



Cycling Interior Alaska

Cyclists of all ages and abilities can find a mixture of great rides in Interior Alaska. The following guide will give you a few ideas on places to ride in the Interior, and is by no means exhaustive. Most of these rides are on multiple-use routes as Alaska has very few bicycle-specific trails. They vary from easy twenty minute jaunts to multi-day expeditions. *Every map mentioned in this guide is available at the Fairbanks Alaska Public Lands Information Center.* Whatever you do, make sure your level of preparedness matches the intensity of your ride. Ride safely, and have fun!



Close to Town

The following areas are located within a half-hour drive of Fairbanks.

Fairbanks Bikepaths: The area surrounding and including the city of Fairbanks contains many miles of paved non-motorized paths.

Map: "Bikeways." **Fee:** none.

University of Alaska Campus: UAF offers several miles of non-motorized trails that wind through hardwood birch/aspen forests and black spruce bogs. **Map:** "UAF Campus Map." **Fees:** Parking fees may apply.

Birch Hill Recreation Area: A variety of multiple-use trails weave through the paper-birch dominated Birch Hill area. The Rec. Area is administered by the Fairbanks North Star Borough. Part of the area is inside Ft. Wainwright. Pay attention to local signs, as the base is sometimes closed due to training exercises. Find the exit to Birch Hill just north of Fairbanks off the Steese Expressway. **Map:** "Birch Hill Nordic Ski Trails." **Fees:** none.

Chena Lake Recreation Area & The Chena Flood-Control Project: These lands are managed by the Fairbanks North Star Borough and the US Army Corps of Engineers, respectively. They contain a mixture of paved, gravel, and dirt non-motorized paths. Terrain is generally flat. **Map & info:** "Chena Lake Recreation Area." **Fees:** day-use fee for Chena Lake Rec. Area. There are no day use fees on the US Army Corps flood-control lands.

Rules of the Road

- Be safe! Always wear a helmet. Wear bright-colored clothing so others can see you. Let someone know where you're going, especially if biking alone.
- Be prepared. Have a repair kit and air pump handy.
- Give horses, hikers, and dogteams the right-of-way.
- Do not bike on dirt trails during soft conditions as bike tires will leave ruts that will persist after the ground dries. Some trails are closed periodically during spring breakup.
- Many hiking trails are off limits to bicycles and motorized vehicles. Pay attention to signs at trailheads.
- Respect private property.

Ester Dome Singletrack Loops: Eight miles of singletrack loops of varying difficulty zigzag their way through the birch and aspen forest of lower Ester Dome. Built specifically with mountain bikers in mind, these trails feature banked turns and great flow. The trailhead is located two miles up Ester Dome Rd. Look for an unmarked pullout on the left-hand side. **Map & info:** “Ester Dome Single Track Map.” **Fees:** none.

Other areas near Fairbanks: Check out the areas surrounding Ester and Goldstream, Ester and Murphy Domes, and the Tanana Valley State Forest. **Maps & info:** please see www.fairbankscycleclub.org.



Out of Town

Access to the following areas requires at least a half-hour drive out of town.

Two Rivers Elementary Trails: There are about ten miles of walking/biking/ski trails located behind Two Rivers Elementary School. The School is located at mile 18.2 Chena Hot Springs Road. **Maps:** “Two Rivers Ski Trails.” **Fees:** none.

Chena River State Recreation Area: Mountain biking is permitted on multi-use trails inside the Chena River State Recreation Area (Alaska State Parks). They are not allowed on hiking trails with the exception of the Chena Dome Trail. Multi-use trails in the Recreation Area include the Compeau, Stiles Creek, and Angel Creek trails. **Map & info:** several maps available. **Fees:** day-use parking fees or camping fees may apply.



Roadways

Cycling is permitted on most roadways in Alaska, with the exception of some expressways near Fairbanks and Anchorage. The following highlights popular rides or those requiring special considerations.

Denali National Park Road: Ride the famous 92-mile Park Road. The road is mostly gravel with very narrow shoulders. Watch for busses and wildlife. **Maps & info:** Denali NP Map and “Alpenglow.” **Fees:** Denali NP entrance fees. Camping fees may also apply.

Denali Highway: The original access route to Denali National Park from the Richardson Highway features some of the best scenery in the Interior. Traffic is typically light. The 135-mile route runs from Paxson to Cantwell and is mostly gravel. Public lands are administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). **Map & info:** “Denali Highway.” **Fees:** Camping fees may apply.

Dalton Highway/Haul Road: The only access road to the North Slope is a long and arduous 498 miles from Fairbanks (when combined with the Elliot Highway). There are many gravel sections and conditions are often dusty. There are few services. Watch for large trucks. Public lands in the road corridor are administered by the BLM. **Maps & info:** “The Dalton Highway Visitor Guide” and “Bicycling the Dalton Highway.” **Fees:** Camping fees apply at Marion Creek Campground.

For more information on cycling in the Interior, check out:

The Fairbanks Cycle Club:
<http://www.fairbankscycleclub.org/>

Outside in the Interior by Kyle Joly.

Available in the Alaska Geographic Bookstore and online:
www.alaskageographic.org

