



## ALASKA DISCOVERY

A Mountain Travel Sobek  
Company

P.O. Box 35003  
Juneau, Alaska 99803

T: 1 800 586 1911

F: 1 800 956 7488

info@alaskadiscovery.com  
www.alaskadiscovery.com



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# THE HULAHULA RIVER

*Rafting & Hiking in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge*

### TRIP DETAILS

*12 days ~ Alaska*

*Moderate to strenuous  
paddle rafting with some  
Class III/IV rapids,  
moderate to strenuous  
day hikes*

*11 nights camping*

### 2009 DATES

*Jun 12–Jun 23*

*Jun 23–Jul 4*

*Jul 4–Jul 15*

### 2009 LAND COST

*\$3,550 per person  
(4-8 members)*

*\$1,600 charter flights*

TRIP LEVEL  
MODERATE TO STRENUOUS

### HIGHLIGHTS

- *River rafting, hiking, camping in the pure wilderness of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge*
- *Spectacular bush flights across vast stretches of northern Alaska*
- *Float across the coastal plain all the way to the Beaufort Sea; spectacular wildlife includes musk oxen, wolves, grizzlies, and caribou*

*Revised October 7, 2008*



ALASKA  
DISCOVERY

# THE HULAHULA RIVER

*Rafting & Hiking in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge*

From its headwaters in the Brooks Range, the Hulahula River flows through rolling tundra and a breathtaking canyon just before it spills onto the vast coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge on its way to the Beaufort Sea. Here is a lush landscape layered in wildflowers, home to an outstanding variety of wildlife, including Dall sheep, musk oxen, snowy owls, sandhill cranes, eider ducks, swans, wolves, fox, moose, grizzlies, wolverine, and small bands of the Porcupine caribou herd on their summer migration. Our trip includes paddle rafting and several full layover days where we can break into smaller groups for birding, photography, nature walks, or a full day hike up the surrounding hills. No prior paddle rafting experience is necessary, but the Hulahula is a swift-flowing river with lots of fun Class III whitewater—ideal for the paddling enthusiast!



## ITINERARY

*Note*—We will try to adhere to the following itinerary as closely as possible. However, it is subject to change due to weather, flight delays, and government regulations.

☞ **Rendezvous**—The trip begins in Fairbanks, Alaska. You will need to arrive in Fairbanks no later than 5:00 p.m. the **night prior to the trip** in order to attend the **mandatory pre-trip meeting that begins at 6:00 p.m.** at the Fairbanks Bed & Breakfast (902 Kellum St. Fairbanks, AK 99701; 907- 452-4967). Your trip leader will go over trip logistics, bear-country camping techniques, water safety instructions, and distribute personal camping equipment, including raingear, rubber boots, and river bags. The meeting will take about two hours; we recommend eating dinner before the meeting. Dinner and lodging\* is on your own this evening. The next morning we pick everyone up early, so you will want to get plenty of rest tonight.

\*We recommend the Bridgewater Hotel (rooms with private bath) or the Fairbanks B&B (rooms with shared bath). Both are of good value and offer good service. (A courtesy van for the Bridgewater Hotel is available at the airport. Call the hotel from the airport courtesy phone.)

### **DAY 1 ~ To the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge**

This day is mostly devoted to flying north! After an early breakfast on your own, our journey begins with a spectacular 300-mile bush plane flight over the Yukon River Flats to the Native community of Arctic Village. We then switch to smaller planes and continue north over the Brooks Range and on to the upper Hulahula River. The Arctic Refuge is a land of majestic mountains, rolling tundra, and the coastal plain. At first glance, the country appears quite barren from our plane. But a closer look reveals a lush, alpine landscape blanketed with wildflowers, intricate valleys, and ancient rock formations and cascading waterfalls. We'll land on a small gravel bar along the river near its headwaters, and set up our first camp.

*L, D...Camp*

### **DAYS 2-11 ~ Rafting & Hiking along the Hulahula River**

Our schedule on the Hulahula will be leisurely and flexible as we'll have nearly 24 hours of daylight each day! Like all river trips, the peaceful sounds of the river will be a constant companion. Paddle rafting days are mixed with full layover days to hike the ridges above the river, photograph wildflowers and amazing wildlife—including some of the Porcupine caribou herd, fish for Arctic char and grayling (bring your fishing gear!), and explore one of the finest wilderness settings on earth.

A fun and exhilarating set of Class III rapids carries us through a narrow gorge on the first portion of the trip. Near the end of the trip we'll have the opportunity to camp on the Arctic Coastal Plain, where unparalleled grand vistas stretch for miles and the birding is fabulous. This is the heart of the area threatened by oil development. At this point in the trip there may be some necessary portaging of boats and gear. The amount of portaging is dependent on water levels. Our final take-out is near the Beaufort Sea, with a possible hike to the edge of the sea where the offshore ice pack may be in view.

*B, L, D each day...Camp*

### **DAY 12 ~ Return to Fairbanks and Depart**

On our final day, we'll break camp and await the arrival of the bush planes for our flight to Kaktovik, followed by a flight back to Fairbanks. We plan to arrive in Fairbanks by 7:00 p.m., but we highly recommend booking another

night in Fairbanks as flight delays are possible. Guests often gather for a no-host dinner on this final evening.  
B,L...

### **EXTEND YOUR ADVENTURE – DENALI NATIONAL PARK!**

Make the most of your visit to the Land of the Midnight Sun! For an incredible wildlife experience, consider a stay at Camp Denali, a beautiful natural haven deep in the heart of Denali National Park. Daily activities include hiking the backcountry with expert naturalist-guides, canoeing, mountain biking, fishing, and flight seeing. Each day you can choose which suits you best! Rustic but beautifully-appointed guest cabins have superlative mountain views of Denali, and are a short walk to the historic hand-hewn lodge and informal dining room where sumptuous meals are served. Evening programs presented by staff naturalists and visiting specialists are designed to further acquaint you with the Far North. Call us for details! *3- to 7-night stays. June-September*

*Land Cost: \$1,425-\$3,325; \$1,069-\$2,494 (children 11 and younger) + per night tax (per person, double occupancy)*

## **2009 LAND COST**

\$3,550 per person + tax (4-8 members)

\$1,600 per person charter flights

Rates quoted are per person, based on sharing double accommodations in tents.

### **What's Included**

- ◆ expert leadership
- ◆ all arrangements in the field, including camp meals, guides, group gear and equipment (2-person tents, rain gear, rubber boots, river bags)
- ◆ meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- ◆ bush plane charter (see separate cost above)
- ◆ rafting equipment
- ◆ permits
- ◆ basic medical and evacuation insurance

### **What's Not**

Airfare to and from Fairbanks, Alaska; meals not noted in itinerary; daypack for yourself to carry daily items; sleeping bag and pad (available for rent from Alaska Discovery for \$40); insurance other than basic medical and evacuation insurance as noted above (we strongly recommend you purchase the supplementary trip insurance offered by Alaska Discovery, which includes trip cancellation insurance); optional tipping to leader, guides and local staff; airport transfer in Fairbanks the day before the trip begins; excess baggage charges; airport taxes; and items of a personal nature (sodas, alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

### **Air Travel**

Airfare is not included in the land cost of our trips. For air reservations, we recommend you contact the airlines directly. Please refer to the link or document called "Planning Your Trip to Alaska," included in your Trip Packet. **But please check with our staff before purchasing or obtaining your tickets.** We need to verify your arrival and departure schedule and ensure we have enough participants to operate the trip.

### **How We're Giving Back**

**Dollar-a-Day:** An easy way to contribute to conservation efforts in Alaska is to participate in Alaska Discovery's "Dollar-a-Day" program. Most of our guests donate two dollars for each day of our trips in the Alaskan wilderness. In turn, we distribute these funds among Alaskan organizations that work for conservation of the areas of Alaska in which we operate. If you choose to make an optional contribution, your donation will be included in your invoice and distributed amongst the following organizations:

- ◆ The Alaska Conservation Foundation ([www.akcf.org](http://www.akcf.org))
- ◆ Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association ([www.awrta.org](http://www.awrta.org))
- ◆ Discovery Southeast ([www.discoverysoutheast.org](http://www.discoverysoutheast.org))
- ◆ Friends of Admiralty Island ([www.friendsofadmirty.org](http://www.friendsofadmirty.org))
- ◆ Friends of Glacier Bay ([www.fogb.org](http://www.fogb.org))
- ◆ Southeast Alaska Conservation Council ([www.seacc.org](http://www.seacc.org))
- ◆ Alaska Wilderness League ([www.alaskawild.org](http://www.alaskawild.org))
- ◆ Audubon Alaska ([www.audubonalaska.org](http://www.audubonalaska.org))

## **WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT**

### **Expert Leadership**

Expert leadership is the key to an exciting, unforgettable experience. Our trips feature gifted leaders for whom leading trips is a true vocation. Besides showing you wonders you'd never find on your own, they make sure everything runs smoothly and safely without a hitch. They are knowledgeable about all aspects of your trip, and take great pleasure in sharing their insights with you. More than just guides, they positively elevate your experience by being teachers, companions, and the best of friends. You'll be in good hands with them every step of the way.

We are fortunate to have the best whitewater rafting guides in the world working for us. Each has a minimum of five years professional guiding experience; most have been boating with us over 10 years, on rivers from the Alsek to the Zambezi. All possess certifications in wilderness first responder and swiftwater rescue. Many of them teach guiding and rescue skills at local guide schools in the off-season. They are mature, well educated and personable (not to mention incredible cooks!). They are the first to rise and the last to sleep, and in between will make you gourmet meals, guide you safely down the river, tell stories around the campfire, and ensure you come away from the journey with a true appreciation of the culture, natural history, and other important aspects of the trip. You won't find a more competent crew anywhere!

Leader assignments will be confirmed in the Final Bulletin sent to you three weeks prior to departure.

### **Activity Level**

Alaska Discovery trips are designed for flexible, energetic people who like to be active. Although this trip operates at a relaxed pace, it is an active trip into a remote wilderness with no facilities of any kind. Good physical condition, an adventurous spirit, a positive attitude, and a willingness to deal with possible wet, cold and windy conditions are a must!

The trip is also very participatory in nature. It is necessary for everyone to assist in paddling the rafts downstream (if there is a headwind, the paddling will be more strenuous). Depending upon water levels, it is also possible that you will need to help pull the rafts over gravel bars. You should also be prepared to help carry personal and group gear

to and from the rafts (the terrain can be uneven and slippery), and to set up your own tent, after a demonstration by the guide. Everyone is welcome to assist with other tasks of wilderness camping.

The hiking days may be long and can be strenuous as there are few trails and the terrain can be uneven and steep. We try to accommodate different hiking speeds, but the greater your level of fitness, the more you will enjoy the wonderful hiking opportunities available in this area. We recommend you do some preliminary hikes in preparation. To avoid blisters, be sure to hike in the boots you plan to bring with you well in advance of the trip.

The weather can be highly variable. Prepare yourself for temperatures ranging from the brisk 30s to the scorching 80s by bringing a variety of clothing layers (more detailed information will be sent to you in your trip packet). At this far north latitude, a light dusting of snow is even possible. Although our trip is timed to avoid the heaviest insect populations (and maximize our chance for viewing caribou), bring your favorite bug repellent. You may wish to purchase a good mosquito head net and a “bug jacket.”

If you don't normally follow a fitness or exercise regime, we strongly recommend beginning one. Incorporate any activities that build up arm strength and flexibility. In paddling, it is more important to be able to maintain a steady pace than it is to have a powerful stroke.

## THE NEXT STEP

### **Ready to go? Signing up is easy!**

Just call us at 1-800-586-1911 and reserve your spot! You can also reserve a trip online at our website ([www.alaskadiscovery.com](http://www.alaskadiscovery.com)). If you prefer to use a travel agent, he or she can book your trip at no extra cost and provide other helpful assistance.

### **Then Leave the Rest to Us**

Before you go, we provide you with extensive pre-departure information, including clothing recommendations, suggested reading lists, and other details.

### **Why Alaska Discovery is Your First Choice for Adventure**

**We are Alaska's oldest wilderness guiding company!** Alaska Discovery has pioneered trips in Alaska by kayak, raft, and canoe for more than 35 years. We led the first tours to sea kayak Glacier Bay, Icy Bay, Russell Fjord, Tracy Arm, Endicott Arm, and to reopen the cross-Admiralty canoe route. We also ran the first commercial descents of the Tatshenshini, Alsek, and Kongakut Rivers. Our permits in Alaska's finest wilderness areas give you greater access than any other company. We are one of the few companies with permits in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Glacier Bay National Park, Wrangell-St. Elias/Tatshenshini-Alsek World Heritage Site, and the Tongass National Forest. We are also a founding member of the Alaska Conservation Foundation and contribute to numerous Alaskan conservation organizations through our “Dollar-a-Day” program. Among our many awards, we have received the prestigious Outstanding Long-Term Program Award of the Alaska Land Manager's Forum for excellence in dedication and commitment to ethically and socially aware use of the land.

### **References**

Don't take our word for how great our trips are. We'll be happy to provide you with references of satisfied past travelers.

### **Questions?**

Feel free to call us at 1-800-586-1911 if you still have any questions or concerns. We're here to help you. You can also check out our website at [www.alaskadiscovery.com](http://www.alaskadiscovery.com).

### **Note on Itinerary**

Although we will do our best to adhere to the itinerary schedule as listed, it is subject to change. Please read the Limitation of Liability and Booking Conditions in the four-page Participant Information Form. You can find all this information on our website at [www.mtsobek.com/faq](http://www.mtsobek.com/faq) and the form itself at [www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant\\_info.pdf](http://www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant_info.pdf).

### **Terms & Conditions**

Once you have made a deposit for a trip, you agree to be bound by all our terms and conditions including the Limitation of Liability Clause. The full Terms and Conditions can be found at [www.mtsobek.com/faq/#liability](http://www.mtsobek.com/faq/#liability) or call 1-888-MTSOBEK (687-6235) for a copy. These are partial conditions. Your participation is contingent on your signature on the full list of terms specified in the four-page Participant Information Form ([www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant\\_info.pdf](http://www.mtsobek.com/pdf/participant_info.pdf)). Any dispute concerning, relating or referring to the Terms and Conditions, to any literature concerning this trip, or the trip itself, shall be resolved exclusively by binding arbitration in San Francisco, California, according to the then existing commercial rules of the American Arbitration Association. Such proceedings will be governed by substantive California law (but not procedural law) without regard to the California Arbitration Act.

### **Note on Services**

At Alaska Discovery, we have assembled an outstanding team of guides by taking the greatest care in both recruiting and retaining the fine guides we have. Along with our high standards of qualifications and experience, we conduct our own training. Each spring we hold refresher courses in rescue, gun handling, trip area knowledge, communication, teamwork, and special lectures on the unique natural and social history of Alaska. We also sponsor Wilderness First Responder classes regularly for our guides.

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