

**Commencement: Reconnecting on the
Noatak River**
*Gates of the Arctic National Park, Brooks
Range*



www.arcticwild.com

A grant written for the Ritt Kellogg Fund by Jenine Durland, Becca Rich,
Liza Springmeyer, Tess Weidner & Becca Willis
January 10, 2005

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Commencement: Reconnecting on the Noatak River
Gates of the Arctic National Park, Brooks Range, Alaska

“A poetic appreciation of life, combined with a knowledge of nature,
creates humility, which in turn becomes the greatness in man.”

-Olaus Murie, 1973

“I swear the earth shall surely be complete to him or her who shall be
complete,
The earth remains jagged and broken only to him or her who remains
jagged and broken.”

-Walt Whitman

“But for those who somehow feel unnurtured, missing something, groping for something
satisfying, surely there should still be a place, a big place—wilderness.”

- Mardy Murie

WHO WE ARE... We are five women on the edge of “something big”— what we might call the “real world.” Our four years at Colorado College have been filled with new experiences in all areas of life, from backcountry travel to communal living. The relationships we have fostered at CC have opened doors inside ourselves as well as in the greater world around us. Above all, each of us women recognizes a driving urge to feel connected and a part of something, to “be complete,” as Whitman once wrote, and enter this new stage of our lives with what Arctic-lover Olaus Murie called “a poetic appreciation of life.” It is this common goal that has brought us five friends, along with our extensive wilderness and river skills, together to explore what Justice William O. Douglas called “[the] last American living wilderness.”

OUR EXPEDITION... In our two weeks in the backcountry of the Brooks Range, we will explore “the largest undisturbed wilderness in North America,”¹ via the Noatak River, Alaska’s longest Wild and Scenic River. The Noatak, renowned for its remote beauty, offers an incredible experience of the Alaskan backcountry with minimal human impact. We will paddle inflatable canoes through class I and II waters for nearly 120 miles, experiencing an intact ecosystem from the river banks up. While two of our group members are professional whitewater guides, our river route is an easy, non-technical float fit for beginners. We believe our challenges will come from within as we relearn how to co-exist with wildness around us.

¹ www.equinoxexpeditions.com, “Noatak River Canoeing Odyssey”

Given the mileage and good conditions, we could easily canoe the chosen section of the Noatak in seven days; however, the wilderness we will be traveling through is one of the greatest gifts this remote region has to offer. We will use layover days to explore side canyons and valleys, alpine lakes, and mountain peaks such as Mt. Igikpak at the headwaters, all the while keeping our eyes alert for wolves and grizzlies following in the tracks of caribou.

WHY THE NOATAK... Alaska is a land of inspiration owing to the scale of grandness in everything from wildlife to open lands. It is also home to the last bits of “living” or intact wilderness on our continent. Specifically, “the Noatak drains the largest river basin in North America still virtually unaffected by human activities.”² The Noatak is one of the last examples of what Wallace Stegner coined as the “geography of hope,” and indeed, we see this expedition as an exercise in our skills and a source of profound inspiration. We believe that the same skills required for a true wilderness expedition—humility, sound judgment, awareness—are the same skills that “feel unnurtured,” as Mardy Murie wrote, and that we will need most as we commence with our own front-country adventures.

² Jettmar, Karen. The Alaska River Guide. Alaska Northwest Books, Portland: 1993

Minimum Impact and Environmental Concerns

Traveling anywhere in the backcountry requires a heightened amount of awareness concerning environmental and human impact. The Gates of the Arctic National Park, sharing a mountain range with the Arctic National Refuge, is indeed one of the last great wilderness areas in the world (www.npca.org). As visitors in such pristine surroundings, it is our responsibility to embrace the ethics set forth in the national standards for Leave No Trace.

Whether trained by NOLS instructors or by peers and friends in backcountry settings, each member of our women's expedition is both familiar with and a follower of LNT. Having spent considerable time together in the wilderness of Bandalier National Monument in New Mexico, we have, as a group, discussed and practiced a strong LNT ethic. We are aware of the sensitivity of the tundra ecosystem predominant in the Noatak River Valley and will be putting particular emphasis on minimizing foot impact on land, disposing of waste properly, respecting wildlife, and leaving what we find. As we will be predominantly above tree-line and both boating and hiking in a period of virtually no darkness, we will also not be using campfires.

In our two-week expedition, we hope to lead by example, demonstrating the appeal of low impact travel in a park threatened by current environmental policy. This designation refers to the possibility of the Alaska state government, pending the action of the Bush administration, overruling the Roadless Act and allowing motorized vehicles back into the park. By traveling on water and minimally on foot, as well as respecting LNT ethic, the five of us will be leading our own effort at supporting an ecosystem in danger of falling prey to the extreme environmental impacts of roads and motorized vehicles.

Itinerary

Noatak River, June 17-July 2, 2005

Pre-trip

- June 15th : Fairbanks, Group meeting point
 - Check group gear and food for quantity before flight to Bettles
- June 16th : Fairbanks to Bettles, Bettles Air Service
 - Organize gear; check stoves and canoes
 - Get bear canisters from ranger station

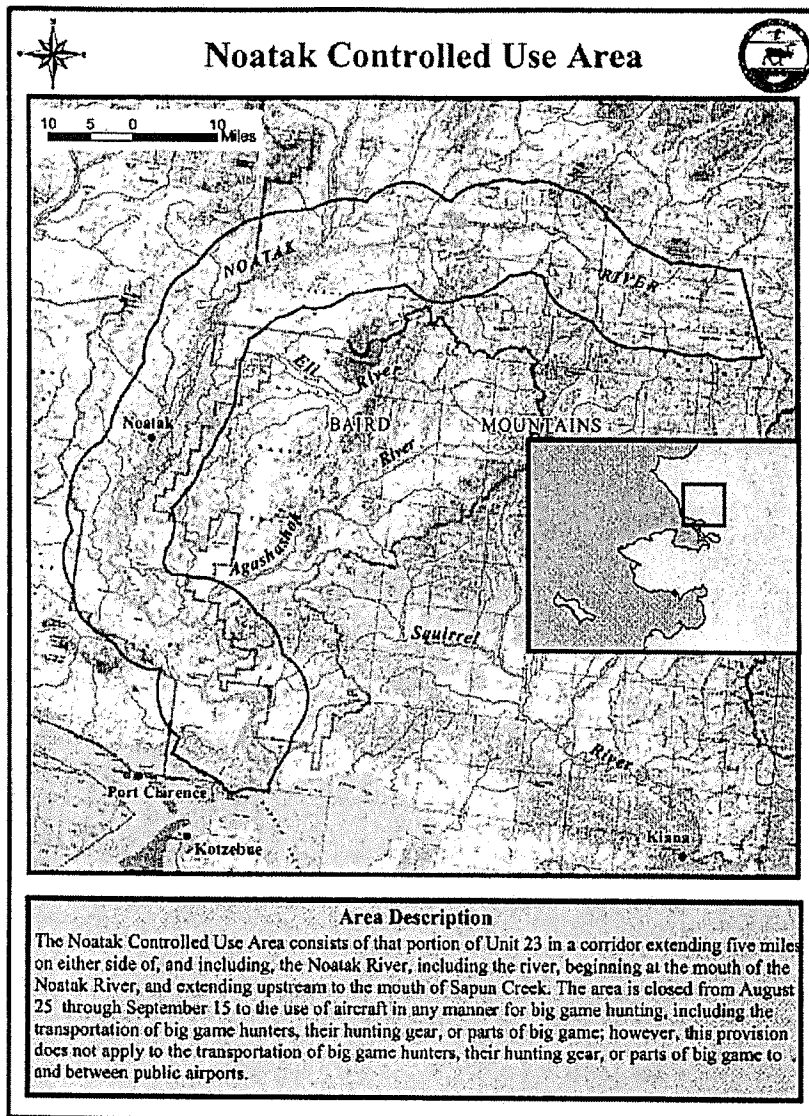
Backcountry

- *Day 1: Bettles to Pingu Lake, Air Service*
 - Unload gear
 - Make base camp, explore, rest up
 - Nightly meeting: poems, songs, stories
- *Day 2: Day Hike*
 - Possible summit of Mt. Igipak
 - Nightly meeting: share and plan for morning
- *Day 3-4: Noatak put in to Douglas Creek Confluence (Class I-II)*
 - Paddle 6-26 miles/ day
 - Nightly meetings
- *Day 5-6: Layover Days : Day Hikes*
 - Explore Douglas Creek drainage
 - Explore nearby lakes
 - Nightly meetings
- *Day 7-9: Douglas Creek to Aniuk River Confluence (Class I-II)*
 - Paddle 6-26 miles/ day
 - Nightly meetings
- *Day 10-11: Layover Days : Day Hikes*
 - Explore Aniuk River Valley
 - Hike ridge up to ancient Noatak Lake
 - Nightly meetings
- *Day 12-13: Aniuk River Confluence to Cutler River Confluence (Take out)*
 - Paddle 6-26 miles/ day
 - Deflate canoes, organize gear for morning portage
 - Nightly meetings (final night = talent show/ reading)
- *Day 14 : Take out to air strip*
 - Early morning: carry gear to air strip (.5 miles)
 - Enjoy our last hours of arctic wilderness

Post-trip

- July 2-3rd : Bettles
 - Return rented gear (canoes, paddles)
 - Return bear canisters
 - Bribe friendly Bettles Lodge staff for shower
- July 3rd : Fairbanks to the Real World

“I swear the earth shall be complete to him or her who shall be complete.”
– Walt Whitman



Area Description

The Noatak Controlled Use Area consists of that portion of Unit 23 in a corridor extending five miles on either side of, and including, the Noatak River, including the river, beginning at the mouth of the Noatak River, and extending upstream to the mouth of Sapun Creek. The area is closed from August 25 through September 15 to the use of aircraft in any manner for big game hunting, including the transportation of big game hunters, their hunting gear, or parts of big game; however, this provision does not apply to the transportation of big game hunters, their hunting gear, or parts of big game to and between public airports.

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Risk Management & Safety Concerns

Traveling in the Alaska Brooks Range backcountry requires that we carry serious safety concerns with us. However, our combined training and experience has prepared us as much as possible.

Sports injury prevention: Our goals for this trip do not to include covering big distance or bagging peaks. We will be able to take the time to care for basic sports injuries.

Water purification: We will bring one pump in addition to iodine purification tablets for all of us.

Emergency first aid care/Evacuation: Between our WFR training, our physician's advice, a properly stocked medical kit and satellite phone, we are as prepared as possible for emergencies. In the need of immediate evacuation, Bettles air service has multiple possible landing spots on this stretch of the Noatak. Their policy is also to sweep up river, from the air, if we are not at our pickup on time. Then, they come back same time next day and if we were still not there, they would notify the park service for search and rescue. Finally, for a non-life-threatening problem, we could paddle out the whole of our intended stretch in about five days.

Hypothermia/Water Travel: Any group traveling in the backcountry will conscientiously avoid hypothermia, especially one traveling on water. We all use our experience and care for ourselves and others group mates. In addition, Jenine Durland and Liza Springmeyer both have experience with water specific safety concerns. They both have worked as river guides, in California and Utah respectively. Tess Weidner and Becca Rich are both certified lifeguards with a few years of experience each. Becca Willis has previous life guarding experience and has a background in swimming.

Wildlife: Since bears and moose frequent water ways, we will be especially concerned with avoiding wildlife. We will carry our food and toiletries in bear canisters and cook/store food 100 feet in opposite directions from camp. During day hikes we will make bear calls, stay together and carry bear spray. While on the river, we will carry binoculars. Since this section of the Notak is both wide and only Class I and II, we will have high visibility and maneuverability to see and avoid wildlife. In addition, Jenine Durland completed a NOLS course in the Talkeenta range in Alaska and is familiar with the precautions necessary.

Over-all, a safe trip comes from planning, clear heads and solid group dynamics. Our planning should prepare us for the foreseeable problems. For dealing with the unforeseeable, we bring each of our own life experiences with emergency situations, whether gained in the backcountry or abroad. Perhaps most importantly, the emphasis we have placed on solid group communication and dynamics will help in difficult situations. We will always have one leader of the day who, in an emergency, will have the authority to make hard calls. If you have any other questions, please contact us.

Backcountry Emergency Contacts

Fairbanks Memorial Hospital
907-459-7231

Fairbanks Search and Rescue
907-452-8181

First Aid Kit

Basic First Aid

- Assorted bandaids
- Gauze
- Athletic tape
- Duct tape
- Ace bandage
- SAM splint
- Tincture of benzoin
- Steri-strips
- Moleskin/blister care kit
- Rubber gloves
- Tweezers
- Irrigation syringe
- Safety pins
- Thermometer

Over the Counter Medication

- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Insect bite treatment
- Antifungal (Monistat)
- Anti-diarrheal (Imodium)
- Anti-histamine (Benadryl)
- Anti-biotic ointment (Neosporin)
- Ex-lax

Prescription Medication

- Allergy treatment (2 epinephrine pens)
- Pain management (Codeine)
- Antimicrobial (Azithromycin)
- Burn care (Silver sulfadiazine cream)
- Intestinal Antimicrobial (Metronidazole)
- Wound care (Povidone iodine)
- Neosporin eye ointment
- Ventalin inhaler



January 6, 2005

Ritt Kellogg Fund Scholarship Committee

Re: Grant Application of Rebecca Rich
Rebecca Willis, and Tess Weidner

Dear Committee Members:

This letter is written in support of the above students who are applying for a grant to pursue safe exploration of the Alaska Wilderness in 2005. I am a board certified pediatrician as well as a board certified anesthesiologists and have been working with this group of young people to provide advice regarding medical safety issues for their wilderness experience. I will also be prescribing appropriate medication and advising them on the use of this medication to help ensure the safety of this expedition.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions regarding the medical aspects of this grant application.

Sincere regards,

Norbert J. Weidner MD

Norbert J. Weidner, MD
Associate Professor,
Clinical Anesthesia and Pediatrics

NJW:mlt

Cincinnati Children's
Hospital Medical Center
3333 Burnet Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45229-3039
(513) 636-4200
www.cincinnatichildrens.org

TOTAL P. 02

Gear List

Camping:

- Day pack*
- 0-degree sleeping bag*
- 3 person, 3-season tent (2) *
- ¾ length Ridge Rest*
- Backpacker's tarp (2)*
- MSR Intrntl' WhisperLite Stove*
- Coleman Camping Stove*
- Fuel Canisters^{\$}
- 1 & 2 Liter Titanium Pots*
- Fry pan*
- Cooking Spoon (2)*
- Spatula, knife*
- Crazy Creek Chair*
- P-cord^{\$}
- Garbage bags (7, aka ponchos)
- Waterproof matches^{\$}
- Lighters^{\$} (5)
- 2-Liter Nalgene bottles (2/person)
- Iodine Tablets (150 /person)^{\$}
- Water purifier*
- 6-Liter MSR Dromedary (2) *
- Bear Canisters (2-3)

Clothing:

- Hiking boots
- River sandals / old sneakers
- Down booties (optional)
- Neoprene booties/socks
- 2 pairs socks (one reserve pair)
- Polypro long underwear top
- Polypro long underwear bottom
- 2 pair quick dry shorts
- Polypro t-shirt
- Swimsuit
- Fleece pants
- Fleece jacket/pullover
- Down jacket
- Wind/water-resistant jacket
- Rash guard
- Paddling jacket
- Wind/water-resistant pants
- Gaitors
- Wool/fleece hat

- Polypro/fleece gloves (1-2)

Accessories:

- Area topographical maps^{\$}
- Compasses (5)^{\$}
- Sunglasses
- Hat w/ brim
- Sunscreen^{\$}
- Head net^{\$}
- Mosquito repellent^{\$}
- Headlamps and spare batteries
- Bear Spray^{\$}
- Trowel (2)[#]
- Whistle (5)^{\$}
- Journal
- Camera
- Binoculars (2)
- Golfing Umbrella (2)*

Hygiene:

- Dr. Bronner's biodegrad. soap^{\$*}
- Ziploc bags^{\$}
- The Keeper (for menstrual cycle)
- Toilet Paper^{\$}
- All-natural toothpaste^{\$}
- Toothbrush

Repair & First Aid:

- Leatherman Tool (5)
- Tent repair tape
- Duct tape^{\$}
- Sewing kit, safety pins
- Patch kit for Inflatable Canoes
- Stocked First Aid kit
- Satellite Phone (1) #

Water:

- Inflatable Canoes (2)#
- Paddles (6) #
- Personal Flotation Devices (6) *
- Pump *
- Bowlines/rope (2)#*
- Farmer John wetsuit (1)*
- Dry box / ammo cans (2)
- Large dry bags* (5)
- Small dry bags* (3)

Group gear - *

Gear to be purchased - \$

Gear to be rented - #

Food

We have found a Sam's Club wholesale in Fairbanks Alaska where we will get our bulk food and those things that are perishable. We plan to get what we can in Colorado Springs before we leave because this will be more cost effective. The Prices are made with this in mind.

Breakfast:

- Oatmeal
- Granola
- Pancakes
- Muffins/Breads
- Dried Fruit
- Bagels
- Bacon
- Omelettes
- Quinoa
- Coucous
- Mac & Cheese & Veggies
- Calzones
- Lasagna
- Potato-Cheese Soup
- Lentil Patties
- Cornbread

Lunches:

- GORP (Nuts & Dried Fruit)
- Energy Bars
- Seeds & Nuts
- Jerky
- Tortillas
- Peanut Butter & Jelly Sandwiches
- Hummus & Bagels
- Tuna
- Cheese
- Sausage

Dinners:

- Dehydrated Veggies
- Pasta
- Burritos
- Chili
- Tang
- Powdered Milk

Desserts:

- Coffeecake
- Cheesecake
- Peanut butter fudge
- No-bake Eskimo cookies
- Rice pudding
- Popcorn
- Cinnamon Rolls
- Fry bread
- Cake

Beverages:

- Tea
- Coffee
- Lemonade
- Emergen-C
- Cocoa

FOOD BUDGET

Item	Amount	Price
Grains:		
Pasta	4 lbs	\$6.75
Couscous	5 cups	\$2.40
Rice	9 cups	\$4.40
Quinoa	5 cups	\$2.50
Bulgur	4 cups	\$1.30
Assorted Bagels	53 bagels	\$16.00
Whole wheat tortillas	130 tortillas	\$30.00
Potato Pearls	8 cups	\$2.50
Granola	6 lbs	\$18.00
Oatmeal	6 lbs	\$13.00
		Grains Sub-total \$96.85
Baking:		
Wheat flour	24 cups	\$5.00
White flour	20 cups	\$4.30
Baking Powder	2 cups	\$2.80
Baking Yeast	1/2 cup	\$7.00
Cornmeal	6 ½ cups	\$3.00
Molasses	1-2 cups	\$2.50
Vanilla	1 ½ vials	\$4.00
Olive Oil	6 cups	\$6.00
Vinegar	small bottle	\$.80
Brown Sugar	5 cups	\$2.60
Granulated Sugar	3 cups	\$1.00
		Baking Sub-total \$39.00
Fruits & Veggies (dehydrated):		
Dried veggies	8 cups	\$36.50
Dried Onion	1 ½ cups	\$4.30
Green Pepper	½ cup	\$2.25
Apricots	3 lbs	\$7.70
Raisins	3 lbs	\$3.00
Cranberries	3 lbs	\$7.60
Mango	1.5 lbs	\$6.50
Pineapple	1.5 lbs	\$5.90
Apple	3 lbs	\$8.20
Banana Chips	1.5 lbs.	\$6.30
		Fruits and Veg. Sub-total \$98.00
Protein:		
Bacon	3 lbs	\$11.00
Sausage	10 sausages	\$4.00
Tuna	15 envelopes	\$30.00

Black beans	1 cup	\$1.00
Lentils	2 cups	\$.60
Peanut butter	6 lbs.	\$8.30
		Protein Sub-total \$54.90
Dairy:		
Cheese	22 lbs	
Cheddar	7 lbs @ \$2.40/lbs.	\$16.80
Mozzarella	7 lbs @ \$1.70/lbs.	\$11.90
Powdered milk	10 cups	\$14.30
Powdered eggs	2 cups	\$5.00
		Dairy Sub-total \$48.00
Drinks:		
Tea	120 teabags	\$11.00
Coffee (for constipation emergencies!)	1 cup (one small jar of instant)	\$4.00
Cocoa	2.5 lbs	\$4.50
Apple Cider mix	2.5 lbs	\$5.85
Lemonade	3 cups	\$6.85
Tang	3 cups	\$5.80
Emergen-C	70 packets (2 boxes)	\$8.50
		Drinks Sub-total \$31.50
Spices:		
Dried Chili mix	2 cups	\$2.40
Salt & Pepper	One container of each	\$1.60
		Spices Sub-total \$4.00
Snacks & Other:		
Jelly	One container	\$1.50
Honey	One Jar	\$1.50
Hummus		\$4.80
Dried Vegetable Soup Mix	49 oz potato soup	\$7.75
Tomato Paste	5 cups	\$3.00
Marinara Pasta Sauce	4 ½ lbs	\$4.00
Alfredo Sauce Mix	4 ½ lbs	\$6.00
		Snacks & Other Sub-total \$35.55
Desserts:		
Cheesecake mix	4 cups	\$4.00
Brownie mix	4 cups	\$6.00
Gingerbread mix	4 cups	\$5.00
Popcorn	2 cups	\$2.00
		Desserts Sub-total \$17.00

Grains Sub-total	\$96.85
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Baking Sub-total	\$39.00
Fruits and Veg. Sub-total	\$98.00
Protein Sub-total	\$54.90
Dairy Sub-total	\$48.00
Drinks Sub-total	\$31.50
Spices Sub-total	\$4.00
Snacks & Other Sub-total	\$ 35.55
Desserts Sub-total	\$17.00
Total	\$424.80

Alternative Foods:		
Fresh Oranges	19 lbs	\$9.00
Fresh Apples	6 lbs	\$4.00
Margarine	5 lbs	\$3.50
Almonds	3 lbs	\$9.70
Dried Strawberries	14 oz	\$7.00
		Alternative Foods Sub-total \$33.20

Flight Information

These are approximate flight prices for a single person at this time. Once we receive the grant, we will find what the cheapest flight combination will be. So far, it looks like flying out of Denver is the least expensive option.

<u>C. Springs to Anchorage</u>		<u>C. Springs to Fairbanks</u>	
	Price		Price
American	\$1,036.21	American	\$1,208.42
Delta	\$578.48	Delta	\$1,849.32
Priceline	\$462	Priceline	\$595
Hotwire	\$674	Hotwire	X
Orbitz	\$512	Orbitz	\$696
<u>Anchorage to Fairbanks</u>			
Alaska Air	\$191.90		

<u>Denver to Anchorage</u>		<u>Denver to Fairbanks</u>	
	Price		Price
American	\$466.10	American	\$688.50
Delta	\$480.50	Delta	\$741.03
Frontier	\$455.81	Priceline	\$595
Priceline	\$462	Hotwire	X
Hotwire	\$453	Orbitz	\$593
Orbitz	\$473		

Total Budget

Food.....	\$424.80
*Flights between Colorado & Fairbanks, AK.....	\$3000 (\$600/person)
Bush plane flights between Fairbanks and Bettles, AK.....	\$1350 (\$270/person)
Bush plane between Bettles & drop pt.....	\$5,585 (5 passengers and gear)
Boat rental.....	\$1080 (\$270/wk)
Stove Fuel (Coleman white gas).....	\$24 (4 gallons @ \$6/gall)
Prescription drugs.....	\$30
Iodine tablets.....	\$30
Miscellaneous (duct tape, sunscreen, batteries, etc.).....	\$25
Satellite Phone.....	\$100 (rent at \$50 per week)
*TOTAL.....	\$10,548.80

*We realize that this grant is unusually expensive. We have looked through the budget trying to cut expenses wherever we could. We will buy bulk food, borrow spices, and watch for cheap airfare. However even with these attempts, the remote location and the duration of our stay necessitate an expensive excursion. We have included the expense of our plane flights to Alaska because with out it, some of us could not come. We understand the resources for this grant are limited and that we are asking a lot. We are currently investigating other funding, including grants through Balance Bar and Luna Bar. In short, we would appreciate whatever you are able to give us. We hope that this wilderness will convince you, as it has convinced us, that this trip is worth it.