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## Alaska National Parks News Release

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### NPS Releases Brooks River Visitor Access EIS

The National Park Service has released the final Brooks River Visitor Access Environmental Impact Statement, identifying a preferred alternative which calls for the construction of a permanent bridge crossing the Brooks River and other associated developments in Katmai National Park and Preserve.

The Brooks River is a short river connecting Brooks Lake and Naknek Lake. Midway along the river is a low waterfall where dozens of brown bears gather each summer to catch migrating salmon. Bear viewing opportunities, along with trout and salmon fishing, a campground and lodge make the Brooks River area the most-visited part of the 4 million acre park and preserve.

The project – which may be built in phases – is estimated to cost \$7.4 million, and is not yet funded. The improvements are aimed at improving visitor access, safety and resource protection in the area. The site currently has a floating bridge which is removed each fall. The bridge and trails at the mouth of the Brooks River allow visitors and staff to move between the lodge, campground and NPS offices on the north side of the river and viewing platform and facilities on the south side of the river. The road leading to the Valley of 10,000 Smokes is also on the south side of the river. An expanded series of boardwalks is also called for in the plan.

A 1996 development plan for the Brooks River area is amended by this plan; the existing float plane landing area will not be moved, nor will a dock, breakwater or road be constructed.

The final EIS is available at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BrooksVisitorAccessFEIS>. No action will be taken on the preferred alternative for 30 days, after which a record of decision will be written.

Katmai National Park and Preserve is one of Alaska's oldest national park areas, established in 1918. The park hosts about 40,000-50,000 visitors per year. More information on the park is available at [www.nps.gov/katm](http://www.nps.gov/katm)

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