

Upper (east entrance) / Lower (west entrance) Kenai River Trail

Round Trip: Upper 5.6 miles roundtrip
Lower 4.6 miles roundtrip

Difficulty: Easy - Moderate

Hiking Time: Upper = 3 - 5 hours

Lower = 2 - 4 hours

U.S.G.S Maps: Kenai B1

Elevation Gain: Upper = 260 feet

Lower = 250 feet

High Point: 550 feet



Trailhead: This trail has two trailheads along Skilak Lake Road. The Upper trailhead starts at mile 0.6 and the Lower trailhead starts at mile 2.3. These mile markers are from the east entrance of Skilak Lake Road junction with the Sterling Highway.

DESCRIPTION: This trail provides access to the Kenai River and is divided into upper and lower sections. The western or lower section of the trail goes through a burned section from the Pothole Lake fire (human-caused) which occurred in 1991 and burned 8,700 acres. Much of the trail is forested and some areas are soggy. In July 2004 a fire burned 46 acres. The cause of this fire is unknown.

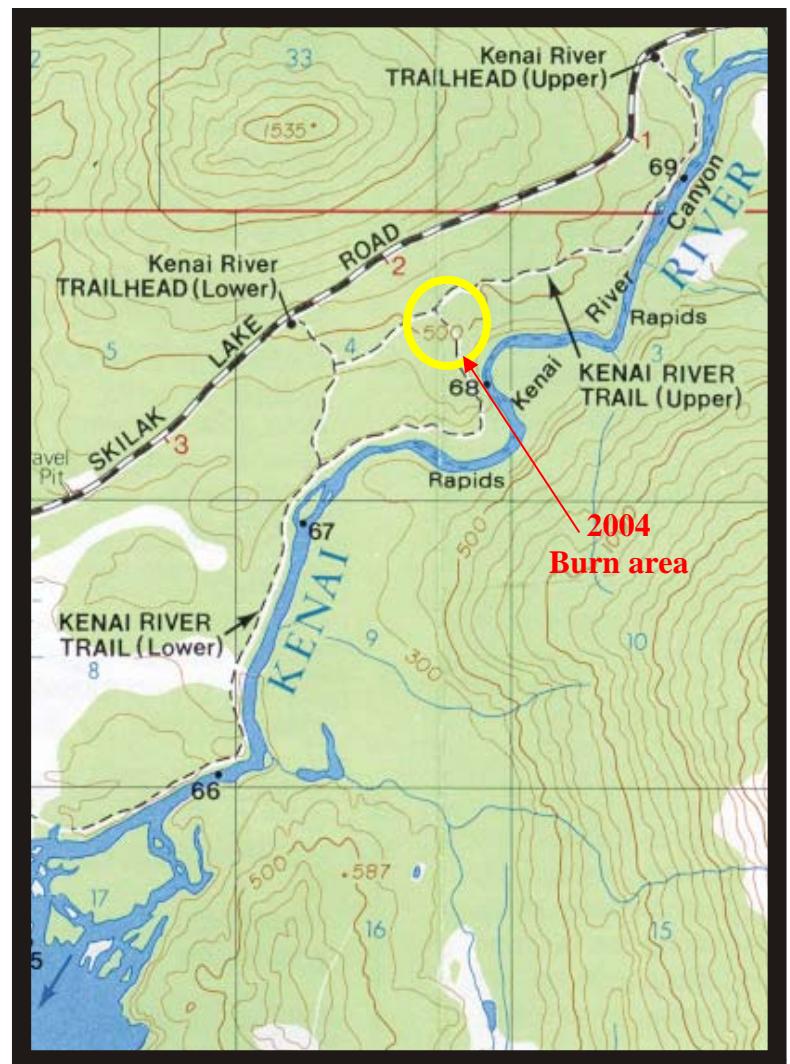
SCENIC VIEWS: Excellent views of the Kenai River canyon can be obtained within the first half mile of the (eastern) upper section. Good views of the Kenai River are also available in the lower section, though they are less spectacular.

CAMPING: There are several areas suitable for camping along the Kenai River; most are in the lower section. Firewood is fairly abundant, but backpacking stoves are recommended to reduce impact.

FISHING: Trout, Dolly Varden, and salmon can be caught in the Kenai River. Check the current fishing regulation before you go.

OTHER ACTIVITIES: Flowers are abundant in the spring and summer. Berry picking can be good during late summer. Look for eagles, mergansers, moose, river otter, beaver, and other animals.

WINTER ACTIVITIES: The Upper Kenai River remains open in winter. Though the trail is not well suited for cross-country skiing, it is suitable for snowshoeing. Near the river the trail is often steep and slippery, and caution is advised. Animals needing open water can sometimes be seen in this area. Look for wintering bald eagles and other birds.



Each square = 1 mile