



Dixie Pass Trail

Access: Trailhead on Kotsina Road

Distance: Approximately 24 miles round trip

Time: 3-4 days

Maps: USGS Maps-Valdez (C-1); McCarthy (C-8) 1:63,360; Valdez, McCarthy 1:250,000

Difficulty: Moderately strenuous with moderate route finding

Highlights: Accessible by road, alpine tundra, great views



View from the pass

Note: Proper food storage is required. Bear Resistant Food Containers are available from park visitor centers.

Route:

At mile 14.5 along the Chitina-McCarthy road, turn north at the Strelna airstrip onto the Kotsina Road. After 3.8 miles, turn into the small clearing on the left side of the road. If no parking is available you may need to park at the McCarthy Road and walk to the trailhead. There are also two small pullouts between the Nugget Creek Trailhead and the Dixie Pass Trailhead. The trail begins on the right side of the road.



For the first 3 miles the trail follows a wooded bench before dropping down to Strelna Creek. After reaching Strelna Creek, the hiker should stay on the west side of the creek for approximately 2 miles. Hike up the west side of the Strelna Creek to the confluence of Strelna Creek and the creek from Dixie Pass from the northeast. Cross Strelna Creek above the confluence. Follow the (right) tributary from Dixie Pass. The trail turns into a route at this point. Follow the creek, crossing several times on your way to the next confluence. At the next confluence follow the west (left) fork. You will come to a canyon that may be impassable at high water. If so, you will need to hike up and around it on either side of the creek. At the next confluence cross to the center of the two creeks where you will find a trail switch-backing up to the pass. There isn't any water available in the pass but you can camp in the stunning Rock Creek drainage just on the other side of the pass. Return via the same route.



Above the pass



Along The Trail

Additional Comments:

- Campsites are found along Strelna Creek and the Dixie Pass drainage on sand/gravel bars. The saddle of Dixie Pass has room for 3 or 4 tents. However, Dixie Pass is a thru-way for bear and other wildlife and camping is not advised. Hikers may want to camp and day hike from the confluence 1 mile below the walled in canyon.
- Water is easily accessible for most of the trip except for the last mile or so up to the pass. At Dixie Pass , water may possibly be collected from snow field runoff (snow pack dependent).
- Dixie Pass is an obvious and natural corridor for wildlife. The hiker may find and lose the game trails many times before the trip is completed. As long as the map route is followed, the pass will be easy to find.
- Creeks must be crossed several times.



Potential Hazards:

- Bears may be present anywhere along this route. Precautions should be taken to avoid encounters with bears. Packing out all excess food and garbage will prevent habituation of wildlife.
- Stream crossings may present difficulties and dangers due to water volume and velocity that vary drastically according to the season, time of day and weather conditions. Temperatures of most creeks are just above freezing, even in mid-summer. A firm understanding of glacial creek and river crossing is essential.
- The hiker should be prepared for all types of weather conditions, including rain and snow in the higher elevations. Summertime brings snow to the saddle of Dixie Pass , use extreme caution when crossing snow fields as they may conceal drainage systems underneath.
- This is a remote area, and rescue or medical evacuation possibilities are limited and may take several days.