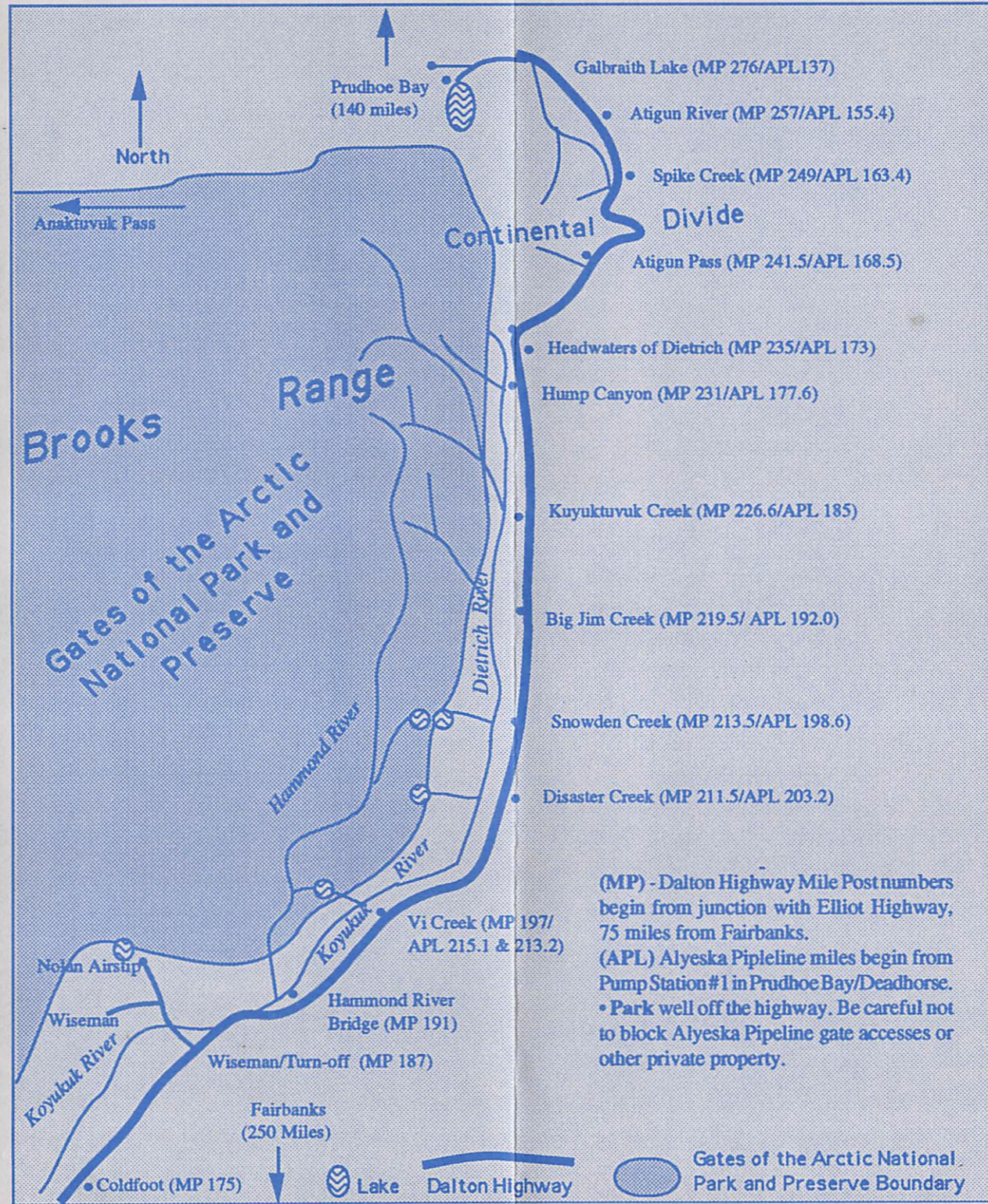
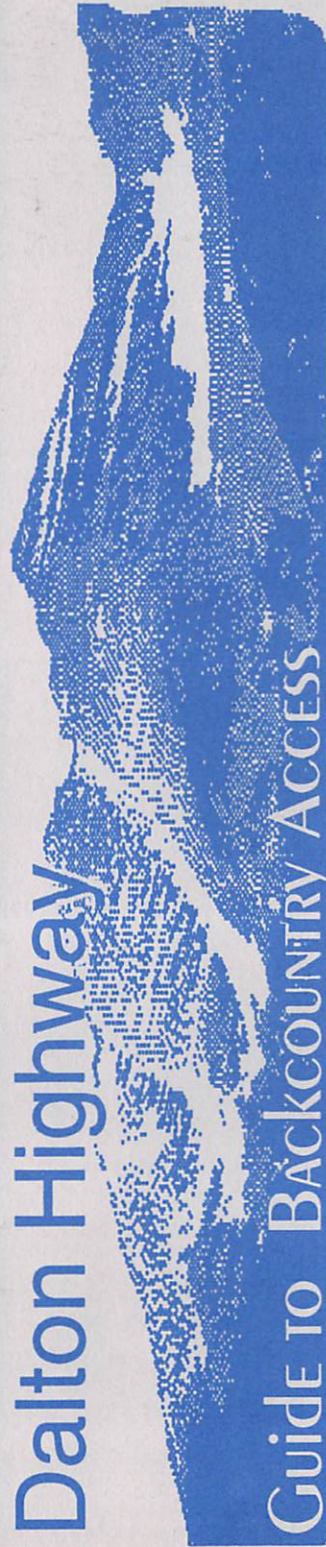


Gates of the Arctic

Dalton Highway

GUIDE TO BACKCOUNTRY ACCESS

National Park and Preserve
National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior



GATES OF THE ARCTIC NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE can be accessed from the Dalton Highway. Some of the most lovely and challenging terrain is within the realm of a short or extended wilderness adventure. Your trip may begin from locations along the highway from Coldfoot (MP 175) up to Galbraith Lake (MP 276).

- **Hiking** can be difficult. Trail systems do not exist in Gates of the Arctic. Instead, traditional methods of route selection such as river and creek drainages, ridges, and animal trails must be used but chosen wisely. It is not unusual for backpackers to progress only 5 miles per day. Alder thickets and tussocks (clumps of tundra sedges) often impede hiking in the Arctic. Both types of vegetation will be found in valleys and on the side slopes. Wet feet are likely in both tundra and valley hiking. Use safe techniques when crossing streams and rivers which can be hazardous with water levels changing quickly.

- **Camp** with minimum impact. Protect delicate tundra and fragile lichen environments by camping only on gravel bars or areas of moss or heath if you must choose a vegetated site. Use a stove for cooking and make the choice to have a campfire carefully as they may scar the landscape and deplete critical habitat. For the least impact, build fires only on gravel bars and mineral soils. Please erase, burn, and/or carry out all signs of your fire, camp, and personal sanitation.

- **Plan** your trip well. Remote wilderness demands self-sufficiency from all visitors. Wilderness survival skills are essential. Prepare for emergencies and radical changes in weather. Study appropriate topographic maps. Plan your meals carefully so as to not have waste. Carry enough food for extra days.

- **Animals** are wild and unpredictable. Keep a clean camp and use common sense. Cook well away from your campsite. Bear-proof food containers are strongly recommended. Store them away from camp and cook areas. Filter, then disperse dishwater in swift flowing streams. Carry out food waste. Take every precaution to minimize animal encounters.

- **Gates of the Arctic** is a unique place for wilderness recreation. Please practice techniques which will maintain its wilderness values. This is your park. Please report any infractions which you observe.

Wiseman/ Nolan Access Area (MP187)

The Wiseman turn-off (MP 187) accesses the Nolan Airstrip roadhead which allows entry into the Glacier River and the southeastern Park backcountry. From here various routes are available down to the lower North Fork of the Koyukuk, up to the Clear River and into the "Gates" and Doonerak areas, or into the upper Hammond River Valley.

Nolan Airstrip Parking

After leaving the highway, continue straight, past the Wiseman fork in the road, travel up the ridge approximately six miles to the airstrip in the small community of Nolan. Park well off the airstrip to the west or east. Please respect private property and driveways. Vehicle travel upstream from this point can be extremely muddy, rough, and impassible.

• Wiseman Creek Lake Access

An "unofficial" trail leads to the Glacier River Valley by way of Glacier Pass. Both Pasco, and Snowshoe Creeks access passes which also lead into the area. Hike west from the airstrip. A wide but wet trail begins west of Nolan Creek and traverses the north side of the lake.

• The Nolan Creek Access

Travelling up Nolan Creek, Montana Gulch, or Vermont Creek provides passage to the Glacier River Valley by way of the Vermont Dome ridgeline. Hike up Nolan Creek from the Nolan Airstrip Parking .

Remember: All mineral claims are private property. Within the Park boundary, recreation gold panning and mineral collection is allowed but, "Hands and Pans" only! You are responsible for knowing all Federal National Park mining regulations and restrictions. Alaska rural residents may use Park and Preserve resources to support their subsistence lifeways. Any camps, traps, and equipment you may encounter are private property.

Topographic Maps: Wiseman (C-1) (C-2)

Koyukuk & Lower Dietrich Access Areas (MP 191 - 214)

The Middle Fork of the Koyukuk River forms as the Dietrich River meets the Bettles River flowing between Sukakpak Mountain and Wiehl Mountain. Four lakes nestled in the ridgeline to the west can be accessed from the highway as it passes along the northern portion of the Koyukuk River/Dietrich River Valley. These can be a fine destination, as part of a loop trip, or access to longer journeys within the park. From the Hammond River, passage can be made to the upper Glacier River through a small pass leading to Roy Creek, Chimney Pass, Holmes Pass, and points northwest.

Hammond River Bridge Parking

The bridge roadhead (MP 191) will allow travel up the Hammond River Canyon and to Jennie Creek Lake without a river crossing. After crossing the bridge, travel on the north side of the river on either the river bar or side hill. Ascend either the ridge or Jennie Creek up to the lake.

Vi Creek Parking

This drainage (MP 197 APL 215.1 & 213.2) will allow a more direct route to/from Jennie Creek Lake. Follow the canyon up to the outlet flowing from Jennie Creek Lake. This route requires a potentially difficult crossing of the Middle Fork of the Koyukuk River.

Disaster Creek & Snowden Creek Parking

Park and cross the braided Dietrich River at the Disaster Creek parking area (MP 211.5 APL 203.2) or the next drainage north, located across from Snowden Creek (MP 213.5 APL 198.6) A 2-3 day loop is possible to Kaaruk Lake, Kalkabuk Creek, and a broad valley with two unnamed lakes. Passage down to the Hammond River Valley can be obtained over a small pass west of the lakes.

Topographic Maps: Wiseman (B-1) (C-1)
Chandalar (B-6) (C-6)

Upper Dietrich River Access Areas (MP 220 - 237)

This area provides access to some of the Park's most beautiful and diverse terrain. From here the areas around the Upper Hammond River, Apoon Mountain, Mount Doonerak, the North Fork of the Koyukuk, Oolah Valley, and the Itkillik River drainage are accessible. Passage to the village of Anaktuvuk Pass is also possible.

Big Jim Creek Parking

Big Jim valley (MP 219.5 APL 192.0) narrows into a beautiful but extremely rugged limestone canyon. The options include a loop into Trembley Creek, access into Kapoon Creek, or an easier passage that follows a low pass to Kupuk Creek, and into the Hammond River.

Kuyuktuvuk Creek Parking

Parking is available (MP 226.6 APL 185) on the west side of the highway along the river. This provides a popular access point to Oolah Pass, Kinnorutin Pass up Trembley Creek, or over Alinement Pass up the next un-named valley north.

Hump Canyon Parking

A shorter but rougher access to Oolah Pass is available up this canyon (MP 231 APL 177.6). Climb the steep pass, called "The Hump" below the microwave tower, to Kuyuktuvuk Creek. Or, continue up to access high glacial passes with possible loops to other Dalton Highway Access drainages to the north.

Headwaters of the Dietrich Parking

Access to the upper Itkillik Valley or a loop to the Atigun River area is possible. Park at the river (MP 235 APL 173) and hike the gravel bar, or drive a mile to the pullout on Chandalar Shelf and side-hill the valley.

Topographic Maps: Philip Smith Mts. (A-5)
Wiseman (D-1) Chandalar Lake (A-1)

Atigun Pass/ North Slope Access Areas (MP 241 - 276)

Access points on either side of Atigun Pass can lead to challenging loops across the Continental Divide or journeys into the Itkillik Valley, Oolah Valley, and the village of Anaktuvuk Pass.

Base of Atigun Pass Parking

Identified as "West Fork of the North Fork of the Chandalar River" (MP 241.5 APL 168.5), this canyon can be part of a loop to the Dietrich, on to the Itkillik, or down to the Atigun River.

Spike Creek & West Fork of Atigun River Canyon Parking

Park at Spike Creek (Atigun Camp) (MP 249 APL 163.4) or on the south end of the wide long glacial canyon of the West Fork of the Atigun River (MP 257 APL 155.4). From either canyon, travel south over steep glacial passes within the edges of the Preserve boundary or, westward over to the Itkillik River drainage and down to Galbraith Lake.

Galbraith Lake Parking

At the Galbraith road sign (MP276 APL 137) take the road to the west. Turn right at airstrip to park at the "gravel pit." Hike west along the front range to Itkillik Lake. Or, drive on 2 more miles to the campground. Hike southwest up the drainage and over the pass into the Itikmalak Valley and on to the Itkillik.

Topographic Maps: Philip Smith Mts. (A-5) (B-4)
(B-5) Chandalar Lake (A-1)

Anaktuvuk Pass

A hike-in/fly-out trip can be made to the village of Anaktuvuk Pass from the Highway, returning on a commercial flight back to Coldfoot.

Topographic Maps identified here are 1:63000 scale and are for Parking Access Areas only.