



LOCATION

Noatak is located on the west bank of the 396-mile long Noatak River, a few miles west of the 66-million acre Noatak National Preserve. Noatak is 55 air miles north of Kotzebue and 70 miles north of the Arctic Circle.

HISTORY

The Noatak area has been inhabited for at least 5,000 years. The village of Noatak was founded in the 1890s when Friends Church missionaries asked families living in sod houses in various settlements along the Noatak River to establish a permanent community where the Friends Church would build a school and place of worship. Elders selected the current site of Noatak, which at the time was a seasonal hunting and fishing campsite, because of its strategic location for access to various camp sites, its ready supply of wood for heating, its fishing productivity and its year-round hunting and trapping. The first airplanes to land in Noatak arrived in the late 1920s. A post office was established in 1940.

GOVERNMENT

Noatak is an unincorporated community. The Native Village of Noatak (IRA) governs the village.

THE PEOPLE

Most Noatak residents are descended from three distinct groups of Inupiaq Eskimos who came together to populate the village in the 1890s: the Nau-
taugmuit, which translates into English as "inland river people," the Napaaqtugmuit, or "tree people," and the Nunamuit, or "treeless land people." The two main groups diverged for much of the year, some heading upriver, with the caribou, and others staying in the forest, and all gathered on the coast, in spring, to hunt seals and beluga.

The population of Noatak increased steadily from about 100 residents in 1900 to 336 residents in 1940. Its population declined from 1940 to 1960, when the census recorded 275 people living in Noatak. After 1960 the population began to rise again. From 1990 to 2000 the population of Noatak went from 333 to 428, the greatest single-decade increase in the history of the village. The current population of Noatak is around 510. Ninety-six percent of Noatak residents are Inupiat Eskimos.

Climate and Topography

Winter temperatures in Noatak generally range from 21 degrees below zero (Fahrenheit) to 15 degrees above. Summer temperatures average 40 to 60 degrees. Temperature extremes have been recorded from 59 degrees below zero to 75 degrees above. The yearly snowfall in Noatak averages 48 inches, rainfall around 12 inches. The Noatak River is navigable by shallow-draft boats from early June to early October.

Transportation Services and Facilities

Air—Noatak is primarily accessed by air. Passenger, cargo and private aircraft pilots utilize a 4,000 long by 60' wide lighted gravel runway that is one of 256 airports owned and by State of Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, the largest aviation system in North America. Multiple scheduled passenger flights depart for Kotzebue daily. A round-trip ticket from Noatak to Kotzebue costs about \$250. Air cargo rates from Kotzebue range from 68 cents per pound for loads exceeding 5,000 pounds to 80 cents per pound for loads weighing fewer than 500 pounds.

Land—Depending on the season, residents travel overland to other villages and for subsistence activities using ATVs, motorcycles, snow machines and dogsleds on a wide array of historic and more blazed trails paralleling the Noatak River.

Water/Marine—The Noatak River is too shallow to allow barge service to the village. Small boats are commonly used for recreation as well as subsistence hunting and fishing.

Local Governmental Services

Water—The public water supply for Noatak is pumped from wells to a holding tank located north of the airport on Main Street, where the water is treated and then distributed throughout the community via a piped, re-circulating system connected to around 85 homes along with the school, health clinic and businesses. The remaining 20 or so households haul water from the Noatak River and/or from neighboring houses.

Sewer—All homes connected to the public water system are likewise connected to a gravity sewer system that channels wastewater to a holding lagoon outside of town. The other 20 or so households utilize honeybuckets.

Solid Waste Disposal—Noatak residents individually haul refuse to a public landfill located west of the airport, about a half mile outside of town.

Public Safety—Noatak is within the jurisdiction of the Alaska State Troopers detachment based in Kotzebue.

Other Services and Utilities

Health Services—Maniilaq Association operates a health clinic in Noatak that has three exam rooms, a pharmacy, an eye exam room and a dental exam room. Six certified health aides provide routine medical examinations and treatment for minor health issues on a daily basis. Health care emergencies and treatment for serious health issues requires Medi-vac by plane to Kotzebue.

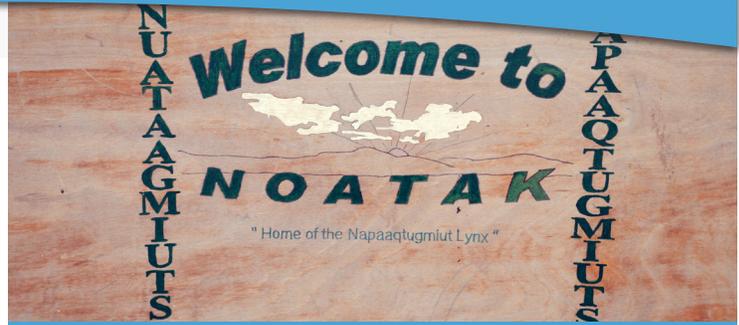
Electricity—The Alaska Village Electric Co-op provides electricity to Noatak via diesel generation with a peak operating capacity of 982 kilowatts. Electricity rates in Noatak are by far the most expensive in Northwest Alaska, due to diesel fuel shipping rates. Monthly residential rates factoring in the Power Cost Equalization (PCE) subsidy are 20 cents per kilowatt-hour for the first 1-500 kW h, 88 cents per kilowatt-hour for 501-700 kW h per month and 78 cents per kilowatt-hour for every kW h per month over 700. Small commercial rates are 88 cents per kilowatt-hour for the first 1-700 kW h per month and 78 cents per kilowatt-hour for every kW h thereafter.

Telecommunications—Kotzebue-based OTZ Telephone Cooperative provides in-state telephone service to Noatak residents and businesses, and long-distance service is provided through a combination of AT&T, Anchorage-based GCI and Kotzebue-based OTZ Telephone. Internet service is provided through Inutek.net, a cooperative effort between OTZ, Maniilaq Association and Anchorage-based GCI Communications.

Telephone Service	Residential	Business
Basic local service (single landline) – Includes taxes, fees. Additional charges for optional features	\$25.00/mo.	\$35.00/mo.
Long distance	\$.15/min. + \$5/mo. fee	\$.18/min.

Cellular phone service	Plans with unlimited minutes begin at \$39.95/mo.
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DSL Internet	256K Download	1.5mbps Download
	\$25/mo	\$45.50/mo



SCHOOLS

Noatak has a combined elementary, middle and high school facility attended by around 150 students per year. The current school was completed in 2009.

Media

Most Noatak residents use CB/VHF radio systems for communication within the village as well as seasonal campsites surrounding the village and other communities within a 100-120 mile signal range (Deering, Kiana, Kivalina, Kotzebue, Noorvik and Selawik). The primary formal source of news and community information in Noatak is Kotzebue-based KOTZ radio. The Arctic Sounder, a regional newspaper, is delivered to local subscribers, businesses and the school.

Employment/Economy

The Noatak economy is based on traditional subsistence activities. Important food sources include moose, caribou, salmon, ptarmigan, rabbit and waterfowl. Full-time employers include the tribe, Maniilaq Association and a handful of retail stores. Around 25 residents work full or part-time at Red Dog Mine. Seven residents have commercial fishing permits.

Housing

There are 106 residential structures in Noatak, including ten small apartment buildings. One hundred of the structures are occupied. The rest are older log cabins. The median home value in Noatak is \$63,800. The median rent is \$590. The average family household size is 4.5 persons.

