



ST. ELIAS ALPINE GUIDES, LLC

Kite Skiing the Chugach – 10 days

May – August

Kite Skiing Course Outline

- I. **Glacier travel and rescue:**
 - A. How glaciers form and flow
 - B. Route finding
 - C. Roped travel
 - D. Crevasse rescue and haul systems

- II. **Kite flying technique:**
 - A. How the kite works
 - A-1 Concept of lift and Drag
 - B. Kite controls
 - B-1. Lines and Bridle
 - B-2. Launching
 - B-3. Steering
 - B-4. Powering up
 - B-5. Stalling
 - B-6. Landing the kite
 - C. Incorporating skiing with kite flying
 - C-1. Good stance while in tow
 - C-2. Reading the wind
 - C-3. Where to sail on the wind
 - C-4. Emergency ditching of the kite
 - D. Field repair and re-rigging of your kite

- II. **Fundamentals of Ski Mountaineering:**
 - A. Sled hauling
 - B. Ski touring
 - B-1. Roped skiing
 - B-2. Self arrest technique while on skis/snowboard
 - B-3. Maintaining control while on steep terrain
 - C. Traveling in alpine avalanche terrain
 - C-1. Route finding
 - C-2. Recognizing terrain traps
 - C-3. Weather
 - C-4. Snow pack
 - C-5. The Human Factor
 - C-6. Rescue:
 - a. Beacon search
 - b. Probe search
 - c. Treating for hypothermia in a wilderness setting
 - d. Facilitating rapid rescue in a wilderness setting

Kite Skiing Program

After a recent trip to the Bagley Icefield, one of our guides, Eli, recognized the vast potential for kite assisted, ski mountaineering right in our own backyard. The Bagley Icefield is one of the largest icefields outside of the Polar Regions. It offers an incredible training area for learning the fast growing sport of traction kiting. Traction kites are a class of kites that harness the wind's power and haul a person on their vehicle of choice. In our case it is skis or a snowboard, and this is simply referred to as kite skiing. There are several advantages of learning to kite ski on the Bagley Icefield. An icefield is not flowing in the same way as a glacier and therefore less likely to be crevassed, so therefore the objective hazards are significantly reduced as compared to standard glaciated terrain.



ST. ELIAS ALPINE GUIDES, LLC

Kite Skiing the Chugach – 10 days

May – August

If a glacier is a river, than an icefield is a lake, and what an unbelievable lake it is. The Bagley Icefield covers a vast area in an east to west orientation starting on the U.S. - Yukon Territory border and running on average, six miles wide, for nearly 100 miles, passing by countless mountains. It finally terminates in the Eastern Chugach, where it quickly spills out of the mountains in tumbling cefalls headed for the Copper River Delta. This is a kite skiing paradise yet to be explored.

You will fly from McCarthy, Alaska to the Bagley Icefield - an amazing 1 hour flight through the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. After the drone of the airplane fades away, you will look around and realize that you have just rediscovered the definition of wilderness. Forget the crowds of the Alaska Range in spring; the only proof of other humans' existence is the occasional commercial jet passing over. After a few days the jets become reassuring company. In the Eastern part of the Icefield you will enjoy a panorama that has few equals. At the same time you can look at the Western side of Mt. Logan, Canada's highest peak at 19,551 feet (5,959m), and the north side of Mt. St. Elias, America's second highest peak at 18,008 feet (5,488m). The uniqueness of this view is that Mt. Logan is the largest mountain by volume on Earth. The summit plateau is 23 miles long, and the base circumference over 100 miles. Likewise Mt. St. Elias is the largest mountain on Earth in terms of vertical relief. It rises to its full height from its base in the frigid waters of Icy Bay (sea level) in less than 20 Miles.

These two magnificent peaks will act only as sentinels on our trip. We will keep our sights set on the lower mountains along the perimeter of the Icefield. Many of these mountains are unclimbed, unskied, and unbelievably skier friendly. After learning and grasping the fundamentals of kite skiing, we will use our kites as vehicles to cover long distances with relative ease and speed. We will use the Bagley Icefield as a super-highway to the mountains. Provided the wind is strong and the weather good, we will be able to cover a lot of ground in this skiers' Shangri La.

If you are researching this type of expedition you may have seen a lot of hype about Baffin Island. That venue is no doubt a paradise of it's own but it is very difficult and expensive to get to. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park is easy to get to in terms of Alaskan destinations. All you have to do is make your way to Anchorage and we will arrange the rest. Baffin Island is only "in" during the frigid arctic spring - the temperatures must be cold enough to maintain frozen sea ice there. The Bagley Icefield is glacial ice and therefore not as subject to summer warming. During the 2004 summer season (one of the warmest on record in Alaska) we enjoyed days with temps in the 70's while skiing perfect corn snow under August sunshine. We feel this makes for a much better classroom. The Bagley sits at a moderate elevation of 6,000 feet so that acclimatization is not an issue.

We encourage you to be one of the first to experience this remote area and learn an exciting new sport in an awe-inspiring classroom. The head of our kite-skiing program, Eli Potter, has kite-skied in many areas including Antarctica and several icefields throughout Canada. Eli is excited to share in this adventure with those looking to get in at the cutting edge, as he considers the Bagley prime real estate for this up-and-coming sport. If you have never flown a kite or are a trend setting veteran, we would be happy to cater to all ability levels. Moderate proficiency at skiing or snowboarding is required. Snowboarders are required to have a means of touring (i.e. snowshoes or a split board with skins). Avalanche equipment is a must. See equipment list for other items. Kites will be provided with an option to buy at a reduced price before or after the course. The cost of the course includes instruction, food, and flights. We are limiting the client-guide ratio of this trip to 3:1. Invite some friends! More people reduce the cost of a trip. A trip you will never forget, in an Alaska that few will experience.