

The Chena River Nature Trail



The Chena River Nature Trail is part of the Ski Trails at the Lake Park. The entire Nature Trail loop is 2.5 miles (4km) long. If you walk at a leisurely pace, it should take about 1.5 hours. As you follow the trail, look for the numbered signposts which share information on the boreal forest, wildlife, Chena River and more.

If you walk quietly and refrain from sudden movements or loud noises, you will have a better chance of observing wildlife. Many animals tend to be more active at dawn or dusk.



INTRODUCTION

The Chena River Nature Trail takes you through forest, shrub, and meadow communities which are typical of Interior Alaska. Together, these communities are called the *boreal forest*. Biologists often use the Russian word *taiga* (pronounced TIE-ga), which means "land of little sticks" to describe this vegetation. Taiga is found in northern regions world-wide, including Scandinavia, Siberia, and northern Canada.



The interpretive numbered signposts along the trail will assist you in recognizing these communities and the *habitat* they provide. Habitat is the combination of food, water, and shelter that wildlife species need to survive. Each kind of plant community provides habitat for different species of wildlife.

Each community of the boreal forest represents a step in the process of *succession*, the very gradual replacement of one plant community by another over time. The area of the Chena River Nature Trail lies in the active floodplain of the Chena and Tanana rivers. These rivers are constantly re-working the landscape by eroding and depositing soils as the meander through the lowlands. During periods of high water, the rivers may change or create new channels. Soil builds up in the old channels, vegetation appears, and the process of succession begins.

PARK ETIQUETTE

Please do not litter.
Please keep your dog on a leash.
Please do not knowingly disturb wildlife.
Please do not pick plants.
Please do not peel bark from trees.

RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

Waterproof Footwear
Insect Repellent
Water Bottle
Camera