

Brief Trip Summary

We left Platte Valley, Colorado on June 16 and returned on July 25 for a total of 90.9 flight hours. Overall the plane worked very well. Mechanical problems were limited to a magneto P-lead short, a spark plug wire short and a fuel-flow transducer issue. We spent several additional days in Fairbanks addressing the magneto and plug wiring issues.

We camped almost the entire 5 weeks, save a number of days staying with a family in Fairbanks (building the same Moose plane we flew) and 4 days spent at the [Otter Cove Resort](#) in Homer (a great place by the way—the “resort” that is). We didn’t stay in a single motel or hotel.

Planned vs Actual Stops

We were able to stop in many of the planned airports, but did not make it to Nome, Barrow and several of the other Northernmost planned stops. We spent several days each in Cordova, Seward and Fairbanks.

Fuel

As expected, fuel prices were high, particularly in Canada. After a while, I quit looking at the per gallon or per liter price and just signed the credit card slip without looking at the total amount either. That being said, I think the lowest price we paid was here in Colorado at \$2.65/gallon whereas the highest must have been \$1.45/liter (\$5.49/g) in Whitehorse. To add insult to injury, in Canada you are charged a GST tax on top of the already outrageous fuel price.

Fun Stops

Cordova had to be the neatest stop, with it’s 1,800 gravel runway, tons of eagles, great fishing right off the dock, superb hiking trails, hundreds of salmon in the creeks and bears feeding on salmon. We had great weather for 3+ days in Cordova and few bug issues. I have to agree with a Cordova local who told us that he’d been all over Alaska and found Cordova to be the single-best spot.

Best Scenic Stop

McCarthy has absolutely spectacular scenery, with plenty of glaciers, waterfalls and lush greenery. We came within no more than 10 feet of a medium-size black bear hiking near the Kennicott copper mine, adding to the value of our experience here.

Worst Stop

Though scenic, the Homer Spit has to be the armpit of Alaska. Way too many cars, tourists and rowdy, drunk campers made the one day we camped there an experience to forget.

Things They Don't Tell You...

Some credit card companies place a 3% surcharge on Canadian transactions; some only add 1%; best to call each of your card companies and find out (it depends on the issuing bank; not on whether it is generically MasterCard or VISA).

If you purchase a phone calling card at a Canadian post office, calls can be made using the discounted calling card rate anywhere in Canada, Alaska or the lower 48. Most calling cards (all?) that I've seen for sale in the lower 48 are only good for the lower 48.

Many Canadian airports have a parking fee if you stay more than 8, 12 or 24 hours, depending on the airport.

If you're using a hand-held or panel mounted GPS, while you might be used to seeing many terrain features (e.g. roads, railroads, towns, lakes, rivers, etc) when you're in the lower 48, you won't see such in Alaska or Canada. Only major features are displayed (at least on my Garmin 430 and Garmin 420). There were vast sections of the flight where the GPS was blank save my course line. Being good at pilotage with the Sectional was important!

Best Memories

While the overall scenery was fantastic, the people we met along the way really made the trip worthwhile. We met many, many fantastic individuals and a number of truly special families on our trip. Sharing experiences, stories and just enjoying the wonderful generosity of people made our family appreciate the value of sharing one's blessings with others. Our hope is that we can be at least as kind to others we meet who are traveling in Colorado.

What Would We Do Differently

Minimize the number of stops in Canada. Avoid stopping in any big cities (e.g. Anchorage). Minimize any stops along the Alaska Highway route (more on this later). Fish More. Hike more.

Would We Do The Trip Again?

Absolutely. We would cherry-pick our stops though, returning to a number of special stops (e.g. Salmon Arm, Cordova, Seward, McCarthy) and visit some new locations that we didn't see this time. We'd especially like to visit more remote strips, as we generally saw the prettiest scenery, met the nicest people and had the best adventures at smaller, gravel/grass/dirt strips.