



Weather & Climate Summary Wrangell – St. Elias National Park & Preserve Winter 2026

Wrangell Mountains through frosty trees. NPS Photo

Glennallen Winter Season 2026

The long-term climate records used to put current weather into perspective are located along the park's western boundary. Historically, we used the Gulkana airport site, but due to missing data this fall and winter, we are using the Glennallen KCAM site—with records dating back to 1965. In Glennallen, winter 2026 was colder than normal with near-normal precipitation levels. The winter season, December through February, was 4.3°F colder compared to the 1991-2020 normal. December was the coldest month compared to normal. Total winter precipitation was 2.43 inches, slightly above the normal value of 2.29 inches for the season. The accumulated snowfall for the winter months was 32.6 inches (see Table 1 and 2, Figures 1 and 2).

December

December was colder and snowier than normal. The average monthly temperature was 11.7°F colder than normal. This was the fourth coldest December on record and the coldest since 2012. During the first week of the month, daily highs on several days climbed above 32°F, but after that, the cold settled in and temperatures averaged 22°F colder than normal through December 26th. The total precipitation (melted snow and rain) for December was 1.02 inches, which is 129% of the normal amount. The snowfall total was 9.7 inches.

January

January temperatures were near normal with above normal precipitation. The first week was exceptionally cold, with two record-setting daily lows: -52°F on January 3rd and -56°F on January 4th. On January 5th, the temperature reached -59°F, approaching the record cold for that date of -61°F set in 1975. Temperatures rebounded sharply in the second week, climbing well above normal and exceeding 32°F on several days with reports of rainfall. After January 19th, conditions moderated to near-normal levels. Precipitation for the month totaled 0.89

inches, which is 127% of normal. Snowfall for January was 15.8 inches.

February

February was cooler and drier than normal. The average monthly temperature was 2.3°F, which is nearly a degree cooler than the normal average temperature. Temperatures were near normal during the first half of the month but cooled off significantly in the last week, ending well below normal the last few days of the month, with low temperatures reaching -39°F. Those last few days were 27°F colder than average. Total snowfall for the month was 7.1 inches, with a water content of 0.52 inches, which is 65% of normal. The snow depth at the end of the month was 17 inches.

Table 1. Glennallen average monthly temperatures compared to 1991-2020 normal.

Winter 2025-2026	Average Monthly Temp (°F)	1991-2020 Normal (°F)	Departure from Normal (°F)
December	-14.2	-2.5	-11.7
January	-5.5	-5.2	-0.3
February	2.3	3.2	-0.9

Winter temperature departure from normal: -4.3°F

Table 2. Glennallen monthly precipitation totals compared to normal.

Winter 2025-2026	Total Monthly Snowfall in.	1991-2020 Normal (in.)	Departure from Normal (in.)
December	1.02	0.79	+0.23
January	0.89	0.70	+0.19
February	0.52	0.8	-0.28

Winter precipitation departure from normal: +0.14 in. (106% of normal).

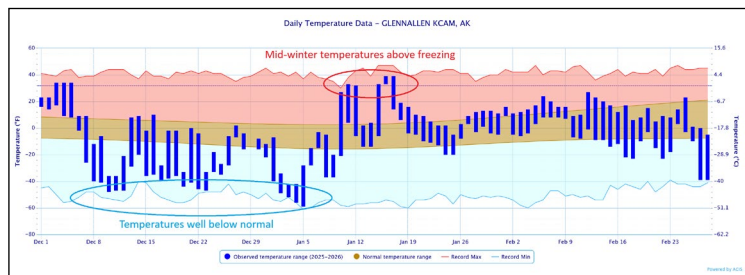


Figure 1. Winter 2025-2026 daily temperatures at Glennallen showing record maximum (red), record minimum (blue), normal (brown) and observed range (blue bars). <http://xmacis.rcc-acis.org/>

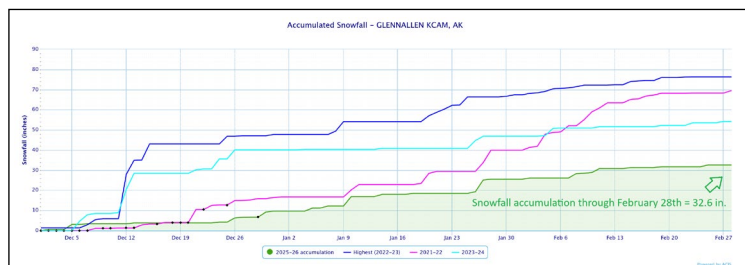


Figure 2. Winter 2025-2026 accumulated snowfall at Glennallen (green) compared to the three highest winter snow accumulations (2022, 2023, and 2024). <http://xmacis.rcc-acis.org/>

Yakutat Winter Season

This winter was colder and drier than normal in Yakutat. The average winter season temperature was -2.0°F colder than the 1991-2020 normal. Precipitation total was about ten inches below normal with 26.24 inches of rain and melted snow recorded this winter. December was particularly cold and dry. The average temperature was 8°F below normal and the precipitation total was 47% of normal. January was 2°F warmer than normal with near normal precipitation. February temperatures were near normal, while precipitation was 67% of normal.

Cold Winter in Interior Alaska

Most of the state was colder than normal this winter with the Interior having the coldest departures from normal (pink shading on Figure 3).

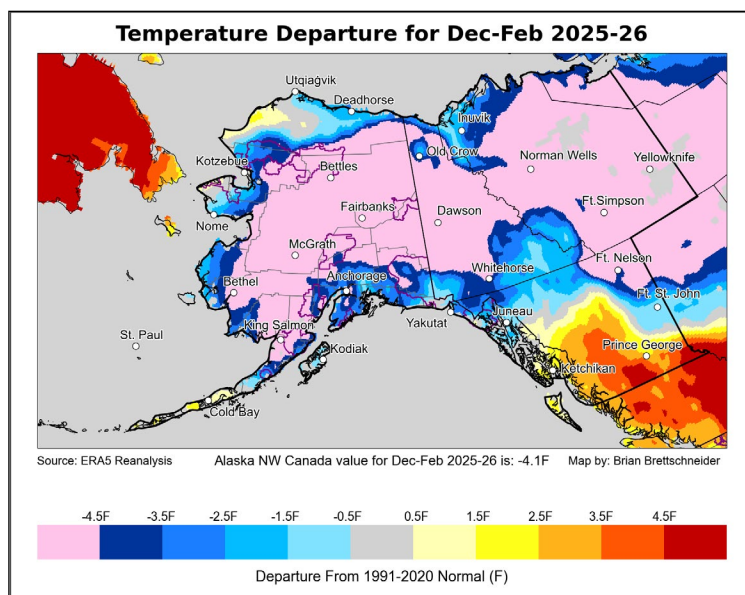


Figure 3. Winter temperature departure from normal for Alaska. Map courtesy of Brian Brettschneider using ERA5 reanalysis data.

Cold Winter at Chicken Creek Climate Site

It was the coldest winter on record at the Chicken Creek site in the Nutzotin Mountains northeast of Chisana. The average temperature for the winter season was 4.0°F , which is 6.3°F colder than average (Figure 4). This follows the winter of 2025, the warmest winter to date. We started observations in 2005, since then winter season temperatures have increased by 2.1°F .

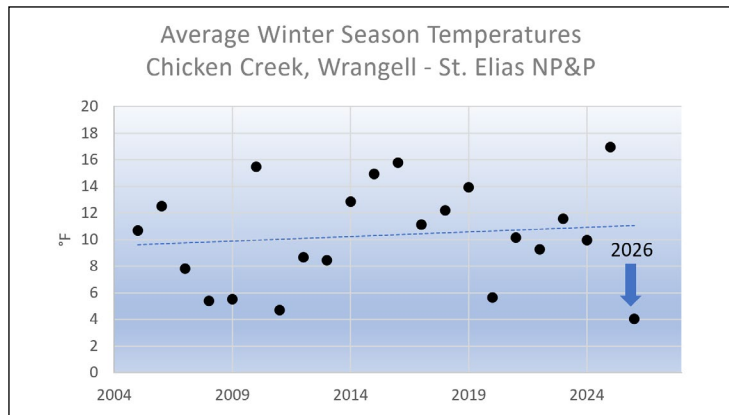


Figure 4. Average winter season temperatures at the Chicken Creek climate station in Wrangell – St. Elias NP&P 2005-2026.

Record Snow at May Creek and Chisana

At the end of February, snow depth and snow water equivalent at Chisana and May Creek reached their highest levels since records began in 2009. Chisana had 27 inches on the ground and May Creek had 36 inches (Figure 5). Due to a combination of October rain and abundant winter snowfall, the 2026 water year precipitation total (rain plus melted snow since October 1) is the highest on record. To date, Chisana precipitation accumulation is at 5.8 inches, the median is 3.2 inches. May Creek is at 10.2 inches, well above the median at 5.8 inches.

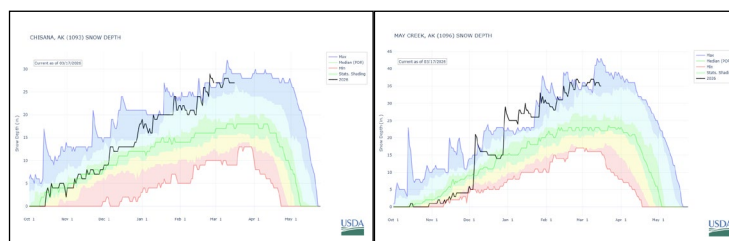


Figure 5. Chisana (left) and May Creek (right) winter snow depth with maximum (blue), minimum (red), and median (green). The black line is 2026, the current year.

Snow depth was near normal to above normal at the climate stations in the Chugach and Wrangell Mountains. Gates Glacier had 62 inches at the end of the winter; the median is 55 inches. Tana Knob had 47 inches of snow on the ground; the median is 58 inches. This site is more susceptible to wind scour. Tebay had 57 inches in mid-February; the median is 54 inches.

[Click here](#) for current weather in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve

More Information

[Pam Sousanes@nps.gov](mailto:Pam_Sousanes@nps.gov); ph 907-519-7372

[Kenneth Hill@nps.gov](mailto:Kenneth_Hill@nps.gov); ph 907-519-7370

<https://www.nps.gov/im/cakn/climate.htm>

Data disclaimer: Please note that the near-real time data used to generate these reports is subject to change. QA/QC data from the NPS CAKN/ARCN climate stations are available at nps.datastore.gov