

Willow Area Summer Trails



Pat Newman Memorial Park Trails

This trail network can be accessed by the trailhead at our new community park. At mile 71 Parks Hwy, turn west on to Willow Creek Parkway. Drive 1 mile and on the left is a driveway to the parking area. An informational kiosk with maps is located at the start of the trail along with a green directional sign. The first tenth of a mile is common for all the destinations. Those trails north of the Parkway are in the Willow Creek State Recreation Area and are non-motorized. All the trails listed below are within this trail network and can be considered easy hikes.

Lucky Shot Trail

A good destination along this trail is the Lucky Shot Bridge located 1 mile from the trailhead. The bridge crosses a salmon spawning stream and some of the 2015 Sockeye Fire burn can be seen here. Look closely and one can see salmon fry swimming in the creek.

Almond Lake Trail

Enjoy some solitude with a 2 mile hike to Almond Lake. Keep following the Lucky Shot Trail past the Windsock connection and cross the Willow Creek Parkway (go around the barriers). Continue on the Lucky Shot to the Almond Lake Trail turn to the left. The trail will lead to the wetlands surrounding the lake but a narrow trail on the right will take you a couple hundred yards to a beautiful view closer to the waters edge. Maybe you can spot loons, cranes or a moose on the lake edge.

Windsock Trail

This is a multi-use trail that connects with residential areas around Shirley Lake. From the trailhead, follow the Lucky Shot Trail to the Windsock Trail connection. From there, the Windsock travels south for 1 1/2 miles. It's a nice flat trail that can be accessed by Shirley Lake Road on the south end.

Shirley Lake Trail

Although this trail can be reached by the Windsock Trail, the shortest way is along a new trail to be constructed starting in July. A highlight of this trail is the Shirley Creek bridge. From the trailhead, follow the signs along the main corridor for .2 mile and follow the flagging/construction area to the left.

Two Bridges Loop

Here is a nice easy 4 mile loop, starting and finishing at the Park that will take you through the Lucky Shot, Windsock, Shirley Lake and the new trail that's under construction.

Nancy Lake State Recreation Area Trails

These trails can be reached by Nancy Lake Parkway, mile 67.2 Parks Hwy. and are all managed by Alaska State Parks. Access to each of the non-motorized trails are along the 6 mile Parkway. Make sure you pay the daily parking fee.

Red Shirt Lake Trail

This popular 3 mile one way hike follows the tops of glacial hills and moraines to the rustic lakeside campsites along a bay of Red Shirt Lake. Other than being a bit hilly, it is an easy hike. Trail parking is at the end of the Parkway and before entering South Rolly Campground.

East Red Shirt Lake Trail

If your looking for less people and a bit more of a rugged hike, take the East trail. The reward is a great view of the lake. Of the 5 mile length, the first mile and a half is on a well built trail, the remaining length may have some wet spots but still well defined. The trailhead pullout is at mile 5.6 of the Parkway.

Chicken Lake-Cross Park Trail

To get to this trail, take the East Red Shirt Lake Trail for 1.5 miles where the start is marked with a kiosk. The eastern end of the trail is Lynx Lake Road so the hike with a shuttle is 6 miles and roundtrip will be double of course (Lynx Lake Road is not developed and can be very muddy). The trail passes between Big Noluck and Chicken Lakes in the Nancy Lake Canoe Trails. There is a canoe portage between the lakes that can take you to the waters edge of each.

Parkway Loop

Park at the winter trailhead, mile 2.2 Parkway for this hilly 2 1/2 mile trail. The trail is designed for skiing but is very suitable for a nice hike. Take the marked ski trail directly across the road from the parking area.

Hatcher Pass Management Area, Willow Side

Craigie Creek Road

Beautiful 9 mile roundtrip hike along rocky mining road to Dog Sled Pass and Schroff Lake. The 1400' elevation gain is very gradual and along the way there are lots of historic remnants from a small town serving the Lucky Shot and War Baby mines nearby. The start is off a road located at mile 23.8 Willow Fishhook Road. Drive a short ways up before the Lucky Shot Mine Road turns to the left. Park on the right side.

Grubstake Gulch Trail

A moderate hike of 5 miles and a gradual 1500' elevation gain, it follows a mining road to a small pond high in a beautiful mountain valley. This trail is also great for accessing the top of Baldy Ridge, another 1000' above. At mile 26 Willow Fishhook Rd, take a road with "no trespassing" signs down to Willow Creek and park near the bridge. Don't worry, it is legal public access but stay way from mining equipment and operations. Cross the bridge and take a now bermed mining road on the right side that leads up the hill. You will know you are on the correct trail if you see water flowing down it near the start.