



Harding Icefield Trail

6-8 hours round-trip

A hike to the top of the Harding Icefield Trail gives you a glimpse of what much of south-central Alaska looked like during the last ice age. This strenuous trail climbs approximately 1,000 feet every mile, but spectacular views along the way make it well worth the effort. Even a half-mile hike up the trail gives you a panoramic view of the valley floor and the edge of Exit Glacier.

No Feeding Wildlife

No Pets

HARDING ICEFIELD



End of the Trail

About 3,500 feet above the valley, the trail ends at the edge of Harding Icefield, a vast expanse of snow and ice stretching as far as the eye can see. Allow at least 6-8 hours to hike to the end of the trail and back. Although it's only 3.7 miles one-way, the trail is steep, and you'll want plenty of time to take in the view at the top!



Top of the Cliffs

If you decide not to go to the end of the trail, the top of the cliffs at mile 2.3 is a worthy destination. Here you get your first glimpse of the Harding Icefield and have great views of Exit Glacier. Allow 4-6 hours for a round-trip hike to this spot.

FOLLOW ORANGE FLAGS

Even though tracks may lead elsewhere, please protect this fragile alpine area by staying on the path marked by the orange flags.



Marmot Meadows

At mile 1.3, the trail levels off briefly at an open plateau of small rolling hills blanketed by wildflowers and alpine vegetation. Give yourself 2-4 hours for a round-trip hike to Marmot Meadows.

HIKE ON THE TRAIL

Hiking off trail or cutting switchbacks kills fragile plants and causes damaging erosion.

PREPARE FOR THE TRAIL

This hike can be a fun adventure, if you're prepared. The weather can be unpredictable. Bears frequent the trail. Let someone know your plans.



WEAR A HAT

Don't forget your sunglasses and sunscreen. You can sunburn even on a cloudy day.

DRESS IN LAYERS

It's cooler at higher elevations. Be prepared for rain, strong winds, and even snow!

KEEP BEAR SPRAY HANDY

Know how to use it. Bears are usually not a threat but they deserve your respect.

BRING WATER AND FOOD

Water along the trail may contain Giardia. Don't drink it unless you purify it.

CARRY A TRASH BAG

Be considerate of other hikers. Pack out toilet paper and all trash.

WEAR STURDY BOOTS

The trail is steep and often muddy. Wear rugged-soled shoes to avoid slipping on wet rocks.