



ALASKA RIVER LOGS

INTRODUCTION

These river logs consist primarily of trip reports filed by the now-defunct Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, which surveyed Alaska's rivers for possible inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River system in the early 1970's. They are supplemented by reports from the Bureau of Land Management, the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, and the National Park Service.

The Alaska Public Lands Information Center believes that, although the reports are quite old, the river information they contain is still useful and the detailed river descriptions provided are unavailable anywhere else in a public format.

The logs have also been supplemented with more recent federal and state agency brochures, agency handouts, news articles, and new logs developed by our staff.

A WORD OF CAUTION: As you read these logs, bear in mind that river conditions in Alaska can change drastically from year to year depending on weather and erosional processes. Rivers in Alaska are often given a higher classification on the International Scale of Difficulty than they would in a more temperate climate for two very important reasons: 1) most are very remote and help is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain in a short period of time, and 2) Alaskan rivers are extremely cold, as low as 35 F for glacial rivers, and 40 F to 50 F for clear rivers. During periods of high water, as after spring break-up or prolonged rains, rivers should be upgraded by at least one class, because the current will be much faster and more forceful, and erosion will create more hazards such as floating logs, overhanging trees ("sweepers"), and log jams. Also, most topographic maps of Alaska have not been revised since the late 1970's or early 1980's. Most braided Alaskan rivers change channels every year or even several times in one year, so maps may not reflect current conditions: you must have good river-reading skills in addition to map reading skills.

For more detailed information, please ask for a copy of our handout "Planning a River Trip in Alaska".

*Memorandum*D3426 Alaska
(W&SRS)

TO : Files

FROM : Patrick Pourchot

SUBJECT: Togiak River Field Inspection Log

DATE: December, 1973

attached is a day-by-day log written by Richard Russell, of a field inspection of the Togiak River conducted August 2-9, 1973, by the following personnel:

Gerry Zamber	BLM (Anchorage District Office)
Matt Dick	BSF&W (Research temporary, Bethel)
Dick Russell	ADF&G (King Salmon)
Bill Gabriel	C/E
Pat Pourchot	BOR, ATF

Except for the following supplemental comments, Dick's log and a bird identification list submitted by Matt Dick, are substituted for my own notes.

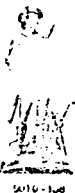
August 2. We left Anchorage about 9:00 a.m. via Sea Airmotive Navajo for overflight of both Togiak and Kanektok Rivers. Passengers included Lew Waller (BLM), Jerry Hout (BSF&W), Sandy Dauenhaver (BSF&W), Noel Granzow (BOR), Cathy Pourchot and myself. The president of Calista Corp., Ray Christiansen, did not show up for the flight, although scheduled to go.

We made stops at the village of Togiak and Quinhagak and made arrangements for local meetings following conclusions of the inspections of the Togiak and Kanektok Rivers, respectively.

Weather was good and many aerial photographs were taken.

August 3. After leaving King Salmon from Anchorage, we stopped in Dillingham to pick up Lanny Andre, a representative for the Bristol Bay Native Corporation. Not being informed by the Corp. that it was to be a week-long inspection, he decided not to participate and returned to Dillingham after we put-in on Togiak Lake.

We camped on east side of lake just above outlet. Large schools of red salmon observed just above outlet in front of camp.



River at outlet 15-20 yds. wide, 2-3 feet deep, 3-4 mph current, very clear, gravelly bottom.

Vegetation around lake, tall willows (15-20' high), poplars, tall grasses. Tundra on adjacent hills and mountains. Scenery outstanding with mountains rising steeply around lake. A few patches of snow left on mountains. Lake 1/2 mile wide at lower end.

Hiking good along lake margin; 20-30 foot gravel shores. Saw evidence of prior camp around lower lake (2 old tent frames).

August 4. Traveled about 10 miles, drifting most of way despite wind blowing mostly upstream. Current 3-4 mph consistently. River 30-40 yds. wide, 4-6 feet deep, clear, no rapids.

Took geochem samples approximately every mile throughout trip.

August 5. Traveled approximately 12 miles by drifting; camped just below Ongivinuck River.

30-60 foot ridges running along both banks of river much of day. Observed a few small groves of spruce adjacent river, mostly poplar groves, though with tundra stretching back from immediate river area. Some spruce poles had been cut at largest grove. White spruce identified and possibly black spruce.

August 6. Traveled around 16 miles, camped about 2 miles below Kashaik River.

Observed several old house and/or village sites along river.

Poplar groves, willows and tall grass dominate along river. 60-100' ridges along river most of way. Glimpse of base of mountains here and there through rain and low cloud cover - probably good views of mountains on clear days.

River shows little signs of rising despite continual rain; banks show fairly stable water levels with fluctuations of only 1-2 feet. River 100 yds. wide, 6-10 feet deep, 3-4 mph current, with a few 5 mph riffles although almost all smooth water. Very clear water; can see bottom most of time. Very gently meandering channel with a few smaller side channels occasionally.

Camp sites not numerous because of thick vegetation and lack of sand on bars.

August 7. Traveled 16-18 miles and camped about 1 and 1/2 miles above Gechiak Creek right upstream of major channel bifurcation to Twin Hills.

30-40' banks most of day on one side or other. Water still clear although depth 10-15 feet, precludes seeing bottom in many places.

Only occasional poplar groves, mostly tall willows along banks and tundra on higher banks and bank tops. Saw a lone spruce away from the bank in the tundra about 1/4 mile from river. Some alder on a couple steep slopes. Wild flowers included Jacob's ladder, monkey flower, parnacious, yarrow, fireweed, buttercup.

Again camp sites few and far between; very few gravel bars and most of those have no sand. Other sites brushy, steep, or hummocky.

Again saw several native allotment signs along river, some drying racks.

Named tributaries have been quite large and rivers in their own right (20 yds. wide, 1-3 feet deep).

August 8. Traveled about 13-14 miles. Terrain changed with few adjacent ridges or high banks; mostly broad valley with little relief, dense poplar and willow vegetation. Many more channels in river, old and new, map reading very difficult even with 1/63,000 coverage. Current still 3-4 mph, however, and drifting good. Winds died down. Several times on previous days strong headwinds required hard paddling in places.

August 9. Arrived Anchorage approximately 8:00 p.m. after dropping Dick off in King Salmon.

Overall. Traveled approximately 50-55 miles in 4 days, on water by raft. Most of trip was leisurely float with little paddling and frequent stops. Good information obtained by participants on fish, wildlife, birds, flora and geochem. Despite almost continual rain and overcast conditions an enjoyable, productive inspection was made.

The excellent fishery, wilderness character, good smooth water "boatability" and historic interest of this river makes it of outstanding value from a recreational as well as a subsistence and cultural standpoint.

Enclosure