



# DISCOVERY HIKE

This 3-5 hour hike offers a chance to explore the trailless Denali backcountry with a ranger. Plan to be in the park anywhere from 5 to 11 hours, depending on the hike location and subsequent bus riding time. The hike may cover 2-6 miles and is designed for the adventurous spirit.

## GEAR CHECKLIST:

- footwear (refer to specifics on signup sheet)
  - long pants, recommended because of brush
  - rain gear (refer to specifics on signup sheet)
  - warm layers, even if it's warm and sunny when you leave (synthetic long underwear recommended)
  - high energy food for lunch
  - minimum 1 quart of water per person
  - tickets for the 8:00 am Disco bus
  - extra shoes & extra pair of warm socks for river crossings (refer to specifics on signup sheet)
  - recommend spare socks, extra pants & shirt to change into on bus after hike in case of getting wet
- Optional items: Camera, binoculars, bug spray, field guides, map.*

Location \_\_\_\_\_  
 Milepost \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ranger \_\_\_\_\_  
 Elevation Gain \_\_\_\_\_  
 Approx. Distance \_\_\_\_\_

## RATINGS:

**Moderate** - Elevation gain of less than 1,000 feet; may include some areas of thick brush, muddy or boggy ground, large and uneven hummocks, rocks and generally uneven terrain. See specific hike descriptions.

**Strenuous** - Elevation gain of 1,000 - 2,000 feet; may include river crossings, extremely steep slopes and areas of loose rock in addition to the conditions mentioned above. See specific hike descriptions.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

## Glossary of Terms Used in Discovery Hike Descriptions

**Stream-crossing:** Less than knee deep, usually a single or few channels of clear, cold water.

**River-crossing:** May be knee, up to thigh deep, usually several swift, silty streams comprise each river.

**Gravel bar:** A gravel bar is a wide area of uneven rocks following the course of a glacially-carved river valley. These bars tend to be fairly level but often involve stream or river crossings.

**Stream- or river-crossing shoes:** A spare pair of sneakers offer the best foot protection, sport sandals (rubber soles, canvas straps) are also acceptable. Some people prefer to cross in boots, possibly changing socks at the end of the crossing or the hike.

**Brush:** Thick vegetation, often knee to thigh high. This will soak your legs if it has rained recently.

**Willow or alder thickets:** May be up to 15 feet high. Pushing through thickets is exhausting; if the vegetation is wet you will be soaked.

**Bog:** Wet, spongy ground. Shallow (hopefully!) standing water mixed with grasses, sedges and rushes. Bog hiking is a bit like walking on a leaky water bed. Many fascinating, tiny plants live here.

**Tussocks:** Dense, wobbly clumps of grasses rising out of bogs. Rather like walking on basket balls.

**Scree:** Loose rocks usually found on steep slopes above tree line. Scree varies in size from peas to potatoes to pumpkins. Most of the mountains in Denali are covered with scree toward their tops. Can be pleasant walking once you adopt a proper technique. First time scree walkers may feel uncomfortable as the rocks slide or roll under foot.

**Alpine tundra:** The vegetated areas above tree line where plants grow in a thin, delicate carpet.

Denali offers unique wilderness conditions and off-trail hiking opportunities. We hope these definitions help clarify terrain conditions we may encounter on a Discovery Hike and help everyone to arrive with similar expectations. See you at the Discovery Hike.

## What is a Discovery Hike, and is one right for me?

If you can agree with most of the statements below, then you will probably enjoy a Discovery Hike.

- ◆ I have a whole day or more to spend in Denali.
- ◆ I have sturdy hiking boots with good ankle support, rain pants and other equipment on the list.
- ◆ I don't mind getting wet, muddy and sweaty.
- ◆ It doesn't faze me to be 4 hours from the nearest toilet and to eat lunch on the ground.
- ◆ I'm still a happy hiker when my hiking boots are soaking wet.

## That doesn't sound like my kind of hike. Would a different hike be more my style?

If the following statements ring true for you, then check out the park paper, the *Alpenglow* for times and routes of several shorter Ranger Walks on trails.

- ◆ My sneakers are the sturdiest footgear I have.
- ◆ I only have a short time to spend in Denali National Park.
- ◆ I can't face another bus ride.
- ◆ I don't want to commit a whole day to this activity.
- ◆ I'm interested in a hike focused more on education than physical exertion.
- ◆ I am more comfortable on a designated trail with certain ending points and times.

## We want you to Discover with us, but do not be surprised . . .

. . . at how much more energy it takes to hike off trail through brush or boggy ground than it does to hike on a trail.

. . . if the intended distance, route, or difficulty change due to wildlife, weather, or other unforeseen circumstances. Rangers are discovering too!

. . . you will not be hiking on trails in this wilderness. If you encounter social trails you will probably be told not to use them, minimizing impact on vegetation struggling to recover.

. . . if climbing up a steep mountainside on short tundra vegetation actually seems *easier* than slogging through brush or bog on more level ground. "Moderate" rated hikes have less elevation gain than those rated "strenuous" but can end up being just as challenging.

. . . if your ranger is exploring the route for the first time.

. . . if this ranger-led hike turns out to be quite challenging. "Ranger-led" does not mean the activity is easy!

. . . at your own abilities! Both of these unique hikes are challenging and rewarding!