The frozen Unalakleet River comes alive in winter with the joyful cries of sled dogs. Activities along the river corridor include parallels the frozen river en route to the Iditarod National Historic Trail. The best time to visit is July through mid-September to take full advantage of the wildlife and recreational activities.

The Unalakleet River supports such species as Arctic char, Atlantic salmon, Dolly Varden, and Arctic grayling. The upper 81 river miles of the Unalakleet River is designated a wild river, a designation that protects the quality of the river. The clear, smooth waters are excellent for fishing for chinook, coho, and silver salmon. Rainbows, Cutthroat, and Dolly Varden are also plentiful.

Fishing is excellent for chinook, coho, and silver salmon. The clear, smooth waters of the Unalakleet River are excellent for fishing for chinook, coho, and silver salmon. Rainbows, Cutthroat, and Dolly Varden are also plentiful.

Today, the Unalakleet River and the Athabascan groups in the region are protected by the Iditarod National Historic Trail, which commemorates a 2,300-mile system of trails that connected villages along the Yukon River and Norton Sound. This trail system was essential for the transport of food, goods, and people and was crucial in the development of the region.

Climate

The Unalakleet River is located in a subarctic climate, with long, cold winters and short, cool summers. Winter temperatures can drop below -40°F, while summer temperatures can reach 80°F. The river itself is relatively small, with a length of only 16.5 miles, and has a varying pool/riffle channelized, once it reaches the valley basin. At this point, the river is swift and the Norton Sound and the Yukon River divide rainfall and snow melt between them. The Norton Sound, with an average depth of 3,300 feet, is a vital body of water for trade and transportation.

Weather conditions can change quickly on Alaska Native lands below the 64°30'N parallel. Weather conditions are highly variable, ranging from clear and sunny to foggy and stormy. Precipitation can range from light mist and a heavy downpour, and temperatures can range from cold to hot and humid.

Camping

Camping is not allowed in the area due to the presence of wildlife. Visitors are encouraged to camp at designated sites outside the area.

Telegraph System (WAMCATS)

The Telegraph System (WAMCATS) was a network of wireless telegraph stations that provided communication between the west coast and Alaska during the late 1800s and early 1900s. The system was used by the U.S. Army to communicate with fur traders and prospectors in the region. The system was eventually replaced by the Alaska Public Service Corporation.

Public Shelter Cabin

Public Shelter Cabin at Old Woman is located on Alaska Native lands below the 64°30'N parallel. The cabin is a two-story wooden structure with a metal roof. The cabin is equipped with basic amenities, including a stove, cooking area, and sleeping quarters.

Juneau

Juneau is the capital of Alaska and is located on the southeast coast of the state. The city is a popular destination for tourists, with many attractions, including the Alaska State Capitol, the Alaska State Museum, and the Alaska State Fair. Juneau is also a major port of call for cruise ships, and the city is known for its stunning natural beauty and outdoor recreation opportunities.

Kaltag

Kaltag is a small community located on Alaska Native lands below the 64°30'N parallel. The community is known for its rich cultural heritage and traditional ways of life. Kaltag is also home to the Kaltag School, which is a small school that provides education for children in the area.

Iditarod National Historic Trail

The Iditarod National Historic Trail runs in Alaska. It commemorates a 2,300-mile system of trails that connected villages along the Yukon River and Norton Sound. The trail was used by the Alutiiq people and the Athabascan people for centuries before the arrival of European explorers.

Wild and Scenic River

The Unalakleet River is designated a wild and scenic river. The designation protects the river from development and ensures that it remains a natural waterway.

GMU 21D

GMU 21D is a land management unit located in the Unalakleet National Wild River area. The land management unit is responsible for the stewardship of the land and resources within the area.

Administrative Lands

The Unalakleet National Wild River area is managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. The area is designated as a national wildlife refuge and is managed for the conservation of wildlife and their habitats. The area is also managed for outdoor recreation opportunities, including fishing, hunting, and camping.

Contact Information

Anchorage, AK  99507
4700 BLM Road
Anchorage Field Office
Bureau of Land Management

Map Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 4N

There are approximately 70 million acres in the Unalakleet National Wild River area. The area is located in the western part of the state and is part of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The area is home to a diverse range of wildlife, including caribou, moose, and wolves. The area is also a popular destination for outdoor recreation, including fishing, hunting, and camping.