

Alakanuk



Population: 686

Alakanuk is located at the east entrance of Alakanuk Pass off of the southern channel of the Yukon River, 15 miles from the Bering Sea. It lies 8 miles southwest of Emmonak, approximately 162 air miles northwest of Bethel. It is the longest village on the lower Yukon. The development stretches over a 3 mile area along the pass. The climate of Alakanuk is subarctic, averaging 60" of snowfall and 19" of total precipitation per year. Temperatures range from -25 to 79 degrees F. Heavy winds are frequent during the fall and winter. The Yukon River is used as an ice road during freeze-up, November through April.

Alakanuk is a Yupik word meaning "wrong way", aptly applied to a village on this maze of watercourses. The village was first reported by G.R. Putnam of the U.S. Coast & Geodetic Survey in 1899.

The population of the community consists of 97.7% Alaska Native or part Native. Alakanuk is a Yupik Eskimo village active in commercial fishing and subsistence. Alakanuk experiences a seasonal economy. Many residents hold commercial fishing permits. Poor fish returns since 1998 have significantly affected the community. Government employment and retail business provide limited year-round employment. Salmon, beluga whale, seal, moose and rabbit provide food sources. Some residents trap.

Alakanuk is easily accessible from the Yukon River and Bering Sea by barge and riverboat. Most passengers and mail arrive by air. There are no roads connecting Alakanuk with other population centers in the region, but ice roads are used in winter. Snow machines and boats are used for local travel.