

# Bering Straits Spring - Nome to Deering, 2015

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**Skis. Sleds. Sea Ice. Blizzards. Breakup. Packrafts.**

**One 6-year-old. One 4-year-old.**

**Two months. 360+ miles.**

**Along the edge of the Bering Strait from Nome to Deering.**

Originally, we thought we'd make it all the way to Kotzebue. Between kid speed and storms, we changed our estimation, and ended up in Deering on the last day of May. It was an amazing ride. You can see [photos from our travels](#), an [interactive map](#) with our route and messages from the wild, and read Erin's [first update](#) and [second update](#) published in the ADN.



**[Visiting where the first Americans may have tread](#)** -- *The winds died. The craggy cliffs disappeared. The world turned flat and white. Sometimes, heading down the beach in the morning, when it looked just the same as yesterday and the kids wanted to play "Pooh and Piglet and the Sabertooth Tiger" and "Pretend Easter Egg Hunt in the Mud Melt Holes" -- just the same as yesterday -- the world seemed endless...* [\[Read More\]](#) ...Erin McKittrick, May 31, 2015

**[Walking a windswept 500 miles to Kotzebue with 2 kids](#)** -- *Bryan Weyauvanna stepped off his snowmachine, gulped the last of his thermos of coffee, and gestured at one of the mountains behind Cape Woolley, pastel pink in the setting sun. "That mountain? It's 3870 on the map, but in my language, it's Singatook. And when you see a cloud up there, that means it's going to be windy."*... [\[Read More\]](#) ] Erin McKittrick, Apr 12, 2015

## Continuing where the Iditarod leaves off:

On March 14, 2015 we flew to Nome, spending nearly a week debugging our winter gear and watching dog mushers finish their thousand-mile race up the Iditarod.

That's where we began. Below is what we wrote while planning:

We won't bring dogs. Instead, we plan to *be* the dogs—pulling gear and a pair of children at a speed that's more "crawl" than "race."

## Wild Speculations:

We'll set off on skis, tracing the edge of the Seward Peninsula. We'll follow the sea ice or the rolling hills, on snow machine trails or not. Our kids will follow along on their own tiny skis, or homemade kick sleds, or flop their tired little bodies onto our already-heavy loads. We'll burn driftwood in our collapsible titanium stove--if we can find driftwood. We'll travel eight miles in a day. Or we won't. We'll ski the whole way, or we'll strip the runners off the packrafts—walking and paddling as the land thaws beneath our feet. We'll visit half a dozen villages along the way: Teller, Brevig Mission, Wales, Shishmaref, Deering, and Candle. We'll be



farther west than I've ever been, and in colder weather than our kids have ever been.

Lituya

Some of these unknowns will be ironed out in the months of planning before we leave. Some we won't know until we're there. And the rest are questions we don't even know to ask yet.

**We'll have an adventure.**

**You're Crazy:**

For wanting to do this? Probably.

For thinking we can? Probably not.

People have been traveling with their kids across this landscape for thousands of years. Hig and I have been wandering across Alaska for 15 years, and have been bringing the kids since they were infants. Our children are already veterans of three major expeditions, from the April blizzards on Kachemak Bay to the November snows on **Malaspina Glacier**. Most recently--walking and paddling 800 miles **around Cook Inlet**.

**Why?**

Do you even have to ask anymore? We're going because it's time to go. Our family rhythm includes a hike day per week, a campout per month, and a multi-month expedition every two years. And while we expect our past experience will help us out here, every expedition is new, and tantalizingly different.

We're going because we're curious. Curiosity has dragged us many thousands of miles across Alaska. And left us with a map full of yawning blank spots—great green-brown swaths of temptation. A lifetime's worth of places I haven't explored.

What is it like to stand on the frozen Bering Straits? On the spit at Shishmaref village? At the rim of an ancient volcanic crater? What can we learn about the ancient history, the rush of gold-seekers, and the questions facing the peninsula's future? Who will we meet? What will we see?

We'll find out soon enough.

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Where we've been so far...

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Katmai

