

Public Use Cabins

Wrangell-St.Elias National Park and Preserve

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior



Nugget Creek Cabin

Location: N61.626122, W143.713382

Refer to USGS Maps: McCarthy 1:250,000; McCarthy 1:63,360 (C-8)

Reservations: Required. Please call (907) 822-7401 during summer and (907) 822-5234 during winter. Reservations can be made six months in advance of your first night of stay. The maximum stay in the cabin is 7 days in a 30 day period without a permit.



Access: This cabin is accessible from the McCarthy Road. Cabin can be reached from the 14-mile Nugget Creek Trail. Trailhead is located on the Kotsina Road. Kotsina Rd turn-off is at mile 14.5 of the McCarthy Rd, on the north side of the road. Nugget Creek Trail is suitable for ATV, foot, horse, or mountain bike. Cabin can also be accessed by small airplane at a 900' gravel airstrip approximately 200 yards from the cabin. Water can be carried from nearby Nugget Creek.

Description: Nugget Creek Cabin is 15 feet by 19 feet in size and contains a woodstove, table and chairs, fire extinguisher, outhouse, and four standard twin wooden bunks. This cabin is on the north side of Nugget Creek at about 3,000' elevation. Nugget Creek feeds into the Kuskulana River about 1/4 mile downstream from the cabin. The cabin is situated in the flat river bottom amongst a forest of spruce and aspen. The location is suitable for off-trail hiking to the terminus of the Kuskulana glacier. A trail extends for 1.5 miles beyond the cabin to access the old mine sites at the 3,800' elevation on the bench above Nugget Creek.

Attracted by Ahtna reports of float copper, prospectors began examining the Kuskulana River and its tributaries about 1899. James McCarthy was one of the first to examine Nugget Creek, named for a two-ton copper nugget which prospectors had discovered in the stream bed. McCarthy staked numerous claims in the vicinity and built a small cabin, only the sill logs of which remain. Alaska Consolidated Copper eventually acquired McCarthy's claims, but although the company mined property on Nugget Creek for about a decade, it was a wasted effort. Nugget Creek's entire production consisted of two carloads of high-grade ore shipped prior to 1916, and 160 tons of hand-sorted ore shipped after. The company's failure to locate additional ore eventually forced it to abandon its effort in 1919.

This public use cabin was built in 1966 by Tom Byron, who intended to homestead the area. It was subsequently improved by Jerry E. Coppess, who owns a nearby claim. It is now owned and maintained by the National Park Service.

Airstrip: none

