

Beaver Creek is your pathway to adventure. Flowing through the heart of the White Mountains National Recreation Area, Beaver Creek passes through boreal forests, past jagged limestone cliffs with falcons circling high above, and across the Yukon Flats to the Yukon River.

Beaver Creek is a class I (smooth water) river float with a few short sections of class II water. Numerous gravel bars along the way provide excellent places to camp, fish, and observe a variety of wildlife, such as moose, caribou, wolf, bears, eagles, falcons, and migratory waterfowl.

The first 127 miles of Beaver Creek are designated a wild and scenic river. Most of this segment lies within the White Mountains National Recreation Area. Beaver Creek begins at the confluence of Bear and Champion creeks. The last 16 miles are in the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge. After meandering slowly for another 154 miles through the "Flats," Beaver Creek joins the Yukon River. From there, the take-out at the Dalton Highway bridge is 84 miles downriver. This road-to-road trip, from the put-in on Nome Creek Road to the take-out on the Dalton Highway, is more than 360 river miles.



Gravel bars make great campsites. Photo by Daniel Krza.

National Landscape Conservation System

Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River is part of the BLM's National Landscape Conservation System, which conserves, protects, and restores nationally significant landscapes and places that have outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations. National Conservation Lands include 900 areas (27 million acres) of National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness Areas and other federally designated special places.

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Beaver Creek

Wild and Scenic River

Natural History

The White Mountains are made up of massive white limestone formations up to several thousand feet thick. Wind, rain, and freezing temperatures have weathered away the surrounding soil to expose the jagged cliffs and peaks seen along Beaver Creek. These high ridges are home to Dall sheep and peregrine falcons.

In contrast, the valley bottoms usually consist of permafrost (permanently frozen soil) about a foot beneath the surface. Growing on the permafrost are forests of short, stunted black spruce, deep sedge tussocks, and thick stands of willows. Moose, caribou, grizzly bears and black bears live throughout the area.

Along the creeks, the gravel soils support tall white spruce trees and dense brush that line the banks. Eagles, peregrine falcons, and owls hunt the river corridor. Migratory waterfowl, such as mergansers, buffleheads, goldeneyes, and harlequins spend the summers along Beaver Creek.

Known for its large dorsal fin, the arctic grayling is the predominant fish species in the White Mountains area. Other types of fish include northern pike, sheefish, burbot, and salmon.



Be alert for bears among the willows and on the gravel bars.

Map & Guide

Cover photo: A kayaker enjoys an evening on Beaver Creek.



Beaver Creek rafters float along a jagged limestone ridge in the White Mountains. Photo by Daniel Krza.

Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River



Beaver Creek winds through limestone peaks of the White Mountains.

Planning Your Trip

Beaver Creek flows through a remote area of Interior Alaska. Once you put in at Nome Creek, you will encounter no roads or services until you reach the Dalton Highway crossing over the Yukon River. There is no cell phone coverage in the area.

It usually takes six days to reach Beaver Creek's confluence with Victoria Creek at river mile 111. Many people end their float trips near here by arranging to be picked up by an air taxi service and flown back to Fairbanks. If you intend to continue on to the Yukon River bridge, plan for up to two additional weeks of travel. Commercial services are limited on the Dalton Highway, so arrange transportation back to Fairbanks in advance.

Motors on boats launched on Nome Creek are limited to 15 horsepower or less. The type of boat you use depends on where you plan to take out. A raft, inflatable kayak, or folding boat can be loaded into an airplane if your pickup point is a gravel bar. A canoe is better for traveling on the Yukon River.

Make your pickup arrangements with an air taxi service before leaving Fairbanks. One of the several gravel bars near Victoria Creek (between river miles 100 and 111) may be preferable for aircraft landing and takeoff depending on the river's water level and shifting channels. Inclement weather, changing water levels, or a delayed pickup may prolong your trip. Bring extra supplies in case you spend unexpected time on the river.

Be prepared to line your boat for short distances through shallow sections of the river, particularly on the upper section of Beaver Creek.

Camping is best on the many gravel bars along Beaver Creek. The BLM encourages Leave No Trace camping techniques. Use dead and down wood for campfires. Pack out any non-burnable trash. Remove any trace of your camp, such as fire rings, and scatter any firewood piles.

Several public use cabins are accessible from the river and available for rental. If you plan to use any of the cabins, please make a reservation before you leave Fairbanks. Reservations must be made via the Recreation.gov website (search for "White Mountains National Recreation Area - Alaska Cabins"). Call the BLM office in Fairbanks for additional information. The trail shelter on Summit Trail is free of charge and available on a first-come, first-served basis.



Northern pike attract anglers to pools and sloughs of lower Beaver Creek.

Be Prepared

Have the proper equipment and expect a wide variety of situations and weather conditions. Beaver Creek is beyond cell phone range, so be prepared to handle emergencies on your own. Make sure to bring a topographic map.

File a trip plan with a friend

- Leave your trip plan with someone, noting:
 - Date, location, and method of travel
 - Where you plan to camp
 - What type of equipment you are taking
 - How and when you expect to return to town

Unpredictable conditions

The weather can change without warning. Sunny days can change to rain or even snow. River conditions can change rapidly as well. Rain in Beaver Creek's headwaters often causes the river to rise suddenly downstream. Choose campsites carefully and always tie off your boats at night so they don't float away with rising water levels.

River temperatures are very cold. Be able to recognize the symptoms of hypothermia and know how to treat it. Carry dry clothes in water-tight containers.

Watch out for wildlife

Grizzly and black bears live in the area. Keep a clean camp and store food away from your tent to avoid unwanted guests.

Be Careful with the Water You Drink

- Drinking water should be boiled, filtered, or treated chemically for giardia.
- Dig any latrines or "cat holes" at least 100 feet back from the mean high-water mark (this is where the main vegetation line on the bank begins).

Trip Description

To reach Beaver Creek, follow the Steese Highway north from Fairbanks to MP 57. Take U.S. Creek Road for 7 miles into the White Mountains National Recreation Area and the Nome Creek valley.

Turn left onto Nome Creek Road and continue 12 miles to its end, just past Ophir Creek Campground. You'll find a parking lot and a staging area to begin your trip. Be prepared to pack your equipment and boats 200 feet along a footpath to Nome Creek.

Nome Creek Mile 6

From the river put-in, it is a short, 2.5-mile float on Nome Creek to reach Beaver Creek at river mile 6. For the first 20 miles, Beaver Creek is a shallow stream with frequent sand and gravel bars that you will occasionally have to line your boat across.

O'Brien Creek Mile 12

After passing several smaller creeks, O'Brien Creek at river mile 12 is the next major drainage to join Beaver Creek. Trail Creek adds more water at river mile 15. The next 17 miles flow through a mix of boreal forest and hillsides burned in a 2004 wildfire.

Borealis-LeFevre Cabin Mile 32

At river mile 32, the Borealis-LeFevre Cabin sits on a small bluff on the north side of the river. This public recreation cabin (reservations required) is part of a system of trails and cabins in the White Mountains National Recreation Area. The 20-mile Summit Trail starts on the south bank of the river and ends at MP 28 of the Elliott Highway. The non-motorized trail can be used for a day hike or as a take-out point for a float-in, pack-out trip.

Big Bend Mile 36

The river braids into several channels for the next several miles before coming back together near Big Bend at river mile 36. The rock formation at Big Bend is the southern end of a limestone ridge that forms the spine of the White Mountains. You can often see Dall sheep and peregrine falcons among the rocks.

At Big Bend, Beaver Creek turns north and grows wider and deeper as it passes along the base of the White Mountains. Several privately owned cabins and landing strips are located along Beaver Creek. Please do not land aircraft at these sites or disturb them in any way.

Fossil Creek Mile 46

Between river miles 45 and 80, you will see evidence of the wildland fire that passed through in 2005. Near river mile 46, Fossil Creek flows into Beaver Creek across from a privately owned cabin. With your topographic map and a little route-finding, you can hike 4 miles along the creek and the winter trail through Fossil Gap to Caribou Bluff Cabin. This public recreation cabin offers spectacular 360-degree panoramic views of the Fossil Creek drainage and Limestone Gulch.

Colorado Creek Trail Crossing Mile 53

Colorado Creek Trail crosses Beaver Creek at river mile 53. This winter trail is not obvious from the river but can be located by consulting a topographic map and carefully observing the landscape. In an emergency you can follow the trail eastward through the tussocks and across Windy Creek for 1.5 miles to the Wolf Run public use cabin.

Beaver Creek continues slowly northward, moving away from the White Mountains and passing by forests of birch and aspen. Here the river braids into smaller channels, then rejoins and meanders across a broad, open area with distant views of the mountains. Look for eagles soaring high above the river or moose feeding in the willows along the banks.

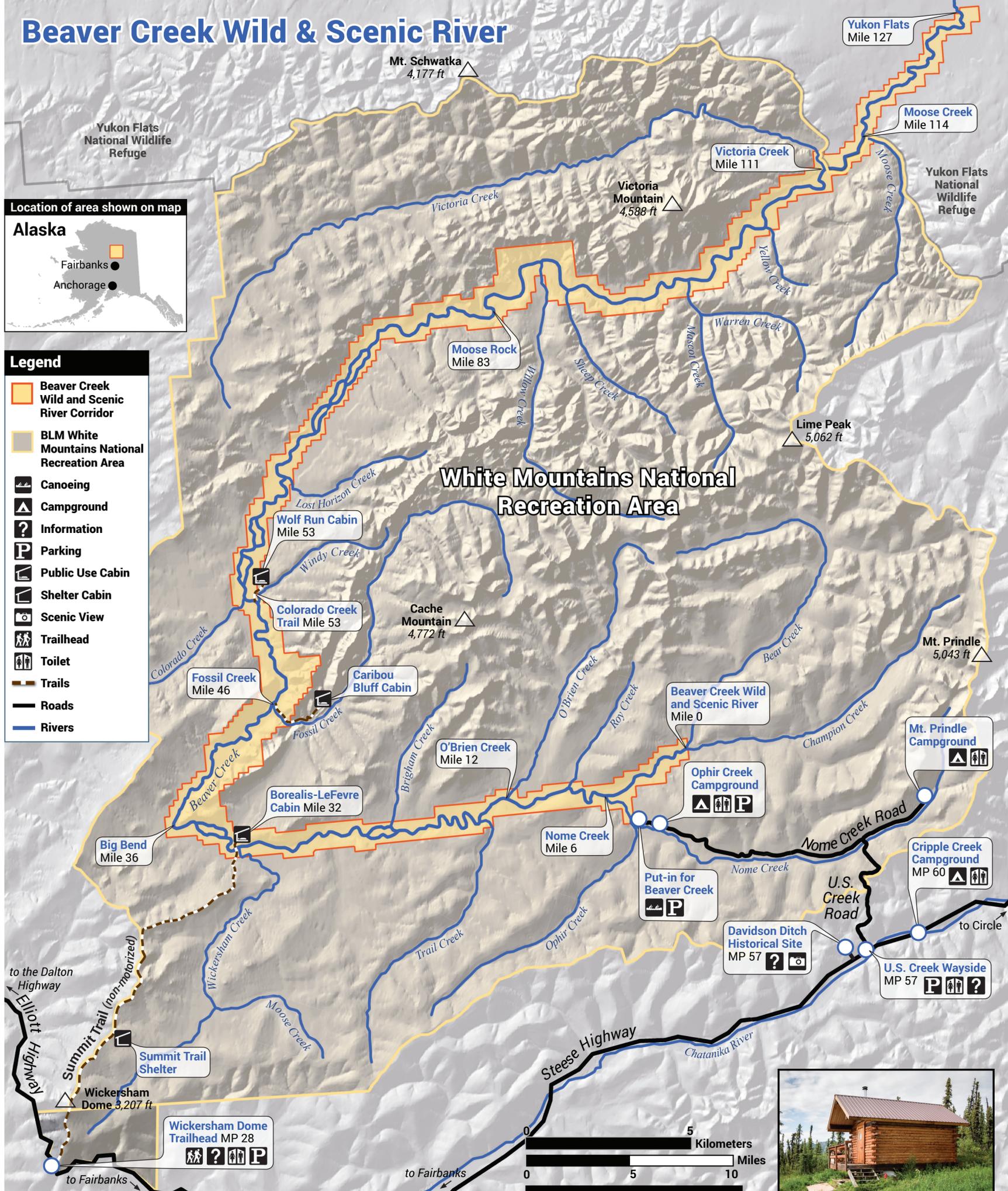
Moose Rock Mile 83

By river mile 83, the river flows into the mountains and you can frequently see Dall sheep climbing on the cutbanks and high bluffs, or eagles soaring nearby. You will float across several deep pools at the base of the bluffs. Small creeks cascade into the river over waterfalls.

For the next 25 miles, several creeks and tributaries drain into Beaver Creek, adding water and increasing the current. Large gravel bars provide great campsites with lots of firewood. While floating, you will have good views of Victoria Mountain to the north and high peaks to the south.

Near river mile 100, Beaver Creek has established a new channel. The older, now dry channel often serves as a favorable location for air taxi pickup.

Beaver Creek Wild & Scenic River



Victoria Creek Mile 111

The mouth of Victoria Creek is at river mile 111, across from a privately owned cabin. Please do not disturb the private property. Several gravel bars near Victoria Creek may be suitable for air taxi pickup. Discuss pickup points with your air carrier prior to departure.

Moose Creek Mile 114

The mouth of Moose Creek is the northeast boundary of the White Mountains National Recreation Area. From here Beaver Creek enters the Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge. For the next 14 miles the river braids with fast water, sharp turns, cutbanks, and sweepers.

Yukon Flats Mile 127

The Beaver Creek Wild and Scenic River corridor ends at river mile 127. For the next 140 miles, Beaver Creek slowly meanders through the Yukon Flats. A small boat motor helps when negotiating this section of slow water. The current picks up noticeably at river mile 268 near Beaver Creek Slough. You will recognize a distinct change in water color from dark green to silty gray.

Yukon River Mile 281

At river mile 281, Beaver Creek joins the Yukon River. The Yukon is a very large, fast-flowing river comprised of many channels. It can be challenging to navigate. Fast currents, high winds, and floating debris, such as logs or entire trees, can easily damage or capsize a boat.

The last section of the trip, from the mouth of Beaver Creek to the Yukon River Bridge on the Dalton Highway, is 84 miles. You can make this stretch in a long day with a small boat motor, if wind and water conditions are favorable. Otherwise, plan for several days of floating.

Yukon Crossing, where the bridge crosses the river, is 134 highway miles northwest of Fairbanks at MP 56 of the Dalton Highway. Lodging, food, telephone, and gas are available on the northwest side of the bridge. Yukon Crossing is the lower of only two places in the state where the Yukon River may be reached by road.

To reach Yukon Crossing from Fairbanks, follow the Steese Highway to Fox. Take the Elliott Highway to MP 73, then follow the Dalton Highway 56 miles to the bridge.

Download BLM's georeferenced PDF map of the White Mountains and Beaver Creek for your smart phone or tablet. Instructions and maps are available at www.blm.gov/maps



Borealis-LeFevre Cabin at river mile 32 provides convenient overnight lodging for floaters. Advance reservations are required.

USGS Quad Map Legend

This brochure should be used for general trip planning only. The map index below shows the USGS inch-to-the-mile maps (1:63,360) recommended for detailed trip planning.

