

*A flying trip to the
Canadian Arctic*

Julia and Greg Arehart
August 8-9, 2019



Our route from Colorado to our cabin in Atlin, BC



The planned arctic tour route



We went to see the barren lands (blue shaded area)

Flight planning: fuel logistics



FBO

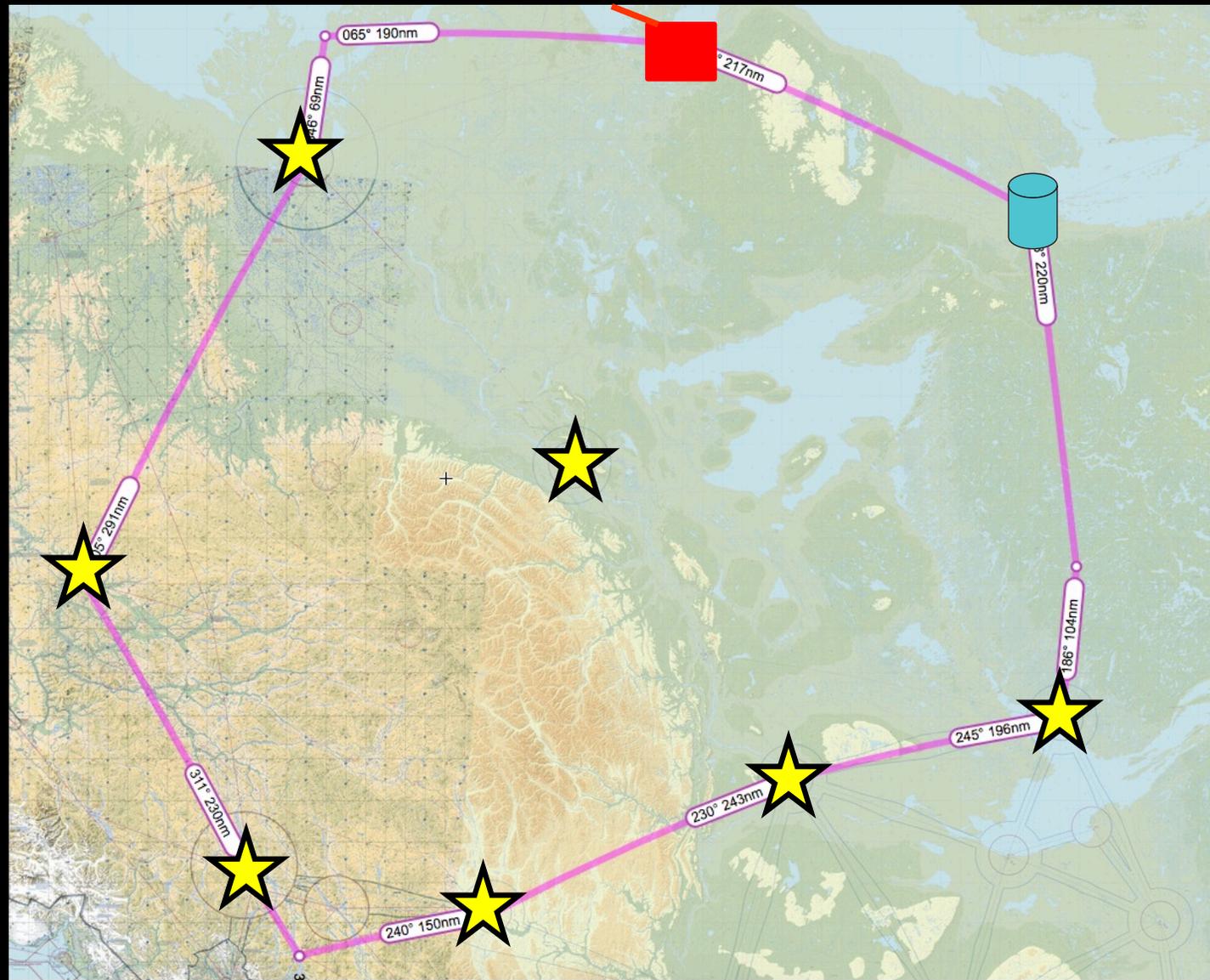


Drums



Gas cans

Direction of
flight



Flight planning: safety considerations

Two airplanes

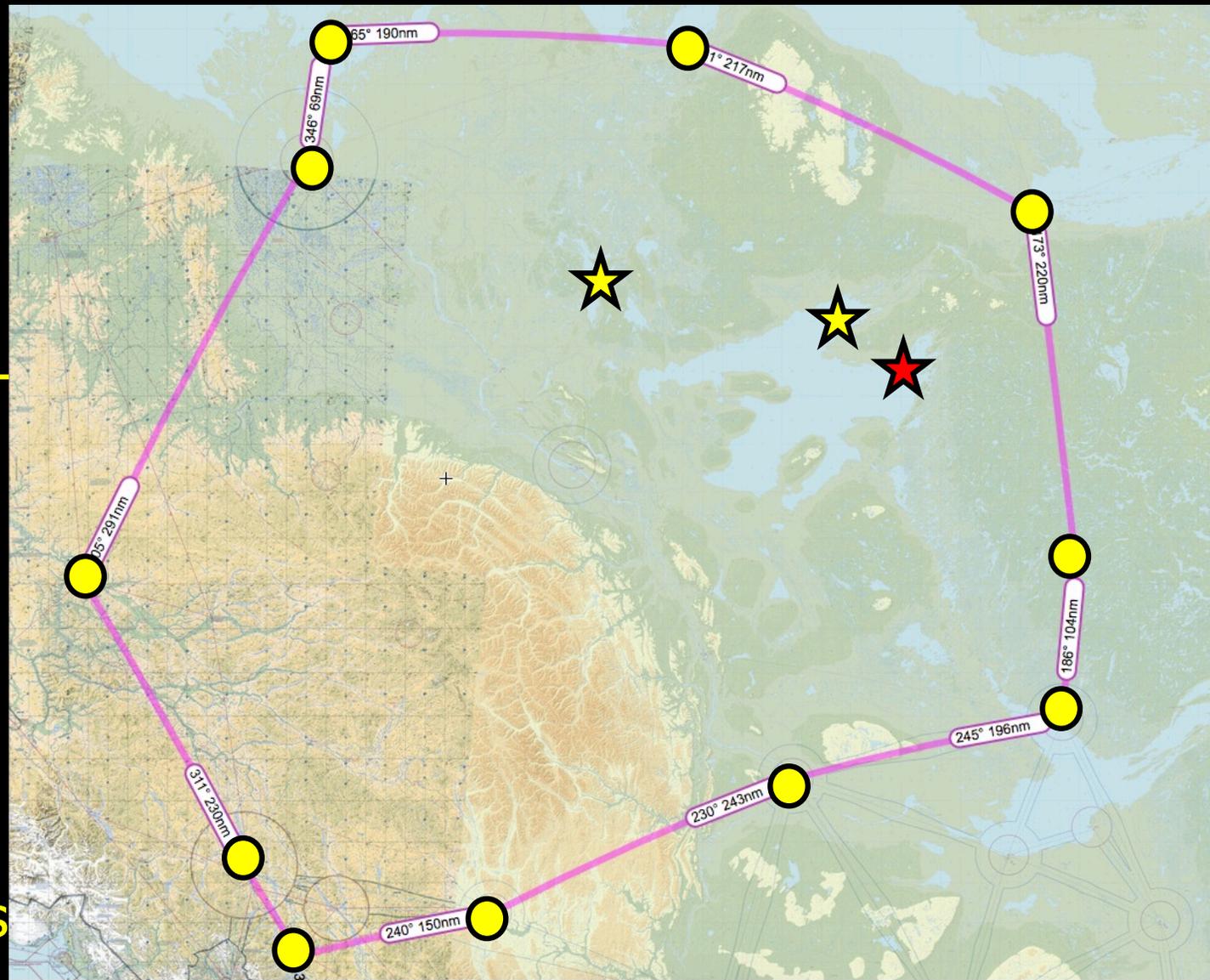
Alternate airports
(not many!)

SAR: 406PLB,
InReach, 121ELT

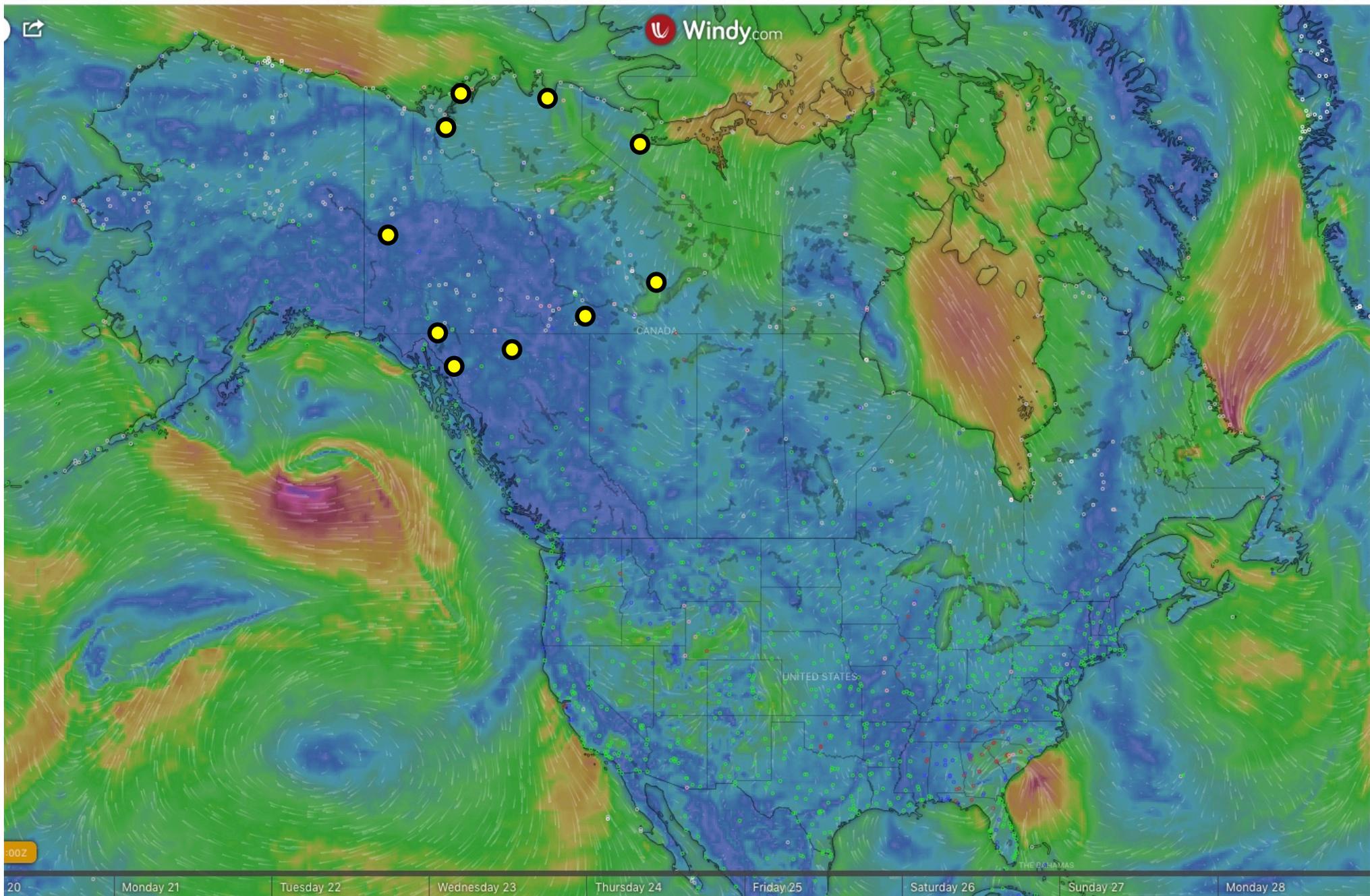
Filing flight plan
(**required!** in
Canada)

Camping gear
(lodging not
assured)

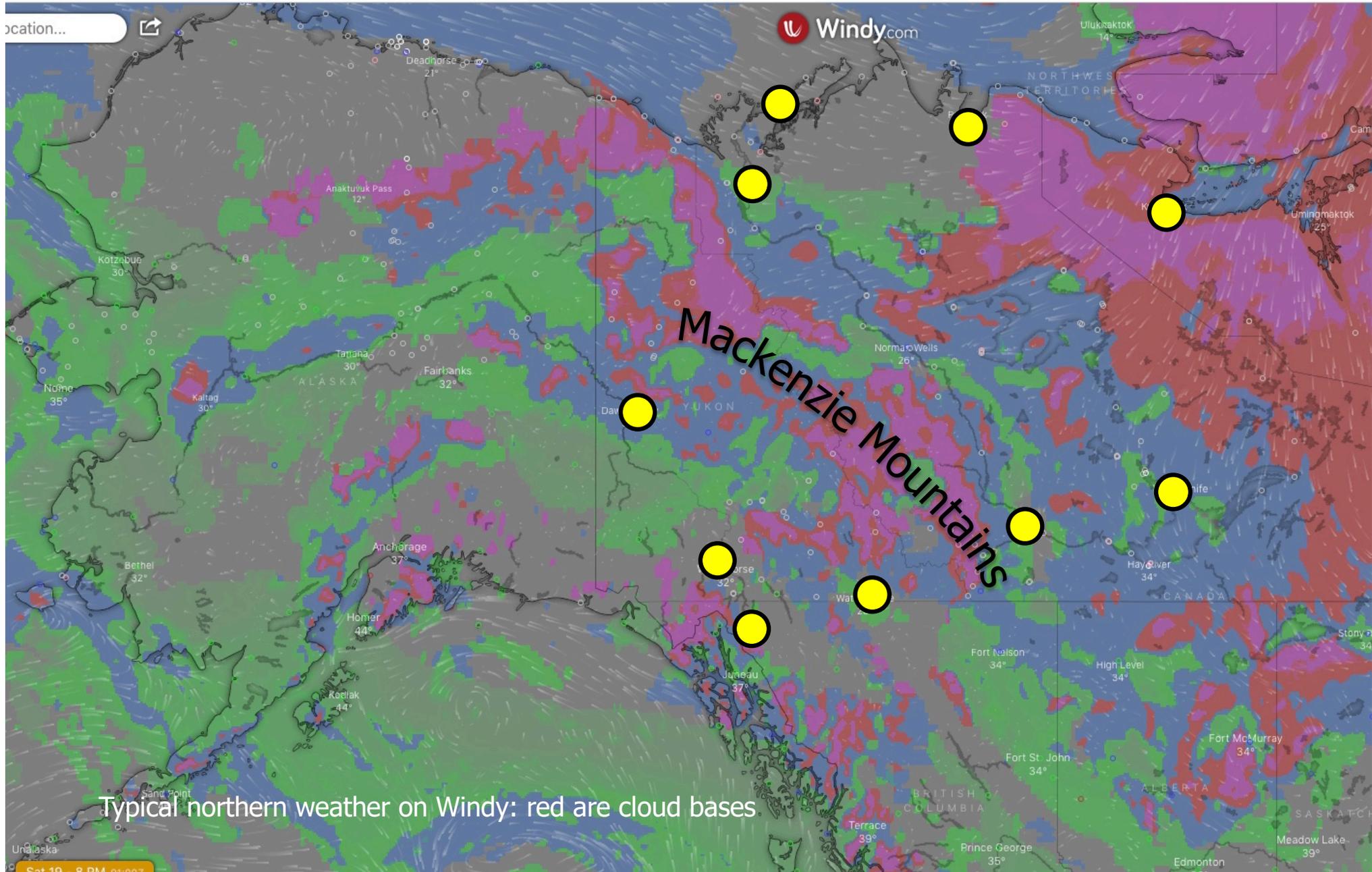
Spare parts & tools



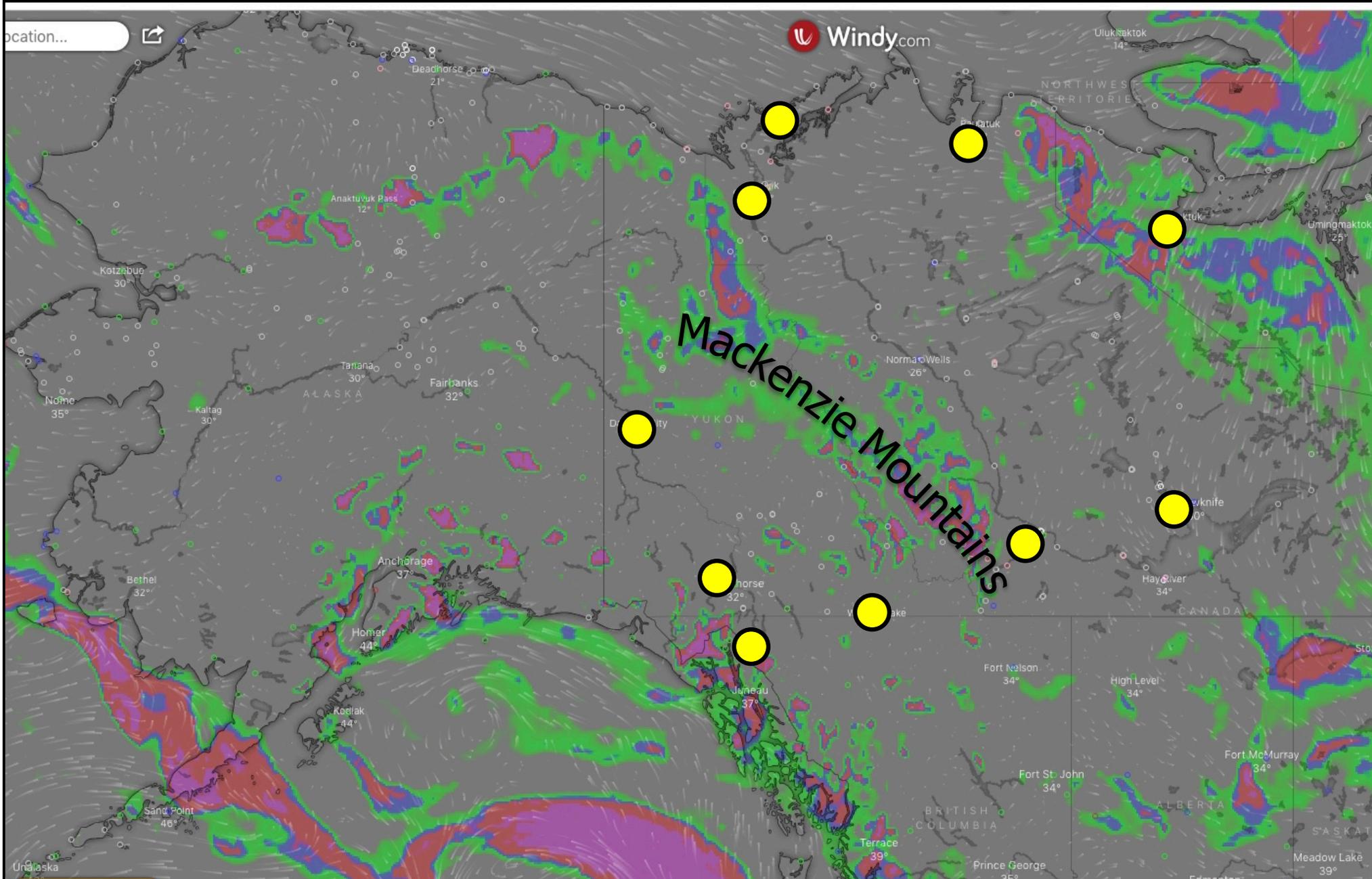
Windy.com for weather



Ceilings (cloud base)



Visibility map

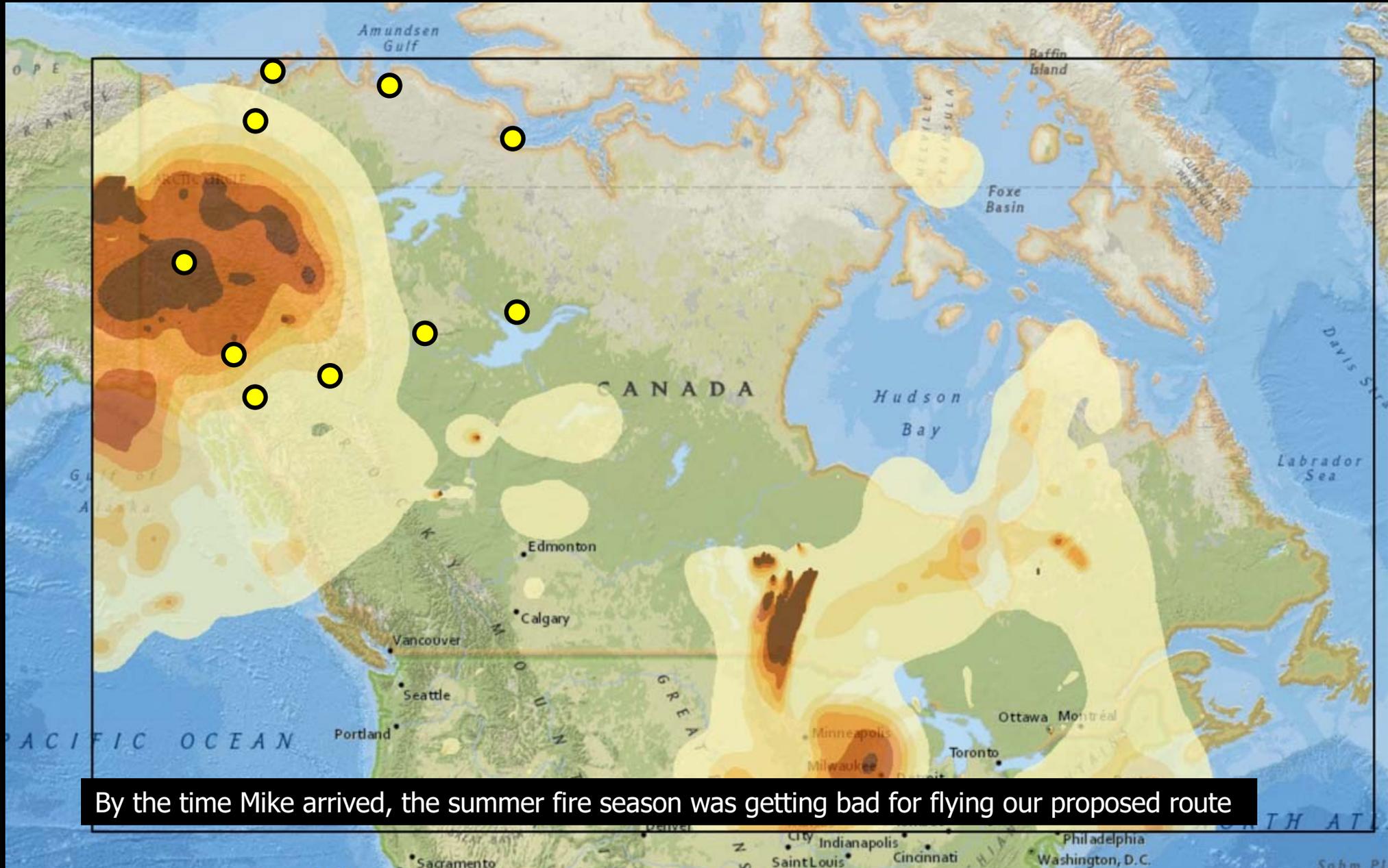


Second plane



Our original plan was to fly in conjunction with a friend who has an RV6A

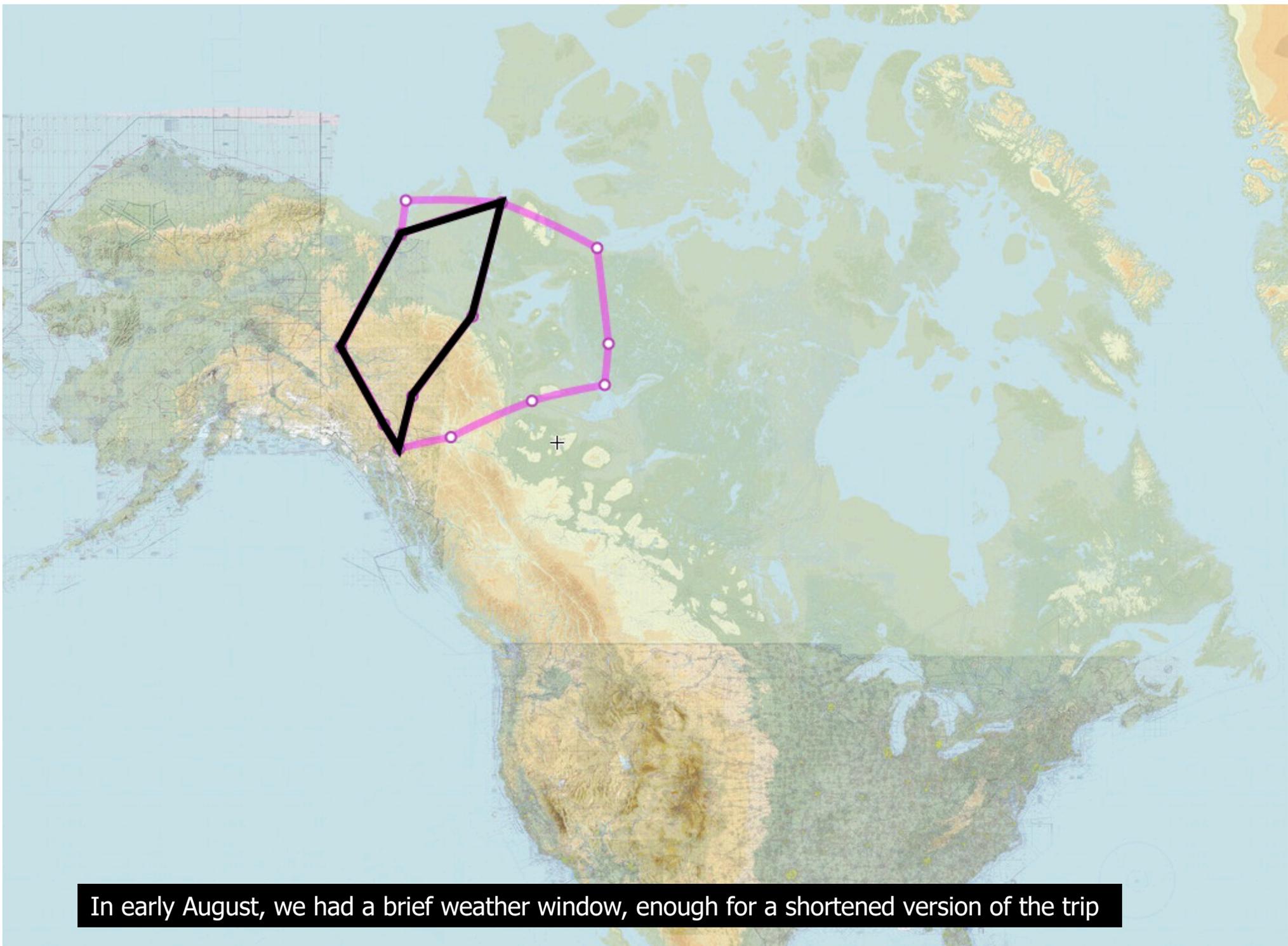
Smoke map



*After nine
days of
smoke....*

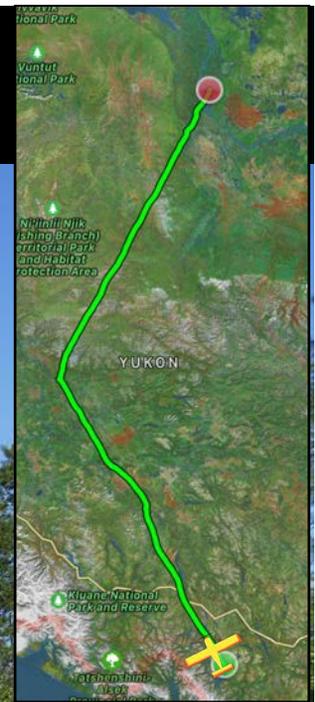


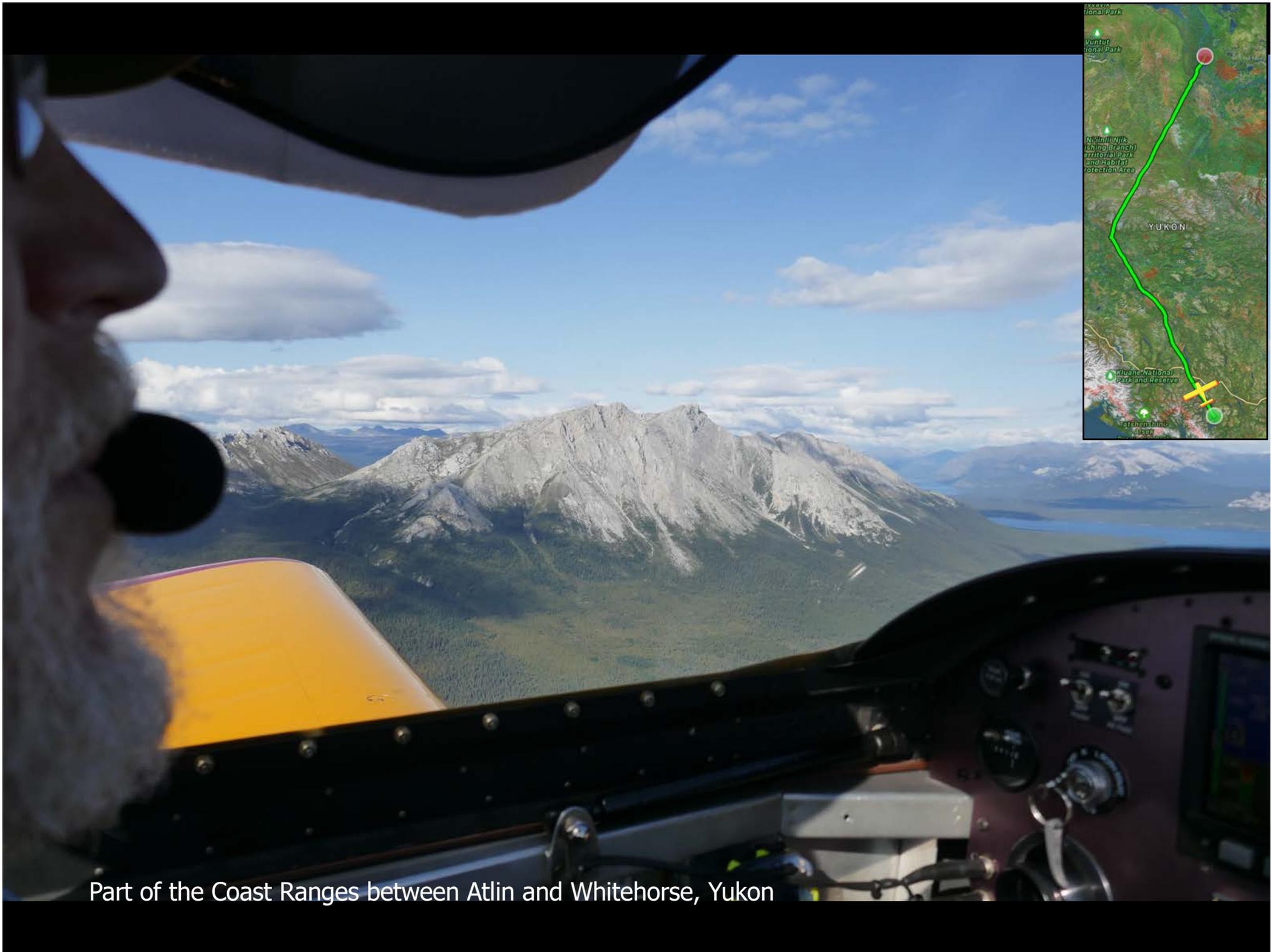
Mike had to return home without making the trip



In early August, we had a brief weather window, enough for a shortened version of the trip

Departing Atlin – August 8





Part of the Coast Ranges between Atlin and Whitehorse, Yukon

Float pond at Whitehorse



Whitehorse airport



Leaving behind "the big city"



Fort Selkirk - confluence of Pelly & Yukon



Airstrip at Fort Selkirk (a historic Hudson's Bay trading post site) is mowed once a year, maybe

Results of the fires

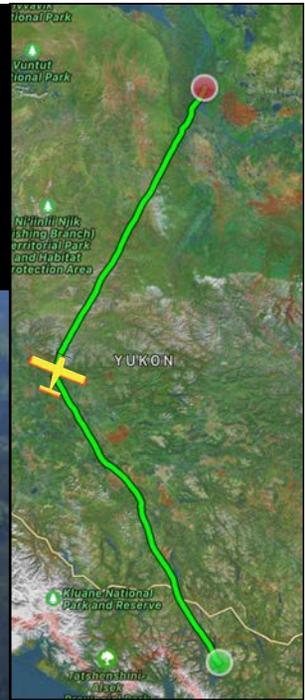


Placer mining "gold rush"



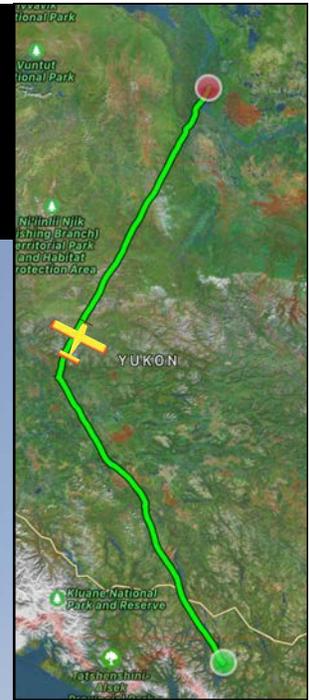
Modern-day mining in the historic Klondike gold fields. Note the small airstrip (we didn't land)

Dawson City airport



Recently-paved (May, 2019) runway at Dawson City

Tombstone Park



North from Dawson through the Rocky Mountains at Tombstone Park

Selkirk Mountains *(northern extension of the Rockies)*



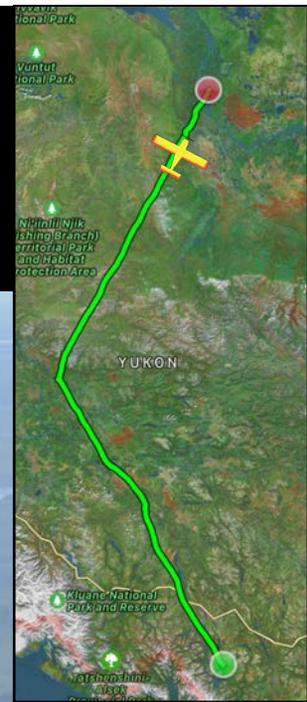
Richardson Mountains



Crossing over many miles of flatness north of the Selkirks, we paralleled the Dempster Highway

Ferry across the Peel River

(Dempster Highway – gravel from Dawson to Inuvik)



Ft. MacPherson airport

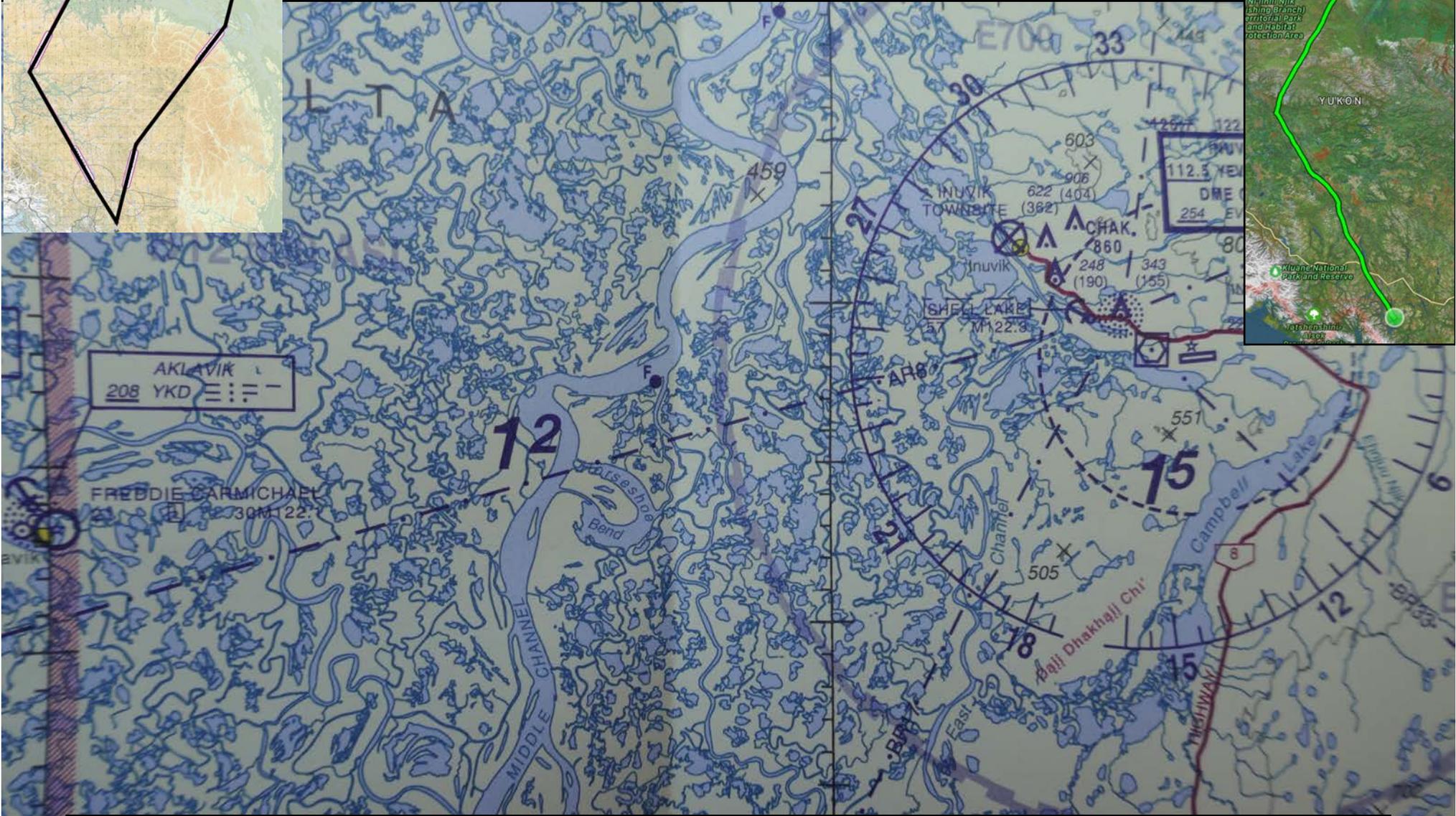
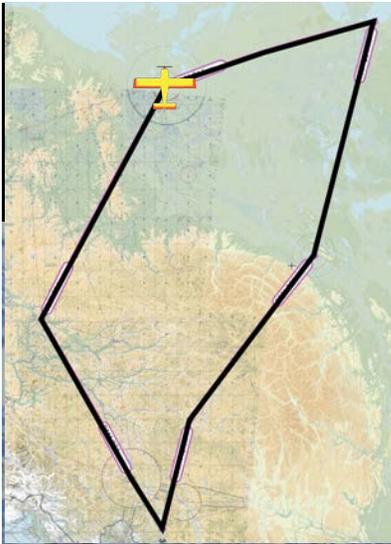


Confluence of the Peel and Mackenzie



Some of the Klondikers got to Dawson by going down the Mackenzie and up the Peel, then over the Rockies

Inuvik – (runways are true north)



This is when one is happy for GPS! We also swapped to paper charts since our nav system did not have electronic Canadian charts. This far north, all the runways are labeled relative to true north because of the rapidly changing declinations

End of day 1: ~5.5 hours, 700 miles





Tied down at Inuvik – the only little airplane on the ramp



It gets cold here in winter so preheat is a must



Circumpolar map at the terminal in Inuvik

"Igloo church" in Inuvik (Catholic)





One of the local eating establishments, Alestine's

Weather coming in....



Evening flight planning suggests the weather may be moving a bit faster than we had hoped



Departing to the east the next morning, clear skies where we are headed

Fog on the Anderson River





Sea fog?



We're paralleling the coast, so sea fog would not be unusual.....



About 50 miles out of Paulatuk, we decided to go lower and see if we could get to the coast under the cloud layer. A commercial flight was above us and reported that ceilings were 1500' at Paulatuk



Patterned ground from freeze-thaw cycles – ceiling was about 800' AGL



The Arctic Ocean!



Landing at Paulatuk



The airport at Paulatuk is a beautifully maintained and smooth raised gravel strip

Aklak Air arrived ahead of us



Not a lot of other air traffic in Paulatuk – we added our extra fuel here

Buildings on stilts (permafrost)



The local marina



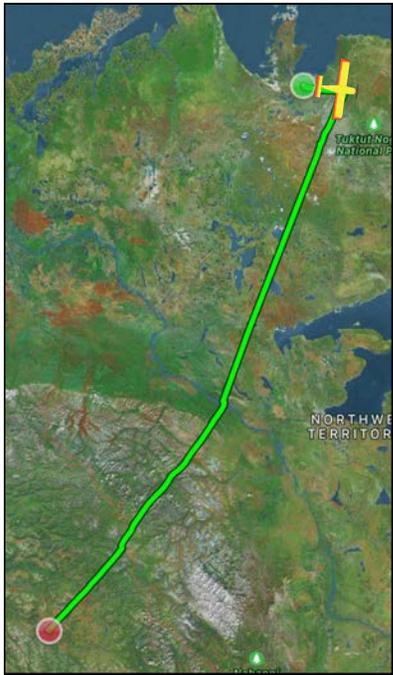
Paulatuk Cemetery

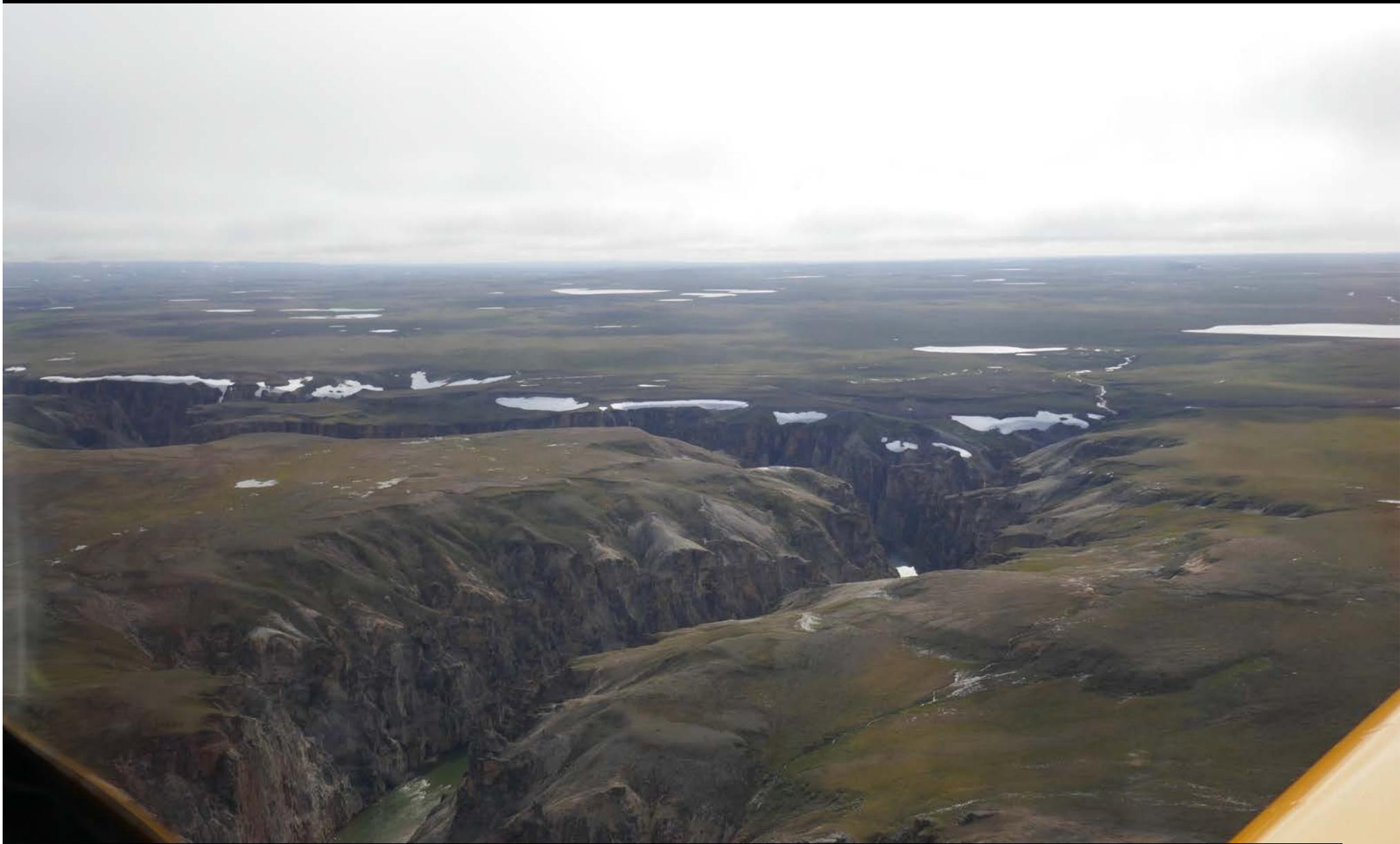


Getting out before we get weathered in!



Hornaday River





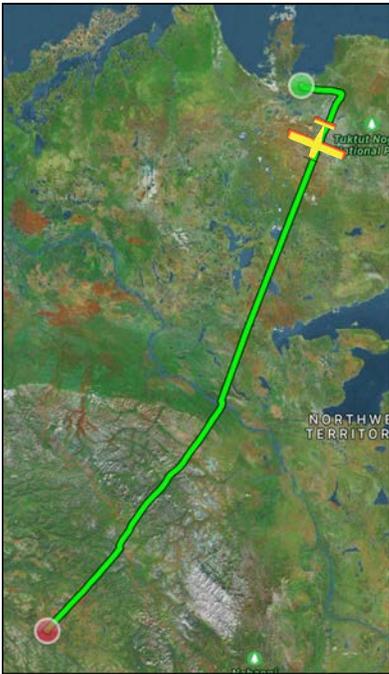
Yes, those are snowbanks in mid-August! Following the Hornaday River to Tuktut Nogait National Park, one of the least-visited parks in Canada (there are no real facilities)

La Ronciere Falls





Southbound over the barren lands



This is what we came to see on the trip: the Barren Lands

Back south of treeline....



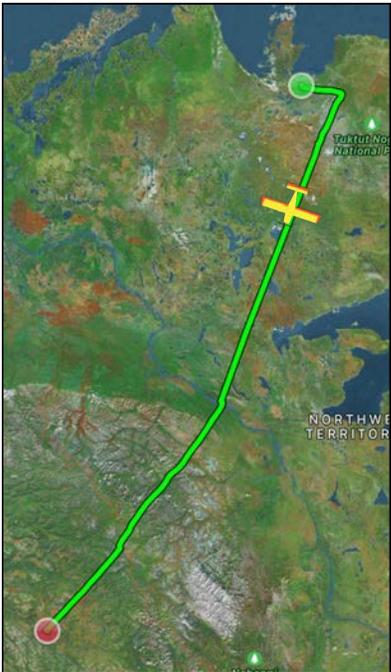
Eventually we started seeing trees again along rivers and streams

Interesting textures on the landscape



Crossing the arctic circle southbound



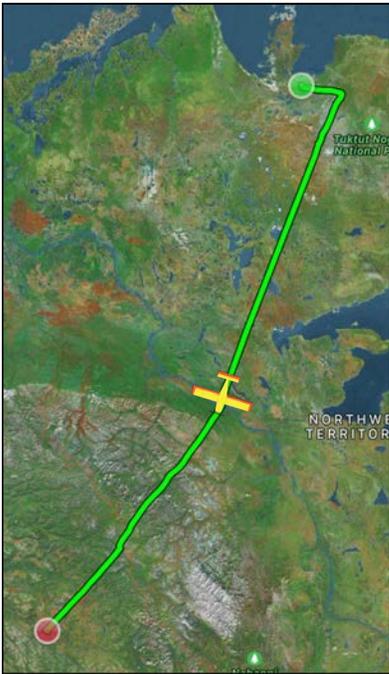


Even in the wilderness, evidence of man: geophysical survey lines for petroleum exploration

Great Bear Lake

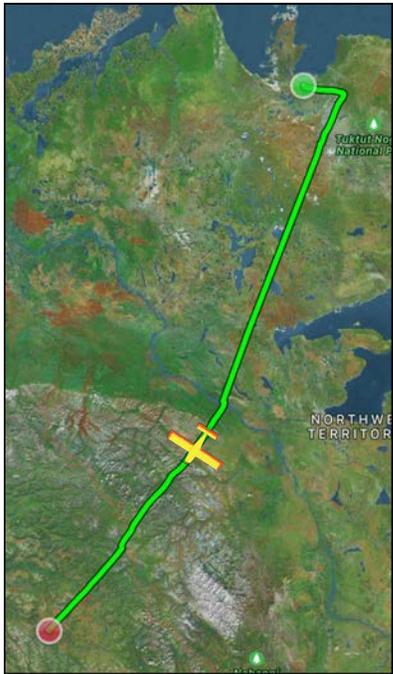


Norman Wells - \$11.00/gal fuel



The most expensive fuel we've ever bought, even though Norman Wells is the center of the oil patch. Weather reports indicated the weather was going to come in soon and stay for several days. With hotels scarce (and expensive at ~\$375/night), we opted to go on rather than be stuck for who knows how long

Mackenzie Mountains



Back across the northern Rockies

Fresh snow....



....and old glaciers



Rugged terrain....



...with not many emergency landing spots

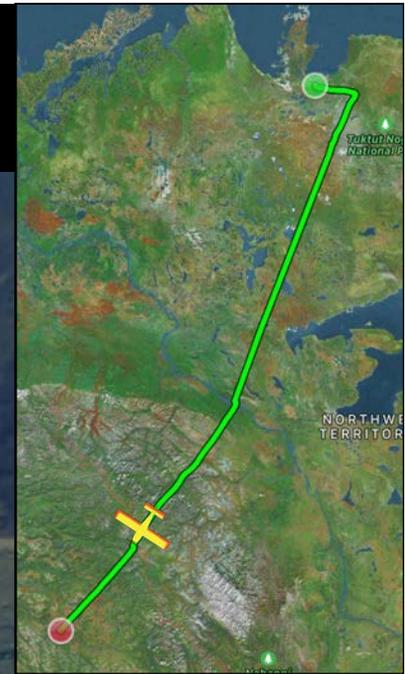
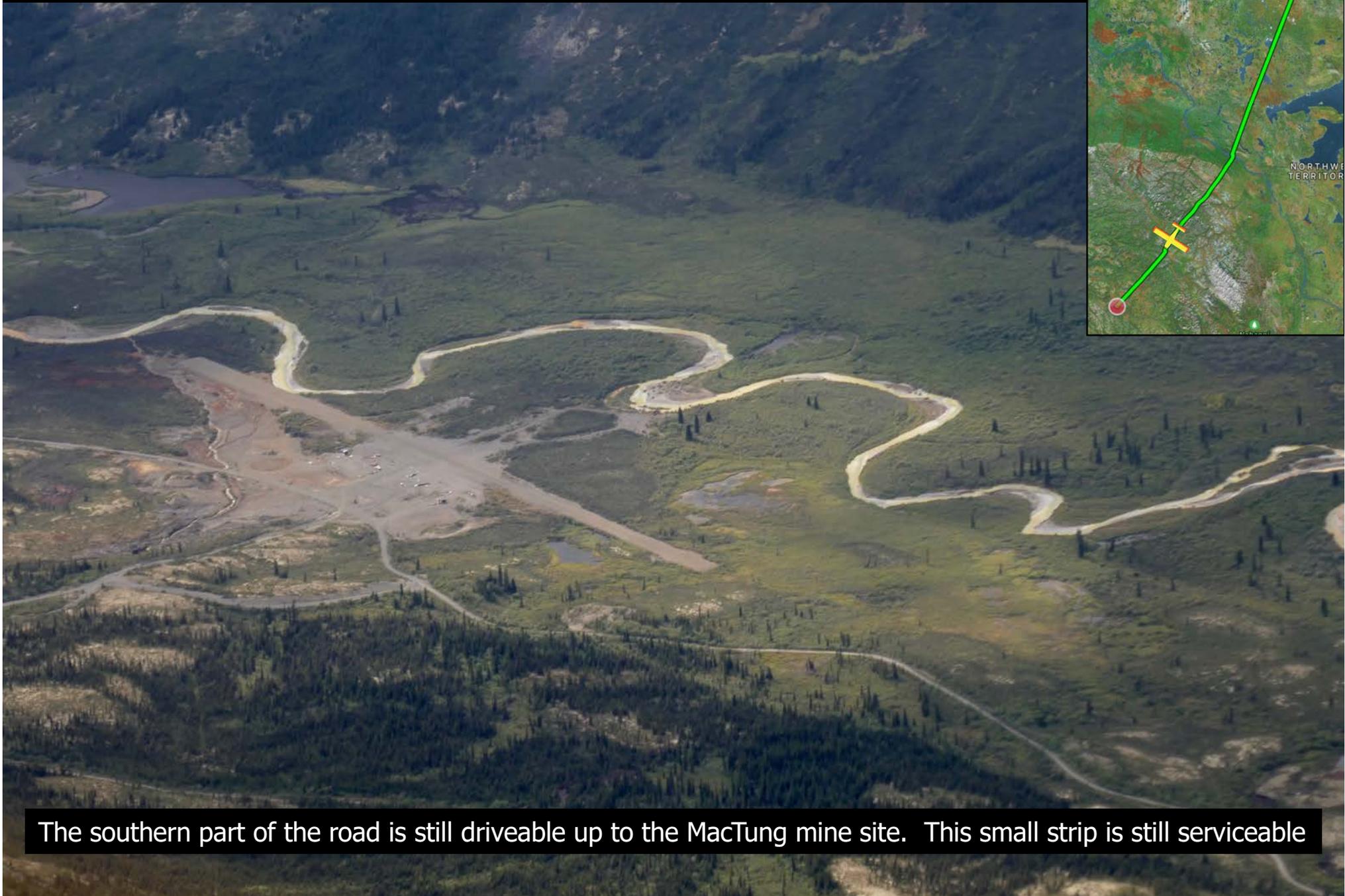


North Canol road



The old road from the Alcan highway over the mountains to Norman Wells – built during WWII as a pipeline route to get oil from the NWT oilfields but abandoned right after the war

Mac Pass airport



The southern part of the road is still driveable up to the MacTung mine site. This small strip is still serviceable

Ross River airport

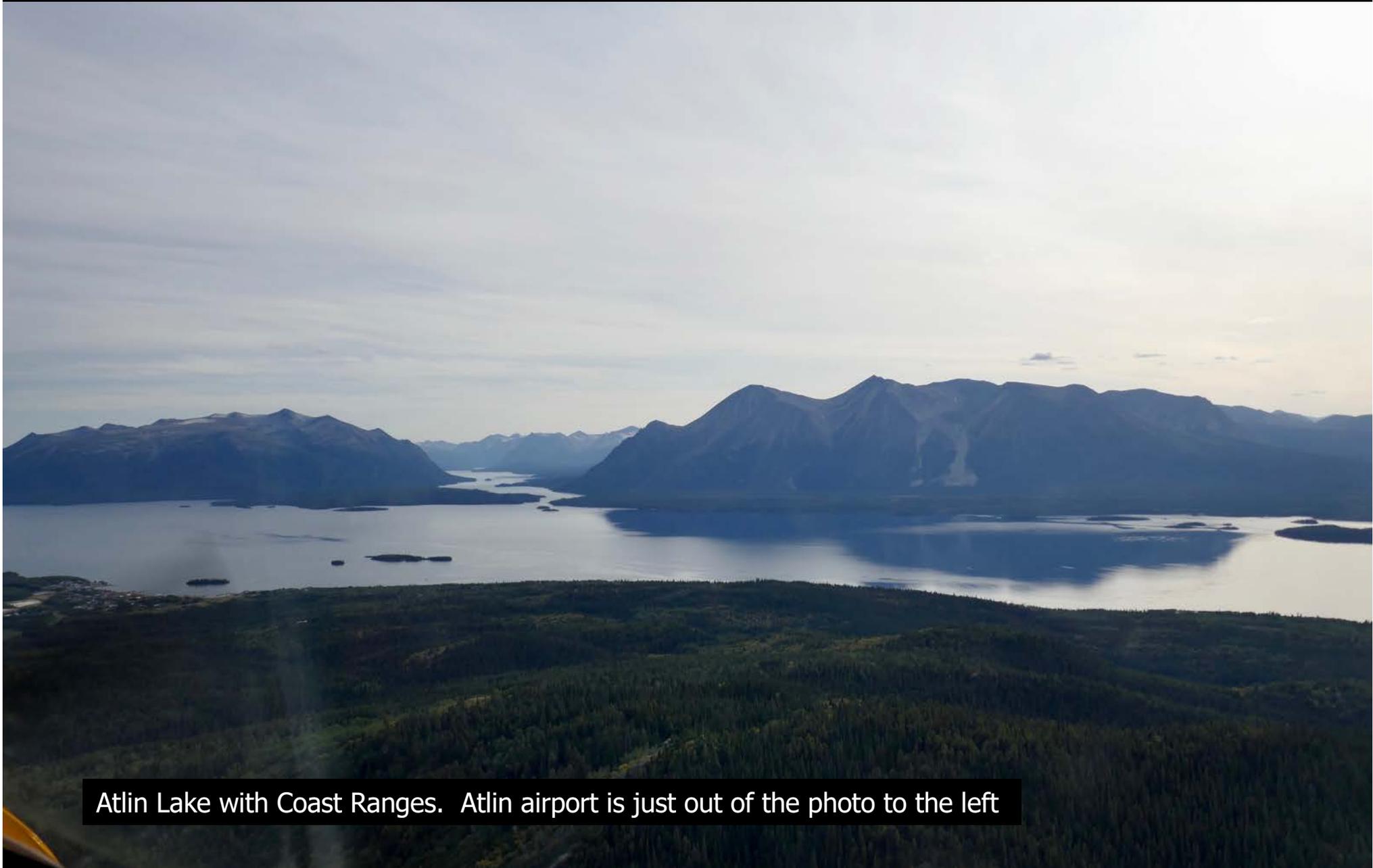


Across the roughest of the mountains, it was good to stretch our legs again

Final leg home



The mountains look familiar now and the long lake is Atlin Lake



Atlin Lake with Coast Ranges. Atlin airport is just out of the photo to the left

End of day 2: ~7.5 hours, 1000 miles





After two long but beautiful flying days, we arrived home