

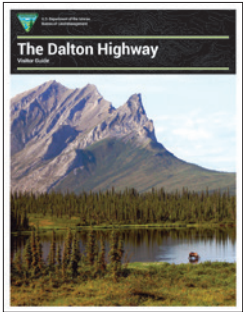
Driving the Dalton Highway

Built in 1974 to construct the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and transport supplies to the North Slope oilfields, this highway is 414 miles long. It transects northern Alaska from Livengood to Prudhoe Bay on the Arctic Ocean coast.

The highway is mostly gravel and can be rough, dusty, muddy, or icy, depending on the weather. There are steep hills, dangerous curves, and loose gravel. Big trucks have the right-of-way. Drive with your lights on, stay in your lane, and if you stop, pull as far to the right as safety permits.

Services are few and far apart. Gas and cafes are available at Yukon Crossing, Five Mile, Coldfoot and Deadhorse. There is no cell phone service. Carry a CB radio, two spare tires mounted on rims, standard tools, first-aid kit, drinking water, and ready-to-eat food. No grocery stores or medical services are available.

For more information visit the BLM website at www.blm.gov/visit/dalton-highway.



A FREE copy of the 24-page *Dalton Highway Visitor Guide* can be downloaded from the website above or picked up at one of our offices listed on the back.

Maps

The following 1:63 360 scale topographic maps cover the area in this brochure:

- Bettles C-2, D-1, D-2
- Wiseman A-1, B-1
- Chandalar B-6, C-6

Purchase maps at the Arctic Interagency Visitor Center in Coldfoot or at the Alaska Public Lands Information Center in Fairbanks or download FREE geo-referenced digital public maps at: www.blm.gov/maps/georeferenced-PDFs

Contact Us

Bureau of Land Management

Fairbanks District Office

222 University Avenue
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-3844
907-474-2200

Toll Free: 1-800-437-7021

<https://www.blm.gov/office/fairbanks-district-office>

Alaska Public Lands Information Center

Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center

101 Dunkel Street #110
Fairbanks, AK 99701-4806
907-459-3730

<https://www.alaskacenters.gov/visitors-centers/fairbanks>

Yukon Crossing Visitor Contact Station

Dalton Highway, Milepost 56
(Open daily from late May to early September)
No phone

Arctic Interagency Visitor Center

Dalton Highway, Milepost 175, Coldfoot
(Open daily from late May to mid-September)
907-678-5209 office
907-678-2005 fax

<https://www.blm.gov/learn/interpretive-centers/aivc>

All photos courtesy of the
Bureau of Land Management



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Cover photo: A gold panner tries his luck on Minnie Creek in the Brooks Range along the Dalton Highway.

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Panning for Gold

Along the Dalton Highway



Guide & Map

The Ageless Lure of Gold

The first prospectors entered the Brooks Range shortly after the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898, pushing to ever more distant regions by canoe, dog team, and snowshoe. A few stayed to build communities in the wilderness. The fortunes of miners and communities have since surged, dwindled, and surged again. With construction of a highway north, miners could access their claims more economically.

Today, you too can try your hand at finding some “color.” Please read this brochure to find out where you can go and what you can do on public lands along the Dalton Highway without running afoul of claim owners or federal and state regulations.

Where to Go

The BLM manages public land on both sides of the highway from the Yukon River to milepost 300 (Slope Mountain). The Alaska Department of Natural Resources manages the land from there to Prudhoe Bay.

Much of the BLM-managed land south of Atigun Pass is already covered by mining claims. This brochure identifies the stream segments near the highway where you can pan without worrying about existing claims. The BLM has inventoried and rated these streams for their mineral potential. The open segments and ratings are listed alongside the map inside this brochure.

You may stake no new claims within lands designated as the Inner Corridor of the BLM’s Utility Corridor (Public Land Order 5150). See the map inside this brochure for the Inner Corridor’s boundaries.

Where Not to Go

The Trans-Alaska Pipeline right-of-way (27 feet on either side of the pipeline) is closed to recreational mining.

You need to get permission from a claimant before you may pan on an existing claim. For information about a claim, contact the BLM’s Public Room in Fairbanks at 907-474-2200. Your research will be

easier if you first identify the location (township, range, section, and coordinates) of the area that interests you.

Permission to recreationally mine on a person’s claim does not confer the right to drive or ride a motorized vehicle from the Dalton Highway or to use anything besides hand tools. If you have permission to mine on someone’s federal mining claim and you want to use a suction dredge, you must first contact the BLM for authorization. Such use is not considered casual or recreational.

Tools for Gold Panning

What to Use

You may use a pick, shovel, rocker box, sluice box, or metal detector.

What Not to Use

You are not allowed to use motorized equipment. Recreational suction dredging is prohibited on most lands within the Dalton Highway Inner Corridor (see map inside this brochure). In addition, State of Alaska statute prohibits off-road vehicle use, including cars, trucks, snowmachines, and four-wheelers, within 5 miles of the highway for any purpose (except as provided by the statute).

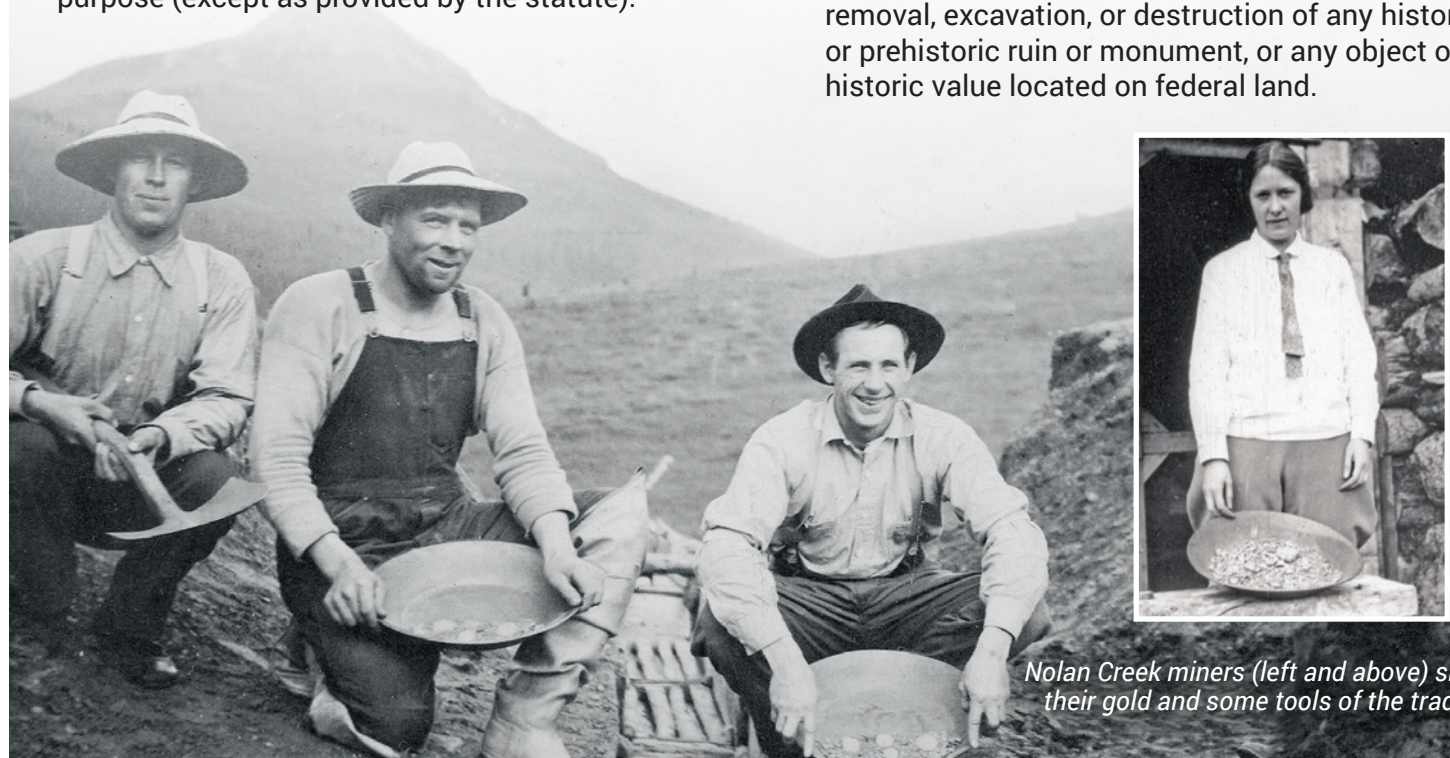
Where to Camp

The BLM maintains three campgrounds south of Wiseman: Five Mile Campground (milepost 60.4), Arctic Circle Campground (milepost 115), and Marion Creek Campground (milepost 180, 5 miles north of Coldfoot). Travelers may also camp in pull-outs and inactive gravel pits, but camping on pipeline access roads is not recommended. Camping is limited to a maximum of 14 days within a 28-day period in any one location.

Please keep a sanitary camp: pack out all garbage. Do not leave food out where bears and other wildlife might find it. Dig holes to bury human waste at least 6 inches deep and 200 feet from water. Avoid camping on fragile tundra vegetation – if damaged, it can take decades to heal because of the harsh climate. Commercial lodging is available at Yukon Crossing, Five Mile, Coldfoot, Wiseman, and Deadhorse.

Protect our History

Old cabins, their contents, and remains teach us about the lives of the people who came before and how they worked and survived in this challenging land. The Antiquities Act of 1906 prohibits the removal, excavation, or destruction of any historic or prehistoric ruin or monument, or any object of historic value located on federal land.



Nolan Creek miners (left and above) show their gold and some tools of the trade.

Areas Open to Recreational Gold Panning

You may use metal detectors, gold pans, manually fed rocker boxes, or sluices to collect minerals in the following areas listed with approximate mile-post markers. The lands are closed to staking of new mining claims under Public Land Order 5150. Learn more at <https://www.blm.gov/alaska/mining>.

Mile #	Area Open to Panning	Gold Potential
211	Disaster Creek. Open from the bridge upstream for 2 miles.	Low
207	Bettles and Dietrich Rivers. Open from bridge upstream for 2 miles on Bettles River and upstream for 2 miles on Dietrich River.	Low
202	unnamed creek. Open from bridge upstream for 2 miles.	Medium
197.2	Gold Creek. Open from bridge upstream for 2 miles.	Medium
196.4	Sheep Creek. Open from bridge upstream for 2 miles.	Medium
196	Nugget Creek. Open from bridge upstream for 1 mile.	Medium
190.5	Hammond River. Open from its confluence with Middle Fork Koyukuk River upstream for 1 mile.	Low
187.2	Minnie Creek. Open from bridge upstream for 1.5 miles, and on all of Larson Creek.	Low
184	Dry Gulch. Open from highway all the way upstream.	Low
176	Clara Creek. Open from highway upstream for one-half mile.	Low
175.5	Slate Creek. Open from bridge upstream for 1.25 miles.	Low
168.7	Rosie Creek. Open from mouth upstream to source.	Low
156.3	South Fork Koyukuk River. Open from bridge for 1.5 miles upstream and 2 miles downstream, but not in the pipeline right-of-way.	High
135.7	Jim River. Take side road west. Open from end of road downstream for 2 miles.	Low
135.1	Bonanza Creek. Open from North Fork bridge upstream for 2.5 miles, or downstream any distance, but not in pipeline right-of-way.	Medium
125.7	Bonanza Creek. Open from North Fork bridge upstream for 2.5 miles, or downstream any distance, but not in pipeline right-of-way.	Low
114	Fish Creek. From bridge, open upstream for 1 mile and downstream for 1 mile.	Low

Key to Potential Placer Gold Values*	
	Low - less than \$5 per cubic yard
	Medium - \$5-\$14 per cubic yard
	High - more than \$14 per cubic yard

*Calculated values as of Spring 2021

