

**LONG-RANGE INTERPRETIVE PLAN**

**GATES OF THE ARCTIC  
NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE  
2000**



**LONG-RANGE INTERPRETIVE PLAN**

**GATES OF THE ARCTIC  
NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE**

**2000**

**ALASKA**

**PREPARED BY  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**Gates of the Arctic  
National Park and Preserve**

**Harpers Ferry Center  
Division of Interpretive Planning**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

## INTRODUCTION

Introduction .....	1
The Planning Process .....	2

## SITE BACKGROUND

Background .....	3
Legislative Background .....	3
Purpose and Significance .....	4
Interpretive Themes .....	5
Visitor Experience Goals .....	7

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

Park User and Audience Profiles .....	8
Existing Conditions and Visitor Experience .....	10
Issues and Influences .....	17

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Pre-Visit Information .....	18
National Park Service Facilities .....	21
Personal Services .....	27
Partnerships .....	32
Implementation Priorities .....	33

## APPENDICES

I. The Planning Team .....	34
II. Accessibility .....	35
III. References Used .....	36

---

# INTRODUCTION

---

*With no more land frontier that people can experience, the United States has set aside this last wild mountain expanse so that future generations may always have a place to comprehend what New World means, may feel the pulse of ancient wildlife cycles and taste what tempered the character of their forebears. ... Existence in pristine country has become a rare experience in most of the world. Protected, the Brooks Range can perpetuate a sense of what discovery and solitude can mean to the human spirit.*

John Kauffman, Alaska's Brooks Range:  
The Ultimate Mountains

Unlike most parks in the National Park System, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve was established as much to protect intangible wilderness experiences as to protect physical resources. Bob Marshall, an explorer-forester, in the 1930s suggested protecting the wilderness experiences of northern Alaska declaring that "in Alaska alone can the emotional values of the frontier be preserved." Fifty years later, Congress recognized Bob Marshall's sentiment creating Gates of the Arctic National Park to preserve the emotional values to which Marshall referred.

The area is one of the last of its scale in the United States conducive to wilderness adventure where a sense of isolation and discovery can be perpetuated amid rugged country. Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve is the centerpiece of one of the largest protected areas in the world, providing awe-inspiring space for wandering, solitude, and adventure. It is a major reserve of wilderness, one of the few remaining of such caliber among America's dwindling wilderness resources.

Gates of the Arctic has diverse "visitors." For some visitors, a trip to Gates of the Arctic is a backcountry pilgrimage to "the ultimate wilderness" that inspired Bob Marshall. For a growing number of visitors, Gates of the Arctic is a park seen from the Dalton Highway, from the air, or experienced vicariously at the communities of Bettles, Coldfoot, or Anaktuvuk Pass. For other people, Gates of the Arctic is their homeland or their backyard.

There are no visitor facilities within Gates of the Arctic, no single entrance, and most visitors never come into contact with National Park Service staff or facilities. Yet the park's diverse audiences still need to understand Gates of the Arctic in order to appreciate and protect this unique park. Finding ways to achieve that understanding is the challenge of this plan.

# THE PLANNING PROCESS

---

The goal of the interpretive planning process is not the creation of a plan. The ultimate goal is the development of a cost-effective, tightly focused, high quality park interpretive program that effectively addresses all audiences and achieves management goals.

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) recommends actions that should occur over the next eight to ten years. It identifies park themes, describes visitor experience goals, and recommends a wide array of interpretive services, media, programs, and outreach activities to communicate in the most efficient and effective way the park's purpose, significance, and themes. It will join a park-produced annual interpretive plan and interpretive database

to make up a comprehensive interpretive plan for Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

Work on this LRIP began in June of 1999 when the Harpers Ferry Center interpretive planner traveled to Gates of the Arctic to meet with park staff and become familiar with park resources. Park staff and the interpretive planner then selected the planning team to include members of the park staff, park partners, and other interpretive experts. This plan is the result of a four-day interpretive planning workshop that took place in Fairbanks in September of 1999.

A backcountry wilderness management plan for Gates of the Arctic is being initiated at the same time as this plan is underway. As much as possible, these two plans should support each other and recognize their common interest in identifying and managing for key visitor experiences and educating the public. Many of the visitor experiences identified in this plan (opportunities for solitude, discovery) can best be achieved through a backcountry management plan.

Barring legislative changes or major new research, the planning foundation expressed in this LRIP - purpose, significance, themes, and visitor experience goals - will remain constant over the life of this plan. Specific recommendations about media and programs may need to be updated as staffing, funding, technology, or resource conditions change. Further design documents will need to be prepared to implement some of the goals and recommendations in this plan.

# SITE BACKGROUND

---

## Background

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve is located 200 miles north of Fairbanks, Alaska. The national park, containing approximately 7,253,000 acres of public land, protects a substantial portion of the central Brooks Range, the northernmost end of the Rocky Mountains. The national preserve contains approximately 948,000 acres divided between two areas. There are private lands and native allotment lands within both the park and preserve.

There are no roads or established trails within Gates of the Arctic, although the Dalton Highway comes within about five miles of the park's eastern boundary. There are no plans to develop visitor facilities on park land. Access to the park is almost exclusively by small aircraft with scheduled air taxi service from Fairbanks to Bettles, Coldfoot, and Anaktuvuk Pass. Charter flights into the park may be arranged from these and other communities.

Gates of the Arctic's administrative offices are located in Fairbanks, with field offices in Bettles, Anaktuvuk Pass, and Coldfoot. The Superintendent also manages Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

## Legislative Background

- On December 1, 1978, President Jimmy Carter declared 8,220,000 acres as Gates of the Arctic National Monument
- On December 2, 1980, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) created or expanded thirteen National Park units, including Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.
- Section 201 (4) of ANILCA established Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve to "maintain the wild and undeveloped character of the area, including opportunities for visitors to experience solitude, and the natural environmental integrity and scenic beauty of the mountains, forelands, river, lakes, and other natural features; to provide ...opportunities for mountain climbing, mountaineering, and other wilderness recreational activities, and to protect habitat for the populations of fish and wildlife including but not limited to caribou, grizzly bears, Dall sheep, moose, wolves, and raptorial birds."
- ANILCA mandated that traditional subsistence uses by local residents be permitted in the park where such uses are traditional, and designated approximately 7,167,000 acres of Gates of the Arctic as wilderness under the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964, subject to ANILCA provisions.

# PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE

---

Planning focuses first on why a park was established and what conditions should exist there before delving into details about specific actions.

## Purpose

The **purpose** of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve is to:

- Preserve the wild and undeveloped character and natural environmental integrity - including natural processes, habitat and biodiversity - of the central Brooks Range.
- Provide opportunities for appropriate wilderness recreational activities and solitude.

## Significance

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve has national **significance** for the following reasons:

- Gates of the Arctic is the central component of a 40 million-acre contiguous, undeveloped, arctic protected area, one of the largest protected areas in an increasingly developed world.
- Due to its vastness and undeveloped character, Gates of the Arctic provides outstanding wilderness recreational opportunities.
- Gates of the Arctic protects the core of the traditional homelands of the Nunamiut Inupiat peoples.
- The area was an inspiration to Bob Marshall, who coined the term "Gates of the Arctic," was one of the earliest proponents of Arctic preservation, and one of the founders of the American wilderness system.
- Gates of the Arctic exemplifies an intact, high latitude Arctic ecosystem, with its corresponding natural processes, flora, and fauna.

# INTERPRETIVE THEMES

---

Primary interpretive themes are those ideas or concepts that every visitor should understand. They are the key ideas through which the park's nationally significant resource meanings are conveyed to the public. These themes provide the foundation for interpretive programs and media at the park. The themes do not include everything we may wish to interpret, but rather the ideas that are critical to a visitor's understanding of the park's significance. All interpretive efforts should relate to one or more of the themes, and each theme should be addressed in the overall interpretive program.

Meaningful interpretation doesn't cost anything; it just requires a theme.
--

The themes have been numbered for easy reference; this numbering does not indicate any kind of prioritization.

- 1. Part of one of the largest undeveloped protected areas on earth, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve was established to provide future generations a chance to sense discovery, partake of solitude, and experience a vast wild expanse still dominated by natural processes.**

Gates of the Arctic is unique in that it was partially established to protect opportunities for an experience and a feeling - solitude, freedom, discovery, adventure, challenge, natural quiet and self-reliance - feelings that were fundamental to the "feeling of the frontier."

- 2. Indigenous peoples have been living in what is now Gates of the Arctic for thousands of years in an intimate relationship with the natural resources; these relationships continue today.**

Gates of the Arctic is an inhabited wilderness. Both Athabaskan and Inupiat people have been a part of this cold, lean landscape for thousands of years. Their cultures are among the few native hunter-gatherer cultures remaining fundamentally intact in the United States. While most Inupiat are coastal people, one group, the Nunamiut, became mountain nomads in the central Brooks Range. Twentieth century environmental, social and economic changes led the Nunamiut, one of the last nomadic groups in the United States, to congregate in Anaktuvuk Pass in the 1950s.

- 3. Gates of the Arctic is the "ultimate" wilderness that, in the 1930's, inspired Bob Marshall and later generations of Americans to champion the preservation of wilderness and the Arctic.**

Bob Marshall's appreciation for the Brooks Range, imbued with vigor, infectious enthusiasm, and eloquence, became the root of the conservation movement to perpetuate an arctic wilderness in Alaska. Marshall's time in Alaska was instrumental in refining his thoughts and passions about wilderness, leading him to champion the preservation of wilderness and help found the Wilderness Society.

- 4. The arctic ecosystem is a thin veneer of life uniquely adapted to an extreme environment; Gates of the Arctic enables this fragile ecosystem to evolve with minimal human intervention.**

Life is precarious at the top of the world. Light, temperature, and water are dominant forces in creating and maintaining arctic ecosystems. Arctic life is uniquely adapted to the short growing season and cold temperatures. Many species - from caribou to birds to fish to visitors - migrate in and out of the region, creating an ecosystem based on a migratory biomass. The intact arctic ecosystem protected by Gates of the Arctic ensures future opportunity to study the natural processes and behavior of the Arctic without significant human intervention.

- 5. As one of more than 375 National Park units, Gates of the Arctic is part of a system of federal lands that protect our nation's natural and cultural heritage.**

The federal public lands encompass a variety of management purposes. The National Park System also contains a spectrum of units; Gates of the Arctic is at the end of the wilderness spectrum. It is a huge, naturally functioning area where wilderness purposes will necessarily constrain high levels of visitation and development will not occur.

# VISITOR EXPERIENCE GOALS

---

Visitor experience goals describe what physical, intellectual, and emotional experiences should be available for visitors to Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. These experiences will be available to visitors of all abilities, including those with visual, auditory, mobility, or cognitive impairments.

Visitors to Gates of the Arctic will have opportunities to:

- Obtain and utilize the knowledge and skills to have a safe visit and minimally impact park resources.
- Learn about the park themes through a variety of media, regardless of whether they physically visit the park.
- Have a reflective or introspective experience.
- Experience solitude.
- View wildlife in their natural habitat.
- Challenge themselves and test their wilderness skills and self-reliance.
- Expand their perceptions of and respect for other cultures.
- Feel like they are "discovering" the park.
- Be oriented to the range of recreational wilderness opportunities at Gates of the Arctic.
- Feel they are a part of natural processes and gain respect for those processes.
- Become involved with the management of public lands.
- Continue to use park resources as appropriate (subsistence).
- Get a sense of what the arctic is like in all seasons.

"Visitor experience" is what visitors take from a park. It is everything that visitors do, sense, feel, think, and learn; it includes knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors; it is affected by experiences prior to the visit and affects behavior after the visit. Interpretive planning describes desired experiences, and recommends ways to facilitate those experiences.

# PARK USER & AUDIENCE PROFILES

---

*In Alaska alone can the emotional values of the frontier be preserved.*  
Bob Marshall, as quoted by Congress

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve received approximately 9,700 visits in 1998. While backcountry visitation has remained relatively stable over the last ten years, Dalton highway visitation and fly-over visitation is increasing. Because there are no set entrance points to the park, measuring visitation to Gates of the Arctic is difficult. Many visitors fly directly to their destination without coming into contact with park personnel or facilities. While commercial operators are required to provide visitor use statistics, these statistics may not accurately portray visitation. Other "visitors" fly over the park, drive next to the park, or even hike into the park.

No formal study or survey of visitors has been conducted at Gates of the Arctic. This list of current and potential visitor groups and audiences is based on staff observations. The groupings are generalizations and are meant only to give an idea about park visitors and audiences.

**Backcountry visitors:** These visitors - mostly hikers, climbers, and river floaters - account for approximately 25% of the total visitation to Gates of the Arctic. The average length of stay for these visitors is 11-12 days, and almost all of their use is during the summer. Perhaps 90% of these visitors pass through Bettles on their way into the park. As many as half of these visitors are repeat visitors, and perhaps a third are foreign. About 40% of these visitors are commercially guided.

**Local Residents:** Ten local villages in and around the park have a total population of approximately 1,800 permanent residents. A small percentage of these residents currently use the park regularly for subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering. These residents use the park for just a day or two at a time, but many times throughout the course of the year. This use accounts for less than 5% of total "visitation."

**Dalton Highway visitors:** While most of these visitors do not actually enter the park, they are one of the park's biggest audiences, accounting for almost half of all Gates of the Arctic visitors. Most of these visitors are adult and on a two or four day driving trip of the Dalton Highway. Approximately 40% of these visitors are on bus tours. Many of the independent travelers are Alaskans, while many of the tour bus visitors are from out of state. Approximately 5,200 visitors stopped at the Coldfoot Visitor Center in 1999. This use accounts for approximately 40% of park "visitation" and is growing.

**Fly-through visitors:** While these visitors never set foot in the park they are still a significant audience for the park. They may spend a few hours over the park or near the park, at Bettles or in Anaktuvuk Pass. All of these visitors are on guided air tours, and this use is concentrated in the summer and fall. Currently there is only one major operator offering these tours. This use accounts for approximately 20% of park "visitation" and is growing.

**Non-subsistence hunters:** Non-subsistence hunters account for less than 5% of the total visitation to Gates of the Arctic, but can have a relatively high impact on preserve resources. They use the preserve during the fall, and stay an average of a week. At least half of these hunters are from Alaska.

**Winter visitors:** A tiny percentage of visitors come to the area in and around Gates of the Arctic to engage in winter activities such as viewing northern lights or dog mushing. These visits are currently centered around Bettles and tend to last three to seven days. Many of these visitors are international.

**Scientists/Researchers:** A small number of scientists and researchers, from universities and other government agencies, come to Gates of the Arctic to conduct research. These groups are required to obtain a permit and receive a safety message as a condition of their research.

**Outreach audience:** There is a large and relatively untapped audience for outreach programs. There are ten local rural villages, with both school and adult populations. There is also an urban audience in Fairbanks that includes schools, service clubs, sporting clubs, and special events. This audience also includes policy makers and civic organizations state-wide.

**Virtual Visitors:** Many residents of Alaska, the lower 48, or the world at large may never visit Gates of the Arctic for economic, accessibility, or many other reasons. However, they may still have an interest in information about Gates of the Arctic and its resources, and may enjoy "armchair" visits to the park.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS & EXPERIENCE

---

*There's a land where the mountains are nameless, and the rivers run God knows where.*

-Margaret Murie, about the central Brooks Range

## SUMMARY

Visitors do not spontaneously visit Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. Accessing Gates of the Arctic takes considerable preparation and effort, and therefore most experiences in the park are multi-day efforts.

There is a growing audience of visitors who may not set foot in the park but "visit" the office in Bettles or Anaktuvuk Pass, drive the Dalton Highway, or fly over the park. There is also a large audience of "virtual visitors" who will never visit Gates of the Arctic but form a national interest group and potential support group for the park.

Currently almost all of the interpretive efforts at Gates of the Arctic focus on delivering a safety and resource protection message. At present there is little thematic interpretation offered.

## PRE-VISIT INFORMATION AND TRIP PLANNING

Many park visitors get their information about Gates of the Arctic by calling the park's headquarters in Fairbanks or one of the field offices. Information is also available on the park's website as well as from the Fairbanks Alaska Public Lands Information Center (FAPLIC). A small number of visitors walk into the Fairbanks headquarters for information. Information is also available by mail. Dalton Highway visitors get their information from the BLM website, "The Milepost" (a commercial publication), BLM publications on the Dalton Highway, and FAPLIC. Backcountry visitors get their information from the website, by calling the park, and from commercial operators. Sport hunters get information from air taxis or from friends.

Many visitors also get information from commercial operators, from friends, from guides, or from their previous experiences at the park. Some visitors may not even know they are going to a National Park Service area - they are planning a hunting or backpacking trip that happens to take them into Gates of the Arctic.

Because of the wilderness nature of Gates of the Arctic and the self-sufficiency that visiting requires, the National Park Service encourages visitors to plan their own trips and tries to refrain from suggesting where visitors can or should go. Because of the limitations of National Park Service information on trip planning, many visitors end up getting their trip planning information from commercial operators, or are steered towards a certain location by commercial operators. There are a minimal number of places in the park where airplanes

can safely land, so visitor use tends to get concentrated into certain drop off and pick up points.

Because most Gates of the Arctic trips require hiring an air taxi, most backcountry visitors have already planned their trips by the time they arrive at Bettles. In some cases, weather or logistics force visitors to develop or revert to contingency plans.

### *Commercial Operators*

Almost every visitor to Gates of the Arctic utilizes one or more commercial operators for their visit, unless they are a local resident or own their own plane. Most visitors use air taxis to get in and out of the park. Others take advantage of guiding services (fishing, hunting, river guiding, backpacking), flightseeing tours, or other activities. Commercial operators - whether air taxi operators, guides, or other - provide a variety of levels of service and a variety of information about the park and its resources. Some commercial operators provide pre-visit information and help visitors plan their trips.

Visitors can get a list of licensed commercial operators from the National Park Service by mail or on the park website. Other visitors find their commercial operators through websites, advertising, or through word of mouth.

## **NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PROGRAMS AND FACILITIES**

There are no National Park Service facilities within Gates of the Arctic. Three "frontcountry" communities have National Park Service facilities: Bettles, Anaktuvuk Pass, and Coldfoot.

### ***Bettles***

As many as 90% of Gates of the Arctic's backcountry visitors pass through Bettles, a small community located south of the park that is a transportation hub for northern Alaska. Bettles is accessible mainly by air. Park staff estimate that less than 50% of visitors that pass through Bettles stop in the Bettles ranger station. Many visitors are on a tight air schedule, basically just changing planes in Bettles, and do not have the time to stop in the ranger station. Because there is no sign near the runway directing visitors to the ranger station, some visitors may not know the ranger station exists. Others are not encouraged by their guides or air taxis to stop by.

A kiosk with panels about Gates of the Arctic and Kanuti National Wildlife Refuge is currently under production. This kiosk was designed to be located somewhere at the edge of the airstrip, but there are now questions as to where it can feasibly be located.

The Bettles ranger station is shared between the National Park Service and Kanuti Wildlife Refuge. The station has gradually been transformed from an office building into an office and visitor contact station, but still has the feel of an office building. Many visitors' first impression is that they have accidentally walked into someone's office. A doorway vestibule contains a community bulletin board, a brochure rack, and an after hours notebook with backcountry information. A small lobby contains restrooms and divides the National Park Service side from the Fish and Wildlife Service side of the building.

The National Park Service side contains several offices, a large wall map, a small library, and a portable exhibit structure containing backcountry orientation and safety information. Currently there is little thematic information about Gates of the Arctic available.

During the summer season, the Bettles ranger station is staffed seven days a week by backcountry rangers, the park interpreter, or the visitor use assistant. The main task is to provide a face-to-face backcountry orientation to visitors. This orientation talk, which the park encourages all backcountry visitors to receive, lasts anywhere from ten minutes to an hour. It is a last chance opportunity to ensure visitors have the important safety and resource protection information they need. The talks tend to focus on bear safety, food storage, and Leave No Trace ethics. The park promotes the availability of the backcountry orientation through the website and a rack card. An in-state, toll-free phone number for the Bettles ranger station is available to encourage visitors to call and get the orientation by phone.

During the summer and fall, National Park Service staff has been providing evening programs for the clients of the Northern Alaska Tour company's flight-seeing tours. These tours arrive in Bettles most evenings in the summer and spend 30 minutes to an hour on the ground. Park staff has been providing a 20-30 minute introductory program in the ranger station. The portable exhibit is moved and chairs are set up for this program. Approximately 700 people participated in this tour in 1999 and the number is increasing.

### ***Anaktuvuk Pass***

Anaktuvuk Pass is a Nunamiut Inupiat village within the boundaries of Gates of the Arctic National Park. Anaktuvuk Pass is the second most popular stepping off point for visits into Gates of the Arctic. Some visitors walk directly into the park from Anaktuvuk Pass.

A small ranger station/office is located at Anaktuvuk Pass. The ranger station is not visible from the airport, and there are no signs directing people there from the airport. If visitors look lost when they get off the plane at the air strip, local residents will usually direct them to the ranger station. There is no information about the local community and the park, or public restrooms, at the airstrip.

The ranger station is not regularly staffed and has no dedicated visitor space. When staffed, visitors can receive the backcountry orientation or have their questions answered. When the ranger station is not staffed, outdoor panels provide a condensed version of the backcountry orientation, and also an orientation to the community.

The Simon Paneak Museum, located up the hill from the ranger station, is open year-round and houses exhibits focusing on the Nunamiut culture, natural history, and archeology of the area.

### ***The Dalton Highway: Coldfoot***

The Dalton Highway was opened to tourist traffic in 1994. While visitors who drive along the Dalton Highway do not physically enter Gates of the Arctic, they are in the Brooks Range and in a sense are in the frontcountry of Gates of the Arctic. The Brooks Range and the North Slope are major attractions for the highway. According to surveys of visitors who drive the Dalton Highway, many are looking for a "wilderness driving experience."

The Dalton Highway receives both independent travelers and tour buses. Due to difficult topography, few visitors on the Dalton Highway are stepping off on backcountry trips into Gates of the Arctic. If the Dalton Highway were to be paved or substantially improved, visitation along the highway and at Coldfoot could increase dramatically, and more visitors could use the Dalton highway as a stepping off point for Gates of the Arctic.

The Bureau of Land Management is currently planning wayside exhibits along the Dalton Highway and a series of trailheads with parking and "suggested routes of travel."

A small multi-agency visitor center is located near the development at Coldfoot along the Dalton Highway. This visitor center, open only in the summer, is staffed by the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. The visitor center contains a small Alaska Natural History Association (ANHA) sales outlet, a visitor information desk, and some exhibits on the natural and human history of the Brooks Range. The one-room building serves as an auditorium every evening during the summer when evening programs are offered. These programs are attended mainly by tour bus clients, and on evenings when the tour buses are in town, more than one evening program will be filled to capacity.

A new multi-agency visitor center is scheduled to open in Coldfoot in 2002. The new facility would provide many of the same functions as the current facility but in a more effective and less cramped way. The new facility is

*Bob found in both the wilderness and in the frontier community some of the essentials of freedom of the human spirit for which he fought.*  
- George Marshall about his brother.

planned to contain: an information desk, a trip planning area, safety and resource protection messages, an ANHA sales area, and a dedicated auditorium with a new film that orients visitors to the breadth of the Brooks Range. The building will also contain new exhibits.

***The Dalton Highway: Wiseman***

Wiseman is a small subsistence and mining town located just off the Dalton Highway that was immortalized by Bob Marshall's book, *Arctic Village*. Many visitors who travel the Dalton Highway visit Wiseman. There are also commercial bus tours that stop at Wiseman. The federal land agencies consider Wiseman to be a gateway community to the BLM Road Corridor and Gates of the Arctic National Park and have pledged to assist the community to ensure tourism does not cause it to lose its positive values. A multi-agency kiosk and restroom is being planned for Wiseman that will provide an orientation to the community and some recommendations on etiquette for visiting the community.

***Fairbanks***

The Fairbanks Alaska Public Lands Information Center (FAPLIC) provides information on Gates of the Arctic but probably reaches only a small percentage of park visitors.

The Gates of the Arctic headquarters in Fairbanks receives a considerable number of walk-in visits and phone calls from backcountry visitors looking for information and orientation about the park. Many of the staff in the office are currently not trained to provide this information, and in many cases direct these questions to the Bettles ranger station.

**OTHER NON-PERSONAL SERVICES**

***Publications***

Current publications distributed by the park at the ranger stations and the Fairbanks office include:

- Gates of the Arctic Map and Guide (glossy Harpers Ferry Center pamphlet)
- A site bulletin called "Your Arctic Adventure"
- A rack card focusing on the backcountry orientation
- "Leave No Trace" handouts
- Bear Facts, a publication about bear safety
- Emergency signal cards for signaling aircraft
- Kobuk River hunter brochure

**Website**

The park's website currently contains the basic information ("the 17 points") as well as an expanded web page. The expanded page is topically organized and provides information on visiting Gates of the Arctic, student information, resource information, and information on trip planning.

**OUTREACH AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

Due to limited staffing and distances involved, approximately 10-20 educational programs are offered per year in the nine rural schools in and around the park. Because of the small size of the schools, programs are usually offered to the whole school, grades K-12 when a school is visited.

In 1998-99, a Parks as Classroom grant and two dedicated and motivated Volunteers-in-Parks allowed the park to give 130 programs in the nine schools. Each program lasted at least an hour, and in most cases a visit to a school lasted longer than one day. Without additional funding or personnel, this level of educational programs is not likely to continue in the future.

A student guide to Gates of the Arctic, geared towards students in middle school, is available by mail or on the park's website.

Project Jukebox, an Alaska-wide oral history project, recorded oral histories of people in and around Gates of the Arctic. These recordings are currently being formatted to be posted on a website and made into a CD-ROM.

Several outreach programs are offered in Fairbanks each year. These include the Fairbanks Outdoor Show, Outdoor Days, science fairs, programs for youth groups, and programs for civic groups.

**STAFFING**

The interpretive staff at Gates of the Arctic includes:

One permanent interpretive specialist

One seasonal visitor use assistant (Coldfoot)

Three permanent subject-to-furlough rangers, plus seasonal rangers, and a seasonal visitor use assistant (Bettles), who provide much of the daily contact with visitors, give the backcountry orientations, and give evening programs.

Volunteers, SCA, RAPS, and youth program participants

One permanent ranger-pilot

All Gates of the Arctic staff, regardless of duty station, are considered to have public contact duties.

***Training***

Currently there is no interpretive training provided at Gates of the Arctic. The annual seasonal orientation does not contain an interpretive component. In the past, employees have occasionally been sent to training at other parks.

# ISSUES AND INFLUENCES

---

These safety, resource, and management issues could be addressed through interpretation.

*We must band together, all of us who love the wilderness. We must fight together - wherever and whenever wilderness is attacked.*  
- Bob Marshall, 1932

## **Safety issues**

- Some visitors do not know or practice proper behavior around bears, including proper food storage.
- Some visitors are not aware that Gates of the Arctic wilderness requires self-sufficiency. As a result they arrive unprepared, ill equipped, or inexperienced in handling wilderness, wildlife, and weather dangers.
- Some visitors do not know how to safely cross rivers or operate watercraft.
- Some private pilots are not prepared for Brooks Range conditions.

## **Visitor-related resource issues**

- Some visitors do not practice "Leave No Trace" or minimum impact camping.
- Some visitors do not know they are in a national park or preserve, and/or do not know the rules and regulations for the park or preserve leading to unintentional game infractions or resource violations.
- Backcountry use is sometimes concentrated on top of cultural resource sites.
- Limited landing areas and the popularity of certain destinations in the park concentrates visitor use, impacting the resource and the visitor experience.

## **Other Management Issues**

- There is perceived and sometimes real conflict between user groups - between non-local hunting and subsistence uses or between recreational use and subsistence.
- To date, there has been a failure to communicate to the public or visitors the significance of Gates of the Arctic.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

---

Interpretive planning analyzes all needs and recommends a wide array of interpretive services, facilities, and programs to communicate in the most efficient and effective way the park's purpose, significance, and values.

The following is a description of programs and media proposals designed to realize the visions, objectives, themes, and visitor experiences previously described for Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve. The discussion of each program or media proposal identifies its purpose, special considerations,

and sometimes the suggested themes or methods of presentation. However, the methods of presentation are merely suggestions and should not limit creativity in the media design stage.

## SUMMARY

While the park will continue to provide safety and resource protection information, it will also add true theme-based interpretation. The park will continue to reach out to "virtual visitors" to help develop a national constituency of park supporters.

## PRE-VISIT INFORMATION AND TRIP PLANNING

Because visiting Gates of the Arctic demands a certain level of preparation and self-reliance, visitors need good current information about the park to plan their visit. The National Park Service needs to be very direct in communicating to the public the fact that a park experience at Gates of the Arctic is a fundamentally different experience from a park experience they may have had elsewhere. Visitors need to be self-sufficient, and need to be aware of safety and resource issues. Visitors need to have realistic expectations of what they can feasibly see and do at Gates of the Arctic. The environmental conditions and size of Gates of the Arctic are different than what many visitors may expect. Visitors who are used to hiking in other locations may have unrealistic expectations about how much distance they can travel in a day or what kind of wildlife they can expect to see.

If the public is well informed from the outset, they will have a better and safer park experience and be less likely to damage park resources intentionally or unintentionally. It may be that some people choose not to visit the park, or need to be redirected to visiting the park in another way such as driving the Dalton Highway, taking an air tour, or embarking on a guided backcountry trip.

Self-reliance and discovery are fundamental attributes of a wilderness experience. The National Park Service will continue to encourage visitors to use self-reliance and the spirit of discovery for backcountry trip planning. Through the

website, printed material, and personal contact (whether by phone or in person), park staff will provide safety information, resource condition information, and help refer visitors to where they can find the information they need to plan their visit. Park staff will consider whether publicizing the location of feasible access points to the park would be a useful tool to help visitors with trip planning. If the National Park Service does not give out this information, it leaves visitors subject to the information given by commercial operators, which is not always objective and does not necessarily support park management concerns. It may be more beneficial to both the National Park Service and visitors to provide visitors with this information, since these access points are determined by geography, and visitor use of these areas is, by nature, concentrated. This information would help visitors select realistic starting and ending points for their trip so that they can be independent to plan the other aspects of their visit.

Safety and Leave No Trace information will need to be fun, visual, and easy to understand. It must explain WHY visitors should behave a certain way and how that behavior will benefit them. It is important that visitors have this information before they leave home so that they have the proper equipment and mentality for their trip. This information will not only protect resources and reduce safety incidents, but will allow visitors to enjoy their trip and have a more reflective park experience with less worry and confusion.

Information about what Gates of the Arctic is, and therefore what a trip requires, as well as safety, Leave No Trace, and basic travel information, will be posted on the website. This information will be tied into theme 1, that Gates of the Arctic was set aside specifically to provide wilderness experiences.

A standardized backcountry user packet will be developed containing the above information as well as information on subsistence use, and information on local communities. This packet will be distributed by the National Park Service by mail, available on the website, available at all park offices and at FAPLIC, and distributed by air taxis and other commercial operators. A standardized hunting packet will also be developed, containing the same information as well as information about hunting rules and regulations.

The park will continue to provide the face-to-face backcountry orientation at Bettles ranger station, by phone, or at Coldfoot, Anaktuvuk Pass, or Fairbanks

In a week I would be in the great, thumping modern world. I would be living once more among the accumulated accomplishments of man. The world with its present population needs these accomplishments. It cannot live on wilderness, except incidentally and sporadically. Nevertheless, to four human beings, just back from the source streams of the Koyukuk, no comfort, no security, no great invention, or no brilliant thought which the modern world has to offer can provide half the elation of twenty-four days in the little explored, uninhabited world of the Arctic wilderness. - Bob Marshall

## RECOMMENDATIONS

as staffing permits. The orientation will continue to focus on behaviors that can be changed at that point in the visitor's trip.

Safety and Leave No Trace training will be provided to Coldfoot and FAPLIC staff so they can pass this information on to visitors.

### *Commercial operators*

The majority of park visitors come into contact with commercial operators - in a sense they are the front line of the National Park Service at Gates of the Arctic. Commercial operators and the National Park Service have a common goal of providing a quality experience for clients/visitors to Gates of the Arctic. Gates of the Arctic staff will work with commercial operators to develop materials - rack cards, brochures, videos, the backcountry user packet, or information kits - that can be distributed by commercial operators, displayed in their lobbies, or even dispensed on the planes.

The National Park Service will work with tourism marketers and commercial operators to encourage them to provide their clients with accurate expectations of a Gates of the Arctic visit. This will help dispel unrealistic expectations about wildlife viewing opportunities, hunting and fishing possibilities, and travel times.

The National Park Service will continue to encourage commercial operators to bring their clients into the Bettles ranger station for a backcountry orientation. This will need to be a win-win situation for the National Park Service and the commercial operators' clients where the clients get useful resource condition information, can acquire a bear resistant food container, or see interesting exhibits in the Bettles ranger station.

The National Park Service currently requires all commercial operators' clients receive a backcountry orientation. The park makes the orientation available in several locations, by phone, and through media on the exterior of the Beattles ranger station. The park will develop a 8-10 minute backcountry orientation, safety and "Leave No Trace" video that could be made available through commercial operators or shown at NPS facilities.

Park staff will offer Leave No Trace classes and information to commercial operators and their staffs, and hunting guides in particular.

The National Park Service will continue to encourage the air taxi operators to educate their clients about aircraft safety.

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE FACILITIES

The park will use visual clues and standard designs park-wide to promote agency identity and help people recognize that Gates of the Arctic is a National Park. Examples include using the black band on wayside exhibits, developing a standard format for site bulletins and handouts, and the judicious use of the National Park Service arrowhead.

### *Bettles*

Actions in Bettles will focus on increasing the less-than-50% capture rate for the Bettles ranger station. The park will develop signage to direct visitors from the airstrip to the ranger station. The wayside exhibit that is currently planned with the Fish and Wildlife Service will be modified to reflect the park themes, completed, and installed somewhere near the air strip. When available, staff will "rove" the airstrip when planes come in, encouraging visitors to stop by the ranger station.

To increase the capture rate, the Bettles ranger station needs to be inviting and a worthy destination for visitors. Up-to-date information needs to be available to attract visitors and make visitors and commercial operators feel it is worthwhile to stop by.

The National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service are planning to remodel the Bettles ranger station to make better use of space and separate the office and visitor functions. The Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service visitor areas should be combined to create one comfortable and inviting visitor area that has less of an office feel.

Functions that the renovated Bettles ranger station will need to provide include: staff operations (radio, phone, computers, offices), public restrooms, a comfortable space for reading and reflection, an introduction to all the park themes, a book sale area, a place for interpretive presentations, and a 24-hour backcountry orientation.

A vestibule can be built on the outside of the building that would provide 24-hour backcountry orientation information protected from the rain and bugs. This could be accomplished through weather-proof wayside-type exhibits located on the exterior wall of the building in the vestibule.

Once inside, visitors would encounter a comfortable space for reading and reflection. The park's loaning library would be located here, would be expanded and promoted, and would include books by and about Bob Marshall. This would be a place where visitors could gather during inclement weather. This location would be designed to provide an opportunity for visitors to reflect on the Gates of the Arctic experience they have just had, or are about to have. A

## RECOMMENDATIONS

visitor logbook would be available providing a forum for visitors to write their reflections and other visitors to read them. Some quotes from these reflections would be posted around this area. Reflections from local residents could also be added.

The park will develop an agreement with ANHA to provide a small sales outlet at the Bettles ranger station. The sales outlet would be located next to or a part of the reading and reflection area. Park themes will provide the guidance for the sales items available in Bettles. The sales items should include works by and biographies of Bob Marshall.

Small, inexpensive, attractive exhibits would provide an introduction to all park themes. Quotes from local residents or recorded oral histories could be incorporated showing native peoples' relationship to the land (theme 2). Exhibits could incorporate photographs and quotes from Bob Marshall (theme 3). Exhibits can show what the park looks like throughout the year (tied to theme 4), since most visitors will not experience the park in winter. Exhibits or a video can introduce that Gates of the Arctic is a unique, expansive wilderness park (theme 1).

The renovated contact station will need to provide a space where groups can be pulled together for a slide show, video, or program. This could involve reconfiguring the reading/reflection area, or could be a dedicated space, but would need to be a space that could be adequately darkened for evening presentations. The park will develop a standard, high-quality slide show or video that introduces visitors to Gates of the Arctic as a unique wilderness park. This "virtual experience" program would be available to anyone, but in particular would be geared towards those visitors who will not actually enter the park. Ideally this video would be a version of the new film that will be developed for the Coldfoot visitor center (see below).

In the interim until a new contact station is built, the information desk can be rearranged to the side or back so that it does not provide a divider between the staff and the visitor.

### ***The Dalton Highway***

The National Park Service will work with the Bureau of Land Management to encourage development of short trails, bird blinds, or viewpoints along the Dalton Highway. These facilities would be designed to encourage highway travelers to have "out of car" experiences. These opportunities would also help

*The beat of the tundra is slow indeed.*

John Kauffman

focus visitors on the experience of the Dalton Highway, not just on getting to their destination.

The National Park Service will work with the Bureau of Land Management to develop waysides for the Dalton Highway that introduce Gates of the Arctic National Park at key locations where there are viewpoints into the park. These waysides will introduce Gates of the Arctic and provide a concise introduction to the park themes.

The ANHA branch at the Coldfoot visitor center provides libraries of reading material to the tour buses that drive the Dalton Highway. The park will work with ANHA to make these libraries represent all the park themes.

The park will consider developing a Junior Ranger program for the Dalton Highway. This program could be a checklist or scavenger hunt to guide kids to tune into and observe things along the highway. The program could be turned in at the Coldfoot visitor center, at the Fairbanks office, or at the FAPLIC for a junior ranger badge or patch.

#### *Wiseman*

The National Park Service will encourage people to visit Wiseman in a manner that is sensitive to the local community. Wiseman provides visitors a chance to learn about cultural diversity and the uniqueness of Alaska. The National Park Service will work with other agencies to develop the proposed wayside exhibits/kiosks for Wiseman. The exhibits should include information about Bob Marshall (theme 3).

#### ***The Dalton Highway: Coldfoot***

The increasing number and variety of travelers on the Dalton Highway has led the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to plan a larger visitor center at Coldfoot with expanded orientation and interpretive opportunities. BUCY Associates, a private exhibit planning firm, developed an interpretive site plan in 1998. The purpose of the new Coldfoot facility is to stimulate, excite, and enlighten visitors with information and experiences at the visitor center, and to enhance their trip through and within the highway corridor in such a way that they learn about the entire area traversed by the highway.

The National Park Service will continue to play an active role in the exhibit planning for the Coldfoot Visitor Center, as well as planning for the operation of the center. The park should seize on this opportunity to make sure that the exhibits address all the park themes. Given the multi-agency nature of the center and the resources the agencies have in common, the visitor center will most easily interpret theme 5 (federal lands agencies), theme 3 (the native people of the Brooks Range), and theme 4 (the arctic). The National Park Service should work to have an exhibit on Bob Marshall incorporated.

#### *Audiovisual*

The Coldfoot Visitor Center plans call for the development of an auditorium and a new film. This should be a 15-20 minute film introducing the Brooks Range wilderness, including its intact ecosystem and the cultures that live in

## RECOMMENDATIONS

it. The film should be a "virtual visit" to the Brooks Range, since most people that drive the Dalton Highway may never step into the backcountry. The film should portray what the park is like in all seasons, since the facility will only be open in the summer.

This film would be shown in Coldfoot, but be available for viewing at other sites (Bettles, Fairbanks) and available as a sales item.

### *Anaktuvuk Pass*

At Anaktuvuk Pass, as at Bettles, visitors need to know there is National Park Service information available and be able to find it. At a minimum, signs should direct visitors from the air strip to the ranger station. If possible, a visitor orientation board should be developed somewhere near the air strip that would establish a National Park Service presence, orient visitors to Anaktuvuk Pass and Gates of the Arctic, answer some common questions, and direct visitors to the ranger station for more information. This could be a partnership project between the park, the community, and the Simon Paneak Museum. Restroom facilities are also sorely needed near the Anaktuvuk Pass airstrip. The National Park Service will work with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the local community to see how this problem could be addressed, perhaps with the provision of a seasonal restroom maintained by the FAA.

The ranger station should be restructured as much as possible to provide more for visitors, provide better quality information, and introduce park themes. Again, the challenge will be to reduce the "office feel" yet still allow the building to function as an office. One of the two rooms (the current library and the current office) could be made to be more of a visitor room while the other would be more of an office. Better quality information boards should be designed and developed for the exterior of the building so that information is available 24 hours per day. This is particularly important since the ranger station is not regularly staffed. A vestibule for the building could be developed containing this information, or a kiosk containing a wayside exhibit and a bulletin board could be developed and installed outside the building.

The National Park Service will continue to work with the Simon Paneak Museum, encouraging visitors to go to the museum and facilitating the museum's mission to interpret native cultures. The National Park Service is also considering partnering with the Museum to develop a visitor contact station and restroom at the museum. The National Park Service would communicate to the public at the museum contact station rather than at the ranger station.

A site bulletin about the Nunamuit and Anaktuvuk Pass could be developed as a partnership between the Museum and the National Park Service. This site bulletin would include information about what facilities and services are available in Anaktuvuk Pass.

***Fairbanks***

If visitation warrants, the park will consider recreating a uniformed staff position with public contact duties at the Fairbanks office. This position would provide information about Gates of the Arctic and Yukon-Charley.

***Publications***

Gates of the Arctic brochures are currently in a wide variety of formats, styles, and colors. Park staff will develop a unified look for their site bulletins and brochures that easily is recognizable as a National Park Service product.

Gates of the Arctic and Western Arctic Parklands are currently initiating a project to develop a handbook for Alaska's Arctic parklands. The parks that will be treated in this handbook include Bering Land Bridge, Cape Krusenstern, Gates of the Arctic, Kobuk Valley, and Noatak. Arctic National Wildlife Refuge may also be included in the project. This would include the entire Brooks Range from the Bering Sea to the international boundary with Canada. This handbook should be approached from a thematic point of view rather than of five individual park stories. The handbook will be developed in close cooperation with the Alaska Natural History Association and the Alaska Support Office. The park themes will be used as a guide in the development of the handbook, and the handbook will provide an introduction to all the park themes. The handbook will be a central point of information about the Brooks Range. The park will coordinate with other state and federal agencies in its production.

The National Park Service Map and Guide (glossy black brochure) for Gates of the Arctic will be revised to incorporate park themes explicitly. It will also be revised to be more visually appealing and less static graphically. It will focus on Gates of the Arctic as a wilderness area (theme 1). An inset box about Bob Marshall should be developed, and quotes from Bob Marshall should be used.

A multi-agency, ecosystem map of the Brooks Range will be developed to graphically show the ecosystem and the enormous size and patchwork of its protected areas. It can serve as a great visual introduction to any of the park's themes. It could also incorporate the native peoples of the region, their general routes, and their place names. The map will be an important component of the Arctic Parklands Handbook, and would best be developed as part of that project (if it is not required for an exhibit at Coldfoot first). The map should be used in exhibits, could be incorporated into the Gates of the Arctic Map and Guide, could be its own Map and Guide, and could be turned into a poster or sales item for ANHA. The map could be the cornerstone for a multi-agency brochure or Map and Guide to the Brooks Range.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Working with ANHA, park staff will develop a small pamphlet about native cultures of the Brooks Range. The pamphlet would be available for sale in Bettles, Coldfoot, and other ANHA locations, and other non-ANHA locations such as the Simon Paneak Museum. The park and ANHA will also develop a small pamphlet about Bob Marshall. This could start as a site bulletin and develop into a small sales item.

As mentioned in the "pre-visit information and trip planning" section, the park will develop a standardized backcountry user packet and hunter packet.

A Trails Illustrated map is currently under production for Gates of the Arctic. Park staff will work proactively with Trails Illustrated to incorporate an introduction to all park themes, Leave No Trace, and safety information onto the back of the map.

The park will partner with Federal Aviation Administration to develop a brochure on aviation safety in the Brooks Range. It will include information on the purposes of Gates of the Arctic. The brochure will be made available in the transient lounge at the Fairbanks airport and flight services that service Bettles, Anaktuvuk Pass, and Coldfoot.

### *Website*

The website will serve both as a trip planning tool and as a "virtual visit" opportunity for people who will never visit Gates of the Arctic.

In addition to the trip planning, safety and Leave No Trace information, the website will be revised to incorporate an introduction to all the park themes. Information will be incorporated on Bob Marshall. Several of the oral histories from the JukeBox project could be placed on the web as a way to introduce theme 2.

A suggested reading list for the park will be developed and put on the website. It will include books on all the park themes. The reading list will be linked to the ANHA site. A slide show about the park could be posted on the web, providing a "virtual visit" to Gates of the Arctic. A visitor comment form/reflection page will be added to the website. Visitors' comments and reflections on the park will be periodically posted.

The park will provide links from the Gates of the Arctic website to other protected areas in the Brooks Range, the Simon Paneak Museum, Leave No Trace sites, BLM's Dalton Highway page, and other arctic sites. Ultimately an inter-agency website on the Brooks Range should be developed that introduces the ecosystem as a whole. It could also use the Brooks Range map.

## **PERSONAL SERVICES**

Because of the comparatively small number of park visitors, Gates of the Arctic has an opportunity for face-to-face contact with park users not possible at other parks. The crucial element is finding the key points of contact (airstrips, commercial tour and guide services, Bettles, Coldfoot, or lodges in and around the park) and concentrating personal services there.

Park staff will continue to provide and promote face-to-face backcountry orientations. For most park visitors, this will be the only opportunity they have to speak with park staff. Visitors should be encouraged to come back for a debriefing after their trip - this gives management information on park resources and allows visitors to reflect on their trip. Visitors should be provided with a visitor comment/reflection form that they can fill in on the spot or mail back to the park.

The park's contact stations at Bettles and Anaktuvuk Pass will be staffed as much as possible during the busy season. As much as possible, rangers will rove the air strips to provide face-to-face contact with and backcountry orientation for visitors as they exit the air taxis. This also helps develop credibility with the air taxi operators and may ultimately encourage them to send their guests to the ranger stations.

Slide shows and programs will continue to be available by request in Bettles. A standard slide show and/or a copy of the film from Coldfoot should be on hand in case staff is not available when groups come in. Programs on several of the park themes can be developed over time.

The park will collaborate with private lodges in and around the park to occasionally present interpretive programs on park themes to lodge guests.

The park can sponsor or facilitate programs by local community members. These could include demonstrations relating to the native cultures and crafts, and can help show the relationship between native people and the land. These programs could occur in Anaktuvuk Pass, Coldfoot, and Bettles and can be geared toward both residents and visitors.

Personal service programs at Coldfoot should relate to park themes.

## **OUTREACH AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

### ***Outreach***

Parks can not survive as islands. Many resource issues transcend park boundaries and need the support of the local and statewide communities to be effectively addressed. This is particularly true at parks such as Gates of the Arctic that contain private lands, receive considerable visitation from within the state, and receive subsistence use from the local population.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Community outreach is an effective way to reach local and regional audiences, whether they visit the park or not. Community outreach can be an effective way to reach people who, for financial, physical, or other reasons can not visit Gates of the Arctic.

The park will consider developing a traveling exhibit that could be rotated through the various National Park Service facilities - Bettles, Coldfoot, Anaktuvuk Pass, and Fairbanks. This exhibit could also be loaned to other agencies or used for special events. The exhibit would focus on park themes - for example, an exhibit on the native cultures of the Brooks Range area and their relationships to the natural resources of the area could be designed in conjunction with the Simon Paneak Museum. Once an exhibit had been rotated through all the facilities and partner agencies, it could be changed out for an exhibit on another theme.

The park will look for ways to participate in elder, youth, and adult activities in the communities with activities related to park themes. Personal contact with residents of Anaktuvuk Pass, Bettles, and Wiseman may be the most effective ways to reach this audience which is intimately tied to Gates of the Arctic. Personal contact may be the best way to indirectly get across theme 5, the role of the National Park Service and other federal agencies in protecting resources and providing for their enjoyment. Visitors and local audiences should be involved and consulted in the development of exhibits and programs. This will improve the quality of the exhibit or program and also help visitors and locals feel involved in the management of their public lands.

Commemorative activities such as open houses, exhibits, or publications should be developed for the 20th or 25th anniversary of ANILCA.

Once the Bettles contact station is remodeled, the reading area should be promoted as a place where community members can come to relax, read, and buy ANHA items.

The park will develop periodic press releases with research results, as well as feature pieces about Bob Marshall, Leave No Trace, or safety issues. These press releases could be reformatted into a newsletter and distributed by hand to local residents. They can also be sent to hunting magazines, newspapers, or outdoor magazines to stimulate or be folded into larger articles. These press releases could form the basis of a monthly column in the Borough newspapers.

A multi-agency thematic booth on safety, Leave No Trace, or the Arctic in general can be developed for use at sportsmen and outdoor shows and local fairs.

Information on job and career opportunities with public land agencies, and opportunities for volunteer or SCA positions should be widely advertised within the community and posted on the website. "Junior achievement" days or a day for local children to spend with an employee can be initiated. A Bob Marshall award program can be developed to recognize local community members who help protect or educate people about wilderness.

### ***Education Programs***

The park is already conducting outreach programs in the local schools and responding to school requests as it can. The park's educational program could be made more effective if it included all park themes and were focused into a methodical, theme-based and goal oriented program based on the school curriculum. Some headway was made in 1998 in developing a program such as this.

The park will need to consult with local teachers and school districts to determine what themes to target, how to fit into the state curriculum, what grade levels (if any) to target, and how the park can most effectively work with schools. This consultation can be done through meeting with curriculum coordinators, tapping into teachers' in-service workshops, and meeting informally with teachers.

Once the theme and goals of the program are established, the park will need the teachers' input to determine the most effective way to deliver the message. This could include conducting teacher workshops and training teachers to give the programs, developing a sequence of staff visits to the classroom with a series of activities, developing activities for kids to do before and after the staff visit, developing a workbook of activities, or developing traveling trunks. If park staff visit classrooms, it should be as part of a series of activities including pre and post-visit activities. Because the local schools are so small, park staff usually ends up giving programs for all the grades in a school in one visit. Therefore, activities appropriate for each age group will need to be developed. Programs will need to be designed to reach a wide variety of learning styles and learning abilities.

While the park will need to work with teachers to develop the theme and content of the educational programs, programs should probably focus first on increasing awareness that Gates of the Arctic is part of the National Park System and what that means.

Gates of the Arctic National Park could develop its education program in conjunction with Western Arctic Parklands. The two park areas share common local schools and common themes, and might be able to develop a stronger educational program together rather than separately.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Some ideas of specific activities for schools include:

- Electronic field trips or distance learning about native cultures (would reach a larger audience than just local schools)
- Look for and use any pre-existing Arctic science curricula that may have been developed by other agencies or institutions.
- Develop a handbook for students on the arctic ecosystem.
- Develop "go and tell" like "show and tell" for children that live in or near the park.
- Develop school group activities linked to or as part of ongoing professional research.
- Develop a junior ranger activity booklet to be used in the schools.
- Develop a traveling trunk on Bob Marshall to send to schools.
- Weave safety messages and Leave No Trace into education programs.
- Encourage students to keep journals, write reflections on the park and its resources. Develop art projects and photo contests about the park and its resources to encourage students to reflect on the park.
- An interactive CD-ROM could be developed on the Brooks Range for use by various agencies and entities.

Once the park has developed an educational program for the local schools, it may want to alter the program for use in schools in Fairbanks. The FAPLIC could be a partner in presenting programs to Fairbanks schools.

## STAFFING

To fully implement the proposals in this plan - and meet the National Park Service objectives of providing for visitor enjoyment and the long-term protection of resources - the staff dedicated to interpretation and education will need to increase. In particular, the park will need to hire staff or find volunteers to develop and implement an educational program. A position could initially be shared with Western Arctic Parklands.

Another priority is to hire seasonal interpreters to provide programs at Coldfoot and in Bettles, to rove popular backcountry areas, and to develop and test outreach and education programs. Where possible, the National Park Service should encourage and help train locals to become staff members. Local residents can also be contracted in partnership with ANHA or the Simon Paneak Museum to provide educational programs on a periodic basis.

All staff should be committed to working with the public, both in the field and in the ranger stations.

# PARTNERSHIPS

---

The ultimate outcome of planning for national parks is an agreement among the National Park Service, its partners, and the public on why each area is part of the National Park System, what visitor experiences should exist there, and how those conditions can best be achieved.

Implementation of elements of this interpretive plan depends on the continuation and expansion of existing partnerships and the development of new ones. Some of these cooperative efforts have been proposed in other sections of the plan but will be summarized here.

While all partnerships are important, the relationship between the National Park Service and the commercial operators licensed for business at Gates of the Arctic is extremely important to the park's ability to reach visitors.

The partnerships with FAPLIC, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Fish and Wildlife Service are essential for the dissemination of information about the park. This partnership will be important for the design and operation of the Bettles ranger station and the Coldfoot Visitor Center, and the development of collaborative, ecosystem-wide interpretive and educational programs and materials for the Brooks Range.

A stronger partnership with Western Arctic Parklands will be important to the development of a handbook, a Brooks Range map, other publications, and safety and Leave No Trace information for the Arctic. Partnering may increase both parks' ability to conduct outreach and education programs in their shared local communities.

Partnering with local school districts, universities, the National Park Foundation, local museums, local and regional tribal organizations, and others will be important to achieve the park's educational program. The partnership with ANHA will be important for the development of educational materials about the park.

The park is and will continue to partner with a variety of federal, state, local, and private groups to conduct research about the natural and cultural resources of Gates of the Arctic. These agreements will include a public education/interpretive component as a condition of their acceptance.

Continuing to work with the Education and Interpretation Team at the support office in Anchorage will help the park complete the projects recommended in this plan. The Team offers technical assistance in developing funding or grant requests, guidance in design of print or electronic publications, and help in identification of training opportunities in interpretive skills. The Team can serve as a liason between the park and ANHA, exhibit fabricators, printers, and other interpretive media vendors and park partners.

# **IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES**

---

The following list represents the planning team's implementation priorities.

1. Restructure the Bettles ranger station to separate functions, make it into a destination with exhibits and 24-hour information.
2. Provide outreach to local communities at least once per school per year.
3. Develop standard backcountry use packets.
4. Develop and produce the Arctic Parklands Handbook.
5. Revise the park Map and Guide to represent park themes and be more dynamic (next revision due at the park in early 2002).
6. Develop a 8-10 minute safety, resource protection, and "Leave No Trace" video.
7. Develop a 20-minute film that introduces main park themes (as part of Coldfoot VC) and reaches out to a national audience and local communities.
8. Develop standard information packets for sport hunters.
9. Require researchers to give presentations or provide an interpretive component of their research.
10. Take proactive role in planning the new Coldfoot Visitor Center.

# APPENDIX I

---

## **The Planning Team**

### **Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve**

Robyn Burch, Administrative Officer  
Jobe Chakuchin, Natural Resource Specialist  
Glenn Hart, Interpretive Specialist  
Mike Haubert, Park Ranger  
Dave Mills, Superintendent  
Jeff Mow, Chief of Operations  
Patty Rost, Chief of Resources  
Steve Ulvi, Management Assistant

### **Other National Park Service Staff**

Chris Dearing, Exhibit Designer, Harpers Ferry Center  
Bob Grogg, Assistant Division Chief, Publications, Harpers Ferry Center  
Kate Hammond, Interpretive Planner, Harpers Ferry Center, Denver  
(Team Captain)  
Diane Jung, Team Leader, Education and Outreach, Alaska Support Office  
MaryAnn Porter, Chief of Interpretation, Western Arctic Parklands

### **Park Partners**

Brett Carlson, Northern Alaska Tour Company, Fairbanks  
Lenore Heppler, Interpretive Specialist, Bureau of Land Management,  
Fairbanks  
Sarah McConnell, Northern Alaska Tour Company and NPS volunteer,  
Fairbanks  
Vera Weber, Simon Paneak Museum, Anaktuvuk Pass

## APPENDIX II

---

### Accessibility

Every attempt will be made to promote full access to interpretive media and programs to ensure that people with physical and mental disabilities have access to the same information necessary for safe and meaningful visits to National Parks. This is in compliance with the National Park Service policy:

**"...To provide the highest level of accessibility possible and feasible for persons with visual, hearing, mobility, and mental impairments, consistent with the obligation to conserve park resources and preserve the quality of the park experience for everyone."**

NPS Special Directive 83-3, Accessibility for Disabled Persons

All interpretation will follow general standards for accessibility as described in the Harpers Ferry Center Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media.

# APPENDIX III

---

## References Used

- BUCY Associates. "Interpretive Site Plan: Interagency Visitor Center, Coldfoot, Alaska." Corvallis, Oregon, 1998.
- Glover, James. A Wilderness Original: The Life of Bob Marshall. The Mountaineers, Seattle, Washington, 1986.
- Kauffmann, John. Alaska's Brooks Range: The Ultimate Mountains. The Mountaineers, Seattle, Washington, 1992.
- Marshall, Robert. "North Doonerak, Amawk, and Apoon." 1939. Copyrighted in Arctic Wilderness.
- Murie, Margaret. Two in the Far North. Alaska Northwest Publishing Company. Anchorage, AK, 1978.
- National Park Service. "Interpretive Plan, 1990, Draft"  
"Statement for Management, 1996"