RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommended land protection approaches for nonfederal land are discussed below. Information about specific tracts--owners, acreages, minimum interest needed for protection, justification, proposed method of acquisition, and priority--is included in appendix L.

The use of patented mining claims for new visitor facilities would conflict with the objective of the general management plan to reduce the traffic in the road corridor (refer to the discussion of visitor use and general development in the "General Management Plan" section of this document). The existing recreational uses of private properties in the Kantishna area are considered compatible; however, additional recreational use and facility development in this portion of the park would generate additional traffic on the park road and increase the problem of avoidance behavior by wildlife. To avoid this potential for adverse effects, the National Park Service will seek to acquire, through purchase, donation, or exchange, the surface estates to the mining properties to preclude large-scale recreational development. This action will allow mining activity to continue according to applicable laws and regulations (see appendix B). For the small private tracts an easement will be acquired to maintain compatible uses at existing levels.

The National Park Service will use existing authorities to minimize the adverse effects of ongoing mining activities. Validity determinations for unpatented claims will be completed as quickly as feasible to determine status. Wherever new mining activity might introduce development into a previously undisturbed area, the National Park Service will acquire the mineral properties in fee title, through donation, exchange, or purchase.

The National Park Service will seek a land exchange with the state of Alaska to place the "wolf townships" inside the northeast park boundary. These lands were recognized by Congress as important habitat for park caribou and wolf populations, and they are also used by park bears and moose. Acquisition of these townships is needed to protect the natural ranges of these populations from incompatible development and sport hunting. Specific concerns for the wolf townships are that the Savage wolf pack populations have dropped drastically in recent years and also that wintering caribou are particularly sensitive to human disturbances (NPS, Singer and Beattie 1984). Adding the wolf townships to the park would complete the habitat and range protection of the Toklat and Savage wolf packs and the wintering caribou herd.

This exchange of approximately 95,000 acres has been identified for possible consideration in the state of Alaska and is a recommendation of the draft "Tanana Basin Plan" (ADNR 1984). Lands involved are primarily state lands which recently have been excluded from the state land disposal program. A total of 41 small tract entries (206 acres total) have been patented by the state from previous small tract sales, and these will not be included in the exchange or relinquishment. Uses on these lands, which are primarily recreational, will be monitored for any

adverse impacts on wildlife within the new park boundary. The lands also include Eight-Mile Lake and portions of the Stampede Trail.

The secretary of the interior is authorized to acquire by donation or exchange available state lands contiguous to the park boundary by notifying Congress of this intention. If acquisition of these townships is possible only through an exchange, the National Park Service will consider exchanging certain lands of approximately equal acreage and value. Congressional approval is required to increase or decrease the total amount of land within the boundary by more than 23,000 acres.

The state intends to leave the wolf townships open to mineral entry and coal prospecting and leasing. However, the National Park Service recommends the exclusion of these lands from mineral entry until they are acquired by the federal government. Once the area is within the boundaries of the national park, it will be closed to mineral entry.

The national park and preserve boundary will be adjusted to follow natural geographic and hydrographic features wherever possible. The National Park Service proposes that much of the western boundary of the park follow the Swift Fork River. Placing the boundary along this natural barrier to the spread of fire will greatly enhance the fire protection afforded to state and native lands, consistent with the "Tanana-Minchumina Interagency Fire Management Plan." In addition, the inclusion of these lands within Denali National Park will offer added protection to an area of significant caribou habitat, based on 1984 caribou surveys, which indicated use of an area immediately east of the Swift Fork by as many as 200 to 300 caribou. If made part of the preserve, the area will still be subject to both sport and subsistence hunting.

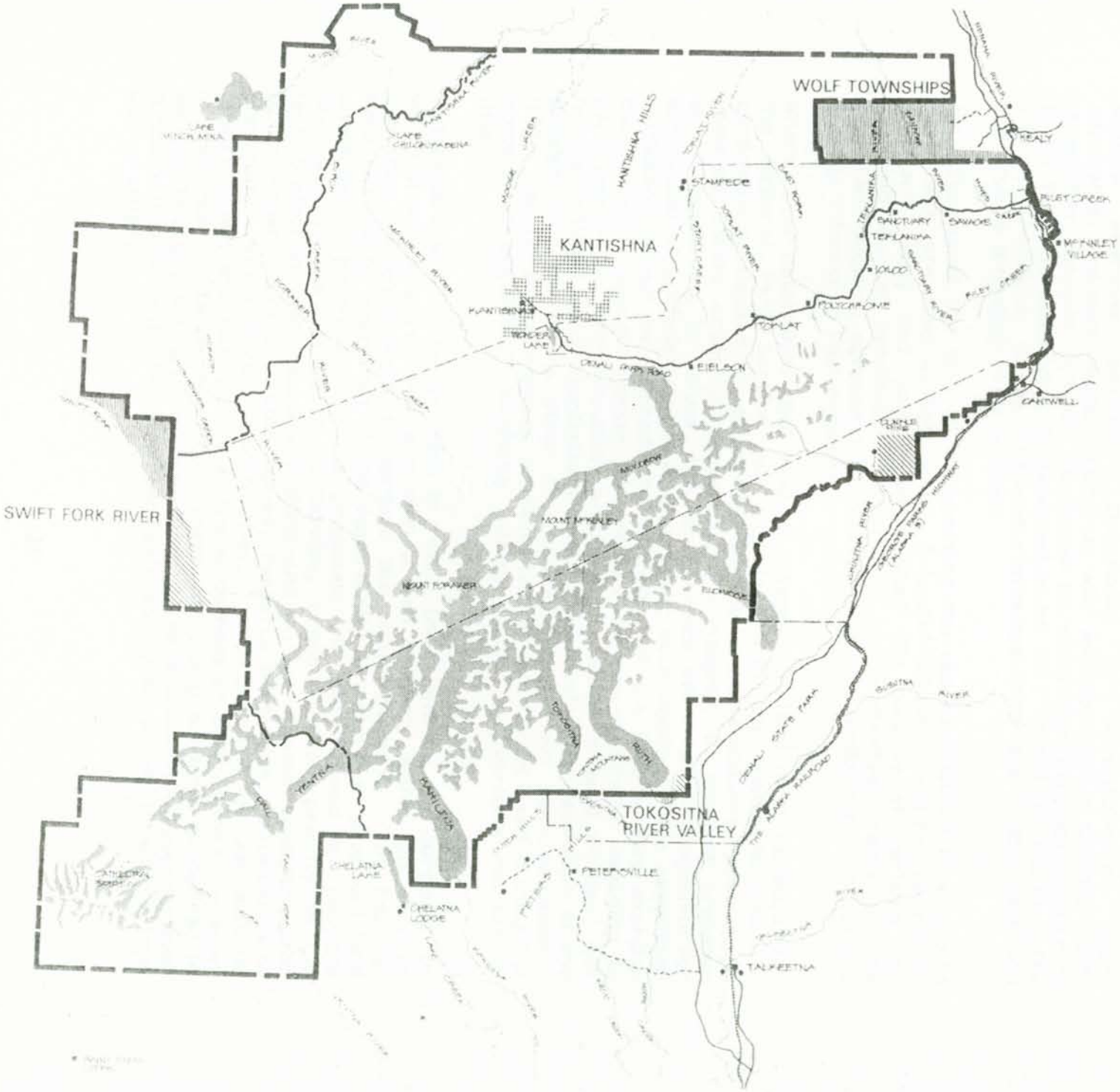
Other areas of federal parkland identified for possible exchange with the state include fragments of small river valleys, such as the Tokositna, which are only partially inside the southern park boundary. Deletion of these valley segments from the national park will simplify the description of legal hunting areas and provide easily identifiable boundaries for sportsmen and others. The recommended boundary redesignation will also exclude one headquarters site and two trade and manufacturing sites from the national park boundary. Since sport hunting will then be allowed in this area now closed to hunting, landowners could realize economic benefits from guiding or other services.

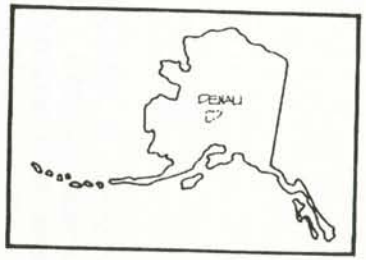
The National Park Service will not seek to include the Chelatna Lake area within Denali National Park and Preserve. Congress recognized that this area was potentially valuable for recreational use and access to the south side of Denali. However, the current proposal for south-side development and use, which focuses on the Ruth Glacier, can be implemented without federal land management in the Chelatna Lake area.

The National Park Service will work with the state to promote compatible management of lands between developable parcels and park lands to facilitate fire management, avoid interference with traditional subsistence uses, and protect wildlife and cultural resource values. Also, for the

navigable portion of the Tokositna River and any rivers determined navigable in the future, the National Park Service strongly urges the state of Alaska to disallow activities that would compromise the natural, cultural, scenic, and recreational values of Denali National Park and Preserve.

The National Park Service will continue to work cooperatively with native groups in the management of cemetery and historic sites to preserve their cultural significance regardless of their ownership.





AREAS TO BE ADDED THROUGH EXCHANGE

AREAS TO BE DELETED THROUGH EXCHANGE

ACQUIRE SURFACE ESTATES

DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE BOUNDARY

AIRSTRIP

GLACIER

NORTH

LAND PROTECTION

Denali National Park and Preserve
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service