



McCarthy, Alaska Visitor Guide



PRESENTED BY



RAFTTHEWRANGELLS.COM



alaska adventure, your way.

Maybe Alaska is a once-in-a-lifetime bucket list trip for you, or maybe you've been here before but you're looking for something unique and off the beaten path.

No matter your reasons, if you're drawn to the untouched wilderness where you can hear the sounds a glacier makes with your hand pressed against the ice, or see a bear lumber across the horizon from the safety of your raft, and experience small Alaskan town living...you're in the right place!

We understand that the most inspiring and memorable trips are the ones where you can let go and have fun with complete confidence that you're in expert hands. This is why we're here to help you plan your itinerary—from your travel and accommodations to day trips, food, and more!

Nick Merlino

Owner/Founder
McCarthy River Tours & Outfitters
Explore McCarthy Alaska



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Depending on your preferred vibe, we have cabins, yurts, campgrounds...and some local favorites we can suggest.



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Frequently asked questions from visitors and fellow adventurers alike.

WELCOME TO THE LAST FRONTIER



MCCARTHY, ALASKA—LOCATED IN WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE

Rugged mountains, hanging glaciers, and abundant wildlife are all on display in what is the largest national park (and possibly the best-kept secret!) in the United States: Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve.

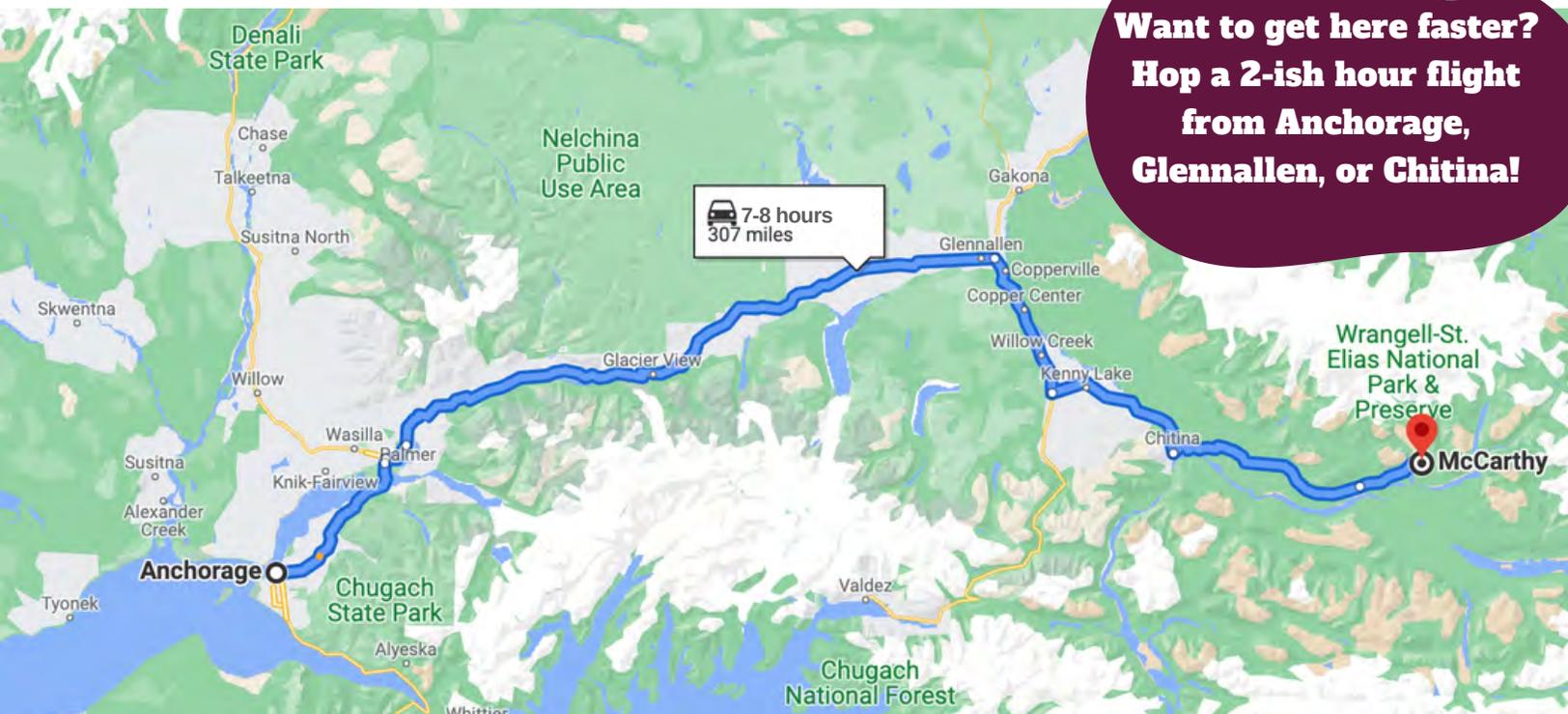
At 13.2 million acres, this national park is the same size as Yellowstone National Park, Yosemite National Park, and Switzerland

combined. It is home to Mt. St. Elias, the second-highest peak in the United States at 18,008 feet, and boasts a rich and diverse wilderness.

And the best part? It's a short 7-8 hour drive from Anchorage, and that makes immersing yourself in this wild, untouched land easier than ever.



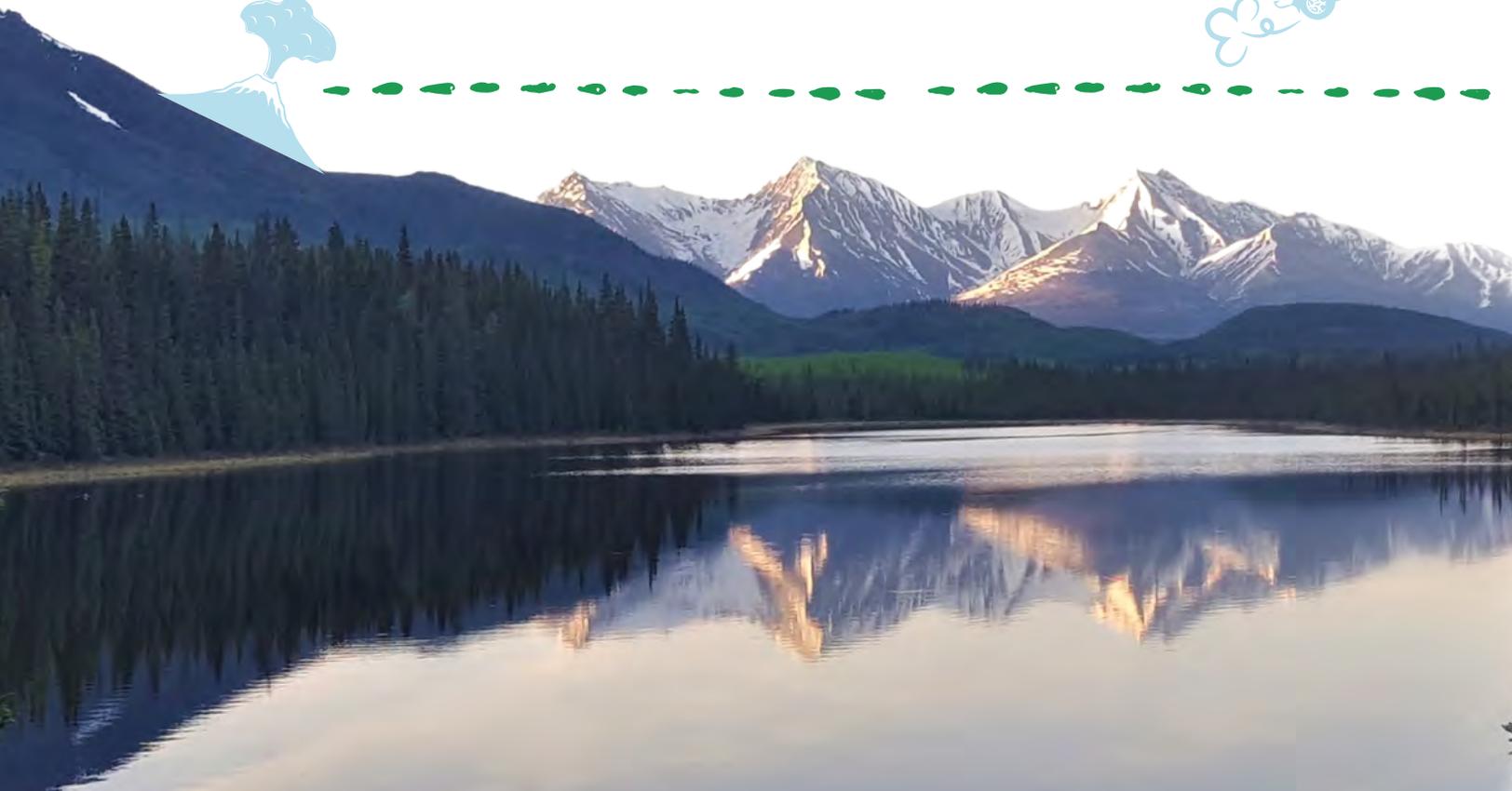
**Want to get here faster?
Hop a 2-ish hour flight
from Anchorage,
Glennallen, or Chitina!**





QUICK FACTS

- * Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve is a designated World Heritage Site with Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve, Kluane National Park Reserve, and Tatshenshini-Alsek National Park. Together, they make this the world's largest international protected wilderness.
- * Mt. St. Elias, at 18,008 feet, is the second-highest peak in the United States.
- * Mt. Wrangell, at 14,163 feet, is one of the largest active volcanoes in North America.
- * The Nabesna Glacier, at approximately 80 miles, is the longest non-polar valley glacier.
- * The Hubbard Glacier is one of the largest and most active tidewater glaciers in North America.
- * The spectacularly scenic, 6- to 8-hour drive from Anchorage rivals the best drives in the world. Immersing yourself in this wild, untouched land is both the journey and the destination!
- * [Childs Glacier](#) calving into the Copper River, which can be viewed on our Copper River expedition, is one of the best scenic river trips in the world!





GETTING TO MCCARTHY

SHUTTLES

From Anchorage, Alaska:

[Great Land Adventures](#)

Private shuttles to Glennallen with possible hikes on the Matanuska Glacier.

[Copper Valley Air Service](#)

Offer a twice-weekly flight (Mondays & Thursdays) from Anchorage to McCarthy on the mail plane. Ask about flights from Glennallen!

[Wrangell St.Elias Charters](#)

Van shuttles daily during the summer months from Anchorage.

[Soaring Eagle Transportation](#)

Tuesday, Thursday, & Saturday shuttle between Anchorage, Valdez, & Glennallen.

[Interior Alaska Bus Line](#)

Monday, Wednesday, & Friday shuttle service between Anchorage, Glennallen, & Tok.

From the Copper Basin, Alaska:

[The Kennicott Shuttle](#)

Daily shuttle from Glennallen to McCarthy with stops in Copper Center, Kenny Lake, & Chitina along the way.

[Wrangell Mountain Air](#)

Daily flight schedule between Chitina & McCarthy.

RENTAL CARS

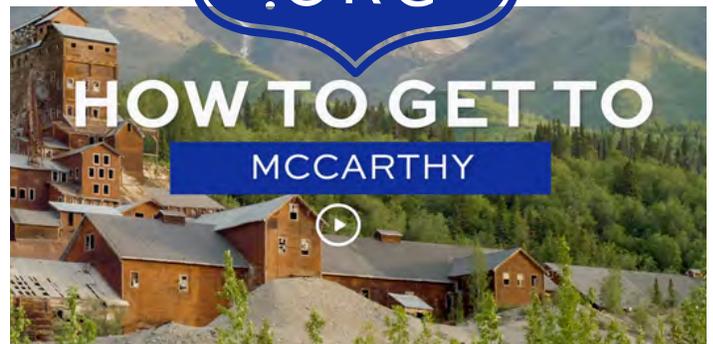
Check out [Alaska 4x4 Rentals](#) or [Alaska Overlander](#) for rentals. Always be sure to ask about restrictions that might affect your ability to travel to McCarthy.

CAR STORAGE

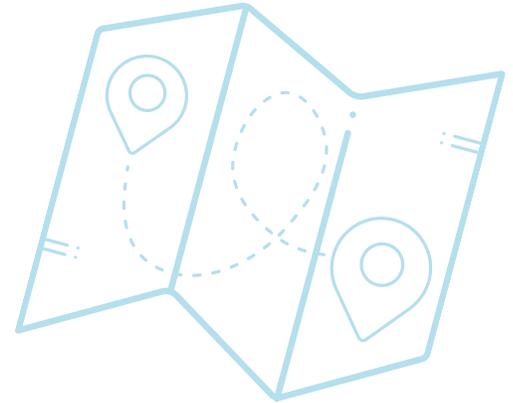
We offer free car storage to all Multi-Day Guided Trips. If you are interested in storing your car while on your trip with us, let us know.

DRIVING DISTANCES

Anchorage to McCarthy: 314 miles / 7.5 hours
Fairbanks to McCarthy: 374 miles / 9.5 hours
Valdez to McCarthy: 176 miles / 5.5 hours
Glennallen to McCarthy: 125 miles / 4 hours
Chitina to McCarthy: 60 miles / 2.5 hours
Denali N.P. to McCarthy: 395 miles / 11 hours



Watch this information-rich video to see how breathtakingly beautiful the drive is from Anchorage to McCarthy!



QUESTIONS ABOUT GETTING HERE

What are the McCarthy Road and the Nabesna Road like?

The Nabesna Road is roughly a 50-mile stretch of dirt road with multiple creek crossings and a very quiet end-of-road. Meanwhile, the McCarthy Road has been vastly improved since 2006, with many of its stretches now straightened and widened, and creek crossings have been routed into culverts. That being said, it is still a 60-mile dirt road and you should expect to travel between 25 and 30 miles an hour with some occasional rough stretches.

Can I drive my rental car on the McCarthy and Nabesna park roads?

The McCarthy and Nabesna Roads are maintained by the State of Alaska as state right-of-ways. However, since they are dirt roads, many rental companies restrict travel on them; you will also encounter this if you are attempting to drive the Dalton or Denali highways as these are dirt roads too. It is worth it to check with local car rental companies like [Midnight Sun Car Rental](#) in Anchorage about options for driving on dirt roads in Alaska.



one-stop
adventures



DAY TRIPS



let's make a day of it!

DAY TRIPS

Paddle around icebergs, explore hidden ice amphitheaters, hike on Root Glacier, and watch for Alaska wildlife roaming the open meadows of the banks.

Our day trips are private, which gives you a unique and authentic experience that aligns with your interest, comfort level, and pace.



KENNICOTT GLACIER LAKE & RIVER RAFTING

Explore a glacial lake that formed in the last 25 years, float next to a 25-mile long glacier, jump from an iceberg into glacial waters (protected by a drysuit!), learn about the natural and human history of the Kennicott Valley, and—of course—raft class III whitewater!

GLACIER HIKES

Explore the blue pools, moulins, crevasses, and rolling ice of the Root Glacier accompanied by one of our local guides. Hikes include a walking tour through historic Kennicott, expert glacier crampon instruction, exploring the glacier, and more.

KENNICOTT GLACIER LAKE KAYAK TOUR

Take an exciting 4-hour Alaska glacial kayak tour on the Kennicott Glacier Lake paddle among icebergs, hike on the rocky surface of the ancient ice and watch as geology happens before your eyes.

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MULTI-DAY RIVER ADVENTURES



the trip of a lifetime

MULTI-DAY RIVER TRIPS

Your Ticket to Adventure, Connection, and Complete Recharging

Ever wondered what it is like to lay in a tent on an Alaska wilderness adventure and listen to the river flow past all night? To lose yourself in awe by the sheer beauty that surrounds you? Or to sit silently from the safety of a boat and watch as bears and moose make their way on the riverbank?

Our overnight and multi-day Rafting Expeditions immerse you into the untouched Alaskan wilderness and some of the most untamed land in North America.



GET THE GUIDE

Download our guide to multi-day river rafting trips and get:

- What to Pack Checklist
- Leave No Trace Guide
- The Role of Adventure Guides
- FAQs
- And more!*



**stay, play,
eat & drink**

with us

WHERE TO STAY



Glacier View Campground



STEPS AWAY

Whether you're looking for a tent site or a spot to park the RV, our very own **Glacier View Campground** is a visitor favorite! Our cafe and ice cream shop is only 1/4 mile away. You can grab a hot and savory coffee from the cafe in the morning, and easily check in for your day or multi-day adventure. Then end the day on a high-note: grab one of our famous burgers and a glacier-cold beer or glass of wine at our full-service grill!



CAMPGROUND AMENITIES

- Owned by us!
- Tent campsites and RV sites are available.
- Fresh water.
- Camp store on site.
- Come self-contained as there are no hookups or dump stations.
- Full-service Glacier View Grill BBQ is on-site!
- Bear-proof storage available.
- Bike rentals are available for our guests.
- Shared showers and bathrooms.
- Pets welcomed at campsites and RV sites.



WHERE TO STAY



Kennicott River Lodge

CABINS

Located just before the end of McCarthy Road, **Kennicott River Lodge** provides you with a classic and cozy accommodation against jaw-dropping scenery. Being located on the roadside of the Kennicott River means easy accessibility (close enough to walk!) to the historic area of town, the museum, and a local favorite, The Potato.



LODGE AMENITIES

- McCarthy River Tours Adventure office is conveniently located on-site!
- 5 cabins with different sleeping arrangements to accommodate your party
- A Main Lodge "Suite" with private deck and bathroom facilities located just downstairs
- Wi-Fi
- Large shared kitchen
- Sauna rental available
- Jaw-dropping views of the Kennicott & Root Glaciers as well as the mile-high Stairway Icefall
- Large firepit and outdoor area
- BBQ Grill
- Shared showers and bathrooms
- Steps away from As the Glacier Melts Cafe. Featuring Alaska-made ice cream and espresso.

QUICK TIPS

Package your lodging & camping with our world-class adventure tours for the best savings!

More Great Options



OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS

[Currant Ridge Cabins](#)

Fully-equipped cabins with kitchen, bedroom, bath, and view. These cabins are a great choice for families, groups, and anyone looking for the comforts of home while getting lost in the wild.

[Aspen Meadows Bed & Breakfast](#)

Offers cabins and a shower house with a light breakfast in the morning. A great place for people looking for a relaxing setting here in McCarthy.

[Blackburn Cabins](#)

Conveniently located on the wagon road between McCarthy and Kennicott, your home away from home in the Wrangell Mountains.

[Kennicott Glacier Lodge](#)

Located in the historic town of Kennicott. Offers great views of the Kennicott and Root Glaciers. Quiet and comfortable setting for a relaxing stay. Don't forget the great food and casual atmosphere, too!

GROCERIES & LIQUOR



[McCarthy Center Store & Nugget Liquors](#)

The local grocery store features fresh produce, baked goods, prepared foods, and a wide selection of organic, gluten-free items. Nugget Liquors has a selection of beer, wine, and spirits in case you need to restock your supply!

KEEP THIS IN MIND!

Store items and alcohol are priced significantly higher in McCarthy than in Anchorage.

We suggest stocking up before you arrive.

AROUND TOWN

More Great Options



WHERE TO EAT

[Glacier View Grill](#)

Burgers as big as the Wrangell Mountains! BBQ foods and beer/wine. Enjoy a panoramic view of The Root Glacier and surrounding Wrangell Mountains from the comfort of an outdoor cafe that's famous for its "Glacier Burger".

[The Roadside Potatohead](#)

Known locally as "The Potato". From the famous potatohead burrito to their rotating dinner entrees, they do their best to use local produce and made-from-scratch ingredients. Don't forget their locally famous curly fries!

[The Meatza Wagon](#)

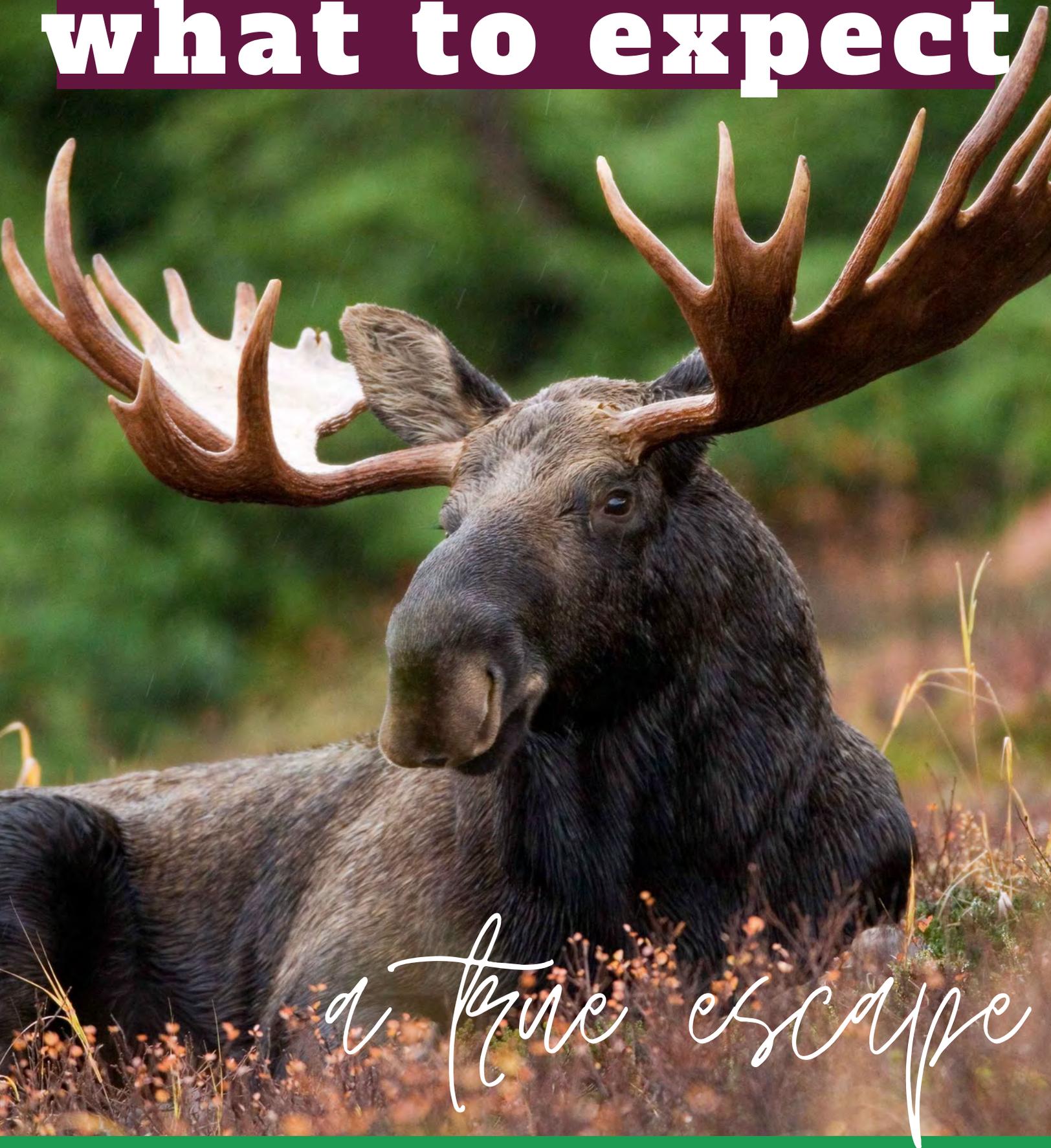
This is a small, family-friendly spot that isn't owned by a local serving food, but by a chef who also happens to be a local! Enjoy their covered seating area overlooking the Kennicott Glacier and Mt. Blackburn

[As the Glacier Melts Cafe](#)

The best Alaskan-made ice cream and [@steamdotcoffee](#) espresso!



what to expect



a true escape

This slice of paradise is wild & remote.

CONNECTION

We don't have the greatest cellphone reception or the strongest internet signals. So this is the perfect time to disconnect from the outside world and reconnect with your fellow travelers, adventure guides, and locals!

RICH HISTORY

No trip to McCarthy is complete without visiting our local [McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum](#), which features local artifacts and the best photo collection we have seen in the valley. And be sure to download this [McCarthy Road Map Guide](#) for a trip back in time and this self-guided [Kennicott Walking Tour!](#)

MEDICAL NEEDS

There is no advanced medical care available in McCarthy. Even minor medical needs may require prolonged, difficult, and expensive transportation to the nearest medical facility. Please bring extra prescription medicine with you and take extra precautions for your health and safety.

Trip insurance that offers medical and travel protection is certainly a great thing to secure for yourself before you join us!





responsibility

for people, place, planet

We are stewards of the wilderness where we operate our business.

REGENERATIVE TOURISM

McCarthy River Tours was founded in 2010 in the spirit of exploring the great rivers of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. At the heart of our mission to provide you with an unforgettable Alaskan experience is the commitment to not only protect the wilderness we enjoy with you—but to actively participate in regenerative tourism as well.

Wrangell-St. Elias, the largest national park in the country, [is committed to the four pillars of sustainable tourism](#): effective management, social and economic development, cultural protection, and environmental efforts. McCarthy River Tours is also committed to supporting the stewardship of our region's environment, communities, and economies. We recognize that healthy, intact ecosystems are vital to sustaining the local Alaska Native and rural cultures.

McCarthy River Tours is a 1% for the Planet Member and is certified in and adheres to Leave No Trace ethics to ensure that we limit our impact on the wilderness and leave it better than we found it. We are also [River Ambassadors with American Rivers](#). Educating our visitors in sustainable and regenerative practices is a critical aspect of our work. We've invested in solar energy for our grounds and operation, and we buy/source locally. We regularly volunteer for community initiatives, too.

We believe the experience you'll have with us will transform and renew your commitment to making a difference for people, place, and planet.





ready to plan?

questions & answers



MORE QUESTIONS



What's the weather like?

Alaska weather can be hard to predict, as it can change suddenly and dramatically.

June tends to be the nicest month but also the buggiest. July is warm and very busy, while August tends to be cooler and more likely to see some rain, but the least buggy! During the summer months, the prepared traveler should plan for temperatures ranging from 40°F to 80°F.



When is there a midnight sun?

McCarthy's longest day of the year is the Summer Solstice, sometime between June 20th-22nd. The sun is up from 3 AM until just before midnight, and it does not get dark all night. By August, we start getting dark nights again, and stars begin to come back out. This is when we start seeing the occasional Aurora Borealis!

What is the best time of year to see the Northern Lights?

Although the winter months offer the clearest viewing opportunities thanks to sub-zero temperatures, September and October can be equally good without the frigid cold! You'll enjoy the added bonus of the Alaskan fall foliage and lower rates for transport and accommodation.



Is the park open year-round?

The park is technically open year-round. However, the seasonal window during which people visit is between May 15th and September 15th. Outside of that window, services can be minimal. We offer trips from the last weekend in May until the first weekend in September. If you're interested in days beyond this, contact us! We can create a custom booking and help you with your itinerary to ensure an easy, seamless experience!

Do you include drysuits on your trips?

Yes! We raft and paddle rivers that originate from glaciers: the temperature of the water can hover in the mid-30's. A drysuit is not only a much-needed barrier from the cold water in an emergency situation, but it turns an average day on the river from stressful to fun! You don't have to worry about staying warm and dry if it rains or you get splashed.



I have questions! How can I reach you?

You can call us at 907-302-0688, [email us](#) via our contact form, or use our website [chat feature](#). Either way, we're looking forward to helping you plan your visit to McCarthy—and your adventure with us!



ready to reconnect in wild alaska?

we're waiting!

Visit RaftTheWrangells.com



contact us

Mile 59, McCarthy Rd.
McCarthy, AK 99588
907-302-0688
info@raftthewrangells.com

hours of operation

May 15 – September 15
8am-7pm AK Time, every day!
September 16 – May 14
10am-4pm AK Time, Monday, Wednesday, & Friday