

Proposed Actions at Denali National Park and Preserve: National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Assessments of Effects

2026

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Visitor Resource Protection

1. Seasonal Installation of two FAA Weather Cameras, Kahiltna Glacier (2022-2026)

Description: The NPS would continue to permit seasonal installation and removal of two weather cameras on the Kahiltna Glacier. The cameras are located outside of designated wilderness at ~6,200-foot (1,890 m) on the Kahiltna Glacier, proximate to the Kahiltna Ice fall, on the flank of the southernmost spur of the West Ridge of Mount Hunter (see coordinates below). The cameras provide near real time weather information for pilots and NPS staff to make accurate go/no-go decisions for aviation operations. This information would also be made available, via the FAA website, to the public. The size of the temporary weather camera/station is about 3 square meters (32.3 square feet).

Location: Kahiltna Glacier (62° 55.91' N, 151° 12.84' W)

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effect.

2. Backcountry Use Monitoring with Trail Counters and Cameras (2022-2026)

Description: The NPS would continue to monitor indicators and standards identified in Denali's 2006 Backcountry Management Plan (BCMP) to assess important Resource and Social Conditions related to wilderness character and the visitor experience. Monitoring in 2026 may include the seasonal installation of infrared trail counters at 10-20 rotating sites on formal and informal trails in the frontcountry and backcountry, including in Wilderness areas. Year-round installations would be maintained at Horseshoe Lake and on the east side of the Savage Alpine Trail, near Mountain Vista. Counters would be camouflaged and hidden from view as much as possible.

Location: Throughout the park

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

3. Denali National Park and Preserve Superintendent's Compendium Update

Description: The NPS would continue to annually update the Superintendent's Compendium. The Compendium is the summary of park specific rules implemented under the discretionary authority of the park Superintendent that addresses designations, closures, permit requirements, and other restrictions and/or specifications imposed under the discretionary authority of the superintendent. Proposed changes for 2026 include 36 CFR 1.6(f) and 13.50 (filming, still photography, and audio recording permits and restrictions), and 2.2(d) (conditions and procedures for transporting lawfully taken wildlife through park areas). All changes are subject to a 30-day public comment period.

Location: Throughout the Park.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effects

4. Maintenance of Telecommunication Facilities in DENA Wilderness

Description: The NPS would continue to perform cyclic maintenance and necessary upgrades of mission critical equipment at existing radio repeater sites in Denali National Park and Preserve. Most sites are accessed by helicopter. In 2026, work to replace failing radio repeater components and shelters is expected to occur at Thorofare, Tokosha, and Cantwell repeater sites. This work may require some ground disturbance at the Thorofare site. Maintenance work is also expected at East Branch, Savage, and Thorofare repeater sites.

Location: Existing radio repeater sites throughout the park.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

5. Removal of Downed Aircraft from Glaciated Environments (2020-2029)

Description: The NPS would continue to remove non-historic materials including downed aircraft, as needed, from glaciated areas of Denali National Park and Preserve. Such removal efforts may require a variety of actions, including but not limited to overnight stays by removal personnel, use of fixed wing aircraft, use of helicopters for sling loads, and helicopter landings. Actions taken under this authorization would be reviewed and approved by the Superintendent on each occasion.

Location: Glacial environments throughout the Park

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

6. Kennels Yard Shading and Lighting: Animal Care Improvements

Description: This project would continue to improve the health, safety, and welfare of the Denali sled dogs and kennels staff by installing temporary shade nets in the dog yard in summer and lighting in winter. In 2025, five poles were installed down the centerline of the dog yard and three poles along the fenced pens to be used for the dual purpose. In 2026, NPS proposes to complete the trenching needed for the electric utility connections and the installation of historic-style lighting. An archeological monitor would be required during ground disturbance.

Location: Denali National Park Kennels

NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined.

7. Kennels Doghouse Replacement: Animal Care Improvements

Description: The NPS proposes to improve the health, safety, and welfare of the Denali sled dogs and kennels staff by replacing the existing doghouses with newly designed doghouses. The new design would improve the size, insulation, and operational safety and efficiency of the doghouses, while still incorporating the historic character of previous designs.

Location: Denali National Park Kennels

NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined.

8. Kennels UTV, ATV, and Non-motorized Cart Use for Training (2026-2030)

Description: The NPS would continue to use non-motorized wheeled carts, motorized Utility Task Vehicles (UTV), and All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) on established frontcountry trails and roads for training the park sled dogs. This expanded terrain provides more varied opportunities for training and exercise when environmental conditions are not adequate for the use of sleds. Use occurs no earlier than the conclusion of dog demonstrations and bus services (mid-Sept) and no later than April 15.

Location: Trails and roads in the park entrance area including Riley Creek Campground, Denali Visitor Center campus, Denali Bus Depot, Roadside Bike Trail, INR Airstrip perimeter.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effects.

9. Mountain Vista Footbridge

Description: The NPS proposes to leave the footbridge near Mountain Vista in place year-round as a permanent installation in wilderness. As part of the Winter and Shoulder Season EA (2020), the bridge was seasonally installed and removed every year. However, several incidences of staff injuries have occurred during the process, and this practice is no longer safe or feasible. Bridge improvements would be made to protect the durability of the structure and reduce future maintenance needs.

Location: Winter trail near Mountain Vista.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effects

10. BearSaver Locker Installations at Roadside Cabins

Description: The NPS proposes to install BearSaver lockers at three historic cabins along the Park Road to provide year-round wildlife-resistant food and equipment storage. Currently, food is stored outside of these cabins in Knaack boxes, which are not designed for this purpose and have developed issues that prevent the boxes from being properly secured from animals. The lockers would be installed out of the historic viewshed of the cabins and would require archeological monitoring during ground disturbance.

Location: Upper Toklat, Thorofare, and Wonder Lake

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect

11. Headquarters Flag Management and Lighting

Description: The NPS proposes to install a light fixture on the Headquarters flagpole to ensure that our flag display meets flag code. The variability of the daylength at this latitude and limited staff availability has made it difficult to consistently raise and lower the flag at sunrise and sunset during winter months. This flagpole is located within the McKinley Park Headquarters Historic District and has been in this location since 1926. The NPS would strive to achieve appropriate illumination that meets dark sky standards and minimizes compromising the historic integrity of the district.

Location: Park Headquarters

NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined

External Affairs

12. Issuance of Commercial Use Authorizations (2024-2028)

Description: The NPS would continue to issue new Commercial Use Authorizations (CUAs) which cause no more than minimal impact to park resources and values; to extend, renew, reissue, or modify previously approved CUAs not entailing new construction; to change or amend approved actions or plans involving CUAs; to renew CUAs not involving new environmental impact; and to approve other activities documented in CUA stipulations (fuel, storage, temporary shelters, transportation, navigation aids, etc). Previously approved activities include frontcountry guided hiking, guided winter activities, mountaineering, non-tour air transport, frontcountry camping, and dog sledding. CUAs are provided as one and two-year opportunities.

Location: Park wide

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

13. Special Use Permit for construction of Guest Facilities at Rainy Creek (2025-2026)

Description: The NPS would continue to permit the activities requested by Hank Swan on behalf of the Kantishna Hills LLC (Kantishna property owners) who are constructing structures as part of a lodge facility on their three private parcels on Rainy Creek. Activities include the use of national park lands to stage equipment and construction materials, permission to use a helicopter to sling-load construction materials from two of the requested staging areas on NPS land to their property, brushing of roads and staging areas, and use of a snowmachine and groomer to create a fixed-wing aircraft winter landing strip on NPS land near their property and a snow machine trail stretching between Glen airstrip and Rainy Creek inholding property.

Location: Kantishna

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effect.

14. Special Use Permits: Events, First Amendment, Filming, and Photography (2024-2028)

Description: The NPS would continue to issue Special Use Permits (SUP) for special park uses and events occurring within Denali National Park and Preserve. Activities that would be permitted include charity sporting events (road runs or bicycle events), weddings/ceremonies, military training exercises, first amendment activities, commercial filming, still photography, and other special events as approved by the Superintendent.

Location: Throughout the Park

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effect.

15. Military Crash Site Reconnaissance, Eldridge Glacier (2023-2027)

Description: The NPS would continue to permit the Pacific Forces Regional Support Center at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson for annual helicopter (UH-60 Blackhawk) searches and landings on the Eldridge Glacier between May and October. The purpose of the activity is to conduct a reconnaissance to search for human remains or crash debris in the vicinity of 1952 crash site of USAF C-119 Boxcar, which is located in eligible wilderness. No installations would be permitted.

Location: Eldridge Glacier

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect; project-specific consultation was sent in June 2022.

16. Greg LaHaie/Kantishna Air Taxi Land Use SUP 2025-2026

Description: The NPS would continue to permit Greg LaHaie (Kantishna property owner) to use NPS lands to park his personal vehicle year-round adjacent to the airstrip and to use an airplane tie-down area for storage of his airplane, small shed building, and a fuel supply. The fuel supply (Avgas) is in a 2,000-gallon double-wall fuel tank, vented, with overfill protection, and hoses disconnected.

Location: Kantishna airstrip

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

17. Award of a Concession Contract for Guided Interpretive Hiking Services (2025-2034)

Description: The NPS would continue to permit Denali National Park Wilderness Centers, Ltd. (Camp Denali) to provide the following visitor services under the authority of Section 1307 of the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act: Guided interpretive hiking/trips (in the Kantishna area new park additions and in the former Mount McKinley National Park) and guided and unguided canoeing on Wonder Lake (including the storage of five canoes on Wonder Lake). Guided hiking/trips may include the following incidental activities: naturalist walks, photographic outings, bird watching, and/or gold panning. No overnight guided hiking is authorized under the contract.

Location: Kantishna

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effects.

18. Yentna River Airstrips brushing: Special Use Permit (2025-2029)

Description: The NPS would continue to permit a CUA holder who operates a hunting guide service in the Yentna River areas of Denali National Preserve to perform brushing on and around the existing airstrip. This includes using gas-powered equipment to clear landing areas (up to 75 feet in width and 800 feet in length).

Location: Middle - East Fork Yentna River: N 62°26.714', W 151°55.710'; Upper - West Fork Yentna River: N 62°30.532', W 152°26.653'.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effects.

19. Access to Mountain House LLC: Special Use Permit (2025-2026)

Description: The NPS would continue to permit the Mountain House LLC (Robert and Marne Sheldon) to access their 4.99-acre private parcel, located on the Ruth Glacier. Specific SUP activities include the creation and use of two storage areas (15'x15' each), one adjacent to the Main (east) Ruth Glacier East Landing Strip ("Landing Zone Cargo Site") and another near the base of the private property ("South Nunatak Cargo Site"), and helicopter slingload operations to transport cargo from either site.

Location: Ruth Glacier

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effect.

Facilities

20. Routine maintenance of historic / cultural sites, structures, objects, utilities, and grounds

Description: The NPS would continue to perform routine maintenance and repairs to historic and cultural structures, sites, utilities & grounds. Specific activities would be reviewed by the NHPA specialist before implementation and would not include activities that would cause an "adverse effect". Activities that involve ground disturbance may require an archeological monitor.

Location: Throughout the Park

NHPA Assessment of Effect: "No Adverse Effect", "No Historic Properties Affected", or "No Potential to cause effects".

21. Routine maintenance of non-historic structures, utilities, and grounds

Description: The NPS would continue to perform routine maintenance and repairs to existing non-historic structures, utilities, and grounds. Specific activities would be reviewed by the NHPA Specialist before implementation and would not include activities that would cause an "adverse effect". Activities that involve ground disturbance may require an archeological monitor.

Location: Throughout the Park

NHPA Assessment of Effect: "No Adverse Effect", "No Historic Properties Affected", or "No Potential to cause effects".

22. Kantishna Airstrip Routine Maintenance and Minor Upgrades (2024-2028)

Description: The NPS would continue to perform routine maintenance and minor upgrades on the Kantishna Airstrip, located at the western terminus of the Denali Park Road. Possible maintenance activities include vegetation management, in-kind regrading, or resurfacing; new construction or other major modifications to the airstrip are not included.

Location: Kantishna Airstrip

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

23. Application of CaCl to Mitigate Dust on the Denali Park Road (2023-2027)

Description: The NPS would continue to mitigate dust on the Park Road to improve concessions operations and visitor experience, as well as to reduce maintenance needs. This project would apply a binding agent (calcium chloride) to the unpaved portion of the park road to reduce blowing dust and fine gravel loss. Dust detracts from the visitor experience and is a respiratory irritant. Dust also reduces the visibility on the park road, creating a safety hazard and decreasing the wildlife viewing opportunities.

Location: Along the unpaved portion of the Park Road (Mile 15-92)

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

24. Denali Park Road Routine Maintenance and Repair (2023-2032)

Description: The NPS would continue to perform routine maintenance, repair, and operating activities on the Denali Park Road. Maintenance activities may include resurfacing, installing engineered materials within the road subgrade, and asphalt patches. Activities would not occur outside of the existing road prism and would strive to preserve the unique character of the Park Road Historic District.

Location: Denali Park Road

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

25. Mitigate flood damage potential on Park Road

Description: The NPS would continue to mitigate potential road damage from flooding by periodically removing material from the intake and discharge areas of several culverts along the Park Road. Small to medium flood events during summer months have deposited an excess amount of material and partially filled the culverts, significantly reducing the flow and forcing water over the stream banks and onto the road. The removal of this material from the stream bed would be done to match the natural stream grade so that the water would reclaim the area and leave little or no long-term effect.

Location: Denali Park Road

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

26. Trails Maintenance Plan (2024-2028)

Description: The NPS would continue to maintain existing trails, including historic trails, located within Denali National Park and Preserve as described in the associated “Trails Maintenance Plan”. Work may include brushing, the removal of downed vegetation, replacement of existing signs, “in kind” repairs to existing trail structures, re-grading, resurfacing, trail stabilization, and / or trail rehabilitation. This work would not include new trail construction, major trail reroutes, installation of new major trail features, or trail alterations that would change its character or trail class.

Location: Existing trails throughout the park

NHPA Assessment of Effect: "No Adverse Effect", "No Historic Properties Affected", or "No Potential to Cause Effects".

27. Reduce Roadside Vegetation to Increase Safety and Visibility (2022-2026)

Description: The NPS would continue to remove brush along the Park Road to improve road structure, eliminate a barrier to wildlife crossing, and enhance visibility and safety for drivers and visitors. This project would be limited to the vegetation that grows within 5 meters of either side of the road. Brush will either be hand cut using chain saws and a chipper and left on site or plucked by an excavator and hauled to a burn pile for disposal.

Location: Denali Park Road

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

28. Nenana River Trails

Description: The NPS would continue to construct approximately 17 miles of trail along the Nenana River between Mile 231 and Mile 237 of the Parks Hwy. Of this total, approximately eight miles would be a crushed gravel multiuse trail open to both pedestrians and bicyclists. The other approximately nine miles would be a dirt hiking trail open to pedestrians only. In 2026, design is in progress for the multiuse trail and the construction of the hiking trail would continue. Construction of the multiuse trail would occur in 2026-2028, with the section within the AK DOT right-of-way expected to be constructed in 2029-2030.

Location: Tsenedghaas Na' Trailhead to Riley Creek Day Use Area

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

29. Wooden Shelter (Quinzee Huts) Winter and Summer Locations (2024 - 2028)

Description: The NPS would continue to temporarily place wooden shelters along the park road on a seasonal basis for administrative use. The huts would remain out of sight of the Park Road when not in use and would not be permanently placed where they are visible from the Park Road Historic District during summer visitor operations. There would be no new ground disturbance during hut placement.

Location: Along the Park Road

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

30. Polychrome Area Improvements

Description: The NPS would continue to construct a 400-foot steel truss bridge over Pretty Rocks landslide and other engineered solutions in the Polychrome area of the Denali Park Road. In 2026, contractors would complete both phases of the project, including the bridge, a retaining wall near the bridge, installation of monitoring equipment, rock scaling, and a minor re-route of the Park Road near the Bear Cave landslide (mile 44.8). Project-specific NHPA consultation was sent in December 2021 and an agreement to mitigate the adverse effects was signed in March 2022.

Location: Mile 44-46 of the Denali Park Road

NHPA Assessment of Effect: Adverse Effect.

31. Ghiglione Bridge Replacement

Description: The NPS proposes to construct a 180-foot concrete and steel curved bridge with wooden rails, located 70 feet north of the existing Ghiglione bridge, closer to the original 1930s road alignment. The existing bridge would be demolished and removed at the end of the project. The existing bridge is a “Mission 66 Era” bridge that is a contributing feature to the Mount McKinley National Park Road Historic District. It has reached the end of its service life and was determined to be deficient by the Federal Highway Administration. Project-specific NHPA consultation was sent in July 2019 and a programmatic agreement to mitigate the adverse effect was signed in Aug 2020.

Location: Mile 42 of the Denali Park Road

NHPA Assessment of Effect: Adverse Effect

32.C- Camp Shower House Replacement

Description: The NPS proposes to construct a new shower house in the C-Camp employee residential area. The existing shower house was built in the 1970s and has now exceeded its service life. The new year-round shower house would include toilets, showers, a laundry room, and utility sink areas. The two cabins adjacent to the new shower house would be renovated to meet ADA requirements. The existing shower house would be demolished and removed. Construction would be completed concurrently with the fire dorm in 2026.

Location: Southeast of the Shaffer Building, on the north side of C-Camp.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

33. Construction of a Wildland Fire Management Housing Facility in C-Camp

Description: The NPS proposes to construct an eight-bedroom (single occupancy) dormitory facility in the c-camp residential area to support the Wildland Fire Program. The 3,340 square foot facility would include a communal living area, dining/kitchen area, shared bathrooms, showers, and a laundry room. It would be built for year-round use and would be connected to existing water, sewer and electrical systems at C-Camp. Construction would be completed concurrently with the shower house in 2026.

Location: North of the current resident parking lots, on the east side of C-Camp.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

34. Hazard Tree Removal

Description: The NPS proposes to develop a plan outlining the process and personnel engaged in hazard tree identification, risk assessment and prioritization, and removal and disposal methods. While this plan is in development, trees that are hazards to human safety or property would continue to be removed.

Location: Frontcountry Developed Area

NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined

35. Replace and Expand MSLC Winter Septic System

Description: The NPS proposes to replace the existing leach field and its associated appurtenances and piping. It would also remove and replace Manhole X, an intermediary manhole that diverts waste in the summer months to the lift station further south and to the leach field during the winter months to the east. The existing septic system located on the Murie Science and Learning Center (MSLC) campus in Denali's frontcountry currently provides wastewater treatment and disposal for four facilities during the winter and shoulder seasons when the Frontcountry Wastewater Treatment plant is not in operation (roughly September through May): The existing seasonally-operated wastewater disposal system has been determined to be undersized for the current and anticipated utilization.

Location: MSLC campus

NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined.

36. Geotechnical Investigation in Frontcountry Developed Area (2024-2028)

Description: The NPS would continue, as needed, to drill boreholes (up to 120 ft deep) and excavate test pits (approximately 5' x 8' x 15' deep) to collect geotechnical data and soil samples to inform the design of several upcoming infrastructure projects in the frontcountry developed area. Some boreholes would include instrumentation and a steel casing visible at the surface; others would be backfilled immediately. Off-road locations would use a tracked drill rig to minimize ground disturbance along the access route. The Cultural Resource Management Team would determine on a case-by-case basis if a survey or archeological monitor would be needed. In 2026, the following amendment to the Park Road Programmatic Agreement (regarding future actions that wouldn't require further consultation) is being proposed: to increase the borehole size from 8" in diameter to up to 16" in diameter.

Location: Frontcountry Developed Area

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

37. Replace Roof and Repair Interior Damage at the Eielson Visitor Center

Description: The NPS proposes to replace the roof on the Eielson Visitor Center (EVC) and the supporting utility building, as well as make other repairs to the interior and exterior of the building. Originally constructed in 2008, water infiltration through the roof occurred annually during the spring melt, causing extensive damage. The intricate shape and design of the roof as a viewing platform with numerous penetrations is to blame, so the new roof would no longer be open to pedestrians and would no longer have skylights. The roof would still be vegetated with native plants to visually blend into the landscape. The damaged photovoltaic (solar) panels attached to the roof's south edge would be removed and the visitor center's energy needs would be met using a propane generator and the existing hydroelectric system. Construction would occur during 2027-2028; final design, compliance, and contract solicitation would be completed in 2026. The EVC would re-open to visitors in 2029.

Location: Mile 66 of the Park Road

NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined.

38. Stabilize Alaska Road Commission Basement on McKinley Airstrip

Description: The NPS proposes backfilling the underground cavity (approx. 15'x 15'x 10') discovered on the edge of the McKinley airstrip when mowing equipment broke through a portion of the ceiling in 2024. Cultural resource specialists determined that it was the basement or underground storage room of a former Alaska Road Commission building. Due to safety concerns and the need to stabilize the area, NPS would excavate the basement, remove the wooden cribbing, and fill the cavity with compacted material. Because the work may impact undisturbed soils, an archeological monitor would be required.

Location: McKinley Airstrip (INR)

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No adverse Effect.

39. Nenana River Pedestrian Bridge

Description: The NPS proposes to construct a bridge across the Nenana River, south of the Park entrance. The bridge would allow non-motorized travel between Denali Park Village and Tsenesdghaas Na' Trailhead. This infrastructure would be a safety improvement for both pedestrians and motorists, as an alternative to pedestrians crossing the river on the nearby highway bridge. Design and compliance are in progress in 2026, final design and compliance will be completed by 2027, and construction would begin in 2028.

Location: MP231 George Parks Highway

NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined

40. Administrative Camp Improvements

Description: The NPS proposes to upgrade the administrative-use temporary housing area in the entrance area of the park to address safety concerns. Upgrades include the addition of wildlife-resistant food storage lockers within the camp, the replacement of a weatherport shelter for a group dining area, and the installation of a sign on the camp access road for visitor awareness that public entry is prohibited. Work that impacts previously undisturbed ground would require an archeological monitor.

Location: Administrative Camp west of Riley Creek Campground.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effects

41. Toklat Gravel Scrape (2026-2031)

Description: The NPS would continue to extract up to 22,200 cy gravel biennially from the Toklat River bar to be processed and stored at Toklat Road Camp for use in Park Road construction projects and road maintenance activities. In 2026, this work would be completed by a contractor. The extraction activities would be visible from the Park Road Historic District but would occur in a naturally disturbed area that would be reclaimed by the river within a few years.

Location: Toklat River and Toklat Road Camp (Mile 53 of the Park Road)

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No adverse effect

42. Stampede Airstrip Cyclic Brushing

Description: The NPS proposes to remove vegetation from the historic Stampede Airstrip to maintain safe aircraft access and landing conditions. The airstrip would be cleared of brush and woody vegetation within the landing surface and immediate edges, maintaining the existing footprint of the airstrip. Brushing would reoccur on a three-year maintenance cycle to prevent significant brush encroachment and reduce the need for more intensive clearing in the future. Brushing activities would use power tools and cut brush would be dispersed. Work crews would camp on site for multiple days.

Location: Stampede Air Strip (63°44'56.41"N, 150°19'44.47"W)

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No adverse effect

43. Park Headquarters Permanent Housing Expansion

Description: The NPS proposes constructing ten new ADA-compliant year-round housing units for staff in the Denali Park Headquarters area (two single-bedroom duplex units and three two-bedroom duplex units). Work would also include site preparation, construction of road access, and installation of utilities. Construction would occur on previously disturbed grounds outside of, but adjacent to, the Mount McKinley National Park Headquarters Historic District. Design and compliance are ongoing in 2026, with an Environmental Assessment to be completed in 2027.

Location: Park Headquarters

NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined

44. Improved Addressing for Emergency Response to Park Buildings

Description: The NPS proposes to improve emergency response to park housing units and administrative buildings by designating consistent identification numbers and displaying them on the exterior of each structure, including within the Headquarters Historic District and the Park Road Historic District. The appearance of the addressing numbers would meet current safety codes.

Location: Frontcountry Developed Area

NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined

45. Replacement of Teklanika Field Camp Structures

Description: The NPS proposes to replace six wall tents and a group yurt at the Teklanika Campground Field Camp with six hard-sided ADA-compliant sleeping huts and a new yurt. The former structures would be removed. The huts would be built through the local School-to-Work program and would be installed in 2026 and 2027. The field camp is currently used to house Alaska Geographic field courses in the summer.

Location: Teklanika Campground Field Camp at the south end of Teklanika River Campground

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected

46. Denali Visitor Center Waterline Installation

Description: The NPS proposes to abandon the existing offline water line in the Denali Visitor Center parking lot and install a new water main from a fire hydrant at the interface between the Visitor Center and the parking lot to the historic Powerhouse building, creating a loop with the existing water main. The abandoned line would not be excavated, and the new line would require 640 linear feet of excavation through a previously disturbed area.

Location: Denali Visitor Center campus and parking lot
NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected

47. Seasonal Housing Fire Suppression

Description: The NPS proposes to install a fire suppression system in each NPS seasonal housing unit to meet current fire safety codes. These housing units are “dry” for most of the year and do not have winterized plumbing so traditional sprinkler systems may not be feasible. Design alternatives are currently in development in 2026.

Location: C-camp and MSLC Housing areas
NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined

48. Riley Creek Campground Repaving

Description: The NPS proposes to repair the road subgrade and repave the road surface with asphalt at Riley Creek Campground. The project scope could include all three campground loop roads, the frontage road, the walking path connecting the loops to the Mercantile, and the post office area. Staging areas could include the Riley Creek Day Use Parking area. Portions of the campground would need to be closed to visitors for up to a month at a time, on a rotating basis, with the entire project being completed in one season. Design is currently in development in 2026, and implementation would be in 2027.

Location: Riley Creek Campground
NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined

Natural and Cultural Resources

49. Cultural Resource Inventories (2023-2027)

Description: The NPS would continue to implement activities that help fulfill the Park's legal responsibilities under Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act (54 U.S.C. 306102) to identify, evaluate, and protect historic Properties. Section 110 inventory activities include survey, evaluation, testing, and protection or collection of cultural resources (archeology sites, historic structures, cultural landscape, museum objects, and ethnographic resources).

Location: Throughout the Park
NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effect.

50. Plate Boundary Observatory stations - monitor tectonic and magmatic process (2022-2026)

Description: The NPS would continue to permit this research conducted by EarthScope (NSF) to monitor tectonic activity using existing Plate Boundary Observatory (PBO) stations that were installed in Denali in 2007. Data from PBO's integrated network of GPS stations, strainmeters and seismometers, coupled with aerial and satellite imagery, are providing important temporal constraints on plate boundary deformation and are improving our knowledge of the fundamental physics that govern deformation, faulting, and fluid transport in earth's lithosphere.

Location: Wickersham Dome (63.55273, -150.92221) and Tokosha (63.67113, -150.68460)

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected.

51. Long-Term Acoustic Monitoring: Denali Triple Lakes (2022-2026)

Description: The NPS would continue to conduct annual acoustic inventories at the Denali Triple Lakes trail site, which is one of the longest-running sites in the NPS (sampled in 2009, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021). These inventories aim to explore the implications of detecting change by using a series of monitoring records through time.

Location: Between the second and third lake of Triple Lakes, near the Triple Lakes Trail.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effect.

52. Monitoring Passerine bird populations: CAKN Vital Sign Monitoring Program (2022-2026)

Description: The NPS would continue to conduct observational bird surveys to detect changes in a series of metrics associated with distribution, presence, relative abundance, and peak detection times of a suite of passerine birds over time. Survey routes include roadside surveys and offroad surveys. This long-term monitoring program is part of the Central Alaska Network (CAKN) and has occurred annually in Denali since 1992.

Location: Along Denali Park Road and within 6km of the Park Road.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected.

53. Stream Assessments (2022-2026)

Description: The NPS would continue to conduct stream assessment activities throughout Denali National Park and Preserve including physical habitat surveys, stream morphology surveys, pebble counts, floodplain assessments, flow measurements, macroinvertebrate sampling, and collecting water samples. The project may also include the temporary installation of temperature and environmental conditions logging devices, survey benchmarks, trail cameras, and hydrophones.

Location: Throughout the park

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected

54. Fuels Reduction and Fire Mitigation (2025–2029)

Description: The NPS would continue to implement fuels reduction and maintenance activities to improve public safety, as referenced and defined in the DENA Fire Management Plan (updated in 2024). Project work would consist of mechanical thinning (i.e., tree cutting and trimming), prescribed burning (i.e., pile burning), and Firewise work (i.e., clearing defensible space around buildings and structures). On-site pile burning would be conducted in conjunction with a soil and vegetation monitoring program. All units would be surveyed for cultural resources prior to treatment and artifacts would be avoided or protected. In 2026, mechanical treatment and pile burning areas could include the entrance area trails and Park Road corridor between Mile 0 – Mile 2.

Location: Frontcountry Developed Area

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect

55. Spring Abundance Surveys for Willow and Rock Ptarmigan (2024-2028)

Description: The NPS would continue to permit this research conducted by the AK Dept of Fish and Game to survey the abundance of willow and rock ptarmigan in two areas of Denali National Park and Preserve. Surveys occur between 1 and 31 May for a total of 3 to 4 days. Within each day, surveys occur during the two hours after sunrise and the 2 hours prior to sunset. Surveys consist of playing the call of a territorial male ptarmigan using an electronic game caller to elicit a response from adjacent territorial males. The total number of responding males by species, the direction from which they responded, and their behavior will be recorded at each listening post.

Location: Along a four-mile stretch of the Denali Park Road between Mile 15 and 23 and along a two-mile transect north of the Park Road along Primrose Ridge.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected.

56. Wolf and Coyote Monitoring in Denali NPP (2022-2026)

Description: The NPS would continue to capture and radio collar wolves each year to maintain at least 2 radio collared wolves in each pack whose home range is at least partly within the designated wolf population monitoring zone. Wolves are captured using immobilizing darts fired from a low-flying helicopter and wolves are equipped with radio collars containing either conventional VHF transmitter beacons or satellite-linked GPS locators. Collared wolves are located by aerial radiotracking from single-engine airplanes approximately twice monthly during March – Sept (more intensively May - June to locate dens and estimate pup production), and opportunistically during winter. In addition to the wolf monitoring project, the NPS would continue to capture and radiocollar up to 5 coyotes per year along the northeast boundary of Denali. This monitoring project has been conducted in Denali since the 1980s.

Location: Within Denali NP, north of the Alaska Range, including the Windy Creek watershed.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effects.

57. Inventory and monitoring program for the streams and rivers of Denali (2022-2026)

Description: The NPS would continue to conduct this long-term stream monitoring program as part of the Central Alaska Network (CAKN) Inventory and Monitoring Program. Monitoring activities include water sampling of rivers and streams in the Park at road-accessible sentinel sites that are sampled approximately annually, and helicopter-accessed remote sites that are sampled either once or on an approximately decadal revisit schedule. In addition, small temperature loggers, most of which have been deployed in 12 streams along the park road since 2008, would be maintained and replaced as necessary.

Location: Throughout the park

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effects.

58. Dynamics of the Denali Caribou Herd (2022-2026)

Description: The NPS would continue to monitor long-term population trends, vital rates, and other population characteristics that determine the status of the Denali Caribou Herd. It would also continue to research survival patterns and habitat selection of male caribou. In March, female caribou are captured by helicopter darting and radiocollared to monitor survival, productivity and movements, and composition surveys and herd counts. Radiocollared caribou are relocated by radiotracking from fixed wing aircraft every 2 months. In addition, female caribou are relocated in mid-May to assess natality. We also conduct 2 helicopter surveys to assess the age/sex structure of the herd annually (early June and late September).

Location: Throughout the Park and Preserve

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effects.

59. Vertebrate ichnology and paleoenvironments of the Upper Cantwell Formation (2022-2026)

Description: The NPS would continue to permit an external researcher to investigate the taxonomic richness and paleoecology of dinosaurs and other vertebrates in Denali National Park through backcountry excursions. There is abundant trace fossil evidence preserved in the Cantwell Formation, North America's most prolific, high-latitude dinosaur track assemblage. If significant specimens are located during excursions, they would be photographed or imaged using photogrammetry. Silicone peels would be made for some tracks when size, weather, and preservation are appropriate. In addition to possibly collecting tephra (volcanic ash) samples for radiometric dating, fossils may be collected when necessary. This would only occur if specimens are at risk of being lost due to erosion.

Location: Big Creek drainage, Tattler Creek, and Cabin Peak areas.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No historic Properties Affected.

60. Monitor permafrost on burned and un-burned sites near Gosling Lake (2024-2028)

Description: The NPS would continue to utilize an unmanned aircraft system (UAS) to carry a multi-spectral sensor and a radiometric thermal sensor to Gosling Lake to monitor permafrost once every three years. The UAS would be operated between 100 and 120 meters AGL, at speeds of 10-15 mph over both transect sites. There will be ~ 8 take-offs and landings per transect site (~50 acres each), and each flight segment lasting 10-12 minutes each, totaling ~ 2 to 2.5 hours of flight time for the entire research area.

Location: Lake immediately north of Gosling Lake in the northwest corner of Denali NP

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected

61. Small-Mammal Monitoring at Legacy Plots in Denali by CAKN (2025-2029)

Description: The NPS would continue to monitor small-mammal population dynamics at the Rock Creek legacy plots in Denali National Park and Preserve as part of the Central Alaska Network (CAKN) Inventory and Monitoring program. The monitoring involves mark-recapture sampling via live-trapping of three species of voles (*Myodes rutilus*, *Microtus oeconomus*, and *Microtus miurus*) on four long-term monitoring plots established in 1992. Each plot is approximately 0.8 ha in area contains 100 Sherman live-traps baited with irradiated sunflower seeds (microwaved to prevent germination of the sunflower seeds in DENA). The 400 traps are checked three times daily over four days. Captured animals are identified by sex and species, weighed, and reproductive status noted. Unmarked individuals are implanted subcutaneously between the shoulder blades with transponder tags and released.

Location: Alaska, Denali National Park and Preserve, Rock Creek Drainage

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effect.

62. The Critical Connections Program: Lifecycle of Denali's Migratory Birds (2025-2028)

Description: The NPS would continue to study migratory bird movements as part of the Central Alaska Network (CAKN) Inventory and Monitoring program. The purpose of the study is to document year-round movements of migratory birds that nest in Denali, estimate their annual survival, and assess how conditions across their year-round range affect their ability to return to their northern breeding grounds and successfully produce young. Capture activities would occur during the breeding season. Targeted individuals would be captured, tagged with aluminum lag bands, fitted with a VHF radio transmitter tracking device, and released. Individuals would be recaptured in subsequent years and tracking devices removed before being released. This may include the use of UAS. Non-target individuals that are captured would be banded with USGS aluminum leg bands and some non-target individuals will also be banded with plastic color-coded leg bands to help identify them in future years and for future studies.

Location: Within 4 km of the Denali Park Road (Mile 0-92)

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effect.

63. Weather and climate monitoring in Denali as part of the CAKN I&M Network (2021-2033)

Description: The NPS would continue to maintain six climate stations installed in Denali National Park in 2004 and 2005 as part of the Central Alaska Network's climate monitoring program. The stations continuously record temperature, precipitation, wind speed and direction, soil temperature, relative humidity, snow depth, and solar radiation. Each station is visited annually to download the data, calibrate and swap out sensors, and troubleshoot any problems. Two sites are accessible along the park road, while the four additional sites are in more remote locations and require access by air. The objective of the climate monitoring program is to monitor and record weather conditions at representative locations to identify long and short-term trends, provide reliable climate data to other researchers, and to participate in larger scale climate monitoring and modeling efforts beyond park boundaries.

Location: Toklat, Eielson Visitor Center, Dunkle Hills (above the old mine site), Ruth Glacier (in the Tokosha Mountains above Ruth Glacier), Stampede Airstrip, and Wigand Creek (in the Toklat basin just north of the wilderness boundary near the confluence of the Toklat and East Fork of the Toklat).

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected

64. CAKN I&M Network Permafrost Monitoring in Denali (2021-2031)

Description: The NPS would continue to monitor the thermal and physical state of permafrost within DENA as part of the Central Alaska Network (CAKN) Inventory and Monitoring program. The active layer thickness, soil surface elevation, and soil temperature is measured along six transects in the Toklat Basin (previously measured in 2013), at burned and burned areas near Gosling Lake (previously measured in 2005 and 2019), and at two newly established sites near the Park Road (Wonder Lake and Murie Flats). These sites are remeasured every 3 years.

Location: Toklat Basin, near Gosling Lake, Wonder Lake, Murie Flats

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

65. Effects of Traffic (and No Traffic) on the Behavior of Grizzly Bears (2023-2026)

Description: The NPS would continue this research study to assess changes in grizzly bears' movement and habitat use in response to traffic. The multi-year closure of the western half of the park road in 2021 provides an opportunity to study the effects of high traffic volume on grizzly bears, using the same bears in the same area and thus controlling for major confounding effects. The non-traffic "control" period in 2023-24 can be compared to the impact or "treatment" period when high traffic levels resume in 2026-27. Bears (24) were captured and fitted with radio-collars in 2023 and spring 2024. During the study duration (years 1-4), fixed-wing radio-tracking flights occur monthly (April - Oct) and co-occur with ongoing wolf tracking flights.

Location: Along the park road from Mile 22-77.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected.

66.Operation and Maintenance of Seismic Monitoring Stations (2026-2030)

Description: The NPS would continue to permit the Alaska Earthquake Center to monitor seismic activity in Denali National Park. This includes the continued operation and maintenance of four existing monitoring stations and three communications sites inside the park. These stations are part of the statewide seismic array to better locate and characterize seismic activity throughout Alaska. Maintenance may involve periodic visits via helicopter to these stations for upgrades or repairs, as needed, which averages once every 2-3 years.

Location: Castle Rocks (63.4188, -152.0844), Kantishna Hills (63.5527, -150.9233), Thorofare (63.4502, -150.2893), McKinley (63.73228, -148.93678), Double Mountain (63.60657, -149.47013), Mt. Healy, and Murie Science Learning Center

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

67.Shallow Lake Monitoring Project-CAKN (2023-2028)

Description: The NPS would continue to monitor shallow lakes as part of the long-term Central Alaska Network (CAKN) vital signs monitoring program. Between 70 and 100 lakes would be sampled within the park boundary using a helicopter and floatplane. Each lake is sampled for water quality, zooplankton composition and abundance, basic lake morphometry, vegetation composition, soil thaw depth to estimate surface water dynamics and determine the condition of shallow lake ecosystems. In addition, soundscape equipment is used to determine the presence and abundance of wood frogs. Staff would set up tents at the Lake Minchumina airstrip or use the facilities at Friday Creek as primary base camps.

Location: Caribou Lake, Billberg Lake, and 161 lakes (near Minchumina Basin and Eolian Lowlands)

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected.

68. CAKN glacier monitoring in Denali (2023-2032)

Description: The NPS would continue to monitor the Kahiltna Glacier as part of the long-term Central Alaska Network (CAKN) monitoring program. This monitoring was first conducted in 1991 and has continued to be conducted by NPS since 2016. The goals of that program are to track annual changes in mass balance (snow accumulation and snow/ice melt), and to relate those changes to climatic (temperature, precipitation, etc.) and dynamic (changes in glacier geometry) forcings. This requires monitoring glacier conditions at multiple elevations (approximately 14,300', 10,000', 7100', 6300', and 3800') along the centerline of the Kahiltna Glacier. A single, 1" diameter pole is placed vertically in the snow/ice surface of the glacier (except at the 10,000' site) and measurements are taken with GPS units. Snow pits and/or shallow snow cores (using a hand-drill) are used to measure snow quality.

Location: Kahiltna Glacier

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effects.

69. Monitoring the pattern and consequences of spruce bark beetle infestation (2023-2032)

Description: The NPS would continue to monitor the spruce bark beetle infestation. The purpose of this study is to create a baseline understanding of the variation in white spruce forest composition and structure in areas anticipated to be affected by an ongoing spruce bark beetle outbreak and then monitor the consequences of this outbreak over time. Field activities occur at 99 plots and include small metal plot markers installation, soil profiles, soil samples, tree cores, and vegetation measurements.

Location: Denali frontcountry area including Rock Creek, Riley Creek, Middle Teklanika River

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected

70. Denali Acoustic Monitoring Program (2023-2032)

Description: The NPS would continue acoustic monitoring at 121 unique monitoring locations in Denali. Core purposes of monitoring have included: (A) ensuring compliance with Denali's 2006 Backcountry Management Plan, (B) observing the effectiveness of management actions [including adoption of quiet technologies, best practices, or contract stipulations], and (C) phenology studies. We deploy equipment with a 3 x 2-meter footprint and two spiral anchors for at least one month in duration.

Location: Throughout the park

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effect.

71. Collecting dragonfly larvae for mercury analysis (2023-2032)

Description: The NPS would continue to participate in this ongoing nationwide citizen science research that is evaluating the utility of dragonfly larvae as indicators of mercury status in national parks. Groups of 15 or fewer staff members and citizen scientists collect dragonfly larvae, water samples, and sediment samples from lakes and ponds along the park road corridor and the George Parks Highway. Access is on foot; a total of up to 80 dragonfly larvae will be collected in the park each year, from two or more sites.

Location: Lakes and ponds within 1.5 miles of the Denali Park Road or Parks Highway

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effect.

72. Long term ecological monitoring of streams (2023-2027)

Description: The NPS would continue to conduct long-term monitoring of ten key streams along the Park Road corridor that were identified following an intensive study of 43 streams in 1995. The goal is to identify long-term natural variation in stream communities to be used as a baseline with which to measure anthropogenic or long-term natural change (e.g., due to global warming). The study involves collecting six water samples at sites upstream of road crossings.

Location: Savage Creek, Sanctuary Creek, Hogan Creek, Igloo Creek, N4, Tattler Creek, East Fork Tributary (near East Fork cabin), Highway Pass Creek, Little Stony Creek West and Moose Creek.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected.

73.Changing disturbances, ecological legacies, and the boreal forest (2023-2028)

Description: The NPS would continue to permit an external researcher to measure abrupt thaw features in the Toklat River basin as part of the Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) Network. The project seeks to determine how legacies constrain the response of the Alaskan boreal forest to climate change, how these legacies will affect future ecosystem trajectories, and what the local, regional, and global impacts of these changes are now and in the future. At each site, water samples are collected from the outflow to analyze DOC, DIC, nutrients, bioavailability, and radiocarbon age of DOC. Each abrupt thaw site is also monitored for rate of expansion using GPS, as well as measuring the thaw depth, organic soil depth, vegetation height, and normalized difference vegetation index.

Location: Throughout the park

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected.

74.Wildfire and Abrupt Thaw effects on the Carbon balance of High-latitude ecosystems

Description: The NPS proposes to issue a permit to an external researcher to expand on concurrent research (see project #73) and assess the role of wildfire in accelerating permafrost thaw and carbon loss. The project would integrate landscape-level soil measurements collected at six previously established sites within the Central Alaska Network (CAKN) Inventory and Monitoring grids, which burned in 2013, with measurements collected at six additional control sites to the east of the grids. At each of the sites, they would collect 4 surface organic layer samples and three deep soil core samples using a fuel-operated SIPRE drill (3" diameter; approximately 1-1.5 m deep). Access to all sites would be via helicopter from Stampede Road, with multiple flights daily over 2-3 weeks.

Location: Toklat River basin

NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined

75.Alaska Range Dall's Sheep Ecology and Health Assessment, ADFG (2024-2027)

Description: The NPS would continue to permit the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Department of Wildlife Conservation, to conduct a Sheep Ecology and Health Assessment study in Denali. The study includes capturing, marking, and tracking 30 rams and 30 ewes in each of two different study areas (a treatment study area outside the park, with a general season full curl hunting paradigm, and a control study area within the park, with minimal hunting pressure as only federally qualified subsistence individuals are allowed to hunt in the area). In 2026, due to collar failures and mortalities, ADFG would conduct supplemental ram captures in mid-June to maintain their radio-collared sample size (around 5 new collars and 5 or more recollars). Also, ADFG would conduct ground-based counts (helicopter access) in the first 3 weeks of July.

Location: Extending west from the Parks Highway to the Herron River drainage along the north side of the Alaska Range.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effects.

76. Stabilize Historic Slippery Creek Cabin

Description: The NPS would continue to stabilize the historic Slippery Creek cabin. Slippery Creek is a historic mine site consisting of abandoned underground workings, a tree-room cabin, an airstrip, and a connector road. The Slippery Creek Cabin was built prior to 1941 and is unique for Denali in design and location and proposed to be significant on a local level as a physical representative of mining exploration and extraction. In 2024, repairs were made to the roof. In 2026, work would include repairs to the cabin's foundation. An archeological monitor would be required during the excavation.

Location: Slippery Creek Mine (southwest of Kantishna)

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

77. Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) in NPS Operations (2024-2028)

Description: The NPS would continue to use Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) operations in Denali Park and Preserve for administrative purposes such as Search and Rescue, scientific study, fire operations, law enforcement, natural and cultural resource stewardship, education/interpretation, and training flights. This only includes flights specifically operated or administered by the NPS. UAS flights will be conducted in compliance with all applicable FAA regulations, Code of Federal Regulations, and in accordance with any applicable Special Flight Rules Area considerations.

Location: Throughout the Park

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

78. Resampling plots for landscape scale vegetation monitoring (2024-2028)

Description: The NPS would continue to resample vegetation monitoring plots to detect, quantify, and investigate patterns in the distribution and abundance of plants species, as well as any changes in community composition and vegetation structure at a landscape scale. Work includes taking low-impact measurements of vegetation attributes in 26 study areas. No new ground disturbance or installations.

Location: Throughout the Park, mostly north of the Alaska Range

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

79. Effects of spruce mortality on insect biodiversity and fire behavior in Denali (2024-2026)

The NPS would continue to permit this US Geologic Survey (Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center) research project. The project quantifies how spruce bark beetle-induced tree mortality will impact pollinator and beetle biodiversity in the Denali boreal forest ecosystem and, secondarily, models how changing fuel loads may affect wildfire behavior in these forests.

Location: Along the southern Park boundary and near the Visitor Center, as well as 'control' sites along the Park Road (including within the Wilderness area).

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

80. Monitoring the Reproductive Success and Productivity of Golden Eagles (2025-2034)

Description: The NPS would continue to monitor Golden Eagles as part of the Central Alaska Network (CAKN) monitoring program. Denali's long-term monitoring program started in 1988, with the goal of revealing the ecological relationships between Golden Eagles, their prey, and their habitat. Monitoring includes annually documenting the occupancy and reproductive success of golden eagles and the nest success of gyrfalcons using aerial surveys (and additional ground-based observations as needed). In late March through mid-April, adult Golden Eagles are captured using a netlauncher or bownet baited with locally obtained carrion. Juveniles are captured at the nest. Captured eagles are banded, sampled, and tagged with a lightweight transmitter. Naturally shed feathers are collected at a sample of nests each year for DNA analysis. After testing, the feathers are deposited with the USFWS Eagle Repository in Colorado. These activities are conducted under the required federal and state permits.

Location: Northern foothills of the Alaska Range

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effects.

81. Understanding Permafrost Dynamics along the Denali Park Road (Phase 2)

Description: The NPS proposes to issue a multi-year permit to researchers from University of Alaska Fairbanks to assess permafrost dynamics along the Denali Park Road corridor. The research would help NPS advance adaptation strategies for infrastructure impacted by permafrost degradation and support management decision-making. Reconnaissance work occurred in 2024-2025, and phase 2 (2026-2027) would include drilling and collecting soil samples along the Park Road corridor at up to 128 sites, including in wilderness. It would also include the installation of instruments in and around those boreholes to measure thaw depths and monitor temperatures (to be left in place for several years). Ground disturbance activities would be monitored by an archeologist.

Location: Along the Park Road from road from mile 0 to 92.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

82. Climate, Permafrost, and Infrastructure: Landslide hazard assessment (2023-2026)

Description: The NPS proposes extending this permit by one year to a researcher from the University of Alaska Fairbanks to continue to collect data from five instrumented boreholes installed in 2023. The purpose of the study is to monitor mountain permafrost and better understand the permafrost mechanisms driving increased mass-movements in Denali National Park. The borehole instruments and a weather station will remain in place at the conclusion of this study, as part of a concurrent study (see project #81).

Location: Along a transect across the Park Road in Igloo Canyon

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect

83. Denali Vegetative Fuel Reduction Monitoring Program (2025-2034)

Description: The NPS would continue to monitor the impacts of fuels treatment activities and wildland fire occurrences. The monitoring program is designed to determine whether fire and resource management objectives are met, as well as to document any unexpected or unintended consequences. Primary monitoring activities are observational, apart from the following potential actions:

- Marking plot centers with either a 3.25" metal cap flush with the ground, a wooden stake at plot center or the end of each transect line (1-4 total), and/or a 2" magnet buried 10cm below ground.
- Exposing two 2" x 2" duff plugs per plot for measuring litter and duff layer thickness.
- Tagging up to two trees per plot with 1" circular metal numbered tags.
- Collecting voucher specimens of vascular or nonvascular (moss or lichen) plant species for identification purposes only. Fewer than 30 specimens expected of each type per unit.

Location: Treatment units within the Park Road corridor.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected

84. Re-sampling Legacy Fire Monitoring Plots in Denali NW Preserve

Description: The NPS proposes to revisit 23 previously established monitoring plots to gain additional insight into how naturally occurring wildfires reduce vegetative fuel loads and impact ecosystems over time. These western plots were installed following past wildfire occurrences and have rich monitoring histories that document fire effects and post-fire recovery. Each plot would only be visited once between 2025-2034. Monitoring activities at each plot would be similar to those conducted in Denali frontcountry (see project #83) and would include exposing two duff plugs (2" x 2") per plot for measuring litter and duff layer thickness and collecting voucher specimens of vascular or nonvascular (moss or lichen) plant species for identification purposes only.

Location: Denali National Park's Northwest Preserve

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect

85. Impacts of spruce beetle outbreak on soil, mycorrhizae, and forest composition (2025-2028)

Description: The NPS would continue to permit researchers from the University Alaska Anchorage and Amherst College to investigate the effects of spruce bark beetles on northern forests with a focus on mycorrhizae and soil dynamics. This is a continuation of research conducted in 2023 and 2024. The study capitalizes on the intersection of a massive northbound spruce beetle outbreak with a network of long-term ecological monitoring (LTEM) plots established in Denali in 1992. Measurements are collected at 30 plots for a total of 166 study trees. Study methods include observation of vegetation structure and composition, measurement of sap flows, monitoring soil respiration, and collection of fine root samples and small soil cores (2cmx10cm deep) once per season.

Location: along Park Road (east of Mile 12), along the Parks Hwy, and at the Rock Creek LTEM sites.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: To be determined.

86. Spruce Beetle Cold Weather Mortality Assessment (2026)

Description: The NPS proposes to issue a permit to the Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection to investigate Spruce Bark Beetle mortality following a period of extreme cold during the 2025/2026 winter. Study methods would include collection of bark samples (approx. 6" x 6") from a total of up to 12 beetle-affected trees, and general plot measurements at each sample site. These samples are likely to contain Spruce Beetles and/or other insect species, which would be destroyed following analysis.

Location: DENA frontcountry, outside of wilderness and at least 100 feet from any Park road or trail.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected

87. Spruce Beetle Population Monitoring (2026-2030)

Description: The NPS proposes to issue a five-year permit to the Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection to monitor Spruce Bark Beetle populations in Denali National Park. This would be a continuation of monitoring that occurred in 2021-2025, including the continued use of beetle trapping. Trapping would consist of annually installing two Lindgren funnel traps baited with propylene glycol, a standard tool for bark beetle monitoring. Traps would be installed around mid-May, checked at 2-week intervals through early September, and then removed at the end of the season. These efforts identify when spruce beetle flight periods begin, peak, and end each season, as well as relative beetle populations, which can inform management decisions and tree processing recommendations.

Location: East of the Parks Highway near the Park entrance and near the pullout around mile 234

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected

88. Targeted Invasive Plant Species Surveys and Removal (2024-2029)

Description: The NPS would continue to survey and remove invasive plant species as a part of the Alaska Region Invasive Plant Management Plan (2010, amended 2017). In Denali, survey work would focus on elodea, which is often spread by floatplanes. Removal work would focus on hawksbeard found in the entrance area of the park and would be done by either spraying herbicide or hand pulling/digging.

Location: Park entrance area, Horseshoe Lake, Wonder Lake, Ruth Glacier terminal lakes, Backside Lake, and Lake Chilchukabena.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected.

89. North American Breeding Bird Survey in Denali (2026-2030)

Description: The NPS would continue to survey breeding birds annually along two routes established in the mid-1980s as part of a long-term, international avian monitoring program to track the status and trends of North American bird populations. Field methods include driving the Park Road and recording visual and aural observations.

Location: Along the Denali Park Road (approximately Mile 14.5 - Mile 39 and Mile 53.5 - Mile 78)

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

90. Understanding Body Composition Changes in Climbers on Denali (2026)

Description: The NPS proposes to issue a permit to an external researcher to measure nutritional dynamics and body composition changes of climbers on Denali. This project would recruit up to 48 participants who plan to climb Denali in the 2026 climbing season and would require the researchers to reside at Basecamp to collect biometric data from the climbers before and after their climb, including body measurements and urine samples.

Location: Denali Basecamp and along the West Butress route.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected

91. Field Investigations for MP234-238 Railroad Realignment

Description: The NPS proposes to issue a research permit to Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to conduct field investigations to inform the potential realignment of the Alaska Railroad between approximately MP234-238, eliminating the crossings of the Parks Highway. Field investigations for 2026 to include a cultural survey, wetlands survey, planimetric survey, and preliminary survey to inform geotechnical investigations in 2027.

Location: West of the Parks Hwy between MP 234 and 238.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined

92. Developing Native Plant Materials for Ecosystem Restoration (2026-2030)

Description: The NPS proposes to issue a five-year permit to an external researcher to collect native plant seeds in Denali for the purpose of developing a source of native plants for restoration projects throughout interior and Northern Alaska. All seeds would be hand-harvested. The initial phase of the project would be to effectively establish a seed increase field, which aims to multiply seeds collected from diverse wild plant life forms such as forbs, shrubs, trees, nitrogen fixers, and wetland species, and ensure their suitability for current and future environmental conditions.

Location: Denali Park Road corridor

NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined

93. Fitbits For Trees: Linking Hourly Tree Growth with Weather Conditions (2026-2028)

Description: The NPS proposes to issue a three-year permit to an external researcher to measure tree growth patterns near the existing weather station at the Denali Kennels. Dendrometers would be installed on approximately 12 white spruce trees to measure hourly white spruce bole diameter. One soil moisture logger would also be installed. One tree core from each tree would be collected at the end of the project to relate the hourly measurements to the final tree ring width for each year of observation.

Location: Within 250 meters of the McKinley Park Weather Station at the Kennels, Park Headquarters.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect

94. History of Vegetation and Fire Regime to Inform Fire Management Planning

Description: The NPS proposes to issue a permit to an external researcher to investigate fire regimes and vegetation changes throughout Denali National Park to better inform fire management strategies throughout the park. The research would utilize lake sediment records spanning 14,000 years to reconstruct both dominant vegetation (via pollen deposits) and fire history (via charcoal deposits) for the purpose of assessing fire return intervals and historic vegetation changes. Field methods would include using two small boats and a coring platform anchored at the deepest part of the lake to collect lake sediment cores using a push coring system with a winch.

Location: Two road-accessible lakes adjacent to the Parks Highway between MP 232-234.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Historic Properties Affected

95. Geohazard Monitoring along the Denali Park Road (2026-2030)

Description: The NPS proposed to investigate and monitor unstable slopes along the 92-mile Denali Park Road corridor in anticipation of administrative actions related to geohazards that threaten infrastructure. This is a continuation of similar monitoring that occurred from 2020-2025 and would include the installation of monitoring equipment within the 300-foot-wide road right of way, outside of the right of way, and within designated wilderness. In 2026, the seasonal installation of a time lapse camera near the “Zena Landslide” is proposed. The following amendment to the Park Road Programmatic Agreement (regarding future actions that wouldn’t require further consultation) is also being proposed: temporary installations within the right of way would no longer be limited to 6 months.

Location: Zena landslide (Mile 35.1), Igloo Canyon

NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined

96. Interior Alaska Forest Inventory and Analysis (2026-2029)

Description: The NPS proposes to issue a permit to the US Forest Service to continue to conduct a forest inventory and analysis study in Denali National Park. This study is part of a nationwide, long-term study that began in Denali in 2018 and will potentially continue through 2060. In 2026, they would revisit four previously established sites and establish one new site to gather information on the status and condition of forest resources as well as possible indicators of ecological change and land cover trends. Field methods include forest attribute data collection, tree borings, and soil cores. Access to all sites, including in eligible wilderness areas, would be via helicopter.

Location: Throughout the forested area of north of the Alaska Range.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined

Interpretation and Education

97.Repair Denali Visitor Center Exhibits

Description: The NPS would continue to perform routine repair and maintenance of indoor exhibits in the Denali Visitor Center, which is a non-historic building.

Location: Denali Visitor Center

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effect.

98.Kennels Sled Room Exhibit Redesign

Description: The NPS proposes to update the Kennels sled room exhibits with more relevant, up-to-date information about the Kennels and interactive displays that will allow for multi-sensory engagement for people of all ages and abilities. The historic sled dog kennels building is the oldest building in Denali National Park still used for its original purpose. Planning for redesign of the Kennels building Sled Room exhibits is expected to begin in 2026.

Location: Kennels Building, Park Headquarters Historic District.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: To Be Determined.

99.Alaska Place Name Signage

Description: The NPS would continue to replace the signs on some bridges along the Denali Park Road with signs that would also display Alaska Native names. The signs would be replaced in kind (brown, wooden) and would still display the existing name for the body of water and the road elevation. The Alaska Native place name would be identified and approved through conversations with tribal partners and approved in advance by the Denali management for use in the park maps, signs, and other public outreach materials. In 2025, the signs at Teklanika and Savage River were replaced. Future replacements may include Moose Creek.

Location: Along the Park Road

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Adverse Effect.

100. Produce Audio/Video Media to Support Key Safety and Orientation Messages

Description: The NPS proposes to develop several new media products for visitors including a visitor orientation video and videos related to bicycle safety, wildlife safety, backcountry safety, and the wolf monitoring project. This project would also include the development of podcast-like format using oral histories gathered from former employees and concession bus drivers related to the history of the park road and the development of a podcast-like format to support a walking tour of the Headquarters Historic District.

Location: N/A

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effect.

101. Connect Park Visitors with Key Safety and Orientation Messages (2024-2027)

Description: The NPS would continue to design and install new and updated information panels in frontcountry areas between Miles 0-15. The project strives to create a unified sense of welcome, bring clarity to trip planning, and provide consistent safety information wherever visitors enter the park.

Location: Frontcountry of the Park

NHPA Assessment of Effect: No Potential to Cause Effect.

102. Temporary Installations in the East Fork Area (2022- 2026)

Description: The NPS would continue to provide temporary infrastructure for visitor services in the East Fork Bridge area (Mile 43) while the Park Road is closed at the Pretty Rocks Landslide (Mile 45.4) and East Fork is the westernmost bus destination. The following installations are in place seasonally: a shelter bus, two staff shelters, various information signs, pedestrian barriers, portable toilets, a trash can, and stairs from the road to the river bar. In 2022, NPS also widened a small section of the Park Road and constructed a bus turnaround with an 85 ft turning radius on the east side of the East Fork bridge.

Location: East Fork Bridge area, approximately mile 43 of the Park Road.

NHPA Assessment of Effect: Adverse Effect to Historic Properties. Separate NHPA consultation was sent in Dec 2021 and a Memorandum of Agreement to mitigate the effect was signed in March 2022.