

Take a **HIKE** in your National Forest



Portage Pass Trail

Chugach National Forest
Glacier Ranger District (907) 783-3242
Begich, Boggs Visitor Center (907) 783-2326

USGS Map: Seward D5, D5 SW
Trip Time (one way): 1.5 hours
Difficulty: Moderate
Condition: Good
Public Use: Moderate
Recommended Season: June-October
Length (one way): 2 miles
Elevation Gain: 750 feet

Recreational Opportunities

This trail is good *day hike* for all ages, and provides spectacular views of Portage Lake and Glacier, the surrounding sub-alpine terrain, and Passage Canal. Picnic and/or camp sites are plentiful from this trail in open sub-alpine terrain, or down on Portage Lake's rock beaches.

There is no road or foot access to this trail from the Begich, Boggs Visitor Center, but paddlers may access the trail using the water route on Portage Lake's northeast shore, starting at the Bear Valley pullout.

Wildlife in Portage Pass includes mountain goats, bears, and marmots. The pass is an important migration route for many birds, from songbirds to snow geese!

Trail Access

At mile 79, Seward Highway (49 miles south of Anchorage), turn onto Portage Glacier Road. Travel 7 miles to the Whittier Tunnel. Hours of operation and toll rates can be found at www.dot.state.ak.us, or calling 1-877-611-2586. The trail starts on the Whittier side of the tunnel. After exiting the tunnel, take the first right, cross over the railroad tracks, take a right at the "Y", and drive a short distance to the trailhead at the end of the road. Look for a trailhead sign.

Trail Description

A steep uphill hike for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to the pass at 750' elevation is on an old military roadbed. Snow can persist into early summer. Trail starts in dense shrubs, (lots of salmonberry), then enters sub-alpine hemlock forests. Numerous tarns can be found in the pass, perfect for a quick dip if it's a warm day!

A spectacular view of Portage Glaciers awaits you at the pass, and stays in view down to Portage Lake, approximately 1.25 miles from the pass.

Special Considerations

Trail from the pass to the lake is closed to motorized vehicles all year, the Whittier side is open to snowmachine use with adequate snow cover. The land on both sides of the trail between the trailhead and the pass is privately owned, please stay on the trail and do not trespass! The pass is notorious for high winds as it funnels air between Prince William Sound and Turnagain Arm. Whittier has the 2nd highest annual precipitation record in Alaska, at 175" Winter travel is not recommended due to the potential for avalanches.

Be prepared for rapid weather changes.
Use caution with all wildlife. Boil surface water for 5 minutes before drinking.

Remember, pack it in pack it out!
You can contact a U.S. Forest Service office to receive more detailed information on safety precautions.



United States
Department of
Agriculture



Forest Service
Alaska Region
Chugach National Forest

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