



Foundation Document Overview

Bering Land Bridge National Preserve

Alaska



Contact Information

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Purpose



The purpose of Bering Land Bridge National Preserve is to protect and provide the opportunity to study and interpret the landscape that contains an invaluable record of floral, faunal, and human migration between Asia and North America and that supports an ongoing traditional subsistence culture.



Significance and Fundamental Resources

Significance statements express why Bering Land Bridge National Preserve resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

Record of Migration: Bering Land Bridge National Preserve protects and provides opportunities for the study of paleontological, archeological, and biological resources that reveal a record of migration across the land bridge between Asia and North America.

- Archeological Sites
- Fossils
- Education
- Migratory Bird Habitats
- Tundra Continuum
- Solution Caves



and Values

Inupiaq People: Bering Land Bridge National Preserve protects and interprets, in collaboration with Alaska Natives, thousands of years of use and occupation by the Inupiaq people and their continuing subsistence way of life.

- Archeology
- Ethnographic Resources
- Landscape

Subsistence: Bering Land Bridge National Preserve protects natural resources and native habitats that provide the opportunity for local rural Alaska residents to engage in customary and traditional subsistence uses.

- Subsistence Resources
- Habitat
- Cultural Knowledge

Serpentine Hot Springs: Bering Land Bridge National Preserve protects the integrity of the Serpentine Hot Springs, its natural setting, and its cultural and spiritual significance.

- Sense of Place
- Inupiaq Cultural Significance
- Geologic and Natural Resources
- Visitor Use



Volcanic Features: Bering Land Bridge National Preserve protects and provides opportunities to study and interpret a variety of high latitude volcanic features unique to North America.

- Volcanic Features and Processes
- Scientific Research
- Educational Tools

Reindeer Herding: Bering Land Bridge National Preserve protects reindeer herding habitat to ensure the continued opportunity for reindeer herding by Alaska Natives.

- Research and Monitoring
- Physical Record
- Ethnographic Resources



Description

Bering Land Bridge National Preserve was established on December 2, 1980, under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). This designation enables the land to be protected, but also used for public hunting, gathering, trapping, fishing, and subsistence use.

Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, comprising 2.7 million acres, occupies about one-third of the Seward Peninsula in northwest Alaska, which is about 500 air miles from Anchorage. The peninsula is approximately 200 miles from east to west, and the greatest north to south distance is 150 miles. The peninsula is the divide between the Pacific and Arctic oceans, with Norton Sound and Bering Sea to the south and Kotzebue Sound and Chukchi Sea to the north. The northernmost point of the peninsula, Cape Espenberg, extends just north of the Arctic Circle, and the westernmost point, Cape Prince of Wales, is only 55 miles from Siberia.

Bering Land Bridge National Preserve is one of the nation's most remote national park units. The preserve offers unparalleled opportunities to not only experience some of America's most isolated wildlands, but also the rich heritage of Alaskan Native cultures, past and present. The preserve protects a significant expanse of land remaining from the prehistoric "land bridge," also known as Beringia, which spanned from modern-day Asia to North America more than 12,000 years ago. The bridge was up to 1,000 miles wide, and was a land mass that allowed for the exchange of humans, flora, and fauna populations between continents.

The preserve is home to several geologic features that make this area truly unique. It contains the largest maar lakes in the world and the northern-most lava fields as well as Serpentine Hot Springs and the surrounding granite tors. The preserve is also a place where the rich variety of wildlife, fish, and plants have sustained the indigenous people of the region for thousands of years, and where subsistence is essential to the economic, cultural, and social existence of the region's people.

Located approximately 100 miles north of Nome, there are no roads that lead directly into Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, so travel opportunities can be limited. The most common access is by snowmobile, small airplane, boat, dog sled, or on foot. The Bering Land Bridge National Preserve headquarters and visitor center are in Nome, which is not on the road system; therefore, access to the town is primarily by airplane. The villages of Shishmaref, Wales, and Deering are located just outside the preserve boundary.

