

Erie Mine

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior



- Access:** Begins as Root Glacier Trail, Kennecott Mill Town
- Distance:** Approximately 11 miles round trip
- Highlights:** Glaciers, historic buildings, scenery

Difficulty: *Difficult. Requires bouldering, navigation through loose rock, and good judgment.*

From the Kennecott Visitor Center, walk through the Kennecott Mill Town north towards the Root Glacier. About a half mile beyond the visitor center, the road will split. Take the left hand trail. The trail will soon cross over Bonanza Creek and then wind its way through the lateral moraines of the Kennicott and Root Glaciers. After about a mile the trail curves sharply to the right and uphill, follow the trail to cross Jumbo Creek on the footbridge. After approximately another 1/4 mile, the trail reaches the Root Glacier access trail, continue **past** the access trail. (Primitive campsites, along with an outhouse and food lockers, are available in this area.)



View of Erie Mine bunkhouse

In another 1/4 mile the trail will cross the dry outwash plain of Amazon Creek. Depending on recent rainfall or spring melt, Amazon Creek may be flowing above ground. The trail continues in and out of brush and along the top of the moraine for another 2 miles. Towards the end of the trail, the Erie Mine Bunkhouse building will be visible ahead and high above on the hillside to the right of the trail. There is a food storage box and sign located at the bottom of a large gully, almost below the mine. This gully is where the ascent to the mine will begin. If you get all the way to the old tram cables at the end of the trail, you have gone too far. (The bunkhouse cannot be seen from this location)



Climbing to the mine

Begin the ascent by following a foot trail along the right side of the large gully heading straight up the ridge. Although it will look more inviting to move directly towards the bunkhouse visible on the cliff top doing so will not allow you to reach the site. Continue past the first major gully on your left. At this point a second gully on the left will come into view.

There are two routes possible from this point.

Route A: This route requires some bouldering techniques and contains a large amount of loose scree. Follow the second gully toward the mine. This gully will be full of snow in the early season (usually until late June). After some ascent you will approach another gully to the left with a grassy patch at the top of it. This gully will be approximately 200-300 feet below the last peaks of the Nikolai Greenstone (dark colored rock). Follow this gully to the top point along the upper part of the ridge to an outstanding lookout point. From this point the bunkhouse will be visible and just below the ridge. Descend the ridge along the larger rocks and follow the foot trail to the bunkhouse. From the bunkhouse, the mine can be seen by following the foot trail around the corner just to the north of the bunkhouse.

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Route B:

This route is less technical than route A. Follow the previous directions, then, instead of following the second gully on your left, continue straight up following the foot path up the grassy slope to the right. After some ascent, move left (north) above the first jagged rock outcropping. Descend into the main gully to your left (north) by side stepping across the ridge. Follow the grassy ramp up to the top of the ridge to your left. Make sure you go all the way to the top of the grass ramp to avoid the steep cliffs down low on the other side of the ridge. The bunkhouse will be visible from the top of the grassy ramp. Descend to the bunkhouse.

Special Notes:

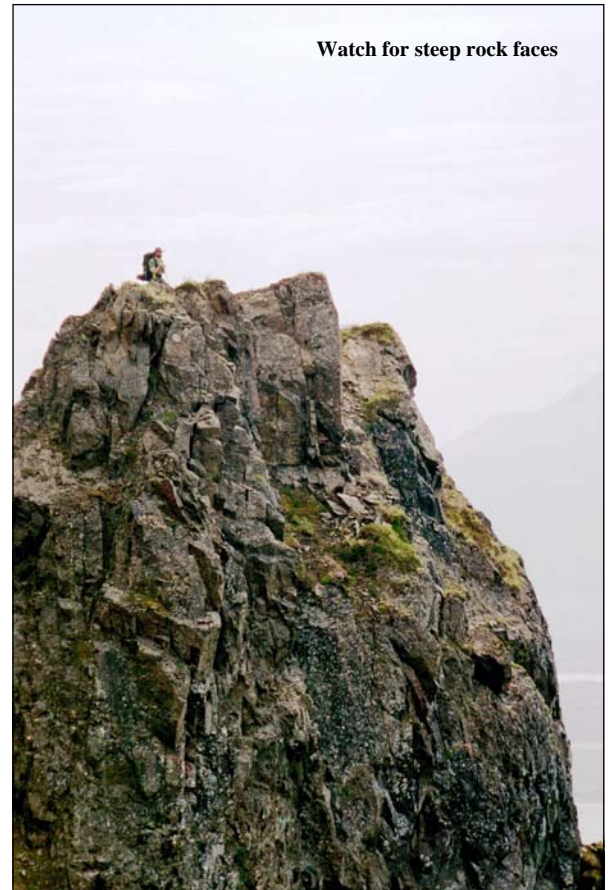
1. There may not be water available past Jumbo Creek.
2. The mine opening and surrounding buildings are in a state of disrepair and are hazardous. In 2005 the roof of the bunkhouse caved in due to snow load. Caution is advised.
3. The Root Glacier Trail is an area where bears are particularly active. Take standard precautions for travel in bear country. Talk to a park ranger in the visitor center if you have any questions or concerns.



Entrance to mine shaft

Warning:

There are very steep faces of loose rock that end in cliffs. Do not attempt to descend any steep faces of loose rock that you can't see all the way down.



Watch for steep rock faces

Please remember:

The Erie Mine and the other historic sites at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve are part of our nation's historic heritage. They have been saved by the American people so that they might be explored and protected. The buildings and the artifacts are protected by the National Park Service. The removal of artifacts from the site and the destruction of historic buildings are prohibited. Please explore them in ways that will allow others to explore them in the future. Thank you for helping to protect Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve.

