



(View of the Black Rapids Glacier valley taken on August 28.)

Join me during the 2018 Black Rapids Fall Photography Workshop for an amazing experience photographing and hiking during Alaska's short but magical fall season. Located along a remote stretch of the Richardson Highway, the [Lodge at Black Rapids](#) will serve as base camp while we explore the rugged mountains and glaciers of the eastern Alaska Range by day and photograph the aurora borealis by night. This workshop isn't for the sedentary tourist or roadside photographer! You'll be earning your shots as we visit scenic locations off the Richardson Highway, hiking on little-known trails and off-trail across the varied terrain of the Alaska Range. The scenery in this area is on par with Denali National Park but it comes without the hordes of tourists and the terrain is not as overexposed...in fact, it's barely exposed! Let me share my knowledge of this majestic region with you as I personally accompany you throughout the workshop providing custom photography instruction in the field and at the lodge, including specialized instruction on shooting the aurora. When we're not adventuring, you'll enjoy private, luxurious accommodations and Alaskan fine dining at the Lodge at Black Rapids. (Did I mention there's a sauna and hot tub?) If you're an avid hiker and a serious outdoor photographer or want to become one, don't waste half your Alaska vacation traveling between locations and don't waste the other half taking the same cliché images of overexposed subjects most other photo tours promote. Instead, come spend quality time in a quiet mountain setting where you can create your own unique images and escape the drone of tour helicopters and crowds while you enjoy Alaska's wilderness. See below for more workshop details and booking information, and don't hesitate to [contact me](#) or the Lodge with questions.

— Steven Miley
StevenMileyPhotography.com



The Lodge at Black Rapids

Itinerary

Participants will be picked up in Fairbanks on Sunday September 2 around noon and transported to the Lodge at Black Rapids approximately 3 hours away. It is recommended you plan to arrive and stay in Fairbanks on Saturday to account for possible travel delays. If you have alternate travel plans, please mention this at the time of booking. Over Sunday afternoon and evening we will cover introductions and orientation, as well as discuss and practice techniques for shooting the aurora borealis so you will be ready if and when a majestic aurora display arises. You will be served dinner at the lodge and if the forecast is promising we will chase the lights later that night. On Monday through Thursday, the hiking itinerary will remain flexible to accommodate group dynamics, weather, staying up late for the aurora borealis, and rest. The goal is to capture the best landscape, adventure, and aurora images we can given the conditions Alaska throws at us while also having an enjoyable experience recreating in the wilderness. Participants will return to Fairbanks on Friday morning in time for any afternoon-scheduled flights. Hiking destinations will emphasize the following:

Itinerary (continued)



Fall Colors

The leaves start changing color in the Alaska Range in late August and typically peak during the first or second week of September. The mountain scenery near Black Rapids rises to another level of gorgeous during this short window, and most of the mosquitoes have disappeared. Temperatures can be cooler than midsummer but still quite enjoyable for hiking. Catch Mt. Hayes and Mt. Moffit reflecting in Donnelly Lake at sunrise, Rainbow Ridge in full rainbow stage, and the rolling tundra coated in

hues of red, orange, and yellow. (Image: Looking down from high up Rainbow Ridge, south of Black Rapids. P.S. - We won't climb anything this steep...probably.)



Glacier Hiking

Get up close and personal with the ice of a glacier! We will visit Canwell or Gulkana Glacier and hike on the ice, looking for interesting features such as moulins, crevasses, meltwater canyons, ice caves, and more. These are not your stereotypical blue tidewater glaciers that you view from afar on a boat, but rather long valley glaciers which serve as highways into the mountains. You'll feel like you're walking on the moon while you observe a landscape being sculpted in real-time by the ice. (Image: Gulkana

Glacier, south of Black Rapids)



Aurora Borealis

Nights are dark enough in Interior Alaska by September to permit viewing and photographing the aurora borealis. Instead of staying up all night every night like you would on an aurora-specific photography tour, we will look for the best windows to photograph the lights so we get enough sleep to balance daytime activities. Our focus will be on achieving artistic captures of the aurora with the Alaska Range as our backdrop. Aurora sightings cannot be guaranteed, but the odds of seeing the aurora over a 5-night period

from our high latitude are generally good. Photographing the aurora in relatively mild September temperatures is also a much more pleasant experience than enduring the extreme cold of winter months. (Image: Aurora over Granite Mountain north of Black Rapids. P.S. - Read my [Aurora Photography Guide](#) for preparation!)

Itinerary (continued)



Adventure

Go on an alpine adventure as we hike up one or more of the many ridges near Black Rapids. We'll gain sweeping views of the Delta River valley and the towering mountains across the river, as well as encounter stunning rock formations, cliffs, pristine mountain creeks, alpine flora, and a lot more. While photographing wildlife is not a primary focus of this tour, we may very well bump into Dall sheep, moose, caribou, or even a b-e-a-r, and we're certain to see signs of these wildlife as well as smaller creatures like arctic

ground squirrels, marmots, eagles, and more. At lower elevations we'll seek out scenic waterfalls, lakes, creeks, and perhaps a few berry patches while we experience the many hidden gems the Black Rapids area has to offer. (Image: Hiking above Bear Creek, north of Black Rapids)

*Note about wildlife photography: Caribou and moose are generally present in large numbers on Army-owned land near Black Rapids, but this land is frequently closed due to training in the fall. The closure schedule is usually not available until a few weeks in advance so no guarantees can be made that the land will be open, but if it is we will probably work in a wildlife photography session, perhaps on the way to or from Fairbanks. Participants who are highly interested in seeing and photographing wildlife may want to consider visiting Denali National Park before or after the workshop—be sure to book your park shuttle well in advance.

Workshop Details & Booking

HOW TO BOOK: Call the Lodge at Black Rapids at 1-877-825-9413 or 907-388-8391 or email thelodgeatblackrapids@gmail.com

Dates: September 2-7, 2018 (5 nights - Arrive Sunday, depart Friday)

Cost (USD): \$4230 per person based on double occupancy; \$5380 per person for single occupancy (Double occupancy rate is for two people booking together; singles will not share rooms)

Deposit & Cancellation Policy: 50% refundable deposit due at time of booking. Total balance due **PRIOR** to July 19, 2018. Entire payment including deposit becomes **non-refundable** starting July 19, 2018. Trip insurance is recommended.

Who: Active photographers ranging from beginner to advanced. Participants should be familiar with their camera menus & controls before arriving and basic photography concepts (aperture/shutter speed/ISO, depth-of-field, basic composition, etc.) - don't need to be experts.

Workshop Group Size: 8 max, 2 min. Workshop will not be canceled as long as minimum is met.

What's Included: Round-trip transportation from Fairbanks to the Lodge at Black Rapids, 5 nights lodging (September 2-6), meals at the Lodge at Black Rapids, transportation during workshop, photography guiding & instruction

What's Not Included: Airfare to/from Fairbanks, lodging/meals in Fairbanks, camera gear, outdoor gear, alcoholic beverages (imbibing heavily is not recommended on nights we plan to shoot the aurora)

Physical Requirements: One or more days will involve moderately strenuous hiking, with "moderately strenuous" defined by 5+ miles round-trip distance and roughly 2000 feet of elevation gain, with potential for "very strenuous" hiking if participants are capable and interested. Hiking off-trail in Alaska is more demanding than hiking on well-maintained trails elsewhere, and don't forget you will be carrying camera gear as well. Slow and steady is fine, but participants should be agile and in good shape. Don't worry, there will be easy days for recovery and routes will be chosen with participant fitness in mind so you will not wind up in over your head. Also, please be aware that in a remote location such as Black Rapids you are several hours from the nearest hospital and rescue personnel may take hours to reach you in an emergency— please be prepared to take care of yourself, especially if you require any medications or have known physical ailments. *All participants will be **required** to sign a **release of liability** as a condition of participating in the workshop.*

Mental Requirements: Positive, team-oriented attitudes are encouraged. It's Alaska, be prepared to endure a little bad weather. You may have to stay up past your bedtime to catch the aurora. You will probably have to deal with heights, putting up with "cold" weather, possibly getting your feet wet, going to the bathroom outside, and other things that make some people uncomfortable.

Gear Recommendations: At minimum, participants should bring a DSLR camera (full-frames are optimal, especially for aurora) along with two or three lenses covering the wide to telephoto focal lengths, a tripod, and common accessories like extra batteries, filters, etc. For a detailed list of recommended camera gear along with clothing & outdoor gear recommendations, [click here](#). Alaska Camera in Fairbanks rents camera gear, as do many online vendors.

About Your Instructor: My name is Steven Miley and I'm a professional photographer living near Black Rapids in Delta Junction, Alaska. I've spent over 6 years exploring the mountains and glaciers surrounding Black Rapids and I know the terrain as well as anyone. I specialize in photographing backcountry landscapes around Alaska, and my photography has appeared in *Alaska* and *Last Frontier* magazines. I also serve as year-round photography & adventure guide for the Lodge at Black Rapids. During the workshop, I'll provide tips and techniques for improving your landscape and adventure photography from a technical and creative standpoint, focusing on how to conceive and plan your shots before you even begin your hiking adventure.