

FAMILY-FRIENDLY OUTDOOR RECREATION GUIDE

Fairbanks and the surrounding area



GET OUTSIDE &
EXPLORE ALASKA!

Children are **NATURAL EXPLORERS**. With their high levels of energy and endless curiosity, taking your family outdoors can be a memorable experience. Fairbanks is close to many accessible parks and wild landscapes that lend themselves to getting exercise and experiencing the beauty of the Interior.

ALL TRIPS REQUIRE CAREFUL PLANNING. When recreating with kids, planning can be the difference between a good experience and a bad one. Knowledge of the area, weather, terrain, limitations of their body, plus a little common sense can help to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip.



This guide is intended to be a local resource for outdoor family-friendly opportunities.

Activities were chosen for proximity to Fairbanks, ease of planning and low cost.

Consider these suggestions when exploring the outdoors:

- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear for the conditions and season
- Wear old clothes you don't mind getting dirty
- Make sure everyone understands the rules
- Use protective gear when appropriate
- Leave a copy of your itinerary with a responsible person
- Be weather wise. Keep an eye on current and predicted weather conditions
- Be aware of the environment and the creatures that live there
- Dispose of trash properly and recycle when possible

Hiking & Walking Trails

Kids are happy when they are outside. Whether you are exploring a trail in the woods or just taking a walk, being prepared is essential to keeping them safe and engaged. Staying together as a group is fun as well as safe! Keep a positive attitude and remember to bring lots of snacks and drinks. Dress in layers and be ready for changing weather conditions.

Checklist:

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Water and snacks | Layers of clothes |
| Suitable footwear | Rain gear—the weather can change quickly |
| Binoculars and camera | Sunscreen and sun hat |
| Bug repellent | Bear spray—if going into bear country |
| First Aid kit | |

1 Creamers Field Boreal Forest Trail

Length: 1 1/2 mile loop

Skill level: Easy

Access: Creamers Field, 1300 College Road. The trailhead and parking lots are located next to the large white barns

Take a stroll on the well-developed trail and boardwalk as it takes you through the boreal forest. Learn about the plants and animals that call the area home. And who knows, you may spot an owl or red fox while on your walk!

2 Wedgewood Wildlife Sanctuary Taiga Trail

Length: 1 mile loop

Skill level: Easy

Access: Wedgewood Resort, 212 Wedgewood Drive

This privately-owned wildlife sanctuary is home to more than one hundred bird species, many mammals, fish, and a wealth of other insects and plants. Wind through the boreal forest, gaze over Wander Lake, and learn about this unique habitat with interpretive signs dotting the trail.

3 Skyline Ridge Trail

Length: 1 mile, one way

Skill level: Easy

Access: Trailhead is at the corner of Noel and Mia Street, north of Farmers Loop off of Cranberry Ridge

With a hillside view of Fairbanks, this trail takes you through the boreal forest and is a great spot for hiking and birdwatching, as well as sledding in the wintertime.

4 Skarland/Equinox Trail, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Length: less than 1 mile, one way

Skill level: Easy

Access: Parking is available at the Large Animal Research Station, off of Yankovich Road

From the parking area, walk along the fence to the right of the entrance gate. The trail will curve around the back of the fence to the left, and take you into the forest, ending at Dalton Trail (road). The trail takes you through the boreal forest, winding among spruce trees, lush understory, and abundant small wildlife viewing opportunities.

5 Isberg Recreation Area

Length: Varies

Skill Level: Easy to moderate

Access: Trailhead is located at the corner of Oboe Court & Isberg Road, accessed either from the top of Chena Ridge Road or Cripple Creek Road

While still in development, many of the established trails in the Isberg trail system offer easy to moderate hiking on gently-sloping forests of black spruce and birch.



6 Murphy Dome & Ester Dome

Length: Varies

Skill level: Easy to moderate

Access: From Sheep Creek Road, turn at the major intersections for either Ester Dome Road or Murphy Dome Road and continue to the top of the respective dome.

Find panoramic views of the Tanana Valley from the top of both domes. Multiple trails begin at each parking area, and travel down multiple sides of each dome.

7 Quartz Lake Loop Trail

Length: 1 ³/₄ mile loop

Skill level: Moderate

Access: Parking is available at the Quartz Lake Campground, located on Quartz Lake Road at Milepost 278 of the Richardson Highway

Cost: \$5 parking fee

Enjoy views of the lake and the surrounding forest while gaining slight elevation. This trail skirts the lake for one-half mile, then climbs up the hill and joins the Lost Lake Trail, eventually leading directly back to the trailhead.

8 Lost Lake Trail

Length: 1 ¹/₄ miles, one way

Skill level: Easy

Access: The trailhead is located next to the Lost Lake Campground, off of Quartz Lake Road at Milepost 278 of the Richardson Highway

Cost: \$5 parking fee

This out-and-back trail skirts along Lost Lake, then continues along a spruce bog and ends at Moose Pond.

9 Denali National Park & Preserve Trail System

Length: Varies

Skill level: Easy, moderate, or strenuous

Access: Denali National Park & Preserve, Milepost 237 of the Parks Highway

Cost: \$20/family entrance fee with free parking and a free shuttle bus to many of the trailheads

There are lots of trails near the entrance to the park, or within the first 15 miles of Denali Park Road. See the "Denali with Kids" guide for family-friendly trails and their descriptions.

10 Table Top Mountain Trail

Length: 3 mile loop

Skill level: Moderate

Access: Turn onto U.S. Creek Road at mile 57 of the Steese Highway. At the T, turn left and continue 8 miles to Ophir Creek Campground

Whether you are berry picking or practicing for a backcountry adventure, the Table Top Mountain Trail will give you access to some of the Interior's most characteristic wilderness. This looped trail takes you to the summit of Table Top Mountain, where you can marvel at the endless horizon in all directions.

11 Angel Rocks Trail

Length: 3 ¹/₂ mile loop

Skill level: Moderate to strenuous

Access: Trailhead is at mile 48.9 of Chena Hot Springs Road in the Chena River State Recreation Area

Cost: \$5 parking fee

With giant granite outcroppings (tors) that jet out from the forest floor and a well-maintained trail, the Angel Rocks Trail boasts some of the best day hiking in the Interior. Once at the top, have fun exploring the "cave" and looking out over the Chena River valley. You might see rock climbers and rappellers on the tors along the trail.



Boating, Fishing & Swimming Opportunities

Before heading out, always make sure you know what you are doing. Children need to understand and follow rules such as keeping their hands and feet inside the boat at all times and not running on the boat.

It is Alaska state law that your child is always wearing a life jacket while on a motorcraft or when participating in water sports. You can make sure that the life jacket fits snugly by having your kid make a “touch down” signal by raising both arms straight up; if the life jacket hits the child’s chin or ears, it may be too big or the straps may be too loose.

Checklist:

- Personal flotation device (life vest) that is the proper size and fit
- Water and snacks
- Rain gear
- Bug repellent
- Layers of clothes
- Sunscreen and sunhat
- First Aid kit

12 Ballaine Lake

Access: Located on Farmers Loop Road, 1 mile north of the University/College Road intersection
The spectacularly natural lake is surrounded by wooded lots filled with hiking trails. The lake is stocked with a myriad of fish including blackfish and rainbow trout. Fishing access is available on both sides of the lake.

13 Tanana Lakes Recreation Area

Access: Located on South Cushman Street, south of Van Horn Rd.
Hours: 6am - 11pm, daily
Relax in the calm waters of Tanana Lakes. With a designated swimming area sectioned off from motorized use, this place is sure to be a regular destination for those looking for sand, sun, and surf. The gradual banks of the lake offer excellent fishing areas for the whole family.

14 Chena Lake Recreation Area

Access: Past North Pole, take the exit for Buzby/Dawson Roads, and follow the signs for the recreation area
Cost: Entrance is free, boat rentals may be available
Hours: The recreation area is open 24 hours a day during the summer season. The swim beach and lake park are open from 6am - 10pm
Chena Lake offers easy access to many different outdoor activities for kids of all ages. The calm waters of the lake are suitable for fishing and non-motorized boating.

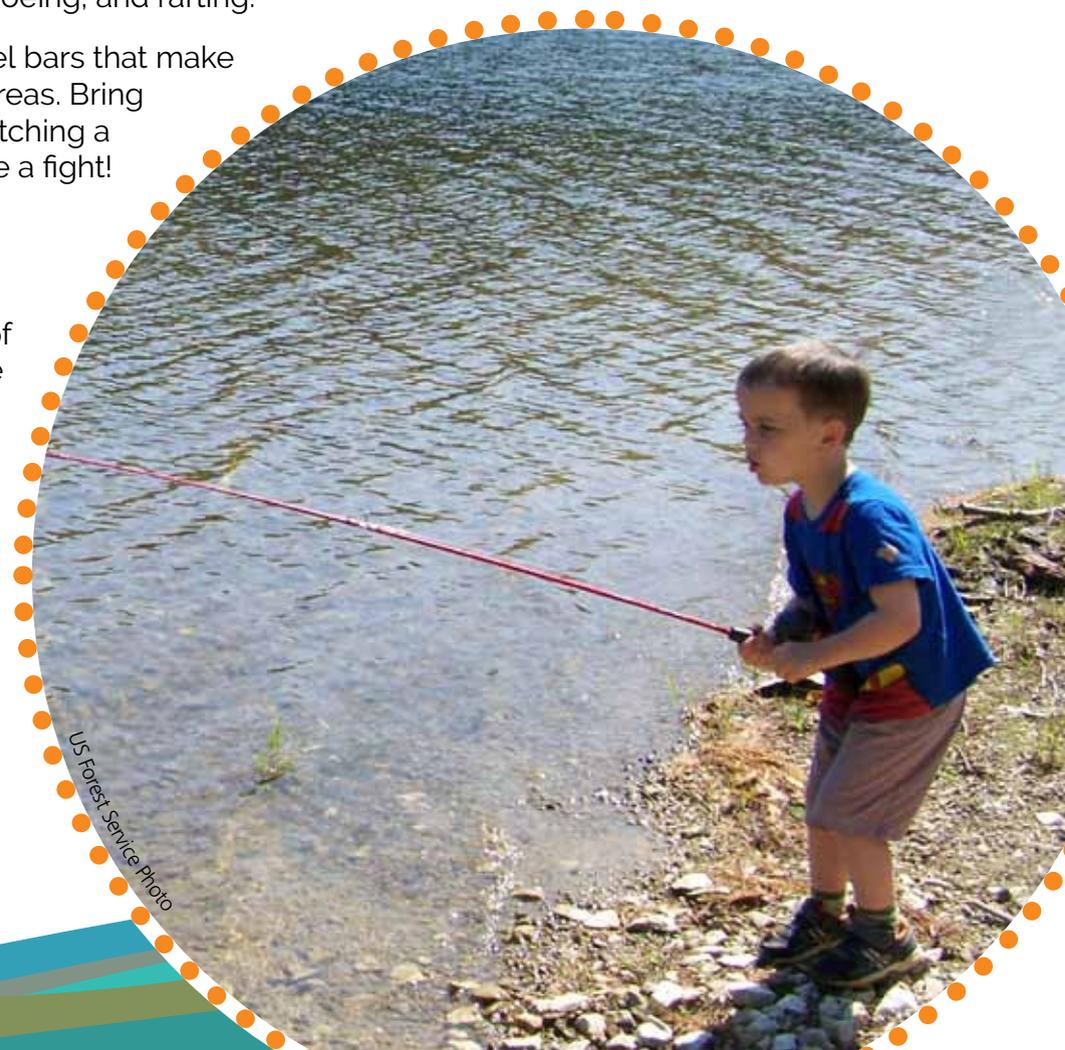
15 Chena River Access

Access: Boat launches in Fairbanks
The “Lower” Chena River meanders through town, offering shallow areas for wading and fishing. The river is Class I water; perfect for boating, canoeing, and rafting.

The “Upper Chena” offers many gravel bars that make for great fishing, camping, or picnic areas. Bring a fishing pole and try your hand at catching a trophy-size grayling; they put up quite a fight!

7 Quartz Lake

Access: At Milepost 278 of the Richardson Highway, 10 miles north of Delta Junction, turn onto Quartz Lake Road and follow the signs
Cost: \$5 parking fee
Fishing is best done away from the weedy areas of the lake, so stick to the boat launch and fishing dock, or along the rocky shoreline.
Motorized and nonmotorized boating are allowed at Quartz Lake.



US Forest Service Photo

Biking Trails

Fairbanks offers many miles of paved and unpaved bike paths. Just remember that these paths are shared by many different users— not all of them being bicyclists. Share the paths, and yield to those going faster than you.

Whether you are big or small, short or tall, always wear a helmet! It's a good idea to have a repair kit and air pump handy, in case of emergencies. Try to stay on solid ground, as bike tires can create ruts in soft and muddy ground. If you don't want to do a full loop, remember that the Fairbanks Bus System has room available for two bikes on each bus.

Checklist:

Bike	Helmet
Bright clothing	Sunscreen
Bug repellent	First Aid kit

13 Tanana Lakes Recreation Area

Access: Located on South Cushman Street, south of Van Horn Rd.

Hours: 6am - 11pm, daily

The two miles of non-motorized unpaved trails in the central portion of the site are great for family bike rides. This park offers bird and wildlife viewing, camping, short walks and bike rides, non-motorized boating and swimming.

16 Farmers Loop Bike Path

Access: Entire length of Farmers Loop Road, skirting north of Fairbanks

Have a blast on the rollercoaster-like bike path! This 8-mile long paved path traverses the ridge just north of Fairbanks. Be safe and remember that you will be crossing driveways and roads with oncoming traffic.

14 Chena Lake Recreation Area

Access: Past North Pole, take the exit for Buzby/Dawson Roads, and follow the signs for the recreation area

Cost: Entrance is free, boat rentals may be available

Hours: The recreation area is open 24 hours a day during the summer season. The swim beach and lake park are open from 6am - 10pm

Chena Lakes Recreation Area offers paved and gravel bike paths with generally flat terrain. Multiple access points are located along the main road and around the lake.

17 Fairbanks River Walk

Access: Downtown Fairbanks, between the Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center and Pioneer Park

This 2-mile long paved trail runs along the south side of the Chena River, between the Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center in downtown Fairbanks and Pioneer Park. The trail then skirts the outer edge of Pioneer Park, but feel free to explore inside the park as well— bikes are allowed!



Picnic & Play

Sit and relax, swing on the monkey bars or zoom down the slide, and have a blast at a picnic area and playground. All of these parks have tables for gatherings and playgrounds for fun and games.

18 Pioneer Park

Access: 2300 Airport Way

Cost: Entrance is free; several museums charge a small entrance fee

Hours: Noon - 8pm, Memorial Day to Labor Day

Pioneer Park is a large park that offers many different attractions for the whole family. Paved paths crisscross the park, leading to multiple shops, restaurants and museums that highlight Alaska's pioneer history. Several picnic areas are available for day use, along with playgrounds for all ages.

19 Slaterville Park

Access: 341 Slater Drive

This small playground with picnic tables sits alongside the Chena River in the center of town.

20 Fairbanks Lions Recreation Area

Access: Corner of College & Danby Road, next to Anne Wein Elementary School

With picnic areas and fire rings, a covered pavilion and an adjacent playground, this park has it all. Don't forget a fishing pole, as the Noyes Slough is right next to the park and provides opportunities for grayling fishing.

21 Ester Community Park

Access: From the Parks Highway, turn on the Old Nenana Highway towards Ester, then take the second driveway on the right

With a full soccer field, basketball court, small playground and picnic area, this community park is a great place to go with the whole family. In the wintertime, the basketball court is covered in ice to create a skating rink, so don't forget to bring your ice skates!

22 Beaver Springs Nature Trail & 5th Avenue Park

Access: East 5th Avenue, North Pole

This easy self-guided nature trail wanders along the meandering Beaver Slough. Follow the interpretive signs as they lead you to a homestead cabin rendition, a flower-enriched garden, and a forest and waterway that are home to moose, fox, beaver, and muskrat!



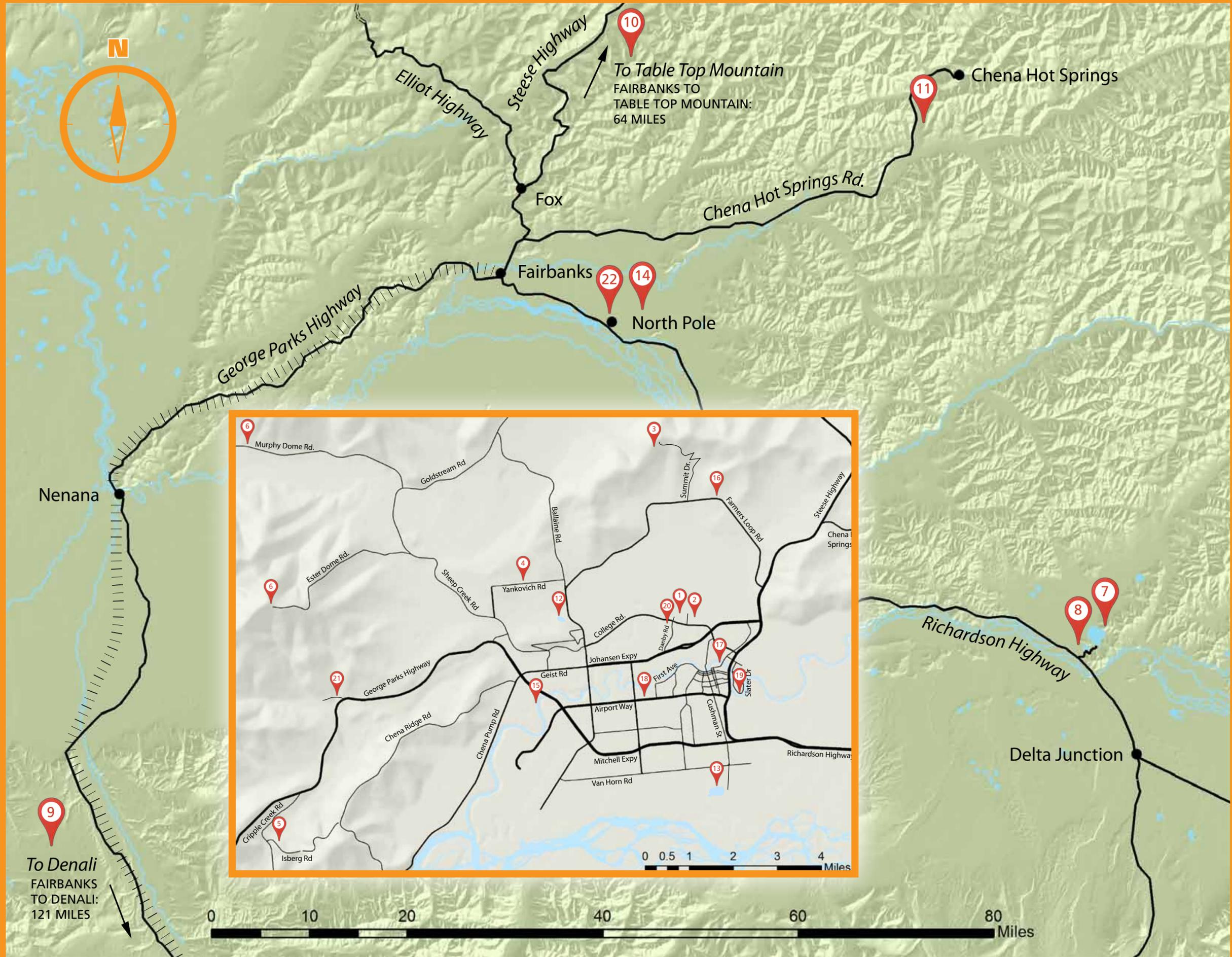
Photo courtesy of the Cotter family



Photo courtesy of the Reinhart Family

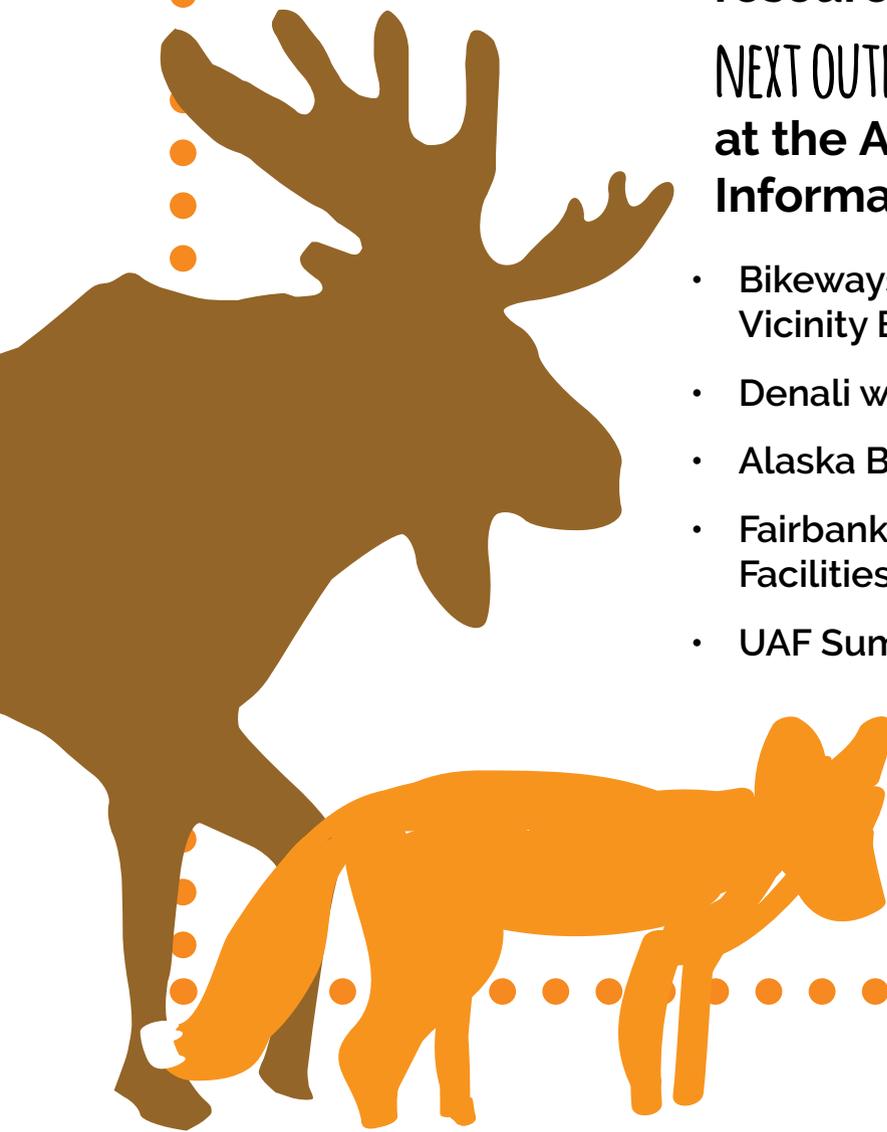
Photo courtesy of the Ness-Rafferty Family

FAIRBANKS & SURROUNDING AREA Outdoor Recreation Map



Legend

-  Outdoor activity location
-  Roads
-  Railroad



Additional Resources:

Find these and other resources for your NEXT OUTDOOR ADVENTURE at the Alaska Public Lands Information Center

- Bikeways: Fairbanks, North Pole & Vicinity Bike Map
- Denali with Kids Guide
- Alaska Boater's Handbook
- Fairbanks North Star Borough Parks Facilities Guide
- UAF Summer Trail Map

10 ways to #FindYourPark

- Go on a ranger-led tour #RangersPointingAtThings
- Relax on the banks of a scenic river
- Pose for a family photo in a park
- Take a deep breath of fresh air
- Get *reel* and go fishing
- Stand on a mountaintop
- Earn a Jr. Ranger badge
- Experience silence
- Make art in a park
- Be an urban hiker

FIND YOUR **PARK**
FINDYOURPARK.COM

A park can be many different things to many different people.

Hear their stories, share your own.

#FindYourPark

Whether you are new to the area or already enjoy the outdoors, this guide will help you discover family-friendly recreational activities in and around Fairbanks.

From boating to fishing, hiking to biking, this guide has it all! Let us help you and your family plan the perfect adventure on Alaska's public lands.

