



THE

Back Roads

OF

ALASKA

June 8 – 18, 2026

Hosted by Gerry Van Kooten, Janel Curry, and Vicki Best

“Back Roads Alaska” is an active, land-based tour of some of the best and most interesting road and ship-accessible portions of Alaska. The trip leader is a long-time Alaska resident, Gerry Van Kooten, an expert on Alaska geology, and Professor Emeritus of Geology at Calvin University.

We incorporate a wide variety of experiences into this 10-day trip including tours of Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula towns of Seward, Soldatna, Kenai, Homer and Seldovia. In the Interior, we visit Wasilla, Denali and Fairbanks. We raft the upper Kenai River, ferry to Seldovia, and tour boat the wildlife-rich Kenai Fjords National Park. We view eagles, Dall sheep, moose and calves, marine birds and rookeries, sea lions and sea otters, possibly caribou and bears, and whatever else shows.



Tour Pace

ACTIVE— This is an active trip and participants should be able to walk several miles on mostly level trail. Our longest hike is about 3 miles and has some uphill. Sometimes we go off trail and walk uneven ground; participants should have good balance and be able to walk comfortably. Our pace is modest and we normally stop often for discussion. See the tour brochure for details, and contact Gerry at gvankooten1@gmail.com to ask further questions about the activity level.



We discuss Alaska's geology, including plate tectonics, volcanoes, earthquakes, landscape evolution, gold and mineral deposits, and major oil and gas fields.

The leader will give informal lectures on Alaska's history, oil development, the Exxon Valdez oil spill, and wildlife trends and issues. We view Denali (North America's tallest mountain, weather dependent), eroding coastal sea cliffs, and mountain glaciers. We view glaciers from land and sea, hike marsh nature trails, walk along the Kenai River, and hike the Horseshoe Lakes trail in Denali National Park. We stop at visitor centers in Parks and Preserves, and attend a slap-stick dinner theater. We will also have a lot of fun on this trip and make new friends.

June is statistically the driest month in Alaska, but the weather can vary from sunny to sometimes cool and rainy.



Hosted by

Gerry Van Kooten

Gerry Van Kooten, Professor of Geology Emeritus, has many years of experience in the energy industry in Alaska working for companies, government, and Native corporations. He has been an Alaska resident since 1985, living in Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula, and returning every summer during his 13 years of teaching at Calvin. He is a veteran tour leader who has led many field trips for students and adult learners to Hawaii, Montana, and northern Michigan. Gerry is excited to show you some of the best of his home state! (907) 202-1486 • gvankooten1@gmail.com

Janel Curry - President of ASA

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Vicki Best - Executive Vice President of ASA

(978) 807-5189 • vicki@asa3.org



Inclusions & Highlights:

- Motorcoach transportation throughout entire itinerary
- Accommodations in moderate first-class hotels
- Point Woronzoff and Earthquake Park visit
- Breakfast daily, 1 lunch & 4 dinners
- Kenai Fjords National Park visit with cruise
- Kenai River raft excursion
- Trans Alaska Pipeline System
- Denali National Park visit
- Tips and taxes for entire itinerary

ITINERARY

JUNE 2026

08, Monday

Depart, Arrive in Anchorage

Today everyone flies from their location to Alaska and arrives at the Ted Stevens International Airport. Upon arrival, this evening, we will meet our tour host (Gerry) and tour managers, (Janel and Vicki). Due to our evening arrival, we will head to the Anchorage Lakefront Hotel for check-in.

09, Tuesday

Anchorage

After breakfast and group introductions, we set out on a driving and walking tour of Alaska's largest city, Anchorage. We will visit Point Woronzoff and Earthquake Park for views of Cook Inlet and Ship Creek. We will walk downtown Anchorage, hold a gold nugget, and have time for an independent lunch. In the afternoon we visit Lake Hood, one of the world's busiest floatplane basins and visit the nearby Aviation Museum. After a little time to rest, we will have a group welcome dinner this evening to get to know each other better. (B, D)

10, Wednesday

Anchorage > Girdwood > Seward

Today we will head south towards the coastal town of Seward on the Kenai Peninsula. Along Turnagain Arm, we make stops at Potter Marsh (birds, fish, moose), Windy Point (Dall sheep), and Portage (tidal processes). Upon arrival in Seward, we walk the waterfront and have some discussion in the covered shore-side pavilion. This afternoon we visit the Alaska Sea Life Center, one of the few cold-water research and rehabilitation centers in the world. (B)



- ❶ View of the downtown Anchorage during Summer
 - ❷ Hiker at Exit Glacier, Kenai Fjords National Park
 - ❸ Seals near Seward
- Cover: Cook Inlet



11, Thursday
Seward

Today we head to Seward harbor to take an 8.5-hour wildlife cruise through Kenai Fjords National Park looking for seals, sea lions, otters, whales, birds, and glaciers. Our cruise will have an on-board lunch and later in the day we stop at Fox Island for a provided dinner. Bring a warm coat and a camera, and maybe binocs! The evening in Seward is free. (B, L, D)

12, Friday
Seward > Soldotna

After breakfast, we hike an easy 1.5-mile trail to Exit Glacier, part of the Kenai Fjords National Park and the only part of the Park accessible by road. We then drive to Cooper Landing and take an afternoon float trip by raft down the Kenai River and have opportunities for wildlife sightings. After the float, we stop by Gerry's nearby Moose River home for an informal salmon dinner before continuing to Soldotna for hotel check-in at Aspen Suites. (B, D)



13, Saturday
Soldotna > Homer

This morning our group will travel to the coastal fishing and "End of the Road" town of Homer where we spend 2 nights. We begin in the towns of Soldotna and Kenai where we walk the Kenai River boardwalk, visit the Kenai River Visitor Center and Kenai River Overlook (cliff erosion and salmon fisheries), and discuss the Cannery Loop subsurface gas storage facility. En route we stop in the Native village of Ninilchik to see the Russian Orthodox Church and cemetery. We visit the Deep Creek Boat Launch and hike to the tip of the spit to discuss longshore sediment drift and view eagles. Approaching Homer, we stop at the Kachemak Bay Overlook before continuing to the end of the Home Spit. (B)

14, Sunday
Homer > Seldovia

This morning we visit the excellent Marine Islands Visitor Center in Homer, walk the lagoon, and return to the harbor to catch the 11am ferry to Seldovia. This 45 min. boat ride takes us to a small, remote coastal village where we have about 4 hours before we catch the return ferry at 4:30 pm. In Seldovia we will hike to a nearby beach and hold an informal outdoor Sunday Service and have plenty of time to explore the town. (B)

4





15, Monday

Homer > Wasilla

Today we have about 5 hours of driving to Wasilla (Sarah Palin's hometown where she was mayor) with several stops along the way. We stop at Alyeska Ski Resort to ride the tram to the mountain top and enjoy expansive views of Cook Inlet and Turnagain Arm. Passing through Anchorage, we stop briefly to see Spirit Houses at the Native village of Eklutna. (B)



16, Tuesday

Wasilla > Denali

We begin today with a visit to the Iditarod Visitor Center where we learn about the famous dog sled race and can ride (\$10) a wheeled cart pulled by a dog team. Driving towards Denali, we stop at the south viewpoint and walk the trail to the farther overlook. Up the road is the Alaska Veterans Memorial where we stop briefly. We stay 2 nights at the Denali Bluffs Hotel, in the town of McKinley Park, also known as Glitter Gulch, the gateway to Denali National Park. Tonight, we enjoy the festivities at an Alaskan dinner theater. (B,D)

17, Wednesday

Denali

Today we explore Denali National Park and Visitor Center. We will ride a Park bus into Denali. Because of recent landslides and road closures, park buses do not drive past Mile 43. After we return we stop at the Visitor Center and hike around Horseshoe Lake (2.1 mi.). (B)

18, Thursday

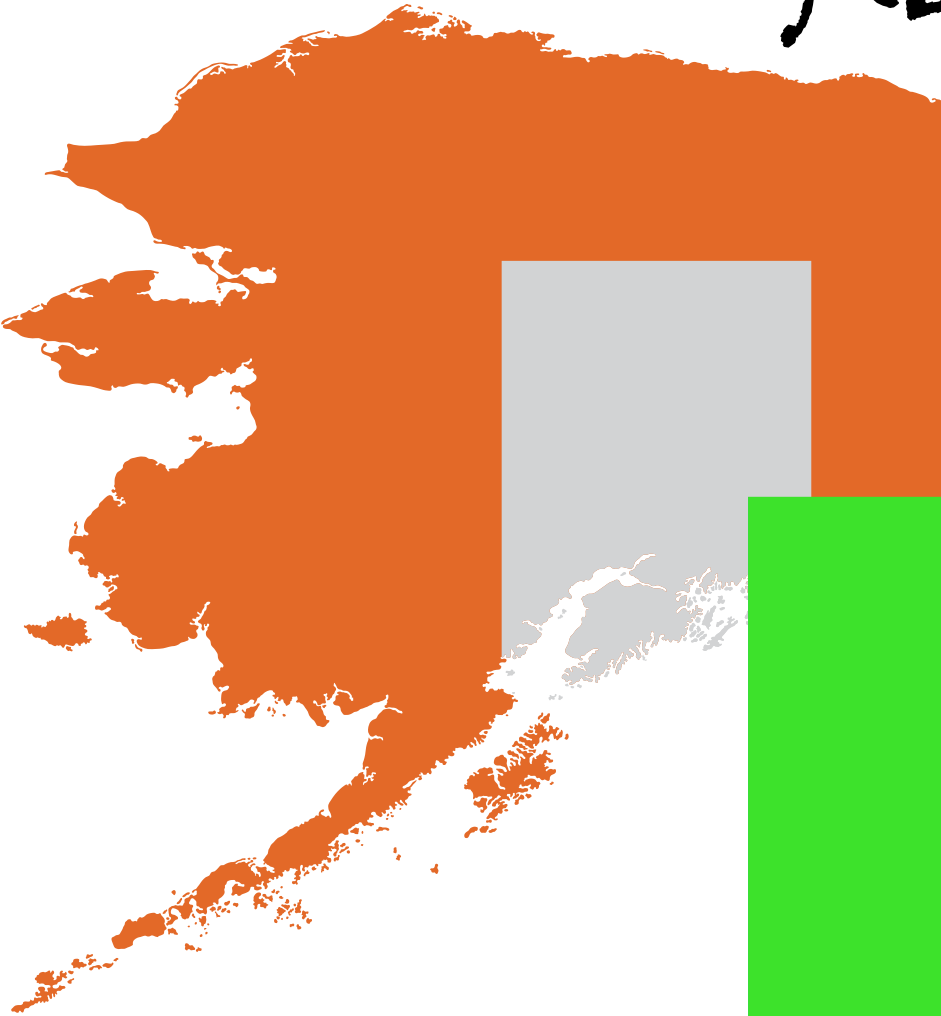
Return

This morning we drive to Fairbanks. Since we have an evening flight, we will be able to visit the Museum of the North associated with the University of Alaska Fairbanks. We also will see TAPS (Trans Alaska Pipeline System) and visit downtown Fairbanks before proceeding to Fairbanks International Airport for our return flights. We will have a group dinner before departure. (B)



- ② Exit Glacier in Kenai Fjords National Park
- ③ Mt. Denali
- ④ Ninilchik
- ⑤ Salmon jumping upstream for spawning, Russian River Falls

Register **TODAY!**



Tour Cost:

**\$6,500 per person based on
double occupancy**

**\$8,000 per person based on
single occupancy**



Contact:

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REGISTRATION FORM

ASA

June 08 – 18, 2026

\$6,500 per person based on double occupancy

\$8,000 per person based on single occupancy

For office use only



Register online at asa3.org

or complete and return this paper form

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE YOUR FULL LEGAL NAME AS IT APPEARS ON YOUR LEGAL ID.

NOTE: Your legal ID must be an exact match to the name on your airline ticket. Incorrect information could result in airline penalties or denied boarding.

Passenger #1 PRINT CLEARLY

First name _____ Middle ☐ I do not have a middle name _____ Last _____ Preferred First Name _____

For travel purposes, **please enter the gender that matches your passport**, even if your passport is not how you refer to yourself at this time. Passports use (M) Male, (F) Female, or (X) another gender identity.

☐ M ☐ F ☐ X Birthdate mm____/ dd____/ yyyy____ Citizenship: ☐ U.S. ☐ Other _____

Cell _____

E-mail _____

Dietary Needs:

☐ Vegan ☐ Low Sodium ☐ Vegetarian ☐ Diabetic ☐ Gluten free ☐ Other _____

Food allergies: _____

Mobility concerns: (walker, wheelchair, etc) _____

Medical _____

Passenger #2 PRINT CLEARLY

First name _____ Middle ☐ I do not have a middle name _____ Last _____ Preferred First Name _____

For travel purposes, **please enter the gender that matches your passport**, even if your passport is not how you refer to yourself at this time. Passports use (M) Male, (F) Female, or (X) another gender identity.

☐ M ☐ F ☐ X Birthdate mm____/ dd____/ yyyy____ Citizenship: ☐ U.S. ☐ Other _____

Cell _____

E-mail _____

Dietary Needs:

☐ Vegan ☐ Low Sodium ☐ Vegetarian ☐ Diabetic ☐ Gluten free ☐ Other _____

Food allergies: _____

Mobility concerns: (walker, wheelchair, etc) _____

Medical _____

Mailing Address

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Emergency Contact

NOT TRAVELING WITH YOU _____ Phone (____) _____

Accommodations

☐ Double occupancy. Roommate's name: _____

☐ Roommate not yet known ☐ Assistance needed finding a roommate

I understand that if a roommate is not available, I will be responsible for the cost of single occupancy.

☐ Single occupancy (+ \$1,500 per person = \$8,000)

CONTINUED ON REVERSE

Optional Travel Protection

- ☐ I/we wish to purchase the travel protection at this time.
- ☐ I/we wish to decline the travel protection at this time. I/we understand that travel protection can be purchased later, as long as it is done prior to making final payment on the tour.

Special Arrangements

Our expert travel consultants can assist in travel arrangements to Anchorage, Alaska. Upon confirmation of your special arrangements, any additional air or land costs that may apply will be added to your account.

Domestic Flight Connections from _____ to _____.

Special Air Arrangements: To spend additional time away, I/we would like to depart on _____ and return on _____. To request special land arrangements (car rentals, hotels, etc.), include a note and we'll contact you.

Signature

I/we have read, understand and accept the terms and conditions as outlined in the tour brochure. I/we acknowledge receipt of information about the Protection Plan as well as the Price Increase Rules.

1. _____ Date _____
2. _____ Date _____

Note – Payment reminders will be e-mailed to Passenger #1. If no e-mail is provided, payment reminders will be sent by U.S. mail.

Enclose your deposit of \$1,000 per person, made payable to American Scientific Affiliation