Cornell’s Adult University
Alaska: Grizzlies, Glaciers, and Godwits

June 29–July 6, 2013
Charlie Smith, Cornell Faculty Leader

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Alaska’s largest interior city, Fairbanks. Meet Charlie Smith and your trip guide in the hotel lobby at 2:30 p.m. for a tour of Fairbanks, including a stop at Creamer’s Field, where we may be able to view sandhill cranes and other birds. Afterward, visit the newly enhanced University of Fairbanks Museum. In the evening, enjoy a welcome dinner and visit the famous Alaska Pipeline. Overnight in Fairbanks at Pike’s Waterfront Lodge. (D) *(Included meals will be noted: B=breakfast; L=lunch; D=dinner).*

Day 2: After breakfast, continue traveling south aboard the historic Alaska Railroad to Denali National Park, stopping for lunch at the Denali Park entrance. After lunch, embark on a five- to six-hour wildlife drive through the park on the private Kantishna Roadhouse bus. Watch for caribou, moose, Dall sheep, grizzly bears, resident and migratory birds, and – if weather permits – gaze upon the splendor of Denali (Mount McKinley)! Upon arrival at the Kantishna Roadhouse, enjoy dinner and settle into your cabin accommodations. Overnight at Kantishna Roadhouse. *(B, L, D)*

Day 3: Enjoy a full day of exploration and hiking in the Kantishna region of Denali National Park. Choose from a variety of available activities, such as guided hiking, natural history programs, gold panning, dog sled demonstrations, and mountain biking. Optional add-on flightseeing tours will be offered during your stay at the lodge. Overnight at Kantishna Roadhouse. *(B, L, D)*

Day 4: Following an early breakfast, embark on a scenic drive through Denali and watch for wildlife while heading back to the park’s entrance. Today’s journey brings us south to Alaska’s largest city – Anchorage. We’ll break for a delicious picnic lunch and casual nature walk in the afternoon. Savor dinner at a popular local restaurant. Overnight in downtown Anchorage. *(B, L, D)*
Day 5: Enjoy a scenic drive south through the Chugach National Forest to the stunning seacoast town of Seward, where we’ll board a small boat bound for Kenai Fjords National Park – home to an array of marine wildlife including whales, Steller sea lions, sea otters, puffins, and more! A half-day marine wildlife cruise will allow us to explore the rugged coastlines. Enjoy lunch in front of a calving glacier before arriving at our exclusive lodge destination: Kenai Fjords Glacier Lodge.

Nestled in a protected tidal lagoon area, the Glacier Lodge offers miles of pristine beachfront for exploring and views of the stunning Pedersen Glacier. This afternoon, meet your guides for a lodge orientation and settle into your private cabins. Enjoy dinner and evening presentations. Overnight at Kenai Fjords Glacier Lodge. (B, L, D)

Day 6: Explore the wild delights of Kenai Fjords National Park. After breakfast in the main lodge, choose from a wide array of activities best suited to your energy level and interest. Guided options include naturalist walks, sea kayaking, group canoe paddles, and more.

In the spirit of adventure and to take advantage of tidal and weather patterns, guides will discuss specific nature outings and options with our group this morning. All activities are suitable for beginners and require no previous experience.

For those seeking a more relaxed approach, the main lodge offers ideal comfort with direct views of nature. Curious sea otters and seals frequent the lagoon, just steps from the main lodge deck. In a nearby meadow, we can sometimes glimpse bears and other wildlife from a safe distance. The natural history library offers amazing resources and interesting reads for those inclined to cozy up with a good book!

Upon return to the main lodge, share stories from your day’s adventure with other guests and join an evening natural history presentation given by local expert guides or guest speakers. Overnight at Kenai Fjords Glacier Lodge. (B, L, D)

Day 7: This morning allows another opportunity to kayak, canoe, or beachcomb for a half-day before boarding our boat for the return wildlife cruise to Seward. Board the historic Alaska Railroad for a scenic backcountry rail tour back to Anchorage. Enjoy a festive farewell dinner on the train. Overnight in Anchorage. (B, L, D)

Day 8: Enjoy breakfast at the hotel, followed by airport shuttles. (B)

Note: We do not expect any major changes in this schedule. However, in the spirit of adventure, we allow our itinerary to remain flexible so that we may take advantage of spontaneous events.