

Chapter Eight: New Highway Impacts and the Park Expansion Process, 1972-1980

As noted in Chapter 7, the long-awaited highway between Anchorage and Fairbanks was completed and dedicated in October 1971. One and all recognized that the opening of the highway would not only shorten the trip between the two cities by more than 120 miles, but it would drastically cut the mileage from either of these cities to Mount McKinley National Park. It was widely anticipated, both within the NPS ranks and among tourism officials, that the road opening would dramatically increase car traffic to the park. The NPS, however, did not make any immediate public statement on how it would handle the expected new crowds.

Improved Access and its Ramifications

It was not until mid-January 1972 that the agency announced how it would respond to the new tourist influx. In a *U.S. News and World Report* interview, Director George Hartzog stated that because of “a great surge of automobile traffic” predicted for that summer, “we’re planning to stop the cars at Savage River. One of the great charms of Mount McKinley National Park,” he continued, “is its fantastic wildlife displays.” But, he added, “Our ecologists tell us that with heavy automobile traffic along the single road into Wonder Lake, wildlife will leave the road.” Closing most of the park road, Hartzog reasoned, was the only way to both preserve park values and to provide for public enjoyment; and as a practical matter, Hartzog chose this course because the road was in no position to support increased traffic volumes. On a note that applied to a number of NPS areas, he said that “We’re trying to avoid more cars. I think we have about reached the end of this cycle of more roads and more trails, more roads and more trails. And I think we have got to look to other means of access.” He suggested that a free shuttle service was being proposed to carry passengers to points of interest beyond Savage River.¹

Hartzog’s announcement, though surprising to many, was a logical extension of problems that had been increasingly manifested since the mid-1960s. As noted in Chapter 7, for instance, growing numbers of campers had forced the construction of a “new Morino Campground” (i.e., Riley Creek Campground) in 1968. And that same year, park superintendent George Hall had told agency planners that because of projected new traffic levels—estimated at three times the present volume—the agency needed to 1) offer buses or some other common carrier to encourage motorists to leave their cars, and 2) restrict

oversize vehicles beyond the Teklanika River bridge because of reduced road width.² And a year or more before Hartzog announced his decision, he and Regional Director John Rutter had weighed the pros and cons of three park-road traffic scenarios: restricting private automobiles west of park headquarters, west of Savage River (where the pavement ended), and west of Teklanika. Park staff, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, were increasingly aware that the increased traffic was having a visibly negative effect on the park wildlife.³ A broad recognition that Mount McKinley and other national park areas had “carrying capacity” problems, and the successful institution of a shuttle-bus system in Yosemite Valley beginning in July 1970, doubtless suggested to Hartzog that a similar system would work at Mount McKinley, too.⁴ And indeed, NPS officials soon established similar shuttle systems both at Everglades and Grand Canyon national parks.⁵

Alaskans, who had been free to drive all the way to Wonder Lake and Kantishna for the past 15 years, were split in their opinions. The *Anchorage Daily News* editorialized that the plan “seems moderate and reasonable to us,” and the pro-development *Anchorage Daily Times*, surprisingly, did not protest the Park Service’s decision.⁶ But Alaska House member Leslie “Red” Swanson (D-Nenana), whose district included the park, called the action “undesirable and unnecessary” because visitors needed to explore the park “at their own pace” and because traffic problems were not “expected in the foreseeable future.” Recognizing “the resentment of the people of Alaska at the federal bureaucracy telling us what to do,” Swanson introduced House Joint Resolution 113 on February 14 that called on the U.S. government to immediately fund an upgrading of the park road; he did so because the NPS had announced the road-closure plan, in part, based on the road’s unimproved condition and its potential as a safety hazard. On March 1, the resolution passed the House on a 37-1 vote; two weeks later it passed the Senate on a 17-1 vote, and Governor William Egan signed it on March 20.⁷ Some Alaskans—both inside and outside the halls of the Alaska legislature—were chagrined that the NPS’s decision had been made at the eleventh hour or that there had not been prior public discussion and comment.⁸ Other groups also protested the Park Service’s decision. The Alaska Visitor Association, worried about tourist-industry impacts, asked the NPS to delay the road closure for a year while further

Tour buses were owned and operated by the concessioner. They specialized in a narrated tour and provided lunch for their paying passengers. DENA 11459, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



A 1968 'bear jam' on Sable Pass was indicative of the gradually increasing traffic on the park road. DENA 11607, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

studies took place. A Fairbanks resident claimed that the action would “deprive low income families . . . a visit to the park” and would deny access by the twelve active Kantishna-area miners to their claims. And a Palmer resident openly worried that the action would turn McKinley into a “rich man’s” park . . . “Are [NPS officials] like the librarian who hates to see anyone check a book out of the library?”⁹

Sen. Ted Stevens responded to Alaskans’ complaints with a volley of his own; he stated that the proposed plan would deprive many Alaskans of “personal acquaintance with the park’s scenic wonders,” and he threatened to block a proposed 2,000,000-acre boundary expansion proposal (which was then being considered in Congress) if the NPS persisted with its plan.¹⁰ Stevens then contacted Hartzog in hopes of a compromise. The two men worked out a mutually-acceptable alternative, which Hartzog announced in early March 1972 during a U.S. Senate hearing. Recognizing that his original plan would have closed most of the park’s campgrounds to all but tent campers, Hartzog provided for a “compromise plan” that allowed motorists, after obtaining permits, to access specifically-allotted spaces in the various campgrounds west of Savage River. The compromise, according to press reports, would also keep the road open on a permit basis for those requiring transportation to or from Kantishna (for miners, prospectors, and Camp Denali staff). It was intended to insure that visitors, in Hartzog’s words, would “never [be]

disappointed in not seeing wildlife as caribou, wolves, bears and foxes frolic near the road.”¹¹ The *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* lauded the plan as a “good compromise,” but Sen. Ed Merdes (D-Fairbanks) lambasted the NPS’s “ridiculous” plan. “Why,” he asked, “can’t they improve the roads in the park instead of being so short-sighted as to discriminate against Alaskans who have been waiting for the new road?” “Serious amateur photographers” also fought the plan; as one noted, “must they share their hobby with a bus load of people that will surely ‘spook’ the wildlife more than a car quietly stopping?” NPS Regional Director John Rutter noted that the “letters the Park Service has been receiving are running about 50-50” regarding the road-closure plan.¹²

On March 30, Rutter announced details regarding the new system. Beginning June 1, the park road would be restricted beyond a “closure point” at Savage River. Free shuttle buses would be provided to all western points along the park road; most buses would go as far as Eielson Visitor Center, though “special transportation beyond Eielson to Wonder Lake will also be provided on a separate schedule.” The agency would establish a staging area in the vicinity of Riley Creek Campground; that area would include an information station, a parking area, a trailer-camper sanitary dump station and rest rooms. Reservations to the various west-end campgrounds, available on a first-come, first-served basis, could be obtained by either writing to the

In 1972 the park transportation system began with restricting private traffic at the Savage River Check Station located near the Savage River Campground entrance. DENA 10588, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



park superintendent or by telephoning the park. (Most of the available spaces would be allotted to Teklanika, Toklat, and Wonder Lake campgrounds. Sanctuary and Igloo campgrounds were “very small,” and Igloo was “designed for tent camping only.”) The agency, recognizing that its plan limited campground choices for those in “camper type vehicles,” also announced plans to upgrade Riley Creek and Savage River campgrounds to accommodate this type of campers. It did not, however, plan to build “a large amount of new facilities” in response to the anticipated new traffic levels. Rutter, in explaining the agency’s rationale, stated that at other parks, “the cars have always gotten ahead of us before and now we have the opportunity to get ahead of the cars for a change. . . . It happens every place where there are people. When you start to hand feed animals it destroys them because they get on a false diet. . . . There isn’t any way we can stop this domestication process.”¹³ The new system also allowed “professional wildlife photographers” to circumvent the road-closure rules by obtaining a use permit from park rangers. The new rules were potentially open for abuse because they did not specify who would qualify for a permit; the issuance of the permit was based on the ranger’s evaluation of the applicant’s qualifications. The agency, in these circumstances, doubtless issued a num-

The Riley Creek Information Center, which opened in the late summer of 1972, was the starting point for the new shuttle bus trips. It also provided visitor use information and, beginning in 1974, staff here issued backcountry use permits. DENA 10507, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



ber of permits to those who did not narrowly qualify. The number of these permits, however, was sufficiently small that the agency, during this period, did not artificially cap how many would be issued.¹⁴

As predicted, the NPS began its new shuttle bus system when the park opened on June 1, and rangers began patrolling the park road to ensure compliance with the new permit system. The bus system was operated by the park concessioner, Outdoor World, Ltd., via a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to provide the exclusive right for a transportation service within the park through the 1987 season. Within the scope of that MOA, Outdoor World and the NPS worked out an annual contract whereby the contractor leased four cramped school buses and three vans—which came from Cantwell and the Anchorage area—and the NPS reimbursed all applicable costs plus a 10 percent profit.¹⁵ The system, as implemented, resembled the one described two months earlier except for three minor changes. First, officials decided to stop most (though not all) casual westbound traffic near the Savage River Campground. To help manage the new system, the agency erected a small kiosk just west of the campground turnoff that was staffed by uniformed NPS personnel on a round-the-clock basis.¹⁶ Second, the agency decided that Sanctuary as well as Igloo Campground would be limited to tent campers. Finally, Toklat Campground (which had just six sites) would be closed in 1972 because, according to Chief Ranger Ivan Miller, “we had a lot of bear trouble there and we wanted to reduce the confrontations between

man and bear.” There were typically 10 to 15 bus round trips each day.¹⁷

During the summer of 1972, park visitation doubled from 44,000 to 88,000,¹⁸ and given the new throngs, the new bus system underwent some unexpected growing pains. The primary problem was related to bus overcapacity; visitors at Riley Creek (where the bus routes began) had no problem finding bus seats, but by mid-season, many of these buses were filled to capacity, leaving no room for those who stayed at the vari-



The Toklat Campground, containing six sites, was established on the footprint of the Alaska Road Commission Toklat road construction camp. Ginger Burley Collection

ous campgrounds along the way. Campground occupants, particularly those at Sanctuary and Teklanika, often spent hours trying to find a bus with an empty seat. Events reached an ugly climax over the July 4 weekend, when visitors so overwhelmed the system that rangers were forced to issue special permits that allowed motorists to freely access the park road. There were also difficulties with the campsite reservation system; because some people who reserved spaces never showed up, some motorists were denied the chance to access park campsites even though the campgrounds were not full.¹⁹

The NPS did what it could to respond to these difficulties. Its first solution—which it implemented shortly after the July 4 weekend—was to put additional buses and vans onto the park road. By early August, there were fourteen shuttle buses in service. As a result, the need to issue permits to garden-variety motorists did not recur, and waiting times along the park road were reduced or eliminated. Suggestions to other difficulties were also considered, but none were implemented until the following year.²⁰

Meanwhile, efforts were made to study the impacts of the new system. At the insistence of Sen. Stevens, the University of Alaska obtained an \$18,200 Interior Department grant to study the public's reaction to the system. That two-part study, released in June 1973, found that 84 percent of an 1,100-person sample of park visitors (which included both bus riders and car drivers) approved of the park's new shuttle bus

policy, while slightly more than half of a 450-person sample of Alaska residents approved of the policy.²¹ In addition, the University of Alaska and the National Park Service—working through the newly-formed Cooperative Park Studies Unit—began to study the effect of human activity on the park's animals and vegetation. This turned out to be a three-year study, conducted by University of Alaska Fairbanks graduate assistant Diane M. Tracy, that focused on the dynamics of several animal species at a number of specific spots along the road corridor. As noted in Chapter 12, Tracy's efforts resulted in several temporary closures of areas for wildlife protection purposes. Less directly, it led toward the first parkwide backcountry management plan (see below) which resulted in administrative control over, and rationing of, camping in areas away from the road corridor.²²

As noted in Chapter 7, the park had gained a new concessioner on January 1, 1972, when Outdoor World, Ltd. took over from U.S. Natural Resources. George Fleharty had first become interested in the Mount McKinley concession when Don Hummel—who also had the Lassen and Glacier concessions—expressed an interest in becoming part of the USNR's Recreation Resources Division. Hummel eventually joined USNR, but not before the larger company took over the Yosemite concession and decided it was not interested in the Glacier concession. Given those moves, Fleharty (and USNR) began a controlling interest in the McKinley (and Lassen) concession in March 1970. By late 1971, however, Fleharty—apparently pleased with the McKinley operation, both financially and personally—decided to retire from USNR. He then formed Outdoor World, Ltd. along with three partners. The 47-year-old Fleharty, in an *Anchorage Times* interview, reportedly paid the NPS \$1.25 million for the remaining 15 years of the park concession contract; as part of that deal, the “expatriate Californian” gave up his interests in the Oakland Seals hockey team and a traveling ice-follies show as well as his Yosemite and Lassen interests “to live a slower-paced life in Alaska.”²³

As a practical matter, Outdoor World operated the park concession much as USNR had. At the NPS's insistence, however, hotel upgrades were in order. Don Hummel, it may be recalled, had conducted substantial renovations in 1966, and under USNR management a new wing had been added in 1970. Three months after Outdoor World assumed control of the park concession, in March 1972, Regional Director John Rutter announced that numerous improvements were on tap in the near future, including a new kitch-

en, expanded dining facilities, and a new lounge area. Continued modernization or replacement of the older north and south wings was planned for the next several years.²⁴

That modernization program began immediately. The hotel opened on May 14, a week ahead of time, and by early September a new dining room had been completed and a new kitchen nearly so.²⁵ Meanwhile, the concessioner had its hands full opening up the hotel and operating two transportation systems: the “wildlife tour,” which concessioners had operated since the 1940s, plus the new shuttle bus system which was operated under contract to the Park Service. The twice-a-day wildlife tour was designed to meet the needs of park visitors who arrived by train; the newly-instituted 3 p.m. tour worked well for southbound visitors who typically arrived at the park at about 1 p.m., while the 6 a.m. tour (moved back from 4 a.m.) fit more easily into the schedule of northbound tourists who had arrived at 4:30 the previous afternoon. Although the two bus systems covered the same geography, they were operationally quite distinct; the wildlife tours, for which a fee was charged, featured relatively high-

quality buses, had the same passengers throughout the trip, and paid considerable attention to park interpretation, while the free shuttle buses supplied more basic transportation that catered to backpackers as well as more passive visitors.²⁶

The NPS, as the season wound down, recognized that it would soon need to deal with a new problem: that of traffic management of the park road once the bus tours had ended. Given the lessening crowds, Outdoor World planned to stop its shuttle-bus tours on September 10. Given the need for access after that date, however, the NPS had little choice but to open up the road to auto traffic. Allowing late-season auto traffic, during this period, was not a controversial decision, for several reasons: the NPS planned to stop road maintenance on September 10, there were few late-season visitors interested in heading out the park road, ecological impacts did not appear to be significant, and the season’s first snowfall (usually by mid-October) closed the road west of the park headquarters.²⁷

The Park Hotel: Tragedy and a Spirited Response
On the eve of the Labor Day weekend of 1972,



The shuttle bus system, instituted in 1972, was designed as basic transportation along the park road. There was no fee, and riders brought their own lunches. DENA 11439, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

officials with both the NPS and the park concessioner had every reason to be proud that they had successfully weathered the first summer under the new road-management plan. Outdoor World, the new concessioner, was just days away from closing up shop for the season, and many among the Park Service's seasonal crew were preparing to leave the park, either for school or other wintertime pursuits. In 1972, as in previous years, daily train service and park road maintenance were both scheduled to stop on September 10, and the hotel itself was scheduled to close on September 18, so the season's end was just days away.

But during the early evening of Sunday, Septem-

ber 3, tragedy struck. At 7:00 p.m., employees of the McKinley Park Hotel rang the fire alarm when they discovered smoke and flames erupting from the hotel basement. Acting quickly, they were able to evacuate some 265 hotel guests, plus more than 200 others then inside, within 10 minutes. NPS officials, called to the scene, brought down a fire truck from headquarters and dispatched other trucks from Healy and other nearby communities. It was no use, however; by the time the trucks arrived the hotel's main building—which contained 80 of the hotel's 130 rooms—was totally consumed by flames. Surprisingly, there were no deaths or injuries in the fire, and thanks to the well-trained efforts of the hotel staff, the evacuation was orderly and almost no one panicked. To assist hotel guests, and anyone else who needed shelter away from the park, a special, 14-car railroad train soon arrived on

scene and headed to Fairbanks, while buses took others to Healy and Anchorage.²⁸

When officials surveyed the scene the following morning, the only remaining part of the main hotel building was two huge stone chimneys; all else was smoking rubble. The new (1970) west wing of the hotel—which was just 50 feet away from the main hotel's south wing—still stood, though it had sustained extensive smoke and water damage. Likewise, the hotel's power house (75 feet away), garage shed (100 feet away), and employee dormitory (150 feet away) also remained standing.²⁹

Before the remains of the 34-year-old hotel were



The McKinley Park Hotel burned on the evening of September 3, 1972. There were no injuries to the more than 400 hotel guests. Wallace A. Cole Collection

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removed, officials immediately sought answers to what caused the disastrous fire. Early press reports stated that “the fire started, apparently, in old wiring in the commissary room in the basement of the hotel.”³⁰ But to gain a more comprehensive idea, the Park Service hired a Seattle fire investigator, Robert Timlin, who arrived at the site on September 5. In addition to on-scene technical work, Timlin interviewed more than twenty witnesses, mostly hotel and NPS staff. Timlin's report concluded that the fire had begun in a false ceiling above the “Bottom of the Barrel,” a basement tavern. At 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, an alarm had gone off in this area, but false alarms had previously been recorded there, and hotel personnel were unable to locate a fire that afternoon. Investigators concluded, however, that fire—begun by faulty wiring—slowly spread in the basement's ceiling area until 7:00,

Wallace A. Cole Collection
After the hotel fire the remaining
buildings included the dormitory
(center), the power house (right) and
the new west wing (not in picture).
Wallace A. Cole Collection



when a female hotel guest noticed that a portion of the dining room floor, located just above the southeast corner of the bar, felt hot. Smoke was noticed soon afterward, and under George Fleharty's direction, employees began to evacuate guests from the hotel.³¹

Concession officials and NPS staff, reflecting on the catastrophe, were saddened by the fire but not altogether surprised. Back in October 1968, the park's chief ranger had recommended a sprinkler system for the hotel. He noted that the system "is a controversial item . . . there is no question that the building is not fire safe, and that something must be done immediately." But other priorities intervened, and the system was never installed.³² And shortly after the fire, Fleharty philosophically noted that the hotel "was so old and so dry, it was going to burn sometime; I had that feeling." And the speed of the fire—according to one guest, "there was a great cloud of smoke and then, whoosh, it went up in flames"—seemed to reflect the wisdom of Fleharty's remarks.³³

The biggest question remaining after the fire, of course, was what should be done to provide overnight accommodations to park visitors. A newly-emergent environmentalist faction urged a go-slow approach.³⁴ But NPS State Director Stanley Albright said that there "is not much question" that a new hotel was needed; "the need for the hotel has been demonstrated," he noted, and regional officials echoed Albright's sentiments.³⁵ But there was little agreement—at least at first—regarding what should be built. It was initially estimated that "from \$1.5 million upward" would be needed to replace the building. Fleharty was unsure, however, whether a similar hotel or "an entirely new hotel complex" would

be built. Fleharty fully recognized that many "changes have taken place since the first hotel was built." But the most pressing problem, however, was time. Albright recognized that "what we must do now is prepare something for people to use next summer," and given the lateness of the season, there was little possibility of any new construction before the spring of 1973, which was just before the next tourist season began.³⁶

In advance of any decisions regarding a rebuilding effort, Alaskans first took stock of the hotel's most attractive qualities. One guest stated that "it sort of looked like an old plantation type home. It had a very homey atmosphere." The *Anchorage Times*, in an editorial, called it "a comfortable structure of considerable charm. There was a touch of rustic, roadhouse atmosphere with enough modern attachments to make a stopover there an enjoyable and pleasant experience." Others, however, found the hotel unattractive and outdated.³⁷

Meanwhile, NPS officials wasted no time on organizing a rebuilding effort. On September 7, while the fire investigator was still combing through the ashes, a phalanx of officials from Seattle and Anchorage converged on the scene and met with Fleharty.³⁸ A week later, Albright flew south and met both with NPS Director George Hartzog and Denver Service Center officials. At the meeting, Albright assured the public that the agency would be able to rebuild to the point where "business as usual" would prevail in 1973. He cautioned, however, that the agency was seeking "an interim plan to provide facilities for next summer that wouldn't interfere with any long range plans."³⁹

The decision on what to build, and where, forced

ditional rail cars would be used for dining space, a coffee shop, a two-car bar, and other facilities. The NPS also planned to build new dining facilities (away from the cars) and enclosed walkways that would link up the various rail cars with other parts of the hotel. Fleharty's plan called for the concessioner to pay \$400,000 for the non-rail facilities, while an additional \$250,000 would come from federal funds which Sen. Stevens (and later Begich) had recently inserted into appropriations bills. Construction costs, not coincidentally, neatly matched the \$650,000 for which Outdoor World had insured the hotel property.⁴² One and all, at the time, felt that the new setup would be temporary. A letter reporting on the results of the October 3 meeting noted the need for an interim hotel at McKinley Park Station was immediate, "even though the ultimate developments may be located elsewhere." Albright, interviewed in mid-October, averred that the facility would be used "for two or three years, anyway." NPS officials were pleased that the agreement allowed the park to meet its 1973 tourist commitments "without locking ourselves into something we'll have to live with forever." To guide future development, Senator Stevens was able to secure an additional \$100,000 appropriation for long-range planning for a permanent facility at the park entrance.⁴³ Stevens, in particular, wanted to ensure a public process; as far back as mid-September, he had stated that



The McKinley Park Station Hotel opened on May 25 for the 1973 season and advertised a railroad station theme. NPS Interp. Collection, #457, Denali National Park and Preserve

he would "earnestly welcome the suggestions of Alaskans for the expansion and improvement of our park's visitor accommodations." Given the extra funds, NPS officials held public meetings in late October and early November at Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and McKinley Park Station where they solicited suggestions regarding road and campground developments as well as permanent hotel facilities. At one of those meetings, held at Anchorage on October 31, NPS State Director Stanley Albright stated—despite previous publicity to the contrary—that no commitments had been made regarding where the new hotel

would be located or what type of structure it would be. The NPS offered four sites for the new hotel: the concessioner-backed site at McKinley Park Station plus Wonder Lake, Curry Ridge, and near the east bank of Savage River.⁴⁴

After the public hearings had run their course, comments from the public and agency officials were forwarded to Interior Secretary Rogers Morton, who on December 15 announced a decision regarding the future hotel site. Morton that day approved Fleharty's "novel temporary solution" and approved a \$600,000 plan to rebuild a new facility on almost the same footprint as the old hotel. Building the hotel, which would involve \$200,000 in federal funds, was approved under the condition that the new facility would be "extremely temporary" and would be eventually replaced by a permanent structure. The architect for the new hotel would be the John Graham Company of Seattle, while hotel construction (including the construction of the lobby, kitchen and dining room) would be performed by Irvin and Company of Anchorage. The Interior Secretary's office noted that the federal government was purchasing 50 prefabricated housing modules from Olympic Prefab Inc. of Seattle (at \$7,000 apiece), while the various railroad cars needed for the project were being purchased or leased from the Alaska Railroad and renovated in Anchorage by the

Interior Design and Structures firm. Irvin construction workers, meanwhile, would renovate the hotel's west wing, which had survived the fire, though with extensive smoke and water damage.⁴⁵

As noted in a park concessions history, "the entire atmosphere of planning and negotiations [for the new hotel] was of expediency and economics. . . . The primary considerations under which the National Park Service, Outdoor World Ltd. and

Irvin and Company were guided were that the facility should be open by the start of the tourist season." Because of the urgency to replace the hotel complex, Irvin and Company started working on the project well before March 7, 1973, when it signed a contract with the Park Service. The company, working in the midst of an Alaskan winter, encountered many difficulties with the frozen soil; once the ground thawed, many new problems cropped up. Many of these problems were glossed over, inasmuch as there was a general recognition that the hotel would be temporary. The company, in its zeal to complete the job on time, racked up thousands of dollars of ex-

penses in excess of contract costs, and for awhile both Irwin and Company and its subcontractors were on the verge of insolvency. The contractor, however, was somehow able to complete the job on time, and the Alaska Railroad, using a series of temporary tracks, similarly fulfilled its part of the bargain by shunting 11 strategically-placed railroad cars⁴⁶ onto the property.

The new hotel, called the McKinley Park Station Hotel to reflect the train-station theme, opened on schedule on May 25. It had the same capacity as the former facility (250 to 300 people), but portions of the hotel remained under construction throughout the summer. On one weekend in early June, for instance, the lack of a working kitchen meant that “meals were cooked on a tiny, three-burner apartment range in the employees’ dormitory and carried by hand to the coffee shop.” The lobby and dining room were not finished until late June, while landscaping and parking-lot improvements were completed in July and August. The new hotel accommodated 25,600 people that summer and averaged a 95 percent occupancy rate.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation officials acted to provide a wider range of accommodations to park visitors. In order to offer something midway between the hotel and the campgrounds, they worked with the Alaska Railroad to establish a youth hostel. The facility would be the first in central Alaska and just the third in the state. In mid-May, the Bureau purchased three railroad bunk cars and placed them on a side track at the McKinley Park Station depot. The hostel, operated by Outdoor World, opened on July 15 and took in 975 people during that abbreviated season; the charge was 50 cents per night.⁴⁸ The hostel proved highly popular in later years; it typically remained open through Labor Day weekend and housed between 1,000 and 1,800 people each year.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, the NPS again tried to grapple with the question of the hotel’s long-term viability. Since the fall 1972 hearings, it had broadcast mixed messages; in February 1973, regional officials had stated that the permanent location of the park hotel would be decided in the upcoming (December 1973) master plan, and just two months later, those same officials told NPS Director Ron Walker that no permanent hotel plans could be finalized until the seven year post-ANCSA planning process had run its course. The realities of the summer of 1973, however, brought an immediate, de facto answer to this question. Both the concessioner and NPS officials were surprised to see that guests were quite happy with the new facility; it was highly popular and also quite profitable. Given that

positive news, Fleharty backed off on any plans he may have had to replace the hotel. Instead, he “decided to see if [the existing hotel] will



work out permanently.”⁵⁰ During the winter of 1973-1974, the agency addressed the issue of the hotel’s long-term viability in a Denver Service Center planning directive. The report, authored by Team Leader Carl Stoddard, recognized that if a hotel in the park was indeed necessary, it should be located in one of three sites: the McKinley Park Station area, Wonder Lake, and along the Anchorage-Fairbanks road in “the so called Southern Addition.” It noted that during the various public meetings in the fall of 1972 “there was not [a] predominance of opinion as to where the hotel should be located.” Weighing the pros and cons of the three sites, it noted that it was impossible to provide both easy access and a mountain view at any of them. After some discussion, the report recommended that “the present hotel remain in operation . . . and maintain the present pillow count,” that the NPS commence both landscaping and facilities improvements at the site, that the agency “support the development of a major lodge . . . in the southern area,” and that any effort to develop any new overnight facilities along the park road should be blocked. Given the report’s conclusions and Fleharty’s happiness with the new hotel’s operations, it appeared that the “temporary” McKinley Park Station hotel was well on the way toward becoming permanent.⁵¹

A key new element in the Stoddard study that had not been previously considered by the NPS was the presence of accommodations along the park’s eastern margin as an alternative to the park hotel. As noted in Chapter 7, three lodges had opened along the road north of Cantwell during the 1960s,⁵² and beginning in 1972, two larger businesses opened just south of the Nenana River bridge: Mount McKinley Village, owned by Gary Crabb, and the Grizzly Bear Camper Park, just across the road and owned by Jack Reiland (see Appendix E).⁵³ Prior to the completion of the Parks Highway in 1971, the newly-opened

The Youth Hostel consisted of these railroad cars and was located between the Alaska Railroad tracks and the McKinley airstrip. DENA 12-78, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

The McKinley Park Station Hotel incorporated modular units providing hotel rooms with baths in addition to the rail car units. Note the landscaping activities in the foreground. DENA 5747, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



stretch of roadway north of the third Nenana River crossing had been empty except for a few homesteaded parcels,⁵⁴ but in 1972 the Tenada Campground opened; the short-lived business was the first along that stretch of highway.⁵⁵ And the highway's completion also made Healy easily accessible by road; at Otto Lake, just southwest of town, the Otto Lake Lodge had housed travelers in 1971 and 1972.⁵⁶ Given that level of local tourism development, Stoddard wrote that, "private motel facilities exist outside the park that are within a reasonable distance from McKinley Station and the potential for other similar sites is very good. It is unlikely however that the private interests outside of the park near McKinley Station are capable of satisfying the total needs of the

travelling public because of the tremendous cost involved in providing building and necessary utilities in interior Alaska."

Stoddard, recognizing the value of these businesses in providing accommodations alternatives, recommended that the NPS

fully support those private interests outside of the park . . . , and if the private sector demonstrates their ability to provide those quality visitor facilities, service and opportunities to meet park standards that the present McKinley Park Hotel and appurtenant structure be phased out in such a way as to maintain a continuous visitor service area in the vicinity of McKinley Park Station.⁵⁷

Planning Begins for an Expanded Park

As noted in Chapter 7, the NPS had put forth a series of master plans during the mid-to-late 1960s that each addressed a possible expansion of the park's boundaries. In 1965, a master planning effort concluded, tentatively, that protection for various large mammal populations living north of the park boundary could best be effected by working out management agreements with the State of Alaska and with the Bureau of Land Management. This plan did not address areas south of the park. But a 1968 master plan called for a 132,000-acre expansion north of the park and a much larger 2,070,000-acre expansion south of the Alaska Range. The 1968 proposals very nearly became law in January 1969, during the closing days of the Johnson administration. Later that year, Rep. John Saylor submitted a House bill that would also have put into law the acreage recommendations put forth in the 1968 master plan. Alaskans, however, worked to protect their own interests shortly afterward, and in the spring of 1970, the Alaska legislature established Denali State Park, which included some of the acreage in the park's proposed southern expansion. Interior Secretary Hickel and other Department officials then worked out a more modest 1,560,000-acre expansion proposal; that idea died away, however, when Hickel stepped down from his post in November 1970. Rep. Saylor submitted a bill to that effect in early 1971, but the bill was never reported out of committee.

Beginning in early 1970, the question of the proposed Mount McKinley expansion began to be subsumed within a much larger issue – one that would dominate discussion among Alaskans for

the remainder of the decade. This issue, regarding the so-called “national interest lands,” had been considered off and on by government planners since the mid-1960s. But only recently, as efforts to reach a settlement of Alaska’s Native claims reached a serious stage, had it entered the legislative arena. In July 1970, the full Senate had passed a Native claims bill that contained a provision calling on the Interior Secretary “to review all public lands in Alaska and . . . recommend to Congress areas appropriate for inclusion in the National Park System and National Wildlife Refuge System.” That bill, however, died at the conclusion of the 91st Congress.⁵⁸ The following summer, Sen. Alan Bible—after a trip to Mount McKinley and other Alaska scenic areas with NPS Director Hartzog and their wives—agreed to include a new national interest lands provision in the Native claims bill. This time the provision remained, and on December 18, 1971, President Nixon signed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, or ANCSA (P.L. 92-203) into law. Included in the new legislation was Section 17(d)(2), which authorized the Interior Secretary to withdraw up to 80 million acres of unreserved public lands for either national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, or wild and scenic rivers.⁵⁹



The majestic Cathedral Spires were a key area of interest when park expansion proposals were considered during the late 1960s and 1970s. NPS, DENA #9169, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Given the fact that various Mount McKinley expansion proposals had been exhaustively considered at both the administrative and legislative levels, chances were high that any bill that addressed the national interest lands question would include new lands for Mount McKinley. But the new, Congressionally-imposed demand that new parkland questions be solved on a statewide level also deemed it highly unlikely that Mount McKinley’s boundaries would be expanded any time soon. Section 17(d)(2) of ANCSA had provided a seven-year timetable for decisions regarding Alaska’s unreserved public lands. Because of Mount McKinley’s relatively high profile among Alaska’s existing or proposed parklands, and more specifically because Rep. Saylor had submitted two previous park expansion bills, the Pennsylvania congressman filed a

similar bill in January 1973 that addressed Mount McKinley to the exclusion of other parks. His bill, however, got no further than his previous efforts.⁶⁰ Congress, it appeared, would decide Mount McKinley’s new boundaries only in concert with a host of other issues relating to Alaska’s federal lands.

The provisions in Section 17(d) demanded that the NPS and other land-management agencies act quickly. Specifically, these agencies had only 90 days to provide to the Interior Secretary a list of those lands in which it had a continuing interest, and it had just nine months to withdraw specific lands for proposed parks, refuges, and the like. Given those deadlines—and in full recognition that Alaska offered a relatively short field season in which staff could gather pertinent data—agencies plunged into a wild scramble in which they resurrected any and all previously-gathered information about proposed areas of interest.⁶¹

NPS officials, operating under the guidance of Assistant Director Theodor (Ted) Swem, started

working on national interest lands issues just two weeks after ANCSA's passage, and by January 4, 1972, Richard Stenmark—an Alaska Group Office employee now working in Washington—had identified a 4,000,000-acre addition to Mount McKinley as one of 21 areas (12 natural, 9 historical or archeological) in which the NPS had an interest.⁶² Between then and the 90-day deadline, the NPS did its best, within the 80-million-acre limitation imposed by ANCSA, to include a large acreage for national park areas.⁶³

Given the seven-year track record of previous proposals, answers to many Mount McKinley-related questions were easier to unearth than those for newly-identified areas. What emerged from this process were preliminary proposals, announced on March 15, 1972, for 14 NPS areas comprising a total of 33.4 million acres. Perhaps because of the Mount McKinley area's broad public recognition, these proposals included a generous 4,019,251-acre park addition (see Map 8).⁶⁴ Included in this proposal was a large swath of rich megafauna habitat—along the same lines that Adolph Murie had recommended, only larger—that extended from 12 to 40 miles north of the existing park boundary. A narrow corridor was included west of the park, and to the south of the park boundary, the proposal included much of the acreage in both the Udall-Johnson proposals of 1968-69 and the Hickel-Saylor proposals of 1970-71. The proposal, to some extent, was shaped by the availability of unreserved federal land (both "d-1" and "d-2" land). But not always: portions of the proposal contained state land selections, either pending or tentatively approved.⁶⁵

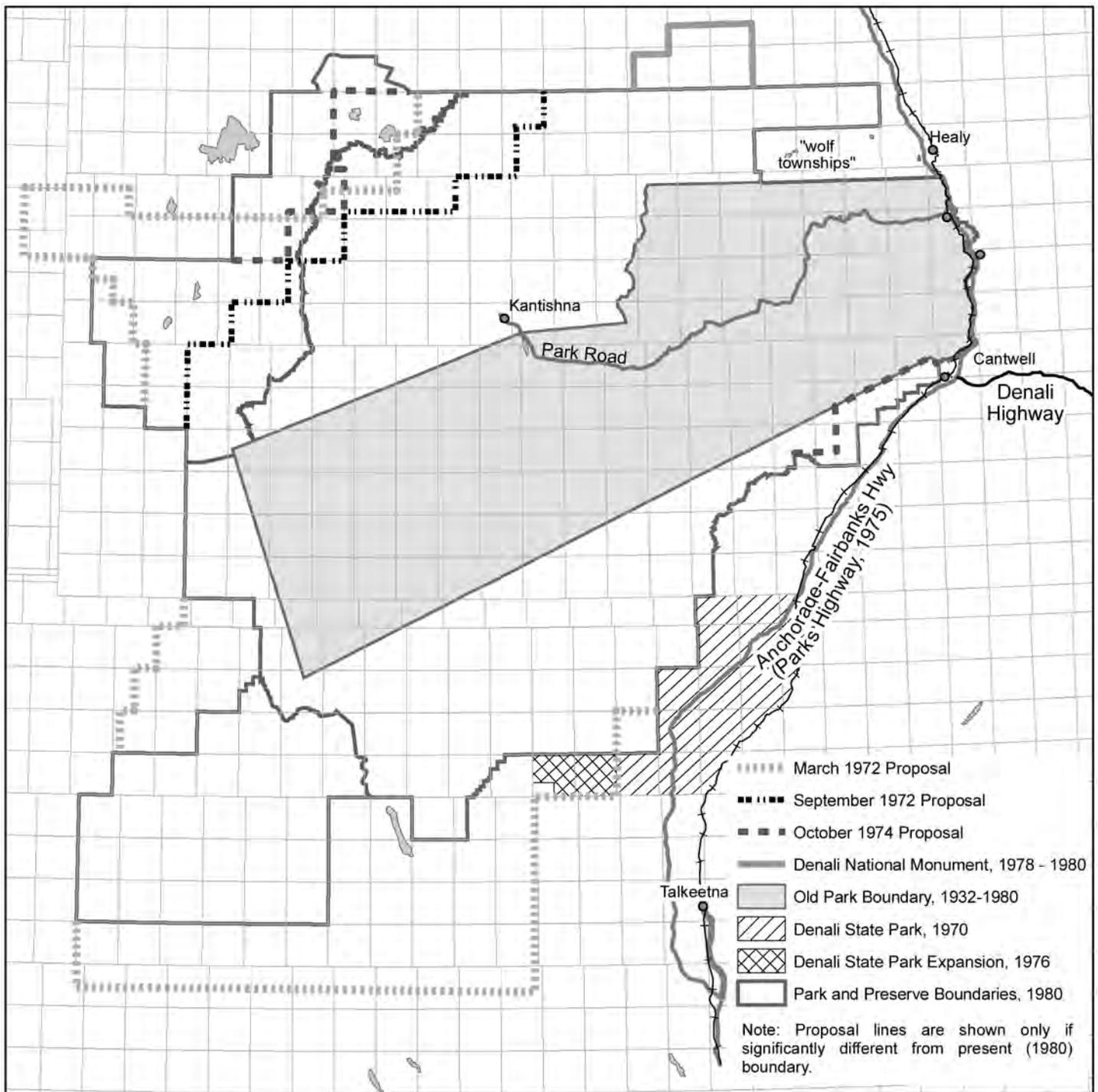
Between March and September 1972, NPS and other agency staff needed to move from preliminary to final determinations regarding the acreage they wanted to withdraw as proposed conservation units. Swem appointed NPS Planner Albert Henson to head the newly-created Alaska Task Force, which consisted of 33 agency personnel brought to Alaska on short-term appointments. It was a time of brief field excursions and hurried report writing, all for the purpose of gaining a well-justified series of boundaries for proposed park units—either new parks or expansion of existing units. By July 1972 the task force gave an interim recommendation to Secretary Morton. These recommendations, for 48.9 million acres of new parklands within 11 proposal areas, included a 3,687,600-acre McKinley expansion, in areas both north and south of the existing park. The July proposal, more than 300,000 acres less than the plan put forth in March, eliminated much of the low-elevation caribou habitat in the Lake Minchumina area (due to it

“not being absolutely critical to the well-being of the major animal park populations”) and a long, 6-mile-wide strip at the south end of the proposal area (due to it “not being necessary for retention or protection on primary park values”), but it added valuable acreage southwest of Broad Pass (because it had “potential access and interpretive areas . . . and important caribou summer range”). It otherwise retained most of the March 1972 proposal acreage.⁶⁶

On September 13, 1972, Interior Secretary Morton announced the final withdrawal areas. As part of an overall 41.7-million-acre Alaska-wide NPS package, the proposed park expansion had been pared down to just 2,996,640 acres (see Map 8). The major reason for the reduced proposal was the elimination of important access routes into the Chelatna Lakes and Sunflower Basin areas south of the park. (These areas were lost because of the ramifications of a September 2, 1972 agreement over a federal-state lawsuit related to overlapping selection areas.) More than a million acres of the proposal area had been lost between March and September; as NPS planner John Reynolds tartly observed, “we got all the rock and ice we asked for.”⁶⁷

The ANCSA-mandated federal planning effort, however, was still in its opening stages. Section 17(d)(2), paragraph C noted that the Interior Secretary would “continue to advise the Congress of the location, size and values” of proposed parklands until two years had elapsed after ANCSA's passage. The Alaska Task Force, therefore, undertook the completion of a massive series of draft environmental statements (DES's) and master plans for the proposed parklands, all of which had to be completed by December 1973. Working in cooperation with the Alaska Planning Group—an ad hoc Interior Department group organized to resolve interest areas between the various agencies—the Alaska Task Force fleshed out its proposals for Mount McKinley and the other ten park proposals.

Recognizing that one of the major areas lost between March and September had been the large block of state-selected land in and around Chelatna Lake, and also recognizing a general concern about the lack of zoning along the newly-completed highway north of Denali State Park, planners for the NPS and the State of Alaska met in late September 1972 to discuss these and other issues. State planners, at first, pushed for a cooperative management system; this philosophy was consistent with the state's efforts in other proposed park areas as well. As noted in Chapter 7, however, the 1958 Statehood Act's statement that the NPS had exclusive jurisdiction over both the



Map 8. Boundary Proposals and Changes, 1972-1980

present park and any proposed expansions prevented the agency from developing this concept. Federal planners emerged from the meeting espousing the idea of a Denali Region National Recreational Complex that would include Denali State Park, the Chelatna Lake area, and lands along the road corridor between Chulitna Pass and McKinley Park Station.⁶⁸

Central to the process that resulted in the DES's for Mount McKinley and the other proposed park areas was a well-publicized series of public meetings that were held under the auspices of the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning

Commission. Between late April and early June 1973, more than forty public meetings were held in Washington, in various Lower 48 cities, and in cities and villages throughout Alaska. Those most relevant to the Mount McKinley proposal were held in Anchorage and McGrath. NPS representatives attended many of these meetings.⁶⁹

In July 1973, two proposals were released that reflected dramatically different visions of the area's future. The Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission—an advisory body established by ANCSA—released a plan for a 3.05-million acre expansion. Though the Com-

During the 1960s and 1970s the NPS considered, then rejected, various proposals that would have placed Chelatna Lake within an expanded park unit. DENA Herkenham #14, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



mission's boundaries were largely similar to those in the September 1972 Morton agreement, the Commission's plan called for virtually all of the southern addition to be open to both hunting and mining.⁷⁰ That same month, the Alaska Planning Group presented an interim package for departmental review; more protective in its emphasis than the JFSLUPC proposal, it included a 3.6-million acre Mount McKinley expansion as part of an overall 49.1 million acre package. That fall, the Sierra Club chimed in with its own recommendations; that organization called for 62 million acres of new national parklands, including a 4.2 million acre Mount McKinley expansion.⁷¹

Given those prior figures, the Interior Department's final (December 1973) administrative recommendations were a sobering disappointment to park advocates, because the scope of NPS recommendations—both for Mount McKinley and elsewhere—had been considerably reduced. Of a total 83.5 million acre package forwarded to Congress, lands proposed for inclusion in National Park Service units totaled just 32.3 million acres, and the master plan and draft EIS for Mount McKinley recommended that just 3,210,000 acres be added to the park.⁷² This acreage was in many ways similar to the

September 1972 proposal recommendations. The new proposal, however, included much of the area that had been lost in the Lake Minchumina area between March and July 1972, though it did not include much of the areas southwest of Broad Pass that had been added to the proposal area between March and July 1972. The proposal also called for a large Cooperative Planning and Management Zone south and east of the proposed park boundaries; this area would be jointly managed by the federal, state and private entities and would attempt to fulfill the goals that state and federal planners had recognized during their September 1972 discussions.⁷³

After Secretary Morton issued its recommendations for Mount McKinley and the other proposed park areas, the Interior Department still needed to finalize its environmental statements before its recommendations were ready to be considered by Congress. The Joint Federal-

Areas, such as this one, north of the park boundary, were considered for inclusion in park expansion proposals due to their excellent wildlife habitat. NPS, DENA 9169, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



Lands important for caribou and moose populations north of the existing park boundary were proposed for inclusion in a newly-expanded park. NPS, DENA 9169, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



State Land Use Planning Commission, as it had a year earlier, held an extensive series of meetings to gauge public opinion regarding the adequacy and scope of the various DES's. The deadline for comments was March 20, 1974, which was later extended to July 22. During the seven-month comment period, the public submitted more than 6,000 comments. Of those, 230 specifically responded to the December 1973 Mount McKinley DES; one of these, the State of Alaska, weighed in with more than twenty pages of Mount McKinley-related comments.⁷⁴

In late April 1974, in the midst of the public hearings process, a group of 30 Alaskans who were “honestly concerned and interested in protecting the unique values of McKinley Park and region surrounding it” met at Cantwell and organized themselves as the Denali Citizens Council. Directors, who were chosen at the meeting, included residents of Cantwell, Lake Minchumina, Deneki Lakes and Hurricane as well as the Anchorage and Fairbanks areas. Pete Martin, elected as acting chair, noted that because the area was “on the verge of major development,” a locally-based organization was needed that would “create a flow of information which will . . . help shape the destiny of this outstanding national park.”⁷⁵ The Council did not make an organizational statement during the comment period noted above; it did, however, make contact with a variety of NPS and other Interior Department officials. The group, which quickly grew to a membership of 150, made numerous comments during the remainder of the “d-2” process. It remains an active organization today, more than thirty years after its founding.⁷⁶

In October 1974, the Alaska Planning Group (APG) issued its final environmental statement for the proposed Mount McKinley park additions; that document recommended that 3,210,000 acres be added to the park (see Map 8). This area was just 30,000 acres larger than the December 1973 proposal; virtually the only changed boundaries were in the Heart Mountain-Little Mountain area, just west of Mount Russell at the southwestern end of the “old park,” and an area just north of the Cache Creek mining district. The Cooperative Planning and Management Zone, first propounded a year earlier, remained in place.⁷⁷

One area of consideration that did not change during this period was the fourteen-mile-wide strip north of the park and west of Healy. An NPS map of potential parklands, dated November 1971, indicated that the entire strip should be included in an expanded Mount McKinley National Park.⁷⁸ But once planners, during the post-ANCSA period, began to scrutinize the area more closely, they learned that 92,000 acres in six key townships, locally known as the “wolf townships,” had been selected by the State of Alaska back in July 1965. By the following May, the BLM had tentatively approved the transfer of most of those lands to the state, and small portions of the township closest to Healy had been subdivided beginning in October 1970.⁷⁹ The land that was both north and west of these townships, however, remained in federal hands. As a result, the initial (March 1972) proposal included the federal lands—but not the state or private lands—in the proposed park area. The remaining plans released that year remained consistent with the March 1972 plan, and both the DEIS (in

December 1973) and the FES (in October 1974) also retained the same proposal boundaries. The FES noted that “this area constitutes extremely critical range for the wolf packs” and was thus identified as an “area of environmental concern.” But because the state “recognized the wolf packs as an important resource,” because it had agreed on August 15, 1973 to close the area to further homesite entry, and because it “also excluded future transportation developments within this area,” Alaska Task Force planners excluded these townships from the expanded park area.⁸⁰

During the summer of 1974, while the APG was still formulating its Mount McKinley FES, an ad hoc park planning group was formed under the aegis of the Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission. This group was called the Mt. McKinley Cooperative Planning and Management Zone Committee, later known as the Mt. McKinley Management Overview Committee. Primarily composed of state officials, its purpose was to investigate issues in the 100-square-mile cooperative zone located south and east of the proposed park-expansion area and to produce a land use plan for the area. It was intended that this committee would be a model for other cooperative efforts in other park areas. Given that direction, the committee met for the first time in late August 1974, and in February 1975, the committee held public hearings in Cantwell, Healy, Trapper Creek, and Anchorage. Committee members, at these meetings, hoped to get management direction, but most were disappointed; as one member noted, “many persons at the Anchorage meeting never heard of the management zone idea, and rural people who came intended to defend themselves from what we were supposedly going to do to them.” And there were organizational difficulties, too; member George Hall admitted that the various members “must develop a more explicit statement of what this group is trying to do.” To address those concerns, several subcommittee meetings were held in mid-March. But by the end of the month, neither the group’s goals nor purposes had yet been finalized. It was hoped that the committee would have completed a series of draft plans by July; then, following another round of public hearings, a final plan would emerge by September. The onset of summer, however, apparently slowed further work on the plans, and after late August 1975 the committee apparently stopped functioning.⁸¹

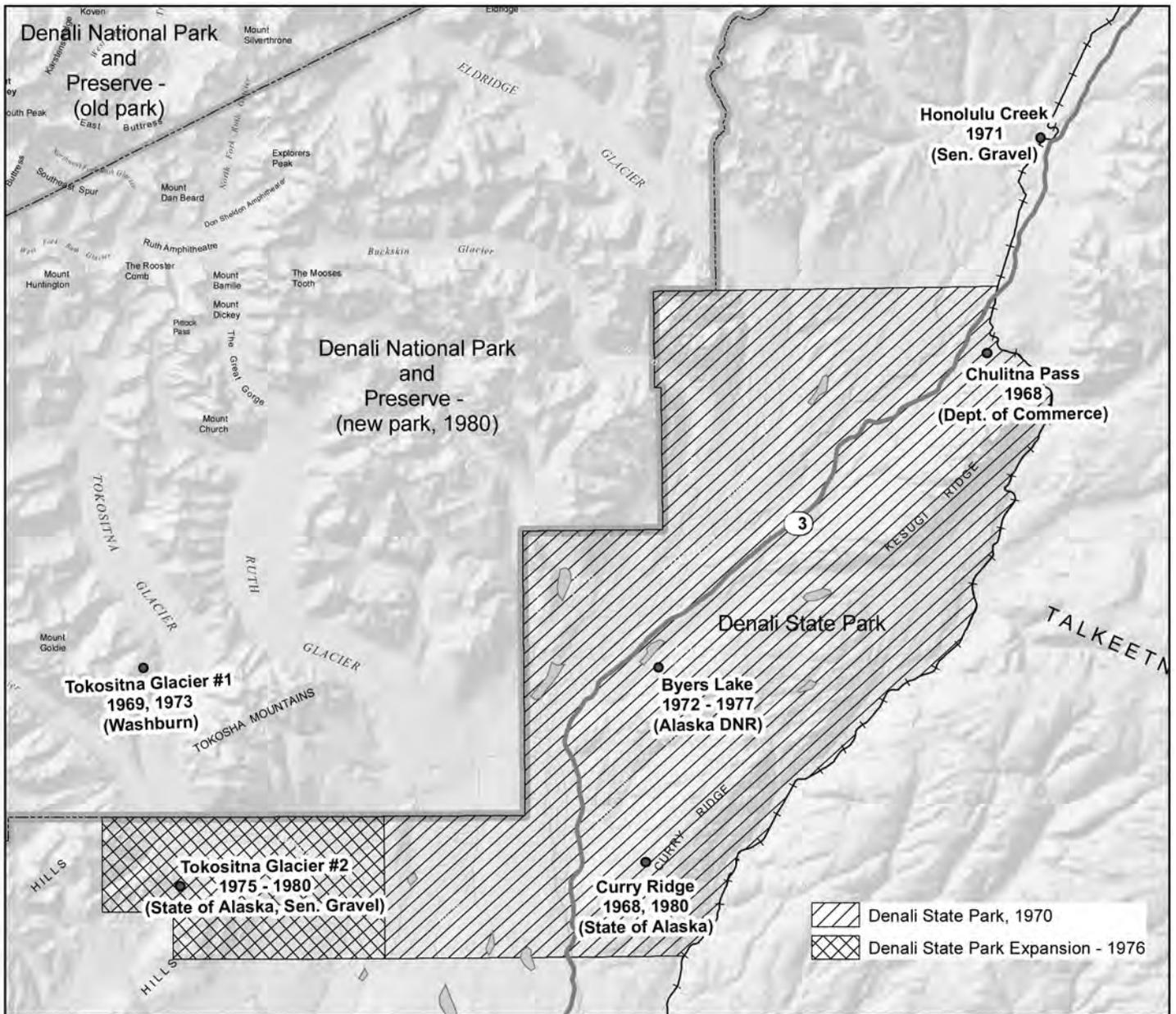
Southside Development Plans and Denali State Park Expansion

Key to the proposed park boundary changes south of the Alaska Range during the 1971-1974 period was tourism development: where, what,

how big, and by whom. As noted above, the NPS had broached the idea of a lodge on top of Curry Ridge as early as 1966, and the Department of Commerce had funded a 1968 study recommending a large hotel at Chulitna Pass. Both of those sites were located on land that had been selected by the State of Alaska, and in 1970 these sites were included in the newly-established Denali State Park. Another site, above the toe of Tokositna Glacier, had been favored by Bradford Washburn since 1969. Not everyone was happy with these sites, however, and they remained on the drawing boards until late 1971, when the Anchorage-Fairbanks road was completed. That fall a new proposal came to light, when Sen. Mike Gravel (D-Alaska) floated the idea of “a year-round lodge and indigenous sports center” on state land near Honolulu Creek, on the railroad just north of Hurricane Gulch. Few others, however, appeared interested in the idea.⁸²

The following spring, state officials issued an internal report suggesting development at a new site: Byers Lake (see Map 9). Officials touted a plan, to be financed by the private sector, for a year-round hotel-resort complex just southeast of the lake that would offer skiing (with a 2,000-foot drop), an enclosed aerial tramway or gondola to the top of Curry Ridge and an observation tower with food service, along with hiking trails, shops, and other amenities. Byers Lake, they argued, offered an “exceptional” view of Mount McKinley, and a timbered site protected from the wind. It also allowed access by floatplane as well as by road; rail patrons, according to the plan, would detrain at Chulitna Pass and take a shuttle bus to the resort.⁸³ By September of 1972, state officials were preparing to “request bids very shortly for its proposed developments” at Byers Lake, and in late October the Alaska Division of Parks solicited proposals for the first phase of a three-phase hotel and ski-resort development.⁸⁴

This proposed development, however, quickly receded into the background due to Alaska Senator Gravel’s efforts to erect a new tourist development. Gravel recognized that the NPS was actively searching for a hotel site due to the September 3 fire at McKinley Park Station and that Mt. McKinley could not be seen from the former hotel site. Gravel also felt that inasmuch as “we have the highest mountain in the world and we haven’t capitalized on it,” the state’s plans at Byers Lake were too modest. So in November 1972, a year after airing his Honolulu Creek proposal, Gravel—a former real estate developer—pitched the idea of a \$50-\$100 million “world recreation center,” a combined Alpine-style village and ski area, which would be similar to Stowe, Vermont or Davos, Switzerland.



Map 9. Proposed Southside Development Sites, 1968-1980

During his speech, Gravel admitted that he was “really only at the conceptual point on this thing right now.” Perhaps for that reason, he was un-specific about where the development would be located. He was certain that it would be “outside the [national] Park or any extensions which may come to pass”; even without that caveat, however, a news report stated that “neither federal or state park officials are quite certain whether there is an area south of Mt. McKinley which would be feasible or available for such a plan.” Gravel hoped to finance the project “through federal funds and grants.” But to gain funds for a feasibility study, he hoped to obtain funds from the state and federal governments as well as from Matanuska-Susitna Borough. The following January, he asked the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission to conceptually endorse his project. Commission staff said “they might be able to

assist in site-survey studies and planning,” but no general endorsement was forthcoming.⁸⁵

Gravel, however, did not give up. In January 1973, he spoke to Interior Secretary Rogers Morton about “Mt. McKinley City . . . a top resort attraction that would catch the imagination of the entire world.” Morton’s decision to fund a replacement hotel at McKinley Park Station undercut part of Gravel’s rationale for his resort idea, but rising park visitation and the proposed resort’s year-round aspect provided independent impetus for justifying its construction, despite a muted public response. In late August that year, Gravel obtained promises from the NPS to fund a \$1 million feasibility study for the “recreation city of 10,000 to 40,000 persons near the south base of Mt. McKinley.” Agency officials, at the time, expressed their support for Gravel’s ideas; they stated that “places on the south side should be

developed for recreation” and that such a resort community would not conflict with other land uses in the area proposed for the expanded park. Gravel, at this point, was still reticent regarding where to locate the resort; the study, ostensibly, would investigate optimal sites. But so far as is known, the NPS conducted no such study, and it made no allowances for such a resort in any of its post-ANCSA planning documents.⁸⁶

Gravel’s ideas, however, were soon challenged by those of Bradford Washburn, the “foremost expert on Mt. McKinley” who touted a tourist development site just west of the Tokositna Glacier and less than 25 miles south of Mt. McKinley (see Map 9). As he had first noted in 1969, he liked the area—which Sydney Laurence had used for several of his well-known canvases—because the Tokositna was a “white glacier” and thus more attractive to tourists than dirt-covered glaciers; in addition, the glacier’s lower end was “perfectly safe” because it was free of crevasses. Washburn hoped to see a lodge with “simple accommodations” built on the top of a glacial moraine beside the glacier; from that point, trails could access not only Tokositna Glacier but also Ruth Glacier, which he described as being “like the Grand Canyon with a glacier in it.” He envisioned the lodge as a year-round facility which would offer “breathtaking” winter views and unlimited cross-country skiing opportunities. The site, winter and summer, would be accessed by a 35-mile road which would leave the main highway near the Chulitna River Bridge and, for the most part, parallel the ridge south of the Tokositna River.⁸⁷ But NPS officials quashed his idea; the agency’s December 1973 and October 1974 planning documents concluded that Washburn’s proposed lodge site would be well

within the expanded Mount McKinley National Park. Within the proposed park areas south of the Alaska Range, moreover, the NPS envisioned interpretation and tent camping, not roads or large-scale visitor services.⁸⁸

Meanwhile, in the midst of the Gravel and Washburn proposals, the state continued to solicit bids for hotel development at Byers Lake. Apparently only one firm responded to the bid requests that had been announced in October 1972.⁸⁹ That firm, moreover, was apparently unable to successfully meet the state’s development expectations, because more than a year later (in June 1974), the state’s Department of Natural Resources was “currently reviewing bids for funding of more elaborate future development plans” in the park such as the Byers Lake lodge and the land-based air strip. In August 1974, DNR officials awarded a 55-year contract for the construction of park tourist facilities to an Anchorage firm, Denali Development Corporation. Now that a private-sector partner was in place, the park’s 1975 master plan continued to promote a major development site at Byers Lake.⁹⁰

Meanwhile, the post-ANCSA land selection process—which was taking place at a meteoric pace throughout the state—was creating new opportunities for tourism development in areas south of the Alaska Range. The various decisions made by Interior Department officials in the nine months after ANCSA’s passage had the net effect of settling considerable overlapping land claims between the state and federal governments, and state officials—hoping “to prevent any hodge-podge development that often mars the boundaries of our national parks”—hoped to add some of these newly-awarded lands to Denali State Park.



Between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s, the state and federal governments showed considerable interest in a hotel near the Tokositna Glacier terminus. This 1977 photo, from the proposed hotel site, looks north to Mount McKinley. NPS, DENA 9169, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

In October 1972, for example, Governor William Egan noted that the state “will” add to the park four townships in the Chelatna Lake area “together with approximately 13,000 acres directly west of Denali State Park.”⁹¹

This proposal, however, was not acted upon, and no further action regarding state park expansion took place until early 1975, shortly after the election of Jay Hammond as governor. In early 1975, the Division of Parks completed a park master plan which, among other provisions, “identified a 66 square mile area [with] outstanding recreational values . . . near the terminus of the Tokositna Glacier” as a proposed park addition. The plan noted that “the major attribute of this proposed addition,” which had been recommended by the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission, “is its commanding view of 20,320 foot Mt. McKinley, particularly from Point Long [sic], which faces the gorge of the Tokositna Glacier.” Near the Long Creek-Canyon Creek confluence, which was just 12 miles south of the site that Brad Washburn had touted in September 1973, the state hoped to construct a “rustic and comfortable lodge” along with a visitor center, trails, picnic areas and campgrounds. The plan noted that “certain portions of this

an improved ten-mile road from Petersville to the site.”⁹²

The plan was admittedly in its early conceptual stage, but given the plan’s impetus, Rep. Theodore G. Smith—who had until recently been the State Parks Division director—introduced a bill (HB 185) to add 66 square miles (42,240 acres) to Denali State Park.⁹³ The bill was referred to the House Resources Committee, which held two hearings on the bill (in Palmer and in Anchorage) on April 5. A meeting participant noted that

testimony on this proposal was light and about equally divided between pro and con. Those in favor pointed out the value and suitability of the area for development of public facilities and an excellent view. Opposition favored no expansion; that private enterprise be allowed to provide the public facilities.⁹⁴

Given the results of the meeting, legislators slowly moved ahead with expansion plans. The Resources Committee passed the park expansion bill in late April, but further action awaited the beginning of the 1976 legislative season. The



Beginning in 1972, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources trumpeted the idea of a hotel development in the Byers Lake vicinity. DENA Herkenham #72, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

development, including the lodge structure, [would] be accomplished with private capital on a concession basis.” But other costs would be borne by the state, including the construction of

House bill passed the Finance Committee on March 24 and the entire House (with a 32-3 vote) on March 29. It then went to the Senate, where the Resources Committee passed the bill on May 7. HB 185 passed the full Senate on May 11, and

again on a May 19 reconsideration vote. It was then sent on to Governor Hammond, who signed it into law on July 2, 1976. The bill became effective on September 6.⁹⁵

The Backcountry Use Plan

In the midst of ongoing plans for both an expanded national park and an enlarged Denali State Park, plans were also being formulated and carried out within the existing Mount McKinley National Park. The completion of the Anchorage-Fairbanks highway, as noted above, brought thousands of additional visitors to the park each year, and the nation's growing penchant for rugged outdoor education meant that many of those visitors sought challenging adventure away from the park road corridor.

To some extent, the park had long been a haven for hikers. Since early days, the Outer Range hills and the broad valleys south of the park road had beckoned visitors. As far back as the 1920s, rangers had proposed trails that would take visitors as well as park staff to Anderson Pass, Clearwater Creek, McGonagall Pass, Foggy Pass, and the head of Savage River.⁹⁶ None of those trails were built, however. As noted in Chapter 5, several short trails were begun during the CCC days of the late 1930s, mostly in the McKinley Park Station area; a new trail, from the hotel area to the park headquarters, was added in 1952.⁹⁷ A few visitors during this period decried the lack of suitable trails, but the advanced age of most park visitors put off serious trail planning for the time being.⁹⁸ But park personnel recognized that the new Denali Highway would attract “younger and more able individuals . . . and to prepare for this type, hiking trails . . . are proposed for construction in the very near future.” Beginning in 1954, plans were made for trails “to the snout of the Toklat River Glacier” and for a bridge across the McKinley Bar that would have allowed trail access to the Clearwater Creek country. Then, in 1956, the *Mission 66 Prospectus* recommended several new trails: up the Savage River valley and to Double Mountain, the old Sheldon Cabin, and McGonagall Pass.⁹⁹ The park's final Mission 66 plan, approved in 1957, called for four short self-guiding nature trails (to be located near stopping points along the park road) along with “five backcountry hiking trails,” each with “shelters constructed in needed locations.”¹⁰⁰ During the Mission 66 period, several of the short nature trails were constructed—at Eielson Visitor

Center and Polychrome Pass, for example—but the park's long-distance trails never got off the drawing board. As late as the mid-1960s, trails-related funding continued to lag, perhaps because few visitors demanded either new trails or maintenance on existing trails.¹⁰¹

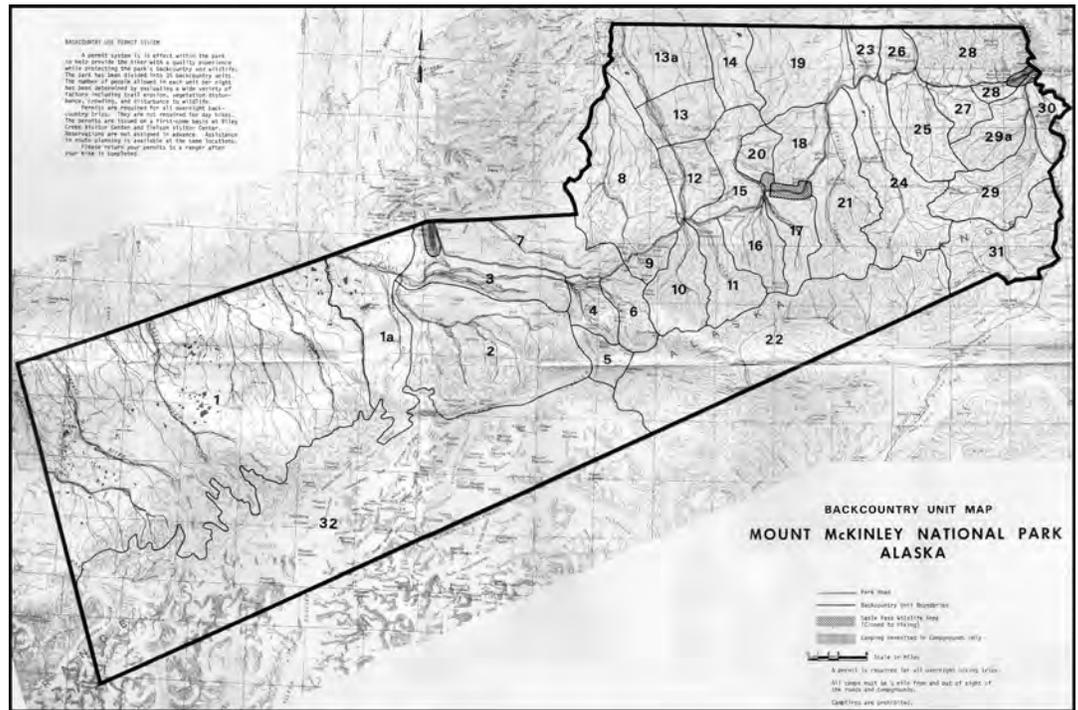
By the early 1970s, an interest in long-distance hiking finally began to make itself known. Beginning in 1971, the NPS required that all overnight backcountry users obtain a campfire permit, and later that summer, the park concessioner began to make a special provision for hikers (both day hikers and backpackers) traveling to various “trail points” on the tour buses. The 1972 completion of the Anchorage-Fairbanks highway, plus the implementation of a bus system that, for the first time, allowed backpackers to travel for free to distant points along the park road, brought a dramatic increase in backcountry activity. The number of visitor-days by hikers and backpackers, for example, ballooned from 5,419 in 1971 to 10,437 in 1973, a 92 percent increase.¹⁰² This mushrooming of activity was immediately felt, and after the 1972 season, park officials recognized that “there is a need for direct onsite management” in the backcountry.¹⁰³

Beginning in 1973, park officials—searching for a long-term solution—sought “to determine how many backpackers the park can take without damaging these natural scenic areas.” Both rangers and backpackers began to recognize, for instance, that open campfires degraded the tundra environment; these fire-blackened sites also attracted future campers to stay at the same spot. To avoid these concentrated impacts, rangers asked that backpackers bring their own camp stoves, and they also recommended that backcountry users hike and camp in generally undisturbed areas, thus distributing their individual impacts over a broad area rather than at a few concentrated locations.¹⁰⁴ That same year, park officials—at the behest of biologist Gordon



Backcountry hiking and camping in the park nearly doubled between 1971 and 1973. NPS Interp. Collection #763, Denali National Park and

The 1977 Backcountry Unit Map shows how the park was divided into areas for the purpose of regulating backcountry use, thereby protecting the hikers' wilderness experience. Backcountry Management Plan Unit Map, 1977, Resource Library, Denali National Park and Preserve



Haber—announced that three backcountry areas would be closed to hiking and camping in order to protect wolf dens and denning areas. From June 15 to the first of September, 28,672 acres were closed along the Sanctuary River, 12,544 acres along the Toklat River, and 1,240 acres along Moose Creek.¹⁰⁵ Haber's suggestion proved to be of long-lasting value, and in the years to come, park officials continued to close key areas on an as-needed basis, either to protect wildlife denning areas or to protect visitors from kill sites or other potentially dangerous locations.¹⁰⁶

During the winter of 1973-74, the NPS began to investigate new ways of managing the park's backcountry. Dan Kuehn, who had recently been hired as Mount McKinley's superintendent, hired ranger Steve Buskirk as the park's first resource management specialist, and Buskirk spent most of that winter cobbling together a park Backcountry Use Plan. By the following March Buskirk had largely completed the plan, and the park issued a press release announcing that it would implement the plan that summer. It was one of a large number of similar plans that the agency was writing for national park areas throughout the country.¹⁰⁷ The press release stated, "Faced with this [usage] increase and consequent overcrowding of some backcountry areas, the National Park Service will moderate the pressure on the backcountry resource and maintain the quality of experience for backcountry visitors." Because campers had consistently noted that isolation was an important part of a park backcountry experience, the plan laid out a mechanism—through the issuance of its

backcountry use permits—whereby the park was divided into 31 backcountry use zones (25 of which were adjacent to the park road), and not more than two backpacking parties would be allowed in each zone. Additional elements of the backcountry plan, unrelated to hiking activity, included a *laissez faire* attitude toward fire management, a refusal to stock fish within the park's lakes, transplant game, control predators, or enhance vegetation. Many of these practices, which reflected "a change in the thinking of wildlife management personnel across the country," had long been practiced at the park, but it was the first time that they had been codified in a planning document.¹⁰⁸

In order to implement these policies, Chief Ranger Gary Brown hired the first-ever backcountry rangers in the spring of 1974: Jack and Beth Hebert. The husband-and-wife team was stationed at headquarters that summer but spent most of its time in the backcountry. As Beth recently noted,

We wrote reports on backcountry conditions, . . . we replaced the floors of several of the backcountry cabins, we . . . hauled to the road wire from the old telegraph line that ran to Eielson. . . . We also cleaned up campfire rings, hauled out trash, checked permits, and informed hikers about the backcountry management plan. We were occasionally involved in search-and-rescue operations and bear management issues.¹⁰⁹

The park released its final *Backcountry Use and Operations Plan*, along with the park's first hiking brochure, in June 1975. Before it did so, however, Buskirk and other park staff addressed several issues that had arisen the previous summer. First, staff recognized that the 1974 use limitations were too strict, so significant increases in visitation per unit were approved. Second, staff took a new look at the park's backcountry use zones and decided to bisect four of them into smaller units, thus creating a new total of 35 zones.¹¹⁰ Finally, backcountry campfire use remained a problem. In 1973 and 1974, the agency had encouraged backpackers to bring portable stoves in hopes of reducing the ecological damage brought on by campfires—both from firewood gathering as well as fire-caused tundra damage. Perhaps as a result of those suggestions, only 23 percent of all 1974 backpacking parties built open fires. Buskirk, recognizing that Mount McKinley, with its rain and mosquitoes, was less than ideally suited for campfires, and also recognizing the ecological factors cited above, recommended in a January 1975 memo that “permission to build fires no longer be issued [to backpackers] and that the use of fire, except in cases of emergencies, be terminated.” Buskirk's superiors—Chief Ranger Gary Brown and Superintendent Dan Kuehn—were understandably wary about the public's reaction to the proposed policy. Both men approved Buskirk's recommendation, however, and beginning in the summer of 1976, open fires were prohibited in all backcountry units.¹¹¹ Meanwhile, the park had expanded its backcountry ranger force from two to four: Jack and Beth Hebert continued to serve during the 1975 to 1977 seasons, while the other ranger pair was Melinda Frison and Donna Pritchett in 1975 followed by Pete and Gretchen Pederson in 1976-77.¹¹²

During the summers of 1977 and 1978, staff under the guidance of the Regional Chief Scientist (in Seattle) conducted an extensive survey of the park's backcountry users. More than 4,000 backcountry visitors were asked about the park's backcountry management policies and, in particular, whether overcrowding was a concern.¹¹³ (The number of overnight hikers, by 1978, had risen to 5,187, from just 2,469 four years earlier.) The survey showed that users, by and large, were “overwhelmingly supportive of the Park Service's regulations governing use of the backcountry.”¹¹⁴ NPS officials, however, made minor changes to the zoning

system. They decided to broaden a restriction on public off-road access in the Sable Pass area that had been established in 1956 (see Chapter 12) by implementing a five-mile-long “closed to hiking” zone for one-half mile on either side of the park road. In addition, they designated fairly extensive areas surrounding the park headquarters, the park hotel, East Fork just north of the park road, and the Wonder Lake area where camping would be permitted only in designated areas.¹¹⁵ The expansion of the park boundaries, and later management actions, would bring new refinements to the system (see Chapter 9), but the basic system would remain largely unchanged.

The park's attitude toward its backcountry, as evidenced by the *Backcountry Use and Operations Plan*, was a recognition that wilderness, as the public perceived it, was well worth keeping. But wilderness, as a legal concept, remained elusive, at least for the time being. As noted in Chapter 7, a 1965 master planning study had noted that the park contained two de facto wilderness areas: a 334,000-acre Toklat Wilderness Area north of the park road, and a 1,396,000-acre Denali Wilderness Area south of the road. Regional and Washington officials concurred with these master-plan recommendations. Within months of the issuance of that master plan, however, the first of a series of new planning efforts brought dynamism—if not total unpredictability—to a determination of what the park's future boundaries should be. Because of that dynamism, the agency deferred its Mount McKinley wilderness study for the time being, even though it had authorized such studies for its other large Alaska units, Katmai and Glacier Bay. After ANCSA was signed into law in late 1971, the commencement of the 17(d)(2) process added yet another element of unpredictability to the equation. Congress, as part of the 1964 Wilderness Act, had mandated that all NPS units with major roadless areas had to be inventoried and evaluated within a ten-year time frame. But because both Congress and the NPS knew that the post-ANCSA process would not be decided until well after the 1974 deadline,



Backcountry rangers Beth and Jack Hebert, left, contact hikers in the park, 1975. Buskirk Photo, DENA R&RP files, Denali National Park and Preserve

all wilderness planning efforts were deferred until Congress had settled the 17(d)(2) question.¹¹⁶

The 1976 Development Concept Plan

While Steve Buskirk and his co-workers were in the midst of writing the park's first backcountry plan, other park staff recognized that the crush of new park visitors since 1972 demanded that a new plan be developed regarding operations and facilities in the hotel area, the headquarters area, and along the park road. As noted above, recreational visitation to the park had more than tripled in just two years; in 1971 there had been 44,500 visitors, while in 1973 visitation had ballooned to 137,300. Visitation continued to skyrocket in 1974, when 161,400 visits were recorded. (See Appendix B.) Because most



In 1975 this Backcountry Information desk was located in the Riley Creek Information Center and was the main contact point for implementation of the park's Backcountry Management Plan. Buskirk Photo, DENA R&RP files, Denali National Park and Preserve

visitors spent their time in the headquarters and hotel-railroad station areas, facilities designed for more modest visitation were clearly being overwhelmed. Specific problem areas included a lack of parking in the hotel-Riley Creek area, an absence of shower and laundry facilities for the increasing number of campers and backpackers, and the poor quality of seasonal housing for both NPS and concessions staff. Park officials, recognizing that the heightened crowds were having a negative impact on many visitors' park experience, expressed these concerns to regional officials in Seattle; they, in turn, requested the assistance of the agency's Denver Service Center (DSC) in the matter. DSC officials decided to address these problems by compiling a development concept plan (DCP) to address a broad spectrum of development-related issues.¹¹⁷

Doug Cornell directed the DCP effort; his involvement began on August 27-29, 1975, when public workshops on the plan were held in Anchorage, in Fairbanks, and at the park. Workshop attendees, who numbered between 40 and 50, first broached questions with long-term impacts ("Should the existing hotel be removed?" Or, conversely, "Should additional hotels be built in the park – and if so, where?"). Both participants and staff recognized that the state and NPS, at that time, were in the midst of a separate planning effort for the Cooperative Planning and Management Zone (see above), and they also recognized that the park's master plan, which had been put forth in December 1973 as part of the larger 17(d)(2) issue, had not yet been adopted. Given those larger issues, there was a broad awareness that a full DCP was premature; instead, the planning document would be called an Interim DCP, the goal of which would be limited to specific problems in the hotel, Riley Creek, and headquarters areas. As the planning team itself noted, "the team will consider only those [planning alternatives] which could be implemented within the present developed area, at minimum expense, and with minimum environmental impact."¹¹⁸

Given the public input at the three meetings, DSC personnel completed an *Analysis of Alternatives* in December 1975, which provided five contrasting development scenarios. The document was then let out for public comment; planners, however, received only twelve responses. Based on comments generated both during the August 1975 workshops and during the early-1976 public comment period, DSC staff compiled the *Interim Development Concept Plan* and released it in early March 1976. The plan called for the NPS to make a large number of changes to interpretive facilities, residential areas, and parking lots; none of these changes, however, were particularly costly. Specific recommendations included a small addition to the park hotel, enlarging area parking lots, adding a shower-restroom building near the youth hostel, adding interpretive space at the hotel, improving signage and lighting, rehabilitating concessioner employee quarters, and the additional of new housing units at the former CCC camp. Alaska officials broadly approved many of the plan's recommendations but urged modifications in others, but perhaps because of other funding priorities, few of the recommended changes were ever implemented.¹¹⁹

The Resurgence of Dog Patrols

As noted in Chapters 5 through 7, Supt. Frank Been removed most of the park's working sled dogs from the park in the early 1940s and kept

only enough dogs for longer patrols and for demonstration purposes. During most of the mid-to-late 1940s, the park had no dogs whatsoever, and annual dog patrols since 1950 had been a hit-or-miss affair; they took place between 1952 and 1960, and again beginning in 1963. Throughout this period, however, the dogs' primary and most visible purpose was for summertime interpretive demonstrations. Until the late 1960s, the park continued to keep sled dogs; their care was typically entrusted to a headquarters-based ranger as a collateral duty.¹²⁰ Shortly after Ivan Miller became the park's chief ranger in 1969, however, the park began to adopt a different attitude toward its sled dogs. He and others realized that "dog sledging was a cultural, historic, and prehistoric resource worth preserving and it provided a means of transportation compatible with the Alaskan wilderness that the park was set aside to protect."¹²¹ (Alaska, during this period, was experiencing a revival in dog mushing; in early 1967, Dorothy Page of Wasilla had organized a 50-mile race—the first long-distance race held in decades—and soon afterward, she and Joe Redington were raising statewide interest in even longer races. This interest, in 1973, would be manifested in the first Anchorage-to-Nome Iditarod Sled Dog Race.¹²²) Recognizing that the park's early operations were largely dependent upon working dogs, but well aware that the few remaining park dogs were sparsely used during the long winter months, an unnamed staffer suggested in an internal memo that November,

How about employing a park "Dog musher" to work with and develop . . . [the park dogs?]. The perpetuation of actually working dog teams should have an intrinsic value well worth the investment and would add a lot in authenticity for demonstration purposes.

A key remaining question, however, was who would train the ranger corps? As the November 1969 memo noted, "I realize it may be difficult to find an experienced hand in this all but extinct profession."¹²³ But as a follow-up source noted, "experienced people were found, old timers passed on what they knew, and Denali Park Kennels became a vital part of park operations, summer and winter."¹²⁴ More specifically, the park kennels were entrusted to ranger Roy Sanborn, who later in the winter of 1969-70 added several

malamutes. The revamped dog assemblage was first exhibited to the public the following summer, and by 1971 Sanborn had written an informational pamphlet about the park's dog teams, entitled *Malamutes of Mount McKinley National Park*. Sanborn remained in charge of the kennels until he left the park in 1972; during that period, he took increasingly long patrols with the team and continued to add more malamutes.¹²⁵



During the summer season park interpretive staff provided dog sled demonstrations at the park kennels for the visiting public. NPS Interp. Collection #704, Denali National Park and Preserve

Park staff gradually came to recognize, however, that malamutes—as attractive and iconic as they were to tourists—fared relatively poorly during wintertime patrols, and they also came to realize what Alaskans during an earlier period had long known: that the dogs most appropriate for long-distance hauling (or racing) were relatively small, they were not purebreds, and in the eyes of many visitors they were not particularly handsome. In 1973, the arrival of Superintendent Dan Kuehn and Chief Ranger Gary Brown signaled changes at the kennel, because soon afterward the park began to obtain strong, adaptable sled dogs—"whatever their breed or mixed breed," as Superintendent Kuehn has noted.¹²⁶

The change in attitude toward the kennels—as reflected by the dogs' appearance and breed—soon had new impacts. First, the park hired staff with specific expertise in dog-handling capabilities: in early 1973 it asked Ford Reeves, a member of the park's maintenance staff, to become the park's first "animal caretaker" in more than 30 years, and in November 1974 the park hired Sandra L. Kogl—who was already experienced with dog teams—to take over the park kennels. Kogl kept the job for more than a decade, and in 1981 she wrote a book about the park dogs, entitled *Sled Dogs of Denali*. An increasing number of volunteers, over the years, ably assisted Reeves and Kogl.¹²⁷ Also in 1974, park staff tried to restore the kennels area to its historical appearance; as noted in the park's annual report, "The kennel building floor was covered with 2" spruce



During Sandra Kogl's years as the park's dog handler and kennels manager, she revamped the kennels' sled dog breeding program resulting in far superior working sled dog bloodlines. DENA 11-155, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

planks and dowelled. The ceiling was paneled. A new 'old' stove was acquired [and] construction began on 15 new, three sided log dog houses to replace old plywood houses."¹²⁸ Finally, and perhaps of greatest importance, the park began to use dogs for regular winter patrols for the first time since the late 1930s or early 1940s. As late as the winter of 1972-73, rangers had recorded only 210 miles of dog sled patrol. But by 1974, this mileage had increased to 1,700, and in 1978 there were some 4,000 miles of dog sled patrols.¹²⁹ The dog teams were used to check winter recreation use, trail conditions, to haul backcountry trash

(including trash left by mountaineers), and to protect park wildlife. During this period, rangers did not rely solely on dog teams for their wintertime patrols; they also used snowmachines to patrol just beyond the northern border and conducted occasional ski patrols as well.¹³⁰ Airplanes were also occasionally used to patrol the park during this period, but because park officials did not have regular access to government aircraft, the only air patrols took place during the late 1970s, inasmuch as Supt. Betts, a pilot, had his own plane and parked it at the McKinley Park airstrip.¹³¹

Dog teams also entered into the commercial sphere during this period. In 1973, veteran dog musher Dennis Kogl requested, and received, a Special Use Permit to take the public on sled dog trips into the park.¹³² Kogl operated his tours until 1976 but then encountered problems insuring his patrons. Thereafter, he retooled his operation and ran a dog-sled freight-service operation, both to supply skiers on long-distance trips in the park and for mountaineers attempting to climb Alaska Range peaks from the north side. The operation, originally called Denali Dog Tours, became known as Denali Dog Tours and Wilderness Freighters beginning in the winter of 1977-78. Kogl remained active until 1984, operating with either a special use permit, a concessions permit, or a commercial use license; he then sold the business to Will Forsburg and Linda Johnson, who kept it going into the 1990s. Two operators currently operate dog sled services: one handles passenger tours, while the other conducts commercial freight hauling.¹³³

Concessions and Business Development

As noted earlier in this chapter, Outdoor World, Ltd. had become the park's sole concessioner beginning in January 1972. Beginning that summer George Fleharty, the company's major stockholder, was the on-site manager of the park's concessions operation. Fleharty and Outdoor World remained in those positions for the next five years. In mid-1977, however, change was in the offing. Outdoor World, apparently in search of capital for new construction projects, prepared a prospectus to sell the company's assets to a larger company. ARA Services, Inc.—a New Jersey-based corporation which also ran concessions operations at Mesa Verde and Shenandoah national parks—responded to the prospectus, and on June 1, 1978 the deal was finalized; Outdoor World became a division of ARA Services (see Appendix D). Based on the company's satisfactory operations elsewhere, the NPS quickly approved the contract; the agency was unwilling, however, to include a 20-year contract extension (which would have extended the final year of the contract from 1987 to 1998).¹³⁴ Despite the corporate-level changes, on-site operations continued much as they had before, with George Fleharty still managing the park concession from his offices in the McKinley Park community.¹³⁵

A key clause in a June 1972 Memorandum of Agreement between Outdoor World and the NPS—which continued

under the 1978 ARA contract—was that the concessioner was given the exclusive right to operate the park's transportation services. This meant that the concessioner controlled not only the park's tour busses (which had been a concessioner function ever since the 1920s) but the new shuttle bus system as well.¹³⁶ Given that authority, the concessioner was responsible for procuring the necessary buses for both systems. In response, the concessioner purchased a small fleet of "Bluebird" blue-colored tour buses. But to obtain shuttle buses, it typically negotiated annual agreements with various Alaska school districts. As noted above, the large number of park visitors in 1972 overtaxed the initial shuttle bus fleet to such an extent that officials were forced to add new buses in midsummer.

In order to avoid repeating the mistakes of 1972, NPS officials vowed to add more buses to the shuttle fleet; in March 1973, Alaska State Office Director Stan Albright announced that "we will have 22 buses that will run throughout the park."¹³⁷ Despite those promises, only 17 were placed into service—a number that again proved insufficient for the record number of park visitors. Once again, those who fared worst were mid-season day hikers, plus campers at Savage, Teklanika, and other campgrounds. All too many times, these visitors were unable to venture farther west along the park road because the passing buses were full to capacity. As a result, they complained long and loud to both concessions and NPS officials, and in one particularly memorable incident, an obviously distraught camper waited so long for a bus that he flagged one down, took the driver's keys and was cited for disorderly conduct. The park superintendent, frustrated that his agency could not afford to fund more shuttle buses, decided to open up the park road to all motorists who had reservations for campgrounds west of Savage River. Regional officials quickly got the message; they quickly provided the park with additional funds, and within a week, 14 more shuttle buses had been added to the fleet.¹³⁸

Given two years of inadequate bus service, and



In the 1970s park dog teams were used to remove old bridge timbers that had washed downstream on the Toklat River. The dog teams also hauled cabin repair materials to cabins along the park's northern boundary. NPS Interp. Collection #2763, Denali National Park and Preserve

an expectation for even higher visitor totals in the future, NPS and concessions officials prepared for upcoming seasons by supplying even more buses. That strategy ultimately worked, and for the remainder of the decade visitors voiced few complaints about the number of park shuttle buses. The U.S. government had to pay all costs related to procuring and operating the additional buses. This “cost-plus” system took an increasing bite out of the park budget, inasmuch as the concessioner had little incentive to trim costs.¹³⁹

Another bus-related worry—one borne entirely by the concessioner—was passenger safety. Over the years there had been few vehicle accidents along the park road, primarily because both buses and private automobiles were rarely seen in the park prior to the war and were still an uncommon sight until the mid-1950s.¹⁴⁰ After the Denali Highway opened in 1957, however, an increasing number of rollovers and other accidents were recorded.¹⁴¹ The first of these involved privately-owned automobiles, but two accidents involving a concessions bus—one of which injured a park visitor—took place during the summer of 1962.¹⁴² More significant was a July 30, 1969 rollover involving a westbound tour bus, just west of Igloo Campground, which resulted in a total loss to the bus and injuries to



This 1974 bus maintenance facility served vehicles in the park visitor transportation system. DENA 5753, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

most of the forty passengers, nine of whom required hospitalization.¹⁴³ Although the agency’s actions during the winter of 1971-72 resulted in the removal of most private vehicle traffic from the park road, accidents continued. In July 1974 a wildlife tour bus rolled down an embankment just east of Eielson Visitor Center, killing one passenger (Katherine McFadden) and injuring most of the remaining 39 passengers, and in August 1978 an Omaha woman “suffered a slight head injury” when an eastbound shuttle bus rolled over midway between Wonder Lake and Eielson. Drivers, in all three cases, were deemed negligent for venturing too close to the road edge.¹⁴⁴

As noted above, the primary reason that Outdoor World became an ARA Services subsidiary was

to obtain capital for new hotel construction. The boom in park visitation during the 1970s meant that the McKinley Park Hotel often had a season-long 99 percent occupancy rate, and many visitors who hoped to stay for two days or more had to leave after just a single night’s stay. Based on these factors, on projections of a long-term boom in Alaska tourism, and the fact that a much larger-sized park (which was then being debated in Congress) would make the area even more attractive to visitors, Fleharty and other concessions-company officials recognized that a new hotel was needed. But he may have also recognized that NPS officials would fight any attempt to build a new hotel within the park boundary or substantially expand the existing hotel. As a result, neither Fleharty nor any other tourist developer tried to build additional hotel space within the existing or proposed park.¹⁴⁵

Instead, Fleharty looked east, to an area just outside the park boundary which was then called Windy Pass. That mile-long sliver of land, which was sandwiched between the Nenana River and an adjacent cliff face, had been claimed by three men (Chalon Harris, Stephen E. Jones, and Charles M. Travers) since 1965 and had been in their ownership since 1974. Near the north end of that sliver, concession company officials decided (for \$3 million) to purchase 46 acres of Harris’s 70-acre parcel. The deal was apparently finalized in 1977. Within months, the concessioner began two major construction projects on its newly-acquired parcel. Looking for a way to supply much-needed seasonal employee housing, it began constructing four-plex housing units that fall on the former site of Tenada Campground. Then, in the early spring of

1978, construction began on the first “hotel unit” at the newly-christened McKinley Chalets. By the spring of 1980 three of these hotel units were open for tourist accommodations, and before the end of that year the construction of a gift shop, lobby, restaurant, and lounge had begun on the same property.¹⁴⁶ These improvements, in the coming years, would be followed by many others in the mile-long Windy Pass area. The developments above, plus many others which followed in later years, were collectively called “the canyon” during the 1980s; today the area is known as Glitter Gulch.¹⁴⁷

Changes in the commercial scene were also taking place at the west end of the park road. The primary commercial destination in that area, as it had been since the early 1950s, was Camp Denali.

During the Parks Highway road construction, material from the Nenana canyon was deposited on Chalon Harris's trade & manufacturing site to form a large pad visible in this photo, above Horseshoe Lake. The first lodging establishment in Nenana Canyon, the McKinley Chalets, was constructed on this pad. NPS Interp. Collection #5537, Denali National Park and Preserve

Begun as a rustic getaway, the camp reflected the environmental sentiments of its longtime owners, Celia Hunter and Ginny Hill Wood, and much of its early clientele was affiliated with conservation groups such as the Wilderness Society, the National Parks Association, and the Sierra Club. (Hunter, in fact, was a member of the Wilderness Society's governing board, and the Society had held its 1963 annual meeting at the camp.) By the mid-1970s the small, informal cabin camp had gained a loyal following under Hunter and Wood's long-term guidance.¹⁴⁸ But in 1975, the two women came to the realization "that we could not forever put out the physical energy that operating Camp Denali demands," and Hunter's role as the Alaska Conservation Society president and as a member of the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission forced her to spend an increasing number of summer days away from camp. Casting about for "someone special" to operate the camp in their stead, they agreed to sell the camp to Wallace Cole and his wife Jerri. The new owners were thoroughly familiar with the camp and its operations, having worked together on the camp staff, and they had both spent several summers working for the park concessioner. Wally, for example, had first worked at the hotel in 1959 and had spent six years there, including several years as its on-site manager, while Jerri also worked in a variety of positions, both at the hotel and as a tour bus driver. The Coles were concerned, year-round residents who lived just outside of the park's eastern boundary.¹⁴⁹

Less than a mile from Camp Denali, and just south of Moose Creek, a new hostelry called the North Face Lodge opened in the spring of 1973. Gary Crabb, who owned the Mt. McKinley Village development just south of the park entrance along the Anchorage-Fairbanks highway, bought a five-acre small-tract site from former park superintendent Grant Pearson, who had staked out the parcel in September 1955 and secured title to it in March 1963.¹⁵⁰ Crabb, the new owner, installed several ATCO trailer units on the property—sufficient for six or seven tourist rooms—and sold tour packages to park visitors; these packages included one-night stays at both of Crabb's lodges. The new tour arrangement rankled NPS officials (who wanted to keep any new traffic off the park road) as well as the park concessioner (who felt that the tours violated contract terms



that gave the company an exclusive commercial use of the road). Crabb, however, explained that he needed to operate over the road in order to access his business, and under that stipulation he obtained a new Special Use Permit that allowed him to run one daily bus each way between the McKinley Park railroad station and North Face Lodge. At first, Crabb used the permit only occasionally; in 1973, in fact, he brought tourists out to the lodge just twice. His use of the lodge, however, gradually increased, and he continued to run the operation out of his trailer units for more than a decade.¹⁵¹

Staff, Campgrounds, and Facilities

During the 1970s there were three superintendents at Mount McKinley National Park: Vernon Ruesch, Daniel Kuehn, and Frank Betts. Vernon Ruesch, as noted in Chapter 7, was the first park superintendent who had not also been in charge of other Alaska NPS units. Ruesch, a former ranger, served from July 1969 until June 1973, when he was transferred to Sitka National Historical Park. Ruesch was replaced by Sitka Superintendent Daniel Kuehn, a historian who had previously served at Salem Maritime National Historical Park (in Massachusetts), Manassas National Battlefield Park (in Virginia), and Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park (in Georgia and Tennessee). Kuehn served until September 1978, when he transferred to the Pacific Northwest Regional Office in Seattle; he was replaced by Frank Betts, a former ranger who had previously served at Rocky Mountain, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Grand Teton and Crater Lake national parks. (He had been an eight-year chief ranger at Grand Teton and a three-year Crater Lake superintendent.) Betts served in his job for just eighteen months when he retired from the agency. He, in turn, was replaced on an interim basis by Charles A. Budge, a ranger who had served on the ad hoc "ranger task force" that had been deployed the previous summer to protect the millions of acres of newly-designated national monuments. Budge served as the park

After more than twenty years of developing and operating Camp Denali, Celia Hunter and Ginny Wood (right) entrusted the wilderness lodge to Wallace and Jerryne Cole, pictured here with their two children, Land (left) and Jenna (right). Wallace A. Cole Collection, Courtesy of Camp Denali



and monument superintendent from early March until late August 1980, when Robert C. Cunningham assumed the superintendent's position (and Budge became the first superintendent at Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve). As noted in Chapter 9, Cunningham would fill the superintendent's shoes for most of the ensuing decade.¹⁵²

During the 1970s the park's budget dramatically increased; it tripled from \$543,000 in 1971, the year that the post-ANCSA planning process began, to \$1.6 million in 1979, the year following Carter's proclamations, and it increased another \$1 million (to \$2.61 million) during the next fiscal year (see Appendix B).¹⁵³ Given those consistent, ample budget increases, the park was able to considerably bolster its staff: to some extent with permanent staff, but to an even greater degree with seasonal workers. As noted in Chapter 7, the role of seasonals at the park had been decidedly modest during the 1950s and was still fairly minor through most of the 1960s, but by the mid-1970s the park was hiring 75 seasonals each year. Supt. Kuehn, moreover, recalls that these men and women were "the cream of the crop." The park would "get something like 3,000 applications" each year, and those that were hired "were wonderful . . . I mean, we had people with master's degrees."¹⁵⁴

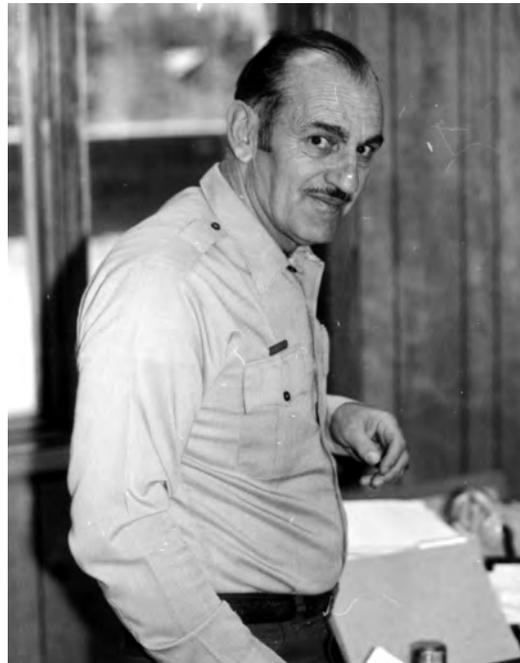
Because seasonals were becoming such a major part of the park's work force, the role of the park's chief ranger became increasingly impor-

tant, and perhaps because interpretive seasonals were a major component of the swelling seasonal work force, the park established a new, full-time position to oversee their activities (see Appendix C). The chief rangers during this period included Ivan Miller (1969-73) and Gary Brown (1973-81), while the interpretive program was managed by Henry Warren (on a half-time basis in 1973), William Garry (who, as park naturalist, directed interpretation activities in 1974 and part of the 1975 season), and William Truesdell (who served as Chief Naturalist from July 1975 through 1980).¹⁵⁵ Another new element in the overall staffing picture—and a very welcome one—was the role of volunteers. During the early 1970s, the number of volunteers was fairly modest; in 1972 there were two, for example, and the following year they numbered four. But by the summer of 1980, 25 so-called VIPs ("volunteers in parks" had contributed more than 1,000 hours of time to assist with living history—the park kennels were consistently popular with volunteers—interpretation, resource management, and mountaineering operations. The park also benefited from the occasional involvement of a Youth Conservation Corps work crew; in 1980, for example, YCC enrollees completed 30 work projects, including road and trail brushing, water line installation and the backcountry cabin rehabilitation.¹⁵⁶

One aspect that complicated staff matters during this period—particularly during the early to mid-1970s—was that the line between park employ-

ees and the NPS's Anchorage office was often fuzzy. As noted in Chapter 7, there had been an NPS central office in Anchorage since 1965, and ever since that time, employees working for the park—because it had the only major NPS presence in the state—were often “borrowed” by the central office to perform statewide planning functions. The confusion over the superintendent's role, begun in 1965, finally ended in the summer of 1969, but during the early to mid-1970s, that confusion was repeated at the interpretive, planning, and resource management levels. The demand for immediate information about Alaska resources—often imposed upon Alaska by the Washington office—sometimes resulted in a park employee begin temporarily deployed in Anchorage for a week or two, but in several instances, agency officials found it necessary to have employees relocate to Anchorage for the winter. It was an exciting, if nerve-wracking, period.¹⁵⁷

As noted above, the agency's decision to restrict traffic on the park road beginning in the summer of 1972 brought changes to several of the park's campgrounds. Prior to that year, park visitors could freely drive to any one of eight designated campgrounds: Riley Creek, Morino, Savage River, Sanctuary, Teklanika, Igloo, Toklat, and Wonder



Vernon Ruesch served as park superintendent from July 1969 until June 1973. DENA 27-109, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Lake. The NPS's first road management decision recommended that all campgrounds west of Savage River would be open only to tent campers. But Sen. Ted Stevens, who was firmly against the plan, spoke to NPS Director George Hartzog and was able to hammer out a revised plan that allowed motorists, after obtaining permits, to access specifically-allotted spaces in the various

campgrounds west of Savage River. Given that compromise, most of the park's campgrounds remained open to vehicle camping. Igloo Camp, however, was designated for tent camping only, and Toklat Campground—for 1972 at least—was closed to all campers because of heavy bear activity. As the decade wore on, further changes were made; Toklat Campground remained closed after the 1972 season, and by the mid-1970s the old Morino Campground—which had apparently been closed after the 1969 season—was reopened as a walk-in campground, limited to tent campers.¹⁵⁸ Throughout this period, tourists in vehicles were free to stay at Riley Creek and Savage River campgrounds, and those with a permit continued to use the Sanctuary, Teklanika, and Wonder Lake campgrounds. (Wonder Lake, though accessible by motorists, was open only to tent campers.) Because the demand for park campground space consistently exceeded the available supply, the five campgrounds west of the hotel area (Savage River, Sanctuary, Teklanika, Igloo, and Wonder Lake) were typically filled to capacity all summer long.¹⁵⁹

During this period, a new aspect of campground operation—fee collection—first became significant. Fees were first collected at the various park campgrounds beginning about 1970.¹⁶⁰ In 1971, park staff collected only \$5,038 in campground fees. The boom in visitation brought on by the new Anchorage-Fairbanks highway, however, resulted in a tripling of campground fees (to \$16,788) in 1972, and by 1980 fee revenues had tripled again, to \$49,800.¹⁶¹ These revenues, modest in comparison to the total park budget, did not remain at the park but instead were sent on to Washington. Inasmuch as there were no park entrance fees or shuttle-bus fees during this period, many visitors enjoyed the park without paying any fees to either the federal government or to the park concessioner.

During the 1970s, NPS crews or contractors constructed a number of new or expanded facilities and planned for others. Toward the western end of the park road, the 1972 establishment of the bus-based transportation system and the huge increase in overall park visitation placed enormous demands on the decade-old Eielson Visitor Center. By 1973, planning and design staffers were already at work on a redesign of the center; the project would provide additional restroom facilities, a new entryway, covered walkways, and a large, open picnic shelter that offered incomparable views (on clear days) of Mt. Eielson, the Thorofare River plain, Mt. McKinley and adjacent Alaska Range peaks. Bids were let in April 1974 and project construction began later that year. The work was completed in 1976, and a related exhibit package was installed the same

Superintendent Dan Kuehn's staff turned out for this group photo on October 30, 1975, at -8 degrees F. Back row, left to right: Joe Donchak, Bill Garry, Bruce Wadlington, Dan Kuehn, Bill Nancarrow, and Steve Buskirk. Front row, left to right: Bill Truesdell, Rusty Stevens, June McLane, Sandra Kogel, Cheryl Ann Cannon, Billy Walker, Jean Rogers, Jim Rogers, Gary Brown, and Tom Adams. DENA 27-112, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



year.¹⁶² No dedication ceremony was held for the overall expansion project; in July 1978, however, National Park Foundation and NPS officials gathered at the spot and dedicated the main interpretation room in honor of the late Joe Hankins, a self-appointed park guide and Igloo Campground host who loved to photograph the park sheep and entertain tour-bus passengers during the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s. A plaque summarizing key points about Joe's life and his warm personal qualities was displayed at Eielson Visitor Center for many years thereafter.¹⁶³

At the eastern end of the park road, several new facilities were built, including a temporary entrance-station replacement, an auto shop, and a sewage lagoon. As noted in Chapter 7, park staff in 1959 had erected a prefabricated entrance station just north of the McKinley Park Station airstrip, and in 1962 an adjacent exhibit building had been added. But by 1967 the exhibit building had been removed. Plans called for the entrance station to be replaced by a kiosk in the middle of the new park entrance road, but this kiosk was never built.¹⁶⁴ Instead, the entrance station remained until the early 1970s. Then, in the late summer of 1972, it was replaced by a new visitor orientation center—a 20' x 50' trailer popularly called the Riley Creek Information Center—at the Riley Creek Campground entrance. It was here that many park visitors gathered to board

the park shuttle buses.¹⁶⁵ The completion of the Anchorage-Fairbanks highway meant that the park's entrance station was now on a side road. In order to overcome this obstacle, the park's Interim DCP recommended that the Riley Creek Information Center be relocated to the new road alignment. But the planned move never took place, and the double-wide trailer at the campground entrance continued to serve as the park's entrance station until, many years later, a larger and more appropriate facility was built.¹⁶⁶

For a full 50 years after Harry Karstens moved the park headquarters away from its former site at the Riley Creek-Hines Creek confluence, virtually all east-end work-related activities had been centered at the site just west of Rock Creek. But since the mid-1960s there had been a dramatic growth in visitation, staff, and budgets (see Appendix B). One of the most visible areas of growth was in the park's vehicle fleet; it had been tiny through the 1950s, but



Throughout the 1970s, campers with a campground permit could drive their private vehicles to the Wonder Lake Campground. Buskirk Photo, DENA R&RP files, Denali National Park and Preserve

This 1979 view of Eielson Visitor Center shows its mid-1970s expansion, including restrooms and a viewing deck. DENA R&RP files, Denali National Park and Preserve



the assumption of road maintenance in 1960 and a proliferation of new duties had resulted in many new vehicles. Superintendent Kuehn, who was trained as a historian, recognized that the primary business buildings in the headquarters area formed a cohesive historical unit. New buildings, as a result, would be a visible intrusion on the prevailing rustic architecture. Given those realities, Kuehn moved to have a new auto shop constructed away from the headquarters area. The shop was located on the hill slope just above the old CCC camp. Park maintenance staff began using the facility in 1975, and the old garage was soon converted to other uses. Since that time, vehicle maintenance and storage functions have remained at “C-Camp,” and as noted in Chapter 10, additional maintenance functions moved to the site in the mid-1990s.

The need for a new, improved sewage lagoon was also apparent. During the 1950s, a septic tank and cesspool had been located just north of the park’s garbage dump, which was just east of the McKinley Park airstrip.¹⁶⁷ But the plans for the new Riley Creek Campground, laid out in late 1966, included provisions for the construction of a new sewage lagoon, and a site was chosen just north and west of the future intersection of the park road and the Anchorage-Fairbanks highway. Then, in the spring of 1970, NPS design personnel—perhaps recognizing that the existing sewage lagoon east of the airstrip needed to be improved—sketched out plans to connect the hotel’s sewage system to an enlarged Riley Creek Campground sewage lagoon.¹⁶⁸ Most of this system, built on contract, was constructed in 1974; it became operational the following year.¹⁶⁹

Joe Hankins spent more than 20 summers as a self-appointed naturalist. Based at Igloo Campground, he often rode along on tour buses, enhancing visitors’ experiences with his information and stories of the park. Joe enjoyed observing Dall sheep and was a keen wildlife photographer. DENA 28-102, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

Changes were also made to the dump itself during this period. In 1964, as noted in Chapter 6, the dump had been relocated to the east side of the Denali Highway (today’s Parks Highway), two miles south of Riley Creek. It began as an open dump, but in the late 1970s—possibly as late as 1981—the pit was cleaned up and replaced by a large holding container. Ever since that time, park garbage has been deposited here, but only temporarily until hauled off to the Healy landfill.¹⁷⁰

Action also took place during this period to



eliminate the park's traditional dependence on locally-generated power and, instead, tie into a larger electrical grid. As early as January 1972, NPS Regional Director John Rutter had announced that the park, in September, planned to switch over to power that would be delivered by Golden Valley Electric Association (GVEA) of Fairbanks.¹⁷¹ Such an announcement, however, proved premature, and in late 1974 it was announced that GVEA, at NPS's request, was "developing plans to extend electric service from Healy to Mount McKinley Village and the park headquarters. A further extension to serve the village of Cantwell also appears feasible."¹⁷² In early 1976, personnel in the agency's regional office prepared a draft environmental statement (DES) for a proposed electric distribution line that would extend from Healy Roadhouse south to the park. That document was completed and distributed that May.¹⁷³ Soon afterward, a meeting held on the subject at McKinley Park was considerably enlivened when Charlie Ott, a longtime resident and occasional park employee, suggested a right-of-way for the proposed line—above the railroad tracks as it wound through the Nenana River Canyon—that was widely agreed to be superior to any of the alternatives that had been laid out in the draft document.¹⁷⁴ The final ES on the proposed line was completed in December 1976, and the following year negotiations began with GVEA to bring power to the park. Construction of the line was begun in 1980 and completed in 1981. The line extended south only to the depot; it did not continue on to Cantwell or other points south.¹⁷⁵

As suggested above, a number of additional facilities were planned during this period as part of the park's Interim Development Concept Plan for the headquarters and hotel areas, which was formulated in 1975 and 1976. But much of what the plan recommended was not built, at least in the short term.

One of the major challenges for the park's maintenance personnel was the annual spring road opening. During the 1960s, as noted in Chapter 7, crews had relied on a bulldozer and Caterpillar tractor to clear the snow off the park road. As late as 1972, however, the park admitted that it had a "lack of proper snow removal equipment," and ice buildup at Mile 4 and elsewhere remained a problem. The following winter William Broadaway, head of the park's Roads and Trails crew, tried a new strategy: laying thousands of feet of Primacord (a long tube filled with Pentaerythritol Tetranitrate, also known as Penthrite) that blasted the ice away. This method was used the following year as well; in 1975, however, ice buildup was not a major problem, and

Jim Rogers, Doug's successor, concluded that Primacord's effectiveness was limited. By 1977 park officials wrote that "Primacord is no longer used for ice removal. Ice is cut from [the] road surface during the winter, and culverts are kept open using a barrel heater. This system seems to work. It is much easier on the equipment. . .". This new method was continued for the remainder of the decade.¹⁷⁶

A Newly-Expanded Park and Preserve

In October 1974, as noted above, the Alaska Planning Group issued its final environmental statement for the proposed Mount McKinley park additions; that document recommended that 3,210,000 acres be added to the park, which was a slight (30,000-acre) increase over what had been recommended in the Draft Environmental Statement and Master Plan. The way was now clear to have Congress consider the Alaska lands issue. But officials in Gerald Ford's administration showed no inclination to work for passage of an appropriate bill. In the face of their apathy, the Mount McKinley and other park proposals that Interior Secretary Rogers Morton had put forth were shelved for the time being.¹⁷⁷ Federal and state legislators, during this period, were also fairly quiet, although not entirely so. In May 1975, for example, Sen. Henry "Scoop" Jackson (D-Wash), who chaired the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, and Paul Fannin (R-Ariz.) introduced an Alaska-wide lands bill, and four months later, Rep. Lester Wolff (D-N.Y.) introduced a House bill that, among its other provisions, would have expanded the boundaries for both Mount McKinley National Park and Katmai National Monument. Both bills went nowhere.¹⁷⁸ Meanwhile, in the Alaska legislature, Rep. Leslie "Red" Swanson of Nenana drafted a bill calling for a Kantishna State Recreation Area that would have covered several hundred thousand acres north of Wonder Lake and allowed the various Kantishna-area mine owners to continue their exploration and extraction activities. This bill quickly passed the House Resources Committee. Legislators soon learned, however, that virtually all of the land within the proposed recreation area was owned by the federal government. Perhaps as a result, no further action took place on Swanson's bill.¹⁷⁹

The ennui that had characterized Congressional activity related to Alaska land issues came to an abrupt halt in November 1976, when Jimmy Carter defeated Gerald Ford in the presidential election. Carter, during the campaign, had pledged to include conservationists in his administration and, more specifically, had promised to support an Alaska lands bill; one of the criteria for which he chose his Interior Secretary, in fact,

During the spring road opening process, park road crews had to steam culverts to remove the ice buildup in them and keep drainage channels open so that the melting snows could be kept away from the road surface. This process continues today. DENA 1-45.7, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



was a pledge to fight for a strong Alaska lands bill. In addition, conservationists were buoyed to learn that Rep. Morris Udall had been chosen as the new Interior and Insular Affairs Committee chair; Udall, in turn, picked Rep. John Seiberling to chair the newly-organized Subcommittee on General Oversight and Alaska Lands.¹⁸⁰ Udall, working with the conservation community, hurriedly concocted an initial cut of an Alaska lands bill; that bill, H.R. 39, was submitted on the first day of the 95th Congress in January 1977. Among the bill's provisions, it called for a 4.7-million acre addition to Mount McKinley National Park. The bill further called for the entire addition, plus 1.9 million acres in the existing park, to become "instant wilderness" in the National Wilderness Preservation System; it was thus a marked departure from previous Interior Department efforts, which called for a study period prior to wilderness being designated.¹⁸¹

Other legislators, however, did not share Udall's view, and during the next several months a variety of other bills offered contrasting visions for how the "d-2" lands should be treated. Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska), for instance, introduced a "consensus bill" (S. 1787) on June 30 that proposed a 1,130,000-acre McKinley park addition, plus an additional 1,960,000 acres of NPS-managed federal cooperative lands.¹⁸² The proposals of former Secretary Morton, which called for a 3,210,000-acre park expansion, were submitted by Sen. Henry Jackson, (D-Wash., as S. 499) and Rep. John M. Murphy (D-N.Y., as H.R. 6564) in January and April 1977, respectively. And the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission still had its three-year-old proposal

for a 3,050,000-acre park expansion, plus approximately 400,000 acres of federally-controlled "Alaska National Lands" in the Cathedral Spires area. None of these alternative measures recommended "instant wilderness" as had been included in the Udall bill; the Stevens bill and the Commission proposal were silent on the matter, and the Jackson-Murphy bills—similar to Secretary Morton's 1973 recommendations—called for wilderness study, to be undertaken within three years of the bill's passage. Other Alaska land bills submitted to Congress that year were either more narrowly conceived than those above or had a slim chance of passage.¹⁸³

During the spring and summer of 1977, each of the major land-management bureaus had been able to make their views known to Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus, and Reps. Udall and Seiberling had conducted an extensive series of public hearings in a wide variety of Alaska settings as well as in selected "Lower 48" locations.¹⁸⁴ That September, Andrus attended a Congressional hearing and presented recommendations that, among other measures, called for the renaming of Mount McKinley to Denali National Park and a 4,089,000-acre park expansion. He also recommended a total of 5,499,000 acres of park wilderness: 1,848,000 acres in the existing park and 3,651,000 acres in the proposed park.¹⁸⁵ On into the fall, Interior Committee members spent extensive time working on modifications to Udall's bill; on October 12, for example, it produced Committee Print No. 1, and on October 28, Committee Print No. 2 was released. Both prints recommended the establishment of a 3,890,000-acre national park expansion and

approximately 5.5 million acres of wilderness.¹⁸⁶ The following January, two weeks of mark-up sessions began in John Seiberling's Subcommittee on General Oversight and Alaska Lands, and it was not until February 7 that the marked-up bill was forwarded on to the full committee. During the mark-up sessions, Rep. Lloyd Meeds (D-Wash.) had tried (and failed) to substitute a "fifth system," multiple-use proposal, but the bill that emerged in the full Interior Committee on February 15 provided more modest protections: 2,650,000 of expanded park, a 1.1-million-acre Denali National Preserve, and a continuation of the previously-recommended 5.5 million acres of wilderness. (The newly-designated preserve, located at the margins of the park expansion proposal, would sanction sport hunting as well as subsistence hunting.)¹⁸⁷ When the Interior Committee concluded its work on March 21, it recommended a somewhat strengthened Denali proposal: it called for a 3,350,000 Denali National Park, a 400,000-acre Denali National Preserve, and a 5,410,000-acre wilderness. The bill then went on to the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, where it was subject to further revisions, and on May 17, debate about the bill began in the full House. During the three-day debate, Rep. Meeds and Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska) tried to reduce the total acreage allotted to the four conservation systems. Those efforts, failed, however, and on May 19, the House passed H.R. 39, with Denali-related acreage identical to what the Interior Committee had approved on March 21: 3,350,000 acres of new park, 400,000 acres of preserve, and 5,410,000 acres of wilderness.¹⁸⁸

Action then moved to the Senate, which received H.R. 39 on June 8, and on June 22 the Energy and Natural Resources Committee began debating the issue. Traditionally, the Senate has been very reluctant to pass any bill affecting a state if both senators were opposed to it. Senators Ted Stevens and Mike Gravel had publicly announced their opposition to H.R. 39. The Senate therefore opted not to use H.R. 39 as its mark-up vehicle. By this time; both Stevens and Gravel had submitted their own bills pertaining to the d-2 issue. S. 1787, introduced by Ted Stevens on June 30, 1977 (as noted above), had called for a 1,130,000-acre park expansion along with 1,960,000 acres in federal cooperative lands, while Mike Gravel's S. 2944, introduced on April 19, 1978, had called for only a 2,620,000-acre expansion to Denali National Park. Stevens's bill was silent on the wilderness question, while Gravel's bill called for the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission to provide a wilderness report within two years of passage.¹⁸⁹ But Sen. Henry "Scoop" Jackson, the committee's chairman, recognized that eight other bills had been submitted to ad-

managed by the National Park Service. One of these proclamations called for the establishment of a 3,890,000-acre¹⁹² Denali National Monument (see Map 8). For the foreseeable future, therefore, the NPS would be managing Mount McKinley National Park, as it had for more than seventy years, but it would also be caring for a much larger Denali National Monument which now surrounded the existing park to the north, west, and south (see Appendix A).¹⁹³

Many Alaskans denounced President Carter's action, some more vociferously than others. In Fairbanks, some of the more militant protesters burned Carter in effigy, and in Eagle, the city council passed a resolution "to offer no aid or assistance to the National Park Service or its employees while your current regulations are in effect." The broadest, best-publicized protest was orchestrated by the Real Alaska Coalition, a hastily-organized, statewide assemblage of sportsmen's and recreation groups. Recognizing that Denali was the most accessible of the newly-established monuments and that monument land was located just outside Cantwell, the Coalition made plans to hold a mass rally there over the weekend of January 13-14, 1979. Just days before that weekend, Coalition organizers stated that they expected "several thousand persons" to attend the "mass trespass" at the new monument, where they "planned several activities that violate federal regulations governing use of Alaska's national monuments."¹⁹⁴ (On December 26, just two weeks earlier, the federal government had issued new regulations that were specifically applicable to the new monuments, although most of these rules provided for more "relaxed subsistence and access provisions" than would otherwise be allowed on National Park Service lands.¹⁹⁵) In response to the planned actions, the NPS—hoping for the best but fearing the worst—organized a large (if low-key) operation involving 13 rangers (most from Oregon and Washington) and 13 other personnel (mostly from Mount McKinley or other Alaska parks).¹⁹⁶ Park superintendent Frank Betts met with the protestors in Cantwell on the evening before the protest began. The leaders of the protest announced that they planned to camp within the monument, start fires, and hold dog races, snowmachining, hunting, archery contests, and pistol shoots. Betts, in turn, told them that NPS rangers "were not gonna arrest anybody . . . we're not gonna make a fuss over this," and other NPS officials stated that most of the planned activities were not illegal.¹⁹⁷

Protesters assembled, as promised, at Cantwell on Saturday, January 13. But the crowd at the "Great Denali Trespass" was smaller than expected; estimates ranged from "less than 1,000"

dress d-2 issues; Jackson, in fact, had introduced two of them (S. 499 and S. 500).¹⁹⁰ To address the diversity of opinion on the subject, the committee on June 28 voted to consolidate the various Senate bills into a single bill; that bill, rather than the House-passed version, was subject to a wearying series of 42 mark-up sessions. The bill that finally emerged from the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on October 5, 1978 called for Mount McKinley National Park to be expanded by 2,587,000 acres and for the establishment of a 1,169,000-acre Mount McKinley National Preserve. The bill offered no “instant wilderness;” instead, new parklands would be studied for their wilderness potential within four years of passage. This bill, more so than its House counterpart, was favored by the State of Alaska, sport-hunting groups and development advocates. With just eight days left in the 96th Congress, House and Senate leaders tried to bridge the gap between the two bills, but the two bodies were unable to hammer out a mutually-acceptable bill, and Congress adjourned on October 15 without passing an Alaska lands package before its self-imposed December 18 deadline.¹⁹¹



Superintendent Dan Kuehn, left, meets with members of Rep. John Seiberling's subcommittee at the McKinley Park airstrip in this late 1970s photo. Jim Shives photo, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

The Carter administration, however, was unwilling to abandon the tremendous efforts that Congress and the Executive Branch had made over the previous seven years. Interior Department officials, recognizing that Congress might not be able to resolve the matter, had spent much of the summer analyzing what impacts the expiration of the 17(d)(2) provision would have on the affected lands, and also on how interim protection might be obtained for the land in case Congress was unable to act. What emerged from that analysis was a massive supplement to the 28 final environmental statements that had been prepared back in 1974. That analysis noted that one way of protecting the lands in question would be via presidential proclamations establishing national monuments. President Carter, on December 1, responded to the FES supplement by proclaiming the establishment of seventeen national monuments which protected a total of some 56,000,000 acres. Of these monuments, thirteen were to be

to “more than 2,000” people.¹⁹⁸ And although several NPS rangers mingled among the crowd, it was (in the words of one NPS employee) “simply a park visitors operation” emphasizing information distribution, first aid, and search and rescue aid. “Law enforcement,” he noted, “is way down on our list,” because NPS officials were mainly concerned “with the safety and enjoyment of the public.”¹⁹⁹ “About one hundred” people “apparently illegally camped in the new monument, huddled around dozens of bonfires built to ward off the chill temperatures.” But, as expected, no one was arrested, and the only unfortunate incident was the death of a 23-year-old snowmobiler (Robert Blessing) when he collided with a wing strut of a taxiing airplane. Protesters left the area on Sunday. As they left, their leaders—Clark Engle and Ken Fanning among them—called the event “successful,” and both NPS officials and local residents were generally pleased at how the event was conducted.²⁰⁰

No sooner had the “Great Denali Trespass” run its course than Congress was hard at work on a renewed attempt to pass Alaska lands legislation. Rep. Udall, who had helped steer H.R. 39

Attendees of the “Great Denali Trespass” arrived in Cantwell by cars which lined the main road into Cantwell, January 13, 1979. DENA 5669, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

through the House in 1977 and 1978, introduced a new version of H.R. 39 on January 15, 1979, at the beginning of the 96th Congress. Udall’s bill, which was consistent with President Carter’s recent action, called for a 3,890,000-acre national park boundary expansion, along with a 5,510,000-acre wilderness. Unlike the bill that had passed the previous May, no mention was made of a Denali National Preserve.²⁰¹ On February 26, the House Interior Committee began its mark-up.

Here, however, Udall and other conservation-minded Congressmen ran into a wall of opposition, and in a key vote, the Committee approved a substitute bill offered by Rep. Jerry Huckaby (D-La.). A measure similar to Huckaby’s, offered by Reps. John B. Breaux (D-La.) and John Dingell (D.-Mich.), was approved in the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee. One of these bills called for the same level of Denali expansion as had the Senate Committee bill in October 1978: in other words, an additional 2,587,000 acres in Denali National Park along with a new 1,169,000-acre Denali National Preserve, and a four-year wilderness study effort. The other bill, however, called for a 3,350,000-acre park, a 400,000-acre preserve, and a 5,410,000-acre wilderness, which was consistent with the bill that the full House had passed in May 1978.²⁰² Conservationists, hoping to recoup their losses in the full House, cobbled together a new substitute bill, which was jointly sponsored by Udall and Rep. John Anderson (R-Ill.). That bill, initially called H.R. 3636, called for an expansion of Denali National Park by 3,410,000 acres, a new 480,000-acre Denali National Preserve, and a 2.8-million-acre wilderness. The House discussed the Alaska lands issue beginning on May 15, and a day later, the Udall-Anderson bill—now renumbered as H.R. 39—prevailed in a key vote against a weaker substitute. Soon afterward, the same bill passed the full House on a 360-65 vote.²⁰³

The Senate, however, was no more likely to go along with the House than it had the year before, and the prevailing Senate vehicle for Alaska lands legislation when the 96th Congress opened was S. 9, sponsored by Sen. Jackson, which was largely if not identically the same bill that had emerged from Jackson’s Energy and Natural Resources Committee the previous October. That bill had called for a 2,587,000-acre expansion of Denali National Park plus a 1,169,000-acre Denali National Preserve. The new bill, however, abandoned its wilderness-study language and substi-



futility of further attempts to compromise, and on November 12 they voted to accept the Senate bill. President Carter signed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) on December 2, 1980.²⁰⁶

Among its many provisions, ANILCA called for a name change of the park (from Mount McKinley to Denali), a 2,547,147-acre park expansion, the establishment of a new 1,334,118-acre Denali National Preserve, and a 1,900,000-acre wilderness, all of which was within the boundaries of the former Mount McKinley National Park (see Map 8 and Appendix A). Inasmuch as Section 1322(a) of ANILCA rescinded the December 1, 1978 proclamations that established Denali and the other national monuments, one effect of ANILCA’s passage was to shrink the area managed by the local park superintendent from approximately 6,372,000 acres to 6,075,000 acres – a net loss of almost 300,000 acres. Most of this acreage was transferred from NPS jurisdiction back to the Bureau of Land Management, which had controlled this land prior to President Carter’s December 1978 proclamation. Most of the acreage loss was in three major parcels: the “wolf townships” west of Healy, a three-township block along the lower Toklat and Sushana rivers, and an irregularly-shaped area southwest of Cantwell between Lookout Mountain and the lower reaches of Eldridge Glacier.²⁰⁷

International Recognition: Mixed Results

During the process that brought about the transformation that changed a two-million-acre Mount McKinley National Park to a six-million-acre Denali National Park and Preserve, two major movements began to recognize some of the world’s most important natural and cultural properties. Recognizing the superlative scenic and wildlife qualities offered at the park, U.S. representatives to the United Nations began to work toward obtaining international recognition for the park.

Protesters rallied with snowmachines, dog teams, and campfires. DENA 5680, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



tuted a 1.9 million acre “instant wilderness.”²⁰⁴

As in 1978, the Senate chose not to adopt the House-passed H.R. 39 as its mark-up vehicle; instead, it delayed work on the Alaska lands issue until October 9 and then began revising S. 9. Three weeks later, the committee reported out a bill similar to the one that it had agreed to the previous October; this bill included the same Denali acreage figures as in its January 1979 incarnation. Conservationists, hoping to improve the bill when it came to the full Senate, worked with senators Paul Tsongas (D-Mass.) and William Roth (R-Del.) to carve out a substitute bill. The Senate did not take up the Alaska lands issue until mid-July 1980. Initial Senate votes showed a strong tendency to support a more conservation-oriented stance. Sen. Stevens, however, refused to capitulate; instead, he prevailed upon the Senate leadership to pull S. 9 from the floor, and instead he set up a series of closed-door meetings with a small coterie of senators. What emerged from those meetings was Amendment No. 1961, which was a rough compromise between S. 9 and the House-passed H.R. 39. That amendment passed the Senate, 78-14, on August 19.²⁰⁵

Thereafter, the House and Senate were at loggerheads. Leading senators—both committee chairman “Scoop” Jackson and Alaska’s Ted Stevens—vowed that they would accept no changes to the Senate bill. But Reps. Udall, Seiberling, Philip Burton (D-Calif.) and others kept working toward a compromise bill. The November election, however, swept Ronald Reagan—an avowed opponent of a strong Alaska lands bill—into the presidency, and gave the Republican party control over the U.S. Senate. Given those developments, House members recognized the

The first such move was made in September 1974, when a U.S. State Department official moved to designate Mount McKinley National Park and 19 other areas in the country as “biosphere reserves.”²⁰⁸ According to the U.N.’s Man and the Biosphere program, biosphere reserves are “areas of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems promoting solutions to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with its sustainable use.” The idea was first promoted at the UNESCO’s Biosphere Conference, held in Paris in September 1968, where delegates hoped to establish “areas representing the main ecosystems of the planet in which genetic resources would be protected, and where research on ecosystems as well as monitoring and training work could be carried out. To carry out the goals of that conference, UNESCO established the Man and the Biosphere Program in 1970. The program’s early proponents stressed that its primary emphasis was essentially scientific, and that all areas designated as biosphere reserves would “remain under the sovereign jurisdiction of the states where they were located.” More specific international planning for these reserves took place at 1973 and 1974 conferences in Morges, Switzerland, and Paris.²⁰⁹

The action taken in September 1974, as it turned out, was not a final designation of Mount McKinley’s eligibility. Instead, the twenty areas chosen that month were only the U.S. candidates. They were then forwarded to UNESCO, and it was not until 1976 that these areas were duly selected as the world’s first international biosphere reserves. The U.N. designated 53 such reserves that year. Twenty-three of these were located in the United

New park signs were necessary after the 1980 name change from Mount McKinley National Park to Denali National Park and Preserve. DENA R&RP files, Denali National Park and Preserve



States, and three were located in Alaska: Denali, the Aleutian Islands, and Noatak. Their current extent of these three reserves is 6,032,440 acres, 2,720,430 acres, and 7,500,000 acres, respectively. (Denali was chosen, among other attributes, because it was considered to be an excellent representative of the “temperate needle-leaf forest” ecosystem.) In the years since those initial selections, one other Alaska area has become a biosphere reserve: Glacier Bay-Admiralty Island (3,743,600 acres), selected in 1986.²¹⁰

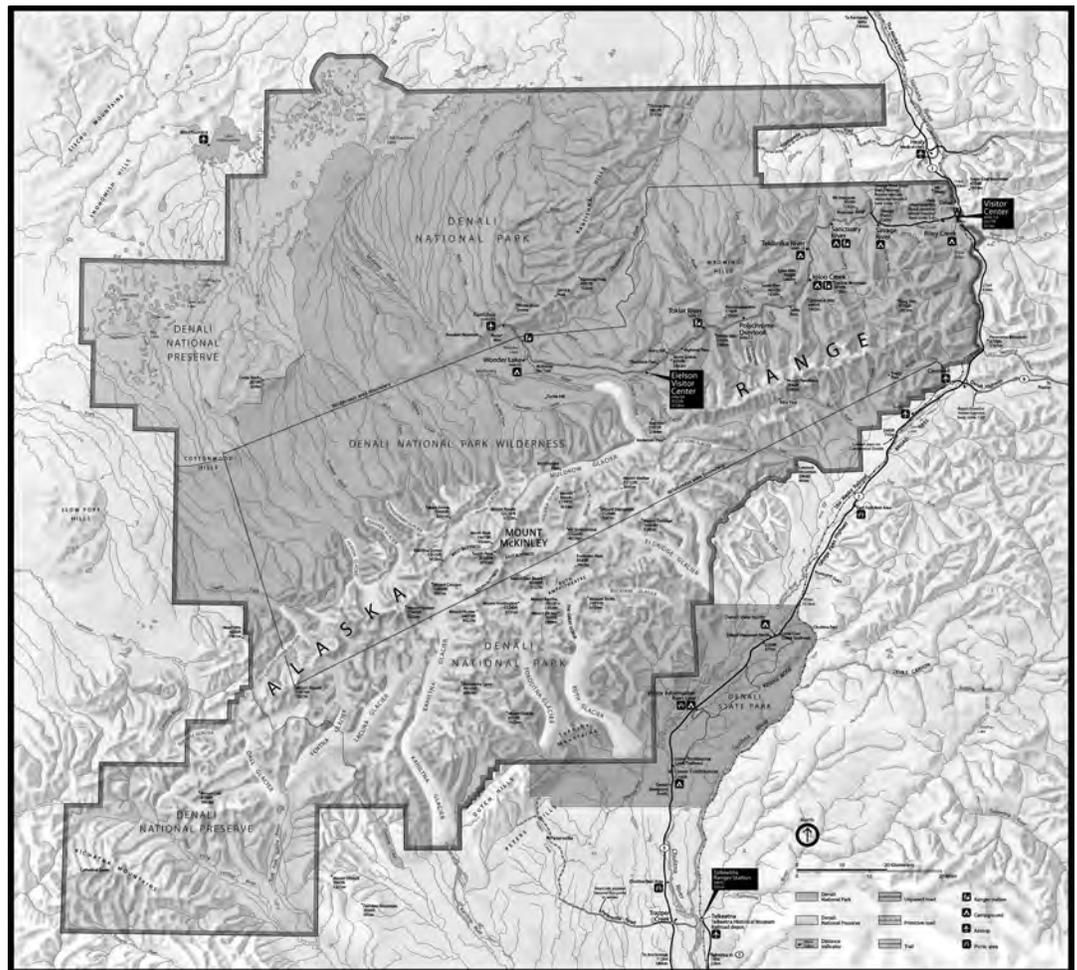
Not long after the park became a biosphere reserve, the park was being considered for a new international designation: that of a World Heritage Site. As early as the late 1950s, UNESCO had been involved with campaigns to save world-famous cultural heritage sites, and as a logical extension of that concern, UNESCO and ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites) pooled their efforts and organized the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, held in Paris between mid-October and mid-November 1972. That convention brought forth the need to establish “an effective system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, organized on a permanent basis and in accordance with modern scientific methods.” That convention named ICOMOS and two other international bodies to a World Heritage Committee, and out of that committee emerged the World Heritage Site idea. The first World Heritage Sites were selected in 1978; among the initial choices were two U.S. national parks: Mesa Verde and Yellowstone.²¹¹

the following five to ten years.” But government officials have made no moves since the early 1980s to place either Denali or any other Alaska NPS areas on the World Heritage List, and in recent years the NPS has been working to trim the size of the U.S.’s Tentative List to more accurately reflect properties that have a broad basis of support.²¹³

Tokositna Development Planning and the “Dome City” Concept

As noted above, various proposals to develop major tourist facilities south of the Alaska Range had surfaced during 1972 and 1973. State of Alaska officials favored a tourist complex at Byers Lake, U.S. Senator Mike Gravel floated the idea of a year-round resort called “Mt. McKinley City” at a yet-to-be-decided location, and Bradford Washburn touted a resort beside Tokositna Glacier, less than 25 miles south of Mt. McKinley. As late as early 1975, Division of Parks officials still backed development at Byers Lake. They also, however, asked the legislature to approve a 66-square-mile extension to Denali State Park, the primary purpose of which was to include a potential tourist development site just west of the Tokositna River. The legislature passed, and Governor Hammond signed, a bill to expand the park in mid-1976. In February 1976—several months before the park expansion bill passed—the state signed a 55-year contract with an Anchorage firm to construct tourist facilities in the state park. That firm, however, was unable to raise the needed \$6 million to develop those facilities, and in March 1977 Russell Cahill, the Division of Parks director, cancelled the firm’s contract.²¹⁴

The land designations that resulted from the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act are shown on this map. NPS file, Denali National Park and Preserve



Each year after 1978 new sites were added to the World Heritage List, and in 1979 a huge binational site was added to the list: Kluane/Wrangell-St. Elias/Glacier Bay/Tatshenshini-Atkas, which encompassed areas in British Columbia (Canada), Yukon Territory (Canada), and Alaska. The following year, the U.S. Interior Department selected 14 additional properties for potential nomination to that list. Among those properties were two Alaska NPS units: Mount McKinley and Katmai national parks. And a year later, the Interior Department moved to place Denali and seven other Alaska parks and refuges on the World Heritage list. Plans called for a public comment period and for the government to “submit its final inventory of potential World Heritage nominations to the World Heritage Committee later this year.”²¹² Although the World Heritage Convention clearly stated that national governments remained in sovereign control of nominated sites, strong objections were apparently raised to these nominations, and as a result, none of these eight areas has been nominated to the World Heritage List. Thus the U.S.’s reserve list (officially known as the Indicative Inventory of Potential Future U.S. World Heritage Nominations), in 1982, was renamed the U.S. World Heritage Tentative List. The Tentative List was intended to list properties that U.S. officials proposed to nominate “during

That November, Senator Gravel reignited interest in southside development when he proposed a domed “Denali City” development, to be located on state park land near the foot of Tokositna Glacier (see Map 9). To a wide-eyed Anchorage Chamber of Commerce audience, Gravel noted that his “recreation city” idea, which would have lodging and facilities for 5,000 to 10,000 people, sounded “far-fetched and visionary,” but he predicted that it would be “one of the physical wonders of the world” and “of benefit to Alaska.” The city would offer “shops, restaurants . . . skating rinks, swimming pools, and even a golf course,” while “a major ski area” would be located “on the slopes behind the complex” along with a tramway leading to an observation station. To ease access to the site from Anchorage, he proposed a \$100 million mag-lev (magnetic levitation) system that could take visitors there in 30 to 40 minutes. The transportation system, he proposed, would be funded by the federal government; the state would finance the dome, and private enterprise would fund the development of the city itself. Power for the city would come from the Watana Dam (part of the Susitna hydroelectric project), which he noted “could be on stream by 1986.” Just a day after his speech, he brought various architects and both state and national parks officials to the proposed develop-



Mount McKinley National Park gained fame as a wildlife preserve, and while most visitors sought out the larger mammal species, many have also been pleased by their encounters with parka squirrels (shown here) and other small animal species. Murie Photo, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

ment site and later held a press conference to further explain his plan. Gravel also stated his intent to submit Congressional legislation in early 1978 for a \$500,000 study that would provide additional details about the proposed development.²¹⁵

One of those who accompanied Gravel to the Tokositna development site was freshman state senator Patrick Rodey (D-Anchorage), who stated that he planned to introduce legislation in 1978 that would provide state funding for initial surveys. He admitted, however, that his own visions for the site were “a little more modest” and didn’t include an artificial dome cover.²¹⁶ A month later, Rodey elaborated on his concept; he hoped to see a \$25.7 million 150-bed lodge and visitor center complex, complete with downhill skiing and tramways, much as Brad Washburn had envisioned. The hotel, he noted, could be built with or without state financing; the entire project, he felt, was non-controversial and non-partisan, and because it was “ecologically sound,” it “has the support of the environmental

community.” His plan admittedly bore “little relationship” to Gravel’s domed city; instead, it came about because he “decided to realistically take a conservative look and provide a facility to take care of the tourists.”²¹⁷

On January 13, 1978, Senator Rodey, as expected, introduced two bills and a resolution related to the Tokositna development. SB 408 called for an \$85,000 appropriation to the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities for planning and engineering studies on the Petersville Road; SB 409 asked for \$260,000 for the Department of Natural Resources to do a feasibility study for the proposed lodge-visitor center project; and SCR 69 asked the legislature to approve the project and requested Governor Hammond to discuss the project with NPS officials. Rodey’s three legislative vehicles cleared the State Affairs and Finance committees without opposition, and on March 21 the full Senate passed them all with unanimous 17-0 votes.²¹⁸

They then moved on to the House. HB 408 proved non-controversial; it passed the House with no dissenting votes and was signed by Governor Hammond on June 3. HB 409, however, was quickly modified to increase the budget amount from \$260,000 to \$360,000. On June 3, the full House debated three floor amendments, and one of those amendments—which shuttled project funds from Natural Resources to Transportation and Public Facilities—passed on a narrow 17-16 vote. The full House then passed the bill, 30-1. House and Senate conferees kept the \$360,000 price tag, but demanded that the funds be channeled through the Department of Natural Resources. The final bill then sailed through both the House and Senate. On July 13 Governor Hammond signed the measure; citing “a consolidation of preliminary engineering studies,” however, he reduced the allotted funding from \$360,000 to \$310,000. Rodey’s resolution (SCR 69) also encountered rough going; it passed the House State Affairs Committee on May 17, but it was never taken up by the House Rules Committee. But Hammond, by this time, was already fulfilling at least part of the resolution’s intent by engaging in project talks with NPS officials.²¹⁹

In the midst of these legislative efforts, Senator Gravel—whose plans for southside development were more grandiose than Rodey’s but not really in conflict with them—appeared before the Alaska legislature and pitched his admittedly “very Buck Rogerish” notions for what one newspaper termed a “ski resort-golf course-world trade center.” By this time, Gravel’s financing costs were substantially higher than before; the cost of the follow-up study had ballooned from \$500,000 to \$2 million, the mag-lev system now cost \$500 million rather than \$100 million, and the cost of the city itself had gone from being merely “expensive” to an estimated \$1 billion. After hearing his proposal, legislators dismissed his “Teflon tent” idea as being either “unbelievable” or “laughable,” and it quickly became the butt of jokes. Gravel, however, said that he would include federal financing for both the mag-lev system and the follow-up study in the “d-2” bill he planned to introduce in the U.S. Senate in April.²²⁰ As predicted, Gravel introduced a d-2 bill (S. 2944) on April 19, and Sec. 1201 of that bill called for “the eventual development of a tightly controlled recreational city under the shadow of Mount McKinley” which would be “a visitor attraction of world scale.” The bill, however, made little headway; it was briefly debated on the Senate floor but never got beyond the committee stage.²²¹

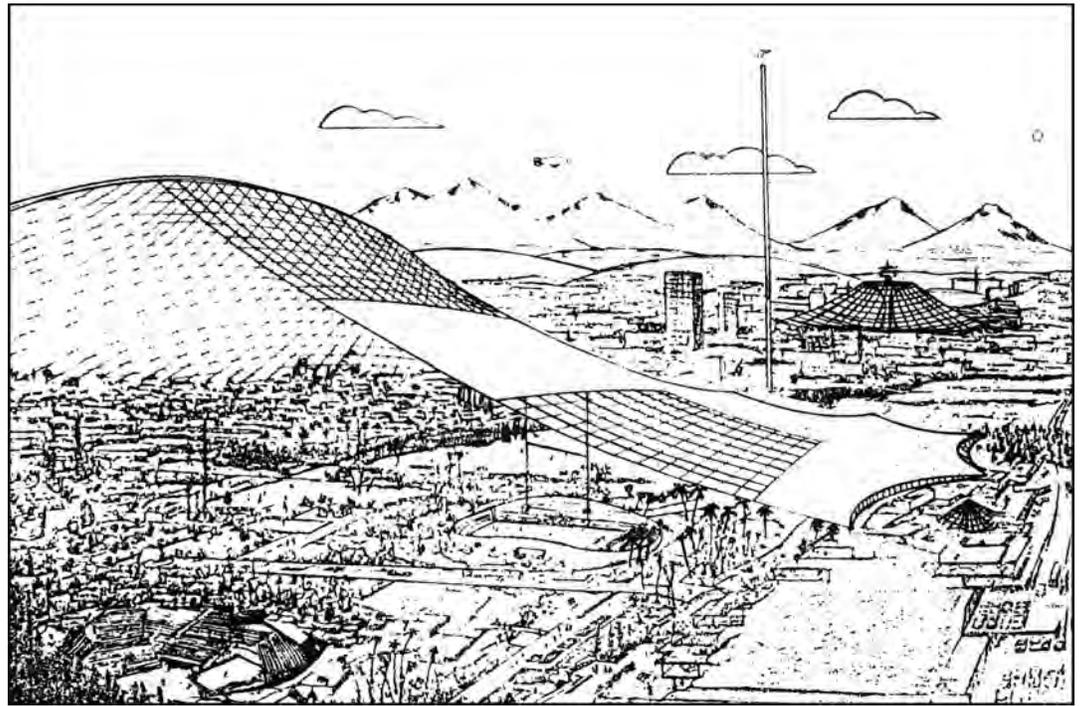
Based on Rodey’s various bills, serious discussions soon ensued between state and federal officials, and in September 1978 personnel from

the National Park Service, the State Division of Parks, and Matanuska-Susitna Borough began working on a Memorandum of Agreement for a joint planning effort at the Tokositna site.²²² That was followed by an October 17 meeting to discuss policies influencing the project. That effort resulted in a November 17 Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Interior Secretary, the Governor of Alaska, and the Mayor of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. Before long, NPS planners began preparing for what they thought would be an environmental assessment and development concept plan for the site.²²³

Meanwhile, the Alaska Division of Parks set up a planning effort with the \$310,000 that it had received from the legislature. It began the effort in January 1979 when three public hearings were held to solicit input on whether a tourism development was needed; and if so, what its size and scope should be. Officials at those meetings heard a wide range of opinions; those who attended the Anchorage meeting (more than 70 people, described as “miners and explorers” by one planner) “had mixed feelings, but were generally opposed” to recreation development, while the 60 or so attendees at the Talkeetna meeting and the much smaller number in Fairbanks were “cautiously in favor” of a development. Virtually everyone at the meetings was opposed to new road construction, and Senator Gravel’s “all weather city” idea was universally criticized as being too grandiose and expensive.²²⁴

The Division of Parks then appointed planner Vicky Sung as project manager, and by early February it had approved two project-related contracts: \$93,000 to Sno-engineering, Inc. of Aspen, Colorado for a study of recreational potential in the Tokositna area, and \$100,000 to Economic Research Associates of San Francisco to study the site’s economic potential.²²⁵ Sno-engineering personnel, who periodically updated state officials on the progress of their work, were universally positive about the area’s potential; they claimed that the nearby slopes offered “the best view of any ski area in the world” and that the area had the potential to be “one of the ten best ski areas in all of North America.” The ERA study recognized that such a proposed development would have a broad basis of potential support, both from Alaska residents and out-of-state tourists. The resort, however, would not be economically feasible unless a “major resort community” was constructed along with it. That plan called for a proposed resort of 2,000 rooms (for at least 4,000 guests), plus facilities for additional 2,000 service personnel.²²⁶ The legislature, in its 1979 session, showed little interest in providing funding for Denali State Park tourism development.²²⁷ Following Senator Gravel’s March 12

In late 1977, Senator Gravel proposed a domed recreational complex south of the Alaska Range. This drawing shows the “dome city” as Gravel envisioned it.



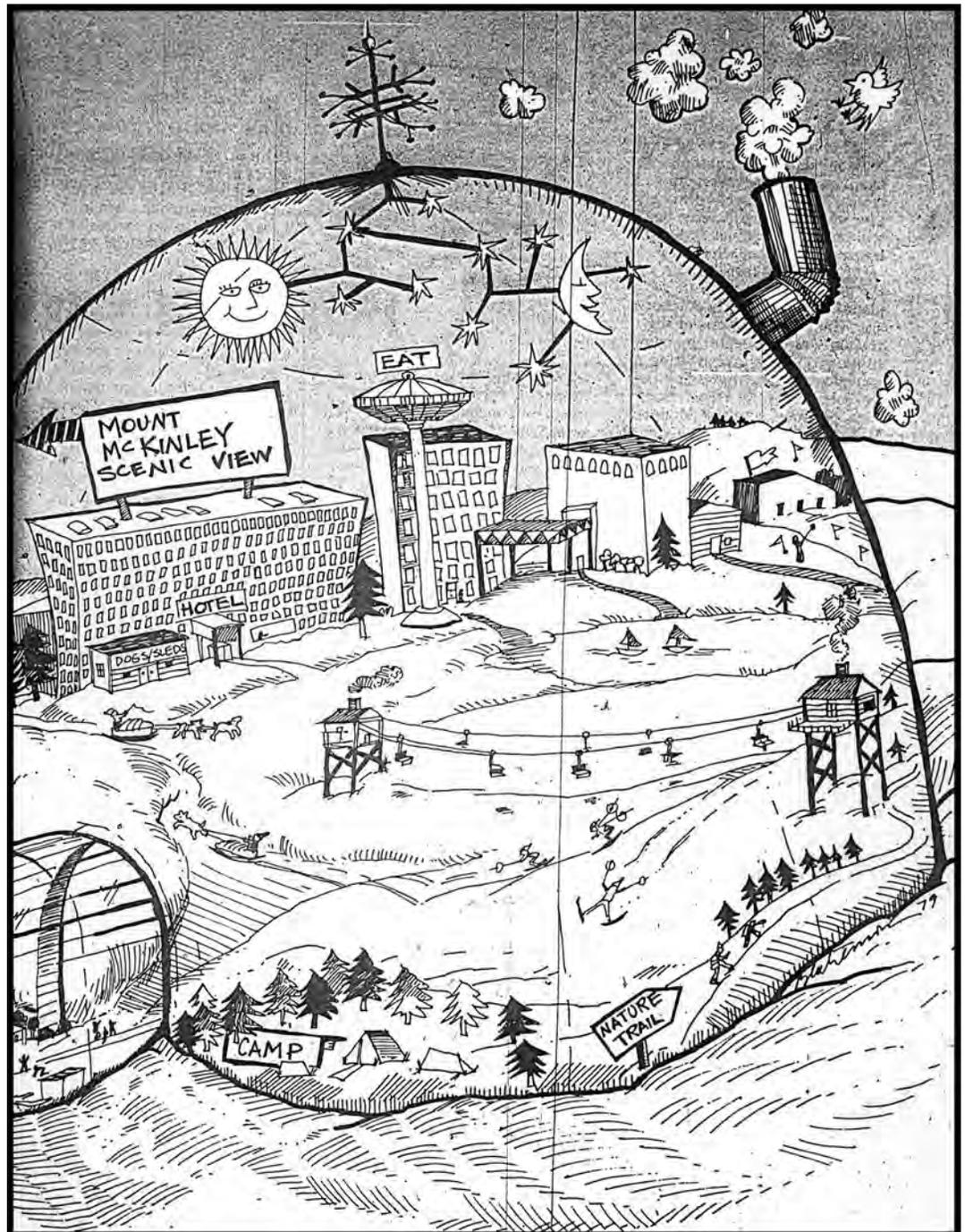
speech before the Alaska Legislature, however, Senate and House members moved quickly to pass a resolution—slightly modified from one that Senator Rodey had proposed a month earlier—that would establish a three-member “Tokositna Committee” to study potential recreational development in Denali State Park and adjacent national park land. The membership of that committee, moreover, would be composed of appointees from the Governor, the Alaska House of Representatives, and the Alaska Senate. Given that criteria, Rodey’s resolution passed the Senate, 20-0, on April 2; it passed the House, 25-10, on April 23; and it was read by Governor Hammond on April 30.²²⁸ In an unusual move, Sen. Gravel—who had played a key role in both drafting the bill and in requesting its consideration by the Alaska Legislature—was appointed as the House of Representative’s choice. The other two members were State Senator Pat Rodey and Natural Resources Commissioner Robert LeResche.²²⁹

Perhaps in response to the various consultants’ recommendations, Alaska tour operator Robert Giersdorf contacted Bradford and Barbara Washburn in the late spring of 1979 and asked them to take several government and tourism industry officials to Switzerland “for the purpose of giving them an on-the-spot feel of how the Swiss mountain tourist industry ticks.” Recognizing that the long-term cost of the planned Tokositna development “will be in the neighborhood of \$50 million” (according to one of those officials), the trip’s purpose was “to investigate how resorts have combined public and private resources” and also “to learn how Swiss resorts maintain

successful year-round operations.”²³⁰ The group spent eight days (from July 11 to July 19) visiting “six or seven” area resorts. The trip, which cost \$11,000 in state funds, answered a multitude of questions; these funds, moreover, did not pay the expenses for several members of the entourage. Even so, charges that the group was “on an out and out junket, wining and dining their way through resorts” resulted in an announcement by Governor Hammond that he would personally approve all state-financed foreign travel.²³¹

Many of those who visited Switzerland returned with a new vision of how the Tokositna area might be developed. State Parks Director Terry McWilliams, for example, said the trip “exploded the concept of what can be done with the Tokositna project. . . . Now we’re considering a much larger area.” Her boss, Natural Resources Commissioner Robert LeResche, came away converted to the idea of building the proposed recreation center; “We saw resorts for 20,000 to 30,000 people in a town with no road access,” he said.²³² Senator Gravel, who did not take part in the trip but still had strong, visionary notions regarding the site’s development,²³³ was highly encouraged to see that the group was considering a world class tourist resort, so he hastily arranged a meeting for the group in Stuttgart, Germany with several of the world’s top resort designers including The Architects Collaborative, or TAC (based in Cambridge, Massachusetts) and Ove Arup and Partners (based in London).²³⁴

The various consultants’ recommendations, the attitude of various State of Alaska employees, and U.S. Sen. Mike Gravel’s hyperbolic rhetoric



For the remainder of the 1970s, Alaskans alternately backed – and derided – Senator Gravel’s plans for an enclosed city. Detractors made light of the idea as shown in this cartoon. National Parks and Conservation Association

clearly seemed to be shifting momentum toward planning for a world-class resort in the Tokositna area—something that might cost between \$200 million and \$1 billion. The State Legislature, however, had provided funding a year earlier for just a 150-bed lodge and visitor center project that would cost the state between \$25 million and \$38 million, and such longtime project backers as Brad Washburn were now protesting because he wanted “something that would blend into the scene. Something that would almost disappear into the landscape.”²³⁵ And some local residents—specifically property owners along the Petersville Road corridor—organized in opposition to the project. They voiced concern, one reporter noted, that “the building and operation of visitor facilities . . . could be an unfair competi-

tion to the ‘little guy’ who owns his own lodge or facility in the general area.”²³⁶

To help resolve the conflict between these starkly contrasting visions, state leaders began a process to decide what company would be its primary project consultant. Sen. Gravel, by this time, had made his choice abundantly clear: TAC, because Gravel and Alex Cvijanovic of TAC “were very close philosophically.” TAC consultants, at Gravel’s direction, had visited Anchorage at least four times in 1978 and 1979, all at no cost to the state or federal governments, and in July 1979, Gravel had expressed his unhappiness with ERA’s “unimaginative” feasibility planning; the U.S. Senator had been disappointed that ERA’s studies had recommended *only* a 2,000-room

development. Gravel, according to an NPS planner, wanted “a far larger development,” so in early August, he began to give TAC “verbal assurances” that it would be the state’s choice for the upcoming management job, and later that month NPS officials were led to believe that “project direction and coordination have passed from the staff level of the Division of Parks, to the consulting firm of The Architects Collaborative.” And inasmuch as the Tokositna Committee had agreed to eventually award its management contract on a “sole source” basis—something that was deemed “perfectly legal”—it appeared that TAC was on the inside track to assume control over how the final plans would be developed.²³⁷

Throughout this period, the NPS had been keeping abreast of project developments. In December 1978 it hired Vincent Radosevich as a research analyst. In early 1979 the agency (primarily Paul Kalkwarf from the Denver Service Center, with assistance from park and Alaska Area Office personnel) teamed up with the Alaska Division of Parks to complete an environmental analysis. By the end of August 1979, much of the agency’s work had been completed.²³⁸ And given the completion of the various state-sponsored contracts, only \$80,000 in Tokositna Project planning funds remained at year’s end.²³⁹

In order to stimulate new interest in the project, a consulting company now needed to prepare a feasibility report for the Alaska Legislature that would be sufficiently convincing to unlock \$1,000,000 from state coffers for final site planning. And based on the events of August 1979, TAC appeared to have the upper hand toward obtaining that contract. That fall, however, the Hammond administration suffered public embarrassment over the awarding of an unrelated contract, so in response, DNR chief Robert LeResche stated that the Tokositna contract would be awarded only through the “request for proposals” process.²⁴⁰ Six firms responded prior to the January 18, 1980 deadline, and when a six-person review team ranked the various proposals, a West Coast firm named ERA/FMC²⁴¹ was chosen by everyone on the review team. TAC, on the other hand, was ranked last by almost all of the panel members. Sen. Gravel, given his position on the Tokositna Committee, nevertheless chose TAC for the management contract. In early February LeResche, following the advice of the review board, chose ERA/FMC. Gravel then, highhandedly, told LeResche that “Senator Rodey agrees with me.” The contract was thus awarded to TAC. LeResche, however, insisted that Rodey provide him a written vote. Rodey, allegedly because of the press of legislative business and the need to review all six proposals, did not make

his opinion known until almost a month after the advertised March 18 deadline. He cast his vote for ERA/FMC, which was awarded the contract. The delay, however, forced the firm to postpone its presentation to the legislature, perhaps until after it had adjourned for the year.²⁴²

The future of the Tokositna development, meanwhile, was being fought over within the halls of the Alaska legislature. Sen. George Hohman (D-Bethel), on February 18, introduced a bill “establishing the Denali Recreational Area Commission.” That bill (SB 481), which was co-sponsored by Pat Rodey and written to some extent by Mike Gravel, called for a five-member commission that would oversee the future of the Tokositna project and prepare its development plan. That commission, however, would not include members of either the State Division of Parks or the National Park Service. Hohman’s bill also, not surprisingly, called for a large-scale “recreational community and convention center” rather than a mere “visitors’ center.” A companion bill (SB 482) called for the allocation of \$1 million to fund the Tokositna Development Plan.²⁴³

Neither of these bills, however, became law. In late April, both seemed well on their way toward being passed; the Senate approved the bill establishing the Commission on a 15-1 vote, and it passed the companion funding bill on an 11-5 vote. When it reached the House, however, the funding bill never made it through the committee stage. Although the bill establishing the Commission eventually passed the House, 22-16, it was not forwarded to the Governor because Hammond, concerned about the lack of state parks representation, promised to veto it.²⁴⁴

Despite the defeat of the two bills in the state legislature, Division of Parks personnel continued to work on project plans. In mid-September 1980, they held hearings in Anchorage and Talkeetna “to share ideas with other planners who would build the visitor center at an edge of Denali State Park.” What was presented at the meeting was a preliminary plan, prepared by the HKS Associates consulting firm of San Francisco,²⁴⁵ for a \$100 million recreation complex at Tokositna which would include “an environmental center and village center with lodging, restaurant facilities, shopping, cultural and educational facilities, a convention center and a nightclub.” A downhill ski course and tramway would come later, the report noted. HKS representatives noted that “if interest is high, . . . an active resort could be operating by the summer of 1986.” But attendees were warned that Division of State Parks involvement would soon “hibernate” without another legislative appropriation. Area residents,

however, reacted negatively to the consultant's proposal, as they had a year earlier. Participants protested that the project was developing too quickly, that the project "would destroy the wilderness concept of Tokositna Valley," and that Curry Ridge was a more favorable development site.²⁴⁶ The comments of Talkeetna-area residents, moreover, matched the apparent mood of Alaska's voters, because several weeks earlier, Mike Gravel—with his farsighted, futuristic development visions for the site—had been defeated by former state representative Clark Gruening of Anchorage in the Democratic U.S. Senate primary.²⁴⁷

Recognizing that another round of hearings was looming in early 1981, area residents became more vocal in their opposition to the Tokositna facility. An informal assemblage of Trapper Creek residents called the Tokosha group, along with the Denali Citizens Council, declared that project planners were too narrow minded; noting that adopting the Tokositna site would disrupt their lifestyle, they urged the adoption of a site atop Curry Ridge.²⁴⁸ Prospects dimmed further in January 1981, when Tokositna-area miners let it be known that 1,000 acres in the Tokositna River valley were overlain by mining claims, some of which were worth a purported \$13 per cubic yard. In addition, state officials admitted that ownership of the proposed development site was still unclear; the state had filed on the land in January 1972, but they had not yet gained "tentative approval" for it.²⁴⁹

Matters came to head at a public hearing in

Talkeetna on March 4. A consensus of those who attended the meeting stated that they backed the idea of a major tourism and visitor center. However, sites such as Curry Ridge and Mount Baldy (the latter site ten miles east of Talkeetna) were far preferable to the Tokositna site. (One local resident railed against Tokositna because people "won't see the peak much in the summer," another claimed that the winter cold there was "more intense" than had been described, and a third averred that a center there would drive wildlife away.) But regardless of the public's response, the fact that planners and consultants had depleted their 1979 funding allotment meant that all project activity would stop unless the legislature provided additional funding.²⁵⁰

Despite the growing antagonism toward the project from area residents, Sen. Rodey continued to support continued development planning, and on March 18, he submitted two bills, both of which called for a supplemental appropriation to DNR, to be devoted to "planning for Tokositna park." Two months later, both bills unanimously passed the Senate Resources Committee. The Resources Committee, however, sent a letter of intent asking that future efforts focus on "several small recreation centers, and not necessarily one large complex," and it further suggested that DNR, in its future planning, "consider the feasibility of recreational facilities at such alternative sites as Curry Ridge, Larson Lake [east of Talkeetna], Byers Lake and the Chulitna River." The Senate Finance Committee refused to consider either bill. As a result, the long-running effort to build either a large or small resort in Mount



Between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s, development interests supported the construction of a hotel at this site, near the Tokositna Glacier terminus. DENA Herkenham #88, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection

McKinley's southern shadow appeared to be dead.²⁵¹

Mount McKinley or Denali? The Fight Over Naming Rights²⁵²

In late 1974, the proper name for North America's highest peak, and of the park, became a public issue. Jay Hammond, who was elected Alaska's governor in the fall election, enthusiastically supported the idea of changing "Mt. McKinley" to "Denali," and a month later, the Denali Citizens Council publicized its interest in having the name changed.²⁵³ Action then moved to the Alaska legislature. On February 2, Sen. John Sackett (R-Fairbanks) and the Resources Committee submitted a resolution suggesting a name change from Mount McKinley to Mount Denali. It moved quickly through the legislature,²⁵⁴ and on March 12, 1975 Governor Hammond read the resolution, which stated that "the Secretary of the Interior is respectfully requested to direct the United States Board on Geographic Names to officially designate Mt. McKinley as Mt. Denali," and it "further resolved that Mt. McKinley National Park be renamed Denali National Park."²⁵⁵

The legislature's action highlighted a dispute that had first erupted more than sixty years earlier (see Chapter 2). Although Natives, Russians, and early American visitors had supplied a number of names to the Alaska Range's highest peak over the years, it was in November 1896 that William Dickey called it Mount McKinley after returning from a prospecting trip in the upper Susitna drainage. That name was enshrined because of his "discovery" account in the January 24, 1897 *New York Sun*. By decade's end, Mount McKinley was part of the standard geographical lexicon. But such luminaries as Charles Sheldon and Hudson Stuck, more sensitive to Native Alaska concerns, consistently used the name Denali.²⁵⁶ Despite their influence, however, each of the Congressional bills to establish the park bore the name Mount McKinley, and both the park and the mountain peak kept that name during the years that followed. From the 1920s to the early 1970s, few questioned the name, and although President Johnson in October 1965 announced that the peak's two summits would be called the Churchill Peaks, that designation was honorific and generally ignored.²⁵⁷ State officials, however, apparently preferred the name Denali, because in 1970 they bestowed that name on the state park they established north of Talkeetna (see above).

On March 7, 1975, the State of Alaska sent the resolution—which called for the peak to be called Mt. Denali rather than Denali, as Sheldon and Stuck had hoped—to the Alaska Geographic

Names Board and also to the U.S. Board on Geographic Names. The U.S. Board, and more specifically its Domestic Names Committee (DNC), recognized that the Secretary of the Interior had the power to change the mountain's name, but changing the name of the national park would require Congressional approval.²⁵⁸ Because actions regarding the mountain name and the park name needed to be treated separately, and because Mount McKinley was such a well-known, long-standing name, the Domestic Names Committee saw a long, tough fight on the horizon; in February 1975—even before the state legislature finalized its resolution—the Committee's meeting minutes noted that if the resolution passed, both the Board on Geographic Names and the Federal Government "would have a problem that may not be resolved easily."²⁵⁹

Those minutes turned out to be prophetic. In March 1975, Donald Orth of the Board on Geographic Names met with Secretary of the Interior Rogers C.B. Morton, but the Secretary "expressed the view that he is not in favor of changing the name of Mount McKinley at this time." The Domestic Names Committee, in response, voted to defer action on the name change proposal for six months, and a month later it asked the Department to issue a press release on the subject and invited the public to comment on the state's proposal.²⁶⁰ By the end of the year, the public had sent the Committee several thousands comments. The initial response (in August 1975) generally opposed the change, but by the late fall, a majority of all letter-writers were favoring the change, and by January 1976, Committee minutes noted that "recent letters are about 4 to 1 in favor of the change." People from President William McKinley's home state of Ohio comprised the main opposition to the change, while Alaskans, former Alaskans, the National Park Service, and people who had traveled in Alaska favored the name change.²⁶¹

By the spring of 1976, 4,000 letters and petitions had been received on the subject, of which about three-fifths favored Denali. But Rep. Ralph Regula, a second-term Republican from President McKinley's home town of Canton, Ohio, drew a line in the sand when he announced that he was beginning a campaign in Ohio to fight the name change. Rallying around Regula, everyone in the Ohio congressional delegation stated their opposition to the proposed name change. In the face of that opposition, the Domestic Names Committee chose to defer the matter for the time being.²⁶² For the remainder of 1976, neither Interior Secretary Thomas Kleppe nor any of his immediate lieutenants took a public position

in the matter, and given the results of the fall elections, the matter was delayed until the new Interior Secretary, Cecil Andrus, was apprised of the situation. The Chairman of the Geographic Names Board, Ray Hulick, implored his fellow board members to set a public hearing on the subject; others on the board, however, delayed that action for several months.²⁶³

In April 1977 the Board finally met with Assistant Secretary of the Interior Joan Davenport to discuss the matter, and during that meeting it was mutually agreed that two hearings would be held on the name-change proposal that fall, one of which would be in Alaska.²⁶⁴ By this time, however, events were taking place in Congress that would strongly influence the outcome of those hearings. On January 4, 1977, Rep. Morris Udall, Chair of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, submitted the first of a number of bills intended to resolve the long-debated Alaska national interest lands question, and each of those bills proposed to expand the existing boundaries of Mount McKinley National Park. But what would be the name of the newly-expanded park? Udall's original bill (HR 39) called for a newly-expanded Mount McKinley National Park, and a revised version issued in July kept the same name. But when Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus, on September 15, issued the Interior Department's recommendations on how the Alaska lands issue might be resolved, that document called for the establishment of a newly-expanded Denali National Park.²⁶⁵

The Domestic Names Committee, as scheduled, held public hearings on the subject on October 25, in Washington, D.C., and November 10, in Anchorage. Those that attended both meetings clearly favored the name change to Mt. Denali. To countermand the tilt in public opinion, the Ohio congressional delegation introduced a joint resolution in Congress on December 7, 1977.²⁶⁶ That resolution stated in part:

... that the mountain ... in the State of Alaska in the United States of America known as Mount McKinley, shall retain the name Mount McKinley in perpetuity as an appropriate and lasting tribute to the service of William McKinley to his country.

The Domestic Names Committee, in response, voted to defer action on the Alaska Legislature's proposal until Congress resolved the joint resolution introduced by the Ohio delegation.²⁶⁷ The resolution was not considered further. Secretary Andrus, clearly in favor of the name change, reacted to the stalled resolution by urging the

Board to reconsider its action of deferral. Before they could act, however, Rep. Regula introduced an amendment to Udall's H.R. 39 that changed the name of the national park to "Denali National Park" but would "retain the name Mount McKinley in perpetuity."²⁶⁸ That bill, with Regula's amendment, passed the House, but Congress adjourned in October without resolving the Alaska lands question. The failure of that bill meant that the Board on Geographic Names could once again act on the case. Rep. Regula, however, informed the Board that he planned to introduce new legislation in the new (96th) Congress as soon as it convened. The DNC, in response, voted to defer action on the Mt. McKinley case until the following year, when "we see what Congress does with the matter."²⁶⁹

Before the new Congress met, however, the Carter administration (as noted above) took steps to secure a measure of protection for much of Alaska's national interest ("d-2") lands. Shortly after Congress adjourned in mid-October, the Interior Department began to enact plans, which had been put in motion earlier that year, to have national monuments designated for the various proposed national parks, along with selected areas of interest to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service. These plans culminated in a series of presidential proclamations that President Jimmy Carter issued on December 1, 1978. One of those proclamations called for the establishment of Denali National Monument, a 3,890,000-acre expanse that surrounded Mount McKinley National Park on three sides. This new designation, which was consistent with recent usage by both administration officials and the Congress, meant that for the time being, the park complex surrounding the continent's highest peak would have two names: both Mount McKinley and Denali.²⁷⁰

When the 96th Congress opened in January 1979, Congressman Udall submitted a new H.R. 39, and one part of that bill called for the establishment of a newly-expanded Denali National Park. Missing from that bill was any language mandating a name for the mountain.²⁷¹ Three months later, the Domestic Names Committee met. In response to that omission, at least two committee members demanded that the Committee take action in the matter. What they said, however, was equivocal; member Charles Harrington, for example, told one reporter that "As long as it's before Congress, we won't touch it." Later in the same interview, however, he said that because the current trend to restore original Native names favored "Denali," that name "is likely to emerge as the mountain's proper name."²⁷²

"Mount McKinley" continues to be the proper name for the highest mountain on the continent, while the name of the park was changed in 1980 to Denali National Park and Preserve. DENA 32-2, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collection



In May 1979, the House passed an Alaska lands bill. Among its other provisions, it called for the existing park to be renamed Denali National Park, and it also called for a newly-expanded Denali National Park (covering 3,410,000 acres) along with a 480,000-acre Denali National Preserve. But Rep. Regula, once again, successfully worked to resist any change in the mountain's name. As a result, language in the House-passed bill stated that the continent's highest peak "shall retain the name Mount McKinley."²⁷³

Action on an Alaska lands bill then moved to the Senate. As the bill was being considered by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, senators held the opinion that the name change decision should be left to the Board on Geographic Names.²⁷⁴ Given that go-ahead, Assistant Interior Secretary Joan Davenport encouraged the Board of Geographic Names to proceed "promptly" with the decision as soon as it had assurance that Congress would not reconsider the name issue. The DNC, in response, initially planned to render a decision by late summer or early fall, unless Congress enacted an Alaska lands bill. But given the two-year lapse, the DNC also felt it needed to schedule two more public hearings on the matter.²⁷⁵

Congress did, in fact, move to enact an Alaska lands bill, and in mid-August the Senate passed its version of an Alaska lands bill, which (like the House bill) also called for an expanded Denali National Park and a new Denali National

Preserve. The Senate bill, unlike the House bill, made no statement regarding a suggested peak name. As noted in the November 1979 Energy and Natural Resources Committee report,

By these actions the Committee in no way intended to indicate its approval or disapproval of the proposal to change the name of the mountain to Denali, which has been pending before the Board on Geographic Names. The Committee believes that this Board is the entity, which should make such a decision and strongly encourages the Board to continue its examination of this proposal and to reach a decision based on the merits of the case at the earliest possible time.²⁷⁶

The House and Senate, for the time being, were unable to agree on differences between the two bills. The Board of Geographic Names, meanwhile, announced that public meetings on the proposed name change would be held in Salt Lake City and Washington, D.C. on November 5 and 14, respectively.²⁷⁷ These meetings were held as scheduled. Just before these meetings took place, however, Ronald Reagan defeated Jimmy Carter in the 1980 presidential election, and as noted above, House leaders agreed to accept the Senate-passed version of the Alaska lands bill. On December 2, President Carter signed into law the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, which expanded the national

park by 2,426,000 acres, added 1,330,000 acres of preserve, and changed the name of the park to Denali National Park and Preserve. It did not change the name of Mt. McKinley.²⁷⁸

So by the time the Domestic Names Committee met in mid-December 1980, there were no further legislative actions that had the potential to intercede with its name change proposal. Despite widespread support for changing the name, tensions over the issue were still running high, and staff member Donald Orth “questioned whether the Board should get involved with the issue at a time when ‘outside’ emotional and political pressures tend to make an empirical judgment difficult.” In addition, the Board remained apprehensive of political repercussions. The meeting minutes of the Board noted that Congress “could always override” a decision of the Board. As a result, the DNC voted to defer the Alaska Legislature’s name change proposal, for another six months, until its June 1981 meeting.²⁷⁹

The Domestic Names Committee’s inability to decide the issue left the gap wide open for a legislative solution, a gap which was quickly filled by Rep. Ralph Regula of Ohio. On January 6, 1981, the second day of the 97th Congress, Regula introduced a bill “which would establish as a matter of law that the highest peak in North America shall continue to bear the name ‘Mount McKinley.’” That bill was reported out of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee on July 29 and it passed the full House on August 4. But the Senate never acted on the measure, and it thus never became law.²⁸⁰

Rep. Regula, however, was not unduly disappointed with the Senate’s failure to act, because Board of Geographic Names policy has long demanded that its members steer clear of any name change proposals that Congress is currently considering.²⁸¹ Based on that policy, Rep. Regula—who is still at this writing an Ohio representative—has submitted in every Congress a bill (or a clause in a larger bill) that addresses the Mt. McKinley naming issue. Sometimes, as in 1981, he has introduced a bill to “provide for the retention of the name Mt. McKinley,” while in other years, he has added a clause in an Interior Department spending bill that “prohibits the use of funds to change the name of Mount McKinley.”²⁸²

Notes - Chapter 8

1 “Changing the National Parks to Cope With People – and Cars,” *U.S. News and World Report* 72 (January 24, 1972), 52-55; *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 19, 1972, 3; *Anchorage Daily News*, January 20, 1972, 4; George

Hartzog, telephone interview by the author, December 21, 2005.

2 Oscar Dick to Peter Doyle III, September 1, 1966, in “D30 Roads and Trails, 1966 thru 1969” folder, DENA Archives; Hall to Chief, Office of Resource Planning, SSC, August 26, 1968, in “D18 Planning Program and Master Plan 1970-71” folder, DENA Archives.

3 Director PNRO to Director NPS, n.d., in “D30 Roads and Trails 1970-1971” folder, DENA Archives; Scott Ruesch, interview with the author, October 21, 2004.

4 *Anchorage Daily News*, January 20, 1972, 4; Hummel, *Stealing the National Parks*, 265, 268; Edward A. Hummel to “All Regional Directors,” October 12, 1967; Peter G. Sanchez to Supt. MOMC, December 6, 1967; both in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives. The “carrying capacity” concept, widely perceived in a qualitative sense, provided a basis for judging when a park area was overcrowded and thus visitation needed to be rationalized.

5 *Anchorage Daily News*, January 20, 1972, 4; Michael F. Anderson, *Polishing the Jewel; an Administrative History of Grand Canyon National Park*, Monograph #11 (Grand Canyon, Ariz., Grand Canyon Association, 2000), 77.

6 *Anchorage Daily News*, February 27, 1972, 22; *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 20, 1972, 4.

7 *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 21, 1972, 9; January 24, 1972, 4; February 9, 1972, 6; *Alaska House Journal*, 1972, 273, 422, 534; *Alaska Senate Journal*, 1972, 424, 439. The passage of this resolution brought forth a predictable chain of correspondence from Governor Egan to U.S. Senate Interior Committee Chairman Henry M. Jackson, to the NPS Director and back again. Jackson asked for the NPS Director to “render a report on the feasibility of the points outlined in the Resolution.” That request was answered by a memo to Jackson from NPS Deputy Associate Director Joseph C. Rumburg, Jr., explaining the NPS’s rationale for its action and an additional assurance that the agency was developing a “continuing maintenance program for the road based on these new requirements for its use.” Various letters in File NR 1-2, Series 88 (1972), RG 01, ASA.

8 As NPS Regional Director John Rutter noted to Sen. Ted Stevens in an April 5, 1972 letter (in “Miscellaneous” file, Box 1, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives), “while we were able to consult in advance with a number of officials and interested persons [about the plan], we were not able to consult with as many as we had intended.” The Alaska Congressional delegation was apparently kept informed, but Anchorage NPS officials, ironically, had little inkling of the plan (see *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 15,

1972, 13).

9 Jim Fuksa to Leslie Swanson, February 1, 1972; F. A. Seymour to John Rutter, February 11, 1972, both in File NR 1-2 (1972), Series 88, RG 01, ASA; *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 26, 1972, 5.

10 A. Stephen Johnson, "McKinley, New Freedom to Enjoy," *National Parks and Conservation Magazine* 46 (December 1972), 22; *Anchorage Daily News*, February 20, 1972, 16.

11 *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 3, 1972, 1; *Anchorage Daily News*, March 5, 1972, 22; March 30, 1972, 1.

12 *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, March 8, 1972, 4; *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 31, 1972, 8; May 6, 1972, 7; *Anchorage Daily News*, March 31, 1972, 17.

13 *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 29, 1972, 2; March 30, 1972, 30; *Anchorage Daily News*, March 30, 1972, 1; March 31, 1972, 17; April 18, 1972, 15.

14 Daniel Kuehn interview, October 11, 2004; Russell Dickenson to Max Baucus, January 25, 1977, in "Park Complaints" folder, DENA Administrative History Collection, AKRO.

15 Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 28; *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 15, 1972, 5; Daniel Kuehn interview, October 11, 2004. Camp Denali co-owner Ginny Hill Wood, in her article "In the Alaska Wilderness, the Park Service Confronts and Turns Back Motorized Tourism" (*Audubon* 75 [July 1973], pp. 108-09), noted that the buses used in 1972 were "aging school vehicles with three-quarter-size seats."

16 Steve Carwile, interview by the author, December 29, 2005; June 8, 2006. Under the new system, ten cars at a time were allowed to obtain a permit at the check station and drive another two miles west to Savage River; additional cars had to wait until one of the ten cars had returned to the check station.

17 *Anchorage Daily Times*, May 22, 1972, 15; Johnson, "McKinley, New Freedom to Enjoy," 20. Various Toklat Ranger Logs from the 1960s report problems obtaining water at the campground, but bears were never a problem in the immediate camp vicinity. Jane Bryant, email to author, February 22, 2006.

18 Several mid-season news reports stated that the park had already received 180,000 or more visitors; this total, however, apparently included non-recreational traffic on the new Anchorage-Fairbanks road. *Anchorage Daily News*, August 8, 1972, 2A; August 29, 1972, 2.

19 *Anchorage Daily News*, August 8, 1972, 2A; Johnson, "McKinley, New Freedom to Enjoy," 22.

20 *Anchorage Daily Times*, August 2, 1972, 4; *Anchorage Daily News*, August 8, 1972, 2A; Johnson, "McKinley, New Freedom to Enjoy," 22.

43 *Anchorage Daily Times*, October 13, 1972, 1, 4; Hadley to Begich, November 3, 1972, see above.

44 *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 18,

21 *Anchorage Daily Times*, August 30, 1972, 8; Gordon S. Harrison to Garrett Smathers, November 9, 1972, in “Plan to Restrict” file, DENA Administrative History Collection; Gordon S. Harrison, *Research Study of the Public Reaction to the Mount McKinley National Park Public Transportation System*, Institute of Social, Economic, and Government Research, Univ. of Alaska, June 25, 1973, 1-2; Study 184/D50, TIC Collection. A synopsis of this study later appeared as “The People and the Park: Reactions to a System of Public Transportation in Mt. McKinley National Park, Alaska,” *Journal of Leisure Research* 7:1 (1975), 6-15.

22 *Anchorage Daily Times*, August 24, 1972, 12; Diane Tracy, “Human-Wildlife Interactions Along Mt. McKinley Road,” in Alaska Cooperative Park Studies Unit, *Final Report: Fiscal Year 1975* (Fairbanks, UAF, ca. 1975), 1, 4, 6, T-1 through T-85.

23 *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 4, 1972, 1-2; September 15, 1972, 5. As noted in a December 14, 1972 *Times* article (p. 2), Fleharty still lived in California during the winter (he kept an office in San Francisco) but stayed at the park during the summer.

24 *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 11, 1972, 2; January 12, 1972, 6; March 29, 1972, 2; *Anchorage Daily News*, March 30, 1972, 1; NPS, Drawing MOMC-70005, September 3, 1971, in NPS Aperture Card Collection.

25 SAR, 1972, 2; *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 27, 1972, 4.

26 Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 28; *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 17, 1972, 20; *Anchorage Daily News*, July 30, 1972, 17; “Mount McKinley Again Will Get Record Visitors,” *Sunset* (Central Edition), May 1973, 58.

27 *Anchorage Daily News*, August 28, 1972, 2; August 29, 1972, 2.

28 *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 5, 1972, 1, 4; *Anchorage Daily News*, September 5, 1972, 1-2.

29 *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 5, 1972, 1; NPS, Drawing MOMC-41004 (“Utilities for 50-Room Wing Addition”), April 23, 1970; NPS Drawing MOMC-41009 and -41009A, February 1973, both in NPS Aperture Card Collection.

30 *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 5, 1972, 4.

31 Robert T. Timlin, *Mt. McKinley Hotel, Mount McKinley, Alaska, Fire Investigation Report*, ca. 1972, in Box 6, File 6-24, Bill Brown Collection (#6857), DENA Archives; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 29.

32 Chief Ranger, MOMC to Supt. MOMC, October 25, 1968, in File D22 (Construction Project Priority), in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.

33 *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 5, 1972, 1.

34 At a McKinley Park Station hearing on November 10, Deborah Vogt of the Fairbanks Environmental Center urged “placement of the hotel outside of the park ... it is time to take all commercial operations out of the park [and] we do believe that concessionaire operated facilities in this park constitute a business monopoly which stifles private enterprise outside the park.” “Statement of the Fairbanks Environmental Center,” November 10, 1972, in Folder 4-16, Box 4, Collection 6857 (Bill Brown Files), DENA Archives.

35 *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 5, 1972, 4. Regional officials John Rutter and Rod Pegues “pointed out that anything built in a park is controlled and regulated by the National Park Service, whereas those built by private capital outside a park are not. ... Some facilities outside the park may in fact be more harmful to the park than well-designed and regulated facilities in the park.” “Minutes of the Meeting of the Pacific Northwest Regional Advisory Committee,” February 3, 1973, p. 7, in Bill Brown Collection, DENA Archives.

36 *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 5, 1972, 4.

37 *Anchorage Daily News*, September 5, 1972, 2; *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 5, 1972, 8; Wood, “In the Alaska Wilderness,” 109.

38 *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 6, 1972, 1.

39 *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 15, 1972, 5.

40 *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 11, 1972, 14; September 15, 1972, 5; September 28, 1972, 12.

41 *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 18, 1972, 14; September 28, 1972, 12.

42 *Anchorage Daily News*, September 22, 1972, 7; *Anchorage Daily Times*, October 13, 1972, 1, 4; October 14, 1972, 6; Lawrence C. Hadley to Nick Begich, November 3, 1972, in File NR 1-2 (1972), Series 88, RG 01, ASA; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 29; *Southeast Alaska Empire*, October 16, 1972, 8. Stevens’s appropriation—which included funds for both hotel construction and future planning—was approved by Congress and signed into law (as part of P.L. 92-607) on October 31, 1972. Hotel construction, as it turned out, demanded \$295,000 of the \$350,000 appropriation; the remaining \$55,000 went to hotel planning efforts.

1972, 14; October 23, 1972, 3; October 26, 1972, 2; October 28, 1972, 2; October 31, 1972, 2; *Anchorage Daily News*, October 24, 1972, 2.

45 *Anchorage Daily Times*, December 14, 1972, 2; December 15, 1972, 3; January 2, 1973, 16; *Anchorage Daily News*, January 4, 1973, 5.

46 Press reports differed on the number of railroad cars needed. The December 15, 1972 *Times* article (p. 3) stated that the concessioner would “buy or lease at least four railroad compartment sleeper cars and 40 to 45 other railroad cars to provide additional space for dining and bar facilities,” while the January 2, 1973 *Times* article (p. 16) stated that “12 rail cars [would] be used for sleeping quarters, storage and office space, a bar, gift shop and coffee shop.” Drawings released in February 1973 (NPS, Drawings MOMC 41009 and 41009A, NPS Aperture Card Collection) showed that 13 railroad cars would be employed in the new design, but only 11 cars—7 purchased and 4 leased—were included in the hotel as actually constructed (Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 31). Two railroad cars came from the Union Pacific in Seattle, while the rest were “Alaska Railroad cars that had been sitting out at Elmendorf Air Force Base.” *Anchorage Daily News*, June 17, 1973, D6.

47 Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 30-31; SAR, 1973, 2, 3; *Anchorage Daily News*, June 17, 1973, D6.

48 SAR for 1973, 3; *Anchorage Daily Times*, May 15, 1973, 8; July 16, 1973, 2; August 29, 1973, 15; September 7, 1973, 18. The hostel idea had originally been that of Ann Morton whose husband, Interior Secretary Rogers Morton, promoted youth hostels throughout the country.

49 SARs for 1974, 2; 1975, 2; 1977, 2; 1978, 7; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 31; Daniel Kuehn interview, October 11, 2004.

50 “Minutes of the Meeting of the Pacific Northwest Regional Advisory Committee,” February 3, 1973, pp. 6-7, in Bill Brown Collection, DENA Archives; Glenn D. Gallison to “All Areas and Offices, Pacific Northwest Region,” April 6, 1973, in Miscellaneous File, Box 1, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 6, 1973, 8. An October 23, 1973 letter from Stanley Albright to Edward O. Logan (in Folder 4-16, Box 4, Bill Brown files [Collection 6857], DENA Archives) noted that all master plans had been deferred until the ANCSA-mandated planning process had been completed.

51 NPS, *Planning Directive, Hotel Site Selection, Mount McKinley National Park, McKinley Park, Alaska*, January 24, 1974, pp. 10-15; unaccessioned file in DENA Archives, also in “Hotel Fire” file, DENA Administrative History Collection.

52 These included the Carlo Creek Lodge at Mile 223.9 (opened in 1961), the adjacent Jere-A-Tad Lodge at Mile 224 (opened in 1966), and Toklat Village, at the second Nenana River crossing (Mile 231.1), opened in 1967.

53 Alaska Northwest Publishing, *The Milepost*, editions of 1971 and 1972. Reisland had homesteaded his parcel in July 1965, six years after Crabb had filed across the road. BLM, Case Abstracts for AKF 023539 and AKF 034647. Steve Carwile, who lived in the area during the mid-1970s, notes that Reisland also occasionally operated a liquor store on his property.

54 In October 1965, three friends—recognizing the area’s potential value once the road was complete—had floated down the Nenana River to the area and homesteaded a mile-long stretch of relatively flat ground just east of the Nenana River. From south to north, these claims included an 80-acre parcel staked by Stephen E. Jones, another 80-acre parcel by Charles M. Travers, Jr., and a 70 acre parcel filed by Chalon Harris. All three men obtained patents for their land in 1974. BLM, Case Abstracts AKF 034867, AKF 034868, and AKF 034881.

55 Alaska Northwest, *The Milepost*, editions of 1971 and 1972.

56 Alaska Northwest, *The Milepost*, editions of 1971 and 1972.

57 NPS, *Planning Directive*, January 24, 1974, pp. 8, 15. In his report, Stoddard included an ominous, eerily prescient prediction: “it should be remembered that no statewide land use plan exists and uncontrolled strip development along Highway 3 is inevitable without such control measures.” Two years earlier—shortly after the road had opened—Deborah Vogt of the Fairbanks Environmental Center had urged “regional planning and zoning for all lands in the McKinley and Highway 3 region. To allow gaudy or shabby eyesores such as West Yellowstone and Gatlinburg to develop here would seriously degrade the natural, scenic, and recreational qualities of the region.” “Statement of the Fairbanks Environmental Center, Hearings, McKinley National Park, November 10, 1972,” in Folder 4-16, Box 4, Bill Brown files (Collection 6857), DENA Archives.

58 Williss, “*Do Things Right the First Time*,” revised edition, 35.

59 Williss, “*Do Things Right the First Time*,” revised edition, 36-42. Details of the Bibles and Hartzogs’ visit to Mount McKinley are detailed in the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, August 10, 1971, 1, and in Edgar Wayburn’s book, *Your Land and Mine: Evolution of a Conservationist*, pp. 228-31.

60 H.R. 1888, in *Congressional Record* 119 (January 11, 1973), 865.

61 Williss, “*Do Things Right the First Time*,” revised edition, 42-43, 50.

62 Williss, “*Do Things Right the First Time*,” revised edition, 50-51.

63 The agency’s plans, however, were shielded from the public; on February 20, 1972, for example, the *Anchorage Daily News* (p. 16) “learned” that the NPS “plans to recommend a two million acre expansion ... almost all” of which would be “north of the park’s present boundaries with much of it in what is known as the Kantishna area.” Both NPS and DOI officials refused to confirm or deny that report; see *Anchorage Daily News*, February 25, 1972, 8.

64 Williss, “*Do Things Right the First Time*,” revised edition, 52-53.

65 APG, *Mt. McKinley National Park Additions, Final Environmental Statement*, October 1974, 21.

66 Williss, “*Do Things Right the First Time*,” revised edition, 54, 57, 59; NPS, *Recommendations Regarding Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act 17(d)(2) Withdrawals* (Anchorage?, the author, July 1972), 85-100.

67 Williss, “*Do Things Right the First Time*,” revised edition, 54-59, 61.

68 Albert G. Henson to Assistant Director, Cooperative Activities, October 2, 1972, in Bill Brown Collection, DENA Archives.

69 Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission for Alaska, *People Planning Today for a Better Alaska Tomorrow* (newsletter), vol. 1 (March-April 1973), 2.

70 Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission for Alaska, *Land Planning and Policy in Alaska*, “Preliminary Land Use Recommendations” (typescript), July 1973. This document was finalized in the 93rd Congress, 2nd Session Committee Print, June 1974 (Washington, GPO, 1974), 77-79. The commission’s philosophy was reflected in a October 30, 1973 *Anchorage Daily Times* editorial (p. 6) calling for wildlife protection on a 1.2-million-acre northern addition but allowing “people-oriented recreational facilities” to the south. The commission’s proposal called for a mining prohibition on only 601,000 acres of the northern proposal area, and none south of the Alaska Range.

71 Williss, “*Do Things Right the First Time*,” revised edition, 59-60, 63-64, 68-71

72 Williss, “*Do Things Right the First Time*,” revised edition, 65-71.

73 The Alaska Planning Group’s *Draft Environmental Statement, Proposed Mt. McKinley National Park Additions* (Washington?, the author?, December 1973), pp. 6-7, which discusses the proposed cooperative zone, did not specify an acreage, but according to later efforts (see below), the zone’s area was approximately 100 square miles.

74 Division of Planning and Research, State of Alaska, “The State’s Response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statements for Lands Withdrawn Under Section 17(d)(2) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act,” ca. April 1974, at ARLIS; Williss, “*Do Things Right the First Time*,” revised edition, 85; APG, *Mt. McKinley Additions FES*, October 1974, 194-95.

75 “Citizens Organized to Protect McKinley National Park and Surrounding Area” (press release), April 29, 1974, in Folder 12, Box 72, Fairbanks Environmental Center Collection, UAF; *Anchorage Daily News*, May 11, 1974, 6; May 14, 1974, 11.

76 Everett Drashner to Nathaniel Reed, July 1, 1974, in Bill Brown Collection, DENA Archives; *Anchorage Daily Times*, December 22, 1974, A-7.

77 Alaska Planning Group, *FES, Proposed Mt. McKinley National Park Additions* (October 1974), 1, 5-7.

78 Williss, “*Do Things Right the First Time*,” revised edition, 36-39.

79 ALIS Record System for T12-13S, R9-10-11W, FB&M; ADNRC Cases GS 1488, GS 1489, and GS 1490. As noted in Chapter 7, the U.S. Geological Survey in February 1958 had reserved some 25,600 acres in the Teklanika and Savage River drainages for a proposed dam and reservoir site; that dam, if built, would have been built approximately 5 miles north of the rivers’ confluence and may have flooded a small part of the park. But the dam idea was eventually abandoned, and in September 1994 the state received tentative approval for this acreage.

80 Alaska Planning Group, *FES, Proposed Mt. McKinley National Park Additions*, October 1974, 37, 155; BLM, Historical Index for T12S, R9W, FB&M.

81 *Anchorage Daily Times*, November 13, 1974, 11; December 11, 1974, 6; January 9, 1975, 18; February 8, 1975, 14; February 16, 1975, C-7; February 25, 1975, 5; March 19, 1975, 2; March 27, 1975, 3; “Mt. McKinley CPMZ” file, Box 3, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.

82 Leonard J. Hansen to Walter J. Hickel, December 20, 1968, in File NR 1-2 (1969), Series 88, RG 01, ASA; *Anchorage Daily News*, April 19, 1980, A-1; Sierra Club, Alaska Chapter, “A Resolution,” October 1971, UAF Archives, in “Gravel’s Dome City” folder, DENA Administrative History Collection.

83 Irene E. Ryan to William A. Egan, *Alaska Investment Opportunities*, May 1972, in File NR 1-2

(1972), Series 88, RG 01, ASA.

84 First-phase proposals were for a commercial lodge, restaurant, general store and service station; a hotel and ski lodge was in the second phase, and an airport constituted the third phase. Ryan to Egan, September 8, 1972, in File NR 1-2 (1972), Series 88, RG 01, ASA; *Anchorage Daily Times*, October 25, 1972, 1, 4; *Anchorage Daily News*, October 26, 1972, 2.

85 Ryan to Egan, September 8, 1972; Gravel to Egan, November 8, 1972, in File NR 1-2 (1972), Series 88, RG 01, ASA; *Anchorage Daily Times*, November 10, 1972, 1, 4; December 22, 1972, 6; *Anchorage Daily News*, November 11, 1972, 2; *Southeast Alaska Empire*, February 1, 1973, 1, 8.

86 Gravel to Egan, January 23, 1973, in File NR 1-4 (1973), Series 88, RG 01, ASA; *Anchorage Daily Times*, August 30, 1973, 4; *Anchorage Daily News*, August 30, 1973, 2; August 31, 1973, 2.

87 Washburn to Leonard J. Hansen, July 18, 1968, in File NR 1-2 (1969), Series 88, RG 01, ASA; *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 7, 1973, 1, 4; September 8, 1973, 1, 3; *Anchorage Daily News*, April 19, 1980, A-1.

88 APG, *FES, Proposed Mt. McKinley National Park Additions*, 9, 35, 126-29.

89 Gravel to Egan, January 23, 1973, in File NR 1-4 (1973), Series 88, RG 01, ASA.

90 *Anchorage Daily News*, June 25, 1974, 7; March 16, 1977, 2; Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks, *Denali State Park, a Master Plan*, 1975, 27, 33-35.

91 Egan to Bradford Washburn, October 9, 1972, in File NR 1-2 (1972), Series 88, RG 01, ASA.

92 Alaska DNR, *Denali State Park, a Master Plan*, 1975, 36-38; "Testimony of James J. Hurley," April 5, 1975, in "Denali State Park" file, Richard Stenmark Collection, HFC. Given an agreement with the NPS, the state also hoped to extend its road north past the proposed lodge onto federal land, to a terminus just east of Mt. Goldie.

93 *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 30, 1972, 7; November 2, 1973, 15; Alaska State Legislature, *House Bill History, 1976*, 10.

94 Richard Stenmark (JFSLUPC) to Commissioners and Staff, April 8, 1975, in "Denali State Park" file, Stenmark Collection, HFC; *Anchorage Daily Times*, April 10, 1975, 4.

95 Alaska State Legislature, *House Bill History, 1976*, 10.

96 SMR, May 1924, 3; July 1924, 5; September 1924, 7; March 1927, 1; February 1928, 4-5; June 1928, 1-3; September 1928, 4.

97 SMR, August 1952, 3.

98 SMR, September 1950, 3. As the April 1956 *Mission 66 Prospectus* noted (p. 16), "the average visitor to the park is an elderly person who is content to view the park in relative comfort via bus tours and automobile, and usually shows but little interest or desire, or has the capability of walking any distance."

99 SMR, September 1954, 1; August 1955, 1-2; NPS, *Mission 66 Prospectus, Mount McKinley National Park*, April 1956, 16.

100 NPS, *Mission 66 for Mount McKinley National Park*, May 13, 1957, 8.

101 SMR, June 1957, 3; August 1961, 6; June 1962, 5; August 1966, 5.

102 *Anchorage Daily Times*, August 6, 1971, 27; NPS, MOMC Press Release, March 22, 1974, in "K3417 Press Releases – by MOMC, 1974-75" file, Box 2, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.

103 SAR, 1972, 4.

104 *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 5, 1973, 21. In the early 1970s, it was a new idea to encourage visitors to hike over virgin ground and avoid existing pathways. Tom Ritter, with the NPS in Anchorage, noted that there were no established backcountry trails "as most of the paths would only turn into water canals." A year later, park employee Steve Buskirk would echo that sentiment, noting that "Trails would only get muddy ... If you're not an experienced hiker, the back country of Mt. McKinley Park is not the place for you. Besides, we have to think of damage to the tundra." *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 29, 1974, 20.

105 SAR, 1973, 5-6.

106 SAR, 1974, 4; 1975, 4; NPS, *Backcountry Use and Operations Plan, Mount McKinley National Park*, June 1975, 6, 11, in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.

107 NPS, MOMC Press Release, March 22, 1974, in "K3417 MOMC Press Releases, 1974-75" file, Box 2, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; Steve Buskirk to author, email, October 26, 2004; Dan Kuehn, interview with the author, October 11, 2004; *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 27, 1975, 14.

The park did not release its final *Backcountry Use and Operations Plan* until June 1975, but several sources noted its implementation a year earlier. A 1976 *Anchorage Times* article (May 11, 1976, 20) noted that "backcountry camping in the national park system has more than doubled in the last five years." By that time, use permits had been implemented in 39 NPS areas, five more than in 1975.

108 NPS, MOMC Press Release, March 22, 1974; *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 29, 1974, 20; SAR, 1974, 2.

- 109 Beth Buskirk to author, email, January 12, 2006.
- 110 NPS, *Backcountry Use and Operations Plan, Mount McKinley National Park*, June 1975, 13. Appendix C of that plan is the NPS brochure, "Hiking in Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska."
- 111 Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management to Supt. MOMC, January 29, 1975, in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; Daniel Kuehn to State Director, Alaska, June 2, 1975; Steve Buskirk to author, email, October 26, 2004.
- 112 Beth Buskirk email, January 12, 2006. Joe Van Horn, in a January 17, 2006 email, notes that Craig Partridge also served as a backcountry ranger in 1976, and possibly 1977 as well.
- 113 Robert L. Peterson to Ted Stevens, December 5, 1978, in "N4615 Questionnaire, 1970s Recreation Surveys" file, Resource Management Operations Papers, Box 3, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; SAR, 1977, 5; 1978, 6.
- 114 Peter Womble, *Survey of Backcountry Users in Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska; a Report for Management* (Seattle, Univ. of Washington Cooperative Park Studies Unit, December 1979), p. 11 and "Summary of Findings" section, p. 1.
- 115 NPS, "Hiking in Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska" (brochure), January 1979, in "Trail Guides" folder, Mt. McKinley-Denali Archive, Box 1, HFC.
- 116 SAR, 1973, 10.
- 117 Kenneth H. Goslin (Team Manager, Pacific Northwest Team, Denver Service Center) to John Rutter (Regional Director, Pacific Northwest Region), July 11, 1975, in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.
- 118 NPS, *Mount McKinley Headquarters/Hotel Area, Interim Development Concept, Analysis of Alternatives* (Denver, the author, December 1975), 1, 3, 5, 11-12.
- 119 NPS, *Interim Development Concept Plan, Riley Creek/Headquarters/Hotel Area, Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska* (Denver, the author, March 1976), 6-14; G. Bryan Harry (Area Director, Alaska) to Associate Regional Director, Administration, PNR, March 12, 1976, in Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.
- 120 Scott Ruesch, interview with the author, October 21, 2004.
- 121 Gary Koy, "Denali Kennels History," unpub. mss., November 1992, in DENA kennel records.
- 122 Walter R. Borneman, *Alaska, Saga of a Bold Land*, 276-77.
- 123 Gary Koy, "The History of Dog Mushing in Denali Through Quotations," unpub. mss., ca. November 1992, in DENA kennel records.
- 124 Gary Koy, "Denali Kennels History," unpub. mss., November 1992, in DENA kennel records. A key part of this transformation may well have been the efforts of an unnamed "dog musher/kennel consultant," who served as a 1972 park volunteer. SAR, 1972, 8.
- 125 Roy Sanborn, *Malamutes of Mount McKinley National Park* (Anchorage, Alaska National Parks and Monuments Association), 1971; SAR, 1972, 6; Scott Ruesch interview, October 21, 2004.
- 126 Daniel Kuehn, interview by the author, October 11, 2004.
- 127 SAR, 1973, 9; 1974, 1; 1975, 1; 1987, 1; *Anchorage Daily News*, August 14, 1980, B1-B4; Sandy Kogl, *Sled Dogs of Denali* (Anchorage, Alaska Natural History Association), 1981.
- 128 SAR, 1974, 4.
- 129 SAR, 1973, 5; 1974, 4; 1978, 1.
- 130 SAR, 1974, 4; 1980, 3; Daniel Kuehn interview.
- 131 Frank Betts, interview with the author, October 15, 2004.
- 132 SAR, 1973, 6.
- 133 Daniel Kuehn interview; Laura Larsen with Sandy Kogl, "Dog Teams on Mount McKinley," *Alaska Magazine* 41 (March 1975), 33; SAR, 1977, 2; SAR, 1984, 1; NPS, *Commercial Service Directory, Alaska Region*, 1990 and 1991 editions; Jane Bryant email, May 5, 2006.
- 134 Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 32-33; *Anchorage Times*, August 16, 1978, 25; SAR, 1978, 6. The *Times* article noted that the effective transaction date was August 1, not June 1. According to the ARAMARK website (www.aramark.com), the company that later became ARA Services was founded in the 1930s in California, and during the 1950s the vending-machine company became known as Automatic Retailers of America. The "Services" name was added in 1969.
- 135 Fleharty's office during the early to mid-1970s was located in the hotel's employee dormitory. When the McKinley Chalets were opened in 1978 (see below), Fleharty moved his office there.
- 136 Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 28.
- 137 *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 21, 1973, 1.
- 138 Daniel Kuehn, interview by the author, October 11, 2004; *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 16, 1973, 2; SAR, 1973, 3.
- 139 Daniel Kuehn interview, October 11, 2004; Ralph Tingey interview, May 17, 2006.

- 140 The first known vehicle accident in the park took place in the late evening of June 25, 1950, caused when a hotel employee drove too fast and rolled his new Ford coupe. Another, in September 1951, took place during the Alaska Science Conference and prevented attendees from taking a scheduled field trip out the park road. SMR, June 1950, 3; Kirk H. Stone, "Geographical Record," *Geographical Review* 42 (January 1952), 151-52.
- 141 The various park Superintendent's Monthly Reports note 16 vehicle accidents between 1959 and 1964, inclusive; ranger reports doubtless recorded several others during this period.
- 142 SMR, June 1962, 4; September 1962, 3.
- 143 NPS, *Denali Park Road Handbook* (bus drivers' manual), 2001 revision, p. 6; Brad Ebel, email to author, January 30, 2006.
- 144 Russ Wilson to Steve Cooper, "Memorandum of Points and Authorities," July 26, 1993, in "Denali Park Road – Lands Division File, 27 Oct. 93," in Denali Park Road Issue, Bill Brown Research Collection box, AKRO; *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 9, 1974, 1; July 10, 1974, 1; August 6, 1974, 20; August 15, 1978, 16; August 16, 1978, 10; SAR, 1974, 3.
- 145 Daniel Kuehn interview.
- 146 SAR, 1977, 2; SAR, 1980, 2; Stroud, *History of the Concession*, 32; Steve Carwile, interview by the author, January 25, 2006; *Anchorage Times*, August 16, 1978, 25.
- 147 Jones and Travers, the other two area landowners, had cabins on their property that they rented out to seasonal workers during this period, but neither landowner catered directly to the tourist trade.
- 148 Williss, "*Do Things Right the First Time*," revised edition, 35; *National Parks Magazine* 33 (April 1959), 16; *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 29, 1965, 2.
- 149 *Tundra Telegram* I:24 (December 1975), 1-2, in "K4223 Publications - DCC Newsletter" file, Box 1, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 7, 1976, 23.
- 150 Pearson, *My Life of High Adventure*, 214, 222; *Anchorage Daily Times*, May 22, 1973, 5; SAR, 1973, 3, 6; Grant Pearson, "Small Tract Petition for Classification" (F 012691), in "Old Serial Fiches" drawer; Pearson, BLM Patent No. 1231148 for U.S. Survey 4015, March 6, 1963; both in Public Room Records, BLM Office, Anchorage.
- 151 *Anchorage Daily Times*, May 22, 1973, 5; Lawrence Hadley (Asst. Dir. NPS) to Director, PNRO, June 25, 1973, in Bill Brown Collection, DENA Archives; Steve Carwile interview, January 25, 2006. As noted in a June 1987 article ("Caribou, Tundra, Whitewater, Mount McKinley ... Alaska Adventures," *Sunset Magazine* 178, p. 74), the lodge at that time was "a fifteen-unit motel."
- 152 Daniel Kuehn interview, October 11, 2004; Frank Betts interview, October 15, 2004; NPS, *Historic Listing of National Park Service Officials*, May 1991.
- 153 U.S. Department of the Interior, *Budget Justifications, NPS*, various years, 1971 to 1980.
- 154 Daniel Kuehn interview, October 11, 2004.
- 155 SARs, various years.
- 156 SAR, 1972, 8; 1973, 9; 1980, 5-6.
- 157 Daniel Kuehn interview, October 11, 2004; Williss, "*Do Things Right the First Time*," revised edition, 53, 60, 63, 130-33; SAR, 1973, 1.
- 158 Alaska Northwest, *Milepost*, 1972 through 1975 editions. Morino's new limitations were established so that hikers arriving on the mid-afternoon train from Anchorage would have a place to camp before heading out the park road. Steve Carwile interview, June 7, 2006.
- 159 SAR, 1974, 3; SAR, 1975, 3.
- 160 Although no information specifically notes the park's commencement of campground fees in 1970, an agency-wide history of the fee issue (Barry Mackintosh, *Visitor Fees in the National Park System, a Legislative and Administrative History* [Washington, NPS], 1983) notes on p. 84, "Fees for Government-operated campgrounds ... were not systematically instituted until 1970." They were definitely in place at Mount McKinley by 1971, as noted here.
- 161 SAR, 1972, 4.
- 162 SAR, 1972, 2; 1973, 2; 1974, 8; 1975, 6; NPS, Drawing MOMC 3112 (November 23, 1956) and 41008/1B (January 1973), both in NPS Aperture Card Collection; GSA, "Invitation for Bids, NPS Project No. 9170-2801," April 26, 1974, in Early Administrative Files, Box D, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.
- 163 SAR, 1978, 1; *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, July 23, 1978, A-7; John Kauffmann, "A Very Special Legacy...", in Jane Bryant historical files, DENA. Hankins had willed a substantial sum to the National Park Foundation.
- 164 NPS, Drawings MOMC 3211 (January 1967) and MOMC 41005 (June 1970), in NPS Aperture Card Collection.

- 165 SAR, 1972, 2, 6.
- 166 NPS, *Interim Development Concept Plan, Riley Creek/Headquarters/Hotel Area, Mount McKinley National Park, Alaska*, March 1976, 6-7.
- 167 NPS, Drawings MOMC 5303A (January 1951) and MOMC 3102A (January 6, 1958), NPS Aperture Card Collection.
- 168 NPS, Drawings MOMC 3211 (January 1967) and MOMC 41005 (June 1970), in NPS Aperture Card Collection.
- 169 NPS, Drawing MOMC 41007 (May 1, 1972), in NPS Aperture Card Collection; SAR, 1974, 8.
- 170 Jane Bryant email, August 29, 2005.
- 171 *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 12, 1972, 6.
- 172 Alaska Planning Group, *FES, Proposed Mount McKinley National Park Additions, Alaska*, October 1974, 111.
- 173 Russell E. Dickenson to Associate Director, Park System Management, NPS, April 19, 1976, in "Misc." file; "Draft Environmental Statement for Proposed Electric Distribution Line to McKinley Park" (NPS Press Release), May 17, 1976, in "K3416 Press Releases – Departmental, 1976-77" file; both in Box 1, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; *Federal Register* 41 (May 10, 1976), 19146.
- 174 Daniel Kuehn interview, October 11, 2004.
- 175 NPS, *Final Environmental Statement, Proposed Electrical Distribution Line Extension to McKinley Park, Mount McKinley National Park*, December 1976; SAR, 1977, 10; SAR, 1980, 7.
- 176 SAR, 1972, 7; 1973, 8; 1974, 6; 1975, 7; 1977, 9-10; 1978, 5; 1980, 6; Brad Ebel, email to author, Feb. 10, 2006.
- 177 Williss, "*Do Things Right the First Time*," revised edition, 84.
- 178 S. 1688 was introduced on May 8, and H.R. 9346 was introduced on September 3. Neither of these bills got beyond the committee stage. *Congressional Record* 121 (1975), pp. 13503 and 27259.
- 179 Swanson's bill, H.B. 489, was introduced on May 7, 1975. *Alaska House Bill History, 1975*, 227.
- 180 Williss, "*Do Things Right the First Time*," revised edition, 87-88; Cecil Andrus comments, in *ANILCA Roundtable with Former President Jimmy Carter*, August 24, 2000 (VHS Recording), Action Video Productions, Anchorage, in John Quinley files, AKRO; Donald W. Carson and James W. Johnson, *Mo; the Life and Times of Morris K. Udall* (Tucson, Univ. of Arizona Press, 2001), 182-83.
- 181 Sen. Henry Jackson, who chaired the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, agreed to submit Udall's bill as S. 500 later that month. Williss, "*Do Things Right the First Time*," revised edition, 88; *Public Law 96-487, Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Legislative History* (Anchorage, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Fall 1981), Vol. I, 216-17; Vol. II, 708, 715-16.
- 182 *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. III, pp. 11, 36-37.
- 183 Williss, "*Do Things Right the First Time*," 89, 118n; JFSLUPC, *The D-2 Book; Lands of National Interest in Alaska* (Anchorage, the author, May 1977), 182-83; *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. II, 677-78.
- 184 Williss, "*Do Things Right the First Time*," 97. Andrus, as Interior Secretary, served as the administrative head of the Alaska lands effort, even though the U.S. Forest Service—one of the four major land management agencies in the Alaska lands effort—was in the Agriculture Department.
- 185 Of the proposed acreage expansion, 3,853,000 acres was on federal land; as a result, most documents stated that the park would be expanded by 3.85 million acres. Williss, "*Do Things Right the First Time*," 94; 95th Congress, 1st Session, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, "Inclusion of Alaska Lands in National Park, Forest, Wildlife Refuge and Wild and Scenic River Systems," September 15, 1977, Part XVI of *Hearings Before the Subcommittee on General Oversight and Alaska Lands*, Serial No. 95-16 (Washington, GPO, 1977), 127-28, 130-31, 140-41. See *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. XIX.
- 186 Williss, "*Do Things Right the First Time*," 97; *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. I, pp. 341, 393, 565, and 600.
- 187 *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. II, pp. 23, 55.
- 188 Williss, "*Do Things Right the First Time*," 97-99; *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. I, 745; Vol. II, 443, 498. Many of the ideas that Rep. Meeds espoused were in H.R. 10888, which he introduced on February 9, 1978. That bill, however, gave no Denali-related acreage figure, and it did not get beyond the committee stage.

- 189 Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 100; *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. III, p. 101, 132-34.
- 190 Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 100; *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. III, pp. 252, 408-09.
- 191 Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 100-02; *Congressional Record* 124 (1978), D 918; *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. III, 445-46.
- 192 Although the proclamation noted that "the area reserved consists of approximately 3,890,000 acres," a 1979 source stated that this acreage comprised only federal lands. In addition, 103,000 acres of non-federal lands were protected, for a total monument area of 3,993,000 acres. More recent acreage compilations suggest that the total amount added in Carter's proclamation approximated 4,178,600 acres. See NPS, *Index, National Park Service and Related Areas as of June 30, 1979*, 15; *NPS Index, 2005-2007*, 17; Land Ownership Maps, AKRO Lands Division files.
- 193 Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 102-03, 105; Proclamation 4616, in *Federal Register* 43 (December 5, 1978), 57035-41.
- 194 Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 104, 139; *Anchorage Times*, January 10, 1979, 4.
- 195 Norris, *Alaska Subsistence*, 88.
- 196 NPS, *Operations Plan – The Great Denali/McKinley Trespass*, ca. January 5, 1979, in Bill Brown Collection, DENA Archives.
- 197 Frank Betts interview, October 15, 2004; *Anchorage Times*, January 12, 1979, 6.
- 198 *Anchorage Times*, January 14, 1979, 1.
- 199 *Anchorage Times*, January 9, 1979, 2; January 12, 1979, 6.
- 200 *Anchorage Times*, January 14, 1979, A1-A2; January 15, 1979, 1, 3; January 17, 1979, 11; Bob Gerhard, email to author, April 11, 2003. Engle was a hunting guide who owned a lodge at the Purkeypyle Airstrip, just west of the newly-established Denali National Monument, while Fanning was a Fairbanks guide and trapper.
- 201 H.R. 39, Sec. 201(b)(1), in *ANILCA Legislative History*, vol. III, p. 678, 680.
- 202 The Breaux-Dingell Substitute had originally been introduced as H.R. 2219, by Reps. Breaux and John M. Murphy (D.-N.Y.). Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 104, 107; *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. IV (pp. 25, 80, 234, and 273-74) and Vol. V (pp. 22, 88-89, 303, and 369-70).
- 203 Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 107; *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. V, pp. 581, 632; Vol. VII, 19.
- 204 *ANILCA Legislative History*, Vol. VII, p. 466, 503.
- 205 Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 108, 111.
- 206 Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 111-12.
- 207 At the time, the announced acreages included a 2,426,000-acre park expansion and a 1,330,000-acre preserve. Since then, however, more exact measurements have modified those figures; see NPS, *The National Parks: Index 2005-2007* (Washington, GPO, ca. 2005), 17, along with recently-updated land ownership maps on file in the AKRO Lands Division.
- 208 *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 18, 1974, 14.
- 209 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "The MAB Programme" website (<http://www.unesco.org/mab/index.shtml>); Curtis Bohlen to Frederick Dean, November 27, 1974, in "K34 Press Releases – News Clippings, 1974-75" file, Box 1, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives.
- 210 *Ibid.*
- 211 World Heritage List website (<http://whc.unesco.org/heritage.htm>) and ICOMOS website (www.international.icomos.org/world_heritage/icomoswh_eng.htm).
- 212 *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 5, 1980, G-3; September 3, 1981, E-9. The seven other Alaska units were Cape Krusenstern, Pribilof Islands, Gates of the Arctic, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the Aleutian National Wildlife Refuge, Glacier Bay, and Katmai.
- 213 James Charleton, email to author, January 3, 2006.
- 214 *Anchorage Daily News*, March 16, 1977, 2; March 18, 1977, 2.
- 215 *Anchorage Daily Times*, November 15, 1977, 2; *Anchorage Daily News*, November 16, 1977, 1, 36; December 17, 1989, H-13, H-16; July 24, 1994, C-3; "Senator Mike Gravel, A Proposal for a Recreational City, Mt. McKinley, Alaska," in "Denali State Park" folder, Stenmark Collection, HFC. The "glassed-in" dome, he noted, would actually be either a geodesic dome or a "Teflon tent."
- 216 *Anchorage Daily News*, November 16, 1977, 36.
- 217 *Anchorage Daily Times*, December 14, 1977, 2; December 16, 1977, 12; December 18, 1977, A-4.
- 218 *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 14, 1978, 3; March 22, 1978, 44; *Anchorage Daily News*,

March 23, 1978, 1; *Alaska Senate Bill History, 1978*, 562, 665. By late March, the cost of both the lodge complex and the road improvements had risen from \$25.7 million to \$38 million. The cost would be split by the federal and state governments. But one factor easing its passage may have been how the costs would be apportioned because Rodey, in one article, said that the “feds may well pay for all of it.”

219 *Alaska Senate Bill History, 1978*, 562, 665; *Alaska Senate Journal, 1979*, FJ 27; *Session Laws of Alaska, 1978*, Chapter 146.

220 *Anchorage Daily News*, March 29, 1978, 2; *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 29, 1978, 12, 48.

221 Williss, “*Do Things Right the First Time*,” 100; *Congressional Record* 124, p. 10712 (April 19, 1978) and pp. 20819 and 20834-35 (July 13, 1978).

222 The NPS was involved in this process because the agency’s October 1974 *Final Environmental Statement* had recommended a Federal-State-Borough Cooperative Planning and Management Zone for the proposed development site. The agency’s role was heightened on December 1, 1978, when President Jimmy Carter signed a presidential proclamation establishing Denali National Monument, which included land just two miles north of the proposed development site. And it was further increased in the spring of 1979, when the Alaska legislature passed a resolution (SCR 14) calling for joint federal-state planning in areas where state and national parks shared common borders.

223 Donald L. Bressler to RD/PNRO, October 3, 1978, in “D 18 – Planning Programs and Master Plans, 1978” file, Box 1, Catalog No. 9169, DENA Archives; John E. Cook to Robert LeResche, October 1, 1979, in File 600 (Tokositna), Series 888 (1975-79), RG 242, ASA; HKS Associates, *Tokositna, A Development Study for the State of Alaska*, February 1981, p. 1.

224 *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 7, 1979, A-4; January 13, 1979, 3; Terry A. McWilliams to Robert Ward, March 28, 1979, in File 600 (Contract), Series 888, RG 242, ASA.

225 *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 11, 1979, A-3; April 23, 1979, 1-2; McWilliams to Ward, March 28, 1979, see above.

226 *Anchorage Daily Times*, April 23, 1979, 2; *Anchorage Daily News*, July 2, 1979, A-1; Michael Frome, “Disneyland North,” *National Parks and Conservation Magazine* 54 (February 1980), 6.

These two studies were summarized in the February 1981 HKS Associates study, *Tokositna, A Development Study for the State of Alaska*.

227 Sen. Pat Rodey (D-Anch.) introduced a resolution (SCR 4) “relating to construction of a lodge and visitor center in Denali State Park” on February 5, 1979, but it never moved beyond the committee stage. On February 13, Rodey also introduced a resolution (SCR 14) “relating to the development of Denali State Park,” but during the next several weeks it never got beyond the Senate Resources Committee.

228 *Anchorage Daily News*, April 24, 1979, A-3; *Anchorage Daily Times*, April 24, 1979, 12; *Senate Bill History, 1979-80*, 345; *Alaska Senate Journal, 1979*, p. 231.

229 *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 6, 1979, 2.

230 *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 6, 1979, 1-2; Bradford Washburn, “State of Alaska, Tour to Switzerland, July 9-21, 1979,” in File 600 (Tokositna), Series 888 (1975-79), RG 242, ASA. The participants included state tourism director Richard Montague, Natural Resources Commissioner Robert LeResche, Parks Division Director Terry McWilliams, Tokositna Project Manager Vicky Sung, and Bob Henning of the Alaska Visitors Association. NPS Area Director John Cook, and hotel men Bill Sheffield and Al Parrish, were slated to go but did not take part.

231 *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 14, 1979, 1-2; July 18, 1979, 8; July 21, 1979, 1.

232 *Anchorage Daily News*, July 24, 1979, 1; *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 26, 1979, 64.

233 As noted in the *Anchorage Daily News*, July 24, 1979, 1, Gravel “still proposes dirigibles as transportation although he has abandoned the domed-city idea.” He also advocated building a dam on the Tokositna River that would create a ten-mile-long lake, and in locating a trade center and cultural institute in his proposed “Denali City.” *Anchorage Daily News*, July 2, 1979, A-1; Frome, “Disneyland North,” 6.

234 *Anchorage Daily Times*, July 26, 1979, 64.

235 *Anchorage Daily News*, April 17, 1980, A-1.

236 *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 9, 1979, L-7.

237 *Anchorage Daily News*, April 17, 1980, C-10; Cook to LaResche, October 1, 1979, in File 600 (Tokositna), Series 888, RG 242, ASA.

238 McWilliams to Ward, March 28, 1979, see above; Cook to LaResche, October 1, 1979, see above. The state-federal report was published the following July; see Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of State Parks and U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, *Environmental Investigation and Site Analysis, Tokositna Study Area, Denali State Park, Alaska*, July 1980,

at ARLIS.

239 *Anchorage Daily News*, April 18, 1980, A-1.

240 *Anchorage Daily News*, April 17, 1980, C-10.

241 As noted in the February 1981 HKS Associates study (see above), ERA/FMC was a consortium of Economics Research Associates and Fawcett, McDermott, Cavanagh, Inc.

242 *Anchorage Daily News*, April 18, 1980, A-1, A-8.

243 *Anchorage Daily News*, April 19, 1980, A-12.

244 *Anchorage Daily News*, April 25, 1980, A-3; *Alaska Senate Bill History, 1979-80*, 278-79.

245 The HKS Associates study (*Tokositna, A Development Study for the State of Alaska*, February 1981) incorporated information gathered by ERA and FMC, along with Dowl Engineers, Edward D. Stone Jr. and Associates, TDA Inc., and Sno-engineering Resource Management Consultants.

246 *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 10, 1980, B-4; September 14, 1980, B-3; September 16, 1980, C-1; *Anchorage Daily News*, September 16, 1980, A-12.

247 *Juneau Empire*, August 27, 1980, 1.

248 *Anchorage Daily Times*, December 29, 1980, A-1; *Anchorage Daily News*, December 30, 1980, A-3.

249 *Anchorage Daily Times*, January 20, 1981, B-1. The state gained tentative approval for the land in November 1981, ten months later.

250 *Anchorage Daily Times*, March 1, 1981, B-3; March 6, 1981, B-1; March 15, 1981, A-11; *Anchorage Daily News*, March 6, 1981, A-10.

251 SB 304 and SB 305, in *Alaska Senate Bill History, 1981-82*, 713-14; *Alaska Senate Journal*, 1981, 1125, 1132-33.

252 Substantial help in researching this section—specifically, references of Board of Geographic Names actions—has come from Michele Curran, who discussed this controversy at length in her dissertation, *United States Board on Geographic Names: The Impact of Controversy, 1890-Present*, Arizona State University, 2005.

253 *Anchorage Daily Times*, December 22, 1974, 1.

254 On February 18, SJR 6 passed the Senate, 13-4; on March 6, it passed the House, 24-9. *Alaska Senate Bill History*, 1975, 547.

255 *Alaska Senate Bill History*, 1975, 547; *Alaska Senate Journal*, 1975, 387.

256 Sheldon's book on the area was entitled *The Wilderness of Denali* (New York, Scribner's, 1930), and Stuck's chronicle of his mountain-climbing exploit was called *The Ascent of Denali* (New York, Scribner's, 1914). Shortly after his return from the peak, Stuck vowed that he would rename the peak if he was "able to prevail on the Board of Geographic Names to make the change" (*New York Times*, July 17, 1913, 1). The board, however, made no such change.

257 "583 Statement by the President Designating Two Peaks of Mount McKinley in Honor of Sir Winston Churchill, October 23, 1965," *Public Papers of Lyndon B. Johnson*, MasterFile Premier Database, American Reference Library; *Anchorage Daily Times*, October 23, 1965, 1; *New York Times*, October 24, 1965, 46. Churchill, the former British Prime Minister, had died at age 90 on January 24, 1965. Johnson's action appears to have been non-binding; it was not filed as a presidential proclamation, and it was never listed in the *Federal Register*.

258 The Secretary's authority was underscored in March 1976; see U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 327th meeting minutes, 11 March 1976, RG 324.004, National Archives.

259 U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 314th meeting minutes, 11 February 1975, RG 324.004, NARA CP.

260 U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 317th meeting minutes, 13 May 1975, and 318th meeting minutes, 10 June 1975; both in RG 324.004, NARA CP.

261 U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Executive Committee, Domestic Names Committee, 122nd meeting minutes, August 1975, 123rd meeting minutes, November 1975, and 124th meeting minutes, January 1976; all in RG 324.003, NARA CP; *New York Times*, October 14, 1975, 14.

262 U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Special Meeting, Board on Geographic Names and Domestic Names Committee, 15 March 1976; 328th meeting minutes, 8 April 1976; and 329th meeting minutes, 13 May 1976; all in RG 324.004, NARA CP.

263 U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 327th meeting minutes, 8 July 1976; 336th meeting minutes, 9 December 1976; and 337th meeting minutes, 13 January 1977; all in RG 324.004, NARA CP.

264 U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 340th, 343rd, 344th, and 345th, meeting minutes, 14 April 1977, 14 July 1977, 14 August, 1977, 9 September 1977; all in RG 324.004, NARA CP.

- 265 Williss, *Do Things Right the First Time*, revised edition, 88, 93-94; *Anchorage Daily Times*, August 25, 1977, 4.
- 266 HJR 672, in *Congressional Record* 123 (December 7, 1977), 38802, 38821.
- 267 U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 348th meeting minutes, 8 December 1977, RG 324.004, NARA CP; *Anchorage Daily Times*, September 12, 1977, 31; *New York Times*, October 24, 1977, 16.
- 268 U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 354th meeting minutes, 8 June 1978, RG 324.004, NARA CP.
- 269 U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 359th meeting minutes, 9 November 1978, RG 324.004, NARA CP.
- 270 Williss, "*Do Things Right the First Time*," revised edition, 103; Jimmy Carter, Presidential Proclamation 4616, in *Federal Register* 43 (December 5, 1980), 57035-41.
- 271 H.R. 39, Sec. 201(b)(1), in *Public Law 96-487, ANILCA, Legislative History*, vol. III, p. 678.
- 272 U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 364th, and 371st meeting minutes, 12 April 1979 and 25 October 1979, RG 324.004, NARA CP.
- 273 H.R. 39, Sec. 201(b)(2), in *ANILCA Legislative History*, vol. VII, 19; *New York Times*, November 16, 1980, 62.
- 274 S. 9 (January 15, 1979), in *ANILCA Legislative History*, vol. VII, 466; U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 373rd meeting minutes, 12 December 1979, and 376th meeting minutes, 13 March 1980; both in RG 324.004, NARA CP.
- 275 U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 377th meeting minutes, 10 April 1980, RG 324.004, NARA CP.
- 276 96th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, *Alaska National Interest Lands*, Senate Report 96-413, November 14, 1979 (Washington, GPO, 1979), 166, as noted in U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Domestic Names Committee, 376th meeting minutes, 13 March 1980, RG 324.004, NARA CP.
- 277 *New York Times*, November 16, 1980, 62; U.S. House of Representatives, 97th Congress, 1st Session, "Providing for the Retention of the Name of Mount McKinley" (Report 97-207), 3.