached the surface. The surrounding earth slowly eroded, exposing the harder rock pinnacles.

### Trail Guide:

Trailhead – The trail begins at milepost 39.5 Chen Hot Springs Road at the Tors Trail Campground day use area.

**0-0.5** Follow the gravel path past the bulletin board in the picnic area, then past the trailhead bulletin board to a walkway over the bridge. Cross the road. Follow the levee along the river past another trail information bulletin board. At the end of the levee the trail forks. At this point you have two choices:

- 1 – Go left (east) – more developed trail – gradual ascent
- 2 – Go right (west) – less developed trail – steep ascent.

**NOTE:** The following guide assumes that you have taken the east route. If you have elected to take the west route, follow the guide backward starting at mile 15.

**0.5-2** The trail follows the river on boardwalks through black spruce and boggy areas. It then crosses Rock Creek and follows it upstream through a narrow band of white spruce, climbing gradually through stands of birch and aspen.

**1.5 -** The 3 mile loop connects here and intersects the west route at mile (14) providing hikers a shorter loop back to the trail head.

**2-4** Continues to ascent along a ridge through black spruce forest with occasional views of the Chena River Valley.

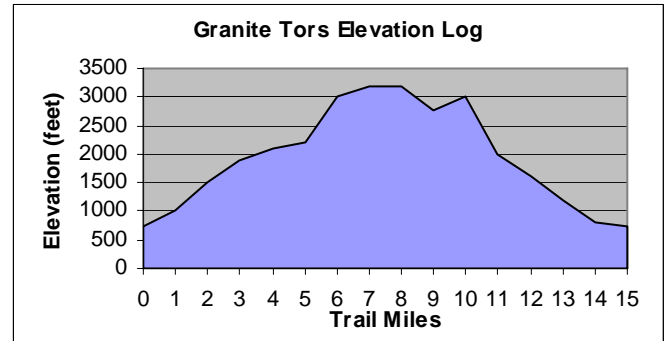
**4-5** Trail drops through two saddles and reaches treeline.

**5-6** A 6 ½ mile spur trail to the left leads to two small groups of Tors. There may be water on the spur trail and at a spring near mile 6. There are good views of Chena Dome to the north and Flat Top Mountain to the west. Rock Cairns now mark the trail.

**6-7** The trail traverses a talus slope across the face of Munson Ridge, a good place to see wildflowers from June to early July. It then drops back into a saddle before emerging into an alpine meadow. If you quietly watch, you may see hoary marmots here and on the Plain of Monuments.

**7 –** Trail heads southwest through alpine meadows to the Plain of Monuments and its scattered tors. The trail shelter is located at the east edge of the alpine area.

**7-9** The East Trail ends and a less developed trail, marked by wooden tripods and rock cairns, continues through wet areas where views of the Alaska Range are excellent. Enjoy exploring, but keep an eye on the trail markers. Weather can hamper visibility and make it difficult to find trail markers.



**9-10** The west trail begins near mile 9, winding through a spruce and alder saddle and emerging on a barren ridgetop. It then drops down to the last group of tors, the Lizard's Eye.

**10-11** The trail heads through a sparsely wooded saddle and begins a steep descent.

**11-14** The descent continues through black spruce to a boardwalk on the upper part of Rock Creek.

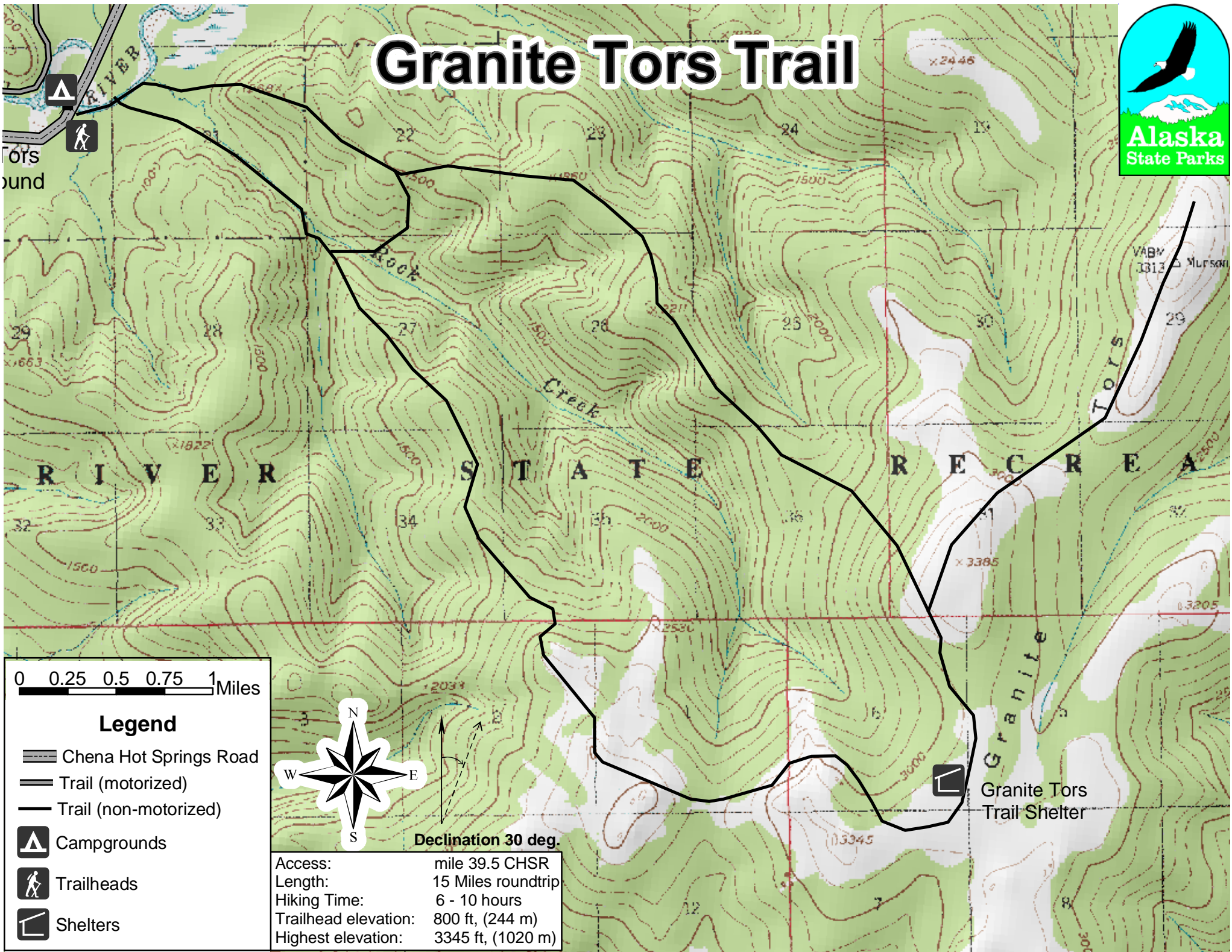
**15** Trail returns to the junction of East and West Trails, then follows levee back to the bridge and trailhead.

### Cautions and Rules:

- Always let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.
- Portions of the trail are steep and rocky, and can be treacherous. Wear suitable footwear.
- Weather can change rapidly; carry raingear warm clothes, and be prepared.
- Water sources may be unreliable and unsafe. Carry at least one day's supply of water.
- Mosquitoes and gnats are abundant in summer; carry insect repellent.
- Fires must be confined to designated fire pits or gravel bars, except in case of emergency. Use a portable stove for heat and cooking in the backcountry.
- Vehicles including mountain bikes are prohibited.
- Minimize your impact on the area; camp away from the trail, pack out what you pack in, and bury human waste away from the trail.
- Shortcutting of switchbacks accelerates erosion and kills fragile vegetation. Please stay on the trail.
- Target practice is not allowed in the Recreation Area except at the mile 36.5 shooting range. The discharge of weapons is allowed only for the lawful taking of game.
- Disturbing or gathering natural materials is prohibited in the Recreation Area, except for berries, mushrooms, and similar edibles for personal use.
- Stay alert and cautious of any trapping activities in the area, traps and bait may be located near trails. Children and pets should be monitored closely.



# Granite Tors Trail



0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles

## Legend

- Chena Hot Springs Road
- Trail (motorized)
- Trail (non-motorized)
- Campgrounds
- Trailheads
- Shelters



Declination 30 deg.

Access:	mile 39.5 CHSR
Length:	15 Miles roundtrip
Hiking Time:	6 - 10 hours
Trailhead elevation:	800 ft, (244 m)
Highest elevation:	3345 ft, (1020 m)