



## Savonoski Loop



**The Savonoski Loop is an 86 mile paddle through the scenic Katmai National Park backcountry. Paddlers need intermediate canoeing or kayaking skills, and experience traveling in wilderness and bear country. Depending on route, experience, and weather, allow a minimum of 4-10 days for the trip.**

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### Savonoski Loop

The Savonoski Loop starts and ends at Brooks Camp. Paddlers should allow 2-3 days to travel the 32 miles from Brooks Camp to Fure's Cabin in the Bay of Islands. A 1.5 mile portage trail connects Naknek Lake and Grosvenor Lake. Allow

at least 2-3 days to travel from the portage trail at Grosvenor Lake to the delta of the Savonoski River. Returning east to Brooks Camp along the Iliuk Arm of Naknek Lake completes the loop.

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### The Route

After leaving Brooks Camp, the route heads northwest before turning east around the base of Mt. La Gorce and into the spectacular Bay of Islands in the North Arm of Naknek Lake.

The mostly level, unmarked portage trail begins behind the outhouse at Fure's Cabin. On the trail, be prepared to encounter mud and numerous biting insects.

After completing the portage trail, boaters travel east approximately 14 miles to the outlet of Grosvenor Lake. In order to best avoid the frequent, strong south and southeast winds known as "wil-liwaws," paddlers are advised to travel along the south shore of Grosvenor. Travelers frequently have to pull to shore to wait out high winds on Grosvenor Lake.

At the east end of Grosvenor Lake, Grosvenor River is a Class I or slow moving, clear water stream about 3 miles long.

The Savonoski River is a braided Class I-II (waves up to three feet) river with a current of 3-5 miles per hour, and can be easily run in one day. Whitewater does not usually occur along the Savonoski River, but there are numerous obstacles to avoid, such as sandbars and fallen trees. The depth of the water is often impossible to estimate due to suspended glacial sediments. Follow the main channel to avoid running aground.

From the mouth of the Savonoski River in the Iliuk Arm of Naknek Lake, it is approximately 20 miles back to Brooks Camp. Due to steep cliffs along the base of Mt. La Gorce on the north shore, paddlers are advised to use the south shore of Iliuk Arm on Naknek Lake, which offers some limited shelter from severe winds when returning to Brooks Camp.

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## Fure's Cabin

Born in Lithuania in the late 1800s, Roy Fure moved to Alaska from San Francisco and constructed the cabin in the Bay of Islands around 1916. Fure prospected for gold in the area and did occasional work as a caretaker and cannery worker, as well as other odd jobs. He also spent time trapping, hunting, and fishing. He traveled the 55 miles to Naknek by skis in the winter and by dory in the summer.

Fure's Cabin and associated structures are listed on the National Register of Historical Places. The hand-hewn squared logs are exceptionally well-crafted and fit so tightly that little chinking was needed. The dovetail joints, as well as the hand-hewn roof and floor planks, reflect a Russian or Scandinavian influence that is rare in Alaska.

The cabin probably had a sod roof until Fure put a corrugated tin roof on it around 1930. Electricity was generated by the windmill near the cabin. The National Park Service restored the cabin in 1988, replacing rotted logs and windows that were beyond salvage.

Fure's Cabin is available by reservation for public use. Reservations are made on a first-come, first-served basis beginning January 1 of each calendar year of intended use. Use is limited to groups no larger than six and overnight stays are limited to no more than four consecutive nights and no more than seven nights a year. Call 907-246-3305 to learn more about the permit process.

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## Bear Safety

Bears are common along the Savonoski Loop. Paddlers should exercise the same Leave No Trace and bear etiquette skills as elsewhere in the park, including the use of bear-resistant containers (BRCs) for storing food, garbage, and other odorous items. A limited number of BRCs are available for loan at the King Salmon Visitor Center and the Brooks Camp Visitor Center.

Paddlers must use caution when traveling the 12 miles between the confluence of the Grosvenor and Savonoski Rivers and the delta of the Savonoski due to the high number of bears frequenting the area.

Paddlers are also advised to avoid camping on the Savonoski River or at the mouth of Margot Creek, as these areas are particularly popular with bears during summer salmon runs.

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## Other Information

Equipment rentals, outfitters, and guides may be available locally. Contact the King Salmon Visitor Center for more information.

USGS topographic maps for the Savonoski Loop include Mt. Katmai C-4, C-5, and C-6. Visit <http://store.usgs.gov> or call 1-877-786-7047 to purchase maps. The Brooks Camp and King Salmon Visitor Centers maintain a limited stock only.

