



News Release

DATE: January 4, 2024
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Alaska Railroad and U.S. Forest Service announce booking change for Spencer Bench Cabin

Starting January 15, U.S. Forest Service to manage reservations of Spencer Bench Cabin & nearby campsites

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – The Alaska Railroad and U.S. Forest Service are announcing a change in the booking process for the popular Spencer Bench public use cabin and nearby campsites. Starting January 15, 2024, reservations for the summer 2024 season will be managed by the U.S. Forest Service and available to book through [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov).

This is a change from how bookings have been handled in the past; since the Spencer Bench Cabin opened in 2015, the Alaska Railroad managed summer reservations due to the cabin's unique location in a part of the Chugach National Forest only accessible by rail. To reach the cabin in the summer months, visitors must travel to the Spencer Glacier Whistle Stop, served daily by the [Alaska Railroad's Glacier Discovery Train](#) from early June through mid-September. From the Whistle Stop, the hike to reach the cabin is just over 5 miles with an elevation gain of 1,600 feet.

The change in the booking process brings the Spencer Bench cabin in line with other public use cabins managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Already, winter stays at the Spencer Bench cabin - accessed by snowmachining to the property - are reserved through [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov).

As part of the new process, summer visitors to the Spencer Bench public use cabin will need to purchase train tickets directly from the Alaska Railroad to access the Spencer Glacier Whistle Stop. From early June through mid-September the Whistle Stop is served daily by the Glacier Discovery Train, which provides service from Anchorage, Girdwood, Portage and Whittier to Spencer Glacier, arriving daily at 1:45 p.m. and departing at 4:40 p.m. Current schedule and fare information for the Glacier Discovery Train is available at AlaskaRailroad.com; passengers may book online or by calling Alaska Railroad reservations at 800.544.0552.

The cabin sits at an elevation of 1,900' and offers breathtaking views of Spencer Glacier and the Placer River valley. This location also provides an outstanding setting for exploring the Spencer Lake area and the high country of the Kenai Mountains.

The 15x17 foot, Alaska yellow cedar trapper-style cabin accommodates up to six people and offers wooden bunks, a table with benches, fire extinguisher, snow shovel, a broom and an outhouse.

Like other U.S. Forest Service public use cabins, guests are responsible for supplying their own drinking water, kerosene for the heater (one liter will last about four hours), a cook stove, flashlights or lanterns, bedding, mattresses, toilet paper, garbage bags, cookware, dishes and utensils. A creek is located near the cabin site but water must be treated before consumption.

In addition to the public use cabin, the U.S. Forest Service also maintains two campsites available for reservation at the Spencer Glacier Whistle Stop. The campsites are located roughly a mile from the train stop via a flat, ADA-accessible trail, and offer pit toilets and bear boxes, as well as close access to the edge of Spencer Lake. Spencer Glacier campground reservations will also be managed through [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov), available in early 2024.

The Alaska Railroad is a state-owned corporation providing year-round inter-city public rail transportation and freight service from Seward to Anchorage to Fairbanks. Moving over 450,000 passengers and 3.7 million tons of freight annually - safety is at the core of its operations.

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