

Nabesna Road ORV Trails

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior



Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve was established under the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).

In abidance with ANILCA, the National Park Service provides reasonable and feasible access to in-holders, subsistence, and recreational users in the park. The most common means of access is by

Permits:



Recreational ORV Use:

- ORV permits are required for all recreational users .
- Recreational ORV use is restricted to established ORV trails.
- To receive a permit, apply in person at the Slana Ranger Station or Park Headquarters.
- [Always check on current ORV trail conditions and/or closures that may be in effect.](#)
- [Currently the Suslota Lake Trail, Copper Lake Trail, and Tanada Lake Trail are CLOSED to Recreational ORV use.](#)

Subsistence ORV Use:

- ORV permits are encouraged for all subsistence users.
- To minimize damage, subsistence users are encouraged to use established trails and dry river beds
- Subsistence users are those individuals who reside within a local resident zone community
- To receive a permit, apply in person at the Slana Ranger Station or Park Headquarters.
- [Always check on current ORV trail conditions and/or closures that may be in effect.](#)

Hunting and Fishing:



*Some lands within Wrangell-St. Elias are designated as **National Park**, while others are designated as **National Preserve**. Hunting regulations are different within each designation:*

- Sport hunting is **ALLOWED** within the boundaries of the National Preserve.
- Sport hunting is **NOT ALLOWED** within the National Park.
- Fishing is **ALLOWED** in both the Park and Preserve.
- All State of Alaska hunting/fishing regulations apply.

Operate Responsibly:



Tread lightly! Careless ORV operation can cause serious resource damage. By using common sense and courtesy, what is available today, will be here to enjoy tomorrow.

- Wheeled vehicles exceeding 1000 pounds are not permitted.
- Tire chains are not permitted.
- Always pack out all trash and fuel containers.
- Cross streams only at designated points or where the trail crosses the stream.
- Before heading out, always check on trail conditions and any current restrictions or closures.
- Respect private property. Do not trespass or enter private cabins.

Suslota Lake Trail

<i>Trailhead:</i>	Parking at Milepost 11.2 Nabesna Road, Trailhead at Milepost 11 Nabesna Road
<i>Distance/Time:</i>	Approximately 8 miles / 4 - 6 hours by ORV. Closed to Recreational ORV Use
<i>Land Status:</i>	National PRESERVE
<i>Trail Conditions:</i>	Travel is extremely difficult due to muskeg, mud bogs, standing water and tussocks. Conditions vary with seasonal rains and amount of use, but are generally poor and very wet.
<i>Ranger Tips:</i>	This trail is not recommended for hiking. After approximately 8 miles the trail crosses out of the National Preserve and on to State of Alaska land. Suslota Lake is outside of the Park boundary on State land. There are a number of privately owned cabins around the lake. Heaviest use is during mid-August through mid-September.

Copper Lake Trail

<i>Trailhead</i>	Milepost 12.2 Nabesna Road Closed to Recreational ORV Use
<i>Distance/Time:</i>	14 miles to the Wilderness Boundary (<i>end of recreational ORV use</i>). 4-6 hours by ORV
<i>Land Status:</i>	National PARK
<i>Trail Condition:</i>	Varies with seasonal rains and amount of use. Use caution when crossing Tanada Creek as it can be deep and swift. The first 6 miles are generally over dry dirt. The remainder of the trail may be very wet with numerous mud bogs. Travel can be difficult. Generally the trail is in fair condition.
<i>Private Lands:</i>	Private lands and structures are located at the western and eastern ends of Copper Lake.
<i>Special Conditions:</i>	Sockeye Salmon migrate up Tanada Creek to spawn in Tanada Lake. You may cross the creek at the established crossing ONLY. Recreational ORV use is not permitted beyond the Wilderness Boundary.
<i>Ranger Tips:</i>	The first 2.5 miles of the trail is suitable for day hikers. ORV's are the principle users of the trail. Copper Lake offers great fishing for Lake Trout, Grayling, Burbot and Kokanee. There are opportunities for base camping and hiking around the headwaters of the Copper River in the Wrangell Mountains.

Caribou Creek Trail

<i>Trailhead:</i>	Parking at Milepost 18.9 Nabesna Road, Trailhead at Milepost 19.2 Nabesna Road
<i>Distance/Time:</i>	4 miles / 1 - 2 hours by ORV, 3-4 hours hiking
<i>Land Status:</i>	National PRESERVE
<i>Trail Conditions:</i>	Conditions vary with seasonal rains and amount of use, but, generally, are good. The trail surface is dirt and rocky streambeds. Creek crossings can be hazardous when water levels are high. The first portion of the trail is easy but becomes more difficult because of several stream crossings and elevation gain.
<i>Ranger Tips:</i>	Recommended for hiking and ORV use. Caribou Creek trail offers outstanding views of the Wrangell Mountains and the Copper River Valley as well as access to hiking in the Mentasta Mountains. The recreational ORV trail ends at a small wooden shack located just above tree line.

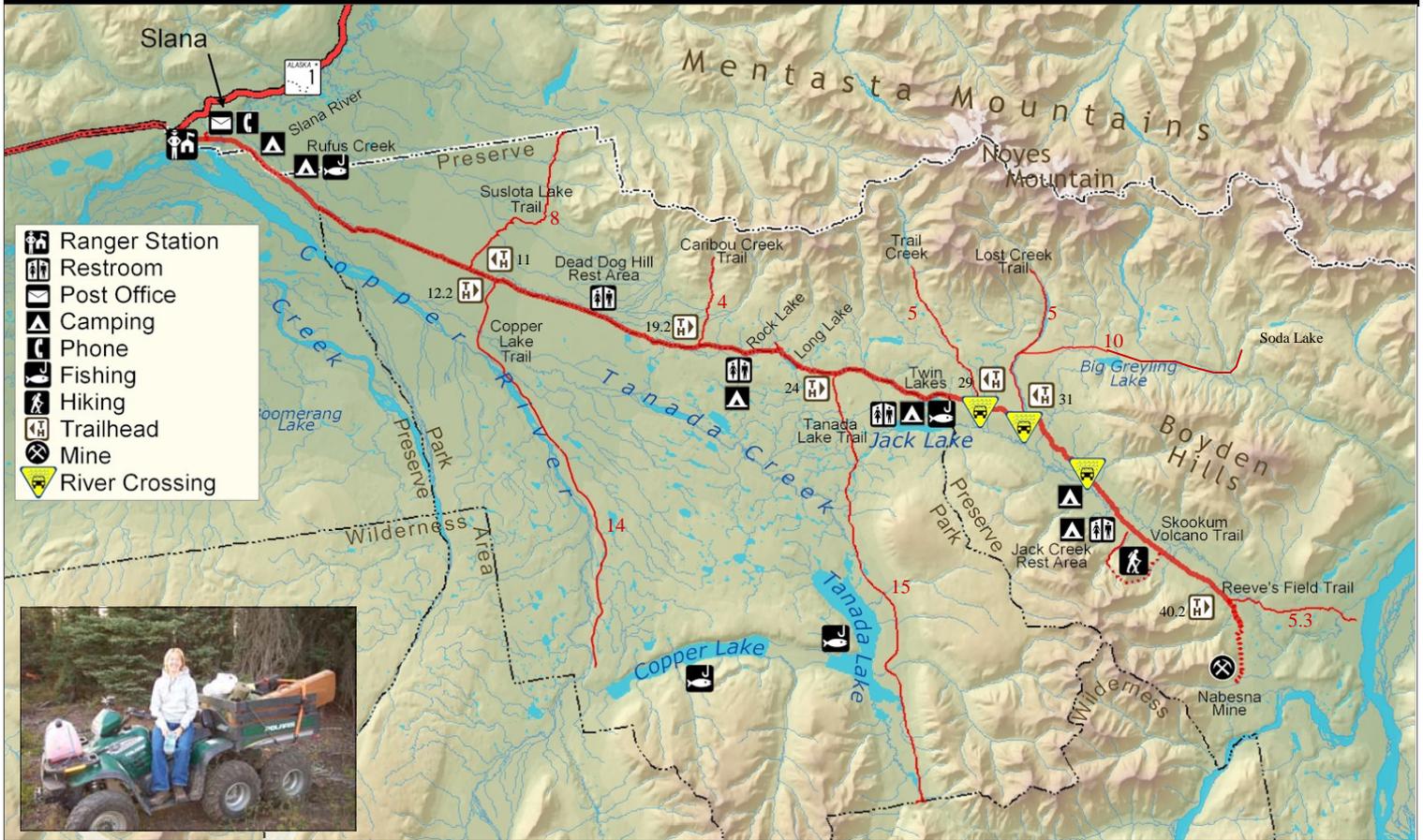
Tanada Lake Trail

<i>Trailhead:</i>	Milepost 24.0 Nabesna Road Closed to Recreational ORV Use
<i>Distance/Time:</i>	15 miles / 8 - 10 hours by ORV to the Preserve Wilderness Boundary.
<i>Land Status:</i>	National PARK
<i>Trail Condition:</i>	Travel is generally extremely difficult due to deep mud bogs and tussocks. Drainage is poor and conditions are worsened after rain and heavy use. Conditions improve beyond Tanada Lake.
<i>Ranger Tips:</i>	Not recommended for hikers, however, some hikers do use this trail to access Sheep Lake and Grizzly Lake. Poor trail conditions make this a difficult hike. Hikers generally allow 5 to 7 days for this trip. The recreational ORV trail ends at the confluence of Goat Creek and Pass Creek, which marks the Wilderness Preserve Boundary. Tanada Lake offers opportunities for wildlife viewing, bird watching and fishing for Grayling, Lake Trout and Burbot.

Trail Creek Trail

<i>Trailhead:</i>	Milepost 29.0 Nabesna Road
<i>Distance/Time :</i>	Approximately 5 miles / 2 - 3 hours by ORV
<i>Land Status:</i>	National PRESERVE
<i>Trail Condition:</i>	Generally good over a gravel stream bed. Rain and snow melt can cause dramatic increases in water levels. High water in Trail Creek can make travel hazardous. Stay alert to changing weather conditions.
<i>Ranger Tips:</i>	Appropriate for hikers or ORVs. Hikers can continue north up Trail Creek to a pass and cross over to the Lost Creek drainage. It is possible to follow Lost Creek back to Nabesna Road creating a loop trip. Allow 2- 3 days. This is a popular trip, appropriate for hikers in good shape with intermediate backcountry skills. The area at the headwaters of Trail Creek offers excellent opportunities for base camping with day hikes in the Mentasta Mountains.

Nabesna Road



Lost Creek Trail

Trailhead: Milepost 30.8 Nabesna Road

Distance/Time : Approximately 5 miles. 2 miles to Big Grayling Lake/Soda Lake Trailhead. 2-3 hours by ORV

Land Status: National PRESERVE

Trail Condition: Generally good over gravel stream bed and packed dirt. The trail follows the Lost Creek stream bed but sometimes enters through the forest adjacent to the creek. Rain and snowmelt can cause dramatic increases in water levels. High water in Lost Creek can make travel hazardous. Stay alert to changing weather conditions.

Ranger Tips: Hikers can reverse the Trail Creek-Lost Creek loop and start at Lost Creek. Some hikers report that this is an easier direction in terms of route finding. The recreational ORV trail ends where the stream exits the narrow canyon.



Big Grayling Lake & Soda Creek Trail

Trailhead:	Mile 2 of the Lost Creek Trail (<i>Park at the Lost Creek Trailhead</i>)
Distance/Time:	2.5 miles to Big Grayling Lake. 10 miles to Soda Creek Mineral Spring. 4-5 hours by ORV
Land Status:	National PRESERVE
Trail Condition:	Varies with seasonal rains and amount of use, but, generally, trail conditions are good. The first 1.5 miles are over hard packed ground. There are wet conditions around Big Grayling Lake. The trail continues from Big Grayling Lake to the end of the recreational trail along the Platinum Creek and Soda Creek streambeds
Route:	Trail begins at approximately mile 2 of the Lost Creek Trail. The trail heads east after leaving Lost Creek through a spruce forest until reaching an open marshy area around Big Grayling Lake. The trail continues east/southeast past Big Grayling Lake along the Platinum Creek drainage. When reaching the confluence of Platinum and Soda Creeks the trail turns north and follows the Soda Creek streambed.
Private Lands:	There is private land located on the northeast and southwest corners of Big Grayling Lake.
Ranger Tips:	Good for hiking and ORV use. The Recreational ORV trail ends at a campsite on Soda Creek and is marked with a sign. Continue on foot to the mineral spring and on to Soda Lake. This area is great for base camping with day hikes and opportunities to view Dall's sheep and other wildlife and birds.. Allow several days to explore the Mentasta Mountains and Soda Lake.

Reeve's Field Trail

Trailhead:	Milepost 40.2 Nabesna Road
Distance/Time:	5.3 miles / 3 - 4 hours by ORV.
Land Status:	National PRESERVE
Trail Conditions:	Travel is difficult due to mud bogs and tussocks. Trail surface is dirt and corduroy improvements for the first 2 miles, with tussocks and mud bogs for most of the remainder of the trail. There are two creek crossings that can be very hazardous. Trail users should stay alert to changing conditions and rising water levels.
Private Lands:	There are two private allotments located adjacent to the Reeve Field trail near Nabesna River. Private property begins shortly after the second Jack Creek crossing. A fifty foot easement is provided for trail users. PLEASE STAY ON THE TRAIL.
Ranger Tips:	The first mile of the trail is an easy hike to Jack Creek. Jack Creek is great for grayling fishing. If you continue on the trail you must cross Jack Creek twice. The Recreational ORV trail dead ends at Nabesna River, but hikers can continue up stream as far as the confluence with Jacksina Creek. Use extreme caution before attempting to cross either Nabesna River or Jacksina Creek. Both are glacial rivers and very hazardous.



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between park and preserve?

Sport hunting and trapping are allowed in the preserve only. ORV's are permitted in both areas, however, recreational users are required to obtain a permit and stay on established trails. Sport fishing is allowed in both park and preserve. All State of Alaska regulations apply.

What is the difference between Wilderness park and Wilderness preserve?

Recreational ORV use is not allowed in Wilderness. Motorboats, airplanes and snowmobiles (*when there is adequate snow cover*) may be operated in both Wilderness park and Wilderness preserve. Sport hunting and trapping are not allowed in Wilderness park. Sport fishing is allowed in both Wilderness park and preserve. All State of Alaska regulations apply.

Where can I get an ORV permit?

Permits are available at the Visitor Center in Copper Center and the Slana Ranger Station on Nabesna Road. Permits are free of charge. If you cannot get to one of those places during regular business hours, we will work with you to complete the permit via fax machine. Permits are not available online nor are we able to leave them unattended for you to pick up after hours.

What's the difference between a Recreational ORV permit and a Subsistence ORV Permit?

Recreational ORV permits are required for anyone who wishes to operate an ORV in Wrangell-St. Elias who is not a local, rural resident. These permits require recreational users to stay on established trails. Subsistence ORV permits are optional and are issued upon request to residents of local rural communities that have been identified as having customary and traditional use of park lands. Subsistence ORV operators are not restricted to established trails.

