

This year, travel with The Planetary Society as we explore:

Alaska Aurora Borealis

Come see the Greatest Light Show on Earth!

March 15-21, 2018

Dear Friends:

We invite you to join us as we explore the great beauty of Alaska in winter, and see the famed Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights, the greatest light show on Earth!

*We will gather in **Anchorage, Alaska**, to begin our adventure. After our welcome in Anchorage, we'll drive along the Chugach Mountains to **Seward**, near Kenai Fjords National Park. Here we will visit the Alaska Sea*

Life Center to see sea otters, seabirds, and a profusion of Alaska marine life. We will see Alaska's major land mammals including grizzlies, moose, and muskox.

*The following day we will explore historic Talkeetna and then take the classic train journey from Talkeetna to **Fairbanks**, passing North America's tallest and most awesome mountain, **20,320-foot Denali** en route.*

*We will arrive in Fairbanks to enjoy the annual winter **World of Ice Art Festival** and learn about the Aurora Borealis at a scientific institute as we discover the delights of Fairbanks and the night skies.*

*Our visits will include the **Geophysical Institute** at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, which was established to study the Aurora and its effects. These studies have continued from the International Geophysical Year in 1957-58 and are conducted in both polar areas. They have added greatly to understanding the unique interactions between*



the Sun and Earth in the polar regions.

*In Fairbanks we will go to two of the best locations in the evening to look at the Aurora Borealis: **Mt. Aurora** and **Creamer's Field**. In these remote locations, we will enjoy hospitality in rustic lodges while viewing the Aurora.*

You will have afternoons to discover other delights of this snowy wonderland. We will see sled dogs and they will

*demonstrate this popular winter sport. We will also visit the **Poker Flat Research Range** which launches rockets to study the Aurora Borealis.*

*Leading this expedition will be popular Betchart naturalist **Bob Nansen**, who has led numerous Eclipse, Antarctica, and Aurora expeditions for Planetary Society over the last 18 years.*

We invite travelers with an appetite for adventure and discovery to explore the day and night winter wonderland of our 49th state this winter!

Sincerely,

Bill Nye
The Science Guy®
CEO



Aurora Borealis Itinerary

Day 1 Home to Anchorage

Expedition members fly from their nearest gateway city to Anchorage, Alaska. Transfer on your own to our *Hotel* (2 nights). Afternoon at leisure, or visit the Anchorage Museum of History and Art for a fascinating introduction to the people and wildlife of Alaska. Welcome social, orientation, and dinner. (D)

Day 2 Seward & Resurrection Bay

Today we will travel south through the Chugach National Forest to the fishing village of Seward adjacent to Kenai Fjords National Park. Seward is named for U.S. Secretary of State, William Seward, who convinced Congress to buy Alaska from Russia in 1867 for less than 2 cents per acre. Here, we will explore the excellent Alaska Sea Life Center. We will see much of the marine life of the North Pacific including seabirds, sea lions, bald eagles, and more! Afternoon return to Anchorage via the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center. (B)

Day 3 Talkeetna to Fairbanks by Train

Depart for Talkeetna, a true Alaskan village. Talkeetna inspired the town depicted in the TV series "Northern Exposure" and is almost as quirky. We will explore Talkeetna, visit shops, and the Museum. Then we will board the famous Alaska Railroad for a scenic journey from Talkeetna to Fairbanks, situated in the interior of this vast state. The rail trip will take about nine hours, with stops along the way to allow locals to get to and from their homes when snow blocks many of the smaller roads.

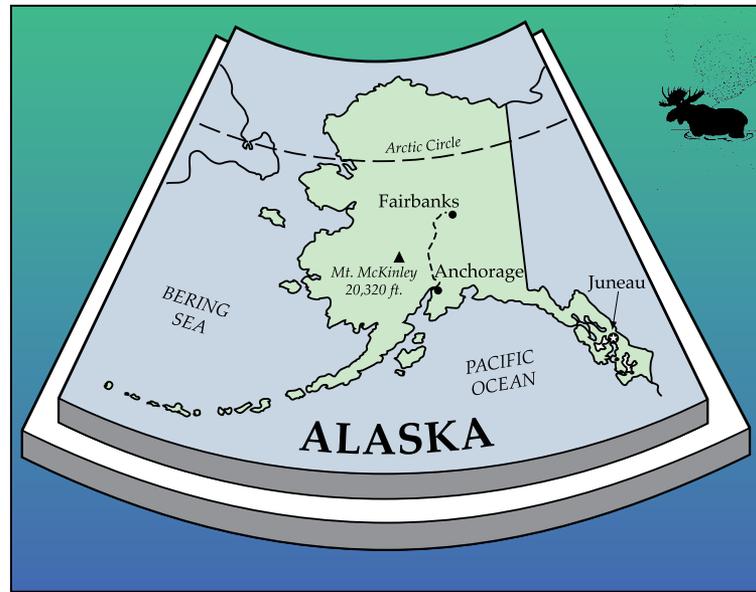
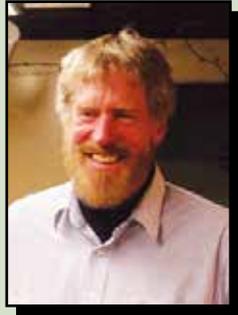
In winter, the views of Mt. McKinley, at 20,320 feet, can be outstanding with clear skies. The train has a dining car for meals. Arrive in Fairbanks and transfer to *our Hotel* (4 nights). (B)

LEADERSHIP

Leading the expedition will be Bob Nansen, popular leader of many Alaska Aurora Borealis trips for The Planetary Society since 2002, as well as Total Solar Eclipse trips to Iceland (2015), Indonesia (2016), and the Grand Tetons (2017), plus many other Annular and Total Eclipse trips.

Bob is a naturalist with a strong interest in wildlife and astronomy, and will delight in sharing the wonders of the night sky with you in Alaska.

Bob was recently in charge of the Planetary Society Sun Valley Eclipse and Grand Tetons Eclipse trips, where many Planetary Society travelers saw the eclipse from the top of Bald Mountain and Rendezvous Peak.



Day 4 Geophysical Institute & Ice Festival

This morning we will enjoy an introduction to the Aurora Borealis at the Geophysical Institute, University of Alaska, Fairbanks. The Institute has a long history of Aurora research that continues today. We will learn about the different types of Auroras, the colors, movements, and current research. Sound at different wavelengths is also emitted by Auroras, but whether a human can hear the sounds has long been debated.

Later in the day, we will visit the famed Fairbanks World of Ice Art Festival. Here, tantalizing images of moose, swans, and other fanciful works of imagination have been carved from massive blocks of ice and illuminated by colored lights to enhance the effects of size and realism.

Following dinner on your own, we will drive to the wildlife refuge, Creamer's Field, to be joined by local star gazers to view the night sky, and the Aurora Borealis. (B)

Day 5 Poker Flat & Mt. Aurora

This morning we will have a late breakfast and then enjoy a late morning lecture. After lunch we will visit the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, the 800-mile-long pipe that carries crude oil from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez for shipment by enormous oil tankers to the "lower 48." We will continue northeast of Fairbanks through rounded, snow-covered schist hills which were a focus of gold mining at the turn of the century. Millions of ounces of gold were taken from this region over a period of 60 years.

We then visit the Poker Flat Research Range. Poker Flat is the world's only university-owned and operated rocket range. The range has been in operation since 1968 and fires rockets to study the Aurora Borealis and do other atmospheric research. The facility houses a geophysical observatory, telemetry

receiving stations, and rocket assembly. We continue to Mt. Aurora for a lodge dinner and evening Aurora viewing. Late return to our Hotel. (B,D)

Day 6 Sled Dogs & Aurora Borealis

After a late breakfast, we will continue our lecture program. After lunch we will visit a kennel of dogs and learn about the art of raising sled dogs and driving dogsleds through the Alaskan wilderness.

We will also visit the University of Alaska Museum of the North today. Here, we will see examples of the many peoples who inhabit interior Alaska and displays of both migratory and non-migratory wildlife. We will also visit the Large Animal Research Station to learn about their research and see the musk ox and caribou at the facility.

Tonight we will watch and photograph the Aurora from an Aurora-viewing facility outside of Fairbanks. Some may choose to photograph the star trails. These dark nights might be a time to experience some of the hearty beverages that keep away the cold. (B,D)

Day 7 Fairbanks to Home

After breakfast, transfer to the Fairbanks Airport. Connect with a flight to Anchorage and fly to the "lower 48" states. (B)



Reservations #1501/BE.PLS

Yes! I/We want to join the **Alaska Aurora Borealis Expedition, March 15-21, 2018**, offered by **The Planetary Society and Betchart Expeditions Inc.**

Please reserve _____ space(s) on the expedition. As a deposit, I/we have enclosed a check for \$ _____ (\$500 per person), payable to Betchart Expeditions Inc. Trust Account.

Name(s): _____ Age ____ Sex ____

_____ Age ____ Sex ____

Address: _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone: Home (____) _____

Work (____) _____

Email: _____

Citizenship: ___ USA ___ Canada Other: _____

Member: ___ Planetary Society ___ AAAS ___ Sigma Xi ___ ACS

Accommodations Preference:

___ Twin ___ Single Twin Share ___ with a friend *or*
___ assign a roommate

___ Nonsmoker ___ Smoker

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

**Please Mail To: Alaska Aurora Borealis 2018
Betchart Expeditions Inc.**

17050 Montebello Road, Cupertino, CA 95014-5435



BAJA CALIFORNIA!
Great Whales Adventure!
January 27-February 3, 2018
including the Lunar Eclipse January 31

Join us for a remarkable adventure to explore the desert wilderness and marine wonderland of Baja California on board *National Geographic Sea Bird* at the time of the Lunar Eclipse, January 31, 2018. See the extraordinary California gray whales in Magdalena Bay, and rich marine waters of the Sea of Cortez! Explore the night skies and learn about the lunar eclipse with astronomer Dr. Tyler Nordgren!

Costs & Conditions

Expedition Fee: \$2,995 per person twin share for 7 days (plus airfare to Anchorage, Alaska, with return from Fairbanks).

Singles: We encourage singles to register on a "twin share" basis. Should you desire single accommodations, the single supplement is \$595. If you do not have a roommate and we cannot assign one, you must pay the single supplement.

What to Expect:

This expedition is for the travel enthusiast who would enjoy seeing the great beauty of Alaska in winter, including "the greatest light show on Earth"—the Aurora Borealis or Northern Lights. Visit Resurrection Bay for the winter wildlife and great scenery. Travel on the classic train journey from Talkeetna to Fairbanks, passing North America's greatest mountain, Mt. McKinley, en route. See ice sculptures in Fairbanks, and learn about the Aurora Borealis at a scientific institute. Also visit the Museum of the North and musk ox research facility. Evenings view the Aurora at Mt. Aurora and Creamer's Field.

The Aurora is normally seen on 80% of the clear nights in March and an active Aurora on 4 out of 10 nights in March. There may be some nights when no Aurora is seen, or there could be bad weather (we hope not, but be prepared for this possibility). Two trips in 15 years have seen no aurora.

Typically, it will be from 15° to 35°F during the days; with temperatures dropping to 10° to -30°F at night. If you have any questions, please consult your physician before you register. This expedition will be a tremendous experience for travelers with an appetite for adventure and discovery! (No smoking in vehicles, during lectures, or meals, please.)

Expedition Fee Includes:

Land transport by coach, train, or vans; six nights accommodations in first-class hotels, twin share with bath; six breakfasts, and three dinners; group entrance fees; leadership, administration.

Expedition Fee Does Not Include:

Airfare to Anchorage with return from Fairbanks; arrival transfers in Anchorage; five lunches, three dinners; independent airport transfers; optional activities; personal items such as alcoholic beverages, laundry, phone calls, bottled water, soda, snacks, or personal insurance.

Airfares & Airline Ticketing:

Please make flight arrangements directly with the airlines to arrive in Anchorage by 4:00 p.m. March 15, and to depart from Fairbanks late morning March 21.

FOR RESERVATIONS

Please mail the completed reservation form with a deposit check for \$500 per person to:

Betchart Expeditions Inc.

**17050 Montebello Road
Cupertino, CA 95014-5435**

Telephone (800) 252-4910 (USA)

or (408) 252-4910 (International)

Fax: (408) 252-1444

Email: April@betchartexpeditions.com

Final payment is due December 21, 2017

Look on the Web: www.betchartexpeditions.com



Cancellations & Refunds:

The initial deposit for this expedition is refundable up to 60 days before departure less a handling fee of \$100 per person. There will be no refund for any cancellation after the 60-day period unless your place can be resold, then only the handling fee of \$100 is withheld. There are no refunds for unused meals, accommodations, or other expedition features. Trip cancellation insurance will be offered; it will cover preexisting medical conditions if purchased within 21 days of the date on your confirmation letter and full trip payment.

Questions?

Please call **April Milne**
Betchart Expeditions Inc.

Phone: (800) 252-4910 (USA)

or (408) 252-4910

(International)

Fax: (408) 252-1444

Email:

April@betchartexpeditions.com



Responsibility: Betchart Expeditions Inc. and The Planetary Society act only as agents for the passenger with respect to transportation and hotels and exercise every care possible. We can assume no liability for injury, damage, delay, loss, accident, or irregularity in connection with the services of any airplane, ship, motorcoach, or any other conveyance used in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, acts of God, terrorism, or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as our rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to substitute another leader of similar expertise or to cancel any tour prior to departure in which case the entire payment will be refunded with no further obligation on our part. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour. No refund will be made for the unused portion of any tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The price of the program is based on current tariffs and rates, and is subject to change. Any tariff, exchange rate, or fuel increases will be passed on to participants. Baggage is carried at the owner's risk entirely. It is understood that the air ticket when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and the airline concerned. The airlines concerned are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their plane or conveyance.

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Photographs courtesy of Dennis Mammana & Tyler Nordgren.

Illustrations and map courtesy of April Milne & Narca Moore-Craig

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