

Skookum Volcano Trail

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve



Access: The trail leaves the Nabesna Road at mile 36.8.

Distance: 2.5 miles to a high pass. Although the trail doesn't continue, one could continue over the pass and complete a loop back to the parking area which adds another 3 miles. The return loop requires difficult walking through a steep, rocky streambed.

Time: 2-4 hours round-trip

Maps: USGS Quadrangle Maps—Nabesna B-5, 1:63,360

Difficulty: Moderate. From the beginning elevation of 3,000', it rises to an elevation of 5,800'.

Highlights: Roadside access, wildlife, spectacular scenery, alpine plants, volcanic geology. This trail leads through an extinct, deeply eroded volcanic system and provides an opportunity to examine picturesque volcanic geology. Erosion has exposed dramatic examples of rhyolite and dacite domes, andesite lava flows, vents, and many erosion-resistant dikes.

Route: From the trailhead, the trail leads up an alluvial fan, through white spruce forest and alder for approximately 0.8 mile. The trail surface is gravel/cobble and dry. From this point, the route enters a creek bed and hikers will need to make shallow creek crossings. Be aware that the level of the creek fluctuates dramatically, depending on seasonal rains, temperature, and time of year. Your feet will probably get wet so you may want to bring sandals or extra shoes that can get wet. There may or may not be sufficient rocks or logs to step on. Do not cross the creek in bare feet - appropriate footwear is necessary.

After about one mile from the trailhead, the creek splits to the left. Follow the drainage that splits to the left, which heads to the pass. Because of fragile alpine tundra plants, the last section of trail is not constructed or maintained.

Enjoy the panoramic views while searching for Dall sheep and arctic ground squirrels on surrounding hillsides. From the pass, hikers can explore the alpine tundra, retrace their route back to the trailhead, or follow an unmarked cobble creek bed (rough walking) to the south which eventually meets the Nabesna Road at a turnout at mile 38.3. Once back at the road, you are 1.4 miles from the main trailhead. Turn left on the road to walk back to the trailhead.

Hazards: Take the necessary precautions of hiking in bear country.

Notes: The trail may not be clearly marked, as it crosses a creek several times and may contain washouts. Watch for cairns, or small piles of stacked rocks, to mark the way. However, due to washouts these cairns may not be there. You should have the ability to read and follow the map without relying on rock cairns to mark the way.



Skookum Volcano Trail & Route

