A Prepper’s Story: Headed To Alaska To Survive Off-grid

Summer 2015. The North Alaskan Wilderness. Isolated from civilization. No electric. No cell phone. No plumbing. For years we have been saying just a couple more years and we will move away. Well, we’ve decided to stop putting off our dream! We have decided to do it!

Moving to Alaska has always been a dream of ours. It was not one person’s idea, and the other person followed along. This idea existed before me and my wife knew each other, we shared the same dream. We dreamed of moving to the Alaskan bush and living in our very own hand built log cabin in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by nature and wildlife.

We wanted to make a life in the remote wilderness away from civilization years ago, but some things always came up. We kept saying that one day we would go. Finally we decided that we no longer had the patience to wait. We felt like if we continued to wait for the perfect time, it would never happen.

Waiting gets you nowhere. Instead of saying there is so much to do before we can move, we asked each other “what do we need to do to make this happen right now?”

Any Moving Checklist Starts with a Good Location

In August 2014 we decided to move to the land we dreamed of, Northern Alaska. To live a simple off the grid life, not only for the beauty of an untouched landscape and the wildlife, but for the peace of the undeveloped wilderness.

Our land

There are many things that can lead to failure. Death from hypothermia, starvation from not being able to find food hunting, an injury that you can't treat because you can't get help. If a person is heading out away from civilization with doubts, it's a bad move.

You have to know you can succeed and have the tools as well as knowledge to accomplish that.

We did make a plan, we planned a lot of things. You cannot find yourself in the Northern wilderness of Alaska without a plan, especially when bringing a child to live an off the grid lifestyle.

First the financial aspect. We asked ourselves what could we afford to pay for the land? We had to make sure we would not have to take out a mortgage from a bank, or have huge payments that we could not afford once living off-grid. Also, the expense of a simple boat that would allow us to get to town for supplies a couple times a year.

For us, the hardest thing was finding the land. We knew we wanted somewhere remote, but also somewhere that we would have the things we need for off the grid living. A water source, an area well populated for hunting. Good land to build on. Plenty of trees for heating with a wood stove.

Finding land was not easy, and it took us a few years to actually find what we wanted. We looked at many online sales.

Craigslist. Land watches. We wrote emails and letters asking about land, contacted realtors, and any person who would talk to us about land.

We would never decide on land without seeing it first. You can’t simply look at a picture and say I’ll take it! We had to literally stand on the land, walk the land, make sure there was an area safe to build, that would not be flooded during the spring thaw when the river breaks up.

We were able to negotiate with the land because it was being sold through a private sale. The land cost a lot of money. If you consider the price for the amount of land we have it is much cheaper than we would have to pay in a developed area.

It was also important for us to find land where we don’t have to pay taxes on the property every year. Since we are so far from the location that we chose to live this lifestyle, it is a big expense to just get there. We are driving over 4300 miles.

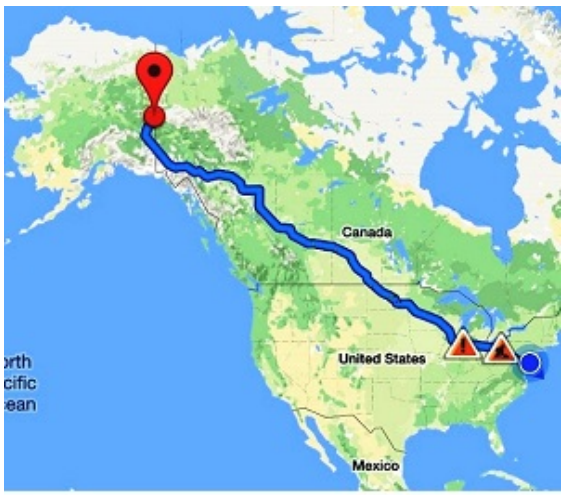
Other expenses for living in the location we chose are a boat, fuel, basic tools for building a cabin, stocking up supplies for our initial relocation. With being in such a remote area it is a lot more work to get what we need on our own. The land is definitely the larger expense.

There are a few things to beware of when looking for land for relocating. You need to find out if the land surrounding your property can be built upon. We did not want to build a cabin off the grid, then over time others start moving into the area and building around us, especially nothing commercialized. We were very lucky to have found a property that is surrounded by a wildlife refuge. That land is protected from developers.

Also beware of the climate. We choose to live about 125 miles south of the Arctic Circle, where temperatures can reach below 60 in winter. You must make sure you know what you are getting into and that you are prepared.

Planning the Journey of a Lifetime

Having a boat is also very important: we need it to get to and from town once off the grid. Without a boat, we could not get to our property. If we choose a boat too small we would have a problem hauling stuff to our property.



Our route

We had to have a certain type of boat. It had to be a flat bottom boat that was made of aluminum. We needed to make sure it was wide and at least 16 feet long.

We also needed a trailer to bring the boat with us, and also a motor was a necessity. We wanted to purchase the whole package, and that was hard to come by.

We searched for a boat for several months. We looked on Craigslist in Alaska. We did not want the hassle of traveling with a 16 foot boat for over 4,000 miles across the United States and Canada.

After searching with no luck, we decided to look locally. We went to marine dealers, we checked newspaper ads, and viewed boats on E-bay. We looked every day for 5 months. We not only checked in our area but the states surrounding us.

It was an exhausting search. Sometimes we would find the perfect boat but it would not have a motor, or the trailer was not included. We wanted to keep our price below 3,000 dollars. An aluminum flat bottom boat without anything included could range in prices of 2,000-20,000. New motors alone are much more than 3,000, so we knew we had to buy something used.

We actually got a deal on a good used boat. We finally found a boat that was 2,200 dollars. The boat has no holes or leaks, and it came with an almost brand new trailer, and a motor in good running condition. We had to drive over 3 hours one way to buy the boat, but it was definitely worth the 6 + hours of driving to get it. We had to make plans for the cabin, how we would construct it. Then to plan where we would live while building the cabin. We decided to buy a canvas wall tent with a small wood stove.

Next we had to figure out how we would have food. We bought fishing net for catching chum, salmon, white fish and others found in the Yukon River. It's impossible to have a garden the first summer, so we bought some dehydrated vegetables. Rice, beans, things that we would be able to cook on a wood stove or over a fire.

We decided to buy our beans and such in bulk. The things we purchased were powdered whole milk, powdered eggs, 20 large #10 cans of dehydrated assorted vegetables and 10 large #10 cans of dehydrated fruits, several cases of toddler meats, several cans of dehydrated potatoes, 25 pounds of sugar, 25 pounds of flour, spices, 2 pounds of chicken bullion, 60 pounds of rice and 25 pounds of beans.

Once the cabin is built, we plan to do plenty of hunting, also restock our dehydrated foods before the river freezes. It will be much nicer to have a garden the following summer, so we can do canning with our vegetables. We only planned for the summer. What we have for food in the summer we need to have 3 times as much stockpiled for the winter.

Without a snow machine, we figure we will be completely cut off from civilization for at least 7 months, maybe 8 months. We know that when the river freezes we are 100 percent isolated. Most people go to the grocery store once a week, but imagine shopping for food and not going back to the grocery store for 32 weeks. We hope that after the first year we can

be more dependent on ourselves by growing our own foods. It will make a big difference financially.

We had to plan the trip there. It’s over 4,000 miles to get there, with everything we own stuffed into the back of our pick-up truck. We had to look at everything we owned and decide what items to keep and what to give away. There is nothing we can think of that we feel sorry about leaving behind.

The Challenge for Body, Spirit and Soul

Of course we will miss our family, but we do not feel sorry about the life we have chosen. To live such a remote life does take sacrifice. Not just not being able to visit with family or friends but, but we must sacrifice all modern conveniences.

If we run out of bread, we have to make more by hand. When our clothes are dirty, we can’t toss them into a washing machine. Instead we have to haul water from the river in 5 gallon buckets, then wash them by hand on a washing board with a bar of soap.

We can’t pick up a phone to chat with someone. We cannot turn on a light or turn on a heater. Even the convenience of washing dishes will miss. That too includes hauling water from the river, then heating the water, then washing the dishes in a washing tub.

Getting a bath, or using the bathroom is different in the bush. Or having to use the bathroom in a freezing cold outhouse in the dark days of winter. Think about hauling water in buckets then heating it for a bath in a galvanized 20 gallon bucket.

Moving to the wilderness of Alaska we leave behind an easy life, to have a better quality of life. If people imagine a

cozy romantic cabin in the wilderness, laying around drinking hot chocolate all day, they are out for quite a shock. Going off-grid will test a person on all levels: your strength, your skills, and your mental status. It’s not an easy sit back kind of life. Hard work keeps a person healthy and also gives us a lot to be proud of.

The biggest milestone of our plan is that we have an exact date to begin our long journey. We are leaving from Delaware on May 1 2015. Having the land cleared will be another milestone. So is getting the cabin complete before the snow starts to fall. After that we can breathe a little easier, knowing we have solid shelter for the long cold dark winter ahead.

This is a tough work to accomplish, and we prepared ourselves trying to stay active. We try to hike as much as possible to keep our bodies in shape.

Our family

My wife Amber stays busy with an active toddler. She is a stay at home mother, and takes care of the majority of our cooking, baking, canning, gardening in the summer, cleaning our home and making sure the laundry is always done.

I am on my feet 12 hours each day with my job, and after work I come home and always find something to get done.

I keep myself busy with chopping wood for our fireplace or doing mechanical as well as household repairs. Lately I have been updating wires and fuel lines on the boat. We don’t think that there is one certain thing to do to prepare for this lifestyle.

Getting our cabin done in 3 months’ time will be many hours of hard physical work. Creating this off the grid-life will be

the hardest work in the shortest amount of time that we have ever had to accomplish in both our lives.

Lessons to Learn

There are many skills needed for this new life. A big one is problem solving, able to think on your feet. You need some basic engineering and creative thinking to make things work. Some carpentry skills, hunting plus having the know how to safely process and preserve the meat.

Experience fishing along with cutting and cleaning the fish. Knowing how to properly and accurately handle a firearm, gardening skills, canning, survival skills as well as knowing what to do medically if an accident happened.

You have to learn how to operate a chainsaw, hand tools, and even the proper way to use an axe. It may sound ridiculous to say, but some people do not know how to properly use an axe. One mistake while swinging the axe and you could be bleeding to death hours away from civilization with a frozen river in front of you and mountains surrounding you.

We are preparing ourselves discussing different scenarios, what if this happened and talk about how we would respond. We are going into the wild, and we cannot predict what will happen but it would be foolish to think that nothing bad would ever happen. Especially in an area very remote where grizzly and black bear along with wolves are abundant.

We garden now, as well as canning foods, and hunting. A lot of the things we already do, are things that we will face once off the grid. Even knowing how to make a fire with different items is important.

Then there is the aspect of our health. Knowing the signs of dehydration, making sure our water is safe to drink. Learning the most we can for as many situations as we can imagine. For example, Amber was explaining the process of using a sewing

needle and fishing line to stitch a deep cut.

These are things that you have to consider when living this life. We are not necessarily afraid of anything in particular, instead I would say, we know the dangers that we could certainly face. Our child becoming sick, or a grizzly bear ripping through our tent in the middle of the night while we sleep. Making sure we are prepared for the winters with enough food and wood to survive. Not only surviving but thriving in long winters with Subzero conditions.

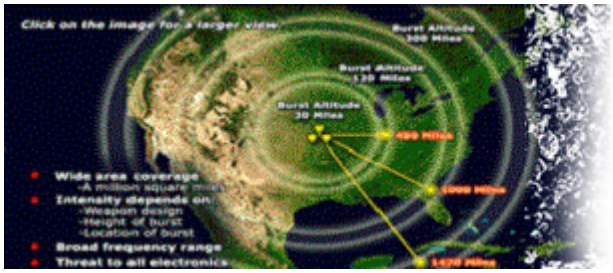
How are we going to live your life one year from now? We want to have the peace of knowing we have created a life that we can be proud of. A completed log cabin and sauna, a completed outhouse. We hope to have a garden that produces well. The satisfaction that we built everything by hand. A feeling of complete freedom. We set out with the idea of not just changing our life, but starting a new life, a life that would be exactly how we wanted it. Our plans did not happen overnight, they took years.

A lot of people opposed our idea of going off-grid. Some family members thought we were insane. Some people even questioned if we were doing the right thing for our son. Others supported our dream, and have decided to follow our journey online. We had to ignore negativity and do what we thought was right. We are the ones that will be living this life. We refused to give up our dream because of others opinions.

Finding land was tough. We did not just pick a spot and suddenly it was ours. Finding land takes a lot of work. You need patience along with persistence. Living off the grid is not deciding to simply walk into the wilderness. Choosing this life takes a lot of skills, research, knowledge, hard work. Also we leave a lot behind: family, friends, electric, cell phones, and many other modern conveniences.

This journey is years in the making. We are excited for it to finally begin. There are no doubts or regrets of leaving life as we know it behind, and we have no plans of ever turning back.

We are headed to Alaska to survive the Yukon!



NASA's Dire Warning: "What We Feared Most Will Come Upon Us. 13 Months To Get Ready"

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*This article has been written by **Rich Johnson** for Survivopedia.*