

Important Information About the Alaska River Logs

These narratives about trips on Alaska rivers are valuable even decades after they were written. However, we recommend that you to keep the following in mind as you read.

First, a word of warning: use these river logs as one source of information that you will supplement with more. Alaska rivers can be very dangerous because of their remoteness, the climate, their sources, and other factors. Bring adequate and proper clothing, equipment, and food. File a "float plan" with someone who can call for help if you do not return on time. Take a satellite phone or other communications tool if at all possible (but not usually a cell phone because of their limited coverage in Alaska). You should plan carefully for a safe and pleasant trip.

Second, note also that land status information contained in these documents may no longer be accurate. These logs were compiled long before massive land transfers of unreserved public land to restrictive public ownership or private ownership. River users should be careful to follow federal or state regulations where appropriate, and to avoid trespassing on private land. [Here is some additional information Alaska native landowners.](#) You can obtain information about access on public lands from the [Alaska Public Lands Information Center](#).

Third, be sure to also check current fishing or hunting regulations, as what was legal decades ago may not be legal today. You can obtain information about state fishing and hunting regulations from the [Alaska Department of Fish and Game website](#). More restrictive federal regulations may apply on certain federal lands.

Finally, there may be errors. We are working to make as much of this material as possible searchable by adding a text layer to the original image-only PDF files using a text capture process. This process is ongoing. Where possible, we have also converted these to HTML files. Please note that while we have corrected obvious errors generated during these processes, errors may still remain. There may also be errors in the original material.

[Return to Alaska outdoors areas](#) for more information about boating, fishing and hunting areas.

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*Memorandum*D4225 Alaska
(W&SRS)

TO : ATF Leader, Tileston

FROM : Noel P. Granzow

SUBJECT: Trip Report - Ivishak River Trip.

DATE: August 23, 1973

On June 28, the Ivishak field team met in Fort Yukon and was flown into Porcupine Lake by Paul Shannahan and another pilot in a 180 and a 185 on floats. Shannahan returned to Fort Yukon and picked up the third canoe and me and flew back to Porcupine Lake. We were met at the lake by Dave Cline, BSWF, the sixth member of the team. The other five members were Scott Grundy, ADF&G, Wilbur Mills, Fairbanks Environmental Center, Marv Hathhorn, Anchorage School Teacher, Peg Tileston, Anchorage.

At 1800 a BLM chopper (FH 1100) arrived at the lake and shuttled us over the Ivishak. We chose a put-in point at Mile 65 as the river above was too thin to canoe. Camp was set up on an island in the river.

Friday, June 29, dawned partly overcast with air temperature 60° and water 42° F. The Philip Smith Mountains rise abruptly from the river edge and the scenery is outstanding. We proceeded downstream and it was sometimes necessary to drag the canoes over shallows. The river is braided and before long we ran into auf eis, which had only recently been cut through. The river was moving at about 6 knots. At 1045 the rain began and continued all afternoon. At Mile 54 we noticed a spring coming out of the side of a bluff on the left bank. Silt was building up in the river and rain continued. At 1800 we set up camp at Mile 46 and hiked up a minor drainage to take wildlife photographs. Although the habitat seemed suitable we saw no wildlife even though we found grizzly tracks and caribou sign.

On Saturday, June 30, we again spent some time looking for wildlife. There was a surprising lack of game; both Dave Cline and Scott Grundy felt that game should have been in the area. We broke camp and proceeded downriver. The sky was clear and we were still in the mountains; exceptionally beautiful country.



The current was still fast and lining was not required as the river was of sufficient depth for canoes. On a bluff rising from the river on the right bank we saw our first game; a cow moose with a calf. This was at Mile 42. The moose saw us and went north along the top of the bluff and over the ridge. Two miles further on we rounded a bend and saw the moose and calf in the river. We silently glided past, pulled to an island and got out to photograph the animals, getting several shots. At this point we were just beginning to leave the d-2 block and entering the native regional deficiency.

As we entered regional deficiency lands, we were approaching a large auf eis area. Although we had been passing much auf eis up to this point we had no trouble getting through and staying on the main channel. At about Mile 39, the three canoes were about 25 yards apart, picking their way through the braided stream. At Mile 37, we pulled up in the left bank to wait for the other canoes. The second canoe followed within two minutes, but the third didn't. We climbed a bluff and could make out the third canoe along the right bank, nearly three miles across the braided river, following a lead through the ice. We signaled with a yellow coat and they waved a paddle. Our two canoes moved on downriver to below the Saviakviyak River where only one channel came out of the auf eis, and waited. After 40 minutes MarvHathorn and I decided to walk back the right bank and see if the lead they were following closed and locked them in. From the bluffs above the river we saw the third canoe, they had found a lead through the ice and were in the main channel. We went back to the canoes and made camp.

On Sunday, July 1, we decided to hike back upriver to the base of the mountains where a warm spring was reported to be located. At 0700, heavy fog filled the valley but by 0930 it lifted somewhat. At 1150 we began the 16 mile walk. Walking was necessary because we were unable to approach the spring location from the river the day before due to the ice field. The team split up into two groups of three, one group to go to the base of the mountain and the other to go up Kashivi Creek to the cottonwoods and see if a spring was there. (We thought the cottonwoods were a likely place for the springs in case they could not be found at the mountain.) I was with the group going to the mountain and on the way over the tundra

we found a pingo, a large mound of earth forced up 10 feet by ice. The top had split open and we could see the mound was practically hollow where the ice had melted inside. Deep inside the mound, about 8 feet down, was a pool of water over solid ice.' We pushed on over the tundra and through muskeg and came to the base of the mountain at 1515; the eight mile walk took 3 hours and 25 minutes. We found the warm spring and took its temperature, a tepid 48" F. Thus, our hopes for a bath were dashed. Although 48" isn't warm in July, if the temperature is constant, the spring would flow throughout the winter. This would account for the immense ice field just below on the Ivishak. We walked back to camp arriving at 1900, total elapsed time for the sixteen mile stroll was seven hours and ten minutes. The wind had risen along the river while we were gone and the tents had moved slightly (just over a foot) even with all packs and duffle inside. Had the tents been empty they might have blown into the river. The wind was not felt back in the swales east of the river. we sacked out at 2230. Thus ended our day of rest.

Monday morning, July 2, was overcast but by the time we broke camp and got on the river, the clouds had dissipated. At Mile 28, we stopped to examine a rough legged hawk nest on the bluff. We climbed a hill on the left bank and hiked back to several ponds which were shown on the maps. From the hilltop we took several photos of the river and the surrounding countryside.

After lunch at the base of the bluff, we were canoeing down the river channel and spooked a lone caribou on a gravel bar at Mile 26. For two miles he ran ahead of us while one canoe went down the left side of the bar and the other two canoes on the right. Finally, he swam the river and climbed the bluffs on the right, stopped when he felt safe and watched us drift on downriver.

The evening of July 2, we camped opposite the mouth of Gilead Creek. All of this day's travel was in native regional deficiency land. Terrain to the north was flat; east and west of us were rolling foothills but to the south we could still see Philip Smith Mountains in the distance. Although we took several hours out for hiking back to the lakes and climbing the bluffs, we still covered 15 milcs. The current was fast, over 6 knots.

We slept late on July 3; didn't get up till 0830. There was a clear sky and a headwind (North wind). The current offset the headwind so it was not difficult to make progress downriver. At Mile 10, we found 3 caribou on an island. They wandered off in no great hurry when they saw us. At Mile 9, the map indicates a VABM site on the left bank on top of a bluff. I climbed the bluff and located the marker, a "Corps of Engineers Station Designator - elevation 1022" which was erected in 1955. I found a 5 gallon gas can and other trash left behind by, presumably, the Corps when they erected the marker eighteen years ago. On the face of the bluff we found another rough legged hawk nest and got some photos of it. We began to hear aircraft overhead, Sagwon or Deadhorse flights we assumed.

At Mile 8, we easily located the abandoned Mobil Oil Company exploratory well. Not only a well but several acres of graded land where quarters had been, and a landing strip. There was some trash in various locations and we got photos of the entire layout.

There was auf eis below the oil well and the river had been diverted through the brush on the left bank. Lining was required to negotiate this area. At Mile 6 we set up camp on the right bank below Ehooka Creek.

July 4, was a sunny, warm day with the temperature reaching 76° in the shade of the tent. As we were due for a pick up on the 5th, we stayed in camp; fortunately for us we did. Heavy wind suddenly came up at 1530 and we had to sit in the tents to hold them down. The temperature dropped 34° in 30 minutes, then the rain hit, hard. It rained all afternoon and all night. One canoe was blown 50 feet by the wind; we re-tied them to brush and stayed put.

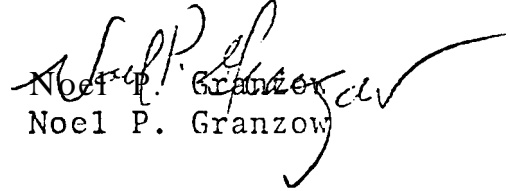
July 5. Wind and rain and cold. Everybody in tents and reading. The chopper due to pick us up didn't arrive for obvious reasons,

July 6. Rain, on and off all day. Finally, at 2300 the chopper arrived and shuttled us, in three trips, to Deadhorse.

On July 7, a DC-3 picked us up at 1410 and flew us to

Fort Yukon where we spent the night at the BLM fire camp.

July 8, was a fair day; we left Fort Yukon at 1145 and arrived in Anchorage at 1455.


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