

# Root Glacier Trail

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

National Park Service  
US Department of the Interior



**Maps:** USGS Maps, McCarthy 1:250,000, McCarthy (B-6), (C-6) 1:63,360

**Distance:** Approximately 4 miles round trip from Kennecott to the glacier or 8 miles roundtrip to the Erie Mine tram cables.

**Time:** 2-6 hours (or longer, if desired)

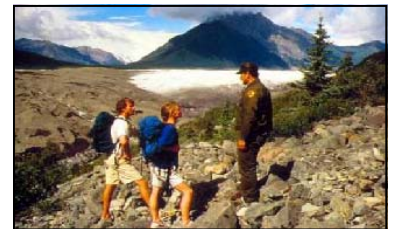
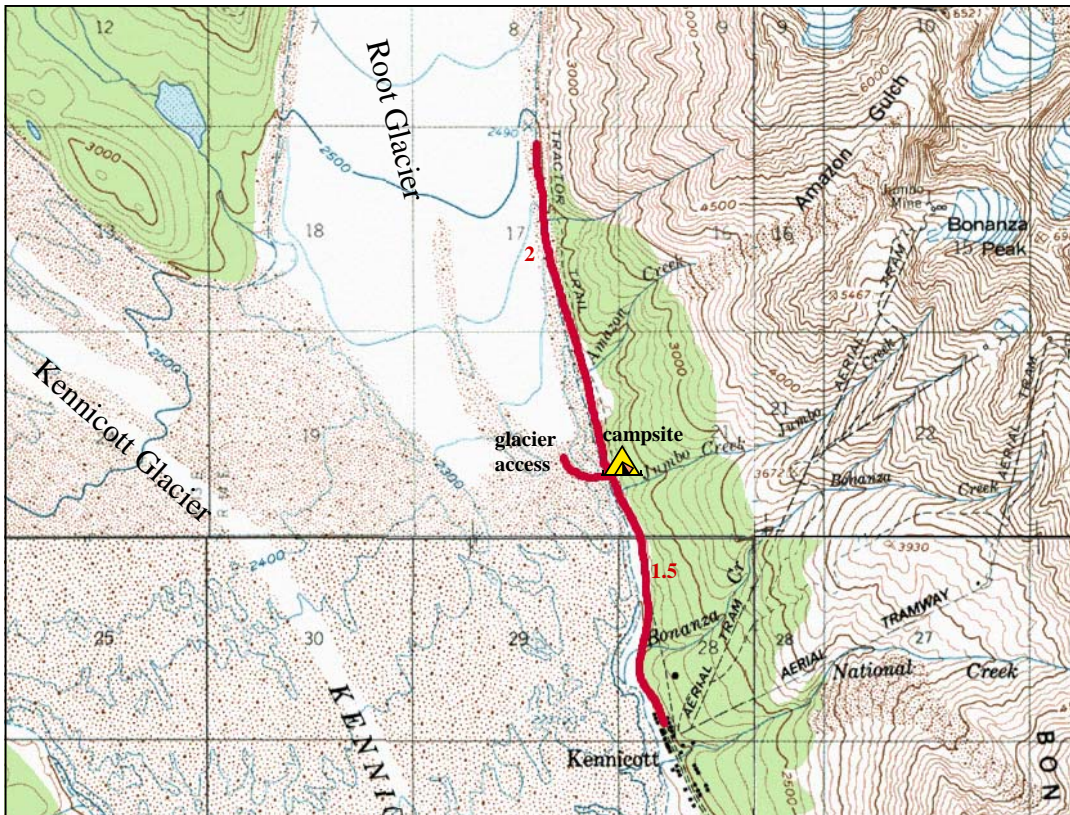
**Access:** Road access from Chitina via the McCarthy Road. Either walk the road between McCarthy and Kennecott (an extra 4.5 miles), take the commercial shuttle, or ride a bike.

**Difficulty:** Easy to Moderate.

**Highlights:** Glacier viewing, scenery, mining history



**Note:** If you are camping at the Jumbo Creek Camping Area, the Erie Mine tram cables or Donaho Mountain, please ensure that your food is stored in the bear-resistant food boxes. Maps of box locations are available in the Kennecott Visitor Center.



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## Route:

From the Kennecott Visitor Center, walk through the Kennecott Mill Town, north towards the Root Glacier. About a half-mile beyond the visitor center, the road will split. Take the left hand trail. The trail will soon cross over Bonanza Creek and then wind its way through the lateral moraines of the Kennicott and Root Glaciers. After about a mile the trail curves sharply to the right and uphill, follow the trail to cross Jumbo Creek on the footbridge. After approximately another 1/4 mile, the trail reaches the Root Glacier access trail. (Primitive campsites, along with an outhouse and food lockers, are available in this area.)

- To access the glacier, turn left at the sign and follow the trail as it winds down the moraine to the toe of the glacier. If you decide to walk on the glacier, use extreme caution. The ice can be very slippery and dangerous.
- The main trail continues past the turn to the glacier paralleling the glacier for approximately 2+ more miles. Near the end, Erie Mine bunkhouse is visible high above on the hillside to the right of the trail, the Root Glacier is below on the left, and the Stairway Icefall is further up valley.



**Potential Hazards:** Avoid walking along the edge of Root Glacier as rotting ice and swift, cold water are potentially dangerous. Bears are present along the entire route. For maximum safety, travel in groups, be noisy when you are walking, and never give any food to a bear.

## Comments:

This is a great day-hike with views of Mt. Blackburn, Regal Mountain, and Donaho Peak. It is also a nice mountain bike trip. The terrain is relatively level with some moderate elevation gain and loss. If a longer hike is desired, follow the trail beyond the camping area, across Amazon Creek, and beyond.