

# adventure

# ALASKA

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## Record Setting!

...The weather that is... It's official - Alaska had its third coolest summer on record; to us it felt like THE coldest summer in our 20+ years up here. Here in Hope, there were only two days above 70... For those of you who travelled with us this past summer, you can attest to that. We had more cloudy, cool, rainy days than anyone can remember. And it may have felt good to you "southerners" escaping the heat and humidity, but we Alaskans felt cheated out of our only three months of "sorta-warmth"! But the bright side is, it was definitely not normal, and we're looking forward to more typical temperatures and bluer skies in '09 . . .

Other than the weather, things this summer went just swimmingly. We had wonderful groups of appreciative folks, for the most part... well there was that one guy....but his wife was really nice! And as we reflect back on the summer, as we do this time of year, we always comment on how fortunate we are to have the opportunity to meet so many interesting people, from all over the world, in such a remarkable setting, which happens to be our home.

And now we start gearing up for next season - printing the new brochure, tweaking itineraries, updating the website, booking vendors... it's a busy time, just when all we really want to do is go on vacation! But that'll come soon enough... It's also a sad time, when we say goodbye to our loyal friends and tour guides for a few months, as they head south, for some well-deserved beach time! (More on those folks later...)



*A shiny day overlooking the Jack River*



*Our Iditarod trip - (that "other" season)*

## Old News New News

Nothing new to report on the building front, in fact we're downsizing a bit. All of our properties (Eagle, McCarthy, Hope) are pretty well "done" with a couple "on hold". We're now in the maintenance years....doing all those pesky little repair jobs that pop up on occasion. Fortunately Todd is quite the "Jack of All Trades" --or at least he doesn't have any choice.

As far as old and new trip itineraries, it's much the same, as you'll note in our new brochure, however we have done some minor tweaking on some tours (we do read and heed those feedback forms!). The **Arctic Explorer Tour** has been evolving over the last 10 years, and next year will also include a hundred mile boat trip on the Yukon River. It's a trip with more variables and potentially schedule-changing weather than any other, and yet it's a truly unique and magnificent itinerary, with folks' universal feedback being "words cannot describe ...". The Far North, for those that haven't been, is a starkly beautiful and increasingly news-worthy part of the world.

And speaking of returning, our **Iditarod Sled Dog Race Adventure** still has space on it for 2009! If you've been contemplating that trip back to Alaska to see what the "other" season's like, this may be the year to do it. And to get you in the mood, we've heard the Discovery Channel will be airing a new series in October featuring the Iditarod and Alaskan mushers. Ought to be quite interesting.

A new itinerary we're excited to introduce for 2009, is our **Alaska Glaciers Tour**. This seven-day itinerary closely follows the All Alaska Tour (our most popular itinerary for 18 years now) but has a greater emphasis on Alaska's magnificent glaciers and ice formations. We visit three National Parks (Denali, Wrangell St Elias, Kenai Fjords), observing tidewater, alpine, hanging and piedmont glaciers along the way. There's a riverboat trip and the opportunity to walk onto the face of several active glaciers - in a safe and do-able dose for all ages. See the website for trip details.

And for those of you that haven't been able to escape the current fervor surrounding our newest export, Vice Presidential candidates, we do feel we must point out that nearly all of our trips pass through the "city" of Wasilla. It's reported that one can see Russia from there . . .



*Morning mist on the Yukon River*

## Staff Updates

And leaving the best for last, we give you our annual guide update, prefaced of course with nothing but kudos and admiration for these folks who dedicate their summer to being our ambassadors of Alaska. **Patrick** returned for his 15th year, enthusiastic as usual and eager to show every one of his charges the wonders of Alaska. He knows this state better than many old "sourdoughs", and loves to share his secret spots, as well as his perfectly timed choice of driving music! He's now probably soaking up some much needed vitamin D on the beaches of California before heading across the Pond to visit family in France and Australia. **Joe** finished his 10th season with us in fine fashion (at least he *looked* fine!), and is now back to his "real" job of teaching high school English and French in Anchorage. He and his family have nearly finished their little cabin project here in Hope and spend many weekends relaxing around the campfire. **Kathleen & Chris** got the summer off from leading full trips

(conflicting schedules), but they managed to keep very busy nonetheless, finishing their new home in Wasilla (did we mention you can see Russia from their deck?), gardening, and teaching Liam to fish for salmon. They too are now back to winter jobs, teaching elementary and high school in Wasilla. **Sheri**, and husband Michiel kept their promise, and after circling the globe last winter, returned to Alaska to guide for us once again. It's Sheri's 9th season with Adventure Alaska and each Spring she brings with her new and exciting stories of their winter journeys. Besides another season working in Antarctica, their travels both new and familiar, included Tasmania, Thailand (where they met on the back of an elephant!), Hungary and Holland. They are now off again, headed back to McMurdo Station in Antarctica for winter work. **Barb, Todd and Liam** (now 6 going on 16...) managed to hold it all together for yet another season. Todd got out a good bit, assisting trips with such mundane tasks as piloting the plane on the Arctic Tour, and shuttling the van for the Yukon River trips. Barb presided over Discovery Cabins as usual, with Liam happily (?) assisting with tasks such as making beds and watering flowers. When groups



*Exploring another world*

arrived, he was quick to show off his Jenga tower-building skills, or lead a "hike" into downtown Hope. The cabins are closed up now for the winter, vans put away, and we're again setting our sights on heading south for a few months, to travel the Lower 48, visiting friends, family, and as many new state and National Parks as we can, before returning to Alaska in January. Thanks to modern technology, the office remains open daily, no matter where we are, so drop us a line anytime, we'd love to chat!

### !!! Repeat Offender Program !!!

*ANNOUNCING JUSTIFICATION FOR THOSE GLUTTONOUS ENOUGH TO THINK OF RETURNING FOR A TRIP WITH US* —If you've survived one before, you get a 10% discount on the next one. Maybe try a new itinerary or another season --The Iditarod! We'd love to see you again!