

RKMF ANWR Post Trip Report

Tobias Fried, Ian Hauver-Radloff, Theo Ollier

Food And Rationing:

Our food was pretty great for this trip; the variety of breakfasts, lunches, dinners, snacks, and desserts was essential for keeping food cravings to a minimum. We had slightly more food than we needed, resulting in heavier packs but no food stress during the trip. Note that our menu changed significantly from the original food plan; updated tables are attached below.

Breakfasts included oatmeal, granola with milk powder, hash browns with cheese, pancakes, and curry bagels (bagels with brown sugar, curry powder, and cheese melted on top). Peanut butter and dried fruit were available for oatmeal, granola, and pancakes. The portions for breakfast could have been a touch larger across the board, though we often supplemented it with a bar early in the day.

#meals	#servings	Breakfast	Ingredient	amount/serving (cups)	total (cup)
8	24	oatmeal			
			rolled oats (quickcooking/instant)	0.5	12
			PB	0.15	3.6
			raisins	0.125	3
5	15	granola w Pb / milk			
			granola	0.66	9.9
			powdered milk	0.125	1.875
			PB	0.15	2.25
			dried cranberry	0.0625	0.9375
3	9	dehydrated hash browns	make with cheese and oil for additional calories		
			dehydrated hash browns	0.5	4.5
			cheddar cheese	2oz	18oz
			olive oil	0.125	1.125

2	6	Pancakes			
			pancake mix - Kodiak Cake Protein Pancakes	0.5	3
			powdered milk	0.125	0.75
			PB	0.15	0.9
3	9	curry cheese bagels			
			bagel	1 bagel	9 bagels
			cheddar cheese	2oz	18oz
			brown sugar	0.0625	0.5625
			curry powder	0.03125	0.28125

Lunch was a mix of meat sticks, jerky, tuna packets, cheese, tortillas, crackers, cold soaked beans, and lots of snacks. Switching up which protein we ate kept lunch enjoyable. We packed a lot of salty snacks like chips, pretzels, graham crackers, cheese-its, and beyond that were greatly appreciated, as well as some sweet snacks like gummy bears and chocolate. We found we could eat as much cheese as was available, though the amount we brought was satisfying (note: we brought 12lb rather than 14lb of cheese). For cold soaking beans, one member had a 16oz Nalgene bowl with lid, and beans were rehydrated well if soaking began an hour or more before lunch.

#meals	#servings	Lunch	Ingredient	amount/serving (cups)	total (cup)
4	12		hummus powder	0.1	1.2
3	9		graham cracker	3 sheets	27 sheets
9	27		Tortilla	1.5 tortillas	41 tortillas
10	30		crackers	1.8oz	54oz
14	42		Salami	2.1 oz	88oz
4	12		PB	0.15	1.8
2	6		Tuna Packet	1 Packet	6 packets
2	6		Chicken Packet	1 Packet	6 packets

3	9		Dehydrated Black Bean	0.33	2.97
2	6		Dehydrated Refried Bean	0.33	1.98
21	63		Bars	2	126
21	63		Cheese	2.0 oz	126 oz
Misc Snack & dessert!!!					
			Nuts	130g/persom /day	

Supplementary food included the salty snacks mentioned above as well as nuts and bars. We had two bars/person/day. The bar selection was widely varied which helped to keep them appetizing. We had some extra bars, others may have success with closer to one and a half bars/person/day. Our largest overpack of food was nuts. We had at least an extra kilogram of nuts after the first and third leg, pretty egregious. If you're eating as much as we were for your other meals, cut the nuts by at least 1/3.

Dinner was a smashing success. We had chicken coconut curry, lentil curry, mac and cheese, peanut butter noodles, black beans and rice, and refried beans and rice. We home dehydrated many vegetables to add to each of these meals such as carrots, broccoli, peas, mushrooms, onion, cabbage, hot pepper, and corn. We bought pre-dried ingredients like freeze-dried chicken, dehydrated black bean flakes, refried beans, chickpeas, freeze-dried ginger and garlic, raspberries, and coconut milk powder. All the veggies in our dinners kept the food cravings and scurvy at bay, and left us all feeling very satisfied. Our portions for dinner were about as big as we could handle, filling our two liter pot to the brim. Portions are good for very hungry people, and can be dialed back a bit if your group members have lower food needs.

Dessert. The light at the end of the tunnel. Fan favorites included Albanese gummy bears and Costco "turtles." We had no problem smashing a shocking amount of dessert, don't be bashful in the supermarket.

itinerary	# ppl	breakfast	lunch	dinner
7/27	3	packed	packed	PB Noodles
7/28	3	oatmeal	salami, cheese, cracker	Coconut Curry
7/29	3	curry bagels with cheese	salami, cheese, tortilla, hummus	Mac & Cheese
7/30	3	granola	salami, cheese, cracker	Lentils Rice

7/31	3	hash browns	salami, cheese, cracker	rice & Refried beans
8/1	3	pancakes	mix of lunch items	PB Noodles
8/2	3	oatmeal	black beans	Coconut Curry
8/3	3	granola	mix of lunch items	rice & black beans
8/4	3	oatmeal	mix of lunch items	Mac & Cheese
8/5	3	granola	black beans	Lentils Rice
8/6	3	hash browns	mix of lunch items	rice & Refried beans
8/7	3	curry bagels with cheese	mix of lunch items	PB Noodles
8/8	3	oatmeal	refried bean	Coconut Curry
8/9	3	granola	mix of lunch items	rice & black beans
8/10	3	oatmeal	mix of lunch items	Mac & Cheese
8/11	3	oatmeal	refried bean	Lentils Rice
8/12	3	hash browns	mix of lunch items	rice & Refried beans
8/13	3	pancakes	mix of lunch items	PB Noodles
8/14	3	oatmeal	black bean	Coconut Curry
8/15	3	Curry Bagels with cheese	mix of lunch items	Lentils Rice
8/16	3	oatmeal	mix of lunch items	Mac & Cheese
8/17	3	granola	mix of lunch items	Cold Rice & black Beans

Budget:

Expense List	
Expense Name	Amount (\$)
Toby Flight Round Trip	\$818
Checked Bag	\$70
Theo Flight Round Trip	\$528
Checked Bag	\$130
Ian Checked Bag	\$45
Map Printing with Caltopo	\$30
Caltopo Premium	\$20

Natural Pantry Food + odds and ends	\$48.98
Dalton Express (North)	\$558
Dalton Express (South)	\$837
Dehydrated / Freeze dried food order	\$129
Costco Food	\$391
Fred Meyer food	\$277
Fred Meyer food #2	\$79
Inreach Essential Plan	\$15
Insurance Plan	\$120
Sven's pre-trip	\$111
Sven's final night	\$108
Fuel	\$19
Costco Food #2	\$97
Yukon camp chili	\$7
Garmin Message Charge	\$23
OE gear (no drytops)	\$70.23
Food Dehydrating Materials	\$108
Bush Flights	\$2,500
Total	\$7,139

*While food costs are not itemized in the budget section, the quantities purchased of each food type are found in the food and rationing section.

Equipment:

Personal Gear: Bomber rain gear was super important. This allowed us to get rained on all day and still be able to wear our puffy under the rain gear at night. One member had a slightly more breathable / less waterproof rain jacket, which was sufficient for the trip but got down layer damp after constant rain. Three pairs of socks worked well, we dedicated one pair as sleep only and kept them in a drybag with our sleeping bag/quilt. One set of sleeping baselayers and one set of hiking clothes (besides two pairs of hiking socks and however much underwear you desire) works well. Ian and Toby had two fleece layers which allowed them to be slightly less careful about keeping them dry. A warm puffy (full on winter weight not necessary) is great, it can snow anytime. Closed toe cros kept our camp socks relatively dry and are much warmer than normal

crocs. Trekking poles are essential and are used for our shelters. Some members occasionally wore a t-shirt and shorts, though these items could be left behind. Proper 30 degree down sleeping bags worked well for us even on snowy nights. 75 liter backpacks were stuffed to the brim with packrafting gear but got the job done. A small personal bathing / face towel was great for dips. Toby used trail runners which were comfortable but were shredded by the blocky limestone of Seefar Pass. More sturdy hiking boots also degraded heavily but had more life at the end of the trip. Choose what you're most comfortable in. Light gaiters were useful to keep rocks out of shoes if using trail runners, but heavier gaiters were completely unnecessary with hiking boots and rain pants. A head net or full bug shirt was useful for mosquitoes, however mosquitoes stopped being an issue after the first week of hiking due to slightly colder weather.

Group Gear: The cook tent was a huge quality of life booster when there was rainy, windy, or cold weather. It kept us much warmer than cooking in the open, and it was often a hangout space for cards. Two two-person trekking pole tents were light and spacious for three people. Extra guy-line is essential for securing tent panels during high winds, and an additional guyline as a clothesline was very helpful. We carried a few extra lines in our repair kit. The two liter pot was pretty spot on for three people. We averaged about two eight ounce (medium) fuel cans per six or seven days and we could've stretched that longer with more cold soaking of our dinners. We had five Ursacks, four of which were small and one major. We couldn't fit all our food into the sacks at the beginning of our seven and nine day rations. Substituting two of the small Ursacks for major Ursacks or one XL Ursack could remedy this issue. Our med kit was well rounded and our repair kit was minimally used. Tyvek flashing tape worked very well for rain gear repair. We brought a Bogler poop trowel for digging catholes, it was very effective.

Padding Gear: The Alpaca Expedition boats from OE and the included deck bag and dry bags did great. We still used a trash bag within the dry bags for our most precious gear. We attached cordage to the front and back of the boats for easier carrying, and added a line to the front to pull the boats when water was shallow. Toby was storing his spray skirt under his seat in the packraft and unfortunately lost it when his boat got pinned in a strainer. Keep anything essential inside the deckbag or attached securely to the boat. Ian and Toby had polyurethane gloves with synthetic insulation for paddling. Water inevitably gets inside which sucks, but they are still much warmer than paddling without gloves. Theo had neoprene pogies which kept his hands pretty warm but were awkward to use when getting in and out of the boat to "walk the dog." We decided to use rain jackets and waders instead of drytops or drysuits. This worked well for the easy paddling we were doing but resulted in the bottoms and sleeves of our rain jackets being wet. This wasn't ideal when it was raining at camp after paddling because we didn't want to wear our puffies in our wet shells. We would make the same choice again because of the weight / space savings, but know that you'll sacrifice some comfort and ease by going this route. A few pairs of latex gloves can help keep baselayer gloves from getting wet in a damp outer glove.

What worked, what didn't:

Group Dynamics: This was the longest backcountry trip that any of us had been on, so the group dynamics were an important aspect. Thankfully, as described below, we all got along great, and were able to each play into our strengths, which complemented each other well. Communication and the ability to be honest with each other were really important to this.

Logistics: Logistically the trip went quite smoothly. Plane flights, lodging, and the highway shuttle were all relatively easy to schedule and went as planned. Ian was able to plan for friends to pick the group up at the end of the trip, which significantly lowered the price of the shuttle back to Fairbanks. The bush plane flight worked out, but there were a few issues along the way. Communication with the pilot was a bit difficult for a number of reasons. None of us knew very much about how bush planes operate, and we were therefore unable to give the pilot the exact information that he needed in as simple a way as possible. This in addition to two members of the trip contacting him resulted in him being pretty irritated. Despite this, we were able to coordinate a plan that worked for both parties. Second, the bush plane was delayed due to weather. This was planned for, so it didn't have a large impact on the trip, however there was a slight communication oversight. Ian gave his inreach to Theo during the first leg of the trip, so that Theo and Toby would have a backup communication device. They could still communicate with Ian, because Ian had wifi for this section, however when Ian got to Happy Valley, he didn't have service or wifi and was unable to communicate that the flight was delayed. Despite this, the pilot was able to communicate with Toby and Theo, and no issues arose.

Route Finding and Changes: Route finding went well, and we were able to easily find our planned route. We mostly used the printed maps, which were even more helpful than expected. They were easy to look at, and saved our battery from using GPS maps. We had 2 major route changes due to time constraints and getting cliffed out. Both of the changes fit within our plan, and felt very safe and stress-free. This was mostly due to us looking into alternate routes in depth before the trip, and having multiple map options to help us decide.

Food: Our food planning served us really well. We had slightly more food than we needed, and we had a variety of salty and sweet foods to satisfy cravings. Due to this we had no food stress, and little to no cravings, which made the trip a lot more enjoyable and less stressful. The cooking gear also worked well for us, although the pot could have been slightly larger to make cooking for three people slightly easier. We also brought more fuel than we had originally planned (3 medium canisters for leg 1, 2 medium and 1 small for leg 2, 3 medium for leg 3) but we likely could've managed with our original fuel quantities. This also meant there was no stress about running out.

Gear: Our gear worked well for us in most aspects. Packs were the right size to carry our equipment, and were mostly comfortable, although Theo's pack caused some pain when we had to carry extra weight for one day. It turned out that we didn't need any bug protection or gaiters. One aspect that could have been improved was our gloves for paddling, especially when it got cold. We each had slightly different options, but none of us were warm enough on the one cold day of paddling. This likely could have been solved with more robust neoprene gloves or pogies, with liner gloves inside (not trying to avoid getting wet).

Risk Management and Emergencies Described Below

Safety and risk management concerns:

Overall our risk management plans went well, and we were able to avoid most potentially dangerous situations. We checked in each night with a set list of contacts using our garmin inreach(s). One situation arose when paddling, where Toby was caught in a strainer. This was somewhat of an oversight in our planning, because we had thought that the lack of trees would mean there would be no strainers (unexpectedly tall willows created one). Despite this oversight, we still had planned for strainers and had learned about entrapment in our swiftwater rescue courses, and were able to use a throw-rope to help get Toby out of the strainer. We did however lose Toby's spray skirt. Another high risk situation was during our ascent to Seefar Pass. Our initial route was steep and loose, and we decided to bail on that route when Toby voiced feeling uncomfortable. This allowed us to find a safer feeling route to gain the pass. We regularly discussed sketchy looking features and routes before beginning them, and continuously gauged each person's comfort level as we went.

Our risk mitigation plan for our outlined risks helped us stay out of danger in the first place. All risks and dangerous situations that we encountered were outlined as possibilities in our risk mitigation plan, including loss of gear, minor musculoskeletal injuries, strainers, bears and other wildlife, and blisters. Notably our swiftwater training helped us safely get Toby out of the strainer we encountered, and our plans for bear safety helped us keep a distanced and healthy relationship with the bears. One issue we had with bear safety was that immediately after resupplies we didn't have quite enough space to put all of the food into bear bags. Despite this, food was still kept away from the tents, and we didn't have any negative interactions with bears.

Bringing a packraft was a smart decision to help us avoid potential swiftwater dangers and foot entrapment while crossing the Sag, however the water was low enough that we didn't need to use the boat and could safely cross.

Specific Route Descriptions and Concerns:

The first major concern of our route was crossing the Sag river on the second day of hiking. Bringing a packraft was a smart decision to help us avoid potential swiftwater dangers

and foot entrapment while crossing the Sag, however the water was low enough that we didn't need to use the boat and could safely cross. Using swiftwater crossing methods we had learned in our swiftwater safety courses we were able to safely and easily cross the river. On day 3 we had to make another crossing, accomplishment creek. This was a much smaller waterway, but it would have been difficult after a rain. Luckily we were able to cross it before heavy rain and had no issues.

A few slight route changes were made during the first leg of the trip, which were mainly due to needing to shorten the route. Using printed topographic maps and satellite maps on our phones, we were able to easily find these route changes and stay on track. The first came on day 6 when we decided to stay higher on a ridge than expected. The ridge provided a nice relief from tundra walking, and sped up our day. On day 7 we decided on an alternate route, heading east rather than north, which was a more direct route to the airstrip where we would meet Ian. This alternate route also went well, and cut out a decent amount of mileage.

Ian's flight into the Wind river valley was delayed by a day due to weather, so Theo and Toby had to wait at this camp an extra day. This caused us to consider opting for a shorter route later on, which ended up being necessary regardless of time constraints. We had 1 major route change due to time constraints and getting cliffed out. When we began hiking down the NW side of Seefar pass, we ended up being cliffed out. Instead of that route, we decided to hike back over Seefar pass the next morning and continue down the NE side of the pass, leading us to the headwaters of the Ivishak. This change fit within our plan, and felt very safe and stress-free. In fact, we ended up being glad we switched because this valley was one of the most beautiful of the trip, and allowed us to see the Ivishak river from its very beginning until it joined the Sag at the end of our trip.

Our largest inconvenience of the trip came from our first day of "floating" the Ivishak. On day 15, we decided to attempt to begin floating the Ivishak, because it looked like some of the channels were large enough. With a lot of dragging and 'walking' our boats, we were able to make it a short distance down the river, however we soon got completely grounded and had to start backpacking again. The transitions between boating and hiking took a lot of time, and we made very little progress that day. Despite this challenging day, we were able to start floating the next morning. We would suggest to any groups following this route that they don't attempt to start floating until the valley narrows slightly.

Travel Logistics:

Plane Flights: Plane flights were 1-2 stops to end in either Anchorage or Fairbanks, AK. Both Anchorage and Fairbanks are relatively small, easy to navigate airports. The Dalton highway starts in Fairbanks and continues north all the way to Prudhoe Bay.

Fairbanks Lodging: We stayed at Sven's Hostel in Fairbanks, which turned out well. Sven's hostel is clean and has showers, and we were able to stay in our own room. It was inexpensive, and we were able to store some belongings at the hostel during our trip. It was also a good place

to meet other travelers doing similar trips in the Brooks Range. Anywhere in Fairbanks is a relatively short uber ride from the airport and Fred Meyers, where you can buy any necessary equipment such as fuel and bear spray, food, or clothes.

Bush Plane Flight: A bush plane flight was necessary for Ian to join the trip during the first resupply, and to give us 2 resupplies (one just food, the second including our packrafts and paddling gear). The flight cost \$2,318 to fly Ian and resupply 1 from Happy Valley airstrip to a natural airstrip in the top of the Wind River valley, and to drop resupply 2 off along the way near the headwaters of the Ivishak river. The flight company that we used was Silvertip Aviation. The pilot was named Matt. This was the least expensive flight option we could find. In person Matt was easy to work with and very reasonable, however we had some issues communicating with him while planning the trip, as he tended to give very short responses, and got irritated when plans had to be slightly changed. Other companies we looked into were Coyote Air, Wright Air, and Yukon Air Service.

Dalton Highway Express: We were picked up at the end of our trip by the Dalton Highway Express. They are the only shuttle running from Fairbanks to Prudhoe Bay and back. They are often used as a tour service, so the ride is quite long and includes sightseeing stops. They need to be scheduled in advance, but can pick up at any milemarker along the Dalton Highway Northbound on Saturday and Tuesday, and Southbound on Sunday and Wednesday. The one-way price ranges from \$84 to \$435+ per person for a one-way trip, depending on the distance and amount of baggage. We didn't have to pay for any additional baggage, each carrying a max-filled 75L backpack.

Permitting / Government Relations:

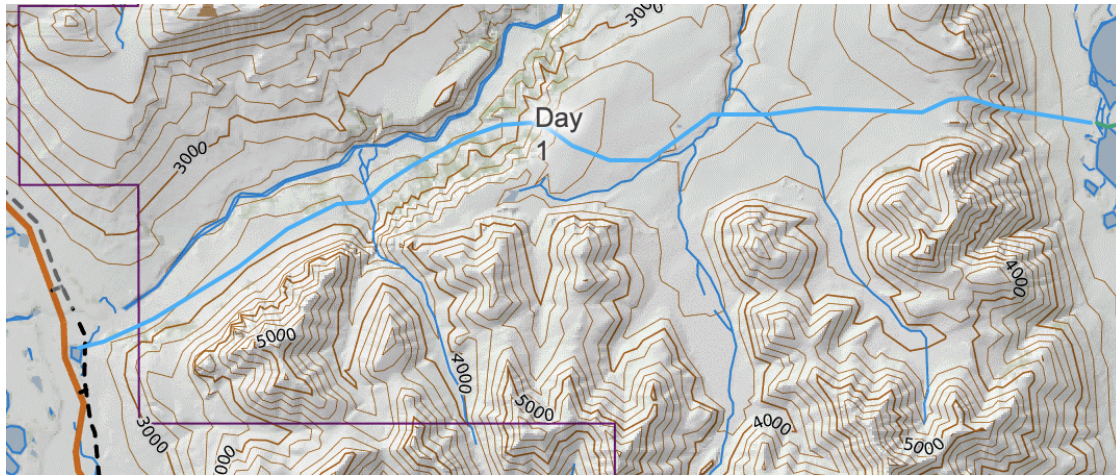
We didn't need any permits for the area we were traveling to, other than a fishing license in order to use the Tenkara rod we brought. These were purchased online through the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Only IDs were needed for the flights.

Group Dynamics and Leadership

Our group dynamics and leadership went very well, and the fact that there were no emergencies or mishaps made this aspect of the trip fairly relaxed. At the beginning of the trip, Toby took slightly more of a leadership role with navigation and as a whole, as he had done more of the route-planning specifics and had more backpacking experience than Theo. After a few days, Theo and Toby took more equal roles in route-planning and as a whole. When Ian joined, we introduced him to how we went about our daily routines of setting up and tearing down camp and from there, each person played to their strengths throughout the trip. Toby was the strongest hiker and oftentimes led the group when hiking throughout the day, Ian had extensive packrafting experience and came in clutch when Toby was stuck on a strainer, Theo liked to be the person to get meals going once we got to camp, etc. Overall, no one really 'took charge' or was the designated leader throughout the trip, each person just showed their strengths in different ways that helped the group have a more enjoyable trip. We largely attribute our successful group

dynamic to regular check-ins about how we were each feeling emotionally and physically. At the beginning of the day, this could be as simple as a “how are we all doing?” which would open the floor for conversations about any brewing injuries or concerns about the route. We also recapped the day during dinner most evenings, roughly touching on what went well, what didn’t, and how we were each doing. Creating space for these conversations allowed us to identify problems early and resolve them before they escalated.

Daily Course Log:





Pictured- The trio making their first steps of the trip. Theo at the top of a hill after getting destroyed coming up it. The view from the ridge we descended at the end of the day.

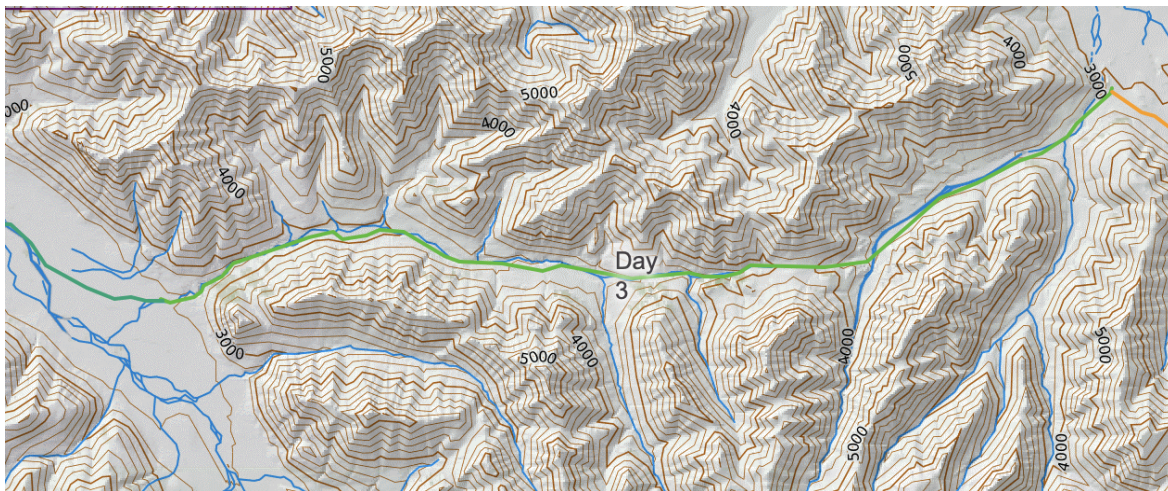
Day 1- We began our trip at Galbraith Lake, an established campground where we camped the night prior. We did our final gear shakedown and began hiking into Atigun Gorge. Ian came with us for the first 20 minutes or so and then joined a group of coworkers higher up on one side of the gorge. We eagerly awaited his arrival over the following 9 days. The walking was relatively easy with a lot of sidehilling until we decided to hike up a hill to reach a plateau basin that we thought would be better walking. Theo got crushed but pushed through after many a break. We finally reached the basin that turned out to be full of tussocky walking. It was a beautiful and tough introduction to the Brooks Range. We walked through the basin for a few miles before descending along a rocky and grassy ridge. Once we came down from the ridge, we walked a little further before setting up camp along the banks of the Sagavanirktok River.





Pictured- Bear tracks. Blueberries. Our cook tent with a rainbow in the background.

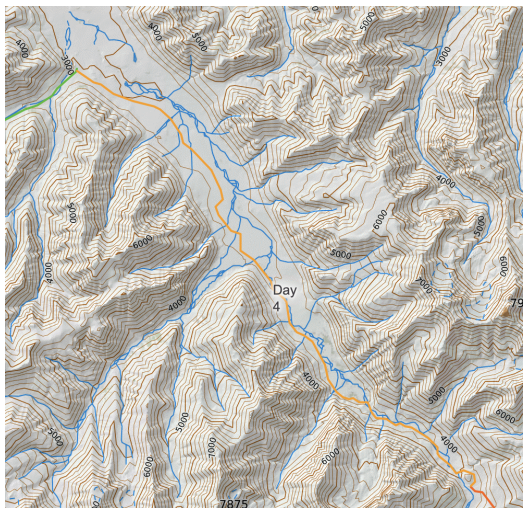
Day 2- The day began with crossing the Sagavanirktok River (where the light blue line turns into the green line), which turned out to be lower than expected. We anticipated using a packraft to cross the river but did not need it. The water was about knee to low thigh depth. After a rain, a packraft would likely be necessary for crossing. We then walked along the side of the hill pictured with the 5000 ft elevation mark. Soon after, we decided to take a flatter route straight through the higher area to avoid going around the entire hill. We got rained on for parts of this day. Once we got around the hill, the walking became flatter and we crossed the Sag again to get across the valley to make it to our ending point just before the entrance to the canyon pictured in the far right at the end of the green line. We camped at an area overlooking a small river and saw a rainbow as we were setting up camp.





Pictured: Toby walking along the banks of a tributary of the Sagavanirktok River. Toby pretending to be a caribou.

Day 3- We began the day at the east fork of the Sag and walked along its rocky banks for a few miles. We saw many rocks with fossilized worms in them. The banks eventually became grassier and covered in flowers; forget-me-nots were common in this area. We eventually began to ascend Accomplishment Pass, and had lunch when we got to the top. We saw multiple caribou antlers at the top. It began to rain and we got moving again, and as we descended into Accomplishment Creek it started to rain more steadily. We quickly crossed Accomplishment Creek and made it to a hill where we set up camp (where the orange and green lines converge). It rained for the rest of the night.





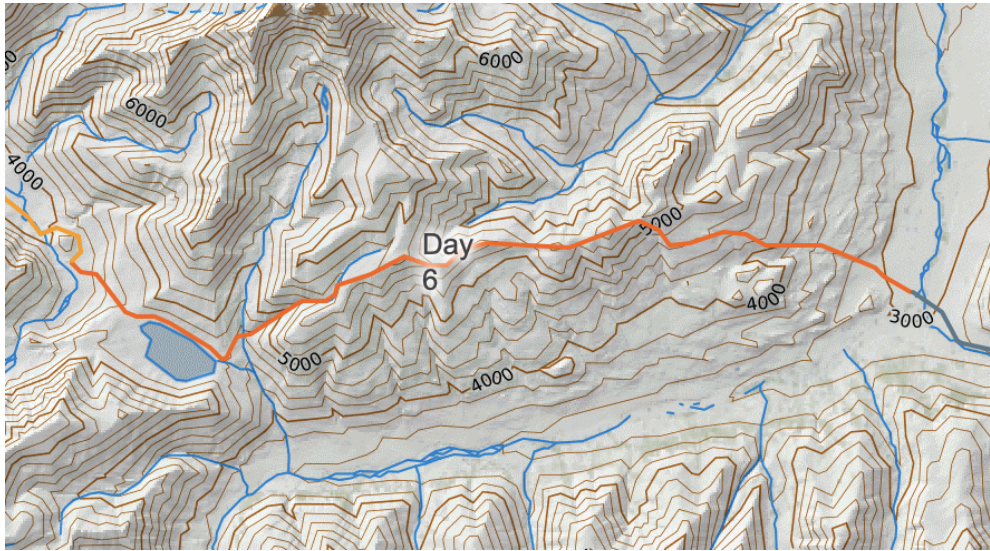
Pictured- Our campsite for the night. Theo amid a morning of A to A+ walking in a new valley.

Day 4- This day started next to Accomplishment Creek, but we quickly veered away from it into a wide valley with packed soil that was easy to walk across. We stopped for many plant and mushroom photos/identifications. In the afternoon, we made it to a rocky waterfall and then made our way up a ravine to get past it. The rest of the day was spent steadily ascending a hill to get to our campsite overlooking a river with some larger mountains behind. The campsite was to the left of the hill on the bottom right corner of the map next to the intersection of the orange and red lines in the flatter area just right of the 6000 ft elevation mark.



Pictured- The view of a river valley near camp on day 5. A lake that we hiked to on day 5.

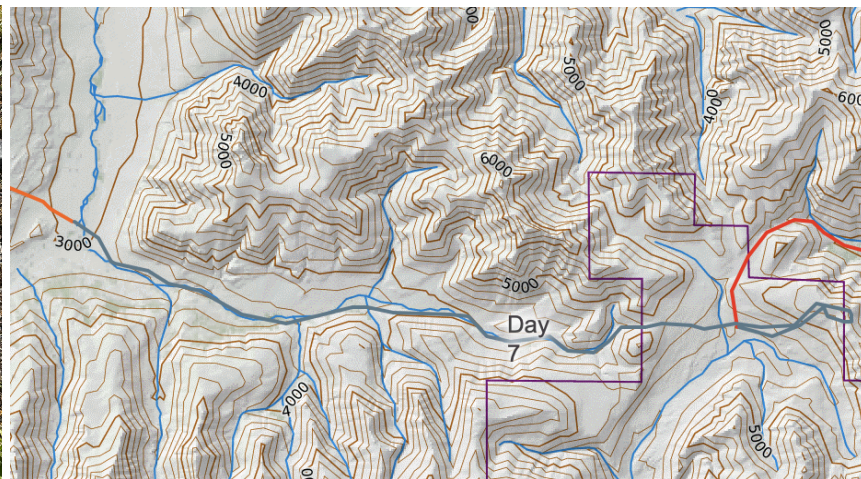
Day 5- This was our first rest day of the trip, which we spent letting our bodies recover. The day started with our first pancake meal that took somewhere in the realm of hours, but that was fine for our pace that day. We stretched a lot and did a short hike up to a lake about 2 miles away without packs on. We swam in the lake and stayed there for a few hours without having to worry about getting back to camp quickly. We played some cards for a while at camp as well, to the point where Cribbage was getting old (for Theo at least, and he learned how to play that day). We started and ended the day in the same place, which was our campsite for day 4.





Pictured- Theo looking out at the surrounding mountains during our ridge walk day. Theo opening a pot of peanut butter noodles.

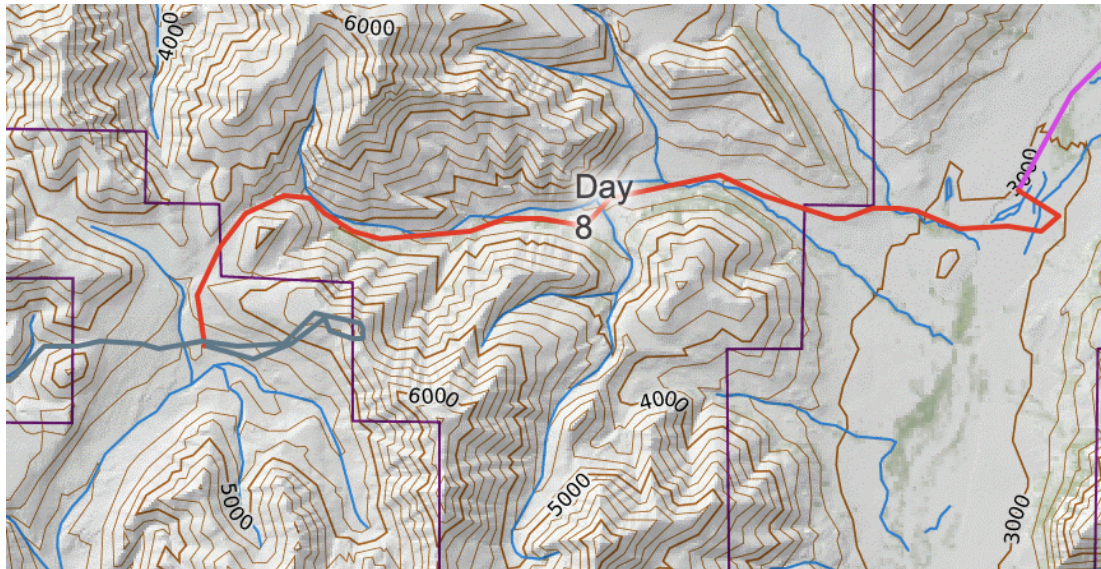
Day 6- We started the day at the same campsite as day 4 and our hiking began by taking the same route up the lake we went to on day 5. We passed the lake, descended slightly, and then climbed up a gully to reach the ridges of a few mountains. We had originally planned to stay in the valley for this section, but decided the ridge looked viable. It was amazing! We continued our ridge walk for a few miles, with views of many peaks, near and far. We were also able to see a few glaciers. This was a stark contrast from our views from the last few days, which had been primarily of mountains from the bottom of river valleys. We followed caribou and dall sheep tracks on the ridges, which we were surprised to see. We ended the day by coming down from the ridge and camping at the bottom of a flat valley with many willow trees (intersection of orange and blue lines).



Pictured- A dall sheep skull.

Day 7- We decided to reduce our overall mileage by hiking east out of our campsite, towards the continental divide, rather than north and then east toward a more northern entrance to the Wind River. We started the day in the bottom of an open valley and started walking on a grassy bench where we came across a plane crash from what seemed to be decades ago. We had very nice

grassy walking this day, and we crossed the Continental Divide this day. We saw a porcupine as well, and many wildflowers like larkspur and fireweed. We got to camp earlier than usual and did a hike up to a nearby ridge (loop in blue) overlooking the Wind River and beautiful mountain views.



Pictured- Toby smiling after picking blueberries. Toby smiling while cooking dinner (and repping SamBob pants).

Day 8- We started our day in the valley (start of red line) and went up a small pass, which took us to Wind River. We walked along the river for a few miles, as it was relatively flat and easy walking. There was a very good blueberry patch along the way. We made it to the general area of the airstrip Ian was set to land on by mid-afternoon, which was a wide expanse of gravel banks with some willow stands. Eventually we found the airstrip. We camped on a grassy bench near the airstrip and prepared for Ian to land the next morning.



Pictured- Theo seasoning Toby's chicken curry. An unknown mushroom.

Day 9- We got up early and went to the airstrip to await Ian's arrival. We soon heard from Matt, the pilot for Silvertip Aviation, that he wouldn't fly until 1 pm because of bad weather. We left the airstrip for a few hours and took little walks or played cards. We went back to the airstrip in the afternoon and had a strange hour (or more) long period of walking back and forth along the airstrip in silence. Toby started running along the airstrip. We played more cards while waiting at the airstrip for a few hours. We hadn't heard anything from Matt or Ian, but we eventually decided to leave the airstrip and have dinner at camp. We stayed at the same campsite as day 8 that night.



Pictured: The trio reunited and cruising along the ANWR super highway.

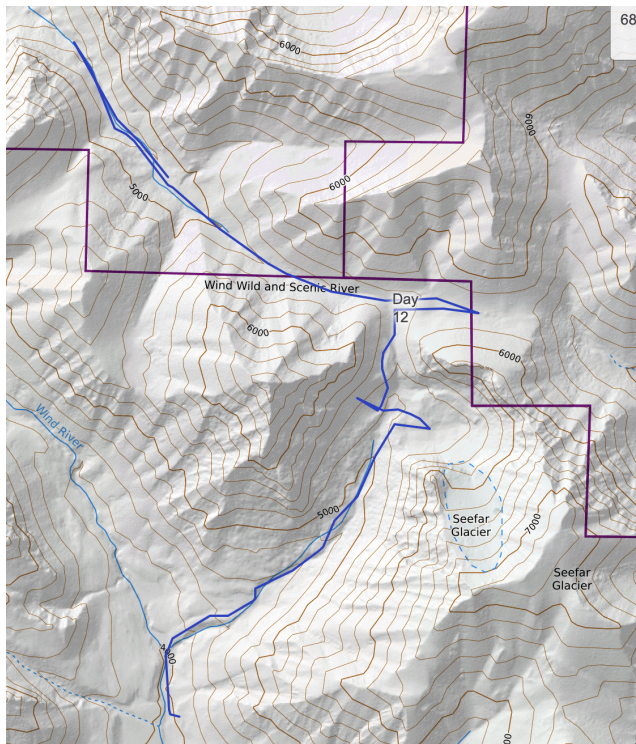
Day 10- This day turned out to be a big relief. The weather finally cleared up in Happy Valley, where Ian was flying from, and he was able to get to us by mid-afternoon. Once he flew in, we quickly packed up camp and started hiking along the Wind River with the hopes that we could keep our original route for this leg of the trip. This day ended up being the best walking of the trip, with consistent moose trails that we called a ‘super highway’ because they were such clear paths and could fit two of us across at times, which had never happened before. We made it a little over 6 miles in half a day and camped in a clearing with lots of blueberries!



Pictured- Ian and Toby on the way to Windy Glacier. Windy Glacier.

Day 11- We started the day by going into a new valley and early on we saw a brown bear with one or two cubs running away from us through some willows about half a mile ahead! The rest

of the morning was great walking at the bottom of the valley and we stopped for lunch at the base of Seefar Pass, which we decided to hike up the next day. We decided to do a day hike to Windy Glacier and got side tracked by some interesting marine fossils for a while. We eventually made it to Windy, and it started to get cold and wet. It was Theo's first time seeing a glacier! The glacier was shrouded by some low-hanging clouds and it looked fairly ominous. Then the rain started and we headed back towards camp along a small creek, but got stopped because it turned into a waterfall and we had to backtrack and return to camp the way we came. This ended up being a long day, and a cold one once we were back at camp. It was a windy night.

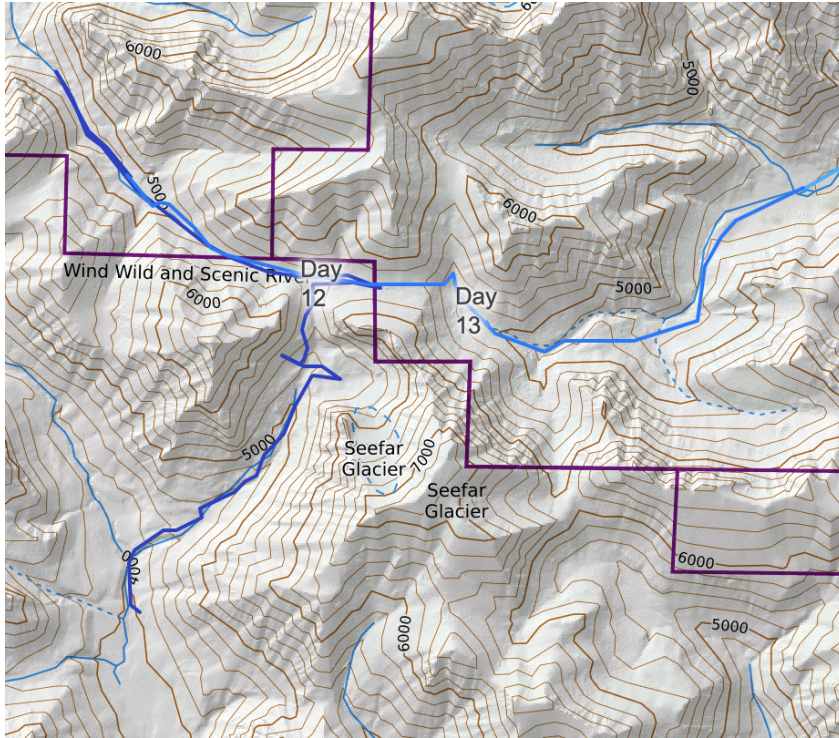




Pictured: Ian and Theo making their way up Seefar Pass. Toby at camp. Ian warming Theo's cold foot.

Day 12- This was a BIG day! The morning started out cold (see above picture of Theo getting his foot warmed by Ian), but we got warm by hiking up Seefar Pass. The initial hike up was

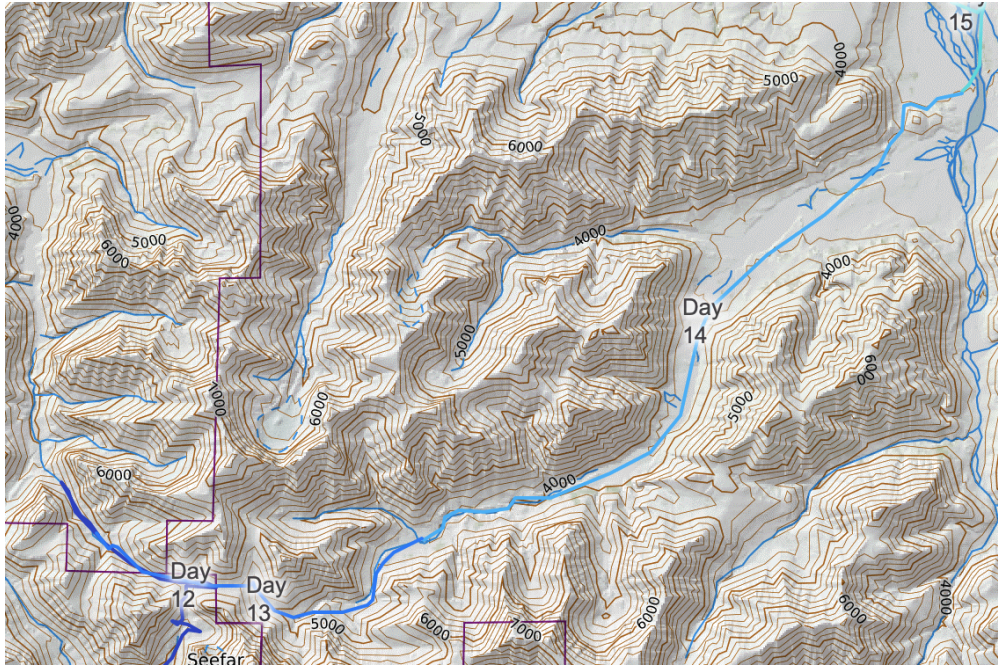
some steep talus, but doable and we made it to Seefar Glacier and had a snack, unaware of the slog to come. Then we began the crux of the day, which was the part of Seefar Pass with a waterfall in the center of the valley that didn't have a clear way to get up. We tried going up on the far left side, which turned out to be some talus that was too steep to continue up. We bailed from that route, descending back to lower elevation. We then tried a way up that was closer to the waterfall, still on the left side of the valley. This route had larger talus and was equally steep if not steeper. Luckily, the large talus was more stable, making it feel safer than our initial route. We made it up, thinking we might have missed an easier way. We've heard reports of people walking directly up the center of the valley when there is snow, perhaps this snow bridges over the waterfall. We had lunch at the pass and found more cool marine fossils, then headed down west of the pass where we had to navigate some snow and ice. Around 5 pm, we reached a camp-able area before deciding to continue on after a group huddle. About 1.5 hours afterwards, we reached an impassable waterfall gorge, oy! We turned around and it was clear that we needed to descend from Seefar Pass on the east side. To end the night we camped at our grassy huddle spot and caught a nice view of the sunset, the first of the trip!



Pictured- Orange stained rock features. Selfie of the squad!

Day 13- This day was a highlight of the trip, no doubt! Beginning at our unexpected campsite west of Seefar Pass, we climbed back to the pass quickly. We avoided the snow and ice chutes by doing a high talus traverse on the left side of the valley looking up. Descending east off of the pass went smoothly, although there was a considerable amount of steep and loose rock. We found a big slab of rock on the river to have lunch at. The valley below was beautiful, with bright green fields and orange-stained rock features lining the valley. The sun came through just as we reached the headwaters of the Ivishak, along which we found a nice pool to have a swim and clean clothes. The rest of the walking was relatively flat and we made it to camp early, which was an open, grassy valley with views of some 6,000-foot peaks. We sat together at camp for a while, listened to 'Thinking of a Place', followed by some Sierra Ferrell, and then played hearts.

The night ended with some brownie mix and granola sludge, a real treat. This day was a nice recovery from the mileage and mental energy of switching routes the day before.



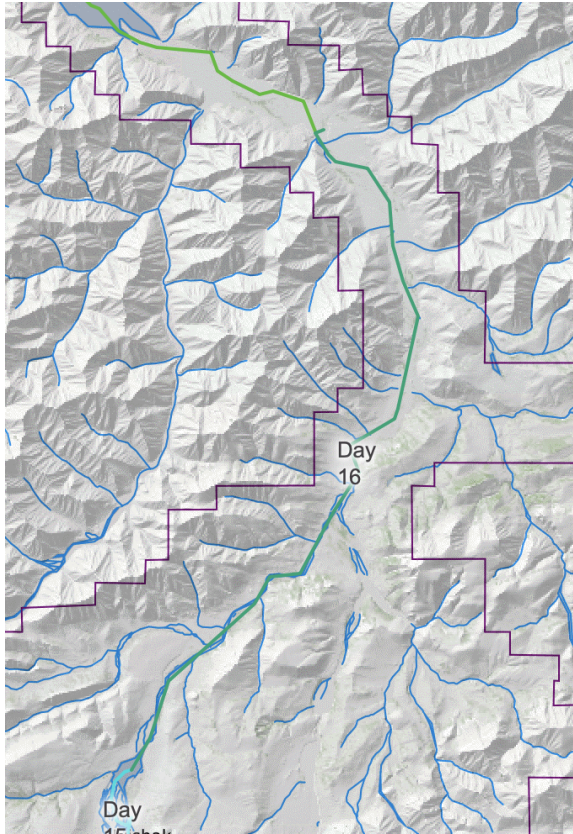
Pictured- Ian (in frustration or pressing a temporary tattoo to his forehead?). Ian offering up some Cheez-It's.

Day 14- This was our last full day of hiking!! The day began by walking along grassy benches near some steep limestone canyons. The good walking continued and we found ourselves in a wide valley with castle-like mountains in front of us with pastel-gray peaks and dark gray deposits coming down from them. We saw many caribou antlers along the way. At lunch we spotted the hill that the resupply barrels were stashed behind, which was surprisingly close by. There was A+ walking in the valley approaching the barrels. We set up camp where we found the barrels, just next to where we planned to put in our boats the next day.



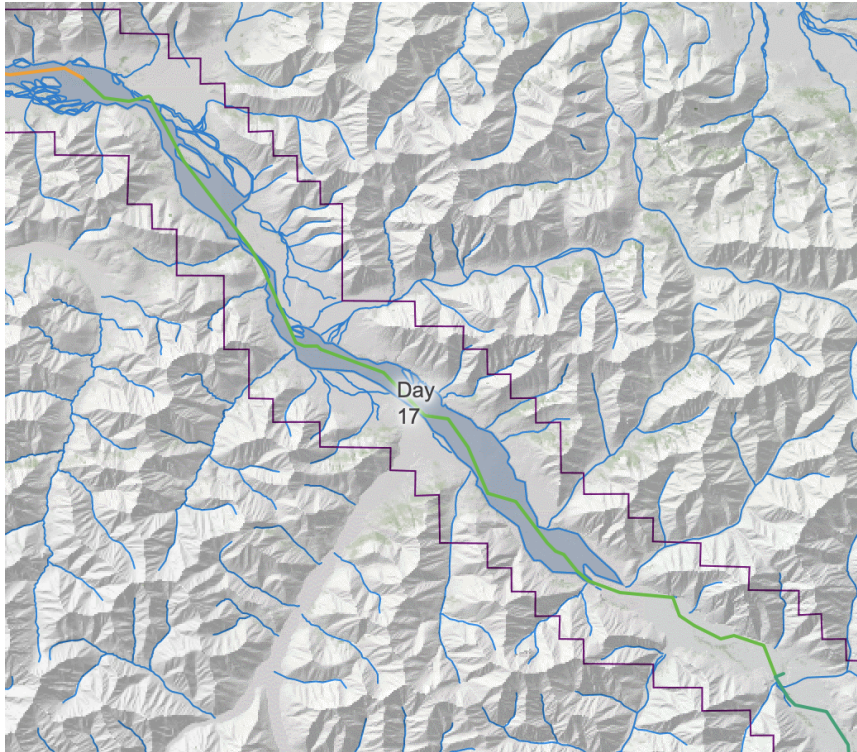
Pictured- Ian and Theo amid the packing process, unaware of the long day ahead.

Day 15- Brutal slog day. We packed all morning, getting the packrafts ready for the first time and distributing the new food rations. The afternoon consisted of brief floating, dragging, and carrying the packrafts along the Ivishak for half a mile. We decided to go backpacking mode when the small channeling we'd been floating in completely disappeared. It took us an hour and a half to repack. Once we got going, the going was slow due to 80+ lb packs (according to our estimates) and subsequent hip pain for Theo and a numb leg for Toby. After roughly 2 miles, we made it to a rocky bank on the Ivishak that was our campsite for the night. We hoped that our efforts were not in vain and that the river would be more floatable the next day. Carrying the fully loaded packs was worrying; it felt that we could've easily injured ourselves during this section.



Pictured- Each member of the crew with their respective temporary Pokémon tattoos: Theo with Gengar for good sleep, Ian with Rayquaza for help from the winds, and Picchu for extra stoke.

Day 16- Our first real rafting day! Floating through the mountains on small braided channels was amazing. We frequently jumped out of our boats to drag them over shallow sections. There were some cool cliffy rocks that we went around, and we all felt the change of pace significantly. It felt like there was so much to take in at once because we were going much faster than the rest of the trip. It was a sunny day and the rafting went smoothly. We talked to some hunters close to the end of the day, which were the first people we had talked to the whole trip aside from Matt the Silvertip pilot. We saw a caribou in the afternoon, the first we had seen on the whole trip! The day got cold once the sun went away and we found a grassy spot to camp in a wide open valley.

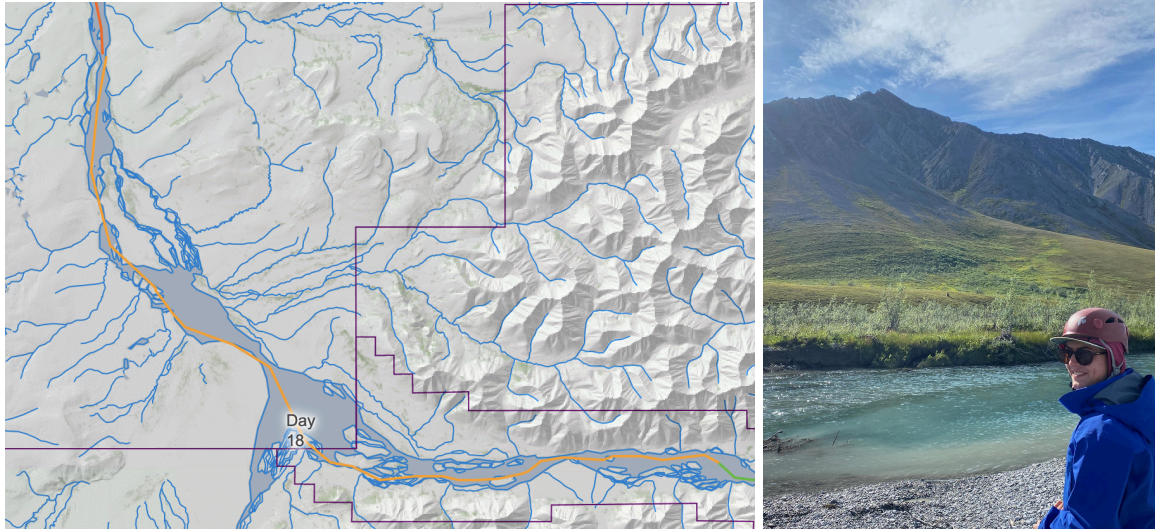




Pictured- Ian on the water. A packraft just before the start of the day.

Day 17- 25 river miles today, mostly floating with some walking occasionally. We woke up to sunlight coming into the tent, which rarely happened and set a positive tone for the day. This was a good chance for us to dry out our wet clothes. We were all starting to get the hang of it today, getting past more and more shallow sections by reading the water. In the middle of the day, Toby got caught in a strainer. He had tried to signal the others to avoid it, but in doing so didn't have enough time to avoid it himself. Theo and Ian threw a rope to pull Toby off the strainer, and then Ian walked to the boat while holding the throw rope to recover the boat. Everyone was okay. We realized that Toby's paddle and spray skirt (which had been tucked under his seat) were gone. Luckily Toby's paddle was caught on another strainer downstream. Phew. There was a bear running across the river in the afternoon! This was another beautiful sunny day with far better

floating than we expected. It was still sunny once we got to camp and we got to go for a swim, which was a nice relief for all of us after not feeling clean for a few days. After dinner, we played the Albanese gummy bear guessing game in which you try to guess the flavor of the gummy bear without looking at it, a personal favorite of Ian and Theo's. We saw two jet boats today with some hunters.



Pictured- Toby, with a bear on the hillside.

Day 18- 29 river miles today, our furthest so far! We had our 3rd brown bear sighting, and we ate lunch across the river from the bear as it took a nap. It would occasionally lift its head and look at us, then drop back down and keep sleeping. The bear stood up at the end, looking at us curiously, and Toby danced back at it (much to Ian's dismay). We looked at the weather over the next few days and decided to frontload the river mileage to avoid bad weather later on, so we started cranking out miles and listening to music. We started seeing groups of hunters and it felt like we were slowly returning to civilization. Our day ended on a grassy bank, where we set up camp on a bench among some shrubs.





Pictured- Toby smiling through the pain during our coldest day yet. Toby and Theo getting warm. Toby's hand, which had turned orange and white after a day of cold rafting.

Day 19- This ended up being our last day of paddling, a heinous 33 miles of cold and wet. From the beginning of the day it was cold and we had to keep paddling fast to stay warm enough, which was still not enough to keep the extremities from going numb at times. We had a rushed lunch full of jumping jacks and running around to stay warm. The rain came in full force throughout the afternoon. We just kept going so that we wouldn't have another day of cold and rainy paddling. Once we made it to the bank where we could see the Dalton Highway a mile or two away we set up camp and immediately warmed up in our sleeping bags. Seeing the pipeline and trucks on the horizon was a surreal experience after being away from such clear signs of human impact for weeks.



Pictured- Ian doing some fly fishing.

Day 20- This was a fairly sedentary day, the first rest day since day 9. We got up later than usual with our tents partially buried under wet snow, and made curry bagels, a delicacy reserved for mornings when we had ample time. The activity of the day was fishing; we brought the Tenkara rod and hadn't used it yet, so Ian taught us how to cast it and that kept us occupied for a solid 45 minutes. We didn't catch anything. The next activity of the day was rock skipping, which Ian was an absolute legend at after skipping rocks every day at Toolik over the summer. Theo and Toby tried to keep up but didn't stand a chance. It was a cold and rainy day again, but it felt a lot better than the day before because we could retreat to dry sleep tents or our cook tent when necessary.



Pictured- The trio just off of the Dalton Highway after finishing the last stretch of the trip. Ian and Toby enjoying the sunset at Galbraith Lake.

Day 21- This was our last day of the trip, the start of a gradual transition to living in civilization. We had another slow start to the day with some pancakes, which were now notorious for taking a long time. The slow pack-up began and we made it to our final take-out point after dragging the boats and walking for two or so miles. We then reached the Dalton, where we waited for a few hours while some of Ian's friends did field work until they drove us all the way back to Galbraith Lake (very kind). We set up camp at an established campground for the first time since the night before our first day of hiking. Then we had our last swim of the trip, freezing cold but always worth it. As a celebratory treat, we tried cooking a cake mix that started as sludge and evolved to donut bite-like things (you can decide what it looks like based on the picture :)).



Pictured- Sven's Hostel at 3 A.M.

Day 22- We had another slow morning and dried things off at camp before getting picked up on by the Dalton Express for a 12 hour trip back to Sven's Hostel. Lots of looking out the window, talking to tourists, and chili that tasted better than it should have because we were so used to our rotation of food. We made it back to Sven's at 1 am and it was lights out.



Pictured- Theo acting like he doesn't know Ian, Ian unbothered. Ian and Theo riding bikes from Sven's.

Day 23- We spent the day riding around Fairbanks on little bikes we got from Sven's and then did the final round of gear organization. Toby's HyperLite pack was broken into by mice at Sven's :(Tools not jewels though am I right. Toby's flight home also got significantly delayed and he ended up taking the same flight as Theo to Denver. We parted ways with Ian in the Fairbanks airport, then played cribbage until it was time to take the red-eye into DIA. Toby and Theo made it to DIA, waited for a while, then said our goodbyes. This concluded our first trip to the Brooks together. More to come? Only time will tell...