

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve Wayside Planning, Design, and Fabrication

National Park Service, AK



In 2011, the 106 Group began working with National Park Service staff at the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve to develop 17 interpretive panels for their ranger stations at Bettles Field and Anaktuvuk Pass, Alaska. The 106 Group edited and drafted interpretive text, designed the panel layouts, and coordinated fabrication.

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve is a remote wilderness area located above the Arctic Circle and far from any roads. Most visitors access the Park and Preserve by bush plane, starting from local villages. Others hike in from the Dalton Highway or the village of Anaktuvuk Pass. The park field office is located in Bettles Field along with a visitor

contact station where visitors attend back country orientations, receive park condition updates, attend ranger programs, get their park passport stamped, check out bear resistant food containers and become a Guardian of the Gates. The Anaktuvuk Pass Ranger Station is a primarily unmanned ranger station where visitors can access basic amenities and orientation information

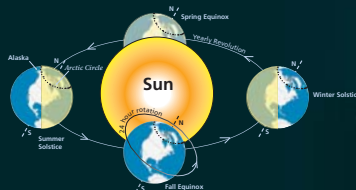
The panels at Gates of the Arctic interpret the natural resources and history of the area as well as provide visitors basic safety and orientation information with which to navigate this pristine yet remote wilderness area.



Light Governs the Arctic World

In Bettles, you stand near the top of the world. This extreme northern location undergoes dramatic seasonal changes in sunlight—around-the-clock sunshine bathes the north in summer, while low-angled light and darkness dominate the winter.

These wide-ranging seasonal conditions affect life's rhythms. Special adaptations help arctic life take advantage of the abundance of summer and survive through the scarcity of winter. Relatively few plants and animals have what it takes to survive these harsh northern conditions. No reptiles live here, and only one amphibian, the wood frog, calls this region home.



The aurora, or northern lights, releases its power from the sun. When sunspots flare on the sun's surface, charged particles radiate out across the galaxy on the solar wind. About three days later, some of these charged particles reach earth. The earth's magnetic field pushes these particles toward the poles. Like a neon sign, these particles "light up" gases in the upper atmosphere 60 to 500 miles above the earth, producing a colorful array of light swirling and rippling through the sky.

