



Walker Lake National Natural Landmark



Walker Lake National Natural Landmark in Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve is known for its superb scenic beauty. The area has been used for millennia by native peoples.

Our Natural Heritage

National Natural Landmarks are sites that possess exceptional value in illustrating the natural heritage of our nation, and present an unspoiled example of natural history. Walker Lake was considered to be of outstanding national importance and was declared a National Natural Landmark many years before the park came into being around it.

Walker Lake was designated a National Natural Landmark in 1968. Ten years earlier, Frederick C. Dean, a professor of wildlife management at University of Alaska Fairbanks, observed the lake while helping to search for a missing Fish & Wildlife Service Grumman Goose aircraft. Professor Dean returned to the area in 1963 for some intensive field study, which ultimately led to his suggestion that Walker Lake be added to the Natural Landmark Registry.



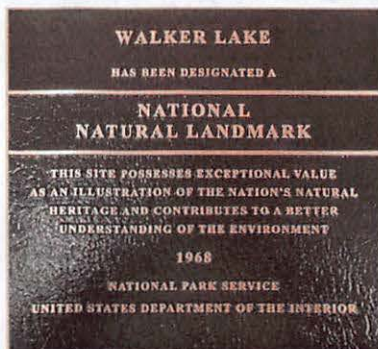
One of the crown jewels of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, the fjord-like Walker Lake stretches nearly 14 miles long, carved by glaciers about 20,000 years ago.



Diversity and Abundance, a Source of Sustenance

From the dense white spruce forest of its shores to the talus slopes that rise 2,000 feet above the lake, the nearly 145,000 acres encompassing the Walker Lake National Natural Landmark is representative of a range of ecological communities and rapid biological change within a very short distance. At nearly 14 miles long and averaging over a mile wide, Walker Lake is a striking example of the geologic and biologic relationships of a mountain lake at the northern limit of the boreal forest in the Brooks Range, and illustrates the glacial history of the area.

Archeological artifacts such as stone chips, scrapers and projectile points have been found at Walker Lake. Situated near the headwaters of the Kobuk River, Walker Lake has been a fishing site and travel corridor for thousands of years. Doubtless the early native peoples of the area found the lake to be as attractive as modern visitors do, camping and fishing on the lake shore. Lake trout, arctic char and grayling can be found in the lake, and in autumn the shores are filled with an abundance of berries.



Walker Lake continues to be a popular drop off point for visitors floating the Kobuk River. It is also a scenic destination in its own right. Many backcountry travelers go to Walker Lake to camp and enjoy the spectacular scenery, not to mention the fishing, miles of canoeing, and the occasional wildlife sighting. It is truly one of the crown jewels of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve.

The solid bronze plaque commemorating Walker Lake National Natural Landmark within Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve can be seen at the Bettles ranger station.

Walker Lake has seen visitors along its shores and on its waters for thousands of years, including those modern visitors who still enjoy camping, fishing and canoeing in this National Natural Landmark today.



For more information about the Walker Lake National Natural Landmark within Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, please contact our Interpretive Park Ranger in Bettles, DaleLynn Gardner, at (907) 692-6100, or email her at DaleLynn_Gardner@nps.gov.

