

## AP NEWS

# Denali Park Road closures raise tourism concerns in Alaska

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ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Landslides that caused road closures last year have raised concerns about whether there will be full access to Denali National Park and Preserve during the upcoming tourism season.

The National Park Service has said it plans to open the entire Denali Park Road by early June, The Anchorage Daily News [reported](#) Saturday.

The 92-mile (148-kilometer) road running through steep mountain passes provides the only driving access into the park's 7,344 square miles (19,021 square kilometers).

"Despite the concern it has raised lately, the park is committed to devoting the resources necessary to opening the Park Road as close to its traditional schedule as possible," Denali National Park spokesman G.W. Hitchcock said in an email.

The park service repeatedly closed parts of the road last summer amid heavy rains, rockfall and mudslides.

Recent National Park Service surveys found the speed of a landslide at Pretty Rocks section of the road has increased dramatically since September and the road was slumping nearly 2 inches (5 centimeters) every day after August.

Private vehicles are restricted beyond Mile 15 of the road. But hundreds of thousands of visitors each year use buses run by commercial operators to take them into the park. A 2011 study estimated about 60% of peak-season visits to the park went beyond Mile 15.

Business owners inside the park rely on the road to bring in supplies for guests.

Alaska's House of Representatives passed a resolution urging the federal government to help with solutions to the road's problems.

Republican Gov. Mike Dunleavy wrote a letter this month to the U.S. Interior Department requesting short- and long-term help.

"A long-term road closure during the summer tourism season (of) the Denali road would have a disastrous cascade effect on businesses throughout the State," Dunleavy wrote.