

Chugach National Forest

Trail of Blue Ice
Iditarod National Historic Trail - Southern Trek



Glacier Ranger District

Difficulty: Easy

Length: 5 miles (one way)

Time: 3 hours

Elevation Gain: 30 feet

Season: Year-round

Public Use: Heavy

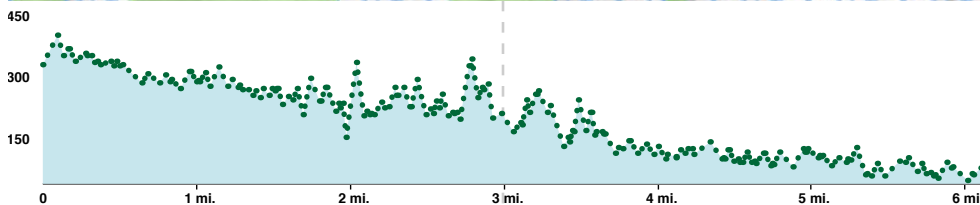
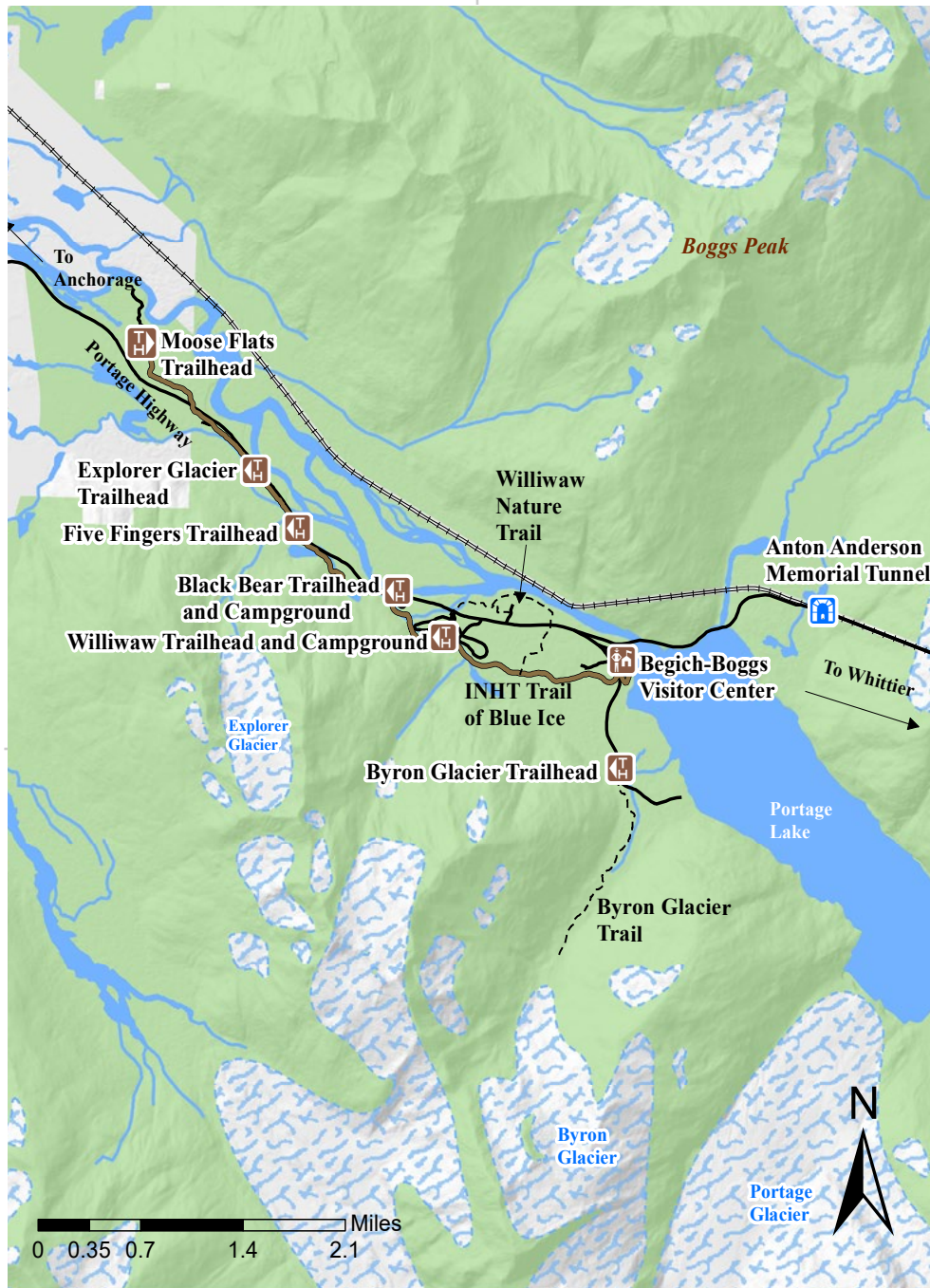
Grade: 1%

Tread Width: 5-6 ft

Trail Condition: Pleasant and accessible hike. A wide gravel footpath with boardwalks and bridges.

Getting there: At mile 79 of Seward Highway turn onto Portage Highway. This trail is accessible from Moose Flats Day Use Site and pullouts at 1.5, 2.5, 3, 4 & 5 miles along the Portage Highway.

Users: Hiker, Mountain, Wheelchair, Bicycle



Map Legend

- Iditarod - Year-round Trails
- Iditarod - Summer Use Trail
- General Use Trail
- 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

The Trail of Blue Ice is a network fully accessible routes linking the developed recreation sites in Portage Valley. It is suitable for people of all skill levels. There are great opportunities to see the receding glaciers on ridges above the valley floor.

The lake-end of the trail, a 700 foot long section, is slightly steeper than accessibility guidelines allow. An accessible alternate route, at the intersection of Portage Lake Loop Road and Byron Glacier Road, can be used. From this point, the trail has a well-maintained paved surface to Williwaw Campground.

Black and brown bears frequent the area, as well as snowshoe hare, eagles, moose, birds and salmon. The trail is well-maintained and is kept clear of brush.

In late summer and early fall the Trail of Blue Ice crosses streams full of spawning salmon.



PORTAGE GLACIER

Portage Glacier once extended the entire length of the valley.

The glacial remnants seen today are Explorer, Middle, Byron, Burns, and Shakespeare glaciers. While still massive in size, these glaciers stand as smaller reminders of the immense ice sheets that once covered this landscape.



BEGICH, BOGGS VISITOR CENTER

Visit with our Forest Service interpretive staff and learn more about the wildlife, fish, and glaciers, and the history of Portage Valley and the Chugach National Forest.

Award-winning exhibits, educational presentations, the film *Retreat and Renewal: Stories from Alaska's Chugach National Forest*, and children's activities are available at the center.

WILLIWAW NATURE TRAIL

The Williwaw Nature Trail is a spectacular offshoot of the Trail of Blue Ice. The path leads along a rehabilitated estuary, with chances to see fish and birds up close.

Visitors can see salmon, migratory birds, beaver ponds, wildflowers, and pick edible berries along this picturesque trail.



PORTAGE LAKE

This 600 foot deep lake was carved out by Portage Glacier over thousands of years.

Visitors can take a boat tour of Portage Lake and get a close-up view of Portage Glacier on Grayline Alaska, a permitted boat company.

Winter users ice skate or fat-tire bike on the lake, and ski surrounding areas.



KNOW Before you GO!

Trail of Blue Ice is closed to motorized vehicles year-round.

There are avalanche run-outs in sections close to the mountains, between Black Bear Campground and Five Fingers Trailhead.

Minimize your exposure to these sections during the winter months.

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...

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www.fs.usda.gov/chugach



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The 7 Principles

- 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