

Chugach National Forest

Ptarmigan Creek & Lake Trail

Iditarod National Historic Trail - Southern Trek

need better photo



Seward Ranger District

- Difficulty:** More Difficult

- Length:** 7.1 Miles (to end of lake)

- Time:** 3-4 hours

- Elevation Gain:** 450 feet

- Season:** May-October

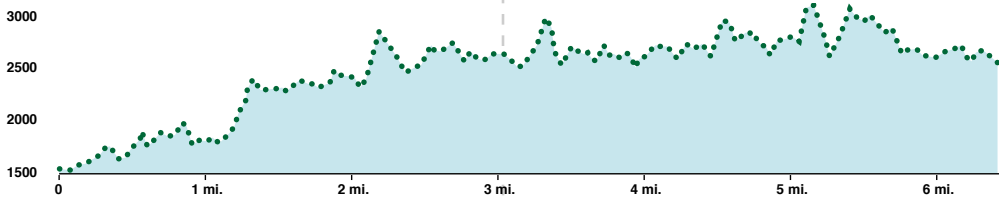
- Public Use:** Moderate

- Grade:** The first mile is fairly level, then steep sections up to the lake

- Trail Condition:** Ptarmigan Creek Trail leads to the more primitive Ptarmigan Lake Trail. This route may be very brushy and is not recommended for horses or bikes past mile 3.4. After mile 2 the vegetation is usually overgrown.

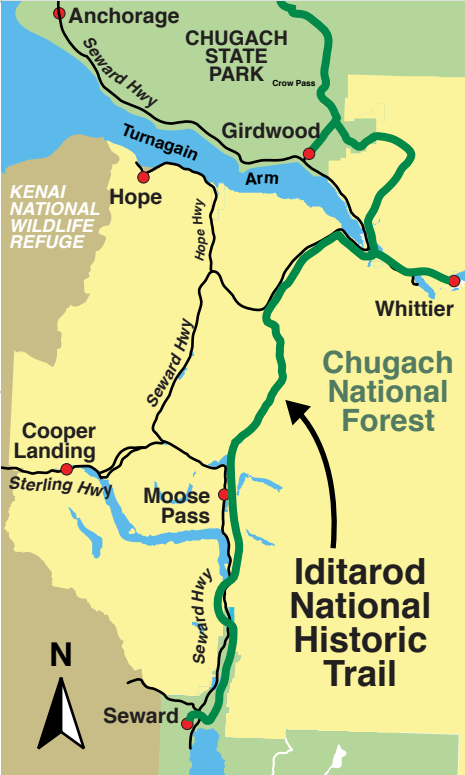
- Getting there:** At mile 23 of the Seward Highway turn east into the Ptarmigan Creek Campground. The trail begins at the south end of the campground.

Users:



Map Legend

- Iditarod - Year-round Trails
- Iditarod - Summer Use Trail
- Iditarod - Winter Use Trail
- General Use Trail
- Backcountry Campsite
- USFS Cabin
- Trailhead
- Ranger Station



PART OF THE IDITAROD NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

The Iditarod National Historic Trail - Southern Trek (INHT) is a 180 mile portion of the 1000 mile-long route. Winter travellers used it from the late 1800s to early 1900, though parts have been used for millenia by Alaska Native cultures. When you walk the INHT, you're walking in the footsteps of Alaska's indigenous people, and its gold miners, pioneers and dogsled mushers.

TRAIL INFORMATION

This is an enjoyable and challenging trail and after mile 3.3 hikers are rewarded by beautiful views of the Ptarmigan Lake's turquoise reflection.

The junction to the Iditarod National Historic Trail route is at mile .75 of the Falls Creek Trail.

The trail follows the creek upstream, but occasionally climbs a scenic knoll or rock outcropping. It can be wet in areas.

The trail leaves the spruce forest after mile 2 and ascends through a large meadow and a wooded area with views of the surrounding mountains.

Ptarmigan Lake can be reached at mile 3.3. The trail continues for another 3.8 miles to the east side of the lake. Access to Andy Simons Mountain can be found on the south side of the lake.

Wildlife in the area includes moose, Dall Sheep and black and brown bear.

There is fishing for Dolly Varden and Rainbow Trout in Ptarmigan Creek, and Dolly Varden in Ptarmigan Lake.

Please review **Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G)** hunting and fishing regulations for more details.



SALMON VIEWING

From late July-August, bright red sockeye salmon can be seen just a short walk from Ptarmigan Creek Campground.

Fishing is not permitted but the area around the trailhead is a great place to see spawning salmon.

Be Bear Aware. Salmon are a prime source of food for bears.

PTARMIGAN LAKE TRAIL

Long-distance hikers can take the scenic route from Ptarmigan Creek Trail to Ptarmigan Lake Trail, a picturesque hike along the lovely alpine waters of Ptarmigan Lake.

There is lakeside camping at designated sites. Bearbox food storage and a backcountry toilet are located on the west side of the lake.



DOLLY VARDEN FISHING

Often mistaken for a trout, the Dolly Varden is still a good catch. To tell the difference, look at the spots. Dollies have light spots on a dark body, and trout have dark spots on a lighter body.

Dollies can be caught in both Ptarmigan Lake and Ptarmigan Creek.

PTARMIGAN

If you look closely ptarmigan, with their brown and grey feathers, can be seen on many trails within the Chugach National Forest.

Three types of ptarmigan might be seen: Rock, Willow (Alaska's state bird) and the rarer White-tail. These "Arctic Grouse" change their plumage with the seasons and are masters of camouflage. Their distinct calls often ring across the mountainsides.



KNOW Before you GO!

Due to potential avalanche danger winter travel after mile 2 is unsafe and not recommended.

Travel past mile 1 is not recommended for horse or bicycles due to exposed tree roots, steep grades and other primitive trail conditions.

Be prepared for rapid weather changes.

PLAN AHEAD

You are responsible for your own safety. Proper equipment and good judgment are essential for safe travel while on the Chugach National Forest.

Filter or boil water for five minutes before drinking to avoid giardia.

All creeks present hazards that can be dangerous. Cross creeks at low water levels. During winter use extreme caution when crossing bodies of water. Remember you cross at your own risk.

Winter travel can be hazardous and trails can cross through avalanche-prone slopes. Visit www.cnfaic.org for the latest avalanche conditions.

Let someone know your travel plans. Be Bear Aware and keep your distance from wildlife.

Contact a USDA Forest Service office for specific trail safety precautions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Seward Ranger District

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Chugach National Forest

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www.fs.usda.gov/chugach



- Plan Ahead & Prepare
- Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors