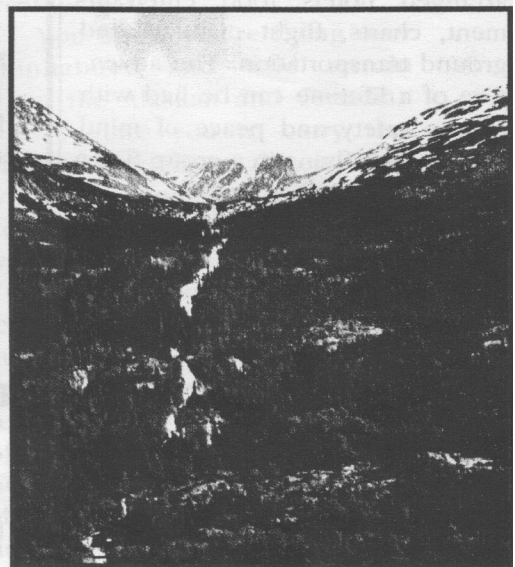


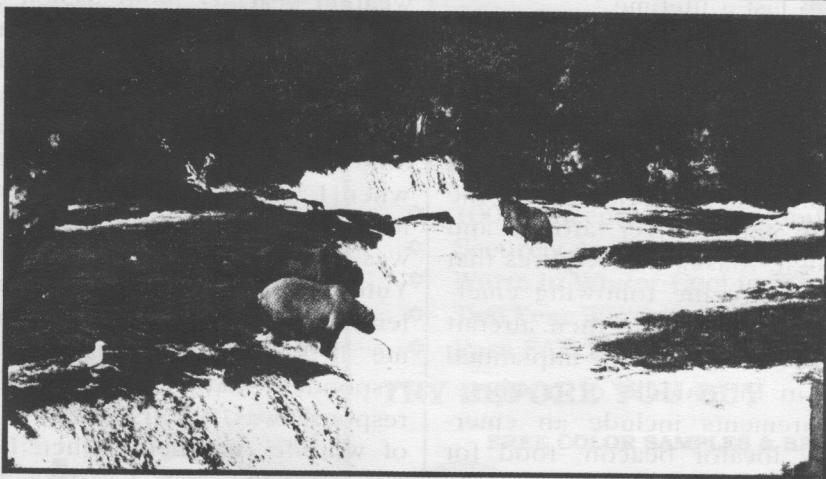
ALASKA



Above: a C-172 over the Koyukuk Valley, located approximately 150 miles north of Fairbanks. Right: the Sawtooth Mountains, also known as the Alaskan Frontal Range. Miners in the 1898 Gold Stampede had to cross this rugged range.



Who cares about the 210—the background is Denali which means “The Big One.” It certainly is big and majestic, with an elevation of over 20,000 feet.



Grizzlies fishing at Brooks Falls in the Katmai National Park, outside of King Salmon, Alaska.

ALASKA NORTHWINDS ADVENTURE

by
Tom Huismann

Adventure, freedom and spectacular scenery are three things we pilots are able to enjoy from the left seat. Many of us are always on the lookout for interesting and adventurous trips to make in our aircraft. Stories abound of pilots who have flown their high performance singles or light twin across the North Atlantic, or weekend pilots who have flown their Archer across the border for a weekend on the Baja peninsula.

A trip that I have always wanted to make is a flight to the Yukon and Alaska. I almost took a job as a bush pilot a few years ago. It would have been a great adventure. I was accepted for training by a VFR-only part 91 airline called Yute Air. However, I made a career choice that returned me to the lower 48, and I have always had a little twinge of regret for not trying the career of a bush pilot.

I have learned however, that there is a tour company that can afford me a taste of adventure as a bush pilot flying in the Yukon and Alaska. This is no vicarious adventure tour — you fly it in your airplane. Alaska Northwind Tours, Inc., of Fairbanks, Alaska offers this rare adventure to some of the most remote, rugged and spectacular scenery in the world. Jerry and Kathy McCann, the owners and operators of Alaska Northwinds will lead you on the adventure of a lifetime.

Alaska Northwinds began as an on demand charter service in the early '80s, providing flight-seeing tours of Mount McKinley and north of the Arctic Circle for passengers of cruise ships plying the inside passage during the summer. In the off season, they would spot game for hunters, make mail runs and carry freight and passengers. The company

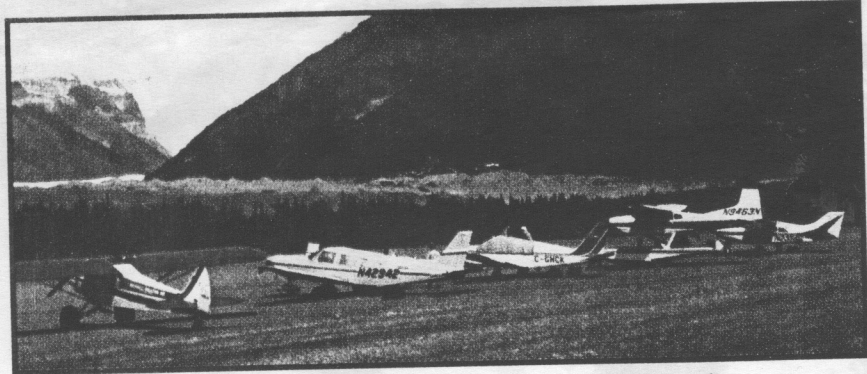
also did extensive photo mapping of the Alaska Highway, also known as the Alcan.

As a charter operator, Alaska Northwinds gained extensive experience, expertise and knowledge of flying the many mountain ranges and river systems. In 1990 Alaska Northwinds was recognized for their expertise and abilities when they were called on to guide a group of planes and pilots that were stranded along the Alaska Highway due to a fierce winter storm that struck in late spring. Shepherding the pilots safely onto Fairbanks gave them an idea. Why not provide this same service to other groups of planes and pilots who wanted to tour the wilds of the northwest? The group flight concept was born. Alaska Northwinds Tours



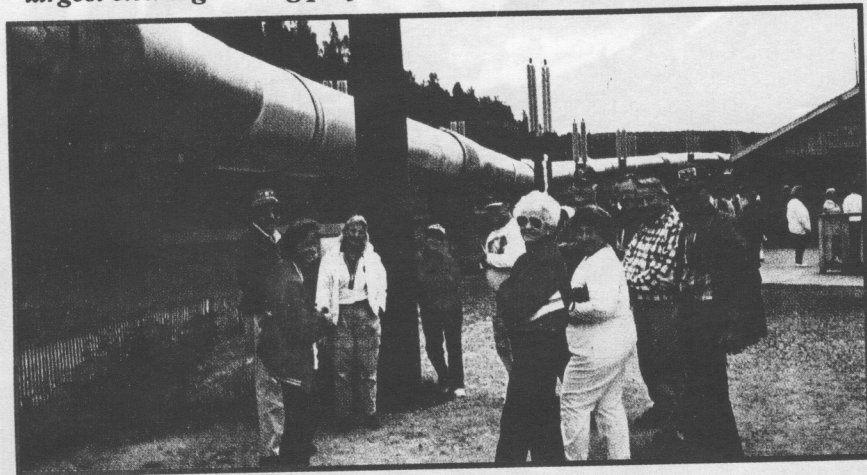
became so successful and popular with group flight tours that they soon abandoned their other money making pursuits of the past.

The terrain and the flying environment are not for the faint of heart. Jerry said however that all certificated pilots are welcome. "There is no minimum experience level required, and our group flights have included everything from a Cessna 172 to a Piper Cheyenne and everything in between. When we fly the tour, aircraft are grouped according to speed, with the slowest taking off first and the faster birds bring up the rear. That way, the speed differential is minimized," said Jerry. "We have worked group flights with pilots of varying experience levels and backgrounds, from retired airline



Above: The Kennicott Strip at the foot of the Wrangell-St. Elias Mountains. In the background you can see the Kennicott Glacier.

Below: group tour pilots and crews visit a section of the Alyeska Pipeline. The pipeline is over 800 miles long and is one of the nation's largest civil engineering projects.



captains to new private pilots. Whenever we come to challenging weather or terrain, we take the lead and find the safest and most expeditious route, ensuring a comfortable journey. Everyone who has flown with us has safely completed the journey, and has returned with memories and stories to last a lifetime."

This is not a typical long cross country a pilot would make in the lower 48. Jerry said there is one requirement concerning equipment, and it gives you insight and appreciation for the terrain you fly over, around and through. Alaska law requires that pilots carry the following emergency equipment in their aircraft in the event of an unplanned stop in the middle of nowhere. Requirements include an emergency locator beacon; food for each occupant of the airplane, to sustain life for two weeks; an axe or hatchet; a pistol, revolver, shotgun or rifle, plus ammuni-

tion; a knife; two boxes of matches; a mosquito head-net for each occupant; two signalling devices, a first aid kit; a small gill net and a small assortment of hooks, flies, line and sinkers. The equipment list is typical, and although not required, it should also include cold weather and wet weather gear.

You know you're flying over uninhabited and wild terrain when the Alaskan and Canadian laws require you to carry that kind of equipment. I remember when I was going over a list of items to bring with me when I was considering the job with Yute Air. At the end of a rather lengthy list, the chief pilot asked me if I had any weapons. I responded that I did not. His response was, "Well, there's lots of wildlife out there. When I'm out flying the bush, I carry a .44 Magnum and a shotgun." The next day I went out and bought a Smith and Wesson .357 Magnum.

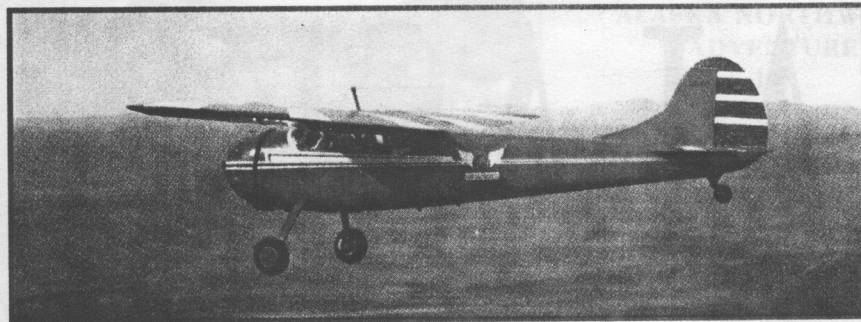
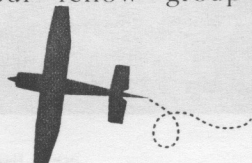
I know, small by comparison, and it would never stop a grizzly, but I thought if I ever needed to, I could make a fair amount of noise with it.

Alaska Northwinds offers two routes, which are referred to as the Steak and Lobster. The Steak is an 18 day, all VFR odyssey with ten days of flying and eight days of sightseeing. Jerry says that it is the perfect blend of adventure, vacation and relaxation. The route follows the Northwest staging route of World War II. Over 6,000 aircraft flew this same route from the United States to the USSR during the war years.

The Lobster is a 21 day VFR/IFR excursion, with 17 days of flying and four days of rest and relaxation. This tour is designed for those who wish to visit the remote Indian and Eskimo villages, and view wildlife in the vast Western Arctic and Bering Sea regions.

Both tours begin in Great Falls, Montana, and are all inclusive. Prices are \$3,995 for the Steak tour and \$4,995 for the Lobster tour. The tours run from June through August. You travel with experienced Alaskan bush pilots who fly escort in a Piper Saratoga. They know their way around the terrain and the weather and will lead you safely all the way. All accommodations are pre-arranged, hotels, food, entertainment, charts, flight manuals and ground transportation. The adventure of a lifetime can be had with all the safety and peace of mind that go with flying in a group flight environment.

You will not fly all the time, and plenty of fun ground tours are arranged along the route of flight giving you a very comprehensive and entertaining tour. In the evenings there is always plenty of time for hangar flying with your fellow group tour pilots.



Above: all types of airplanes participate in the group flights. Here's a Cessna 195.

Below: group tour members at the "Sign Post Forest" at Watson Lake. Started by a GI working on the ALCAN Highway, the locals refer to it as, the largest public display of stolen property.



Tours are limited to ten aircraft each so call now to reserve your place in the formation. For further information, contact Alaska Northwinds, Inc. at 907-479-4500 or 800-828-7017 for the ultimate aerial adventure and tour of Alaska and the Yukon.

SHEEPSKIN SEATCOVERS

Custom Tailored For
YOUR PIPER AIRCRAFT

BUY DIRECT AND SAVE

ALL MODELS **\$329⁰⁰** PER PAIR
(+\$5.00 Shipping)



Hand tailored from #1 grade sheepskin pelts, our seatcovers are custom fitted for each Piper Aircraft-No "Universal Fits".

- ☆ 100% Sheepskin Throughout-No Synthetics
- ☆ Securely Anchored For Non Slip Comfort
- ☆ Warm in Winter-Cool in Summer
- ☆ Two Year Warranty
- ☆ Pass FAR 25.853B

Special Discounts
For Aircraft Dealer.
FBOs & C.A.P.
Members

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

NO Charges Until 14 Days After Shipping
Free UPS Pick-up If Not Completely Satisfied

FREE COLOR SAMPLES & BROCHURE • 1-800-874-5747



AEROSHEEP

341 Chappel Hill Road
Hot Springs, AR 71913

