

WILDLIFE



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250,000
Caribou

2,700-mile
migration

20 million acres of parklands

KOBUK WILD & SCENIC RIVER

Congress designated the Kobuk River as a "Wild River" due to its remote and undeveloped condition, clean water, exceptional opportunities for float trips, winter habitat for the Western Arctic Caribou Herd and its large population of sheefish, a subsistence resource of high importance for local villages.

The Ambler Road would cross the Kobuk Wild & Scenic River and Gates of the Arctic National Preserve.

Defending the future of Arctic caribou: a wildlife wonder in need of protection

The proposed Ambler Mining District, which would require a new private road over 200 miles long through northwest Alaska, threatens the future of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd.

In the wide-open lands of northwest Alaska, wildlife moves freely across the landscape as it has for thousands of years. The Western Arctic Caribou Herd epitomizes this boundlessness. Each year, 250,000 caribou migrate across a 100-million-acre landscape, an area equal in size to the state of Montana.

At 2,700 miles long, the migration of the Western Arctic Herd is one of the longest land migrations on Earth. Wandering from their calving grounds in the Utukok Uplands to their wintering grounds on the Bering Land Bridge and back again, their trek is the equivalent of a cross-country trip from New York to Seattle.

Unlike nearly every other Arctic caribou population in North America, the population of the herd is currently stable. Across the continent, herd populations have plummeted from 4.7 million to 2.1 million since the mid-1990s. Caribou depend upon large unbroken landscapes which the Western Arctic Caribou Herd is still fortunate enough to enjoy.

A PARK LANDSCAPE AT ITS MOST EXPANSIVE

The National Park Service (NPS) manages over 20 million acres of the herd's range, including lands within Gates of the Arctic and Kobuk Valley National Parks, Bering Land Bridge, Gates of the Arctic and Noatak National Preserves, and Cape Krusenstern National Monument. Most of these lands are managed in a contiguous, ecologically intact landscape that encompasses nearly all of the western Brooks Range.

In a state whose immense scale is hard to comprehend, this core habitat could fit the top 10 largest national parks in the lower 48 (including such greats as Death Valley, Grand Canyon, Yellowstone and Yosemite) – plus the state of Connecticut.

Despite the Western Arctic Caribou Herd's incredible story, the future of the herd is uncertain due to mining and oil and gas development proposed within the caribou herd's 100-million-acre range.



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AMBLER MINING DISTRICT AND ACCESS ROAD: A ROAD TO RUIN

The state of Alaska is actively moving forward with a proposal to build a private industrial access road over 200 miles along the southern Brooks Range to transport ore from open pit copper mines planned for the heart of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd range.

The road would cross 20 miles of Gates of the Arctic National Preserve and the Kobuk Wild River. Congress established Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve to maintain its “wild and undeveloped character” and provide “opportunities for visitors to experience solitude.”

If this industrial mining district and road are built, the area will experience heavy truck traffic that will disturb wildlife, create noise pollution and dust, impact wilderness recreation, damage wetlands, and permanently alter the lives of rural Alaskans dependent on traditional food resources like salmon and caribou.



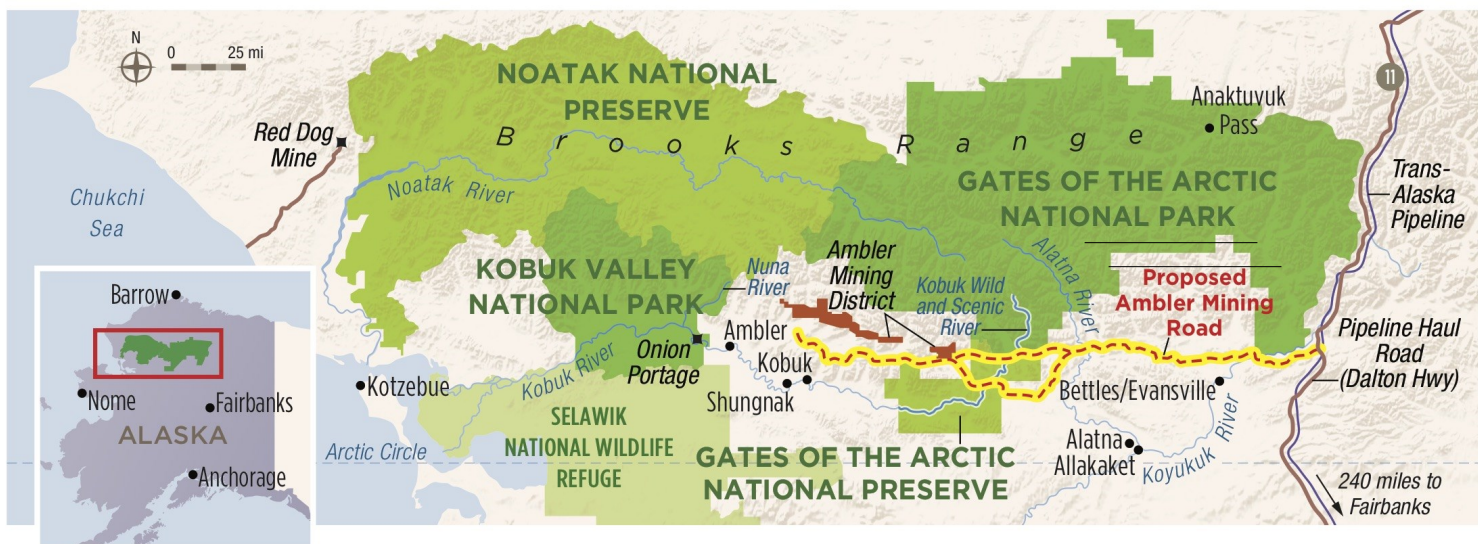
Recent studies in the region indicate that roads impact caribou behavior, and there is serious concern that this road would shift the herd further west, away from the Alaska Native villages whose residents’ subsistence-based living depends on this animal’s meat.

The Alaska National Interest and Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) mandates that the National Park System permit a mining access road across Gates of the Arctic National Preserve lands but the construction of the road is far from guaranteed, with other federal and state permits required prior to construction.

This road proposal, along with several others throughout the western Arctic, threaten the long-term health of one of the greatest natural wonders on the planet.

NPCA will continue working to ensure the survival of wildlife and wild areas for our children’s children. We encourage you to speak up during all public comment periods in support of Arctic caribou and the people who depend upon them.

For more information, contact NPCA’s Alaska Program Manager, Alex Johnson, at 907-891-2272 or ajohnson@npca.org.



Above: Both the landscape and local lifestyles would be irreversibly changed by the Ambler Mining District and associated road, just one of several industrial projects proposed for the western Arctic. © Karen Minot