

**BRIEFING:  
NATIONAL  
PARK  
SERVICE**



Official Business

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801

Chairman: Senator Rick Halford  
Vice Chair: Senator Lyda Green  
Senator Loren Leman  
Senator Bert Sharp  
Senator Robin Taylor  
Senator John Torgerson  
Senator Georgianna Lincoln

### AGENDA

3:30 to 5:00 p.m.

Friday, January 31, 1997

#### BRIEFING: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Bob Barbee    | Field Director, Alaska Field Area, National Park Service |
| Steve Martin  | Superintendent, Denali National Park and Preserve        |
| Jim Brady     | Superintendent, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve   |
| Judy Gottlieb | Assistant Field Director, Alaska Field Area              |
| John Quinley  | Public Affairs Officer, Alaska Field Area                |

- I Introduction and Overview Bob Barbee
  - NPS priorities for the coming years
  - Development plans: Katmai, Wrangell-St. Elias, Kenai Fjord
- II Denali National Park Steve Martin
  - Public access and development
- III Glacier Bay National Park Jim Brady
  - Cruise ships, commercial fishing and development

#### BRIEFING: COMINCO ALASKA

Doug Horswell, Vice President, Environmental and Government Affairs, Cominco, Ltd  
John Key, General Manager, Red Dog Mine, Cominco Alaska  
Charlotte McCay, Senior Administrator, Environmental and Regulatory Affairs, Cominco Alaska  
Sarah Scanlon, Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Nana Development Corporation

- I Introduction
  - Red Dog Mine
  - Cominco Alaska, Ltd

- Zinc Market
- Zinc Industry

**II Discussion**

- Beginning of Red Dog Mine
- Nana - Cominco Partnership
- AIDEA Transportation System Funding
- National Park Service Road Agreement
- Cominco Commitment to Mining in Alaska

**III Background Video**

**IV Benefit to Local and State Economy**

- Native Shareholders
- State of Alaska

**V Upcoming Cominco Developments**

**VI Exploration in Alaska**

**VII State/Private Sector Cooperation**

**NEXT MEETING**

Monday, February 3, 1997:

**ADJOURN**



IN REPLY REFER TO.

# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Alaska Regional Office  
2525 Gambell Street, Room 107  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503-2892

FEB 19 1997

FEB 14 1997

Senator Rick Halford  
Chairman, Senate Resources Committee  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Senator Halford:

Our recent briefing with the Senate and House Resource Committees was a valuable experience for us, and we came away with a better understanding of your interest in several areas. I hope that you and the committee members also found the time well spent, and left the meeting with a better familiarity of National Park Service goals and policy. As Representative Hudson suggested, we will come back more often.

I wanted to follow up in writing to briefly clarify a few points that were left in some uncertainty and to answer a couple of the committee's questions.

### Access

Senator Torgerson asked about access permits for individuals with inholdings in National Park Service units. The regulations implementing Title XI of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act assure valid inholders adequate and feasible access to their property. Those inholders using motorboats, snowmachines and airplanes do not need permits to get to their inholdings.

### Commercial Fishing

Regarding the discussion of commercial fishing in Glacier Bay National Park, we should have done a better job in explaining from the outset that the commercial harvest or extraction of resources from national parks is generally prohibited. Commercial enterprises which provide visitor access and service are allowed in parks - in fact, more than 250 businesses are licensed to provide commercial visitor services in Alaska's national parks.

Commercial fishing is prohibited by the Wilderness Act of 1964 for those portions of Glacier Bay which Congress designated as wilderness in 1980. Nationwide National Park Service regulations specifically prohibit commercial fishing in park waters unless specifically authorized by Congress.

The Park Service has, obviously, chosen not to strictly enforce the prohibitions regarding commercial fishing in the marine waters of Glacier Bay. As we described to the committee, we now are on a path which we believe will be both fair to those who have fished the bay and will ultimately bring us into compliance.

#### Subsistence

Subsistence, as defined by Title VIII of the 1980 Lands Act, is authorized only in those units where specifically noted in the Act. Therefore, we manage subsistence uses in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, Noatak National Preserve, Cape Krusenstern National Monument, Kobuk Valley National Park, Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, those portions of Denali National Park and Preserve which were added to the unit in 1980, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, Katmai National Preserve, Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, and Glacier Bay National Preserve.

The Lands Act did not authorize Title 8 subsistence activity in any portion of Katmai National Park, Kenai Fjords National Park, Glacier Bay National Park and the original 2 million acres of Denali National Park.

#### Mission

For the 10 National Park Service units in Alaska established in 1980, the most succinct mission statements can be found in Title II of the Lands Act. Similar statements are also provided for the expansions of Denali, Katmai and Glacier Bay. The purposes of each monument, park or preserve was clearly outlined. For the "old" parks and the historical parks in Skagway and Sitka, the mission or purpose of each park is also outlined in their authorizing legislation. I have enclosed a copy of Title II of the Lands Act, and the 1925 proclamation establishing Glacier Bay. Each park unit is also governed by the National Park Service Organic Act and by other national laws, such as the Wilderness Act, the Mining in the Parks Act, other applicable sections of the 1980 Lands Act and the Concessions Policy Act. If the committee needs assistance locating these or other public land laws, please feel free to contact our Public Affairs Office at (907)257-2696.

#### Transportation

Each park general management plan includes descriptions of existing and proposed access. At this time, the state highway system in Alaska reaches only four of the 15 NPS units (Denali, Kenai Fjords, Wrangell-St. Elias and Klondike Gold Rush). Because of that reality, most access to national parks in Alaska will be by air and water for many years to come. The 1980 Lands Act anticipated that fact, and it made several special provisions because of the small

likelihood of ground transportation reaching remote parts of Alaska. With few exceptions, airplane access is allowed on all NPS lands, including wilderness. Wrangell-St. Elias, for instance, maintains more than 20 Bush airstrips inside the park for public use. Unlike most parks in the Lower 48, snowmachines and motorboats are also allowed in many areas.

As we mentioned in the briefing, we are completing a feasibility study for new northern access into Denali National Park. At this point, it appears that road or railroad access would cost between \$125 million and \$225 million. A final report will be presented to the Congress in March, and we will forward a copy to you when it is complete.

Additionally, we are excited about continuing the planning partnership with the State of Alaska on new access to the south side of Denali National Park. With the final plan complete, the NPS and state administration will begin moving toward implementation and look forward to working with the Legislature.

I hope this covers any outstanding questions from the committee. If not, or if you would like additional information on any NPS activity, please feel free to contact me at 257-2690.

Sincerely,



*for* Robert D. Barbee  
Regional Director



Alaska

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# Vision for a New Century

The timeless qualities of national parks in Alaska -- the almost unimaginable open space, the wildlife and profound quiet -- are an inheritance that becomes ever more valuable as the world around it becomes more congested, loud and manipulated.

Preserving those qualities will continue as the primary mission for the National Park Service in the 21st Century. But gaining a new emphasis in the Service's mission will be the accommodation of visitors and the recognition that expanded cooperative efforts with local residents and the business community are needed for us to be successful stewards of the natural and cultural resources in Alaska's parks.

This vision encompasses three broad goals:

## **Protecting and managing park resources.**

Alaska's resource issues are as complex as the state is vast. Protecting the inherent resources for which these parks were established remains our highest priority. *Subsistence management, mining claims within park boundaries, Native land claim issues, and protection of archaeological sites are faced by Alaska parks on a daily basis.*

**Accommodation of visitors.** Since passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the Service has completed management plans for every park. We have built many of the called-for developments; in some cases facilities built in the 1980s are already outgrown. *The Alaska inheritance requires major capital investments in key locations such as Denali, Wrangell-St. Elias, Glacier Bay, Katmai and Kenai Fjords if we are to carry out the Service's mission.*

**Building stronger community alliances.** Our goal is to forge new partnerships with local communities, local and state government and private industry. *Improving local hire options, expanding rural tourism opportunities, working with Native corporations on issues as diverse as concession opportunities and research, and cooperative planning with state agencies are key components.*

**The 54.7 million acres in Alaska's national parks make up about two-thirds of all the acreage in the National Park System.**

# Vision for a New Century



**Tarr Inlet, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve.**

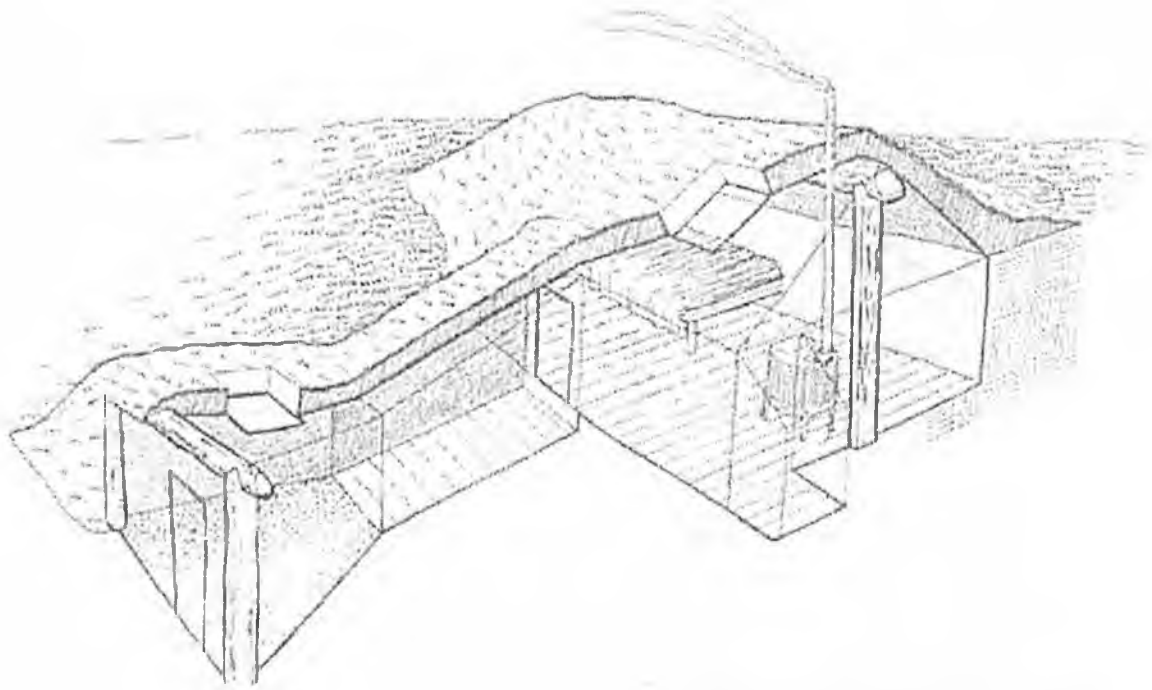
The document which follows describes a commitment to manage parks and pursue actions which accomplish each of the three broad goals. Meeting some of the goals will require federal construction money. In other cases, meeting the goals will require changes in legislative authority. In other instances, we need to change the way we do business in order to meet real and pressing needs.

The strategy is one that will play out over several years. By early in the 21st Century, we envision Alaska parks as valued neighbors for all Alaskans, as accessible and accommodating destinations for increasing numbers of visitors and as places where the preservation and care of natural and cultural resources remains our highest priority.

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# Protecting Park Resources

# Resources in Alaska



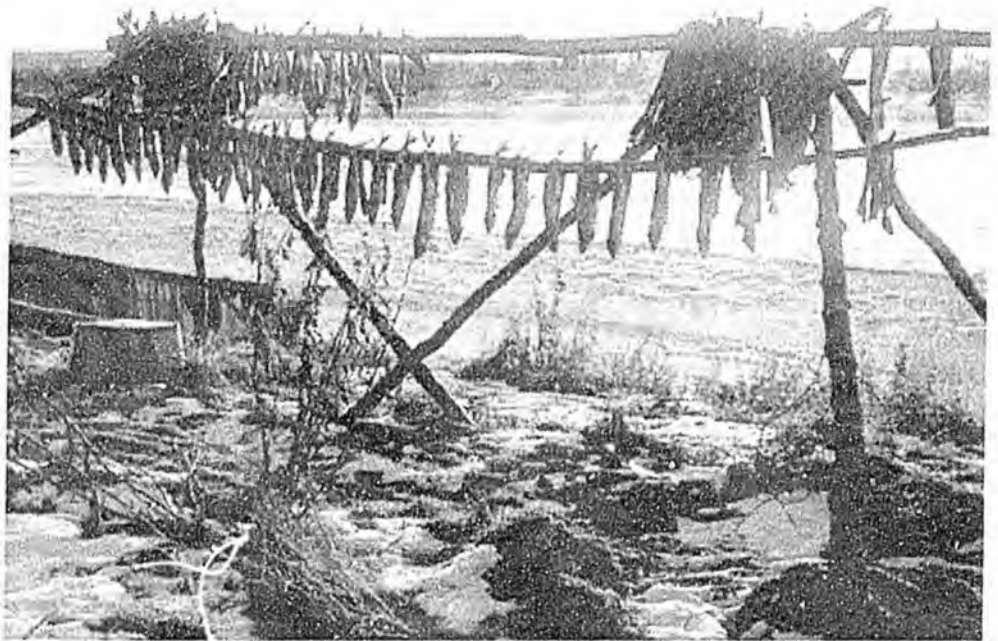
**Drawing of a home in an abandoned Native village on the Bering Strait coast.**

The arctic was the last area occupied by humans in the Old World, but in the New World, it was the first environment migrating people encountered and made their home. Alaska, because it once formed the eastern flank of the Beringian core region, in all probability represents the area of longest, continuous human occupation in the New World.

Despite Alaska's image as a recently transformed pristine wilderness, it is here that humans and the natural environment have had the longest association in the New World. The identification of those links have practical application for resource management, in part because of the continued subsistence harvests of fish and wildlife from within park boundaries. These uses, unprecedented in Lower 48 parks, as well as the opportunity to study natural and cultural resources in vast, virtually undeveloped areas, call for a continued strong program of natural, cultural and social science.

The Park Service mission in Alaska, as elsewhere, is to preserve unimpaired the resources under its stewardship so they may continue to be enjoyed by present and future generations. Despite the vast size of Alaska park areas, they are vulnerable to air pollution, oil spills, commercial fishing, wildlife poaching and archaeological looting.

# Subsistence



Fish drying on the Kobuk River.

In late 1996 the NPS successfully co-sponsored, with the Seward Peninsula Regional Advisory Council, emergency regulation changes for muskoxen hunting on the Seward Peninsula.

Since 1990, the federal government has managed subsistence harvests on federal public lands in Alaska, including seven parks and 10 preserves. Most fish and wildlife species migrate across management boundaries, leading to management conflicts between federal and neighboring state or private lands. This highly political and culturally sensitive issue continues to require extensive staff time. The NPS spends about \$2.5 million per year on subsistence management.

- **Federal Subsistence Board:** The NPS continues as an active member of the Federal Subsistence Board, the group of land management officials that set seasons, bag limits and other rules for the subsistence harvest of fish and wildlife on federal lands. Depending on the outcome of several court cases and possible legislative action, the federal role in subsistence fish management could expand dramatically in the next two years.

- **Working with communities:** In managing subsistence, the NPS works closely with citizen advisory councils. The NPS is continuing to seek comments on its review of subsistence laws and NPS regulations. The document has been reviewed at 17 meetings around the state, and further review at state-wide meetings is planned through March of 1997.

# Mining Claim Acquisition

**Denali National Park:** In the past 14 months, more than 300 acres of mining claims have been acquired in the Kantishna area of Denali National Park and Preserve.

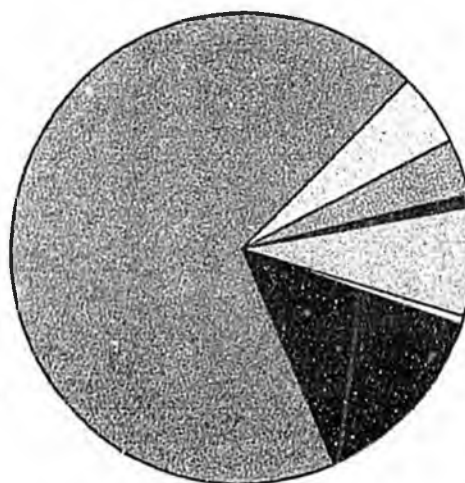
- Of the remaining 36 unacquired mining claim tracts in Kantishna, 13 are patented and 23 are unpatented. The NPS is actively pursuing the acquisition of six patented tracts; negotiations for the unpatented tracts have reached an impasse because of the great disparity between the fair market appraisals and the convictions of value held by the claimants.
- To complete the Denali acquisition program, a \$1.5 million to \$2 million appropriation from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for each of the next three years is necessary.
- Failure to carry out purchases in a timely manner could result in further inverse condemnation actions by claim owners.

## Other parks:

- Wrangell-St. Elias has 686 mining claims that need preacquisition assessment.
- Yukon-Charley Rivers has 129 unpatented mining claims needing validity and pre-acquisition assessment.
- Bering land Bridge has 15 unpatented claims possibly available for acquisition.

Kennecott is a 2,800-acre mining claim within Wrangell-St. Elias and is proposed for acquisition (see Appendix) in FY -98 Land and Water Conservation Fund spending.

Wrangell-St. Elias N.P. has approved two Plans of Operation for mining in the park and is reviewing two additional plans.



- Relocation
- Survey
- Fee appraisals
- Mineral appraisals
- Title insurance
- Haz. waste surveys
- Land acquisition

Allocation of \$8.7 million spent on acquisitions to date.

# Cultural Resources

**In the Noatak National Preserve, a multi-year reconnaissance survey has focused on the upper Noatak River and on the upper Anisak River. More than 450 sites representing 10,000 years of human occupation have been located.**



**Archaeologists at Klondike Gold Rush NHP.**

Cultural resources in Alaska's parks range from sites dating back to the earliest North Americans to World War II defense sites. The major program goals are to:

- Acquire and maintain accurate park information bases.
- Identify and evaluate the full range of cultural resources in parks.
- Develop effective strategies for treating, protecting and interpreting the resources.
- Develop sensitive approaches to cultural and natural resource management.
- Employ social science as a basis for informed human-use resource management decisions.

The Gulf of Alaska Coastal Archaeology Survey is an interdisciplinary project focused on building a model of prehistoric settlement patterns in relation to sea level changes. The work has been completed in Glacier Bay and in Katmai. The Katmai investigations found that after heavy Pleistocene glaciation, the rebounding land rose faster than sea level. The result is that sites dating to 7,000 years ago are found four to 10 meters above sea level.

Subsistence research is under way, many in cooperation with the state of Alaska and universities. The NPS is examining traditional uses of resources such as fish, wildlife and timber, harvest levels, and use of cabins.

# Natural Resources



Establishing a vegetation plot in a heavily used camping area.

The field area's natural resource goals are to:

- Identify and quantify the natural resources at risk.
- Examine and understand basic ecological processes and interactions.
- Determine and evaluate influences from human activities.
- Detect and measure the results of natural and human causes of change.

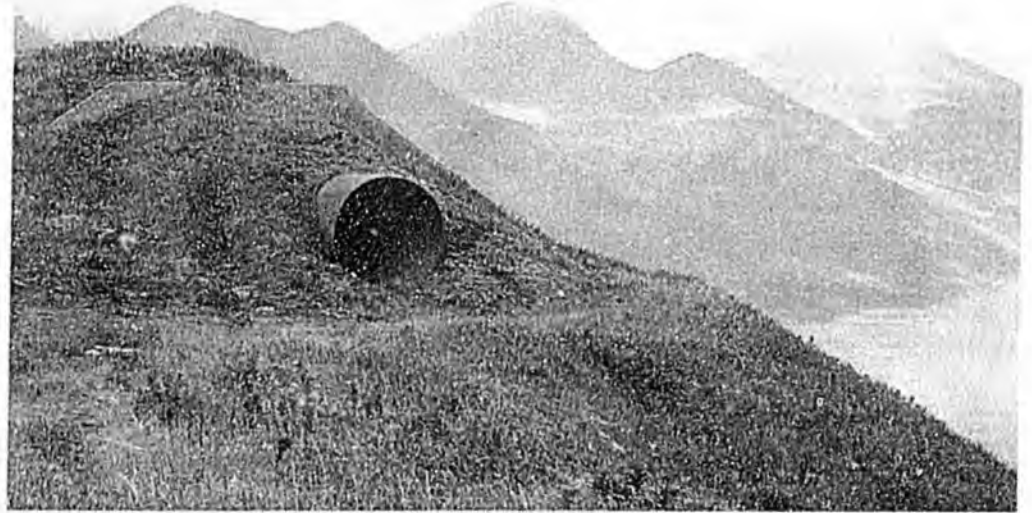
In Denali, there are nearly 100 studies and projects underway every year. Several studies are directed at resolving specific resource issues. These have included wildlife responses to vehicle and visitor use of the road, effects of road dust, wolf management and reclamation of streams altered by mining.

University of Alaska Fairbanks botanists located rare plants in Yukon-Charley National Preserve, and plans are in place to monitor and protect their locations. Botanists also found healthy and widespread populations of another rare plant, leading to a recommendation that it be dropped from C-2 status.

Wrangell-St. Elias staff has monitored all-terrain vehicle use and tested types of trail hardening techniques in order to accommodate ATV traffic on certain trails while preventing a web of new trails around wet areas.

**As part of the Partners in Flight/Aves de las Americas program, Northwest Alaska Areas staff banded 1,105 birds representing 29 species; seven of the species winter south of the Mexican border. The banding stations will remain active for at least another three years.**

# Aleutian WWII N.H.S.



A magazine entrance on Ulatka Head.

**Unalaska Island's Dutch Harbor military facilities were bombed by Japanese aircraft in 1942. Military action in the Aleutians, including the Japanese capture of Attu and Kiska islands, led to the internment of more than 800 Native Aleuts for the duration of World War II. Nearly 80 percent of the Aleut leaders and elders died in the American camps.**

The newest National Park Service affiliated area in Alaska is the Aleutian World War II National Historic Site, an 81-acre site at Ulatka Head on Unalaska Island.

Built as a defense post, the site contains a multi-tiered concrete battery command station, Panama gun and searchlight mounts, a plotting room, and the remains of one of the last intact World War II military defense landscapes including building ruins, roads, communications stations, anti-aircraft positions and ammunition magazines.

The local Alaska Native corporation, the Ounalashka Corporation, will administer, manage and operate the historic area with NPS technical assistance. This assistance will include historic preservation planning, mapping and documentation, recommendations by historic architects and engineers, assistance and in the development of an interpretive program.

The enabling legislation was sponsored in the 104th Congress by Alaska Senators Frank Murkowski and Ted Stevens.

# Kenai Fjords/Coastal Lands

The English Bay and Port Graham village corporations have had about 78,000 acres of lands within the park boundary conveyed to them under the terms of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Ownership of the subsurface estate is held by Chugach Alaska Corporation, a Native regional corporation. The lands -- close to the coast and relatively flat -- have very high resource and park values; they are truly the ecological core of the park.

Funding for the acquisition would come from the Exxon Valdez oil spill settlement funds. The park's coast was hit with significant quantities of oil after the 1989 tanker accident.

- English Bay wishes to sell all of its conveyed land to the National Park Service. Port Graham would like to retain some parcels, but is generally willing to sell others. The Chugach Alaska Corporation has also indicated a willingness to sell.
- Appraisals are complete for the lands of both corporations.
- Negotiations are on-going with English Bay. The corporation is asking for higher than appraised value for its lands. The corporation has also indicated an interest in retaining subsistence rights on some parcels and in establishing a cultural endowment fund to support long-term archaeological research and protection in the fjords.
- The acquisition enjoys strong support locally and nationally.

**The first priority restoration action for the NPS is acquisition of English Bay Native Corporation lands within Kenai Fjords National Park.**

# Lake Clark



Rafting in Lake Clark National Park and Preserve.

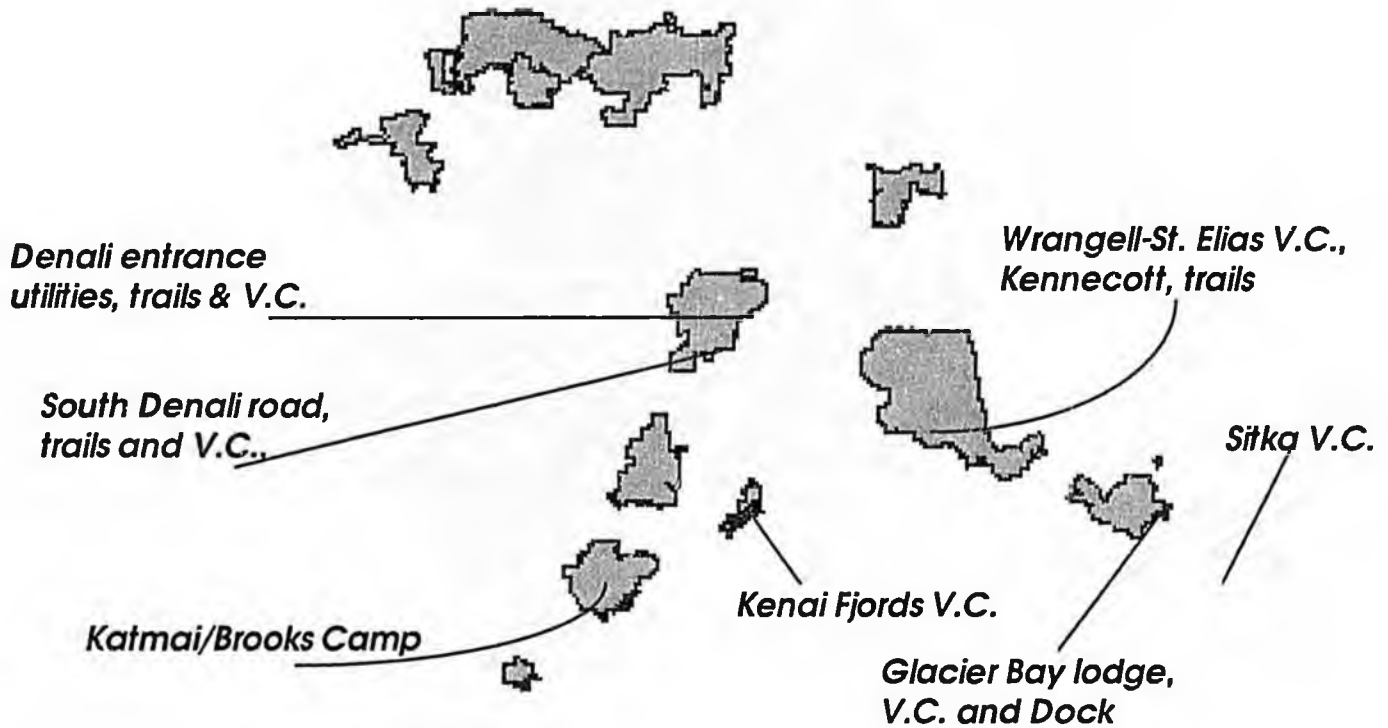
Lake Clark is a 4-million-acre national park and preserve about 120 southwest of Anchorage. The park had about 12,500 visitors in 1996. More than 95 percent of them came to the park with the help of commercial operators and spent an average of three to five days in the park. When visiting the park with a hunting or fishing guide or through a lodge, the typical expense is about \$3,500 per week per person.

- **Increasing visitation:** This has become a concern in parts of the park with float trips, fishing parties and hunting parties impacting streams and coastline resources. For example, 30 to 60 people a day use the Silver Salmon Creek on the coast during the salmon runs.
- **Bear management:** Bear incidents have become a bigger concern because of visitation increases; five bears were killed in Port Alsworth this fall. Brown bears have begun eating garbage at Silver Salmon Creek. Joint action with the state was taken to correct the problems caused by campers, fishermen and inholders.
- **Native land assertions:** Cook Inlet Region Inc., the Alaska Native corporation for southcentral Alaska, owns a large inholding near the coast on which it plans to develop a gold mine. The park is working with the corporation to locate a road access route to the coast. The corporation has also sought other park lands along the coast. The NPS and Department have maintained that the corporation has no legal right to the approximately 30,000 acres of coastal property. The issue has been the subject of proposed legislation, but has not been litigated.

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# Accommodating Visitors

## Between Now and 2007



### Key NPS construction priorities for 1997 to 2007

The timing of NPS construction projects depends on congressional appropriation levels and their rank among the Service's nationwide list of needs. Additional Alaska projects will be ranked by the NPS early this year. Work planned for this summer, and currently ranked high on the NPS construction priority list for 1998 and 1999 includes:

- **1997** Restoration begins on the Pantheon Saloon and Goldberg's Cigar Store at Klondike Gold Rush. These are the last of 13 historic structures restored in downtown Skagway. Also, the NPS will make emergency repairs to the Glacier Bay dock, repair the Katmai road to the Valley of 10,000 Smokes, construct electrical upgrades at Denali, and replace two trailer houses at Glacier Bay.
- **1998** Denali entrance area water and sewer improvements.
- **1999** Wrangell-St. Elias visitor center construction.  
Remodeling of the Sitka visitor center, Old School, and Priest's Quarters.  
Glacier Bay utility improvements.

# Denali/Front Country



Inside the Denali Visitor Access Center.

Improved visitor access and resource protection, including increased travel for visitors on the park road, make up the broad goals of the nearly complete development concept plan for the Denali Front Country. The plan envisions a more complete park experience along the first 15 miles of the park road, allowing visitors to view Mount McKinley and wildlife, hike on trails, picnic and camp, and use a visitor center. Significantly improved access and experience for independent travelers will be provided.

- Utility improvements for the front country are in the NPS construction plan for 1998.
- Fee demonstration project money will fund trail construction and interpretive displays starting in 1998.
- Proposals for a new visitor center, rest areas at Savage and Toklat, campground expansions, parking and other improvements will compete in the NPS national construction priority setting. The park also is exploring possible partnership funding.
- The Natural History Tour offered by the concessioner could double its capacity to 120,000 riders.
- Travel on the park road beyond Mile 15 would be increased by at least an additional 15,000 people through the reallocation of current road permits.

**About 262,000 people rode buses into the interior of Denali in 1996.**

## Denali/South Side



The south side of Mount McKinley.

The South Side of Denali has long been seen as an exceptional opportunity for visitors to see the grandeur of the Alaska Range and to sample the wild character of the park and surrounding lands. After several unsuccessful federal and state planning efforts, a cooperative planning effort began in 1995. The resulting development concept plan and EIS proposes a joint private-state-federal approach to protecting the natural resources and community values while at the same time opening portions of the area to increased recreational use and tourism.

- Proposed developments would be mostly on state land in or near Denali State Park. The visitor center site, just beyond the end of the Petersville Road, has expansive views of Mount McKinley, and would serve as the start of a trail into the national park.
- The proposal includes significant road upgrades, a small visitor center, trails and camping. The DCP estimates a total cost of about \$40 million, most of which is for road construction and upgrades.
- The plan envisions a second visitor center along the George Parks Highway, new trails in the state park and in the Dunkle Hills, and campgrounds.
- The NPS portions of the project have not been ranked in the national construction priority list.

**A cooperative effort has resulted in a conceptual 20-year plan for the south side of Denali.**

**Implementation will be through a team approach, with funding consisting of a mix of federal highway money, state and federal appropriations.**

# Glacier Bay/Construction



Bartlett Cove is the primary access point to Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve. A landing strip in the nearby community of Gustavus (pop. 600) allows jet service during the summer season, and year-round small plane access. The park's facilities are in considerable need of renovation or expansion. The improvement plans include the following elements:

- **Utility Upgrade:** Sewage treatment facilities are operating under an interim authorization from the state Department of Environmental Conservation with the requirement that they be brought into compliance by 1998. Electrical service, water treatment and fuel storage are inadequate to meet projected demand. The upgrade is planned in the NPS 1999 construction program.
- **Dock Project:** Two docks built in 1956 serve visitor, concessioner and management needs at Bartlett Cove. Both have significant structural and safety needs. Emergency repairs will occur in 1997; full rehabilitation and expansion is also recommended in the future.
- **Road Project:** Access to visitor facilities and park headquarters is via a 10-mile road. The road outside the park is paved. The park portion is a narrow, dirt road. Federal highway funding has been requested in 2000 for reconstruction, realignment and rehabilitation.

**More than 200 cruise ships come into Glacier Bay every summer. The largest carry more than 2,000 passengers each.**

## Glacier Bay/...Construction



Trailers continue to house some administrative and maintenance operations.

- **Lodge Improvements:** The 1986 General Management Plan approved enlargement of the 56-cabin lodge at Bartlett Cove. The proposed development includes additional visitor cabins, a low-cost hotel unit, improvements to the restaurant and other visitor use areas. The primary area for interpretive activities is in a loft area above the lodge dining room. This area is inadequate to meet visitor needs, and a separate facility is proposed in the on-going development concept plan. Discussions also are underway with the concessioner on possible private funding strategies.
- **Cultural Center:** The Native Tlingit Indians, who originally occupied the Glacier Bay area, hope to build a Cultural Center/Spirit House before 2000 which would help integrate the cultural history of Glacier Bay into the overall interpretive program. It would also help improve Native involvement in park operations. It is under consideration in the development concept plan.
- **Trailer Replacement:** There are six aged trailers serving as employee housing. Construction of replacement housing (a single-family unit and a multi-family unit) will occur this summer.

# Katmai/Brooks River



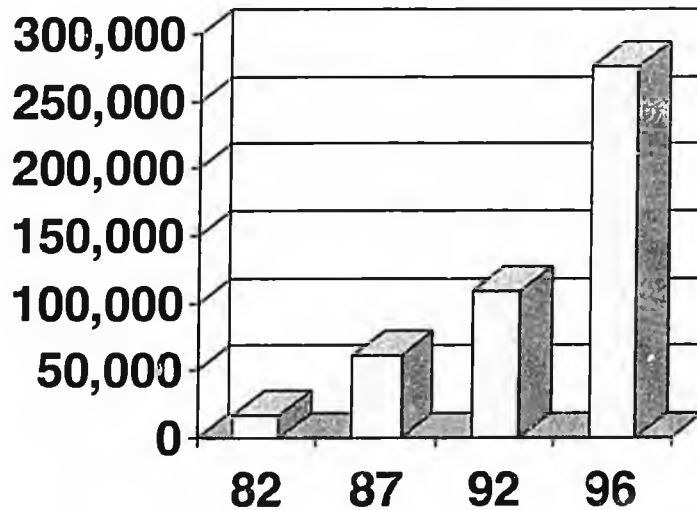
A brown bear at Brooks Falls.

## Enhancing visitor experiences and improving facilities

Significant changes in the visitor experience will occur at the Brooks River area of Katmai National Park and Preserve under a recently approved development concept plan. The Brooks River area is the most-visited part of Katmai. Facilities there, however, are outdated and are located in an area used extensively by brown bears. Katmai is the country's largest brown bear sanctuary. The site is also rich in archaeological sites at least 4,000 years old. The \$9.3 million plan calls for removing all facilities on the north side of the Brooks River and relocating them about three-quarters of a mile south of the river.

- Day use visitation has tripled from 2,079 people in 1986 to 6,391 in 1996. The Brooks area is most heavily used in July, when many days see more than 100 day-use visitors in addition to the campers and lodge guests.
- The new lodge and campground will be the same size – 60 people each per night. The number of day users will be limited to 85 per day beginning in 1998. This will provide a better quality and safer visitor experience.
- A reservation system for day use begins this year. A user fee is charged to campers, lodge guests and day use visitors at the Brooks River. Campers will pay a \$10 per site campground fee. A portion of the fees remains with the reservation company; the balance comes to the park.

# Kenai Fjords/Visitor Center



Recreational visits to the park have nearly quadrupled in six years.

The 2,000-square-foot Seward Visitor Center and the easily accessible visitor facilities at Exit Glacier are overused. This threatens resources, visitor experiences and employee efficiency, safety, and morale. In 1994, the park began a planning effort to determine visitor and resource needs through 2015. A facility incorporating the needs of the Forest Service, Alaska State Parks, the City of Seward and others was proposed in the Development Concept Plan completed in 1996.

In May 1996, the NPS, City of Seward, Seward Downtown Merchants Association, Seward Chamber of Commerce, Forest Service and state parks signed a memorandum of agreement. Key points include:

- The City of Seward set aside land for the project and provided the first \$50,000 for a conceptual design and budget.
- The Forest Service has approved the project contingent on co-location with the NPS.
- State Parks has set aside an initial \$40,000 for exhibits in the new facility.
- The shared facility will save the NPS almost \$1 million.
- The project has broad community support.

**The Harding Icefield at Kenai Fjords receives up to 65 feet of snow every year, feeding the glaciers which spill into the lowlands and the namesake fjords.**

# Sitka/Visitor Center

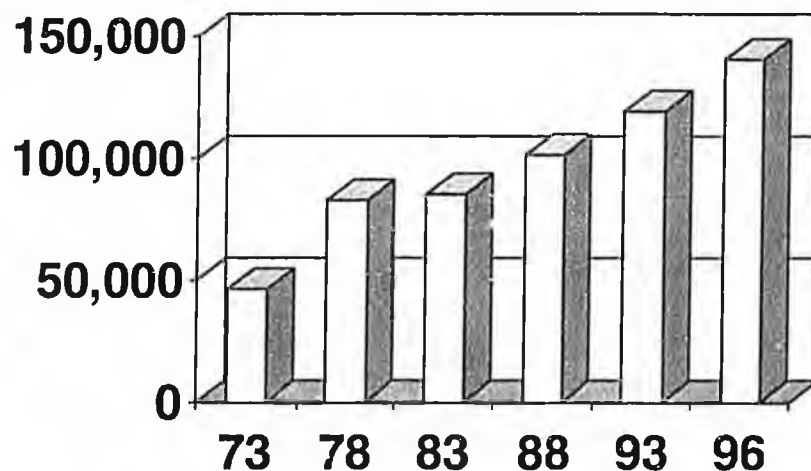


*Johns Community Planning Institute - Sitka, Alaska*

The Sitka waterfront.

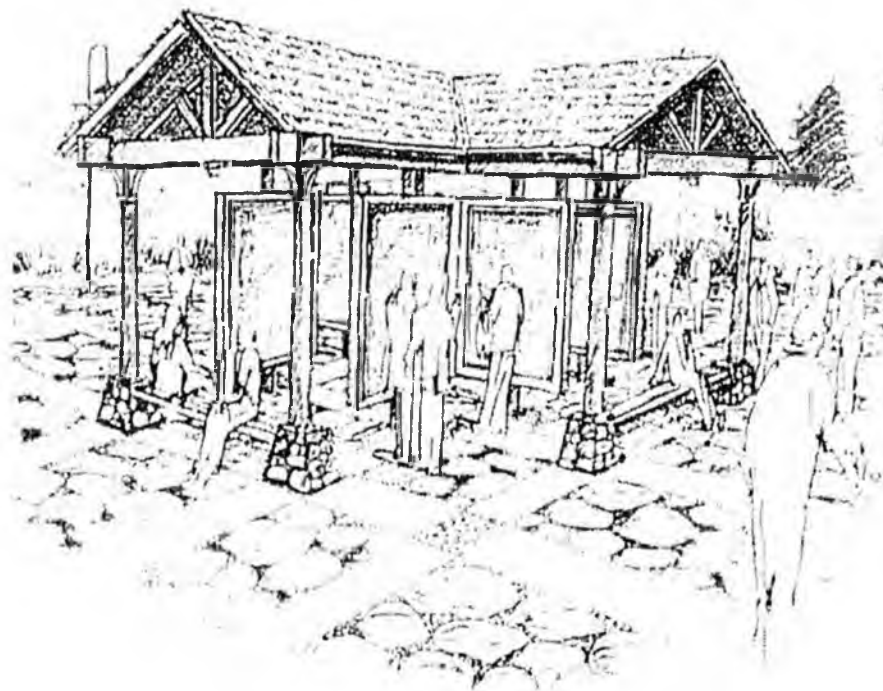
## Facilities to meet current demand are planned for 1999

- The park visitor center was built in 1965 when visitation was 25,000 per year; today it is about 140,000.
- The NPS planning and design work are underway for remodeling the visitor center and stabilizing and rehabilitating the two historic buildings next to the Russian Bishop's House (the Priest's Quarters and Old School).
- The Priest's Quarters, built in 1887, and the Old School, built in 1897, would be adapted for use by administrative staff now working in the visitor center.
- The visitor center would be remodeled to expand exhibits, restrooms, a totem pole display area and the Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center.
- Both projects are on the NPS tentative FY 1999 construction list of priorities.



Increases in recreational visits have paralleled the growth of the cruise ship industry.

# Sitka/Gateway Community Planning



A proposed informational kiosk in Sitka.

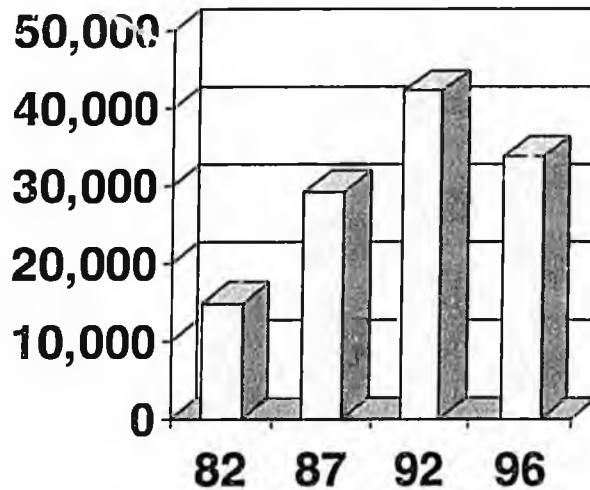
**Sitka is  
Alaska's  
oldest federal  
park,  
established in  
1910 to  
commemorate  
the 1804 Battle  
of Sitka.**

In a coordinated effort with the community of Sitka, the National Park Service is preparing a general management plan and environmental impact statement to chart the course of Sitka National Historical Park over the next 10-15 years.

The pilot project -- part of the NPS Gateway Community Planning Initiative -- focuses on working cooperatively with the neighboring community on planning for land use, visitor facilities, alternative transportation, community services and other issues.

The Sitka effort was launched in 1995. In community workshops, participants chose to focus on vehicle and pedestrian access, the rich cultural diversity of Sitka, visitor information, environmental quality, community education programs, and the development of visitor facilities. A completed plan will be presented to the city and borough assembly in February.

# Wrangell-St. Elias/Visitor Center



Visitation counting methods changed in 1996, but use of popular facilities has continued to grow.

## Strategies for dealing with growth:

- Visitor center construction in 1999. A 230-acre site has been purchased, and a road has been built to the site. Architectural design and exhibit planning are in progress. The visitor center cost is estimated at between \$4.5 and \$6.5 million, depending on the design. A decision on which of two design alternatives will be made in March 1997. If funded, Phase I of construction (utilities and well) could be awarded in FY98.
- McCarthy Road cooperative project with state. (See Appendix).
- Continue incremental improvements to facilities in Chitina, Slana & on the Nabesna road.
- Skookum Volcano Trail construction will occur in 1997. The trailhead for the five-hour loop is on the Nabesna Road.
- Securing agreement on Kennecott acquisition and management. (See Appendix).
- Participation in regional planning efforts with private enterprise and local government, including work on tourism through the Land Managers Forum.
- Construction of public toilets at McCarthy.
- Continue rehabilitation of public use cabins.

**Wrangell-St. Elias N.P. encompasses 13.2 million acres, or more than one-seventh of all the land managed by the NPS.**

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# Community Alliances

# Local Employment

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act gives the NPS authority to hire people into excepted service positions because of their special knowledge of the area based on their having lived in or near the park. People hired under the program bring tremendous benefits to the NPS, but are not classified as career Service employees. The Alaska Field Area believes this is a flaw; after a period of satisfactory work with the NPS, these local hire employees should attain career status and be able to compete for other jobs on an equal footing as their co-workers. The fix must be done legislatively, and would need to be supported by the Alaska congressional delegation.

The NPS also uses local volunteers in a variety of jobs. In FY 1996, they contributed more than 35,000 hours.

**Bering Land Bridge/Northwest Areas:** The four units have a staff of 27 career employees, 13 of whom are local hires. The staff includes nine Native Alaskans, two of whom are division chiefs. For the past four years, Bering Land bridge has employed a local village high school student in the Resource Apprenticeship Program Student (RAPS). He has assisted with administrative jobs, developed and performed an interpretive program and, in 1996, assisted with the recovery of a mammoth tusk.

**Sitka:** In FY 1996, 11 of 13 seasonal employees were local hires. Of those, two were Alaska Natives. Of the nine full-time and four half-time permanent employees, five are local hire.

**Wrangell-St. Elias:** In 1996, the park had 22 permanent employees of which eight were local hires. For the summer, the park hired 20 local residents as seasonal employees.

**Denali:** The park has expanded recruitment outreach in five communities to attract local hire applicants. Job descriptions are being tailored for the type of skills found in Bush communities and different ways of structuring jobs to accommodate local lifestyles are being evaluated.

**Klondike Gold Rush:** Local hires total about 14 FTE out of a park staff of 59.

One Klondike Gold Rush volunteer was Cynthia Brackett Driscoll, whose great-grandfather was George Brackett, a road builder and entrepreneur during the Gold Rush days. Her research resulted in public programs at the park, contributions to the park library, and a book about her family's history.

# Alaska Public Lands Information Centers

The Centers were mandated in ANILCA as a partnership of federal and state land managing agencies representing over 250 sites. The NPS manages the Anchorage and Fairbanks centers. The state operates the center in Tok and the Forest Service operates the center in Ketchikan. The Centers provide convenient one-stop shopping for visitor information.

The statewide system of APLICs is faced with an increase in demand coupled with reduced funding. The state recently withdrew most of its \$140,000 contribution to the operation of the Fairbanks and Anchorage centers. The NPS is exploring other avenues to more creatively fund operations.

The Anchorage Center recently entered into a partnership with the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). The AMHS has moved into the center and will help pay to operate it. Until other funding sources are identified, the NPS remains committed to fund these successful models for cooperative information centers.

In addition to trip planning, the Fairbanks and Anchorage centers offer a myriad of professional services to the visiting public including:

- **Fee Collection:** The Anchorage Center handles public use cabin reservations for the National Park Service.
- **Educational programs:** The Fairbanks and Anchorage Centers served nearly 30,000 youth in Anchorage and Fairbanks through on- and off-site educational program.
- **Military Outreach:** The Fairbanks Center works with the orientation program for new recruits to Fairbanks and for their families.
- **Community Outreach:** Centers work with local universities, hosting community events such as films, public meetings and demonstrations by Native artists.

**APLICs provide more than 300,000 visitors with trip planning services every year.**

**The centers in Anchorage and Fairbanks answer more than 25,000 letters and phone calls each year.**



Recording data in an abandoned Native coastal village.

Existing U.S. park units would make up the American side of an international park.

The FY-96 Beringia budget is \$670,000, of which 77% goes to research and community cultural projects.

Native groups received 72% of the research and community cultural project money; the University of Alaska Fairbanks received 26%.

## New insights into an ancient landscape

The Beringia program grew from a 1989 recommendation by a joint Soviet-American planning team to establish an international park in this remarkable region. Political revolution and other events have slowed the pursuit of a joint international designation, but key interdisciplinary program goals are being accomplished:

- Extensive alliances have been made with groups outside the NPS, including Native and Russian organizations, all of which have significant expertise in the region.
- The program has assisted in the re-establishment of cultural traditions between the indigenous people of Alaska and Russia, and fostered conservation practices.
- Noted researchers from the U.S. and Russia are attracted to the region under the Beringia program. The program has produced more than 50 published scientific papers.
- Hundreds of plant species have been identified in the preserve for the first time; dozens of species have been found for the first time in North America.
- Science camps for youth, trade fairs, dances and other cultural activities have been sponsored.
- Research proposals are prioritized by a review panel comprised of three Alaska Native corporation members and two NPS members, a process that helps weave academic research and local studies based on traditional knowledge.

# Gates of the Arctic/Access

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve is a remote but very accessible wilderness, with increasing numbers of people enjoying the park throughout the year. The heart of the 8.5 million acres unit is just 90 air minutes north of Fairbanks, and hundreds of lakes and rivers in the park allow for easy float plane access. Six major rivers are part of the Wild and Scenic Rivers system.

- **Business:** Over 50 commercial businesses from Alaska and around the world assist visitors with logistics and equipment needs. Typical backcountry visitors spend a minimum of a week in the park, and month-long stays are not unusual.
- **Visitor service:** Three NPS offices on the perimeter of the Park provide information and visitor services. The Dalton Highway Visitor Center, just east of the park, provided services to over 5,000 visitors last summer.
- **Winter use:** Winter visitation has increased dramatically as dogsled trips into the Brooks Range have become popular for groups from around the world. The guiding and outfitting of these trips has become a multi-million dollar industry for the area.

The park's wilderness area, first made famous by Bob Marshall, attracts hikers from around the world.

## Wrangell-St. Elias/Access



**Public Use Cabins:** The park has restored five historic cabins that are available for free public use on a first-come, first-served basis. The cabins are Nugget Creek, Jake's Bar, Hubert's Landing, Too Much Johnson, and Solo Mountain.

**Trails:** The park has identified at least 38 trails with potential to be improved for public access. The Skookum Volcano Trail will be opened this summer by a Sierra Club work group. This trail provides a loop route from the Nabesna Road that can be completed in five hours.

**Chisana Airstrip:** The park and state Department of Transportation agreed to allow the development of a master plan with FAA funding for the Chisana Airstrip. Three public meetings have been held (Chisana, Anchorage, and Fairbanks).

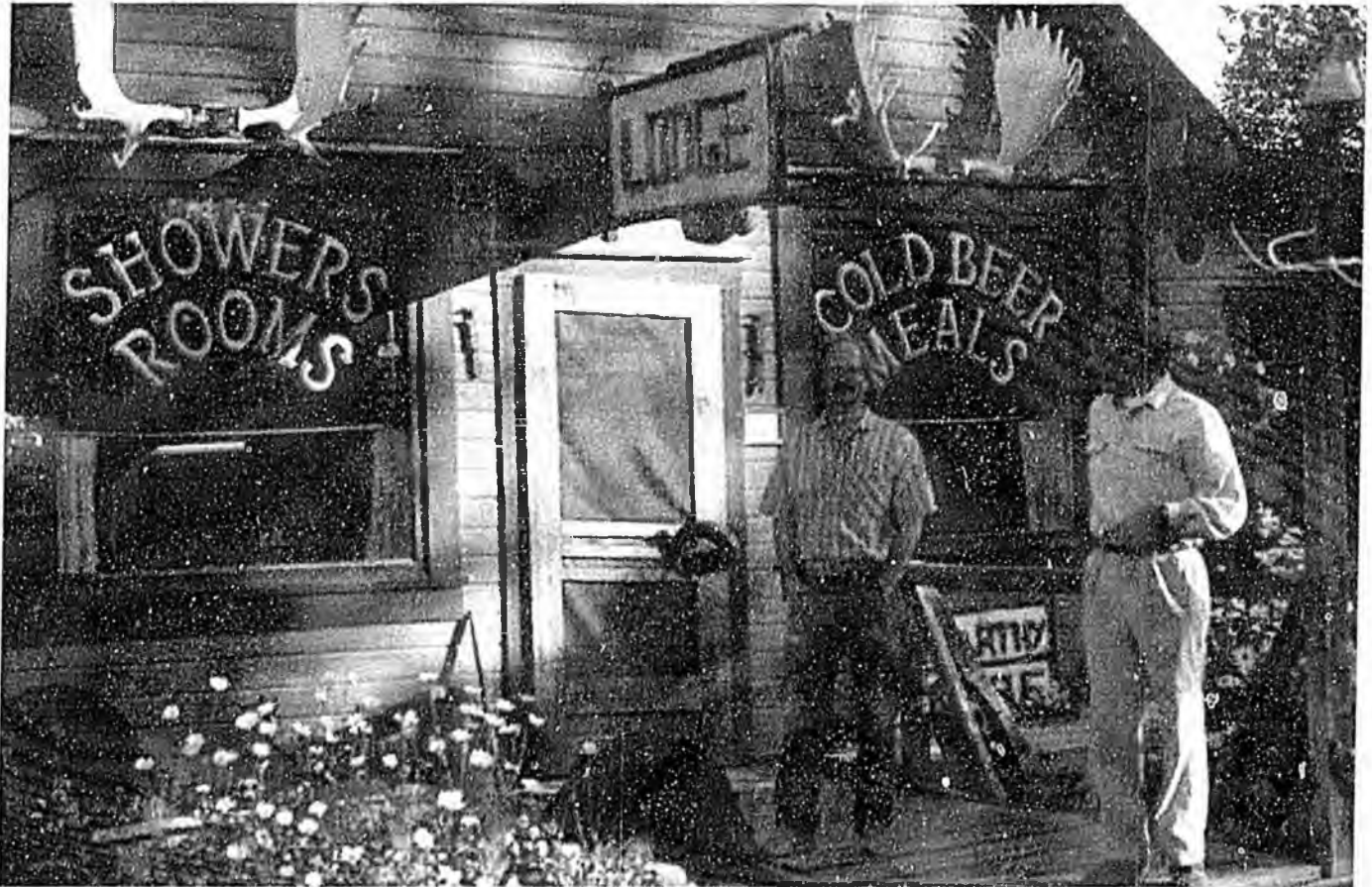
**Backcountry Airstrips:** The park spends about \$22,000 per year maintaining more than 20 Bush airstrips for public access in the park.

**Chitina Wayside:** The park and state Department of Transportation are planning to install an interpretive wayside and toilet facility in Chitina. DOT is funding construction through the ISTEA program.

**Nabesna Road:** The park and the State Department of Transportation have an agreement to begin the planning for a Nabesna Scenic Road Plan. This plan will mirror the McCarthy Road process by involving the local communities, land owners, and Native organizations in the planning for public and private amenities. Road width, surface type, picnic areas, parking areas, camping, trailheads and interpretation will be a part of the plan.

The park has installed five picnic tables, several fire rings, and trailhead information signs along popular areas on the Nabesna Road. Camping is encouraged at both Twin Lakes and Jack Creek.

## Wrangell-St. Elias/Community



Visitors in front of the popular McCarthy Lodge.

**Alaska Land Managers Forum Chitina Valley Project:** A task force is being considered to focus on private/public tourism infrastructure in the Copper/Chitina valley. The Copper Valley and Wrangell-St. Elias are being proposed as a major alternative destination to Denali National Park.

**Public Toilets:** The park and the state Department of Transportation have agreed to build the first two public toilets in McCarthy this spring. A second set is planned for the McCarthy Road side of the tram.

**Community Economic Development:** The park received a \$30,000 grant from the National Park Foundation to develop a Native Alaskan Interpretive Curriculum through the Prince William Sound Community College. This curriculum will be used to stimulate local "ecotourism" businesses within the Native and non-Native community.

**Concessions:** The park has 16 hunting guide concessioners. There are 49 incidental business permits for air taxis, river rafters, backpacking guides, mountaineering guides, and game transporters.

## Working with Neighbors



The Moore House, right, will be restored for the 1997 Gold Rush Centennial.

**Klondike Gold Rush:** The park has played a major role along with state and local groups in planning for the "rush" of visitors expected in Skagway and in the region for the 1997-98 centennial of the Gold Rush. The park has worked with Canadian officials in managing the Chilkoot Trail, and expects more hikers in 1997 than in any year since the Gold Rush.

**Denali:** Doyon, Ltd., the regional Native corporation for much of Interior Alaska, purchased the Kantishna Roadhouse in 1995. Space on the former Liberty One mining claim was assigned to them under a Special Use Permit. At its own expense, Doyon removed unsightly debris and fuel-contaminated soil left by former users. Doyon also encouraged Roadhouse guests to use the company's bus or the NPS shuttle bus system rather than private vehicles. This reduced by more than 150 the number of road travel permits issued in 1996. Doyon also maintained the number of day-trip buses to its facility at 1995 levels, foregoing possible increases in business.

**Kenai Fjords:** In lieu of paying lease fees to the Port Graham Native Corporation for the use of land on which the park has a public use cabin, the park patrolled coastal Native-owned lands and trained a corporation employee as a coastal ranger. The park hopes to expand the program in 1997. The park receives a donation from a local tour boat company to pay a NPS ranger who goes on the all-day coastal park tour. A second company hopes to begin offering the NPS presence on its boats in 1997.

## ...Working with Neighbors

**The Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center is supported primarily by the NPS under a cooperative agreement. The park's goal is to extend the center's operation from seasonal to year-round. The center currently receives between \$50,000 and \$70,000 in support from the NPS. Year round operation would cost \$120,000.**

**Bering Land Bridge:** During the summer, the preserve provides Nome residents and visitors with weekly natural history lectures, often conducted by visiting scientists. The programs are videotaped and later aired on Nome's local access cable television channel.

- NPS archaeologist Jeanne Schaaf is developing a videotape and language workbook focusing on folktales about Serpentine Hot Springs for use in primary and secondary grades in Northwest Alaska.
  - Preserve staff flew camping gear, supplies and materials into Serpentine Hot Springs for 18 students from the Northern Lights Recovery Youth Group. The young men participate in challenging physical work as a means of recovering from addictive behaviors. The group performed work on the Serpentine airstrip as park volunteers during their stay in the preserve.
  - The NPS signed an \$184,000 agreement under the Indian Self Governance Act to fund the Eskimo Heritage project. This is the first such agreement in the nation between a Native American tribe or government and a federal agency other than the BIA. The project is a comprehensive collection of tapes, photographs, videotapes, slide and interviews with elders that will help preserve the Bering Strait region's cultures, traditional knowledge and languages.
- Sitka:** For 27 years, Sitka N.H.P. and the Southeast Alaska Indian Cultural Center have been partners in providing education and enjoyment to visitors and in preserving traditional SE Alaska culture and art forms. The cultural center is a Native-run, non-profit organization located in the Sitka visitor center.
- In February 1996, a new totem pole depicting the clans that settled the Sitka area was raised in the traditional manner at the park. The project was developed and managed by the cultural center with oversight by Native elders and support from the NPS.

## ...Working with Neighbors

**Klondike Gold Rush:** On July 5, 1997, the park will help celebrate the centennial of the Gold Rush by dedicating the J. Bernard Moore House. The park restoration crew has worked on the restoration since early 1995. The house -- built by a town founder -- will become an exhibit for interpreting family life in Skagway at the turn of the century. It will contain two partially furnished rooms in all of their Victorian splendor, as well as exhibit panels and artifacts. A Moore grandson is scheduled to attend the dedication.

The Gold Rush centennial has also kindled a strong partnership between the park and the C.C. Filson Company. In research for an update of the park teacher's guide, the woolmaker's name was prominent among businesses. The company assisted the park interpretive staff in producing a more comprehensive guide. Filson is also a partner in "The Stampede Kit," designed to allow a "hands on" method of teaching. The kit contains a gold pan, gravel, fake gold for salting the pan, postcards, a swatch of Filson wool fabric and a manual to assist the teacher. The kits should be ready for spring shipping.

**Gates of the Arctic:** This is the only national park in Alaska that has a Native village within its boundary. Anaktuvuk Pass is the last inland Eskimo community that remained nomadic until 30 years ago. Recent Congressional legislation calls for cooperative management of all-terrain vehicles used by residents in the area. Three other distinct Alaska cultural groups from 10 adjacent communities are allowed to use the parklands for subsistence activities. The park is also discussing numerous agreements would coordinate management of migratory wildlife that use park lands. These include the Western Arctic Caribou Herd of 500,000 animals and sheefish of the Kobuk River.

**External Programs:** Through the National Park Service's National Register Programs, the Alaska Field Area provides technical assistance and advice in cultural resources to dozens of local communities across the state.

**The development concept plan for Nome calls for a partnership to accomplish the construction of a visitor center/museum. It would be jointly operated by the city of Nome, the NPS and a Native corporation. The NPS continues to consult with its potential equity partners to gain support for this project.**

## YOUR BOOKMARK

### FOR

[www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

Every NPS unit in Alaska has its own World Wide Web site as part of the Service's larger Internet presence.

Go to:  
[www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov),  
choose "Visit Your Parks," and go to Alaska or alphabetical list.

Denali, Bering Land Bridge, Wrangell-St. Elias, and Klondike Gold Rush have the most comprehensive Web pages. Others are under construction.

- **Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve** will host more than two dozen Native Alaskan high school graduates this summer as part of a combined Upward Bound and Earth Quest program at the Coal Creek facilities. The young adults are college-bound and will work on several resource projects, as well as learn other skills.

- **Archaeology Week:** The NPS is a co-sponsor of Archaeology Week, an annual program that presents lectures and school programs in several communities statewide.

- **Search and Rescue:** The Shishmaref search and rescue team received \$25,000 from Bering Land Bridge as part of a cooperative agreement to make improvements to four shelter cabins in the preserve. The cabins are heavily used in the winter by residents traveling by snowmachine between villages.

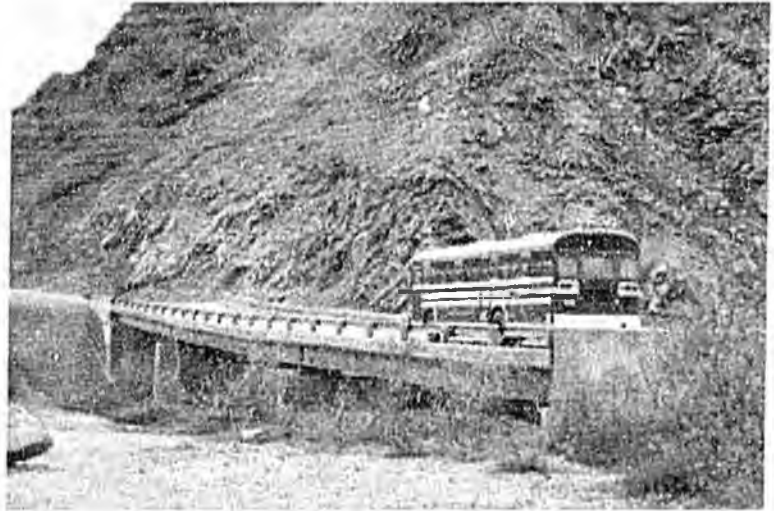
- **Arctic Visitor Center:** The NPS is a partner in a multi-agency effort to establish a first-class visitor facility on the Dalton Highway at Coldfoot. The center would serve visitors to Gates of the Arctic National Park, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the BLM's Dalton Highway corridor, and other public lands. In 1996, more than 6,000 people attended evening programs at the existing small facility.

- **Community Service:** NPS employees are a significant part of their community life, serving on planning commissions, on volunteer fire departments and ambulance squads, as service club officers and in schools.

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# Park Issues/Appendix

## Denali/Access



A shuttle on the Denali park road.

Access into Denali will be a significant focus of National Park Service management and interest groups. The issue splits among three areas: management of the existing park road; development of new access on the south side; and the study of feasibility of a new northern access route.

**Denali shuttle bus:** The Denali shuttle bus system has run for 25 years, since the completion of the George Parks Highway in 1972. In 1996, about 90,000 people rode the shuttle; another 106,000 rode the concessioner's Tundra Wildlife Tour buses to Mile 55; and 60,000 rode the shorter Natural History Tour to the Mile 17 overlook. Front country plans propose increased visitation.

- Significant improvements have been made in the reservation system. Early written and fax reservations are being taken this year. Also, phone reservations will be taken seven days a week.
- About 40 percent of the shuttle bus reservations are available in advance by phone. The remaining tickets are available by phone and in person within two days of use.

**Northern access study:** A feasibility study on a new northern access route into the park along the Stampede route will be complete in March. The report represents the combined effort of the NPS, state Departments of Transportation, Natural Resources, Fish and Game, and the Alaska Railroad.

- The report considers both rail and road access.
- Significant input was received from the Fairbanks Chamber of commerce, the Alaska Visitors Association, and state Division of Tourism, as well as local businesses and other interest groups.
- The study will not result in specific recommendations, but will review construction feasibility, costs and potential market. It does not evaluate environmental consequences, but recommends additional studies if further planning takes place.

# Denali Mountaineering

**Denali National Park ranger Daryl Miller was honored with the Silver Plaque award in Pinzolo, Italy, in 1996. He was the first American to receive the award which honors those who risk their lives to save the lives of others. A Marine Corps veteran, Miller, 52, has been involved in 31 lifesaving rescues since 1982.**

- About 1,200 climbers attempt Mount McKinley and Mount Foraker each year; about half succeed. In a typical season, at least one climber dies and several major, high-altitude rescue missions are performed by NPS mountaineering rangers.
- Each climber pays a \$150 fee and must register 60 days in advance of the climb of Mount McKinley or Mount Foraker.
- The fee offsets administrative expenses -- such as ranger patrols and pre-positioning of supplies on the mountain -- and is not a rescue fee.
- The NPS leases a high-altitude helicopter for rescue work. It costs about \$260,000 per season. The contract helicopter provides the safest and fastest means for NPS rescuers to respond to mountain incidents.
- Military helicopters have a longer response time and can be committed to military missions outside Alaska. National Guard helicopters in Anchorage cannot operate above 11,000 feet.
- The new mountaineering ranger station in Talkeetna opens in early 1997. The center was built by local contractors, and features interior work by several local artists. The \$1.8 million building replaces an unplumbed and poorly heated log cabin as the south district's primary climber and visitor contact facility.

# Gates of the Arctic/Land Exchange



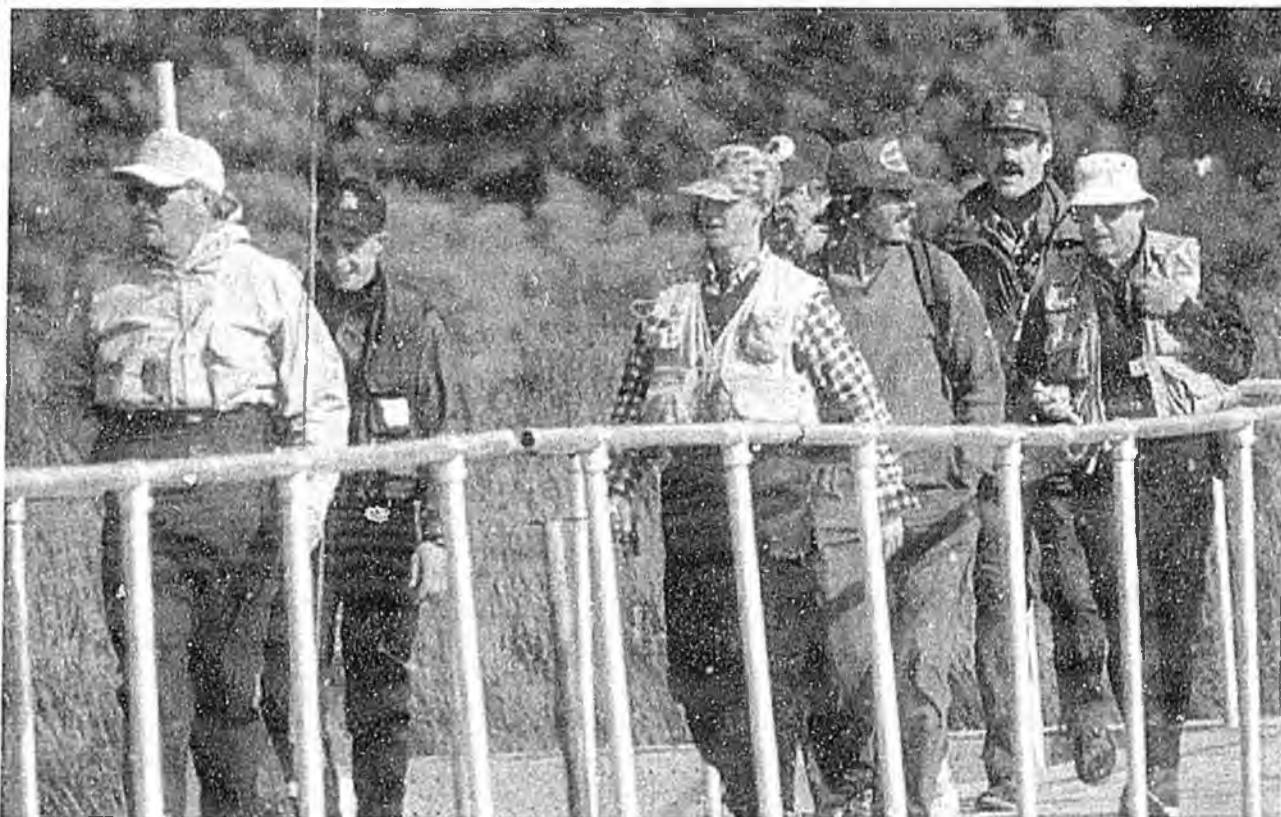
West of Ilikmalak Valley, Gates of the Arctic.

Gates of the Arctic National Park has a unique opportunity to protect additional arctic habitat and wilderness land along the northern boundary of the park. Arctic Slope Regional Corporation is interested in trading subsurface estate and lands it owns in the northern portion of park and in areas that were originally planned to be included within the park.

The privately owned subsurface lands in the Ikillik drainage of the preserve were selected with plans to develop oil and gas reserves. The land is within 20 miles of the Dalton Highway and could easily be developed. This is one of the most scenic areas of Gates of the Arctic and is an important caribou migration route.

Nearly 2 million acres encompassing the Killik River drainage that was originally planned for inclusion in the park is now available for a possible land exchange. These lands would provide the arctic habitat for the park that is presently missing. The area has rich culture resources, including prehistoric sites. There are extraordinary wildlife, fisheries and recreational resources not found in any national park unit. The Killik River has been recommended for Wild and Scenic designation.

## Katmai/Dispersed Use



Fishermen at the Brooks River bridge.

Katmai National Park and Preserve is developing a backcountry management plan in anticipation of dispersed use from Brooks. Use limits will begin at Brooks in 1998, while at the same time there is increased interest in bear viewing, fishing and other uses of the park.

- **Alternative destinations:** The park staff is looking at alternatives that include primitive facilities in Bay of Islands (campsites, food storage, pit toilets, etc.) and use areas along the park coast where commercial operators can conduct operations.
- **Coastal visitation:** The park is also working with two businesses on the coast to determine if incidental business permits can be issued utilizing stipulations developed through the 106 consultation process with the natives and State. There are about 30,000 user days along the coast, although most stay offshore.
- **Valley of 10,000 Smokes:** Additional backcountry use of the park may also be seen in the Valley of 10,000 Smokes. Under the recently approved development concept plan, the Three Forks Overlook Cabin at the valley end of the park road will be remodeled and the trail to Ukak Falls on the valley floor will be improved. Road rehabilitation occurs this year.

# Klondike Gold Rush/Chilkoot Trail

Summer of 1997 marks the beginning of the Centennial celebrations in honor of the Klondike Gold Rush of 1897-98. To commemorate the crossing of the Chilkoot Trail by more than 20,000 stampeders 100 years ago, local Skagwegians Jeff Brady and Buckwheat Donahue will sponsor a Dyea to Dawson race in June. Fifty two-member teams will set out with 50-pound packs to challenge the Chilkoot Trail and the Golden Stairs, before retrieving canoes 33 miles later and boating the remaining 500 miles to Dawson.

- **Higher numbers:** As the Centennial celebrations approach, trail hiker numbers continue to increase, while total park visitation rises at an average rate of 12% annually.
- **Better facilities:** With the noted increase in use along the trail and a projected increase in numbers for 1997-1998, the park has improved visitor use facilities at each campground. Campsites have been added and improved, outhouses replaced, and additional food storage bear poles, dish-water pits, and interpretive media installed. Trail conditions improve each year. Warming shelters constructed in 1993 provide hikers with shelter from the notorious Chilkoot weather.
- **International status:** Efforts are continuing by the National Park Service and Parks Canada to gain a Klondike Gold Rush International Park status.
- **New Canadian fees:** In 1997, Parks Canada will begin a \$35 fee (Canadian) for overnight hikers wanting to cross the Canada/U.S. border at the Chilkoot Summit. Parks Canada will impose a 50 hiker per day limit. Also, a \$10 reservation fee will be collected through C.A.M.I.S., an automated Canadian reservation system. The NPS will work with Parks Canada to ensure a steady flow of hikers along the entire 33-mile trail.
- **Visitor information:** An international, interagency Trails Information Center is proposed in one of the park's restored historic buildings in Skagway to begin in May. The information center would be staffed by personnel from the NPS, Forest Service and Parks Canada.

# Wrangell-St. Elias/McCarthy Road

**A cooperative process:** In 1995, following recommendations from the community of McCarthy, the state Department of Transportation entered into an agreement with the NPS and the state Department of Natural Resources to prepare a plan for the McCarthy Road scenic roadway. The purpose of this plan is to determine the type of public facilities (turnouts, picnic areas, etc.), and methods of preserving the scenic/historic character of the roadway, including the style of road construction that will retain the general character of the road and be compatible with the park. Twenty-nine planning/public meetings have been held with representatives from the communities and Native corporations, and other land owners and managers. The results of this study will be summarized in the draft EIS, and available for further review, comment and amendment as part of the overall road study document.

**The scenic roadway plan includes:**

- A no-build alternative. Selection of this alternative means no systematic improvement of the entire road; however, it does not preclude small projects, as necessary, to keep the road open.
- A 24-foot-wide gravel road, mostly following the existing route, as presented in the original scoping documents and meetings.
- A 24-foot-wide hard surface alternative in combination with minor realignments and other features to preserve the low-speed scenic/historic character of the road. (Without special construction measures, a hard surface roadway would have a different profile than a gravel roadway. The embankment would require a higher and, therefore, wider foundation. The driving surface of the road would remain 24 feet wide.)
- Parking and facilities at the Kennicott River, west of the Footbridge: DOT&PF and NPS are currently working to prepare a site plan based on the needs and concepts that the corridor planning team discussed last fall in McCarthy.
- Handicap Access, toilets and other facilities, footbridges to McCarthy: This study will include consideration of a bike path/trail (handicap accessible) connecting the footbridges and McCarthy, and will address the need for public facilities, including toilets, in McCarthy.
- Trail Study: This study will consider a continuous trail along the corridor or segments in the areas of greatest need. In either situation, a trail can be integrated with the road or separated from it. The trail will be studied for multiple uses including pedestrians, bicycles, motorcycles, horses, dog sleds, snowmobiles and all terrain vehicles.

The state Department of Transportation will produce a draft EIS for public comment this summer.

# Wrangell-St. Elias/Kennecott Acquisition

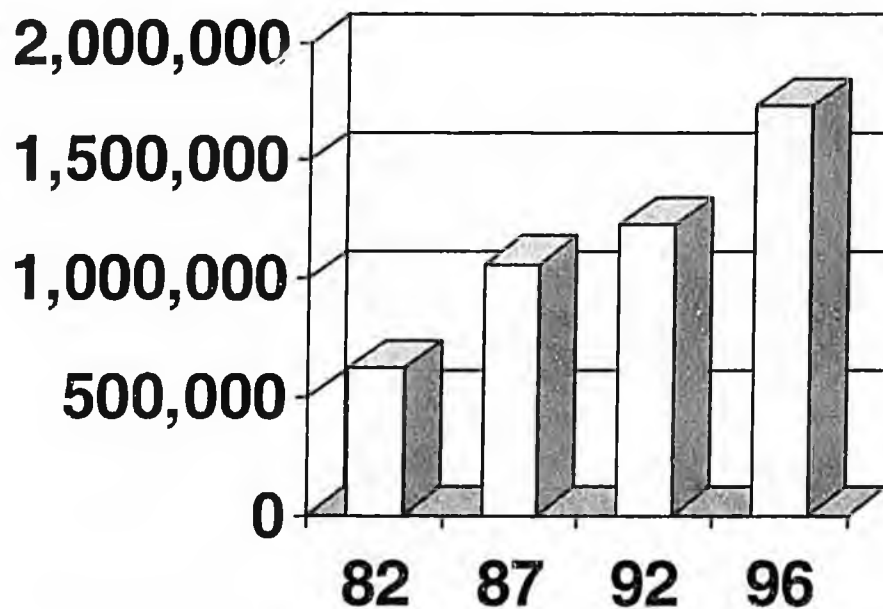
The site is now a National Historic Landmark. In a May, 1991, report to Congress, the NPS recommended that the buildings and land be acquired as part of the park. The lands included in the recommendation are 1,336 acres of surface estate owned by the Great Kennicott Land Company; 1,503 acres of surface estate owned by the Consolidated Wrangell Mining Company; and 3,030 acres of mineral estate owned by the Kennecott Corporation.

**Donation proposed:** The Great Kennicott Land Company proposes donating 14 acres in the center of the historic complex, including three major buildings, to the NPS. The remaining surface estate is offered for sale. Kennecott Corporation is discussing donation of their mineral interest in Kennicott as well as about 12 acres of fee estate.

**Acquisition later this year:** The NPS plan is to complete the acquisition of this property by November of 1997. Kennecott Corporation conducted a site investigation and clean-up of hazardous materials at Kennicott, and reports spending \$3,000,000 on this effort. The NPS conducted a hazardous materials review to determine the cost of remediating remaining hazardous materials. This is estimated to be \$180,000. The surface owners have tentatively agreed to pay for \$125,000 of additional clean-up from the proceeds of a sale. The Conservation Fund, Great Kennicott Land Company and Consolidated Wrangell Mining Company have entered into a purchase agreement that expires at the end of 1997. The National Park Service is having the property surveyed to identify encroachments, is resolving land title problems, and is reviewing an appraisal of the Great Kennicott Land Company's and Consolidated Wrangell Mining Company's holdings. This review is expected to be complete by mid-January, 1997.

**Funding requirements:** Acceptance of donations for mineral estate and fee interest lands would be of minimal cost to the federal government; acquisition of the surface estate is estimated to be \$4,200,000. There are currently approximately \$1,000,000 of existing ONPS funds that can be applied toward the purchase price, thereby lowering the amount of L&WCF money that would be needed. There will also be the cost of stabilization of historic structures and other modifications of the site.

## Recreational Visits



### Visitation continues to rise at most Alaska parks

- Visitation occurs primarily between mid-May and mid-September
- Many cruise ship passenger visit more than one park in Southeast Alaska. Many visit Denali or Kenai Fjords as part of the inland portion of their tour.
- Visitation to Alaska's parks has nearly tripled since 1982.
- Visitors to the 9 NPS units not connected to the state road system tend to stay in parks longer, hire local air taxis or guides, and spend considerable amounts in the local economy.