Welcome to the Mendenhall Glacier

Come explore the beautiful Mendenhall, Alaska’s most accessible glacier. Take time to walk the shore of Mendenhall Lake to a thundering waterfall or explore forest trails to stunning overlooks.

In this recreation area you can leave footprints on soil that was under ice just decades ago. Trail options include easy, paved pathways or challenging climbs to match any ability; one easy trail crosses a salmon stream where bears are occasionally viewed. The first Forest Service Visitor Center in the nation was dedicated here in 1962 to promote the “understanding and enjoyment of glacial phenomena” and today offers the best view of the glacier coupled with enriching exhibits and film.

Mendenhall Glacier is one of 38 large glaciers that flow from the 1,500 square mile expanse of snow and ice known as the Juneau Icefield. As the glacial ice accumulates seasonally, gravity pulls the ice down valleys. Slowly and steadily the glacier scours bedrock, grinding everything to powder or transporting huge boulders (erratics) on its 13-mile path to Mendenhall Lake.

Have you ever connected a whale to a glacier?

Glaciers contribute vast volumes of freshwater to land and marine environments. Southeast Alaska’s glaciers alone discharge enough water to fill 40 million Olympic-sized swimming pools. By grinding mountains into fine particles, glaciers provide our oceans with a variety of nutrients including nitrogen, phosphorus and unique ancient organic carbon, all of which contribute to the productivity of marine food webs. Swimming at the top of this food web are the whales that frequent Auke Bay and the Juneau area.

Why is it melting?

The accelerated melting of ice in modern times is a dramatic and persistent reminder of large and potentially disruptive shifts underway from our warming climate. Alaska’s melting glaciers represent an up-close and personal connection to climate change. Glaciers have always provided for humans, from recreation and aesthetic beauty to water for drinking, agriculture, or electricity. Today they are compelling us to consider the connectedness of nature, the fragility of ecosystems, even the composition of the air we breathe.
SHORT WALKS & HIKES
AROUND THE MENDENHALL GLACIER

What’s there to do at the Visitor Center?

► WATCH our 15 minute movie Landscapes of Change.
► LEARN about the glacier, surrounding landscape, and wildlife.
► RELAX in the glacier observation area.
► BROWSE the Alaska Geographic Bookstore (May – September).

Trail Information

**Photo Point**
- Length: 1/3 mile (.5 km) round trip
- Time: Approximately 15 minutes
- Difficulty: Easy; paved

**Nugget Falls**
- Length: 2 miles (3.2 km) round trip
- Time: Approximately 1 hour
- Difficulty: Moderate; gravel

**Steep Creek**
- Length: 1/4 (.4 km) mile loop
- Time: Approximately 30 minutes
- Difficulty: Easy; paved & raised boardwalk

**East Glacier**
- Length: 3.5 mile (5.6 km) loop
- Time: Approximately 2.5 hours
- Difficulty: Challenging; gravel, rock, & stairs

Steep Creek Trail is partially closed during our seasonal return of robins for improved wildlife viewing.
Have a wonderful and safe visit.

Please
- Smoke in designated areas only.
- Walk bicycles on paved trails.
- Keep dogs on leash.

Bear Safety
Black bears frequent this area. Help keep bears wild and people safe.
- Stay on designated trails.
- Do not take food or flavored beverages outdoors.
- Give bears plenty of space. Do not approach or run from bears.

Visitor Center Hours
- **Open Daily**
  May–September
  8am–7:30pm
- **Open Limited Hours**
  October–April

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FEE AREA
Mendenhall Glacier fees are used here to improve your experience.

907.789.0097
www.mendenhallglacier.net
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All photos by Matt Knutson