Surprise Creek Trail

Round Trip: 8.0 miles   U.S.G.S Maps: Kenai B1
Difficulty: Strenuous   Elevation Gain: 2,200 feet
Hiking Time: 4 to 6 hours   High Point: 2,500 feet

Trailhead: The Surprise Creek Trailhead can be reached only by boat. The closest boat launch is at Jim's Landing (on Skilak Lake Road .1 mile from the east entrance junction with the Sterling Highway) on the Kenai River. This portion of the Kenai River is CLOSED to powerboats. The Kenai River can be extremely swift and dangerous. The trailhead is directly across the river from Jim's Landing boat ramp, approximately 50 yards up a slough. River crossings for both directions must be <u>at least</u> 50 yards upstream of the landing.

DESCRIPTION: Surprise Creek Trail provides quick access to alpine country, and climbs rapidly in elevation through a spruce and hemlock forest until it emerges above timberline. The trail is very steep and wet in several areas. Waterproof hiking boots are recommended. The trail disappears in the alpine tundra and you are free to hike wherever you wish.
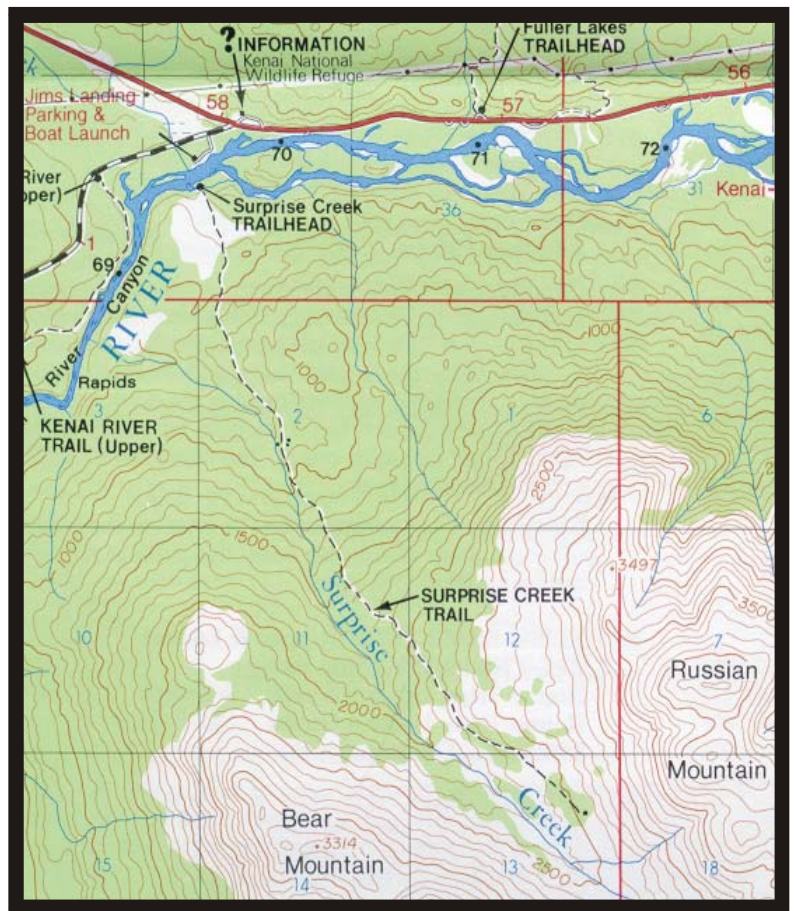
SCENIC VIEWS: Spectacular views of the Kenai Mountains and the Kenai River can be had above timberline.

CAMPING: There are no established campsites and few areas suitable for tents below timberline. However, suitable areas are available in the alpine tundra. Above timberline no firewood is available and backpacking stoves are a necessity. After snow melts little or no water is available.

FISHING: Excellent fishing is available in the Kenai River for Sockeye and Coho salmon, as well as trout and Dolly Varden. Consult current fishing regulations BEFORE you go. There are no fishing opportunities along the trail.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Berry picking can be good along the trail during late summer. This trail also provides excellent opportunities to view wildlife. Look for Dall sheep, marmots, and bears above timberline.

WINTER ACTIVITIES: Not recommended because of difficult access to trailhead during the winter.

Each square = 1 mile