

general management plan



PROPOSED MANAGEMENT ZONING

As a basis for all subsequent land use planning, zoning broadly delineates the appropriate management strategies for various lands, based on their resource characteristics and how they can best be used to achieve the park's purpose and objectives. Areas of Denali will be placed in four management zones--natural, historic, park development, and special use--as shown on the Management Zoning map. The management emphasis for each zone is described below.

Natural Zone. Lands and waters in this zone are managed to protect natural resources, processes, and habitat for wildlife, and to provide opportunities for recreational activities. Subsistence uses by local rural residents are permitted in the 1980 additions to the park where such uses are traditional in accordance with the provisions of title VIII of ANILCA. Because of the relatively pristine nature of the park, more than 97 percent of the total acreage is in this zone. This zone includes those lands either designated as wilderness or determined suitable for designation as wilderness. These lands will be managed to ensure that natural processes prevail. Those uses compatible with the 1964 Wilderness Act and special uses allowed by ANILCA will be permitted in this subzone. (See the "Wilderness Suitability Review" section of this document for a more detailed discussion of wilderness areas and allowable activities.)

Historic Zone. Lands in this zone are managed primarily to preserve cultural resources. In Denali this zone includes all the sites and structures that are listed on or are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Appropriate uses in this zone include visitor appreciation and study of cultural features and adaptive use of historic structures for other park purposes. Lands qualifying for the historic zone are not represented on the zoning map because of their small scale. For a description of these properties, refer to the cultural resource description in part two of this document.

Park Development Zone. Lands in this zone are managed to accommodate major development and intensive use. In Denali this zone includes the road corridor and all lands where major facilities exist.

Special Use Zone. Lands in this zone are owned or used by parties other than the National Park Service. In Denali this zone includes private properties and mining claims.

VISITOR USE AND GENERAL DEVELOPMENT

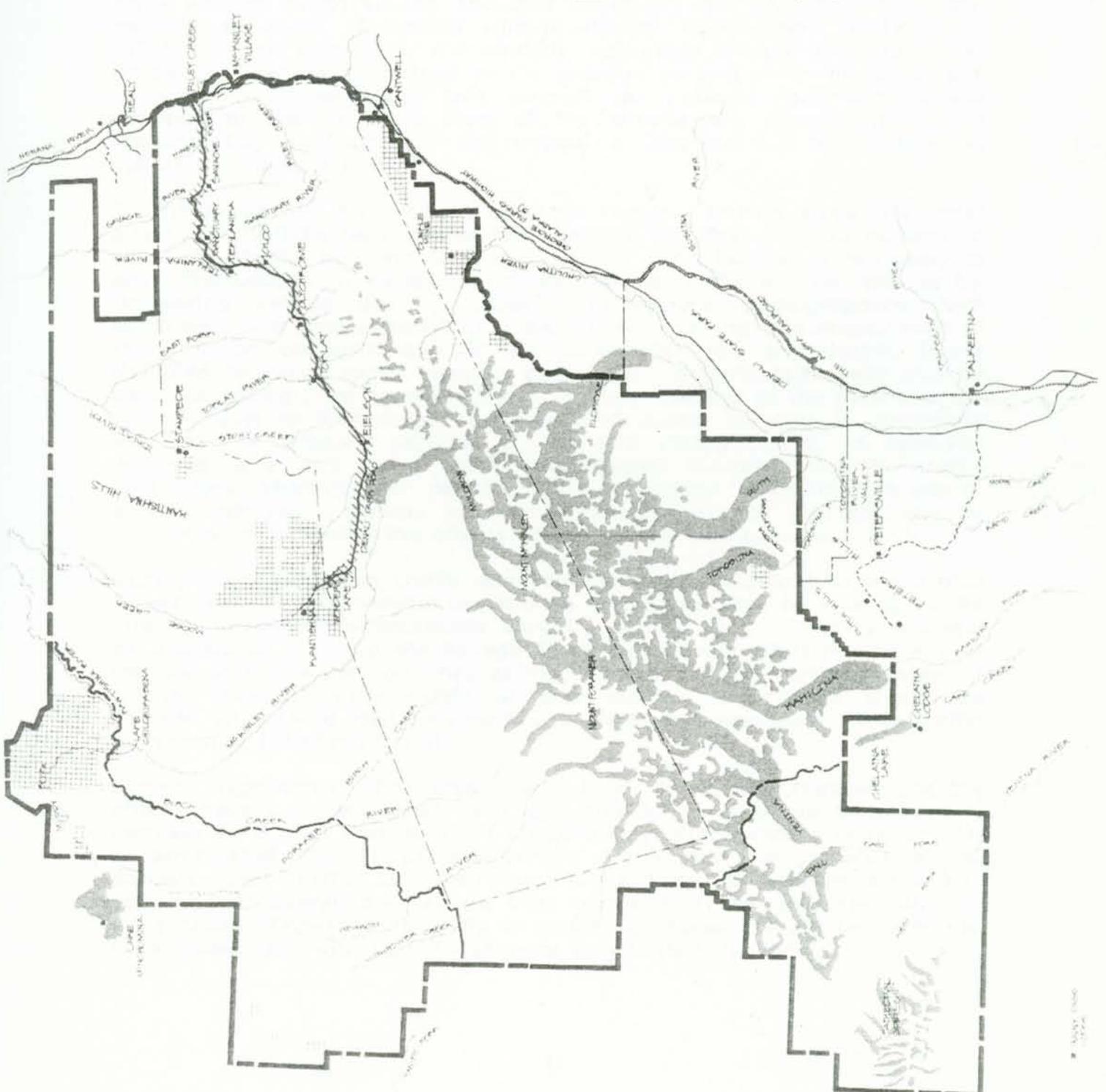
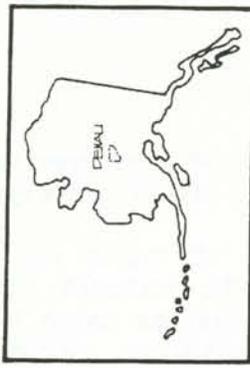
In 1972, when the George Parks Highway opened, visitor use at Denali totaled 88,615. Over the next 12 years visitor use grew at an average rate of 25,000 visitor days per year to a total of 394,426 visits in 1984. The escalating demands on Denali's resources, coupled with the need to provide a visitor experience equal to the resources, is the single most critical problem facing park managers. The solution presented in this plan is to expand recreational opportunities on the south side of Denali, then to modify use on the north to protect resource values. Based on current trends it is expected that the demand for use of Denali will increase by another 250,000 people by the end of the 10-year planning period. This amount of additional demand cannot be accommodated in the existing park road corridor without a significant decline in the visible wildlife, but it can be accommodated if the south side is developed as an alternative destination for visitors.

The southern expansion of Denali National Park to the boundary of adjoining Denali State Park has created an opportunity to add a new dimension to the Denali experience. The established uses of the "old park" will continue while work is undertaken to develop Denali State Park and the south side of Denali National Park for expanded and diversified visitor use. Together the north and south sides will offer a large range of visitor experiences geared to the full complement of Denali's outstanding natural resources. Developed in this way, the parks should be able to meet visitor demands for many years.

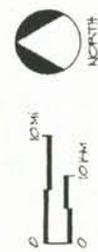
NORTH-SIDE PROPOSALS

During the 70 years of National Park Service stewardship at Denali, the visiting public has been accommodated almost exclusively along the park road corridor, where the principal experience has been viewing Mount McKinley and the park's fascinating wildlife. Within the past 15 years, however, since the completion of the George Parks Highway and the associated dramatic increase in visits to Denali, the National Park Service has become aware that increasing traffic has been detrimental to opportunities for viewing wildlife along the park road corridor.

In 1972, the year the Parks Highway opened, a mandatory public transportation system was instituted, and only visitors with overnight or other special use permits were allowed to drive their cars beyond Savage River. Because of significant increases in visitor use over the next decade, by 1981 the level of bus and permitted private vehicle traffic had increased 50 percent and was again recognized as a threat to wildlife viewing. A special wildlife study undertaken that year and completed in March 1984 concluded that the traffic increase between 1974 and 1981 had not had a significant effect on overall populations in the area, but that it had caused many moose and bears to avoid using the road corridor. In addition to the demonstrated effect of reducing the number of moose and bears that utilize habitat in the immediate vicinity of the road, there is



- NATURAL ZONE
- 97.5% OF THE PARK AND PRESERVE
- SPECIAL USE ZONE
- 1.7% OF THE PARK AND PRESERVE
- PARK DEVELOPMENT ZONE
- 0.7% OF THE PARK AND PRESERVE
- DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE BOUNDARY
- AIRSTRIP
- GLACIER



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Denali National Park and Preserve
 United States Department of the Interior
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 1991 2001 2002
 DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

concern that increasing traffic might eventually disrupt the movements of migrating herds if the spacing between vehicles becomes too short.

In an effort to allow as many people as possible to view all of the big four Alaskan wildlife in their natural habitat, the National Park Service will make additional use of the shuttle bus system and allow fewer private vehicles on the park road. It has been demonstrated that the activities associated with private vehicle use cause the greatest disturbance to wildlife, as evidenced by their avoidance behavior, because the occupants of private vehicles can stop at will and approach the animals on foot, while visitors riding shuttle and tour buses are not allowed to leave the vehicles in areas of critical wildlife habitat (NPS Singer and Beattie 1984). Buses also have the obvious advantage of carrying up to 40 people per vehicle, compared to the average carload of three people per vehicle. In implementing this concept the National Park Service will continue to start the operation of the shuttle bus system during the Memorial Day weekend and will extend it into the fall for as long as visitor use remains high.

Traffic levels will be reduced in three stages. During stage one, total bus traffic will be held to the 1984 monthly averages plus 15 percent to allow the shuttle bus and tour bus service to be tailored more closely to daily fluctuations in demand. Private vehicle traffic will be reduced by decreasing vehicle use by campers, professional photographers, NPS employees, and people traveling to Kantishna. During this stage, some of the interior campgrounds will be accessible only by shuttle buses designed to carry extra camping equipment. Shuttle buses will also be used increasingly for employee travel to duty stations in the park and for public travel to Kantishna. Customers of visitor services in Kantishna will use the company vehicles or the NPS shuttle buses. A specially designed bus will carry most handicapped visitors into the park. Professional photographer permits will be managed to reduce the use of private vehicles. Impacts on wildlife along the road corridor will be monitored to determine the effects of decreasing traffic levels.

During stage two, bus traffic will continue to be held to 1984 levels plus 15 percent. Private vehicle use will be further reduced by making all the interior campgrounds accessible only by shuttle bus. Campers will still be allowed to drive to the Savage River campground, but not to any of the campgrounds beyond that point. There will be further review of wildlife viewing opportunities at this stage. NPS travel should be reduced once large road construction projects are completed. This traffic is currently being monitored.

During stage three, after total traffic levels have been reduced and the effects have been monitored, tour and shuttle bus use will be allowed to increase to a level that does not unacceptably affect wildlife behavior. It is anticipated that if private vehicle traffic can be reduced by 45 percent, bus traffic can then be increased by 20 percent while still achieving an overall decrease in total traffic of 17 percent (see table 1). As a result of these actions, up to 24,000 additional visitors per year can be accommodated with less disturbance to wildlife behavior.



POLYCHROME PASS REST STOP

Table 1: Proposed Changes in Traffic Levels

	<u>1984</u>	<u>Seasonal Use At Full Plan Implementation</u>	<u>Net Change</u>
Tour and shuttle buses	4,245	5,094	+20%
Private vehicles	6,662	3,664	-45%
NPS vehicles	<u>1,754</u>	<u>1,754</u>	<u>0</u>
Total traffic	<u>12,661</u>	<u>10,512</u>	<u>-17%</u>

Based on past trends, the proposed 20 percent increase in bus service will not be enough to accommodate all of the demand. Visitors who cannot be accommodated on the north side of the park can be accommodated on the south side once the proposal for south-side development is implemented; however, the proposals for the northside are not dependent on the south-side proposals being implemented.

The Wonder Lake campground will be relocated and expanded from 20 to 30 sites. The new location will be just west and slightly south of the present location. As stated above, this and all the campgrounds beyond Savage River will be tent campgrounds accessible only by shuttle bus. Four new handicap-accessible sites will be added to the Savage River campground.

Many of the proposals for the north-side road corridor were described in the 1983 Development Concept Plan. These include rehabilitation of the road surface, upgrading of utility systems, renovation of existing structures, and development of new interpretive facilities. A new \$3.7 million visitor access center will orient visitors to the interior of the park and serve as a terminal for the visitor transportation system. All of the specific development projects are listed on the Proposals chart. Together these actions will improve health and safety conditions, provide better information and interpretation, and help confine environmental impacts to the most suitable locations. The intent of these actions is to reinforce existing conditions. The preliminary cost estimates for these projects are listed in appendix E.

An amendment to the 1983 Development Concept Plan is being developed for the park entrance. It will discuss the options of removing the hotel from the park, replacing or rehabilitating the existing temporary structures, or building a new hotel. The public will be involved in the development and review of the DCP/EA.

Any further development of commercial visitor facilities on private land in the Kantishna mining district will be considered incompatible with the planned purposes of the park and the need to limit vehicle use in this portion of the park. The National Park Service is concerned that commercial development would increase the demand for vehicle use and proposes to avoid it by acquiring the surface estates to patented mining claims. This issue is discussed in greater detail in the "Land Protection Plan" section of this document.