

### **What is a Backcountry Airstrip?**

Backcountry airstrips are improved public use aircraft landing areas generally located in remote areas without onsite management. These airstrips may be available year around or seasonally and usually support activities such as remote residential, recreational or industrial use. They also provide important access for land and resource managers from public or private entities. They are located on both public and private lands, and range from airstrips with little or no maintenance to more developed airstrips with some regular maintenance and amenities.

**Kansas Creek**  
Photo courtesy of AOPA

### **Alaska DOT&PF Airstrip Preservation Efforts**

Alaska's backcountry airstrips are a crucial element of the state's aviation infrastructure, often serving as the only access points to remote areas. It is the policy of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) that these essential facilities be preserved and protected and continue to benefit Alaskans. These airports are by definition not included in the FAA's National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems and are not eligible for federal funding. Any comprehensive preservation policy will include efforts to educate the public on the benefits of these facilities, a system for pilots to report conditions of these airports, and the coordination of volunteer / stakeholder groups for maintenance efforts.

### **The Alaska DOT&PF Needs Your Help!**

We would like to include you in our efforts to ensure these essential facilities be preserved and protected. If you want to be contacted in regards to future projects aimed at backcountry airstrips, or to assist in updating the Master Records of these airstrips, please contact Alaska Statewide Aviation at 907-269-0730 or [statewideaviation@alaska.gov](mailto:statewideaviation@alaska.gov)

[www.AlaskaASP.com](http://www.AlaskaASP.com)

### **Backcountry Airstrip Users Comment on Why These Airstrips are Important**

An extensive survey of backcountry airstrip users was conducted as part of Alaska Aviation System Plan. Below are some of the many comments that were received, highlighting the value of these unique airstrips:

*"We need more attention to identifying, charting, and protecting these airstrips."*

*"These airstrips serve as a vital means of access to remote public lands that would otherwise be completely inaccessible. They serve as well to help the state in the development of resources...."*

*"With so incredibly few roads in our vast mostly inaccessible state, airstrips and off-airport landing sites are one of the few options to really know Alaska."*

*"We are 'plane camping' Alaska travelers and love the opportunities available there. My wife has multiple sclerosis which has removed backpacking from being an option for us. Our plane allows us to continue to enjoy the backcountry and all her majestic beauty. We look forward to each of our future visits."*

*"They are of vital importance to Alaskans. Keeping them available and open to the public is of great significance to me."*

**Alsek River**

# **BACKCOUNTRY AIRSTRIPS OF ALASKA**

**An Important, but Often Overlooked Resource**

Part of the  
**ALASKA**  
Aviation System Plan

Backcountry Airstrip Work Group





## Backcountry Airstrip Survey Results

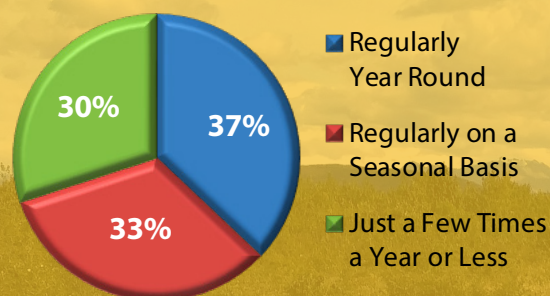
The Backcountry Airstrip Work Group's efforts focused on marked and improved remote airstrips in Alaska. Although off-field landings are common in Alaska, these types of landing areas were not included in the study. In an effort to better understand the importance and needs of Alaska's backcountry airstrips, the work group conducted a public survey from April 6th to May 15th, 2017. The survey was widely distributed with the help of the Alaska Airmen's Association (AAA), the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), the Recreational Airstrip Foundation (RAF), and the Alaska Air Carriers Association (AACA). The survey collected a wide range of data, including who uses the system and why, frequency of use, importance and identification of existing needs or issues.

## Mission of the Work Group

Alaskan backcountry airstrips are an important resource. They provide access to remote areas and support a broad range of activities including commercial, industrial and recreational uses as well as emergency landing areas.

As a part of the Alaska Aviation System Plan, the Backcountry Airstrip Work Group examined these unique airstrips. Partnering with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), AAA, AOPA, RAF, and AACA, the group identified the issues impacting these important assets to help guide future preservation decisions.

### Approximately how often do you land at backcountry airstrips?

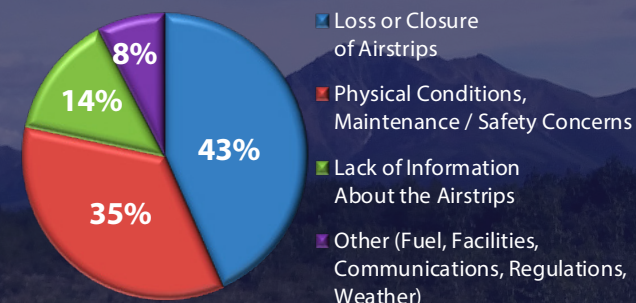


56% of respondents indicated backcountry airstrips they visit are in need of repairs and maintenance.

79% of respondents stated interest in volunteer opportunities to help maintain the system.

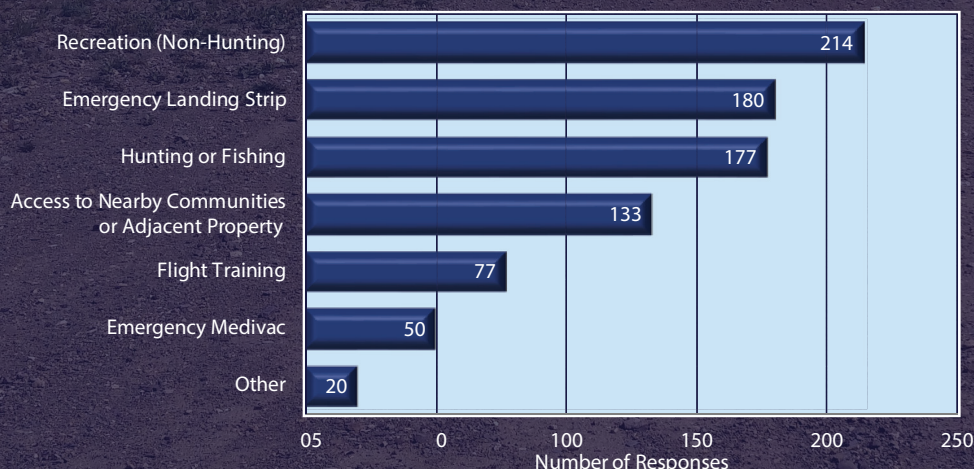


### What issues concern you the most regarding backcountry airstrips?



**Response Rate:** Nearly 250 survey respondents, with 91% reporting that they use backcountry airstrips across Alaska.

### Why are backcountry airstrips important to you?



### How do you find information regarding backcountry airstrips?

