



Foundation Document Overview

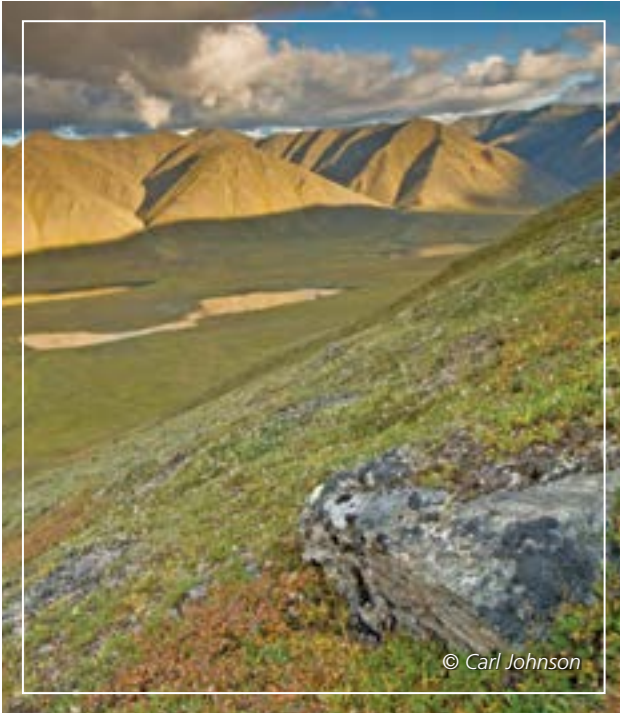
Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve

Alaska



Contact Information

For more information about the *Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve Foundation Document*, contact: GAAR_Visitor_Information@nps.gov or (907) 457-5752 or write to:
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The purpose of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve is to preserve the vast, wild, undeveloped character and environmental integrity of Alaska's central Brooks Range and to provide opportunities for wilderness recreation and traditional subsistence uses.



Significance statements express why Gates of the Arctic National Park and 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.

Wilderness: Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve is acknowledged as the premier wilderness park in the national park system, protecting 8.4 million acres of diverse arctic ecosystems.

- Designated Wilderness
- Wilderness Character
- Diverse Arctic Ecosystems
- Science in Wilderness
- Unique Geological Features
- Contiguous Wilderness



and Values

Wild Rivers: Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve serves as the headwaters for six designated Wild Rivers that support natural systems and human activities across northern Alaska.

- Traditional and Historic Routes
- Recreational Opportunities
- Populations of Fish and Wildlife
- Pristine Water
- Geologic Processes

Wildlife: Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve protects a functioning arctic, mountain ecosystem in its entirety and provides habitat of world importance for naturally occurring plant and animal populations.

- Habitats
- Caribou Migration Corridors
- Breeding Bird Habitat
- Wildlife Populations
- Research and Monitoring

Wilderness Experience: Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve provides visitors with opportunities for solitude and challenging wilderness adventures within a remote and vast arctic landscape.

- Wilderness Character
- Opportunity for Solitude
- Wilderness Dependent Species
- Wilderness Recreation
- Natural Soundscapes
- Scenic Landscapes

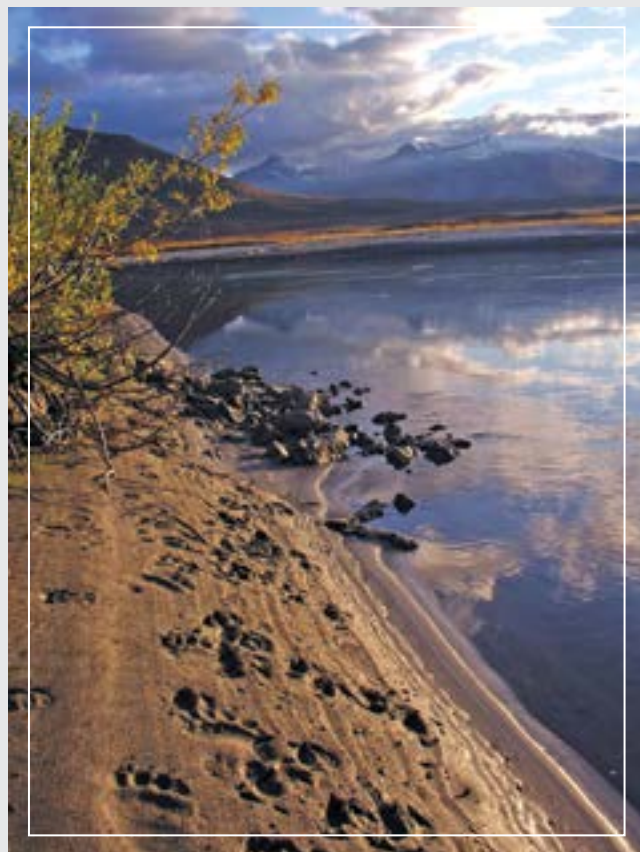


Subsistence: Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve protects habitats and resources in consultation with local rural residents to provide subsistence opportunities on lands that have long supported traditional cultures and local residents.

- Caribou Migration Range
- Subsistence Resources
- Habitats
- Cultural Knowledge
- Resident Zone Communities
- Anaktuvuk Pass
- Spiritual and Cultural Landscape

Cultural Resources: Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve protects a 12,000-year record of human cultural adaptations to high latitude mountain environments and an unbroken tradition of living on the land.

- Archeological Sites
- Museum Collections and Archives
- Alaska Native History and Culture
- European American History and Culture



Description

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve was established on December 2, 1980, under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), to maintain the wild and undeveloped character and environmental integrity of the area, to provide continued opportunities for mountain climbing and other wilderness recreational activities, to protect habitat for and populations of fish and wildlife, and to permit subsistence uses where such uses are traditional.

Lying north of the Arctic Circle in Alaska, Gates of the Arctic is situated in the central Brooks Range, the northernmost extension of the Rocky Mountains, and encompasses 8.4 million acres of land. Gates of the Arctic is composed of the national park (approximately 7.5 million acres) and two units containing 948,608 acres that make up the national preserve. Altogether, the park and preserve is nearly 200 miles long and 130 miles wide, including both the north and south slopes of the Brooks Range. With adjacent Kobuk Valley National Park and Noatak National Preserve, these lands form one of the largest protected parkland areas in the world. Gates of the Arctic is also the nation's second-largest NPS wilderness area, with more than 7 million acres designated wilderness.

The park and preserve is characterized by rugged peaks, glaciated arctic valleys, wild rivers, and many lakes. Six designated wild rivers—the Alatna, John, Kobuk, Noatak, North Fork of the Koyukuk, and the Tinayguk—are among the numberless waterways transecting Gates of the Arctic. Foothills become waves of mountain peaks rising to elevations of 4,000 feet, with the tallest limestone and granite ridges reaching over 7,000 feet. Two designated national natural landmarks, the Arrigetch Peaks and Walker Lake, are within Gates of the Arctic. The landscape is covered by sparse black spruce forests (called taiga), boreal forest, and arctic tundra. The park contains major portions of the range and habitat of the Western Arctic caribou herd. Moose, Dall's sheep, wolverines, wolves, and grizzly and black bears also inhabit the land. Although the landscape appears virtually untouched by contemporary civilization, people have lived here for at least 12,000 years and the park is blanketed with numerous archeological and historic sites. Gates of the Arctic is important for subsistence activities by local residents, who harvest fish, wildlife, and vegetation in the park.

The park and preserve is located approximately 200 air miles north of Fairbanks. No trails, bridges, signs, or visitor services exist within the park or preserve, and no roads provide access. The closest road is the Dalton Highway which is more than 5 miles from the park's eastern boundary. Hiking into the park from the highway is possible; however, access to Gates of the Arctic is almost exclusively by small aircraft. One Nunamiut (Iñupiat) village, Anaktuvuk Pass, lies within the park boundary. There are ranger stations at Anaktuvuk Pass and in Bettles, but there are no developed facilities in the park and preserve. A ranger station and the Arctic Interagency Visitor Center are located in Coldfoot along the Dalton Highway.

