

# GOODHOPE RIVER REINDEER HERDER CABINS

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# Objectives

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-  The NPS would like to restore the former reindeer herder's cabins at Goodhope River as warming shelters for use by the public.
-  The NPS would like to learn about life at the site when it was used by the reindeer herders.

# Goodhope River Reindeer Site

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The two cabins and corral are in a bend  
of the Goodhope River

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Local reindeer herders working under the auspices of the Civilian Conservation Corps built the corral and first building, perhaps used as a mess hall, in 1938.



A new type of portable cabin on skids was designed by the Reindeer Service to encourage close management of the herds.

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# General History

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- ❏ The Reindeer Act of 1937 turned over ownership of all Alaskan reindeer to Alaska Natives under the control of the *U.S. Reindeer Agency*.
- ❏ During the 1940s the large reindeer herds were decimated. Wolf predation was blamed as the cause, and the Reindeer Service introduced airborne wolf hunting as a more efficient way to kill wolves.
- ❏ Herd management practices were in flux from open herding to the more traditional close herding introduced by Siberian and Sami herders.

# Site History

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- Herding at Goodhope languished in the 1940s, and the Deering herd was loaned to the Escholtz and Kiwalik herds.
- In the 1960s, the Karmun family once again began active management of its deer herd, and herding began again at Goodhope.
- Over the years, herders and visitors to the site left their imprint. In 2007, CRM professionals from the NPS visited the site, and surveyed the contents of the buildings and the corral.

The many dated signatures carved into the large wooden table inside the main cabin, and autographs carved into the walls of the smaller building on skids, helped establish the years of use for the site.

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| Decade | N of visits | N of people | % of Total |
|--------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| 1930s  | 1           | 1           | 2          |
| 1940s  | 0           | 0           | 0          |
| 1950s  | 5           | 5           | 7          |
| 1960s  | 10          | 26          | 27         |
| 1970s  | 12          | 57          | 51         |
| 1980s  | 8           | 10          | 13         |
| 1990s  | 0           | 0           | 0          |

A silver metal spiral binding is visible on the left side of the page, with the wire looping through a series of holes.

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One research question that needed to be answered was what part did this facility play in the seasonal round of herding activities? The autographs helped pinpoint the times of year it was most visited.

## Seasonality of Visits to Goodhope

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| Month     | No of Visits |
|-----------|--------------|
| January   | 1            |
| March     | 13           |
| April     | 3            |
| May       | 4            |
| July      | 6            |
| August    | 1            |
| September | 1            |
| November  | 1            |
| December  | 1            |

The signatures establish that the Goodhope facility was mainly used for corralling the herds for counting, marking and castration

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### **Seasonal Activities in Reindeer Herding**

| <b>Activity</b>                       | <b>Month(s)</b>   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Close herding                         | October to May    |
| Calving                               | April to mid-June |
| Counting/marketing/castrating/corrals | March             |
| Antler removal in corrals             | June-July         |
| Slaughtering                          | November-February |

From the table and walls, we made a list of the people who may have worked at Goodhope during the 1960s and 1970s, or earlier.

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### **Names**

The Barr family--Gideon, Jimmy, Reginald and Tom

The Davis family--John and Larry

The Moto family--Carl, George, Gibson, Jim, John and Ronnie

The Sheldon family--Bobby, Douglas, Terresa

The Thomas family--Bert and Ike

The Tocktoo family--Benny, Clarence and Vincent

# Other Names From the Table and Walls

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-  **Winona Beep**
-  **William Gilford**
-  **Delbert Hess**
-  **Alfred Karmun**
-  **Bobby Mendenhall**
-  **Wilfred Olanna (1938?)**
-  **Henry Schaeffer, Sr.**
-  **James Smith**
-  **Gene Snell**
-  **Millie Taft**

# Please Help!

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We don't know where the people who worked or lived at the Goodhope site are now.

We would like to find them so we could come and learn from them, and share with others what it was like to herd the reindeer at Goodhope.

It is important that we listen to the people and hear their views about what the NPS will do with the buildings and old corral at Goodhope.