



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Gates of the Arctic
National Park and Preserve

P.O. Box 26030
Bettles Field, AK 99726

907-692-5494 phone
907-692-5400 fax

Dear Trip Planner,

Thank you for your interest in Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve. We hope that the information below will be helpful as you plan your trip. We encourage you to frequently check out our official website: <http://www.nps.gov/gaar/> for additional updated information. Another good source for Alaska travel information, both in the Brooks Range and beyond, is the Alaska Public Lands Information Center's (APLIC) website <http://www.nps.gov/aplic/>. We also have a 30-minute video/DVD about trip planning, backcountry safety, and *Leave No Trace* camping ethics. Please call (907-692-5494) or e-mail us (gaar_visitor_information@nps.gov) to borrow a copy of the program free of charge.

This 8.4 million-acre park was established on December 2, 1980 as a wilderness park. Congress recognized that a special value of this park is its wild and undeveloped character and the opportunity it affords for solitude and wilderness travel and adventure. In establishing Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve in Alaska's Brooks Range, Congress has reserved a vast and essentially untouched area of superlative natural beauty and scientific value. Congress also protected opportunities for continued traditional subsistence use by local rural residents. The National Park Service has been entrusted to manage this area to protect its physical resources and to maintain the intangible qualities and value of wilderness.

Visitors to GAAR should respect the unique nature of this ecosystem and be proficient in outdoor survival skills.

- If you and your partner(s) are not proficient in outdoor survival skills, we recommend you contact an outfitter/guide service for assistance. Please contact one of our offices for information on all currently licensed operators.
- There are no established services within GAAR's boundaries and only limited means of communication work effectively to contact anyone for assistance (e.g. cell phones don't work in GAAR). Therefore, **even if you contract the services of an outfitter/guide, you must be prepared to care for your own life and your partner(s) for many days if an emergency arises.** As long as you're prepared, it is an experience of a lifetime!

PERMITS AND REGISTRATION

- No permit is required to enter the Park, however, everyone is requested to contact the Bettles Office, the Coldfoot Visitor Center or the Anaktuvuk Ranger Station for a Backcountry Safety and *Leave No Trace* Orientation.
- Commercial transporters are required to ensure all their clients receive a backcountry orientation from park rangers prior to entering the park and preserve. We would also appreciate if you would take a moment to complete our voluntary registration form prior to your trip into the backcountry. These forms are available at any of these three locations. We greatly appreciate your cooperation with this voluntary registration.
- Rangers may be contacted year-round in Bettles at the Field Operations and Visitor Center office. The Ranger Station in Anaktuvuk Pass and the Interagency Visitor Center in Coldfoot is open in the summer season (5/15-9/30). The Administrative Headquarters in Fairbanks stays open year-round. Occasionally, these offices are closed for training needs, so we recommend calling before your visit to confirm operational hours.
- If you are traveling in a group (i.e. nonprofit, educational, commercial, guided, etc.) contact the Bettles Office several months before your travel dates for permit requirements and group size limits.

FACILITIES

- **Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve is a wilderness park - there are no facilities, roads, or trails in the park area.**
- Limited lodging is available in the neighboring communities of Bettles, Anaktuvuk Pass and Coldfoot. Even though there are small stores in Bettles and Anaktuvuk Pass, they carry very limited supplies.
- **You should have your provisions before you leave Fairbanks.**

PARK ACCESS

- Access to the Park begins in Fairbanks and then proceeds by air to Bettles or Anaktuvuk Pass, or by vehicle along the Dalton Highway Corridor. Most people fly into the park and preserve, although some people walk in from the Anaktuvuk Pass airfield or from the Dalton Highway.
- There are no trails into the park and preserve from any location, and river crossings are necessary from both Anaktuvuk Pass and the Dalton Highway. For more information on the Dalton Highway corridor, we recommend this website: <http://aurora.ak.blm.gov/dalton/dalton1a.htm>.
- If you're interested in information on the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve (ANWR) please try: <http://arctic.fws.gov/index.htm>.
- Commercial air service is available from Fairbanks to two communities neighboring the park and preserve: Bettles and Anaktuvuk Pass. You will need to travel by air because there are no roads to either of these communities. Charter service into the Park is available from Bettles, Coldfoot or Fairbanks. Charter costs vary greatly. Please call a charter service for specific price information.
- You may want to plan your trip through an outfitter/guide or air taxi operator. They will be able to give you ideas about when and where you can access the Park. Available landing sites and flying conditions limit air access into the park and preserve. **You should allow plenty of extra time because you can conceivably wait days for safe flying weather.** Your guide/air taxi operator will provide you with options and help you formulate realistic plans and expectations. Also, please note, food and equipment may not be delivered by airborne means (i.e. these items cannot be dropped from an airborne aircraft to someone on the ground). If you plan to utilize a re-supply mid-trip, you must be at the prearranged location to meet your pilot.
- You may find a list of guides and outfitters through our website www.nps.gov/gaar. Click on **Plan Your Visit**, scroll down to **Getting There**, and then click on **More**. This will take you to the Alaska Concessions Website. Once there, scroll down to **Commercial Services Directory**. Our information will be on pages 45-54.

LEAVE NO TRACE OUTDOORS SKILLS AND ETHICS

- As increasing numbers of people seek the beauty and exhilaration of outdoor recreation, our collective mark on the environment and natural processes increases. We encourage you to practice **minimum-impact techniques**, such as:
 - ✓ Plan ahead and be properly prepared
 - ✓ Travel and camp on durable surfaces
 - ✓ Dispose of waste properly
 - ✓ Leave what you find
 - ✓ Minimize campfire impacts
 - ✓ Respect wildlife
 - ✓ Be considerate of other visitors
 - ✓ Respect private land and subsistence users
- To accomplish this properly, you'll need to bring some specific equipment (e.g. camp stove & fuel, small trowel/shovel, etc.) For additional *Leave No Trace* information checkout: <http://www.LNT.org> or contact *Leave No Trace* at 1-800-332-4100.
- **If you encounter others who seem to be causing lasting impacts or creating unsafe conditions, please report this to our rangers as soon as possible.**

HIKING

- Experienced hikers in the Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve consider six miles a good day's travel. There are no established trails and the dense vegetation, tussocks, boggy ground and frequent stream and river crossings significantly slow your progress. You will find easiest walking above the tree line or in the streambeds, if the water level is low.
- Topographic maps will assist you greatly in planning your course of travel. Be sure to carry your topographic maps and a good compass (and GPS unit if you have access to one) with you in the field. **Be familiar with how to properly use these tools!**

- When hiking, minimize damage to vegetation by limiting your group size to **seven people maximum** traveling in one direction/route. Where no game trails exist, walk in a fan formation, rather than a straight line. Adjustable ski poles used as walking sticks are very useful.

CAMPING

- There are no designated camping sites in the park and preserve, but using large gravel bars is preferred wherever possible. These generally have fewer mosquitoes present and can provide less obstructed views of approaching wildlife. **When camping, minimize damage to vegetation by limiting your group size to seven people maximum and by camping in one spot no longer than three days.**

RIVER TRIPS AND LAKE TOURING

- Several outfitters/guides provide river trips and lake touring. For ease of air transportation, most river travel is done with rafts, inflatable canoes or other takedown boats. Most charter operators will not haul rigid canoes.
- **If you are going to rent canoes, make arrangements with one of these operators before you arrive in Bettles.** Waters average Class I and II, but river conditions constantly change. Problems associated with river travel include low water, some rapids, logjams and sweepers. Generally, the highest water is in July and August. High water also has its drawbacks - it can make it difficult to find suitable campsites.
- For planning river travel in Alaska, you may find *The Alaska Paddling Guide* helpful. The *Trails Illustrated Map* of the park and preserve and USGS topographic maps will also assist you greatly in planning your course of travel. Information on where these may be obtained can be done by contacting the Alaska Public Lands Information Center's (APLIC) at <http://www.nps.gov/aplic/>.

CLIMBING

- The most popular climbing areas in the park and preserve are in the Arrigetch Peaks, Mount Doonerak and Mount Igikpak areas. Long-term impacts tend to be greater in these locations. Access to these areas is primarily by float-equipped aircraft and most peaks are considered technical climbs.
- A good source of climbing information for this area is the *American Alpine Club* journals. We currently have no regulations specific to rock climbing, but we do require that climbers follow all park regulations that apply to backpackers and canoeists. This includes cleaning your climbing route and avoiding use of bolts or fixed anchors, as the area is designated wilderness.

BEARS, FOOD STORAGE & FIREARMS

- ***IT IS NOW MANDATORY IN ALL ALASKA PARKLANDS THAT FOOD BE STORED IN NATIONAL PARK SERVICE APPROVED ANIMAL RESISTANT FOOD CONTAINERS.***
- Most people who see a bear in the wild consider it the highlight of their trip. However, habituated bears (bears that have become accustomed to human food and petroleum-based products, such as fuel and bug repellent in aerosol cans) can present a hazard to people traveling in the backcountry.
- **If we all do our best to prevent negative interactions with bears and other wild animals, the backcountry will be a safer place for all—including the bear.**
- Food and equipment cannot be left unattended at any time; unless it is properly stowed in a National Park Service approved Animal Resistant Food Container. **Unattended food caches in non-bear-resistant containers are prohibited.**
- Please contact our Bettles office for updated information on animal resistant food container vendors. Your air-taxi operator or guide service might also be able to assist you in securing these. Gates of the Arctic NP will loan out approved containers free of charge at the Bettles Office on a first-come, first-serve basis. However, we strongly recommend you call ahead to check on availability.
- If you have your food pre-packed in these containers, it will save you time transferring planes in Bettles, Coldfoot, or Anaktuvuk Pass. Preplanning is especially important due to our limited supply and "first come, first serve" basis.

- **If you choose to carry a firearm and/or Capsicum pepper spray for protection from bears, be familiar with the weapon(s) and their potential.** Park visitors are allowed to carry guns in the park's backcountry for personal protection; however we strongly encourage visitors to carefully assess their skill level with firearms before doing so. For people who are not extremely experienced and comfortable with guns, we strongly believe that they would be safer without one. Guns may serve as a false sense of security and could ultimately lead one to taking unnecessary chances or actions in bear country.
- Capsicum can accidentally discharge and disable you or someone in your party. If left to linger on your gear, Capsicum has proven to be an attractant rather than a deterrent. The final decision is yours.
- **Visitors who discharge firearms inappropriately and/or kill or injure wildlife unnecessarily will be held accountable for their actions.** Please refer to the enclosed Bear Safety in Alaska National Parklands brochure.
- Additional guidelines regarding defense of life or property are listed in the *Alaska Hunting Regulations* produced annually by the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game (800-478-3377) or <http://www.state.ak.us/adfg/>.

WEATHER

- Your ability to deal with the rapidly changing weather in and around Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve could well determine the level of satisfaction you derive from your trip into the Arctic.
- **Be prepared for rapid, severe changes in the weather.** One sudden rainstorm, in or near your travel region, can cause streams and rivers to rise suddenly. Since most travel in the park and preserve involves river and stream crossings, it is important to consider potential changes in water levels. **Choose your clothing, gear and food with great care.**
- Be sure to pack a **well-equipped emergency kit, including various means of first aid, signaling for assistance and keeping warm.** There will be no opportunity for replacement after you enter the park and preserve.
- Current weather forecasts for Bettles Field and Anaktuvuk Pass can be obtained from a variety of on-line sources, such as <http://www.weather.com/>. However, be prepared for weather fluctuations throughout most of the year, both from day to day and within any given 24-hour time frame.
- The central Brooks Range has long, severe winters and relatively short, cool summers. Spring and fall are very brief. Thawing generally begins in late April and breakup in mid-May to early-June. The entire region receives continuous sunlight during the summer for at least 30 days. **Freezing temperatures may occur at any time of the year,** but particularly from mid-August on. Rivers generally freeze by mid-September to early-October.
- The south side of the Brooks Range below 2500 feet is generally a sub-arctic climate zone. Precipitation is low, averaging 12-18 inches in the west and 8-12 inches in the east. The average maximum and minimum July temperatures are 70F and 46F, respectively. Thunderstorm activity is common during June and July. Generally July through September is the wettest time of year. Prevailing winds are out of the north. Freezing temperatures may occur at any time of the year, but particularly from mid-August on. Winter is extreme, long and cold. Snow falls during 8 or 9 months of the year, averaging 60-80 inches. Average minimum and maximum January temperatures are -10F and -30F. July may be the only month that snow does not fall.
- The north side of the Brooks Range has an arctic climate. Precipitation is extremely light, about 5-10 inches per year, making this essentially an "arctic desert". Snow has been recorded in every month of the year and the annual average is 45 inches. Mean annual temperatures are colder than on the south side. Maximum and minimum February temperatures range from 33F to -47F. The warmest month, July, generally has a 60F maximum and 40F minimum. Prevailing winds from the east in summer and west in winter are greatly modified by local terrain.
- March and April are usually the best months for skiing and dog sledding. Mid-June to September is usually the best time for backpacking and hiking. July through August is generally the best time to take float trips.
- **Bug protection is a *must* during summer months.**
- **Winter travel presents additional difficulties,** such as ice crossings, potential avalanche conditions and extreme temperatures (-50F or colder). As always, **be sure you're prepared with the properly rated equipment and skills necessary to deal with these potential conditions.** For further information, please checkout our **In Depth** link on our official website: <http://www.nps.gov/gaar/>.

SUBSISTENCE

- When this vast park area was created in 1980, Congress protected the traditional subsistence rights of local rural residents through the Alaska National Interests Land Conservation Act (ANILCA). Ten villages in and around the park and preserve have the right to subsistence hunt, fish and trap within the park.
- **Please respect and do not disturb subsistence activities and sites.**

FISHING

- Because of the low productivity of arctic waters, we encourage catch-and-release fishing or ask you to **keep only what you can immediately consume**.
- State fishing regulations apply (Alaska Department of Fish and Game, 1300 College Road, Fairbanks, AK 99701, or <http://www.state.ak.us/adfg/>). You may purchase fishing licenses in Fairbanks, Bettles, Coldfoot, Anaktuvuk Pass or on-line directly from ADF&G.

PETS

- The Park's General Management Plan, approved in 1986, states that "harnessed and/or restrained dog teams and pack dogs will be the only dogs allowed in the unit."
- Dogs have been associated with dangerous human/bear encounters in some areas. Dogs can also contribute to stress on wildlife and in fact you may be less likely to see wildlife if you have a dog along. For the safety of all, **pets should be left at home** during your trip into Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve.
- **If you intend to bring a service animal, you must contact the Bettles Office prior to arriving in Alaska for applicable regulations.**

This document attempts to answer the most frequently asked questions from potential visitors to Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve. A big part of the wilderness experience is self-discovery and self-exploration, including researching and preparing for your trip.

Detailed route planning is not addressed in this document or our park website, because Congress set this area aside as a trail-less wilderness area specifically for self-exploration and because we cannot effectively evaluate your skill-level versus the fluctuating conditions of this area. Deciding on specific routes is something you and your air-taxi/outfitter/guide service should determine together, based on your skill-level and their equipment ratings, as well as what you desire to accomplish on your trip.

Once you've determined your route and dates of travel and reviewed our official website (<http://www.nps.gov/gaar>), if you need additional trip planning information please feel free to contact us at the Bettles Office (907-692-5494) or email us (gaar_visitor_information@nps.gov).

Have a safe and enjoyable trip,

The Staff of
Gates of the Arctic National Park & Preserve

Gates of the Arctic

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Alaska

SUGGESTED READING LIST

These books discuss aspects of Gates of the Arctic National Park, The Brooks Range or elements of the Arctic/Sub arctic environment. The books contain a variety of information that will aid you in planning a trip to this part of the world. Some books are out of print, but may be found through interlibrary loan. Those still in print may be found in any bookstore or internet source. Information on mail order is available below.

A Guide to the Birds of Alaska, R. Armstrong and Alaska Magazine
A Wilderness Original: Life of Robert Marshall, James Glover
Alaska Paddling Guide, Jack Mosby and David Dapkus*
Alaska Trees and Shrubs, Leslie Viereck and Elbert Little*
Alaska Wilderness, Robert Marshall
Alaska's Parklands, The Complete Guide, Nancy Simmerman
Alaska's Wilderness Medicines: Healthful Plants of the Far North, Eleanor Viereck*
Arctic Dreams, Barry Lopez
Arctic Village, Robert Marshall
Arctic Wild, Lois Crisler
Bear Attacks: Their Causes and Avoidance, Stephan Herrero*
Brooks Range Passage, David J. Cooper
Coming into the Country, John McPhee
Ducks at a Distance, U.S. Fish & Wildlife*
Edwin Simon, - Huslia, a biography, Hancock House Publishers Ltd.***
Floating Alaska Rivers, Marilyn Carter
Frank Tobuk - Bettles, a biography, Hancock House Publishers Ltd.***
Going to Extremes, Joe McGuiness
Guide to Wildlife Viewing in Alaska, Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game*
Inhabited Wilderness, Theodore Catton
Interior Alaska - A Journey Through Time, Alaska Geographic Society
Joe Beetus - Hughes, a biography, Hancock House Publishers Ltd.***
Journeys to the Far North, Olaus J. Murie
Make Prayers to the Raven, Richard Nelson*
Moses Henzie - Allakaket, a biography, Hancock House Publishers Ltd.***
Nameless Valleys, Shining Waters, John P. Milton
Oscar Nictune - Alatna, a biography, Hancock House Publishers Ltd.***
People of the Noatak, Claire Fejes,
The Alaska-Yukon Wild Flowers Guide, Alaska Magazine**
The Brooks Range, Alaska Northwest Publishing Co.**
The Complete Wilderness Paddler, James West Davidson and John Ruge
The Last Treasure, William E. Brown*
Tracks in the Wildlands, R. Nelson, K. Mautner, R. Bane*
Two in the Far North, Margaret E. Murie*
Up the Koyukuk, Alaska Geographic**
Wild Edible and Poisonous Plants of Alaska, Cooperative Extension Service*

Sources for Alaska publications and catalogues available upon request. Most guides, outfitters and air taxi services will send additional information for the areas and conditions you will be traveling to.

*Alaska Natural History Assn., 750 W. 2nd Ave., Suite 100, Anchorage, AK 99501

**Alaska Northwest Publishers Co., Box 4-EEE, Anchorage, AK 99509

***Hancock House Publishing Ltd., 10 Orwell St., North Vancouver, B.C. V7J 3K1

WEATHER

Weather and your ability to deal with it could well determine the level of satisfaction you derive from a trip into the Arctic. This information is a generalization of climactic conditions. Be prepared for rapid, severe changes in weather. Choose your clothing and food with great care. There will be no opportunity for replacement once you enter the park.

Spring and fall are brief. Thawing begins in late April, break-up in early to mid-May. There is continuous daylight from mid-April to mid-August.

August is the rainiest month of the year. The lowlands receive 2" of rain and the mountainous areas, more. One sudden rainstorm can cause streams to rise suddenly. Since most travel in the park involves river and stream crossings, it is important to consider changes in water levels.

Freezing temperatures return in September and the rivers usually freeze by mid to late October.

March and April are the best months for skiing. Mid-June to September is the best time for backpacking and hiking. July through August is the best time to take float trips.

AVERAGE MONTHLY TEMPERATURES

	BETTLES		ANAKTUVUK PASS	
	MAX	MIN	MAX	MIN
Jan	-5	-25	-8	-22
Feb	15	-5	-7	-21
Mar	20	0	1	-15
Apr	35	15	13	-15
May	55	35	39	21
Jun	65	45	58	37
Jul	70	50	61	41
Aug	60	40	54	37
Sept	45	25	39	25
Oct	30	20	14	2
Nov	10	-10	1	-13
Dec	-20	-40	-9	-22



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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Phone: (907) 692-5494
Fax: (907) 692-5400
Email: gaar_visitor_information@nps.gov
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HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL WEB SITES FOR
INFORMATION AND PICTURES OF THE GATES OF THE ARCTIC NATIONAL PARK:

www.nps.gov/gaar/ (THE OFFICIAL PARK SERVICE SITE)

<http://www.terrageria.com/parks/np.gates-artic.html> (SOME GREAT PICTURES)

<http://www.gates.of.the.arctic.national-park.com/>

www.alaskais.com/alaskamap.htm

www.uaf.edu/library/

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=3887429>

Gates of the Arctic

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ACCOMMODATIONS

In addition to providing outfitting/guiding services, the following businesses offer lodging accommodations and a variety of other services on privately owned lands. This listing is provided for the information of potential park/preserve visitors and does not constitute an endorsement of any of the services.

<u>Business</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Services</u>
<i>Arctic Getaway</i> Igloo #8 Wiseman, AK 99790 (907) 678-4456 info@arcticgetaway.com	Wiseman	Lodging, Food, Recreation Open Year Round
<i>Bettles Lodge, Inc.</i> P.O. Box 27 Bettles, AK 99726 (907) 692-5111 1-800-770-5111 (907) 692-5655 fax BTTLodge@Alaska.net	Bettles	Lodging, Food, Gas, Gifts, Recreation Open Year Round.
<i>Boreal Lodging</i> #1 Timberwolf Trail Wiseman Village, AK 99790 (907) 678-4566 phone/fax boreallodge@Juno.com	Wiseman	Lodging, Kitchen Facilities Open Year Round.
<i>Coldfoot Services</i> P.O. Box 9041 Coldfoot, AK 99701 (907) 678-5201 (907) 678-5218 fax adventure@northernalaska.com	Coldfoot	Lodging, Food, Gas, Water Laundry, RV Parking, Camping Facilities, Dump & Fill Site Open Year Round
<i>Iniakuk Lake Lodge</i> P.O. Box 80424 Fairbanks, AK 99708 (907) 479-6354 or (907) 692-5105 Summer (907) 474-2096 gofamorth@compuserve.com	Iniakuk Lake Alatna River	Brooks Range Luxury Accommodation, Food, Recreation Open Seasonally. Accessible only by Float Plane.

Business**Location****Services**

Nunamuit Corporation
P.O. Box 21009
Anaktuvuk Pass, AK 99721
(907) 661-3026

Anaktuvuk Pass

Motel Lodging,
Camp Kitchen
Open Year Round.

Peace of Selby
90 North Polar Rd.
P.O. Box 86
Manley Hot Springs, AK 99756
(907) 672-3206 phone/fax
peaceofselby@compuserve.com

Selby Lake
Narvak Lake

Lodging, Recreation
Open Year Round

Spirit Lights Lodge
P.O. Box 26090
Bettles, AK 99726
(907) 692-5252 or (888) 692-2857
info@spiritlightslodge.com

Bettles

Lodging, Food,
Recreation,
General Store
Open Year Round.

Arctic Trail Cabins and Campground
P.O. Box 26012
Bettles, AK 99726
(907) 692-2822
frannie@alaska.net

Bettles

Lodging, Camping
