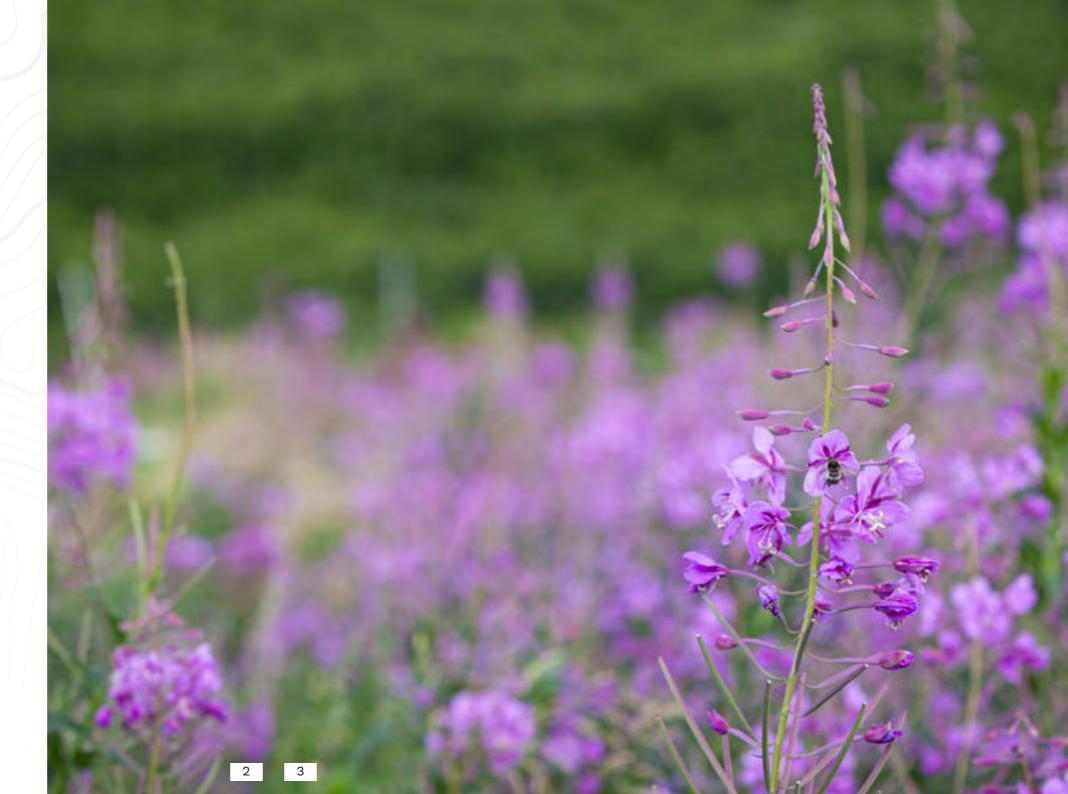
KENAI MOUNTAINS-TURNAGAIN ARM NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA



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To ANCHORAGE INDIAN GIRDWOOD OHOPE, OSUNRISE PORTAGE KMTA WHITTIER NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA **GRANDVIEW** To HOMER **IDITAROD NATIONAL** HISTORIC TRAIL **KMTA AREA** SEWARD **HIGHWAY HIKING PATHS** RAILROAD ------

ABOUT KMTA

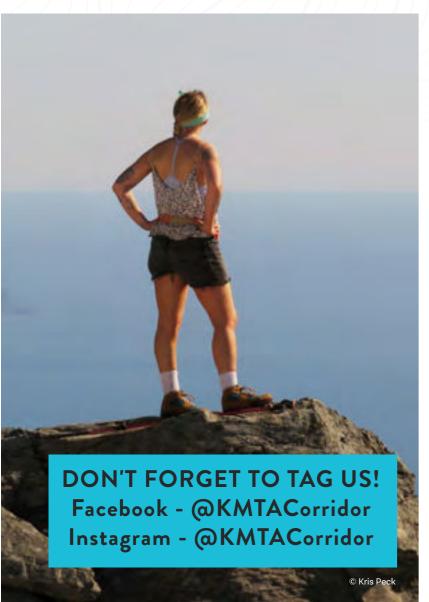
he Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area (KMTA NHA) encompasses a distinctive landscape of mountains, lakes, rivers, glaciers, and fjords. The area is comprised of north-south road, rail, and trail corridors from Bird to Seward and includes the communities of Girdwood, Portage, and Moose Pass. To the west, the area includes Cooper Landing, Sunrise, and Hope. To the east lie Portage, Whittier, and the wild waters of Prince William Sound.

ational Heritage Areas are designated by an Act of Congress and administered by a local coordinating entity identified in the Act. Designation has no effect on property rights. Funding for locally initiated projects that enhance and preserve the area's historic, cultural, scenic, and outdoor recreational resources is provided by the National Heritage Area program through the National Park Service.

ur National Heritage Area bridges Cook Inlet and Prince William Sound via mountains, glacial valleys, and plentiful productive rivers. Throughout this landscape are communities and stories, both of which connect us to our past and future. Fish camps, mining claims, and railroad roadhouses helped shape the home, work, and play spaces of today.

TRAIL CHALLENGE DIRECTIONS

The KMTA Trail Challenge is here, happening from June 28th to September 30th! And where does this adventure take place? On the breathtaking KMTA hiking trails!



The Trail Challenge is not your ordinary hiking event; it's an opportunity to connect with nature, explore historic trails in our National Heritage Area, and support a worthy cause - expanding access to trail-based outdoor learning for Alaskan youth.

Complete a personal goal by challenging yourself to hike a specific number of trails in our National Heritage Area. We've even curated list of trails for you, which you can find on Alltrails.com or in this guide. These resources will assist you in selecting the perfect hiking trail and deciding when to embark on your adventure! Additionally, prizes will be awarded to the top total elevation gained by a participant and the greatest total mileage hiked!

Step 1: The first step in your journey is to choose the number of trails you want to challenge yourself to hike throughout the KMTA National Heritage Area. Select the challenge that's right for you when you <u>register</u> at our race page on RunSignUp. And guess what? By registering, you'll also score some awesome swag including an awesome hat and water bottle - Don't miss out!

Step 2: Trek and Log - As you conquer those trails, log your adventures on RunSignUp. Include your elevation, dis-

tance, and write the name of the trail(s) you completed in the comments section of your activity log. Any named trail in the KMTA National Heritage Area counts, regardless of whether or not it is featured in our AllTrails 2023 KMTA Trail Challenge list or this guide. If you do not know the elevation or distance of the trail you hiked, you can look it up in AllTrails to find that information.

Step 3: Log Review - The KMTA team will review your activity logs as they are submitted. Your elevation and mileage will automatically update in the RunSignUp leaderboard. We will manually add your completed hikes to our custom spreadsheet, where we'll keep track of your unique hike count and progress towards your challenge goal. This is why it is important to name the trails you hiked in the comments section of your activity log.

Step 4: Stay in the Loop - Every week, we'll keep you updated on Trail Challenge progress and results by posting an updated trail count spreadsheet on our website. Watch as the RunSignUp leaderboard automatically updates with distance and elevation gain tracking, once we approve your logs.

Step 5: Hike, Snap, and Win! -

We are incredibly lucky to have some fantastic sponsors supporting the Challenge this year, and we want to express our gratitude by inviting you to check out their businesses during your trekking ad-



ventures. We encourage all participants to take fun selfies during your hikes, when you visit one of our sponsors, and even of any cleanup efforts you engage in while on the trails. If you see some trash on your hike, please pack it out and help keep our trails beautiful!

Throughout the event, we will have random prize drawings for participants who tag us and our sponsors in those selfies on social media, and occasionally we will feature these tagged photos on our social channels!

Step 6: Celebrate! - We can't wait to celebrate your accomplishments at our post-Trail Challenge event in October (location TBD). This is where we'll announce the winners who covered the most elevation and completed the greatest number of miles. We'll also share our fundraising results and your direct impact on helping us expand access to trail-based outdoor learning for

TRAIL ETIQUETTE

Hiking is one of the best ways to spend time in the great outdoors. Whether you're hiking alone or in a group, be sure to follow the written and unwritten rules of the trail.

Proper hiking etiquette helps instill respect for other trail users, and it promotes stewardship of the land.

The best thing you can do when hiking is to remember the "golden rule": treat others the way you would want to be treated.

Here are some main points of hiking etiquette:

- Know your right of way. Check signage for the trail you are hiking, and follow the correct right of way yields. Here are the general guidelines of yielding on the trail.
- Hikers coming uphill have the right of way. If you're descending the trail, step aside and give space to the people climbing up.
- Bicyclists yield to hikers. Come to a full stop and step to the side to give the right of way. Be mindful of the plants or animals that are near the trail if you must step off the trail. Everyone should yield to horses.
- Make yourself known. When you en-

counter other hikers and trail users, offer a friendly "hello" or a simple head nod. This helps create a friendly atmosphere on the trail. If you approach another trail user from behind, announce yourself in a friendly, calm tone and let him/her know you want to pass.

- Stay on the trail. Don't step off trail unless you absolutely must when yielding.
 Going off trail can damage or kill certain plant or animal species, and can hurt the ecosystems that surround the trail.
- Be mindful of trail conditions. If a trail is too wet and muddy, turn back and save the hike for another day. Using a muddy trail can be dangerous, damage the trail's condition, and damage the ecosystems that surround the trail.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Always be aware of your surroundings when hiking. It will help keep you and any members of your group safe, and it will help keep wildlife and their habitats safe and healthy.
- Know the rules for hiking in bear country, and know what to do if you encounter a bear on the trail.
- (Courtesy of www.nps.gov/articles/hikingetiquette)



Be alert - bears can be active anywhere and at any time of the day.

Educate yourself - know the recent bear activity reports and/ or regulations of where you are traveling or camping.

Always play by the rules - never feed wildlife, keep food away from bears, stay on designated trails and leash pets.

Remain calm - if you see a bear, back away slowly while facing the bear and talking calmly. Never run from a bear.

BEAR SAFETY TIPS

- 1. Remember: You are responsible for your own safety and for the safety of those around you!
- 2. Alaska is Bear Country and many areas support both black and brown bears. Color is not a good indicator of species.
- 3. Avoid bears. While traveling in Bear Country, make noise, travel in a group and be alert.
- 4. When hiking, stay on designated trails, keep pets leashed, and keep children nearby.
- 5. Slow down. Running, biking and other high speed sports in bear country increase risk and can affect your reaction time and distance.
- 6. Be prepared for an encounter. Your behavior influences the outcome of bear encounters.
- 7. Carry and know how to use bear spray, have it easily accessible.
- 8. Your initial response to all bear encounters should be the same: Stand your ground, ready your deterrent, group up, watch the bear, and talk to the bear in a firm voice.
- 9. Never approach, crowd or pursue a bear. Even bears at designated bear-viewing areas need their space and space to leave.
- 10. Stay informed! Check local agency offices and websites for information on bear sightings and regulations.

Learn more at www.fs.usda.gov/visit/know-before-you-go/bears (All text taken from the U.S. Forest Service)

BIRD/ INDIAN TRAILS

Turnagain Arm Trail

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Easy DISTANCE: 4.1 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 741 ft

Expect to encounter wildlife on this trail. There are many points of access along Turnagain Arm on the Seward Highway. From Anchorage take your first left just past Potter Valley Rd to access the first trailhead (TH) called Potter TH. Make your own adventure by stopping or starting at other parking areas along the way including; McHugh Creek TH, Rainbow Ridge TH, and Windy Corner TH. One way total: 9.5 miles, hills between miles 2-4 | Potter Trailhead to McHugh Trailhead: 3.4 miles | McHugh TH to Rainbow TH: 4.2 | Rainbow TH to Windy Corner: 1.9 miles

Bird Ridge

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Hard DISTANCE: 4.6 miles ELEVATION GAIN: 3218 ft PARKING FEE: \$5

There are two parking lots to access this fantastic, yet challenging trail. Coming from Anchorage you will make a left at the actual Bird Ridge Trailhead, there are brown signs guiding you there, or the next left around the corner is a big parking lot before the Bird Creek Bridge. Once on the trail, pace yourself because it keeps climbing with very few benches until above treeline. Being a ridge you will find several "peaks" and is approximately 4.6 miles one way. It starts warm in the trees and quickly takes you to some cold, windy slopes so be prepared for all sorts of weather. Don't forget to bring water for you and your pooch because there are no streams or ponds along this route for them to drink and is strenuous for them as well. There are many opportunities for amazing views seeing miles into the Chugach and Kenai Mountains and down the Turnagain Arm.

Bird to Gird Trail

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Moderate DISTANCE: 24 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 1017 ft PARKING FEE: \$5 | Stroller and Bike Friendly!

This out and back paved bike path actually can start in Indian Valley at the Chugach State Park Indian Creek (directly after the Indian Creek Bridge) though it is currently being used for road construction storage so to access the trail from that end park at the Brown Bear Saloon. From here it is approximately 12.9 miles to Girdwood. Heading South there are various places to park and jump on the path just look for a pull out. The namesake of the bike path starts at the Bird Point Trailhead at mile 94 of the Seward HWY, follow the signs. From here the path dips under the Seward Hwy and heads to Girdwood for a 6 mile one way ride. Though paved there is broken pavement making it bumpy in places. It can be a windy, wet ride so plan appropriately. Dogs are allowed on the trail, though leashes are required as some bikers travel fast on this path, please pick up your dog waste.



GIRDWOOD TRAILS

Lower Iditarod Trail

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Easy DISTANCE: 3 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 100 ft | ADA Accessible | Bike and Stroller Friendly

This thoroughfare is wide, flat and graveled to be ADA accessible. Watch out for strollers and wildlife as you walk or cycle through the forest that follows Glacier Creek toward the Turnagain Arm. This can either be an out-and-back adventure or can be a loop by turning right at the large rocks and go up to the Alyeska Highway where you will cross the road and walk or cycle back to the Trailhead on the Alyeska Highway bike pathway. Nearby to the trailhead is the Girdwood Park for the kids to enjoy afterward and across the Alyeska Highway is the Girdwood Town Center where food and drink are available.

Winner Creek

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Easy to Moderate DISTANCE: 6.04 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 1204 ft

Out-and-back from the Winner Creek Trailhead gives folks a few options to choose your own adventure. Starting just behind the Hotel Alyeska Tramway the trail travels smoothly through massive hemlock and spruce trees until there is a T in the trail at about a mile. This is where folks can either turn right and travel the Upper Winner Creek Trail another 8 miles up to the alpine of Berry Pass or turn left and go another mile to the iconic hand tram over the Glacier Creek. The handtram is closed Summer 2021 so you'll check out the impressive Creek before heading back to the Hotel Alyeska. Once there you can enjoy some food, drink, and views at the hotel or head back to Girdwood Town Center for more enjoyable restaurants and shops.

Beaver Pond Trail

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Moderate DISTANCE: 6.5 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 816 ft | Bike friendly

The parking area for the Beaver Pond Trail is accessed from Toadstool Road off the Seward Highway and just before the Alyeska Highway turnoff at the Tesoro. They parking area is the Girdwood Railroad depot and the trail starts on the Bird to Gird Bikepath for a mile before a right turn accesses the Beaver Pond Trail. From here it is a 2.5 mile trail with varying width and difficulty. This out-and-back trail can be turned into a loop by coming out of the trail on the Crow Creek Road and walking or cycling back along the road until it intersects with the Alyeska Highway and jump on the paved bike pathway to come back around to the depot parking lot.

The North Face Trail

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Hard DISTANCE: 2.2 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 2000 ft

Parking for the North Face Trail is at the Hotel Alyeska. The trail starts from the base of the tramway and travels up the iconic North Face. This 2.2 mile 2000' vertical climb will bring you through highs and lows with gorgeous views and lovely water features. When you reach the top of the tramway you can take the tram back down for free or continue your hike into the bowl and back down the mountain. Views and the Boretide Bar and Restaurant at the top of the tram offers a great reward for tackling such a strenuous hike. If you continue hiking down the other side, be ready for a longer day because you will have to walk back to the hotel or wait for the shuttle at the Daylodge. On this side of the mountain you can enjoy a treat at the Bake Shop or tour the Glacier Gallery and Gifts while you wait for the shuttle.





PORTAGE TRAILS

Byron Glacier Trail

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Easy DISTANCE: 3.2 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 777 ft | Stroller Friendly

Another iconic out-and-back flat, graveled, ADA accessible trail that follows a stream back to the Byron Glacier. There is a nice sitting area where the glacier ice used to be and is now higher up in the mountains. It is not advisable to venture further to the glacier and please be careful around the ice. Ice caves and bridges can collapse at any time, unexpectedly. Rather, spin in a circle and enjoy the numerous glaciers that surround the Portage Valley and enjoy the Byron Glacier from a safe distance. Before leaving the area don't forget to stop by the Begich Boggs Visitor Center or the Portage Lake Daylodge to learn more about the historic area.

Trail of Blue Ice

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Easy DISTANCE:10 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 416 ft PARKING FEE: \$5 | Stroller and Bike Friendly

This flat, wide and mostly paved path runs along the Portage Highway and Portage Creek crossing over salmon filled tributary streams. It's worth planning to take some time to watch the beautiful, cherry salmon as they're spawning upstream. At the end of the out-and-back trail is the Begich Boggs Visitor Center and the Portage Lake Visitor Center. You can book a trip on the Ptarmigan boat tour or continue hiking or cycling up to the Byron Glacier.

WHITTIER TRAILS

Horsetail Falls Trail

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Moderate DISTANCE: 2 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 541 ft

From the trailhead climb steadily, then steeply for 2 miles to a couple tent platforms and pools above treeline where you can see into the distance in all directions. After your hike down from this out-and-back route head down to the harbor for a treat at one of the many shops. Limited parking exists at the end of Reservoir Road and can be difficult to maneuver around the single lane dirt road. Additional parking is available just a little further up Shotgun Cove Road at Lu Young Park, which is worth going to on its own.

Portage Pass

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Moderate DISTANCE: 4.2 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 1433 ft

Immediately after exiting the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel from Portage turn on the first right onto a dirt road and the next right brings you to the trailhead. Additional parking can be found on the other side of the road from the tunnel staging area. The trail travels steeply up to views of the Portage Lake and several glaciers that surround the lake as well as views into the Head of the Bay and Passage Canal. Sparkling pools make this flat rest spot even more special. After your hike down from this out-and-back route head down to the harbor for a treat at one of the many shops.





HOPE TRAILS

Gull Rock

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Moderate DISTANCE: 11.4 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 2539 ft

Parking is available at the designated trailhead at the end of the Hope highway, approx.. 500 ft before the Porcupine Campground. Gull Rock shares a trailhead with Hope Point and the trail is well marked with signs at the trail junctions. This moderate trail traverses the northern coast of the Kenai Peninsula through spruce, birch, and hemlock forest while offering stunning views of Turnagain Arm and the Chugach Mountains. A scenic viewpoint at the end of the trail offers a great lunch spot and opportunities for beluga whale watching before heading back toward Hope for live music or dinner at one of the local restaurants.

Resurrection Pass

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Moderate to Hard DISTANCE: 39 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 6036 ft | Bike Friendly

This trail is accessible from the Resurrection North (4 miles outside of Hope on Resurrection Creek Rd), Resurrection South (mile 53 on the Sterling Highway), and Devil's Creek (mile 39 on the Seward Highway). A local favorite, this trail traverses 39 miles through the Kenai Mountains from Cooper Landing to Hope, climbing from either end through forests, creeks, and lakes into a wide alpine valley at the pass. Wildlife is plentiful, and those with keen eyes may notice evidence of the area's mining history. Forest Service cabins and designated campsites along the way make this a great option for multi-day backpacking or bikepacking. You'll have a great time however you chose to enjoy this jewel of the National Heritage Area.

Hope Point Trail

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Hard DISTANCE: 7.5 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 3411 ft

Parking is available at the designated trailhead at the end of the Hope Highway, approx. 500 ft before the Porcupine Campground. Hope Point shares a trailhead with Gull Rock and the trail is well marked with signs at the trail junctions. This challenging out-and-back trail is worth the effort and well maintained, with switchbacks that ease the elevation gain. In the peak of summer, wildflowers abound as you work your way above treeline to sweeping views of Turnagain Arm, Resurrection Pass, and the northern Kenai Mountains. Adventurous hikers looking to go a little further can continue past the end of the maintained trail to the summit of Hope Point on a primitive and unmarked trail.

COOPER LANDING TRAILS

Rainbow Lake Trail

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Easy DISTANCE: 1 Mile ELEVATION GAIN: 50 ft

To find the Rainbow Lake trailhead, cross the Kenai River bridge in Cooper Landing heading west and turn left on Snug Harbor Road. Follow the road for 11 miles and parking will be on your left. This short, 0.3 miles trail is perfect for families and all those looking for a short yet scenic walk with optional water activities! The trail ends at Rainbow Lake with a large hardened area and bear box. Those who continue up the Snug Harbor road will reach the Upper Russian Lakes trailhead and Cooper Lake.

Crescent Creek Trail

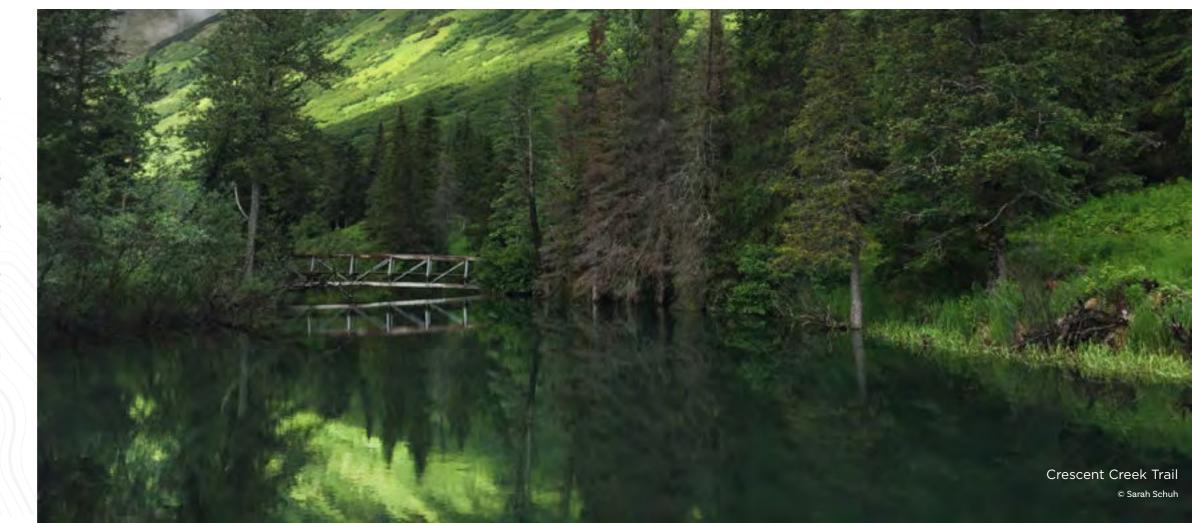
LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Moderate DISTANCE: 10.9 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 1581 ft | Bike friendly

The Crescent Creek Trailhead lies at the end of Quartz Creek Rd in Cooper Landing (a left just after the Sunrise Inn when headed west). This trail gently traverses the creek valley through birch and aspen forest for 4 miles before crossing the creek and continuing to gain elevation and better views as you work toward Crescent Lake, named for its crescent moon shape. You'll enjoy lunch along this large lake nestled in the mountains before either heading back the way you came, or continuing on toward Carter Lake via the Crescent Lake primitive trail. Two Forest Service cabins and several designated campsites along the lake make this a great place to stay and explore for a day or two if time allows.

Russian River Falls Trail

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Easy DISTANCE: 5.1 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 570 ft | ADA Accessible | Bike and Stroller Friendly

Parking for this trail is located at the Russian River campground. This wide, graveled trail is a favorite for locals and visitors alike who come to catch Alaskan salmon or see them leap and shimmy their way toward their quiet spawning grounds upstream. Here, you may also have the opportunity to see brown bears fishing for salmon in the falls- from a safe distance of course! This trail is also the access point for the 21-mile Russian Lakes Trail and the Barber Cabin, which lies on the shore of Lower Russian Lake and is operated and maintained by the Forest Service. Visit the K'Beq Interpretive Site across the highway before you head back home or continue on your Alaskan adventure.



MOOSE PASS TRAILS

Vagt Lake Trail

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Easy DISTANCE: 3.4 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 469 ft

Vagt Lake is a hidden gem, accessed by a short and pleasant trail that follows the shore of Lower Trail Lake before meandering gently through forest and muskeg. From the lake you can choose to continue on the primitive (unmaintained) trail across the creek and around the lake, head back the way you came, or create a loop by continuing south on the Iditarod National Historic Trail to Crown Point Road, which will lead you back down to your car at the trailhead.

Carter Lake Trail

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Moderate to Hard DISTANCE: 3.7 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 1105 ft

The Carter lake trailhead is located at mile 32 on the Seward Highway. The trail climbs steeply for the first mile up an old roadbed through the forest before leveling out in a wide subalpine valley. In the summer months, wildflowers abound and many enjoy fishing in Carter and Crescent Lakes. There are several designated campsites for those interested in camping overnight. The maintained trail ends after 3.4 miles at the Crescent Lake overlook. This hike can be done as an out-and-back, or connected to the Crescent Creek trail via the Crescent Lake primitive (unmaintained) trail.

Devil's Creek Trail

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Hard DISTANCE: 21 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 3103 ft | Bike friendly

A favorite for mountain bikers, the Devil's Creek trail begins below treeline and climbs along the valley wall gradually over 10 miles into the alpine to meet the Resurrection Pass trail. This trail provides stunning views of the Kenai Mountains, as well as an opportunity to swim in alpine lakes, pick blueberries, and hear marmots whistle. This is a great out-and-back bike ride or overnight backpacking trip, and can be made longer by continuing toward Hope or Cooper Landing on the Resurrection Pass trail.

Johnson's Pass Trail - Best in June and July

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Hard DISTANCE: 20.4 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 3041 ft | Bike friendly

A section of the National Historic Iditarod Trail, Johnson Pass can be accessed from either the north trailhead at mile 64 on the Seward Highway or the south trailhead at mile 32.5. Traversing 23 miles through pristine Alaskan mountainscapes, this trail crosses several glacially-fed creeks on the north end and crests at two large alpine lakes in the pass itself. As you travel south you encounter serene hemlock forest, salmon spawning streams, and ultimately finish your journey along lovely Trail Lake. Before you head home, stop in at the Trail Lakes Hatchery to see salmon at their different life stages. Be sure to organize your car shuttle or key swap before you go!



SEWARD TRAILS



Grayling Lake Trail

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Easy DISTANCE: 1.4 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 450 ft

The Grayling Lake Trail is an easy and pleasant section of the Iditarod National Historic Trail. Accessed from the trailhead at mile 13 on the west side of the Seward Highway, this trail winds through hemlock and spruce forest with occasional boardwalk across open muskegs. Grayling Lake is a great place for fishing and wildlife viewing and the trail offers excellent berry picking in the fall. This can be an out-and-back hike or can be made longer by continuing on the INHT south toward Divide, or north toward Primrose.

Lost Lake Trail

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Moderate DISTANCE: 13.8 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 2631ft | Bike friendly

This popular hike is accessed by the Lost Lake or Primrose Trailheads. The two trails connect in the middle at Lost Lake, a picturesque alpine lake nestled at the base of Mount Ascension, easily and often veiled by mist and clouds. The Lost Lake Trail climbs gradually through mighty spruce forest along the Lost Creek Valley into the subalpine. The Resurrection Peaks tower to the west and the hemlock forests eventually give way to the high alpine and panoramic mountain views. The Primrose Trail follows an old mining road for several miles before quickly climbing above treeline and rolling through the alpine toward Lost Lake. The 15-mile trail can be hiked or biked in a day, and there are several designated campsites available for those looking to do a multi-day trip.

Tonsina Creek

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Moderate DISTANCE: 4.1 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 770 ft

This family friendly out-and-back trail can be accessed from the Caines Head State Park parking area. At the Sealife Center, turn right and continue on the gravel road for a few miles, the parking area will be on your right. This trail follows the bluff through temperate rainforest before descending to sea level. Boardwalk through towering, moss-covered trees leads you to a designated recreation and camping area with a large covered picnic area and bear box. From here you can explore the beach, or continue on toward Caines Head and Fort McGilvray for a multi-day adventure. Some sections of the trail to Caines Head are only passable at low tide, so be sure to carry a tide book and time your trek appropriately!

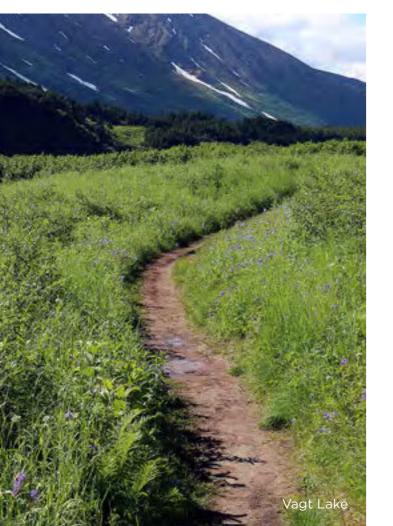
Mt. Marathon

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Hard DISTANCE: 4.1 Miles ELEVATION GAIN: 2923 ft |

This world-famous mountain in Seward is the site of the annual Mount Marathon Race on the 4th of July. The race trail climbs 3,000 ft over only 1.5 miles! An alternative route for hikers departs from a trailhead located along 1st avenue. Be very mindful about parking as this is a residential area. This moderate trail climbs through temperate rainforest into the alpine to meet a ridge, which then climbs gradually to the south toward the race highpoint. This hike is well worth the effort as you are rewarded with views of Resurrection Bay and the peaks, glaciers, islands and coves across the bay to the east.

OUR WHY

By participating in the Trail Challenge, you're not only going on an outdoor adventure in our National Heritage Area, but you're also making a difference. Your involvement directly contributes to our fundraising efforts to support trail-based outdoor learning for Alaskan youth.



We believe that everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy our extensive trail systems and outdoor spaces. In fact, KMTA has invested over \$410,000 to date to preserve the integrity of our trails, and we are now working hard to make them more accessible. Trails are a part of our living heritage, and we focus on building future public lands stewards who will advocate for them and the outdoor spaces they're in through our youth outdoor education programs.

However, the lack of affordable and reliable transportation remains a significant barrier to accessing the full range of trail-related experiences in Southcentral Alaska. Rising fuel costs, long travel distances, budget deficits, and expensive bus rental fees often make these opportunities unattainable for many families and kids. That's why we're raising funds through this year's Trail Challenge to help support the purchase of a passenger van that would help us connect more people—especially local youth-to our trail systems and enriching outdoor learning experiences. We firmly believe in the transformative power of spending time outside. With your help, we can ensure more kids have access to those benefits through inclusive, trail-based learning.

So, lace up your hiking boots, challenge yourself on the trails, and support trail-based education! Let's make a lasting impact together!



INVITE YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILIES TO JOIN US!

Gather your friends and family for this awesome adventure! Invite them to join the KMTA Trail Challenge and be a part of something amazing. Even if hiking isn't their thing or they can't participate directly, they can still make a difference. Encourage them to show their support by making a donation in your honor, helping to expand access to outdoor education for Alaskan youth. Their generosity will allow more kids to experience the transformative power of nature.

Donations can be made at the KMTA Trail Challenge registration page.

OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMS



Alaska Outdoor School

Cultivates student success and lifelong stewardship of public lands in Alaska through outdoor, place-based education for 5th graders. The twonight, three-day program is held at the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center in Portage Valley.



Pathfinders

Supports environmental literacy and lifelong learning through a series of experiential, inquiry-based field trips over the course of the school year. Pathfinders field days are seasonally focused and aligned with grade-level standards in Science and Physical Education.



SnowSchool

Keeps outdoor education going strong all winter long! KMTA's SnowSchool connects students K-12 to snow science, watersheds and winter recreation using a STEM-based curriculum from the Winter Wildlands Alliance.



Fresh Air Fridays

On in-service days, we believe in filling the air with freshness and fun! Join us for Fresh Air Fridays, held at various locations throughout the Heritage Area. These special days provide opportunities for students to enjoy outdoor activities and foster a love for nature.



Coastal Connections

Encourages exploration and discovery of our local coastal ecosystems in the summer months through land- and water-based outings, science, and art activities.



Empowering Outdoor Education

At KMTA, we are passionate about creating meaningful educational experiences that inspire young minds, foster stewardship, and promote lifelong learning. Join us in supporting our vital education programs and help us shape a future where outdoor learning is accessible to all.

DISCOVER THE HISTORY OF KMTA

VISIT --> LEARN --> SHARE



Begich, Boggs Visitor Center

In Portage Valley
Hours: Fri-Sun: 9AM-5PM
www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/chugach/recarea

Cooper Landing Historical Society Museum

Mile 48.7 Sterling Hwy.
Cooper Landing, AK 99572
Hours: Mon-Wed, 12-5 PM, Thur-Sun, By
Appointment
www.cooperlandingmuseum.com



Hope & Sunrise Historical & Mining Museum

64851 Second Street Hope, AK 99605 Open Memorial Day Weekend through Labor Day Weekend, 12-4PM



MORE PLACES TO GO

MODSE-PASS— Recept Little Team Type draw in the Pass The Pass of the Pass of the Pass of the Pass The Pass of the Pa

Moose Pass Water Wheel

Located on the same side as Estes Store - A hand-carved sign at the site reads, "Moose Pass, Alaska, is a peaceful, little town. If you have an ax to grind, do it here." Hunters (and residents) can sharpen their knives at this one-of-a-kind shrine.

VISIT --> LEARN --> SHARE



Seward Community Library & Museum

239 6th Ave, Seward, AK 99664 Tues-Sat 11AM-5PM Sunday 1-4:30PM www.cityofseward.us/departments/library-museum

Prince William Sound Museum

Located in the Anchor Inn 743 Whittier St, Whittier, AK 99693 Daily 9AM-7PM www.pwsmuseum.org



Roundhouse at Alyeska Museum

Top of the Alyeska Tram in Girdwood Daily 10:30AM-5:30PM www.roundhouseatalyeska.org



TIMELINE OF THE KMTA AREA



10,000+



Athabascans and Alutiig have traveled the Kenai corridor, and the Dena'ina established semi-permanent settlements and fish camps throughout the area.

1778 - Captain James Cook reaches what is now known as Cook Inlet.

1793 - Russians arrived in Resurrection Bay. Alexander Baranov establishes Russian fur trade.



Mary and Frank Lowell sail into Resurrection Bay and settle the Seward area. Frank was not impressed, but Mary, who was pregnant and tired of travelling, refused to go on. Frank eventually left the family and moved to Port Wrangell. Mary remained with her nine children.



Alaska Central Railway construction begins. (It becomes the Alaska Railroad in 1915 when the U.S. Government takes over the project.)

1000

1700

1725

1750

1775

1800

1850

1900

1910

1000 AD -1905

Dena'ina villages occupied the confluence of the Russian and Kenai Rivers. The trails that fisherman use today were the same trails that Alaska's early people used to harvest salmon and prepare for the winter.

Purchase of Alaska from Russia. The United States, championed by Abraham Lincoln's Secretary of State William H. Seward, paid Russia \$7.2 million for the purchase of Alaska. Many scoffed at the purchase of an icebox and dubbed it Seward's Folly.

1885

Hope, along with Sunrise, sprang up as a supply center for miners who stampeded to the area during the Turnagain Arm Gold Rush. Today Hope is considered the best preserved gold rush community in Southcentral Alaska. Many of the historical buildings are still in use.



1903

Official birthday of the city of Seward when John Ballaine and 82 other pioneers arrived in Resurrection Bay to build the railroad north.

TIMELINE OF THE KMTA AREA





- 1910

The Iditarod Trail system, originating in Seward, provided a winter dogsled route through the KMTA corridor to Alaska's interior gold fields.

Benny Benson, a seventh grader who lived at the Jesse Lee Home for Children in Seward, won a contest for the design of Alaska's territorial flag. The flag contains eight stars of gold on a field of blue, which represents the North Star and the constellation of the Big Dipper known as the Great Bear.





Alaska is proclaimed the 49th state of the Union.

Archaeologists found prehistoric artifacts, Indian and Eskimo graves near Mile 55 of the Sterling Highway near Cooper Landing. The Kenaitze/USFS K'beq (Footprints) interpretive site opened near Mile 53 in 1997—-an earlier site opened in 1992 was closed.

The first Mt. Marathon foot race is held in Seward.

The Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel, which connects Whittier to the Seward Highway, is completed. At two and half miles long, the tunnel is the longest combined highway and rail tunnel in North America.



1

The Seward Highway is completed.



The Great Earthquake. On Good Friday, March 27th, 1964 a 9.2 earthquake struck at 5:36 pm. It shook the ground for 4.5 minutes.

BIRD AND INDIAN

handful of miners staked claims on Bird Creek in 1897. When the census was taken in 1900, six miners lived at Bird Creek. Bird Creek miners recovered barely enough to meet their expenses. Although mining was a bust, construction of the railroad stimulated the growth of this small settlement.

n 1909, a sawmill was moved from Glacier Creek (Girdwood) to Bird Creek to provide timber and piling that would extend the railroad from Kern Creek west along Turnagain Arm. The sawmill employed 35 men, ten horses and a donkey engine. Weekly mail service from Seward over the trail to Iditarod and Nome began in 1914. The Iditarod Trail over Crow Pass was often windy and avalanche prone. An alternate route took dog teams past Bird and on to Indian where they could more safely traverse Ship Creek Valley toward Knik. Railroad workers were stationed at a sectionhouse at Bird Creek, which served as a flag stop along the tracks until the 1950s.

he opening of the Seward Highway in 1951 provided easier access to the Bird and Indian Valleys. In the 1960s, ten couples combined their resources to purchase the Charles Pierce homestead on Bird Creek. Other people settled on the old Bystedt homestead north of the Seward Highway. In 1972, the residents of Bird, Indian, and Rainbow organized a community council, which over the years has grown to approximately 800 people.

oday the Bird Point Scenic Overlook at milepost 96.5 gives visitors a scenic view of Turnagain Arm. In-

terpretive panels depict the natural history of the area. Hiking and biking trails along this stretch of the Seward Highway abound. Turnouts to the west of Bird Creek/Indian allow travelers to take in the view across Turnagain Arm. From the turnouts travelers can see the cut in the mountains where Sixmile Creek drains into the Arm. The town of Sunrise once bustled with mining activity on the banks of this creek. The peak on the east side of Sixmile Creek is Mount Alpenglow. The town of Hope lays to the southwest. Bird Creek at milepost 101.2 is a popular fishing destination. The nearby Bird Creek State Recreation Site offers camping sites for fishermen and other travelers.



KMTA COMMUNITIES HISTORY

GIRDWOOD

lacier City sprung along the banks of Glacier Creek to supply bed, food, and drink to miners and travelers in the 1890s. When James Girdwood, a well-to-do Irishman, arrived in 1900, Glacier City had one main street, a few log cabins, and a number of tent frames. Girdwood proceeded to stake several claims above Crow Creek Mine.

nown affectionately as "Colonel," Girdwood was so well-regarded by the miners in the area that they eventually changed the name of the community from Glacier City to Girdwood. By 1917, the town had become a recreation hub for miners – of the 16 buildings then standing, five were saloons.

hile mining prompted the creation of Girdwood, the development of transportation kept the community alive as the Turnagain Arm Gold Rush died down. Dog teams and their handlers stopped in Girdwood as they traveled the Iditarod Trail from Seward to the new gold fields of Iditarod and Nome. Several saw mills in the area cut ties for the tracks being laid down during the construction of the Alaska Railroad. Workers for the railroad and later road crews for the Seward Highway used Girdwood as a construction camp.

In 1954, 11 local men formed the Alyeska Ski Corporation and by 1959 the first chairlift and day lodge provided the beginnings of what would someday become an international ski resort. Constructed in 1960, the Roundhouse housed the original bull wheel for Chair One, and became home to the Alyeska ski patrol.

he land around Girdwood sank eight feet during the earthquake of 1964. The waters of Turnagain Arm rushed in and flooded the town, forcing residents to relocate two miles up the valley.

oday, Alyeska Resort, a 60 passenger aerial tramway, and world-class skiing bring visitors from all over the world to Girdwood. Even so, the community retains its small-town charm, a place rich with history and the colorful folks who call it home.



WHITTIER AND PORTAGE

hittier is a gateway to Prince William Sound and a launching point for day cruises, sea kayaking, and other adventures. Whittier is perched at the end of a 12.4-mile branch line that connects Prince William Sound with the main railroad line and the highway system along the Turnagain Arm.

The town was originally built by the U.S. Army as a deep-water port and railroad terminus to transport fuel and other supplies during World War II. A second deepwater port was built in case the port at Resurrection Bay in Seward ever fell under attack. At the height of military activity, the community of Whittier was a bustling town of more than 1,000 people. The current population is only about 182. Before 2000, the only land access to Whittier was by train. The Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel is now a combination highway and railway, allowing cars and trains to take turns traveling to Whittier.

t the head of Portage Valley, at the end of scenic Turnagain Arm, lies the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center. The center showcases the living glaciers that continue to carve the landscape and shape life in the Chugach National Forest. Built on the remnants of a terminal moraine left by Portage Glacier, the Visitor Center is staffed with Forest Service interpreters and provides programs on the historical and natural wonders of the valley. Along with interactive exhibits, the center features the award-winning film, "Voices From the Ice."



KMTA COMMUNITIES HISTORY

HOPE

ope and nearby Sunrise sprang up in 1895 as supply centers for miners who stampeded to the area during the Turnagain Arm Gold Rush. Business was brisk at Hope in 1898, so the Alaska Commercial Company opened a store. In 1902, miner Ed Crawford built a cabin that would, beginning in 1904, serve as Hope's first school house.

he community came together to build a social hall in 1902, one that still serves as the town's community center. The mining district was growing crowded. Most of the best claims had already been staked. So when news of the Klondike gold strike arrived, many prospectors headed for the Yukon. Miners that stayed worked first with pick and shovel and later with hydraulic mining equipment. The larger mining operations provided paying jobs but drove away many small independent miners.

y 1906, the Hope and Sunrise districts had produced more than \$1 million in gold but the boom was over. Only 35-40 people wintered in Hope in 1910-1911.

nlike Sunrise, Hope survived dwindling gold production. Resurrection Creek's sunnier location attracted permanent settlers to take up residence in Hope rather than Sunrise, which sat in the shadow of the Kenai Mountains. Residents took up hunting and fishing and grew spectacular gardens. Some worked as guides and others worked on boats that ferried freight and people across Turnagain Arm and Cook Inlet.

roday Hope is considered the best preserved gold rush community in Southcentral Alaska. Many of the historic buildings are still in use. The Hope and Sunrise Historical and Mining Museum is now home to the Bruhn-Ray mining structures that were moved from the Canyon Creek area by the Alaska Department of Transportation. A bunkhouse, blacksmith shop, and barn, restored by the Hope and Sunrise Historical Society. give visitors a flavor of the early years. The museum also features artifact sheds with early equipment used in mining and farming. Visitors can see remnants of daily living, old newspapers, and photographs of early pioneers inside the log museum. Hope is currently home to nearly 200 residents and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district.



COOPER LANDING

he Cooper Landing area is rich in native and pioneer history. Close to the confluence of the Russian and Kenai Rivers, Cooper Landing was once home to the Kenai Peninsula's early people. Depressions where Native semi-subterranean houses once stood can still be seen throughout the area.

The gold rush to Cooper Creek and the northern Kenai Peninsula between 1896 and 1912 brought an influx of people, some of whom settled in Cooper Landing. In 1910, Charles Hubbard built a gold dredge downriver from the mouth of Cooper Creek on Kenai River. By that time, however, gold was beginning to dry up and miners wanting to stay in Cooper Landing had to diversify. Many became big-game guides, trappers, and fur farmers. Others subsisted on hunting, fishing, and gardening.

amilies instrumental in settling the community were George Towle and his sons, Tom, Ben, and Frank; Charles and Beryl Lean, their son Clements (Nick) and Charles' brother Jack Lean; and Duncan McGregor Little.

ooper Landing was connected to Kenai by road in 1948 and to Anchorage in 1951. The area has been designated as a National Historic District by the National Park Service. The Cooper Landing Museum, at Milepost 48.4 of the Sterling Highway which opened in 2003, highlights local mining history and the area's pioneers. The museum site's four historic buildings include the Cooper Landing Post Office.

oday summer tourism and recreation fuel the area's economy. Called the "Gem of the Kenai Peninsula," Cooper Landing hosts the annual Festival of the Forest to celebrate the creation of the Chugach National Forest 1907.



KMTA COMMUNITIES HISTORY

MOOSE PASS

his scenic community is tucked in the Kenai Mountains along the shoreline of Upper Trail Lake. Moose Pass served as a transportation crossroads since its earliest settlers arrived by dogsled. Oscar Christensen and Mickey Natt came to the area by horse and dog team in 1909.

he log cabin and log roadhouse they built served as an inn and supply house for prospectors headed for the gold fields of the north. The original Iditarod Trail was blazed through the area in 1910 and 1911. By 1912, Moose Pass was the site of a railroad construction camp.

fter Christiansen and Natt built their roadhouse, entrepreneurs built sawmills to supply timber for local construction. The railroad had a never-ending need for hemlock ties. Residents also used lumber to build homes, and miners needed wood for nearby mining operations.

he train began mail service around 1927, with sacks of letters and parcels tossed haphazardly out of the rail car. Sorting and delivering the mail was sometimes left to chance, which prompted the ire of local residents. In 1928, Leora Estes Roycroft took charge of the mail, became the first postmaster, and officially christened the community "Moose Pass." The mail was delivered to Moose Pass by train until 1939, when service was switched to a highway carrier.

pioneering family of the community, the Estes family provided the first electricity for the community of Moose Pass. They purchased the local grocery store, which had been in opera-

tion since the 1930s and is still in use today. The present store is part of two buildings that were joined together, with one half, part of an old roadhouse. The current counter was at one time part of the roadhouse bar. In Alaska's Kenai Peninsula: The Road We've Traveled, historian Ann C. Whitmore-Painter writes, "Locals say an old-timer died at a barstool there and haunts the store today." 'Al' is a friendly ghost, however.

oday, the community has a population of 200 and is the site of the Annual Moose Pass Summer Solstice Festival, an event that takes place every June.



SEWARD

lacier-clad mountains rise up around Seward, a historic community nestled at the head of Resurrection Bay. Since earliest times, the "Gateway City" has been a transportation hub, a place to access Alaska's many treasures. The area was once a crossroads for the Unegkurmiut Eskimo, akin to the Sugpiak/Alutiiq people of Prince William Sound.

n 1792, when Alaska was a Russian colony, Alexander Baranov sailed into the bay seeking shelter from a storm. It was the Russian Sunday of the Resurrection, so Baranov named the cove Resurrection Bay. He then built a ship-building yard where he and his men constructed the schooner Phoenix. Frank and Mary Lowell settled in the area in the early 1880s. Frank eventually abandoned Mary but she and her nine children built a life gardening, raising foxes, staking gold claims, and forwarding mail from monthly steamships to the Turnagain Arm gold fields.

he city of Seward's birthdate is August 28, 1903, the day that John Ballaine and 82 pioneers arrived to build a railroad north to Alaska's resource-rich interior. The new community was named Seward after Secretary of State William H. Seward, who had negotiated the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867. The first spike of the Alaska Central Railway was driven in Seward on May 4, 1904. The Iditarod Trail system, also originating in Seward, provided a winter dogsled route through the Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm Corridor to Alaska's interior gold fields beginning in 1910.

oday, with a population just under 3.000. Seward continues as a transportation hub. It is the southern terminus for the Alaska Railroad and a destination of cruise ships traveling the Inside Passage. Home to nearly a dozen National Historic Sites. Seward is steeped in history, much of which is showcased at the Seward Museum on Third Avenue. Other historical sites include the Founder's Monument on Ballaine Boulevard; Milepost O on Railway Avenue commemorating the Iditarod National Historic Trail: and the Benny Benson Memorial, a tribute to the 13-year-old Native youngster who designed the Alaska flag in 1927. Seward is also the site of the famous Fourth of July Mount Marathon race, a contest that began as a bet between two sourdoughs more than 70 years ago.



KMTA COMMUNITIES HISTORY

SUNRISE

In 1898, Sunrise was briefly the largest city in Alaska. Today the gold rush town is just a memory, a ghost of the days when the Turnagain Arm Gold Rush brought prospectors north to seek their fortunes. Springing up along the banks of Sixmile Creek in 1895, the town was organized and platted as Sunrise City in May 1896.

iners arrived by shallow-draft boats from Turnagain Arm and worked the Canyon, East Fork, Mills, and Lynx Creeks. A tram road built in 1899 linked the townsite with the docks and warehouses at the mouth of Sixmile Creek. During the peak of the gold rush the town's population surged to 2,000 people.

s Sunrise grew crowded, latecomers were forced to build cabins and pitch tents on the hillsides west and east of town. A commercial ferry operation carried people by boat between the Sunrise townsite on the west bank of Sixmile Creek and the cabins on the east bank.

hen the Turnagain Arm Gold Rush began to die down, Sunrise continued to be an important way-point for the Iditarod Trail system that linked Seward with other mining camps to the north such as Knik, Iditarod, and Nome. During summers, packers carried supplies from milepost 34 of the Alaska Northern Railway over Johnson Pass to Sunrise where supplies were transferred to boats and then ferried across Cook Inlet to Knik. During the winter, supplies were transported by dog team along the rail-road route to Kern – where the rails end-

ed - and then overland across Crow Creek Pass and on to Knik. When railroad construction extended the rails to the Matanuska and Knik area in 1916, the summer traffic on the wagon road over Johnson Pass to Sunrise all but ended. This new rail link contributed to Sunrise's decline. By the 1930s only one resident, Mike Connolly, lived in the area.

oday, all that remains of the bustling community of Sunrise is a cemetery. The Point Hope Cemetery is located off an unmarked dirt road at approx-



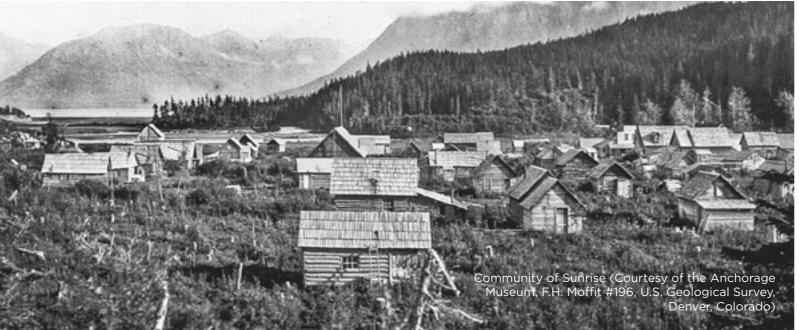
SUNRISE

imately milepost 8.5 of the Hope Highway. The cemetery was recently restored by the Hope and Sunrise Historical Society, Dennis Sammut, private owner of the old Sunrise townsite, historian Rolfe Buzzell, and other volunteers. New grave markers were replaced with replicas of the originals. Workers constructed a cedar fence around the cemetery, and the white picket fence around the "Baby Smith" gravesite was restored.

f the 16-18 people buried at Point Comfort, five were miners killed in an avalanche on Lynx Creek during spring of 1901. Three infants are also buried there. A. W. "Jack" Morgan, in his book Memories of Old Sunrise, remembers helping dig

the grave for the baby of Jack and Nellie Frost. "I believe everyone in town came down when we buried the little fellow. . . . I don't believe there was a dry eye in the whole crowd."

organ also pointed out the cemetery's peaceful quality. "The point was covered with white snow during the winters and lovely wild flowers during the spring and summer. If I had to be buried I think it is where I would want to be." What he failed to mention is that he and his wife had already buried an infant at the cemetery - the year before he'd helped dig a grave for the Frost child.





All information about the history of the KMTA Communities is from the book "Trails Across Time: History of an Alaska Mountain Corridor" by Kaylene Johnson-Sullivan. You can learn more about the history of the KMTA Area by purchasing her book at www.emberpressbooks.com/product/trails-across-time/

Historical Photo Credits: Page 33

1. Canoes of the Oonalashka (Courtesy of the Anchorage Museum)

2. Map of "Cook's River" (David Rumsey Map Collection, www.DavidRumsey.com)

3. Woman of Prince William Sound, from the book "Charts and Plates to Cook" drawn by John Webber (Official artist on Cook's 3rd Voyage) (Courtesy of the Anchorage Museum)

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- 1. The Lowell Family from left: William Lowell, wife Mary, two children, matriarch Mary Lowell, daughter Eva and possibly daughter Alice. (Resurrection Bay Historical Society 20.1.1.)
- 2. The Loop, designed by Frank Bartlett, to bypass a glacier and steep grades through the Kenai Mountains. (Courtesy of the Anchorage Museum)
- 3. Robert Mathison with 385 ounces of Gold, which was a result of 58 days of placer mining. Mathison and his family, originally from Texas, became one of the first families to settle permanently in Hope. (Hope and Sunrise Historical Society

 -Mathison Collection 2010.030.019)
- 4. T.W. Hawkins (in doorway) arrived Aug. 28, 1903, and started a store with Charles Brown. W.A. McPherson photo. (Resurrection Bay Historical Society 506.1.5)

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1. Benny Benson, Alaska State Library (Alaska State Library Portrait Collection, P01-1921)
2. Johnny Hughes won first place in the 1939 Mt. Marathon Race. (Resurrection Bay Historical Society 78.1.65)

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- 1. Child holding "49th State" Pennant(UAA Consortium Library Ruth A.M. Schmidt papers, 1912-2014, UAA-HMC-0792)
- 2. The Anchorage Daily Times October 16th, 1951 front cover announces the opening of the Seward Highway (Cooper Landing Historical Society)
 - 3. Town of Seward Alaska, taken on Easter Sunday 1964. Two days after the Alaska Earthquake." (Frank C. Fox photographs, 1946-1993. Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage. UAA-HMC-0708

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