

The Steese NCA provides habitat for caribou, moose, Dall sheep, grizzly and black bear, turkeys, small game, raptors, waterfowl, and numerous species of small mammals and birds. One endangered species, the peregrine falcon, as well as bald eagles are known to nest in the area.

Portions of the Steese NCA are used by the White Mountains and the Fortymile caribou herds. Caribou are migratory animals, and the exact location of areas they use may change from year to year as herd size fluctuates and/or migration routes change.

Streams and rivers within the Steese NCA are home to a number of fish species, including Arctic grayling, round whitefish, burbot, northern pike, slimy sculpin, and longnose sucker. Small numbers of King and chum salmon are found in some of the larger streams and rivers.

Birch Creek Wild and Scenic River flows from the windswept ridges and alpine tundra of the Steese National Conservation Area into the broad expanse of the Yukon Flats in central Alaska. The river offers one-week float trips notable not only for scenery and remoteness but for convenience -- floaters can access both ends of the Wild River segment from BLM recreation sites along the Steese Highway.

The Bureau of Land Management manages 110 miles of upper Birch Creek as a wild river under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The river continues through state, private and Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge land for a total of 344 miles before emptying into the Yukon River about halfway between Fort Yukon and Beaver.

Two canoeists prepare to start their float trip from the put-in at mile 84 of the Steese Highway. During the first day's float, shallow water often necessitates dragging your boat for short sections.

Rafters negotiate Shotgun Rapids, the most challenging whitewater on the river. A short portage allows the less intrepid to bypass the rapids.

Below Harrington Fork, Birch Creek flows besides rounded ridges of the Yukon-Tanana Uplands.

A musher in the Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race drives his dog team down frozen Birch Creek in February, when temperatures often drop to -40 or -50 degrees Fahrenheit.

Pinnell Mountain Trail
Sweeping mountain vistas and brilliant wildflower displays under the unceasing light of the midnight sun...the Pinnell Mountain National Recreation Trail, one of Interior Alaska's premier hiking trails, offers an unforgettable experience whether your visit lasts a few hours or a few days.

Located 100 miles (161 km) northeast of Fairbanks, this 27-mile (44 km) trail traverses a series of alpine ridge tops centray above timberline. The Pinnell Mountain Trail is marked with rock cairns as it crosses open tundra with views north to the Yukon River and south to the Alaska Range. Wooden posts along the trail show the mileage from the start at Eagle Summit (milepost 107 on the Steese Highway) to the trail's end at Twelvemile Summit (milepost 85.5, Steese Highway). Two emergency shelters provide refuge from storms, but hikers should come prepared for unpredictable, dramatic weather.

Shelter
There are two shelter cabins located on the Pinnell Mountain Trail. The Ptarmigan Creek Shelter is located near 10.1 miles (16.2 km) from Eagle Summit in a saddle just below Pinnell Mountain.

The North Fork Shelter is located at mile 17.8 (28.6 km), 9.5 miles (15.3 km) from Twelvemile Summit, on the back side of a hill. These small, unfurnished shelter cabins provide emergency shelter, away from strong wind and blowing rain or snow.

They operate on a first-come, first-served basis. Hikers should always carry tents and be prepared to use them in case the shelter cabins are occupied.

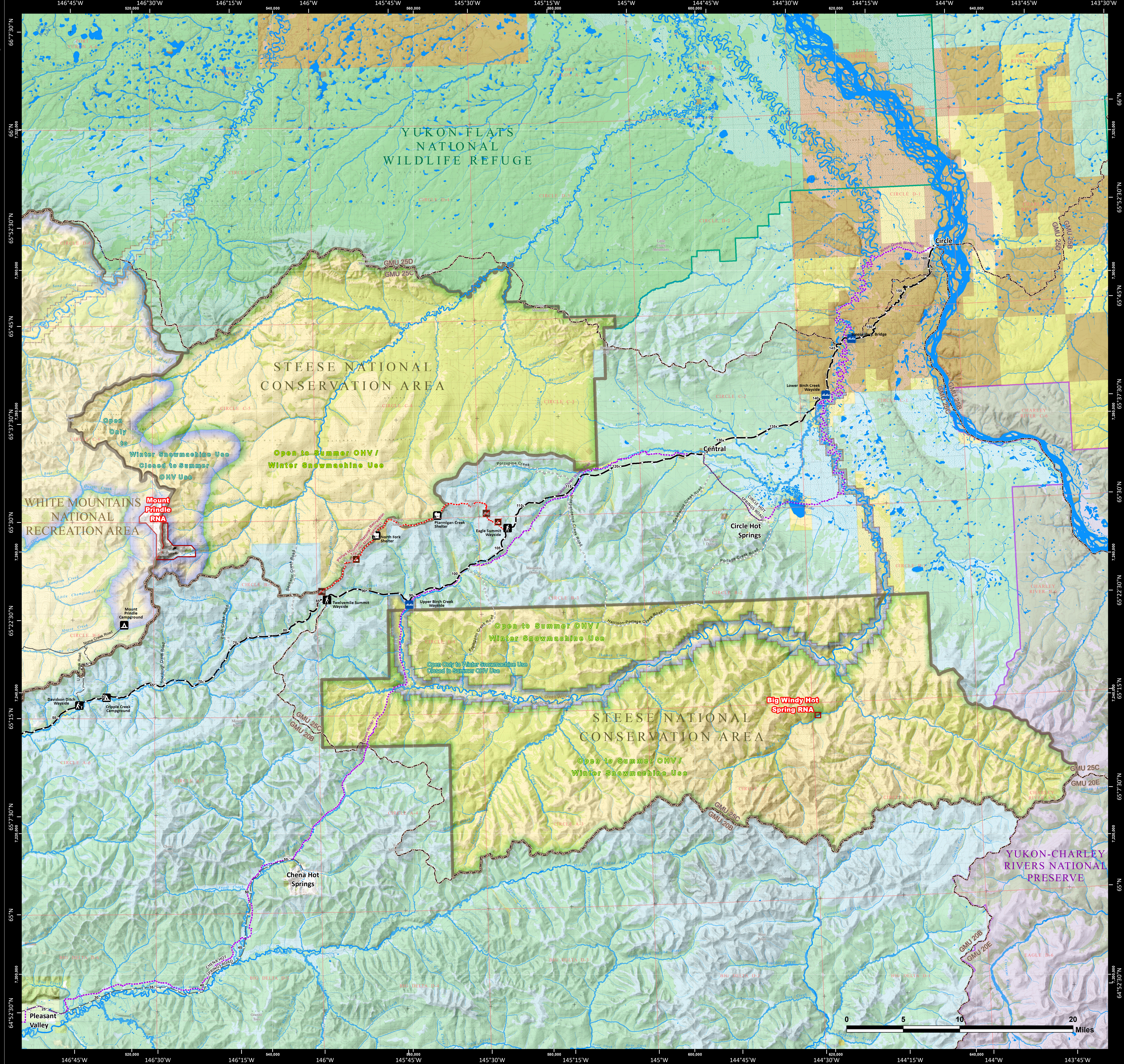
North Fork Shelter

Water
Finding drinking water along the trail can become difficult later in the summer, when snowfields and small ponds dry up. Water is generally available at both shelter cabins, where catchment systems collect melting snow and rain. All water should be treated before use. Day hikers should carry enough water for a full day (at least 2 quarts or liters), and backpackers should always carry at least 3 quarts or liters of water.

Giardia: This intestinal parasite can leave you feeling miserable for weeks. Boiling your drinking water is the best way to kill the organism.

Trail Conditions
The Pinnell Mountain Trail is a primitive trail marked with wooden mileposts and rock cairns. Switchbacks have been constructed to provide safer access across steep talus slopes, and approximately 1.6 miles (2.6 km) of wooden planking provide passage through boggy areas. Hikers along the Pinnell Mountain Trail should expect a physical challenge. Most of the trail has at least an 8 percent grade. In many areas the grade exceeds 25 percent. At Eagle Summit, Pinnell Mountain, and Table Mountain, the trail features long switchbacks with 800-foot (122 m) elevation changes over a distance of one-half mile (0.8 km).

Who was Pinnell?
According to Donald J. Orth's Dictionary of Alaska Place Names, Lt. Commander R. Darling of the U.S. Coastal and Geodetic Survey named Pinnell Mountain for Robert Pinnell, killed in an accident on July 17, 1952 while climbing nearby Porcupine Dome.



- Milepost (MP)
- Maintained Road
- Unmaintained OHV Road
- Pinnell Mountain Trail (Non-Motorized Use Only)
- Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race Trail

- Research Natural Area
- Wild and Scenic River Corridor
- Game Management Unit (7/1/2016)
- USGS 1:63,360 Index

Open to winter use* of snowmachines weighing up to 1,000 pounds curb weight ** and up to 50 inches wide

Open to summer* OHVs and winter snowmachines weighing up to 1,000 pounds curb weight ** and up to 50 inches wide

* "Summer Use" Defined as May 1st thru Oct 14th
"Winter Use" Defined as Oct 15th thru April 30th

** Curb weight is the unloaded vehicle weight with full fuel and oil.

Administered Lands

- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- National Park Service

Fish and Wildlife Service

- Native Lands
- Native Allotment
- Private

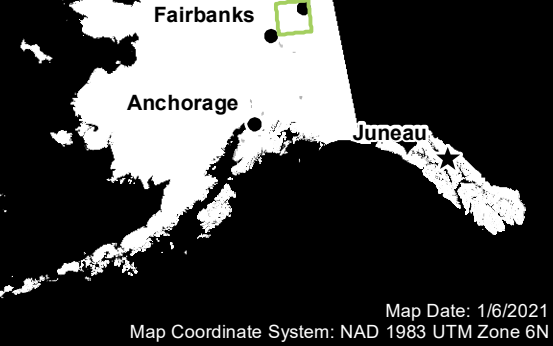
Map not to be used to determine federal subsistence hunting areas.

Contact Information

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Steese National Conservation Area



Map Date: 10/20/2016
Map Scale: 1:63,360
Map Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N