

# **LONG-RANGE INTERPRETIVE PLAN**

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## **WRANGELL-ST ELIAS NATIONAL PARK and PRESERVE**

**SEPTEMBER 2005**



**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

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and PRESERVE**

**September 2005**

**prepared by**

**Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve**

**Harpers Ferry Center  
Interpretive Planning**

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# INTRODUCTION

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Alaska's Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve is like no other in the contiguous 48 states. You must see it to believe it. Number and scale loom large here, magnified by splendid isolation. The largest U.S. National Park, it equals six Yellowstones, with peaks upon peaks and glaciers after glaciers, offering spectacular outdoor recreation opportunities. Wrangell-St. Elias is an inhabited wilderness, where people have lived continuously for thousands of years.

Communicating with park visitors and local residents and providing quality park experiences are challenges at Wrangell-St. Elias. "Visitors" are diverse. For some visitors, a trip to Wrangell is a once in a lifetime backcountry wilderness pilgrimage. For a growing number of visitors, Wrangell-St. Elias is a park seen from bordering highways or experienced vicariously at the park's visitor center in Copper Center. Many visitors engage the services of commercial operators to access the park to climb, hunt, fish, flight-see, or hike. For other people, Wrangell-St. Elias is their homeland and/or their backyard upon which they depend for subsistence, spiritual, recreational and economic resources.

There are few visitor facilities within Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, no single park entrance, and many visitors will never come into contact with National Park Service staff or facilities. Yet the park's diverse audiences still need to understand Wrangell-St. Elias in order to appreciate and protect this unique park. Finding ways to achieve that understanding is the challenge of this plan.

## OUT MY WINDOW

By Zoe L. Ellis  
Slana School, Alaska

Out my window from my house on a hill,  
I see many things not many folks will.

There are three mountain ranges that form a nest,  
The Mentastas, Nutzotins, and Wrangells are best.  
The tiny white specks are really Dall sheep  
Bedded down on rock ledges, fast asleep.

Dad's little red plane roars off the airstrip.  
He's taking out visitors for a hiking trip.  
Up on Jaeger Mesa, above the clouds high,  
Where the spectacular view makes anyone sigh.

Some eagles are soaring in circles, I see.  
They must have a kill to feed their babies  
In a snug nest in a tall spruce tree.

A red parka squirrel fusses with a spruce cone.  
A black and white magpie pecks on an old bone.  
The sun is still shining even though it's late.  
The long days of summer are really great.

The Park is my yard as far as I can see,  
No buildings or streets or pollution for me.  
My home Nabesna, population ten,  
Living way out here, well, it makes me grin.

# THE PLANNING PROCESS

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The goal of the interpretive planning process is not merely the creation of a plan. The ultimate goal is the development of a cost-effective, tightly-focused, high-quality park interpretive program that effectively addresses all audiences and achieves management goals.

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) recommends actions that should take place over the next 8-10 years. It identifies park themes, describes visitor experience goals, and recommends a wide array of interpretive services, media, programs, and outreach activities to communicate in the most effective and efficient way the park's purpose, significance, themes, and goals. The LRIP will allow the park to recognize and address issues created by increased visitation, such as impacts to small communities and subsistence resources. It will join a park-produced annual implementation plan and interpretive database to make up a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP) for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. This plan replaces the 1993 Interpretive Prospectus for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. A separate interpretive plan for the Yakutat District of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve was completed in 2000. The Yakutat District is appended to this plan.

Work on this LRIP began in the spring of 2003 when the Harpers Ferry Center interpretive planner traveled to Wrangell-St. Elias to meet with park staff and become familiar with park resources. Park staff and the planner selected the planning team to include members of the park staff, park partners, and other interpretive experts. A 2-day workshop was held in Copper Center in May 2003 with representatives of the planning team, and a draft of the planning foundation (purpose, significance, themes, visitor experience goals, audiences, and issues and influences) was produced. This draft was taken out for review and comment in a series of public meetings in Copper Center, McCarthy, Chitina, and Kenny Lake in June 2003, and in Tok, Slana, Mentasta, and Chistochina in July 2003. Comment forms were also distributed, and written comments were incorporated with those from the public meetings. Relevant comments from these meetings were sent to the planning team, who finalized the planning foundation. Comments related to implementation suggestions were tabled until the October workshop. In October 2003, the planning team held a 3-day workshop in Copper Center, AK to develop recommendations for media, programs, facilities, outreach activities and partnerships to meet the goals described in the planning foundation. In 2004 a series of meetings dealt with extensive comments received and created some new directions to make the plan more flexible and usable. In 2005 the plan was reviewed for final changes and published. At least yearly it will be reviewed and needed changes incorporated.

Barring legislative changes or major new research, the planning foundation expressed in this LRIP will remain constant over the life of this plan. Specific recommendations about media and programs will be updated as staffing, funding, technology, or resource conditions change. Further design documents will need to be prepared to implement some of the goals and



recommendations in this plan. To insure that this plan remains flexible to meet changing needs, a copy is being published in a 3-ring binder for easy replacement of pages.



## SITE BACKGROUND

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Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve is located 200 miles northeast of Anchorage, Alaska. The park's 13.2 million acres contain superlative scenery, abundant wildlife, and fascinating human history. Wrangell-St. Elias is the largest unit in the National Park system and together with the adjacent Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Kluane National Park and Tatshenshini-Alsek Provincial Park, forms one of the largest terrestrial protected areas on earth. There are private and Native allotment lands within the park and preserve. See park/preserve map in Appendix G.

The park is bordered by and visible from two of Alaska's major highways – the Richardson and the Glenn Highways. Two gravel roads enter the park. The Nabesna Road, 42 miles long, begins at Slana. The 60-mile McCarthy Road begins at Chitina and ends at the Kennicott River on the doorstep of the historic communities of McCarthy and Kennecott. Visitors also access the park on small planes which depart from communities such as Tok, Gulkana, Chitina, and McCarthy and land on numerous airstrips in the park.

Park offices and the main park visitor center are in Copper Center. NPS visitor contact facilities are also in Slana, Kennecott, Chitina, and Yakutat.

### **Legislative Background**

Wrangell-St. Elias National Monument was established in 1978.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated Wrangell-St. Elias National Monument and Kluane National Park as a World Heritage Site on October 26, 1979.

On December 2, 1980, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) created or expanded 13 National Park Service units, including Wrangell-St. Elias. Wrangell-St. Elias NP&P was established to, among other purposes:

“... maintain unimpaired the scenic beauty and quality of high mountain peaks, foothills, glacial systems, lakes, and streams, valleys, and coastal landscapes in their natural state; to protect habitat for and populations of fish and wildlife including but not limited to caribou, brown bears, Dall sheep, moose, wolves, trumpeter swans, and other waterfowl, and marine mammals; and to provide continued opportunities, including reasonable access for mountain climbing, mountaineering, other wilderness recreational activities. Subsistence uses by local residents shall be permitted in the park, where such uses are traditional in accordance with the provisions of title VIII.”

## PURPOSE

Purpose statements describe the reasons for which an individual unit of the National Park System was established. They are based on the unit's legislative mandates and on National Park Service policies. The purpose statements are the most fundamental criteria against which the appropriateness of all recommendations, operational decisions, and actions for the park are to be tested.

Planning focuses first on why a park was established and what conditions should exist there before delving into details about specific actions.

The purpose of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve (relative to education and interpretation), based on legislation and the team's reading of congressional records and park planning documents, includes:

- Conserving and interpreting vast intact and functioning sub-arctic ecosystems, altered ecosystems, and landscape processes of which human beings are a part.
- Providing opportunities for recreation, education, research, subsistence, and traditional ways of life in a wild setting.
- Conserving and interpreting the historic and cultural landscape.



High peaks in Wrangell-St. Elias NP&P

## SIGNIFICANCE

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Significance statements help define and describe the park's importance to the nation's natural and cultural heritage. Significance statements help managers make decisions that preserve the resources and values necessary to achieve the park's purposes. Significance statements are based on legislation and congressional records, special resource studies, park planning documentation, and expert opinion.

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve has national significance for the following reasons:

- Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve is part of one of the largest international terrestrial protected areas in the world, conserving geological and hydrological processes and biological diversity.
- Because of its vast size, high peaks, glaciers, and wilderness, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve provides world-class opportunities for discovery, reflection, unconfined recreation and adventure in a remote setting.
- Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve recognizes that people have been a part of the environment for thousands of years. This park is part of a worldwide conservation trend that recognizes the value of people continuing to live as part of protected places.
- Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve preserves, manages and presents a collective human heritage which continues to profoundly influence regional, national, and international political and economic developments.

# PROGRAM PURPOSE AND DIRECTION

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Guidance – Service-wide, regional, and park written policies and programs

Direction – Philosophical and program direction for the future

## Guidance

### Interpretation

#### Service-wide

- National Park Service Interpretive Development Program

#### Alaska Region

- Inspiring Places, Inspiring People (Proposed Alaska Region Priorities for FY 05)

#### Wrangell-St. Elias

- General Management Plan, including Appendix A of the Kenecott Cultural Landscape Report

### Education

#### Service-wide

- National Park Service Interpretive Development Program

#### Alaska Region

- Inspiring Places, Inspiring People (Proposed Alaska Region Priorities for FY 05)

#### Wrangell-St. Elias

- General Management Plan, including Appendix A of the Kenecott Cultural Landscape Report

### Partnerships

#### Service-wide

- Director's order # 20 Agreements, which describes the types of agreements the NPS may enter into with federal and non-federal entities; the responsibilities and functions of the NPS in these agreements; and regulations, policies, and procedures the NPS must follow.

#### Alaska Region

- Inspiring People, Inspiring Places

#### Wrangell-St. Elias

- See Partnership Listing in Appendix 9

## Direction

### Interpretation

- Stay founded in and current with the National Park Service service-wide Interpretive Development Program, maintaining focus on facilitating intellectual and/or emotional connections between audiences and park resources to create an increased stewardship ethic.
- Address critical resource issues quickly, creatively, and effectively to protect park resources and visitors. Work soundly and in synchrony with management, regional, and service-wide direction.
- Firmly root all interpretive products in the interpretive themes and goals listed in the Long-Range Interpretive Plan for Wrangell-St. Elias NP/P.
- Provide effective information, orientation and interpretation opportunities to hard-to-reach visitors through in-reach and outreach (i.e. personnel at military bases, mountaineers, fly-in visitors, dip-netters, and hunters).
- An annual implementation plan will describe steps the interpretive division and other park divisions will take to achieve action items outlined in the plan. It will also describe efforts to be made to achieve funding for later completion of action items. It will describe any known changes to the plan itself and its action items.

### Education and Outreach

- Firmly root all interpretive products in the interpretive themes and goals listed in the Long-Range Interpretive Plan for Wrangell-St. Elias NP/P.
- Stay founded in and current with the service-wide Interpretive Development Program, focusing on facilitating intellectual and/or emotional connections between audiences and park resources.
- Develop effective informational, interpretive, and educational outreach opportunities that reach underserved audiences and/or provide underserved curricula and concurrently meet the needs of the teachers.
- Wherever possible education products should be curriculum-based; in all cases, education products will directly relate to park interpretive themes and goals and work toward accomplishing park interpretive action items.
- A comprehensive education program will be developed in partnership with teachers to include the following elements: organized, scheduled, sequential, comprehensive for grades K-12.

- Integrate an annual education plan into the annual implementation plan. It will speak to accomplishment of action items.

## Partnerships

- Develop and maintain effective partnerships in order to provide enhanced interpretive and educational opportunities for park audiences.
- Base partnership products on LRIP themes and goals and on accomplishing LRIP action items.
- Consider projects proposed by partners in light of park interpretive goals.



**Kennecott Mill Chute, C Buchman**

# PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

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Primary interpretive themes do not include everything we may wish to interpret, but rather the ideas that are critical to a visitor's understand of the park's significance.

Primary interpretive themes are those ideas or concepts that visitors or audiences should understand. They are the key ideas through which the meanings of the park's nationally significant resources are conveyed to the public. These themes provide the foundation for interpretive programs and media at the park. All interpretive efforts should relate to one or more of the themes and each theme should be addressed in the interpretive program. The themes listed below are in no particular priority order, but have been numbered for easy reference.

1. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Kluane National Park, and Tatshenshini-Alsek Provincial Park make up a World Heritage Site, one of the largest terrestrial protected areas in the world in which natural processes function relatively undisturbed.
  - The potential and demonstrated effects of climate change, commercial fisheries, exotic plant species, containments, altered landscapes, and other natural or human-caused changes will be interpreted
2. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve's dynamic natural landscapes provide opportunities to study and witness the processes of biodiversity and wildlife ecology as well as the dynamic forces of weather, water, glaciers, plate tectonics and volcanism.
  - Management of wildlife is focused on natural processes, even when there processes lead to displacement or extinction.
3. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, other agencies, and landowners manage the watersheds necessary for the perpetuation of the Copper River salmon fisheries; salmon are the heartbeat of the economy, ecology, culture and history of south central Alaska.
4. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve is an inhabited wilderness where human activity and diverse cultural values remain integrated with natural processes.
5. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve's vast size, high peaks, glaciers and wilderness provide world class opportunities for discovery, reflection, unconfined recreation and adventure in a remote setting



6. Mineral extraction was a driving force behind Euro-American exploration and settlement of the Copper Basin, and both influenced and was influenced by national and international events and economies.
7. Since prehistoric times, the Wrangell-St. Elias region has been home to many peoples, ranging from Ahtna and Upper Tanana, Eyak and Tlingit to Euro-American settlers; each has developed and continues to develop different socioeconomic lifestyles based on their unique relationship with the area's rich diversity of resources.
  - In the Ahtna culture, trails could be owned and considered part of a person's home. When a trail owner died, their trail would no longer be used.
8. The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA), which created Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and its designated Wilderness, set forth complex and often controversial provisions for the protection and use of the park.



**Kennecott Mill Building, C. Buchman**

## AUDIENCES

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Wrangell-St. Elias currently receives approximately 40,000 visitors per year. A Visitor Study was conducted in July 1995 under the Visitor Services Project. This study found that most visitors (61%) stayed more than one day, and the Milepost (a for-profit guide to the Alaska Highway) was the most important source of information about the park (45%). Most of the visitors from the US were from Alaska (31%), while 11% of all visitors were international. The most common activities were scenic driving (82%), viewing wildlife (57%) walking around Kennecott (51%) and day hiking around the park, including Nabesna (49%).

Visitors and audiences for park interpretive and educational programs can generally be grouped into the following categories, although many individuals will fall into more than one:

**Residents of the park and surrounding area** – A relatively small number of people live in and around the park, but many of these individuals use the park frequently, often in a “backyard” sense. These individuals use the park for recreation and subsistence during different seasons of the year. They often learn about the park, opportunities for recreation and use of the park, and NPS rules and regulations by word of mouth. Many in this group have a direct or indirect economic reliance on the park. Many have preconceived ideas of the NPS, and the agency’s relationship with this group evolves over time. These individuals have a high potential for impact on park resources (i.e. using 4-wheelers or snow machines, cutting trees, and taking wildlife).

**Alaskan Native tribal members and elders** - This group shares many traits with surrounding area residents, such as subsistence use; in addition they may hold specific cultural values related to place and a longer historic use of the area. Elders are a traditional source of knowledge and should be treated according to cultural protocol.

**Independent families and travelers** – Independent families and travelers (not on an organized tour) fly, drive, or travel by passenger ferry from the contiguous 48 states, elsewhere in Alaska, and Canada. Some travel to the park in cars (including rentals), and some in RVs. These visitors primarily utilize the road system, visitor center/contact stations. They often car camp or stay in RV campgrounds. Many are Alaskan. These visitors tend to be well informed.

**International visitors** – International visitors are a subgroup of all visitor types. They tend to be affluent. Europeans dominate the international visitation at this time but visitors also come from many other parts of the world.

**McCarthy/Kennecott visitors** – These are destination visitors who have planned to visit the McCarthy/Kennecott area on their trip. They are predominantly independent travelers, although a few visit with small tour groups. There is a high percentage of Alaskans in this group. Most of these visitors spend at least one night; a few fly or drive in only for the day. Private property within the park boundaries is a confusing topic for some of them.

**Small tour groups** – These groups of individuals, couples and families are usually accompanied by a guide, and are often affiliated with a special interest group (i.e. church, youth, non-profit). These visitors are generally well informed by their guides.

**Large commercial package tours** – Many of these visitors see, but never enter the park, although some do buy packages to fly or drive into portions of the park (primarily Kennecott). Some come to the Copper Center visitor center on a bus or shuttle. Many do not know they are going into or near a national park; they have booked the tour to “see Alaska.” Many of the package tour companies are looking for day trip opportunities into the park. These visitors are diverse in age, but tend to be upper middle income. Rising numbers of cruise ship lines are including Wrangell-St. Elias as a stop in the terrestrial portion of their trips.

**Education groups** – This diverse group includes school districts, local children, boy/girl scouts, nongovernmental organizations, educational institutes, Elderhostels, and college students who come to the park for educational purposes. These groups do tend to interact with the National Park Service and commercial operators.



**Educational Program, Copper Center VC,  
NPS Photo G. Hart**

**Backpackers/Rafters/Kayakers/Canoers** – In general this group does their homework by contacting the park, reading guidebooks, looking at websites, talking to commercial operators, and visiting Alaska Public Lands Information Center. However, there is still a significant portion of this group who arrive at the park wanting to do a backcountry trip but not having any information on where they might go or how to do it. These visitors tend to be younger and from a diversity of economic backgrounds. Some are international.

**Mountaineers** – These individuals often have little contact with the NPS. They tend to be organized and independent, getting their information from magazines, guides, and books. Mountaineering tends to be seasonal (early spring). Many of these users are international. A significant percentage makes use of commercial guide services.

**Sport hunters/fishermen**— Sport hunters and fishermen come from around the United States, Alaska, and other countries. Some are more interested in a general backcountry experience than a success-driven hunt. Others are highly interested in a successful big game hunt. Many utilize commercial guide services.

**Researchers** –National and international researchers utilize the park. They are generally specific task driven. They often need NPS help to refine their research and understand park rules and regulations. They have a potential for controversy, and are not always low impact in the way they interact with the park.



**Researcher, Wrangell-St. Elias**

**Subsistence users**—Subsistence users are rural residents living in and around the park who harvest wild fish, wildlife, and plant resources for food, clothing, shelter, and other personal or family consumptive purposes. Subsistence practices help keep Alaskan Native cultures and Alaskan bush lifestyles alive; they contribute to independent living and family and community life. This group overlaps with residents and Alaska Natives.

**Federal, state and tribal governments**—Other federal government agencies include the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and other agencies with land management and research functions. Within the State of Alaska, a variety of departments are integral to the park and NPS mission and operations. Such State agencies include Fish and Game, Department of Natural Resources, and Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. Some state agencies with jurisdictional responsibilities within the boundaries of the park contact park users, such as subsistence and sport hunters, berry gatherers, school classes and casual visitors.

**Business owners and their employees** - There are a variety of commercial businesses operating within and around the park. These business owners and their employees may use the park directly as well as have the opportunity to interact with park visitors.

**Military users** - There are a large number of military employees in Alaska who use the park for recreational purposes. They are often new to Alaska. This group tends to be more trophy or success oriented in sport hunting.

**Non-visitors (vicarious visitors)** – This large group may have an interest in the park and its resources and stories although they may never visit the park. They interact with the park and its resources through websites, informational requests, books, school projects, videos, and television productions.

**Disabled Visitors** – This frequently underestimated group of visitors includes vision, hearing, and mobility impaired, as well as developmentally disabled visitors. Whether or not they visit the park may relate to what facilities are available and promoted to them. Often these disabilities will not be obvious to others.

**Potential visitors** – Potential visitors are those that probably would visit the park if they knew about it and understood how to visit and experience it. Research regarding the use of park and wildland resources in the United States by minorities, shows that minorities visit parks less than the white majority for a variety of reasons. These reasons include the way parks are imaged, lack of information regarding how to visit parks, and cultural and economic differences, among other things. New communication methods and venues need to be developed to reach these potential audience members in effective ways.



**Educational Program, Copper Center VC**



# GOALS

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*“To conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”* National Park Service Organic Act, August 25, 1916.

“Visitor experience “is what visitors take from a park. It is everything that visitors do, sense, feel, think and learn; it includes knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and values; it is affected by experiences prior to the visit and affects behavior after the visit. Interpretive planning describes desired experiences and recommends ways to facilitate those experiences.

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve strives to fulfill the mandate of the Organic Act within the further parameters set by the Alaska National Interest Lands and Conservation Act (ANILCA) of 1980 and other legislation. The goals within the Long Range Interpretive Plan for Wrangell-St. Elias incorporate enabling legislation, major park themes, and audiences. The prioritized action items in the next section show direct links to these goals.

1. **Facilitate personal intellectual and/or emotional connections to park resources leading to a stronger sense of stewardship for national parks:**
  - Provide opportunities to understand and appreciate the significances of park resources as described by the primary interpretive themes.
  - Provide opportunities to have a personal experience in the park and feel a sense of discovery and enjoyment.
2. **Facilitate planning of safe, enjoyable and responsible park experiences:**
  - Provide excellent customer service
  - Provide opportunities for visitors/residents to assume responsibility for their personal safety and protection of private property
    - Bears, weather, rivers, glaciers, hypothermia, mining hazards, motorized transportation and roads, wildfire and diseases.
  - Offer opportunities for the full spectrum of park visitors to learn about options for experiencing the park.
  - Provide opportunities to acquire accurate and appropriate information related to the park
    - Location of private property, locations of legal access, reduction of trespass on private property
    - Federal and state regulations
    - Park orientation
    - Safe and responsible ways to experience park resources
3. **Facilitate the protection and appropriate use of park resources:**
  - Promote stewardship and minimize impacts resulting from inappropriate use of park resources.

- Reduced human/pet/garbage food-conditioning of wildlife.
- Reduced wildlife harassment.
- Reduced vandalism and theft of cultural resources
- Reduced inappropriate use of Off Highway Vehicles (OHV).

**For Now**

By Megan Jensen  
Glennallen Elementary School

The birds are chirping,  
Joyful and soft, filling the  
World with a peaceful song.

For Now.

The wolves are howling long and  
Loud, all trying to fit  
In the crowd.

For Now.

The bears are grunting  
Looking for grub, before  
They go and have cubs.

For Now.

The owls are hooting,  
Always watching, hoping to  
Catch a little snack.

For Now.

The eagle is circling,  
Soaring and watching looking  
Down, wondering where all the trees have gone?

The seasons change,  
The fishers leave,  
The hunters and trappers  
Come to stay. If we don't do  
Something soon all the creatures  
Will be gone.

## RECOMMENDED ACTION ITEMS

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The following lists of action items are based on parkwide and district (Headquarters/Chitina, Kennecott, and Nabesna) categories, and further subdivided into “Interpretation” and “Education and Outreach.” Action items are bulleted in banded priority order in each list. Each item also references (in parentheses) the appropriate goal addressed by the proposed action. The subsequent “Overall Prioritized Action Items” section of this document prioritizes all action items by funding source and overall park priority.

### Parkwide - Interpretation

#### Cross-media

##### High

- Complete an accessibility plan for the whole park (the park is currently working on a Kennecott Accessibility Plan). (G2)
- Use the standard international accessibility symbols on park signs, publications and web sites. (G2)
- All relevant programs/media acknowledge other ways of learning (non-traditional, Native Alaskan) and meet accessibility standards. (G1)

#### Public Affairs

Wrangell-St. Elias is no stranger to controversial issues or to noteworthy incidents. A coordinated public relations response to incidents and media inquiries which supports park management, regional directions, and service-wide approaches is essential. Developing and maintaining a close working relationship with local and regional media is important.

#### Public Affairs Coordination

##### High

- The chief interpreter, who serves as the public affairs and information officer for the park, will facilitate the completion of a parkwide Communications Plan in concert with Alaska Natural History Association (ANHA), an outside contractor, and park partners. (G2, 3)
- The chief interpreter will ensure that critical resource management or otherwise volatile political issues are communicated to employees through an interdivisional effort each season, which enables employees to communicate appropriately about these issues. (G2, 3)



## Medium

- The public affairs officer will provide information officer training to interpretive staff so that they can step in effectively and provide the acting public information or public affairs function as needed. (G2, 3)
- Interpretive staff will continue to communicate events which could become news to not only appropriate protection staff, but also to the public affairs officer, who will provide the same service as appropriate. (G2, 3)
- The public affairs officer will work closely with park management and regional public affairs to identify appropriate media messages and incident approaches.
- The public affairs officer will maintain a working relationship with local media providers and government agencies to facilitate smooth interchange of information. This would, at a minimum, involve contacting the two local radio stations and the four park-periphery newspapers, as well as the Bureau of Land Management, Copper Valley Economic Development Council, Copper Valley Chamber of Commerce, State Troopers, and Ahtna Heritage Foundation every three months or more often. (G2, 3)

## Publications

The park's most commonly-used existing publications are the Harpers Ferry Center-produced Map and Guide, and the yearly newspaper the K'elt'aeni, as well as site bulletins on the McCarthy Road, Nabesna Road, and a Kennecott Site Bulletin.

### **Existing publications to be revised**

#### High

- Park staff will begin to design and produce the K'elt'aeni Visitors Guide. While in the process of reorganizing the K'elt'aeni, consider expanding it to include an increased cultural resource protection message, information on how to visit Wrangell-St. Elias without abundant skills or money, and articles on the conservation of artifacts in the landscape. (G1, 2, 3)
- An educational message will be attached to the Trails Illustrated Map and other appropriate existing map publications, indicating safe bear food storage locations in the backcountry. (G2,3)
- The State hunting handbook should be changed to emphasize that Wrangell-St. Elias is a National Park and Preserve and has different hunting regulations than adjacent lands. Hunters will be referred to the Trails Illustrated map of Wrangell-St. Elias for accurate boundary and private parcels. (G2,3)

### Medium

- The map in the subsistence brochure will be revised to include Canada and the World Heritage site. (G1)
- The World Heritage logo will be used on appropriate park publications and maps that include all the protected areas in the World Heritage site (not just Wrangell-St. Elias). (G1)
- The park will work with partners in the Copper Basin to develop and distribute a natural and cultural history guide appropriate for business owners and their employees to learn about park resources. (G1,2,3)

### Low

- The existing Map and Guide will be revised to reflect the park themes in this document. The Map and Guide is meant to give an introduction to the park and its themes, and to serve as a souvenir. The map in the Map and Guide will be revised to show the boundaries of the World Heritage site and to include the World Heritage logo. (G1)

## **New publications to be developed**

### High

- The park will work with ANHA to write and publish a book of easier/accessible hikes in the park. (G2,3)
- The park will develop a site bulletin listing accessible facilities and programs available at Wrangell-St. Elias. (G2)
- A bear safety laminated placard will be affixed on the inside of the lid of all loaner bear resistant food containers (BRFC). (G2,3)
- A Junior Ranger program is currently being developed and printed, and will reflect park themes. It will be coordinated with the web ranger program so that they compliment one another. (G1)
- A map depicting private property, boundaries, and public access/trails in Kennecott/McCarthy will be created. This product will include a cultural resource and bear protection message. (G2)

### Medium

- The park will work with ANHA to develop sales materials that provide a vicarious visit to the park; the park will also work with ANHA to encourage more products that meet accessibility standards (audio tapes, large print books). (G1,2,3)

### Low

- A site bulletin will be developed on the World Heritage site (G1)
- The park will develop a brochure for an interpretive self-guided walk for the Root Glacier trail. (G1)

## Wayside exhibits, kiosks, signs, and bulletin boards

### High

- The park will develop a standard “information portal”, or orientation/interpretation kiosk, to place at the many points of entry/exit within and outside the park. In many cases, the park will require permission from private or other agency landowners to install these portals on their land. Examples of the locations of these portals are the airstrips at Tok, McCarthy, Chitina, and May Creek, and the Gulkana Hanger. The purpose of these information portals will be to orient visitors to Wrangell-St. Elias and help visitors understand they are in/entering the National Park and Preserve, provide a general orientation to the significance/themes of the park, provide visitors with safety and natural and cultural resource protection messages, and perhaps serve as a dispensation point for park brochures. The design of these portals will need to be worked out, but could include one permanent orientation wayside exhibit as well as a bulletin board for more changing or locally relevant information. (G1,2,3)
- The park will work with Ahtna or the appropriate landowner to consider installation of a bulletin board past Chitina on the east side of the Copper River bridge next to the USFS bulletin board. This is a very popular location for resident and visitor fishing. The purpose of this bulletin board would be to provide general information on the park as well as to interpret the value of the watershed (G1,2,3)
- The park will install wayside exhibits in areas with high concentrations of cultural resources (e.g. Bremner, Chisana). The purpose of these exhibits will be to provide an on-site cultural resource protection/historic interpretation message as a tool to encourage protection of artifacts. (G1,2,3)

### Medium

- In cooperation with the village of Chistochina, a bulletin board will be installed and maintained in the village. This bulletin board will display general information about the park, as well as information about resource protection, subsistence use, and ongoing events at the park. The park will work with the village of Chistochina to complete the self-guided natural and cultural history trail (theme 7) that is being developed by Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium. Similar opportunities will be offered to other interested surrounding villages. (G1,2,3)
- The park will work with the Alaska Department of Transportation and other relevant agencies to plan and install interpretive wayside exhibits or kiosks outside the park at logical locations along the Glenn Highway, the Edgerton Highway, Tok Cutoff, and the Richardson Highway where there are good views of park resources. The purpose of these exhibits will be to encourage visitors to get out

of their vehicles, increase their awareness of the park and its significance, and learn about a few of the park's most visible features (i.e. high peaks, rivers). (G1)

## Audiovisual Programs

### High

- The park will seek funding to install Traveler's Information Stations (low-power local radio stations) in Slana, Chitina, McCarthy/Kennecott, and Copper Center. The purpose of these stations would be to provide a general orientation to what there is to see and do in the district. They also would provide road condition reports for the Nabesna and McCarthy Roads, safety and resource protection messages, information on interpretive programs, hours of operation of park facilities, and needed logistical information. The stations will be placed in strategic locations, such as the approach to the end of the McCarthy Road near the Kennicott River. (G1, 2,3)
- The park will obtain an appropriate river crossing safety film for showing in the park visitor contact facilities. (G2)

### Medium

- The park will seek funding to develop a CD-ROM that provides a virtual visit of the park, and also would serve educational purposes. This would likely be a sales item through ANHA and would be distributed to schools. (G1)
- The park will explore distance learning and web cam educational tools in conjunction/cooperation with Murie Science and Learning Center in Denali National Park and Preserve. (G1)

### Low

- The park will continue to participate in the development of television shows and travel videos to impart park themes and messages. (G1,2,3)
- The existing park film, "Crown of the Continent," is an experiential introduction to the park, particularly its natural resources. The park will work to increase dissemination of this film (and any additional films developed in the future) to local television stations, APLIC, and other venues. (G1)
- The park will seek funding to produce a second film that focuses on the park's cultural history and themes. This film would be shown at the park's visitor centers and sold through ANHA. (G1)

## Backcountry Program

### High

- All park staff that assist visitors with backcountry trip planning need a good understanding of the Wrangell-St. Elias backcountry. They need to have had first-hand experience with the Wrangell backcountry (and ideally some of the more popular routes) as well as a thor-

ough understanding of safety issues, resource protection, leave-no-trace camping, and backcountry travel before they take on the critical task of assisting visitors with trip-planning information. This training, including a field trip, will be incorporated into seasonal training. As the program permits, each interpreter may be allowed up to one week of on-the-job backcountry orientation/training. Interpreters will shadow and observe more experienced employees until they are ready to provide these services. (G<sub>1,2,3</sub>)

- Within budgetary and management priorities, the park will continue and expand its BRFC program to include concessionaires, commercial operators, and educational partners. With the same constraints, the park will make electric fences (bear protection) available for checkout for groups, and will communicate this availability to guide services and educational groups. (G<sub>2,3</sub>)
- Produce a park recreational ATV orientation package, which ultimately will include a video of ATV resource concerns in Wrangell-St. Elias. (G<sub>1,2,3</sub>)
- Require recreational ATV permits to be obtained in person, increasing park contact between the ATV user and the park staff. A park ATV orientation would be required before issuance of a permit. (G<sub>2,3</sub>)

## Personal Services

The programs listed below, while open to both local residents and visitors, are targeted toward park visitors. For program recommendations targeting local residents, please see the “Outreach” section of the plan.

### High

- The park will continue to provide roving interpretation as much as possible. Roving will focus on natural and cultural resource protection, safety information, and the overall park themes. (G<sub>1,2,3</sub>)

### Medium

- Local residents are an enormous source of knowledge about the park, its resources and its history and can often provide unique perspectives. Visitors are interested in the opportunity to interact with local Alaskans. The park will work with and encourage qualified local residents to give programs on park themes. (G<sub>1</sub>)
- Park staff will offer interpretive programs and/or roving at local area hotels and RV parks where park visitors are likely to be staying. (G<sub>1</sub>)

## Staffing and Staff Training

### Staff Training

#### High

- The Interpretive Development Program will continue to be the foundation of interpretive training and in the development, presentation, and assessment of all interpretive products. Field interpretive staff will continue to be required to submit an interpretive product yearly for certification through the Interpretive Development Program. (G1, 2, 3)
- All Wrangell-St. Elias staff will continue to be trained on park themes and on the Interpretive Development Program 101 concepts. (G1, 2, 3)
- All employees who provide backcountry information will be trained on backcountry trip planning and will have an opportunity to get out in the field so they will know park facilities/conditions, safety issues, and Leave No Trace (LNT) policies (see Backcountry section). They will also be trained to use blue-line maps. (G2)

#### Medium

- Seasonal training for park staff will include an update about what is going on at the other World Heritage partner sites (theme 1). (G1)
- Cross-divisional communication will be enhanced by periodic meetings/summits between interpreters and other divisions on cultural/natural resource issues, hunting, etc. (G2, 3)
- Training will be available to relevant park staff on Americans with Disabilities Act design standards – what they are and where to get them. An accessibility coordinator will be designated for the park. (G1, 2)
- Utilize employee exchanges and cross-training between the Copper Valley Chamber of Commerce and Wrangell-St. Elias. (G1, 2, 3)

### Recruitment

#### High

- Develop a coordinated and systematic recruitment program using Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), Student Conservation Association (SCA), Local Hire, and Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) hiring authorities to ensure quality interpretive staff that includes a representative diversity of local residents and Native Alaskans, as well as a seasonal career ladder. (G1,2,3)

#### Medium

- Develop an interpretive YCC or high school employment program (theme 5) whereby students rotate through different assignments and

get high school credit for their work at national parks (i.e. the Santa Monica Mountains program). (G1,2,3)

- Hire Native interpreters to do craft demonstrations. Coordinate closely with interpreters hired by Ahtna Heritage Foundation to staff the museum at park headquarters (theme 7). (G1)

## **Additional Staffing** (See Organizational Chart in Appendix G.)

### **Headquarters/Chitina District**

GS-7 Park Ranger, Interpretation PFT, education outreach  
2 additional GS-5 seasonal park rangers, interpretation, one winter/one summer

### **Kennecott District**

GS-7 Park Ranger PSF  
2 additional GS-5 seasonal park rangers, interpretation

### **Nabesna District**

GS-7 Park Ranger PSF (as visitation increases)

### **Yakutat District**

Restore GS-9 Park Ranger PFT to maintain presence and relationships in Yakutat and with WRST and GLBA.

## **Parkwide - Education and Outreach**

### Adult education programs

#### High

- Incorporate a federally protected lands message into the existing hunter education programs. (G2,3)
- Develop a Firewise program throughout the park in concert with regional fire education personnel (possibly incorporated into a local lecture series). (G1,3)

### Community Outreach

Parks can not survive as islands. Many resource issues transcend park boundaries and need the support of local and statewide communities to be effectively addressed. This is especially true at parks such as Wrangell-St. Elias that contain private lands, receive considerable visitation from within the state, and receive subsistence and recreational use from local populations. Community outreach is an effective way to reach local and regional audiences, whether they visit the park or not. The planning team developed

ideas for outreach programs to target specific audiences: local, state/national, researchers, and military.

## Local Outreach

The park is currently involved in a variety of local outreach efforts, but has the following ideas to maintain, stabilize, and grow our local outreach program:

### High

- The park must continue to cultivate relationships with villages and elders, enhancing lines-of-communication. Specific invitations should be extended to elders to attend park events.(G1,2,3)
- Information dissemination about commercial and recreational opportunities in and around McCarthy/Kennecott should to be a partnership effort between the park and the community.(G2,3)

### Medium

- The park should provide personal invitations and contacts to enhance turnout for local events.(G1,3)
- Multi-purpose open houses (get permits, programs, youth activities) should be pursued as effective tools.(G3)

### Low

- Interpretive materials should be made available at village council offices and other locations where people already congregate.(G1,3)

## Headquarters - Interpretation

### Pre-visit Information and Trip Planning

Visiting Wrangell-St. Elias demands a certain level of preparation and self-reliance; visitors need accurate current information about the park to plan their visit. They should have access to this information before they leave their homes as well as before they embark down the Nabesna or McCarthy Roads, or before they enter the Wrangell-St. Elias backcountry. The park needs to provide excellent trip-planning and orientation information via the internet, mail-out information, and via telephone, as well as at the visitor contact stations at the gateways to the park. Visitors need to be self-sufficient, and need to be aware of safety and resource issues. If the public is well-informed at the outset, they will have a better and safer park experience and will be less likely to damage park resources. This will require extensive training of front-line interpreters who staff these stations, including adequate field time where interpreters can have first-hand experiences with park facilities and the backcountry. The park will maintain and enhance backcountry trip planning on the website (see Website) as well as a mail-out backcountry trip planner.



The park also will need to work through local businesses and commercial operators, many of whom are principal contacts for park visitors. Most visitors are more likely to come into contact with commercial operators and local businesses than a National Park Service representative. The park will work with these commercial operators and local businesses to improve their training and materials available to give park visitors (see Commercial Operators).

### **Commercial Operators**

Commercial operators (private businesses licensed to do business in the park, or operating on private land within the park) are a potentially excellent source of information for park visitors. Many local businesses also serve this same function and could participate in some of the programs described below. Commercial operators, local businesses and the National Park Service have a common goal of providing a quality experience for clients/visitors to Wrangell-St. Elias. Specific activities the park will pursue to increase the level of communication and interpretation for commercial operators' clients include:

#### **High**

- Provide a binder with Wrangell-St. Elias information, including publications (i.e. K'elt'aeni, Map and Guide), a flyer with the Wrangell-St. Elias primary interpretive themes, and/or a rack card to willing local businesses and commercial operators that have been identified as "capturing" park visitors. (G1, 2, 3)
- As the park develops a commercial services plan, park staff will conduct annual meetings with commercial operators to increase communication between park staff and commercial operators. The goal of these meetings will be to:
  - discover what interpretive/safety/orientation materials the commercial operators need to distribute to their clients.
  - brief the commercial operators on the park's interpretive themes.
  - provide information or educational sessions on safety and resource protection messages, animal safety, food storage, cultural resource protection, and Leave No Trace.

These meetings will need to be timed and located so that they are convenient to commercial operators' schedules. The park also will consider providing the operators with some incentives to attend, such as bear resistant food containers, interpretive materials, or requiring attendance to secure an Incidental Business Permit. (G2,3)

#### **Medium**

- The park will develop interpretive materials (i.e. packets, "Dear Backcountry User" letters, flip books or exhibits for air taxi lobbies,

rack cards, etc) for commercial operators and/or local businesses to distribute/display to their clients based on feedback about what media would be most effective. (GI, 2, 3)

- Park staff will work with commercial operators and concessionaires to encourage them to acknowledge in their materials (verbally, or through web linkages) that Wrangell-St. Elias is part of the National Park Service. (GI, 3)

#### Low

- The park will develop and promote formal opportunities for commercial operators to be Volunteers in Parks (VIPs) and serve as the eyes and ears of the park. (GI, 2, 3)
- Develop a training program about the park and its resources for local business and commercial operator employees, or offer to provide sessions as part of commercial operators' seasonal training. Work to be involved in and/or receive information concerning their training of employees. (GI, 2, 3).

### Website

The website is a major source of information for visitors planning a trip to Wrangell-St. Elias as well as for virtual visitors who would like to learn about the park but will never physically visit. The website was professionally redesigned in 2003-2004, with each link and page carefully mapped out to describe its function. The website will not only reflect latest web policy, but it will be compatible with both the latest and older web technology.

#### High

- Make Wrangell-St. Elias website accessible at all park visitor facilities, including the capability for printing. (GI, 2, 3)
- Make the Wrangell-St. Elias website maximally accessible to vision-impaired visitors, using the latest recommended guidelines. (GI, 2, 3)

#### Medium

- Provide trip-planning information, including helping potential visitors figure out HOW to visit the park, especially if they do not have a lot of financial resources or backcountry experience.
- Provide information for planning a group or individual trip to the park.
- Provide information on accessibility at the park.
- Provide a well-developed backcountry trip planning section with the following components:
  - Information on bear safety, including food storage and BRFC's. Information on general backcountry safety, Leave No Trace information, cultural and natural resource protection messages, private property within the park, public use

cabins, and good descriptions of some of the most common routes within the park.

- Information on how to plan a backcountry trip both with and without needing an air taxi to access the park.
- Information visitors need to know for international boundary crossings in the backcountry between the US and Canada.
- Interactive map where visitors would click on an area and see pictures, or click on “public use cabins” and all the public use cabins in the park would be highlighted. This same kind of information would also be available through a publication (see Publications) for visitors without access to the internet.
- Provide a page for teachers or educators, including information on park educational programs, traveling trunks, curriculum, and general educational information on park themes.

#### Low

- Utilize digital video, panoramic sequences, and other internet tools when they can illustrate processes or principles better than still images. (G1, 2, 3)
- Provide a vicarious experience for people who will never physically enter the park.
- Provide a space for visitors or users to send in their comments; continue efforts to make the site more interactive.
- Provide links to weather forecasts as well as average highs/lows/snowfall for various times of the year.
- Provide the daily or weekly McCarthy and Nabesna Road condition report (see under Publications).
- Provide an introduction to all of the park themes.
- Provide sections on the World Heritage site, including a link to the main World Heritage web site.
- Provide educational information, both static and “live.” Live programming could include links via remote cameras to park educational events such as culture camps, or to significant geologic events, such as Hubbard Glacier ice dam events. Children also could participate in a “Web Ranger” (online junior ranger) program.
- Build a natural resource – cultural resource section as per current service-wide policy.
- Webmaster attends training when significant changes in NPS web policy occur; website always reflects latest NPS standards.

The website will provide links to park partners, commercial operators, ANHA, the Ahtna site, Canadian partner park sites, the World Heritage program site, suitable science and research sites, and to the National Park Service’s research permitting site. The park will also consider working with partners to develop a website for the existing borderlands conference (theme 1).

## Exhibits

### Low

- The existing exhibits in the Copper Center Visitor Center exhibit room are good and should remain as they are. The only potential change would be to consider whether sound could be incorporated into the exhibits in a low-impact/high-tech manner, more clearly marking the Copper River Watershed on the area map, and providing a blackboard where visitors can post their wildlife sightings (although they should still fill out wildlife observation form) or road condition reports. (G1)

## Wayside exhibits, kiosks, signs, and bulletin boards

### Low

- The park improved the directional sign on the highway at the entrance to Copper Center Visitor Center, built a new entrance sign, and did some clearing to make the entrance driveway more visible. When the entrance sign is due for replacement, it and all other outdoor signs administered on Wrangell-St. Elias property will follow UniGuide Program standards (<http://www.nps.gov/hfc/products/uniguide.htm>).

## Backcountry Program

The park has created a printed version of backcountry trip planning information provided on the new web site, which is available for mail out or for pick up in the visitor contact station (see publications). This will need to be updated periodically.

A parkwide backcountry plan is temporarily becalmed. When its formulation continues, this plan will influence where visitors go in the park, what expectations (i.e. solitude, wilderness, quiet) visitors should have, the range of visitor opportunities, and how visitors conduct backcountry trip planning. The backcountry trip planner section on the web site and the hard copy packet, which has been completed in advance of the backcountry plan, will need to be revised pending the results of the backcountry plan.

### High

- The park will develop permanent interpretive materials for display in the public use cabins throughout the park. This material will include introductions to the primary interpretive themes, cultural and natural resource protection information, safety messages, Leave No Trace, and wildlife interactions information. These materials will need to be carefully designed to ensure compatibility with wilderness experiences. (G1, 2, 3)

### Medium

- The park will work to develop relationships with Outward Bound, the National Outdoor Leadership School, and other climbing guides/instructors and mountaineering clubs. These relationships will be important for disseminating information on safety issues, minimum impact backcountry travel methods, and resource protection. Park staff could develop a park-specific backcountry orientation/mountaineering program for these groups. (G2, 3)

## Personal Services

The programs listed below, while open to both locals and visitors, are targeted for park visitors. For program recommendations targeting local residents, please see the “Outreach” section of the plan.

### Medium

- The park will build a program amphitheater at the Copper Center Visitor Center (as originally planned) to provide a space for interpretive programs that does not conflict with the showing of the park film. (G1, 2, 3)
- The park will develop an Artist in Residence program that requires the artist to provide formal public programs during their stay and to donate one of their park-related works of art. (G1, 3)

### Low

- The park will collaborate with the Bureau of Land Management to give programs on the importance of the watershed at the Gulkana River during fishing season (theme 3). (G2, 3)
- The park will work with the National Park Service Alaska Regional Office and other Alaskan National Parks to put interpretive rangers on cruise ships to increase awareness and knowledge of the national parks that these cruises pass. This program would best be coordinated by the regional office. (G1)

## Copper Center Visitor Center

### Functions

- General visitor information
- Backcountry trip planning assistance
- Nabesna Road and McCarthy/Kennecott trip planning
- Informal interpretation
- In-depth thematic interpretation and vicarious park experience (via exhibits, film, and formal talks and conducted activities)
- Information by mail, email and phone for trip planning
- Subsistence fish and hunting permits

The following are the recommendations for the Copper Center Visitor Center.

### High

- Park staff will continue to work with Ahtna to support their planning, design and construction of the Ahtna museum that is planned for the Copper Center Visitor Center campus. This museum will be planned, designed, staffed and operated by Ahtna Heritage Foundation. The park has the responsibility for the exterior design of the building. According to the most recent plans (2003) the building will have 900 square feet of exhibits, 500 square feet of curatorial space, no theater, 230 square feet of sales area, a work area/kitchen, and an office. The park will be available to work with Ahtna Heritage Foundation to help them plan and design high-quality interpretive exhibits that help tell the stories that relate to park themes (4, 7, and 8). The chief of interpretation is the point contact in establishing a cooperative agreement for the functioning of the museum, which will also speak to staffing, hours, range of sales items, and activities within the museum. (G1)
- Create an interpretive display highlighting the Copper River watershed in the headquarters exhibit building. (G1, 3)
- Create a bulletin board for wildlife sightings in the Headquarters Visitor Center. (G1)
- The ethnobotany garden that figures in the original designs for the visitor center will be designed and installed. (G1)
- Install the Traveler's Information Station (TIS) in Copper Center. (G1, 2, 3)

### Medium

- The program amphitheater that was originally designed for the visitor center complex will be built to provide a place for programming that does not conflict with the showing of the park film. (G1, 2, 3)
- Install TTY. (G2)

### Low

- The Copper Center Visitor Center will be open on weekends year-round, even if it means being closed during the week during the winter time. This will help serve Alaskan winter visitors more effectively. (G1, 2, 3)
- Incorporate sound into the interpretive exhibits in the headquarters exhibit room. (G1)
- The disabled parking spots will be relocated closer to the visitor center. (G2)

## Personal Interpretive Programming

### High

- Expand and improve formal and informal interpretive programs in the Copper Center Visitor Center area, using the theater, the new amphitheater (once constructed), and the trail behind building, as new installations and/or personnel permit. (G1, 2, 3)
- Continue and expand on the arrangement with Princess Wilderness Lodge for interpreters to meet buses and conduct programs on-site. Improve the quality of the programs where possible. (G1, 2, 3)

### Medium

- Present programs in private campgrounds/other local venues (theme 1). (G1,2, 3)

### Low

- Promote greater participation by park staff as guest lecturers in Kenny Lake's First Friday. (G1, 2, 3)

## Outreach

### Low

- Collaborate with Copper River Watershed Project (theme 3). (G3)
- Working closely with cultural resource personnel, provide for the local community displays of artifacts from Kennecott and other mining sites (theme 6). (G1, 3)
- Make the existing jukebox project available at the local library and college (theme 7). (G1, 3)
- Develop archive facilities in Copper Center and make them available to the public for research and education (theme 6). (G1, 3)

## Partnerships

### Medium

- Develop interpretive relationships with other state and federal agencies locally to share themes and conduct projects outside the park that will benefit park visitors and resources (i.e. the proposal to team with BLM to interpret the Copper River Watershed on BLM land). (G1, 2, 3)
- At government to government meetings, consistently provide information about available interpretive programs and materials. Gather feedback at these meetings on the quality, content, and appropriateness of interpretive programs. (G1, 2, 3)

### Low

- Find out what interpretation is offered at Kluane and other World Heritage sites and interface with them. Swap staff, media, and interpretive product ideas with the World Heritage partner parks. Host summits between units of the World Heritage site and corresponding

First Nations/Natives. Get guidance from elders on how to do this (theme 1). (G1)

## Chitina Visitor Center

### Functions of the Chitina Visitor Center:

- Visitor information
- Backcountry trip planning
- McCarthy/Kennecott trip planning including road conditions
- Informal interpretation
- Subsistence fishing permits

Recommendations for the Chitina Visitor Center

#### High

- Install TIS station in Chitina. (G1, 2, 3)
- Until a long-range decision is made on the direction for visitor services, the wayside will provide the interpretive messages. (G1, 2, 3)

#### Medium

- If the long-range park decision so indicates, increase the open season/ hours of the Chitina Ranger station so that it is open and staffed daily from Memorial Day to Mid-September. (G1, 2, 3)

#### Low

- Update signage for the Chitina Ranger Station from the road to accurately reflect what facilities are available. (G1, 2, 3)
- Maintain the Chitina Ranger Station bulletin board with current information, including the road report. If the facility is to remain closed, relocate the bulletin board to the Chitina wayside exhibit to reach more visitors. (G1, 2, 3)

#### Mountains

By Derek Haukaas  
Sapa School

Majestic  
Opulent  
Unrest  
Native  
Towering  
Amazing  
Immense  
Numerous  
Soaring height

## Headquarters - Education and Outreach

### Educational Programs

The park will work with the Copper River School District and the Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment (WISE) to develop comprehensive, coordinated, curriculum-based educational programs, which will be carefully targeted toward appropriate grades/age groups. This educational programming will require its own planning exercise, but will be based on the interpretive themes developed in this document. The educational program will be developed after careful research into the state curriculum and in close consultation with local teachers. Some specific suggestions for the future educational planning group include:



## **Develop, Enhance and Present Existing Curriculum-based Educational Programs**

### High

- Revitalize an education advisory board (group of designated local teachers) to forge a formalized, long-term connection between park staff and teachers. (G3)
- Develop and present programs for high school age students on ANCSA/ANILCA (theme 8). (G3)
- Offer in-service programs where the educational program (currently developed and ready to go) is introduced to all area teachers and superintendents so that they understand its breadth and how to take advantage of it. (G3)

### Medium

- Tie into the existing 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade trip to the fisheries in Valdez and incorporate messages on the importance of the watershed of South Central Alaska (theme 3). (G3)
- Incorporate all themes and Leave No Trace in curriculum and school programming. (G3)

### Low

- Simulcast education programs via ITV for home-school or other students. (G1, 2, 3)
- Develop a Teaching with Historic Places program for Kennecott (theme 7) (G1, 3)

## **Develop Comprehensive Resources for Teachers who are Off-site**

### High

- Develop an inventory of existing education resources, such as lesson plans, and where appropriate, utilize them in the park's comprehensive education planning. (G3)
- Research and gather a comprehensive listing of available professional paper and research texts. (G3)
- Beginning with the existing trunks, develop and promote a comprehensive traveling trunk program. All trunks will need to incorporate or address one or more park themes. Ultimately, a trunk should be developed which focuses on each park theme. (G1, 3)
- Assist with current curriculum development by the Copper River School District (CRSD) on park related subjects (e.g. Ahtna culture and history). (G1, 3)

### Low

- Work with textbook authors and develop an educational curriculum for teachers who will never physically visit WRST. (G3)

## **Develop Educational Programs for Visiting and Local Children**

### High

- Maintain and improve promotion of the teacher’s section of the park web page, which includes curriculum information, traveling trunk information, and general educational information on park themes. (G1, 2, 3)
- Enhance the existing Web Ranger program (internet-based Junior Ranger program) to meet park, region, and service-wide standards as they develop and evolve. (G1, 2, 3)

### Medium

- Develop programs to get children into the park (i.e. getting Copper Valley children to Kennecott). (G1, 2, 3)

## **Adult education programs**

### High

- Insure that field studies opportunities are available for and utilized by Alaska college students, including PWSCC students. The park could support/develop a field studies program for Alaska students modeled after the Wrangell Mountain Center (WMC) program and/or be more proactive at recruiting college students from Alaska for the existing WMC program. (G1, 3)

### Medium

- Develop contacts at Elderhostel and promote joint programs with Native groups and education partners (e.g. Princess Wilderness Lodge, Ahtna Heritage Inc.). (G1, 3)
- Develop an “Art and Lecture Series” program for the Copper Basin (PWSCC or WISE may be good partners). (G1, 3)
- Explore with partners promoting art as a means of interpreting park themes (i.e. artists-in-residence from distant locations and local artists). (G1, 3)

## **Military**

The following are specific ideas for conducting outreach to members of the military who do or might visit Wrangell-St. Elias.

### High

- Communicate with military from a regional perspective (from the Alaska National Park Service Regional Office) to issue a welcome to Alaskan National Parks, and to ensure regional as well as Wrangell-St. Elias resource protection issues are addressed with the military audience. (G2, 3)

- Have the National Park Service Regional Director contact the base commanders to address general resource impact problems at Wrangell-St. Elias. The base commanders can use chain of command to communicate this information to subordinates. (G2, 3)

#### Low

- Provide Wrangell-St. Elias staff or media for the periodic base orientations for new military personnel and their families. (G1, 2, 3)
- Use traveling Wrangell-St. Elias displays for presentations at base events. (G1, 2, 3)
- Work through the morale, welfare and recreation departments at each base to develop appropriate programming for base residents (i.e. recreational center displays or events). (G2, 3)
- Develop articles on Wrangell-St. Elias, its recreational opportunities, and the importance of its resources, for military base newsletters and radio stations. (G1, 2, 3)

## Researchers

The following are specific ideas for conducting outreach to researchers who are considering or who might consider conducting research at Wrangell-St. Elias.

#### High

- Work closely with research proposals to require an educational component as a condition for getting a permit. For research projects which do not require an education component, facilitate the addition of education materials wherever reasonable or possible. Suggest the educational programs/tools the park would want as part of their permit. (G3)
- Send out park information packets (including the map and newspaper) with research permits. (G3)
- Develop a cover letter for research permit applications that includes the park's interpretive themes. (G3)
- Create a group of Power Point slides on Wrangell-St. Elias, its resources/significance, and its major interpretive themes for researchers to use in preparing presentations regarding their research at the park. (G3)
- Educate potential researchers about park values, educational goals, and safety, to the degree possible/reasonable. Institutionalize this relationship with researchers. (G3)
- Interpreters attend research findings presentations when possible to facilitate imparting this information to visitors and the park staff who have not already been exposed to it. (G3)

### Medium

- Develop a lecture series for researchers to present their results to the public. (G3)
- Include a section in summer seasonal training of current research projects and where to find out more about them. (G3)

### **Specific Relationships to Develop:**

#### High

- Partner with Murie Science and Learning Center and the other designated partners to share science and research knowledge through distance learning. (G1, 3)

#### Low

- Coordinate with the Alaska tourism industry to understand their package tour infrastructure, decision-making procedures, and directions in the future. (G2)
- Work with Challenge Alaska to promote opportunities for the disabled at Wrangell-St. Elias. (G1, 2)
- Work with the regional office representative for Rivers and Trails to ensure park concerns are addressed and represented at Rivers and Trails events. (G2, 3)

### **Media**

#### High

- Integrate and prioritize the communication plan into the LRIP action items when it is completed. (G1, 2, 3)
- Institute a local media strategy for keeping local residents and businesses up-to-speed on park happenings and defining procedures for contacting, tracking, and approving media products. (G1, 2, 3)

#### Medium

- Develop regular media releases about park resources, management activities, and other theme-related topics. Work with the regional office to ensure dissemination beyond local media. (G3)
- NPS staff work with writers to include primary interpretive themes, resource protection messages, and other messages which support park, region, and/or service-wide emphases.(G3)
- Develop a regular series of articles (4/year) in the Anchorage Daily News with correct information about ATV use, hunting, fishing, and backcountry use.(G2,3)
- Have park staff write articles for national magazines, Alaska tour guides, Sunday papers, airline magazines, tribal newsletters, Milepost, Lonely Planet and other mainstream guidebooks, climbing magazines, travel magazines (Conde Nast), Peterson's/Outdoor Life, and other such publications that potential visitors are likely to see.

Ask to see proofs of articles written by other authors before they are printed.(G2)

- Cultivate relationships with international news media and guide-books to ensure resource protection messages and interpretive themes are accurately used in their publications.(G2,3)

## Regional and State Outreach

The following are outreach ideas targeted to reach state and national audiences.

### **Work through Alaska Public Lands Information Centers (APLICS)**

#### High

- Provide field trip ideas and itineraries to conference planners in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Valdez and other local areas to encourage them to visit Wrangell-St. Elias.(G2,3)
- Work with APLIC and the National Park Service regional office to develop new exhibits on the Alaska National Parks for the Anchorage and/or Fairbanks airports.(G1,2)

#### Medium

- Require permanent park interpreters to conduct a specified number of educational programs for traditionally underserved audiences in urban areas. Look to Rocky Mountain National Park's model for ideas. The park would work through APLIC to identify and set up these program opportunities.(G1,2)
- Work with APLIC to develop formalized programs to present to universities, Chambers of Commerce, junior achievement programs, school districts and other groups in Anchorage/Fairbanks to increase awareness of Alaska parks.(G2)

## Outreach

### **Local businesses**

#### High

- Develop a training program about the park, its opportunities, resources, and themes for local business employees (see commercial operators).(G1-3)
- Participate in endeavors such as the Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium ecotourism project with local businesses (theme 7).(G1-3)

### Medium

- Develop a “Wrangell Resources” certificate program for local youth (perhaps through PWSCC), facilitating their interest and effective competition in local seasonal jobs (both park and local businesses).(G1-3)
- Continue to invite Chamber of Commerce staff to park seasonal training. Provide Chamber of Commerce with interpretive materials and visitor comment forms. (G2)
- Develop park bulletin boards at RV parks in the Copper Valley.(G2)
- Provide programs in private campgrounds or other local venues (theme 1).(G2,3)

## **Dissemination of information and resource protection messages**

### High

- Expand the number of theme-related articles provided to local newspapers and radio stations. Also include articles on the Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC) process, subsistence and sport hunting regulations, resource protection messages, and critical issues.(G2)
- Create a packet for all ATV permit-holders (the park already has this database). This mail-out packet would include a brochure on treading lightly, ATV rules, and pictures and descriptions of the impacts of ATVs on park resources. Include McCarthy land owners.(G2)

### Medium

- Provide park information where locals get hunting permits and buy/service ATVs, snow machines, and boats.(G2)

## **Oral history program**

### High

- Work with Ahtna Heritage Foundation to train local residents on the techniques for collecting oral histories (theme 7).(G3)
- Collect oral histories of long-term local residents such as trappers, bush pilots, hunting guides (theme 7) for use in future interpretive programs.(G3)

## **Interpretive Programs-Headquarters**

### High

- Develop service projects that instill stewardship and restore damaged areas (theme 4). Market these to social groups.(G1)
- Develop courses or one-night presentations at PWSCC that are team-taught by park staff on topics such as:

- the area ecosystem and geology (theme 2)
- wilderness philosophy (incorporating multiple viewpoints) (theme 4)
- different perspectives on ANILCA (theme 8), (G1,3)
- Formalize the community lecture series in Copper Valley in partnership with Prince William Sound Community College, High Active Auroral Research Project, University of Alaska, and Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment. Additional possibilities for lecturers include:
  - staff from other WH sites (theme 1)
  - local residents
  - people involved in ANILCA (theme 8)
  - local miners (theme 6)
  - fire ecologists
  - bear biologists (i.e. programs which compare and contrast WRST to other NPS units or ecosystems worldwide).(G3)

#### Medium

- Develop database of local residents and their areas of expertise to call on for programs, consultation.(G1)
- Expand “Wilderness and the Arts” program to include adults (theme 4).(G1,3)
- In partnership with the Copper Valley Chamber of Commerce, develop a Copper Valley Residents weekend in June in Kennecott/McCarthy to familiarize people with available services and recreational opportunities. G2)
- Have park staff participate as guest lecturers in Kenny Lake’s First Friday.(G1)
- Increase involvement with the local radio programs by providing information on mine safety, subsistence/sport hunting regulations, and other topics to keep local residents informed about events and issues at Wrangell-St. Elias.(G3)

#### Low

- Use the Chitina River bar and its congregation of local fishermen to interpret watershed and fish related themes.(G2)
- Make the existing jukebox project available at the local library, college, Princess Lodge, and for park staff. (theme 7).(G1)
- Create wallet cards with interpretive primary themes for interpretation and other staff.(G1)

### **Meetings/Current Issues/Local forums**

#### High

- Co-host open forums on understanding ANILCA with various agencies and groups presenting (theme 8).

- Develop Power Point presentations on ANILCA that can be used to address critical issues that arise in the community or state-wide (theme 8).
- Provide subsistence information and permits at community events along with maps and posters of the Copper River watershed (theme 3). Also provide educational handouts.

Low

- Develop a traveling park display/booth and take it to Copper River Native Association (CRNA) and Ahtna annual meetings with subsistence permits, interpretive information, and handouts.

## Kennecott District - Interpretation

### Guidance

- Planning efforts in progress for the Kennecott National Historic Landmark relative to interpretive media and programs will utilize the themes, goals, and action items set forth in this plan, as long as they do not conflict with area-specific factors.

*Interpretive programs at Kennecott would be expanded from existing levels, enabling visitors to learn about the mines and the mill town, the relationship to McCarthy, and natural resources through a variety of media, interpretive techniques, and programs.*  
- Kennecott Interim Management Plan, Draft Environmental Assessment, 2000.

### Exhibits

High

- The park will continue to work toward funding, planning, designing and installing the Kennecott Store and Post office visitor center exhibits. This will be the main visitor center in Kennecott and will interpret the National Historic Landmark, the park as a whole, and the World Heritage site. It will also need to provide backcountry trip planning, room for staff offices, ANHA sales, a group meeting space, and be

the jump-off point for personal services programs. Drawings/plans for this building and the exhibits should be made available or presented to the community as they are completed.

### Wayside Exhibits, Kiosks, Signs, and Bulletin Boards

High

- Implement the Scenic Road Corridor Plan for the McCarthy Road. The content of the exhibits may need to be modified in light of the themes described in this document. The overall purpose of the wayside exhibits on the two roads will be to:
  - increase knowledge of the National Park Service.
  - increase awareness that visitors are in a national park.
  - introduce the park themes.



- provide the most relevant safety, resource protection and Leave No Trace information. (G 1, 3)
- Signs will be developed and installed that indicate where the National Park and Preserve boundaries are located along the McCarthy and Nabesna Roads. (G 2, 3)
- The park will continue to work with the State of Alaska and local organizations to implement the end of the McCarthy road wayside exhibit and interpretive facility (as outlined in the McCarthy Road Scenic Corridor Plan) in order to provide visitors with a more effective orientation opportunity, parking and other services. The park will fully staff the facility following its completion.
- In the interim, prior to the construction of the wayside at the end of the McCarthy Road, the park will continue to staff the visitor information station (VIS) at Mile 59 daily through the summer season. The VIS will also serve as a local hub for area residents to see park planning documents, learn about meetings, and get the latest park news. This facility and kiosk will include a large orientation map and brochures. The VIS will communicate (perhaps through a display) that Alaska parks are different from those in the contiguous 48 states, and that there is private land in the park.
- Trailhead signs and bulletin boards will be installed in the Kennecott/McCarthy area with information about waste management. Sites to highlight include Donoho and Jumbo Creek. The park will develop better signage for existing trails along the McCarthy and Nabesna Roads to encourage appropriate use. (G 2, 3)

## Personal Services-Kennecott

The programs listed below, while open to both locals and visitors, are targeted for park visitors. For program recommendations targeting local residents, please see the “Outreach” section of the plan.

### High

- If/when a campground is built in the Kennecott/McCarthy area, an amphitheater for programs needs to be a part of that design. (G 1, 2, 3)

### Medium

- The park will work to provide interpreters on the commercial shuttles on the McCarthy Road. (G, 1, 2, 3)

## Overview of Kennecott Visitor Center Functions:

- Visitor information
- Backcountry trip planning assistance
- McCarthy/Nabesna Road trip planning
- Kennecott area trip planning

- Informal interpretation focused on topics such as geology of the copper formation, the theory of plate tectonics, glaciology, Kennecott/McCarthy history (including national, regional, and local stories), plant ecology (including subsistence use and wildlife dependence), bear ecology, ANILCA and private property allowances. Emphasize primary interpretive themes 2, 5, and 6)
- Resource protection messages focused on bear/human conflict reduction and artifact theft.

Recommendations for the Kennecott Visitor Center:

#### High

- Keep the current and future visitor center open and staffed daily from Memorial Day weekend until mid-September. (G 1, 2, 3)

### Personal Interpretive Services

#### High

- Provide roving interpretation to address bear safety, cultural resource protection, and thematic interpretation. (G 1, 2, 3)
- Provide informal interpretation about wildlife issues at camping areas in the McCarthy/Kennecott area. (G1, 2, 3)

#### Currently unprioritized

- Provide evening programs at the National Park Service campground in McCarthy/Kennecott area if/when built. Will prioritize when built, (G 1, 3)

### Training

#### High

- Work with local shuttle companies to explore options for interpretive training for shuttle bus drivers. (G 1, 2, 3)
- Expand and improve park training of concession interpreters. (G 1)

#### Medium

- Work with park partners to develop the proposed Kennecott manual, which functions primarily as a natural and cultural history guide book for residents and seasonal employees of businesses/agencies.  
Phase I – Done  
Phase II –the publication will be a cultural and natural resource guidebook to the McCarthy/Kennecott area and will be available for public purchase. Park partner is the lead with NPS support. (M, G 1, 3)

## Outreach

### High

- Provide periodic programs in the Recreation Hall about ongoing work at Kennecott. An overview of plans/projects at Kennecott should be part of seasonal training for park employees and locals. (G 1)

### Medium

- Expand the variety of outreach programs to meet local resident and McCarthy Road resident needs. This would include:
  - Conducting an art contest for a “bear aware” pin series that could be used as a reward for visitors doing good things “bear-wise.”
  - Developing an award system, in conjunction with local partners, to award local residents that are operating in “bear-wise” ways.
  - Developing a field program with WMC that will serve Alaskan college students including those in the Copper Basin.

### Low

- In partnership with the Copper Valley Chamber of Commerce, develop a Copper Valley Residents weekend in June in Kennecott/McCarthy to familiarize people with available services and recreational opportunities. (G 1,2)

## Non-personal Interpretation

### High

- Sign areas of no ATV use in the Kennecott/McCarthy area. (G 3)
- Sign the trails you CAN take in the McCarthy/Kennecott area that do not trespass on private property. (G 2)
- Work with local museum to produce the Kennecott walking tour. (G1,2,3)

## Planning

### High

- Develop an exhibits plan for Kennecott (G1, 2, 3)
- Develop and interpretive/education plan for Kennecott, based on the long-range interpretive plan, that provides umbrella direction for
  - Formal partnership development (see also Partnership section)

- Use of buildings for educational purposes (Example: West Bunkhouse)
- Recommendations for waysides and exhibits
- Publications
- Personal services programs

## **Kennecott District - Education and Outreach**

### Environmental Education Programs-Kennecott

The park will work with local educational partners to develop a comprehensive, coordinated educational program.

#### **Develop educational programs for visiting and local children**

##### High

- Continue to work with the WMC to develop college and adult educational programming and participate in program development, teaching and logistical considerations. (G 1, 2, 3)
- Work with educational partners to develop educational programming for Alaskans at high school, college and adult levels (G 1, 2, 3)
- Work with park educational partners to recruit Alaskan participants (G 1, 2, 3)
- Continue to present summer educational programming for local children (G 1)
- Develop and present a comprehensive Junior Ranger program (G 1)

##### Medium

- Develop programs to get children into the park (i.e. getting Copper Valley children to Kennecott as part of summer field camp program). (G 1, 2, 3)

##### Low

- Test and develop programs for home-school children in McCarthy/Kennecott. (G 1)

## LOCAL OUTREACH

### **Interpretive Programs-Kennecott**

##### High

- Continue to support and participate in the Summer Arts and Lecture Series (SLAS) program.
- Continue to ensure that park messages and speakers are included in the SALS or other local venue.

### Medium

- Continue to participate in local special events with park programming and messages.
- Host special events targeted at local audiences. Invite other local educational organizations to participate in these where possible.

### Meetings/Current Issues/Local forums

### High

- Hold periodic question and answer sessions in Kennecott and with park management on access rules/laws or other issues of interest to the community. (G 1, 2, 3)

## Nabesna District - Interpretation

### Exhibits

- The park will update the Slana Ranger Station exhibits to include permanent, professionally designed media. These would be simple exhibits designed to give visitors an orientation to Wrangell-St. Elias and its themes, as well as to target some specific issues in the Nabesna District. Some suggestions include:
  - a wildlife sighting (although people should still fill out wildlife observation form) and road condition blackboard that visitors can use
  - incorporating material from the ethnographic project at Chisana (theme 6)
  - live feeds from a salmon run at the fish weir (theme 3)
  - temporary exhibit space where pictures of adverse impacts from ATVs or other current resource impact information could be posted.

### Wayside Exhibits, Kiosks, Signs, and Bulletin Boards

- Scenic road corridor plans exist for the Nabesna and McCarthy Roads (see existing conditions section) that call for the design, production and installation of interpretive wayside exhibits along both roads. These waysides need to be planned, designed and produced, and will need to be coordinated with the State of Alaska. This is a major opportunity for the park to contact visitors on both roads. The scenic road corridor plans give some guidance for the content of these exhibits, but this content will need to be fully developed and perhaps modified in light of the themes described in this document. The overall purpose of the wayside exhibits on the two roads will be to:
  - increase knowledge of the National Park Service
  - increase awareness that visitors are in a national park
  - introduce the park themes

- provide the most relevant safety, resource protection and Leave No Trace information.

Signs will also be developed and installed that indicate where the National Park / Preserve boundaries are located along the McCarthy and Nabesna Roads.

## Audiovisual Programs

- The park will seek funding to install Traveler's Information Stations (low-power local radio stations) in Slana, Chitina and Copper Center. The purpose of these stations would be to provide a general orientation to what there is to see and do in that district. They also would provide road condition reports for the Nabesna and McCarthy Roads, to provide safety and resource protection messages, to provide information on interpretive programs, hours of operation of park facilities, etc.
- The park will seek funding to plan, develop and implement audio guides for the Nabesna and McCarthy Roads. These would be produced on cassettes or CDs for visitors to use in their private vehicles (or for use on shuttle buses). Messages would be correlated to mile markers, and a method of distributing and retrieving the guides would need to be established. Another option would be to sell the CD or cassette through the cooperating association. The purpose of the guides would be to supplement the proposed wayside exhibits along both roads with interpretation of the park's major themes.
- The park will install a remote video camera or web cam to display salmon runs at the weir (theme 3). This could be viewed from the Slana Ranger Station or through the internet, and would help address accessibility concerns.

## Slana Ranger Station

The information and interpretive functions at the Ranger Station are:

- Information on Nabesna Road conditions
- General park orientation/information
- Provide information on road-accessible hiking and camping
- Issuing permits (ATV, subsistence hunting, subsistence fishing)
- Backcountry trip planning
- General natural history interpretation (Ethnobotany garden and pressed plant boards, layman's herbarium, guided nature hikes, informal and roving contacts)
- Cultural history interpretation, primarily as it relates to subsistence
- ANHA sales

The following are the recommendations for the Slana Ranger Station

- The Slana Ranger Station exhibits will be updated to include permanent, professionally designed exhibits. These will be simple exhibits designed to give visitors an orientation to Wrangell-St. Elias and its themes, as well as to target some specific issues at Slana. Some suggestions include:
  - a wildlife sighting and road condition blackboard (all wildlife sightings should be recorded on wildlife observation card as well) that visitors can use.
  - incorporating the material from the ethnographic project at Chisana (theme 6).
  - live feeds from a salmon run at the fish weir (theme 3).
  - temporary exhibit space where pictures of adverse impacts from ATVs or other current resource impact information could be posted.

## Nabesna Road

- Complete the Nabesna Road wayside exhibits.
- Install the TIS station.
- Develop audio interpretive program for Nabesna road.
- Develop and install better signage of existing trails so they are easier to find and follow.

## Personal services

- The diversity of programs and schedule needs expanding to provide opportunities for visitors and local residents to participate in formal and informal interpretive and educational programming. Opportunities for interpretive roving related to resource issues needs to expand.
- Provide educational programs for local residents in Slana near the fish wheel (theme 3).

## **Nabesna District - Education and Outreach**

### Education Programs-Nabesna

The park will work with the Copper River School District and the Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment (WISE) to develop a comprehensive, coordinated, curriculum-based educational program that will be carefully targeted toward appropriate grades/age groups. This educational program will require its own planning exercise, but will be based on the interpretive themes developed in this document. The educational program will be developed after careful research into the state curriculum and in close consul-

tation with local teachers and parents. Some specific suggestions for the future educational planning group include:

### **Develop educational programs for visiting and local children**

High

- Increase and expand the existing day camp opportunities, including expanding the culture camps (all themes) in Slana and Copper Center.(G1-3)
- Develop a theme-based Junior Ranger publication to be printed summer '05.(G1-3)

## **LOCAL OUTREACH**

### **Interpretive Programs-Nabesna**

High

- Provide educational programs in Slana near the fish wheel in cooperation with local residents (theme 3).(G2,3)
- Continue and enhance current educational programs at Batzulnetas in cooperation with Mt. Sanford Tribal Consortium.(G1-3)

### **Meetings/Current Issues/Local forums**

High

- Hold periodic question and answer sessions in Slana with park management on access rules/laws or other issues of interest to the community.(G1-3)



# OVERALL PRIORITIZED ACTION ITEMS

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The planning team prioritized recommendations by funding method and by how they would be accomplished.

## **Projects prioritized by overall park importance, regardless of funding source**

1. Provide sufficient interpretive staff for desired program. Match furlough lengths to job functions to the degree fiscally possible.
2. Create backcountry program, including exhibits, publications, and staff training.
3. Create a comprehensive program for handling OHV use, including exhibits, films, permitting, and orientation procedures.
4. Establish a comprehensive education program in the Copper Basin, including a coordinated program with the Copper River School District.
5. Improve visitor services and facilities at Kennecott. Establish VC and exhibits in historic post office building in Kennecott.
6. Improve visitor services and facilities at Slana Ranger Station and in the Nabesna District.
7. Implement Nabesna and McCarthy Scenic Corridor Plans.
8. Improve park-wide communication through a trial system of liaisons and by facilitating the development of a communication plan that includes specific processes.
9. Facilitate an agreement with Ahtna Heritage Foundation for operation of the Ahtna Museum.
10. Provide outreach to military bases.

**Projects requiring project-specific funding to complete (park base increase, Project Management Information System [PMIS], or Operational Formulation System [OFS] project funding). PMIS is for one-time or short-term funding of projects, whereas OFS is for permanent funding increases for long-term operations, including salaries and benefits.**

### High

- Formulate parkwide communication plan.
- Provide sufficient interpretive staff for desired program. Match furlough lengths to job functions to the degree fiscally possible. (OFS)
- Create backcountry program, including exhibits, publications, and staff training. (OFS, PMIS)
- Create a comprehensive program for handling OHV use, including exhibits, films, permitting, and orientation procedures. (PMIS, OFS)
- Establish a comprehensive education program in the Copper Basin including coordinated program with the Copper River School District. (PMIS, OFS)

- Improve visitor services and facilities at Kennecott. Establish VC and exhibits in historic post office building in Kennecott. (PMIS)
- Improve visitor services and facilities at Slana Ranger Station and in the Nabesna District. (PMIS)
- Implement Nabesna and McCarthy Scenic Corridor Plans. (PMIS)
- Outreach to military bases. (OFS, PMIS)
- Develop TIS station for McCarthy/Kennecott, Chitina, Slana, and Copper Center. (PMIS-#91286)
- Plan, design, and fabricate Store and Post Office exhibits. (PMIS)
- Participate in seasonal training for businesses, commercial operators and chamber of commerce, and supply them with information on park themes, safety, resource protection, etc. (PMIS)
- Plan and fabricate Kennecott historic general store and manager's residence exhibits. (PMIS-#90907)
- Develop VIP intern program in partnership with APU at Nabesna-Parkwise. (PMIS)
- Hire YCC students parkwide (each year). (PMIS)
- Design publications in-house and print in most expeditious manner. (PMIS)
- Work with local park tour operators to get information to guides. Get tour operators to come to training and provide them with interpretive material. (PMIS)
- Design and fabricate Nabesna/McCarthy Kennecott Trailhead signs and media. (PMIS)
- Design and fabricate Slana Ranger Station wayside exhibit. (PMIS)
- Build partnership in resource management and interpretation with Murie Science and Learning Center. (PMIS)
- Close caption existing Kennecott cultural history film. (#100907-PMIS)
- Construct a trailer pad for Volunteers in Parks. (#83161-PMIS)
- Integrate accessibility upgrade into the Wrangell-St. Elias interpretation program. (#100903-PMIS)
- Plan and install Cheeshna Sinona Creek salmon interpretation exhibits. (#108215-PMIS)
- Plan and install interpretive exhibits, signage, bulletin board and pavilion in Twin Lakes Campground. (PMIS)
- Develop Kennecott Recreation Hall educational and audiovisual equipment. (#100765-PMIS)
- Develop web-based teaching tool for Kennecott Mill town and mines for NHL. (#102634-PMIS)
- Plan and implement the Nabesna District after school and summer Junior Naturalist Program. (#100906-PMIS)
- Develop and provide summer camps in the Nabesna District. (#100896-PMIS)
- Develop amphitheater, view deck and interpretive trail for WRST Visitor Center. (#47154-PMIS)

## Medium

- Develop backcountry trip planner – safety, resource protection, introduction to themes electronic version. (PMIS)
- Increase/expand day camp and culture camp opportunities. (PMIS)
- Develop outreach programs for underserved audiences. (OFS, PMIS)
- Produce park film about cultural themes to be shown in VC or off-site:
  - Native cultures in the entire span of the park. (PMIS)
  - Kennecott. (PMIS)
- Implement wayside exhibit projects along Nabesna Road.
- Design, fabricate, and install Kennecott NHL interpretive exhibit and wayside design. (#65867-PMIS)
- Design, fabricate, and install Kennecott interpretive exhibit and wayside. (#65868-PMIS)
- Develop backcountry trip planner for Wrangell St. Elias NP/P. (#100838-PMIS)
- Develop interpretive products at information portals, such as Tok airstrip, Chitina, Gulkana hanger, McCarthy airstrip. (PMIS)
- Develop rack card to provide critical resource issues PMIS. (#54522-PMIS)
- Produce an historic photo scrapbook for the Wrangell-St. Elias region. (#76567-PMIS)
- Develop audio interpretation program. (#91302-PMIS)
- Develop Kennecott NHL interpretive exhibit and wayside design. (#65867-PMIS)
- Prepare do-it-yourself GIS trip planner for WRST. (#55482-PMIS)
- Develop McCarthy Road wayside exhibits. (#91577-PMIS)
- Prepare historic furnishings plan, Kennecott Store. (#90664-PMIS)
- Design and construct Slana Ranger Station observation deck and hiking trail w/observation deck. (#100905-PMIS)
- Expand invasive plants/urban outreach program parkwide. (PMIS)
- Initiate Summer Field Studies (Copper Basin/High School Students). (PMIS)

## Low

- Develop materials for distribution/display by businesses and commercial operators. (PMIS)
- Design and fabricate traveling exhibit. (PMIS)
- Develop audio interpretive programs for the Nabesna and McCarthy roads. (PMIS)
- Develop rack card, picture flip book, or other interpretive materials for local businesses, other government agencies, village council office. (PMIS)
- Design and print World Heritage site bulletin. (PMIS)
- Develop comprehensive YCC program based on Santa Monica Mountains model. (PMIS)

- Develop park film about cultural themes to be shown in VC or other locations. (PMIS)
- Broadcast Video Tower salmon counts as an interpretive tool. (#91487-PMIS)
- Develop Slana-Nabesna Area non-personal interpretive program. (#47207-PMIS)
- Develop Yakutat non-personal interpretive program. (#47208-PMIS)
- Develop Yakutat permanent exhibit. (#73871-PMIS)

### **Projects to be completed by park staff with existing park base funding**

#### High

- Develop training opportunities for interpreters to be immersed in the backcountry, so the information they provide comes, at least in part, from personal experience.
- Work with permitting and orientation procedures to create a comprehensive program for handling OHV use.
- Establish a comprehensive education program in the Copper Basin, including a coordinated program with the CRSD.
- Prepare hard copy and web versions of the backcountry trip planner.
- Outreach to military bases.
- Hold an annual commercial operators meeting to brief on safety, resource protection messages, solicit input on what interpretive materials they would like, introduce themes. etc.
- Provide interpretive training for all park staff.
- Develop comprehensive backcountry program that ensures quality backcountry orientations, trip planning assistance for visitors, and backcountry knowledge for staff.
- Website: highlight major park themes, orientation, virtual visitor/potential visitors, group trip planning, info for school projects, backcountry trip planning section, links to WH, Ahtna, weather data, mountaineering, trail descriptions, etc.
- Participate in seasonal training for businesses, commercial operators, and chamber of commerce, and supply them with information on park themes, safety, resource protection, etc.
- Work with local park tour operators to get information to guides. Get tour operators to come to training and provide them with interpretive material
- Develop handout/cover letter for researchers.
- Develop watershed map/handout for fish permits, etc.
- Expand article series in local newspapers and organizations' newsletters.
- Develop/improve backcountry trail/route descriptions and opportunities. Include safety, private land, and resource protection information.

- Staff tables/traveling exhibits/booths at local events to give permits, provide information, handouts.

#### Medium

- Cultivate relationships with researchers and provide them with interpretive materials.
- Develop outreach programs for underserved audiences.

#### Low

- Redo “Map and Guide” to reflect park themes.

### **Projects that could be completed by or with partners**

#### High

- Provide sufficient interpretive staff for desired program. Match furlough lengths to job functions to the degree fiscally possible.
- Establish a comprehensive education program in the Copper Basin, including a coordinated program with the CRSD.
- Participate in seasonal training for businesses, commercial operators, and chamber of commerce, and supply them with information on park themes, safety, resource protection, etc.
- Outreach to military bases.
- Work with local park tour operators to get information to guides. Get tour operators to come to training and provide them with interpretive material.
- Expand article series in local newspapers and organizations’ newsletters.
- Work on AHTNA museum and help develop exhibits.

#### Medium

- Outreach programs for underserved audiences.
- Formalize community lecture series in Glennallen, support in McCarthy: speakers from other WH sites, local experts, bear biologist, fire ecologist, ANILCA authors/experts, locals who mined, elders, etc.
- Develop information portals: Tok airstrip, Chitina, Gulkana hanger, McCarthy airstrip, etc.
- Produce park film about cultural themes to be shown in VC or off-site. Topics would include:
  - native cultures in the entire span of the park.
  - Kennecott.

#### Low

- Develop curriculum/teach classes at PWSCC – wilderness philosophy, park ecology, geology, political science class on ANILCA that gathers different viewpoints.

## **PLANNING TEAM**

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### **Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve staff**

Amy Marshall, Park Museum Curator  
Devi Sharp, Chief of Resources Management  
Gary Candelaria, former Superintendent  
Geoff Bleakley, Historian  
Glenn Hart, Education Specialist/Volunteer Coordinator  
Jed Davis, Superintendent  
Megan Brokaw, Kennecott District Interpreter  
Michele Jesperson, Cultural Resource Specialist  
Smitty Parratt, Chief of Interpretation/Public Affairs Officer  
Tom VandenBerg, Headquarters/Chitina District Interpreter  
Vicki Penwell, Nabesna District Interpreter  
Vicki Snitzler, Park Planner and Acting Chief of Interpretation

### **Other National Park Service staff**

Kate Hammond, former Interpretive Planner, Harpers Ferry Center  
Mitch Zetlin, Designer, Harpers Ferry Center  
Nancy Stimson, Interpretive Specialist, AKSO  
Paul Lee, Interpretive Planner, Harpers Ferry Center

### **Park Partners**

Elaine Sinyon, Tribal Administrator, Cheesh-na Tribal Council  
Evelyn Beeter, President, Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium  
Janelle Eklund, President, Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment (WISE)  
Joe Hart, General Manager, Chitina Native Corporation  
Joeneal Hicks, Natural Resources Director, Cheesh-na Tribal Council  
Meg Hunt, President, McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum  
Rob Terwilliger, former Executive Director, Wrangell Mountain Center (WMC)  
Ron Simpson, Historian, Copper Center  
Suzanne McCarthy, Director, Prince William Sound Community College – Glennallen  
Wilson Justin, Vice President, Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium

## APPENDIX A: PARTNERSHIP LISTING

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Implementation of elements of this interpretive plan depends on the continuation and expansion of existing partnerships and the development of new ones. Some of these cooperative efforts have been proposed in other sections of the plan but will be summarized here. Listed below are current park partners, the status of that partnership (formal, have an agreement, need an agreement), and what the goals of that partnership relative to interpretation are.

The ultimate outcome of planning for national parks is an agreement among the National Park Service, its partners, and the public on why each area is part of the National Park System, what visitor experiences should exist there, and how those conditions can be best achieved.

**Alaska Natural History Association**, have an agreement, collaborate on providing educational materials for park visitors. The Association provides financial aid to the park which supports publications and interpretive services parkwide. The Association is facilitating production of a Communication Plan in 2005-2006.

**Community Involvement**, Wrangell-St. Elias employees are board members and/or are active in the following venues: Copper Valley Development Association, Copper Valley School District Board, DARE instructors, hockey leagues, KCHU NPR Radio, Prince William Sound Community College, Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment, Wrangell Mountains Center. There is great potential to utilize these relationships for outreach education.

**Community Organizations (Community Round Table, Copper Valley Development Association, Copper Valley Search and Rescue, McCarthy Area Council, McCarthy-Kennecott Volunteer Fire Department, Recycle Our Area Resources**, Wrangell-St. Elias employees are members/participants and work cooperatively on projects. There is potential for furthering outreach education.

**Copper River Native Association, Ahtna Heritage, Mount Sanford tribal consortium**, non-profit organizations that need agreements, and work cooperatively to support mutually beneficial educational programming.

**Copper River Princess Wilderness Lodge**, have an agreement, collaborate on providing interpretive programs to Princess guests in return for financial support from the lodge. Assist the lodge with information and images for production of exhibits.

**Copper River School District and Gateway School District**, informal relationship, collaborate on providing mutually beneficial educational programming.

**Copper Valley Chamber of Commerce**, formal agreement, collaborate on disseminating accurate information about the park, park resources, and visitor facilities. Park provides financial support and in return has exhibit space in the Chamber building and a bulletin board in front of the building. There is collaboration on training and consideration for employees of each organization being exposed to the other operation for sharing of ideas.

**Friends of Kennicott**, have agreement, collaborate on interpreting Kennecott through programs and exhibits emanating from the Recreation Hall.

**McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum**, need an agreement, collaborate on interpreting the history of McCarthy and Kennecott to park visitors through exhibits, publications, and programs.

**Murie Science and Learning Center**, need agreement, collaborate on mutual education programs with resource management and interpretation, facilitate long-distance learning with nine partner parks in Alaska.

**National History Day in Alaska**, have an agreement, a developing relationship.

**Native villages** (Chistochina, Mentasta, Yak-Tat-Kwan), have formal government to government relationships, work to develop mutually beneficial educational program and resolve subsistence issues.

**Prince William Sound Community College**, need an agreement, collaborate on providing educational programs about park resources. Wrangell-St. Elias employees often serve as instructors or guest presenters.

**State Troopers**, memorandum of understanding, cooperate on law enforcement and search and rescue activities

**University of Alaska at Anchorage, University of Alaska at Fairbanks**, cooperative agreement, work with museum collections, cooperate on research and studies, engage jointly in projects

**Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment**, have formal MOA in place, collaborate on providing mutually beneficial educational programming through grants and the labor of WISE members. This includes the very successful Earth Discovery Day.

**Wrangell Mountains Center**, have an agreement, collaborate on interpreting park themes, providing park orientation and information, mitigating resource damage, and housing park employees and guests.

**Other federal and state agencies**, informal and formal, share themes, project ideas, materials, resources, and training.



**APPENDIX B: Yakutat Long-Range Interpretive  
Plan**

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**LONG RANGE INTERPRETIVE PLAN**

**GLACIER BAY AND WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS  
NATIONAL PARKS  
AND PRESERVES**

**YAKUTAT DISTRICT 2001**



## APPENDIX C: ACCESSIBILITY

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Every attempt will be made to promote full access to interpretive media and programs to ensure that people with physical and mental disabilities have access to the same information necessary for safe and meaningful visits to National Parks. This is in compliance with the National Park Service policy: **"...To provide the highest level of accessibility possible and feasible for persons with visual, hearing, mobility, or mental impairments, consistent with the obligation to conserve park resources and preserve the quality of the park experience for everyone."**

NPS Special Directive 83-3, Accessibility for Disabled Persons

All interpretation will follow general standards for accessibility as described in the Harpers Ferry Center Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media.

## APPENDIX D: REFERENCES USED

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Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. December 2, 1980. P.L. 96-487. 16 U.S.C. 3101 et seq. (1988). 94 Stat. 2371.

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Long-Range Interpretive Plan (Draft), Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve

"Our Vision for the Future of Yakutat," May 1, 1998. A Visioning Project by the Community of Yakutat

McCarthy Road Scenic Corridor Plan, November 1997, prepared by National Park Service, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Nabesna Scenic Corridor Plan Draft, September 2002, prepared by National Park Service, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

National Park Service

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## APPENDIX E: EXISTING CONDITIONS

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### Pre-Visit Information and Trip Planning

Many visitors get their information about Wrangell-St. Elias through the park's website or the websites of the many commercial operators that do business in the park. Information is also available by phone or mail from the park headquarters in Copper Center. Visitors may get information from the Alaska Public Lands Information Centers (APLICs) in Fairbanks, Anchorage, or Tok, or many visitors who are driving up the Alaska Highway may get their information from "the Milepost" (a commercial guide to the Alaska Highway). Local visitors or residents may get their information from friends or relatives, from a lifetime of experience in the park, or from one of the park visitor centers in Slana, Copper Center, Kennecott, or Chitina.

Many visitors who come to Wrangell-St. Elias are planning trips into the backcountry, either on their own or with a guide. Many of these visitors will utilize the services of one of the park's many commercial operators who provide services ranging from guiding services to air taxis. In fact, many visitors will interact with commercial operators and never contact the National Park Service either in planning their trip or during their trip. Visitors who plan to enter the backcountry have additional information and trip planning needs beyond other park visitors. Currently, backcountry planning assistance is provided at all National Park Service contact stations, over the phone, and minimally on the park and commercial business operators' websites. A significant amount of this assistance is provided by commercial operators. Bear Resistant Food Containers (BRFCs) are available at all park contact stations for free checkout or purchase through Alaska Natural History Association..

**Partnerships** (See Appendix A for existing and proposed partnerships.)

### Site-Specific Facilities and Services

Visitors who drive up the Alaska Highway from the contiguous 48 states or Canada usually have their first contact with the park at the Slana Ranger Station (see map, page 4), so the description of the visitor experience begins there.

#### Nabesna District

##### Slana Ranger Station/Visitor Center

The Slana Ranger Station is a small facility located at mile 0.2 of the Nabesna Road, a gravel road that runs approximately 43 miles through park and private land, ending at the Nabesna Mine. The road and right-of-way are managed by the State of Alaska. Local residents use the road to reach their homes or property, and to engage in subsistence activities. Visitor use

in this area peaks in the summer, with many visitors enjoying the Nabesna Road as a day trip, accessing hiking opportunities, viewing wildlife, enjoying scenery, and fishing, among other activities. Some visitors stay in campgrounds and bed and breakfasts or camp in primitive campsites. Hunting season brings recreational hunters and subsistence hunters to the Nabesna area in August and September.

Many visitors starting down the Nabesna Road or passing by the park on the Tok Highway stop at the Slana Ranger Station, a small log facility with an information desk, offices, exhibits, and an ANHA (Alaska Natural History Association) sales outlet. The current exhibits were created in-house and are of non-durable materials.

### **Publications**

The most commonly used park publications available at the Ranger Station include:

- The K'elt'aeni (the park newspaper, printed once per year)
- The Park Map & Guide (glossy black main park brochure)
- The Nabesna Road Guide (a site bulletin)
- The Kennecott Site Bulletin (a site bulletin)
- Alaska Parklands (a glossy brochure about national parks in Alaska)
- USGS quad maps/National Geographic Park Map

### **Programs**

Due to staffing limitations there are minimal opportunities for formal interpretive programs. Irregular and infrequent interpretive roving occurs. Regular formal educational programs are provided for local children through day camps, culture camps in cooperation with villages, and in schools in cooperation with the school district.

### **Interior Exhibits and Waysides Exhibits within the District:**

A Nabesna Road Scenic Corridor Plan was prepared by the National Park Service, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and Alaska Department of Transportation in September 2002. This plan calls for the construction of multiple pull-outs along the Nabesna Road to provide parking, visitor access, vault toilets, interpretive exhibits, and other visitor opportunities. These developments are currently unfunded, and will need significant detailed planning to be implemented. The Alaska Department of Transportation recently canceled their agreement with the National Park Service and the Department of Natural Resources. The National Park Service plans to finish the plan and implement the project without the Department of Transportation.

Interpretive exhibits for the Commissioner's Court House in Chisana (an old mining town accessible by small plane in the Nabesna District) will be completed in 2003/2004. There are bulletin boards at a number of locations

within the district, including the Slana ranger station and Chisana airport. Information on these bulletin boards is not always updated.

### **Partnerships**

The park has a partnership with Mt. Sanford Tribal Consortium to assist on a project for youth involvement and community service under a Learn and Serve Grant. Park staff present programs to compliment existing health, education, and environmental programs at the Mt. Sanford Tribal Consortium, Cheesh' na and Mentasta Villages.

### **Staffing**

- 1 GS-9 permanent subject-to-furlough Interpretive Park Ranger
- Occasionally a seasonal interpreter, college intern, SCA Resource Assistant, and/or YCC student employee
- Part-time support of the LE Operations Support Clerk (GS-6) and other LE staff as their time permits.

## **Copper Center District**

### **Copper Center Visitor Center**

A new National Park Service administrative and visitor center complex was opened in 2001 in Copper Center, replacing outdated and inadequate facilities. The facility attracts some visitors who are en route to destinations within the park and some visitors who will never physically enter the park, particularly bus groups. For those groups, their experience at the Copper Center Visitor Center IS their park experience.

The complex, built with a “campus-like” atmosphere, includes visitor parking, a short interpretive trail and wayside exhibits, a restroom building, an exhibit building, an auditorium building, and a visitor center building. Park administrative offices are in several buildings behind the visitor center. Ahtna Heritage is planning, designing and constructing a museum, to be operated by Ahtna, on the campus. This museum will interpret Ahtna history and culture.

The visitor center is open year-round during the week and on the weekends during the summer, while the exhibit building and auditorium are closed during the winter. The visitor center building includes an information desk, an ANHA sales area, some introductory exhibits and work space for interpreters. The park film is shown on a television in the visitor center when the auditorium is closed. The exhibit building contains professionally-designed and fabricated exhibits that interpret the park’s natural and cultural resources. The auditorium is a state-of-the-art, sloped-floor dedicated facility. “Crown of the Continent,” the park’s 25-minute film, is shown regularly in the auditorium during the summer months and provides an experiential overview of the park.

## **Publications**

The most commonly used publications include:

- K'elt'aeni
- McCarthy Road and Nabesna Road Guides
- Roadside fishing guide
- Accommodation guide
- Park Map and Guide
- Kennecott Site Bulletin
- USGS quad maps/National Geographic Park Map

## **Informal/Formal Interpretation**

The visitor center information desk is staffed by park interpreters and park guides, year-round. For two years park interpreters have been serving visitors at the Copper River Princess Wilderness Lodge in Copper Center, the largest hotel in the Basin. In the first several years, the staff experimented with presenting formal evening slide programs and with informal roving interpretation, before settling on the formal evening programs. There is no dedicated indoor space for interpretive programming at the Copper Center Visitor Center facility.

## **Education**

Occasional educational special events are held at the visitor center for local kids and school classes. For example an Earth Discovery Day celebration featuring lessons on wildlife ecology, geology and leave no trace was held in 2003. Non school-based youth are occasionally hosted for programs at the visitor center. Topics include caribou migration, "what is a park," general wildlife ecology, bears, and geophysical landscape processes (rivers). An annual wilderness art contest is held for kids. This focuses on conveying wilderness values through artistic medium such as drawing and poetry.

In school educational programs take place in cooperation with the Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment (WISE) on an irregular but increasing basis.

## **Outreach**

Presentations are conducted at conferences such as North American Association of Environmental Educators and National Association for Interpretation. The park educational specialist attends the Hudson Lake Native Health Facility as a chaperone and also teaches native craft workshops.

## **Staffing based in Copper Center**

- 1 GS-12 Chief of Interpretation
- 1 GS-II District Interpreter (Headquarters/Chitina District Interpreter)
- 1 GS-II Education Specialist



- 1 GS-04 Visitor Use Assistant
- 4 GS-05 Seasonal Interpretive Park Rangers
- Community and outside volunteers (sporadic)
- 1 Youth Conservation Corp High School Seasonal Intern

### **Chitina Visitor Center**

The National Park Service operates a small visitor center in the town of Chitina, the starting point of the McCarthy Road. The facility is in a small historic log cabin located in the town off of the main road. Signage to the facility is unclear, and many visitors stop at the state-operated, unstaffed Chitina “wayside” (a parking area with restrooms, phones, and wayside exhibits) on the road instead of the National Park Service facility. The National Park Service facility contains a visitor contact desk, some historical photos, and an ANHA sales outlet. An outdoor bulletin board is available for after-hours information. This station is open as staff is available during the summer.

### **Publications**

The most frequently used publications include:

- K’elt’aeni
- Park Map and Guide
- McCarthy Road Guide
- USGS quad maps/National Geographic Park Map
- Kennecott Site Bulletin

### **Staffing**

In 2004 staff was available to keep the station open between daily from Memorial Day through Labor Day weekend. Staff were trained in the Interpretive Development Program and about park policies and resources.

### **Kennecott District**

The historic towns of McCarthy and Kennecott are located at the end of the 61-mile unpaved McCarthy Road which follows the abandoned bed of the Copper River and Northwestern Railway. The McCarthy Road Right of Way is managed and maintained by the State of Alaska. Road conditions vary. Local residents use the road to reach their homes or property, and to engage in subsistence activities. Most visitors access McCarthy by making the 4-hour drive from Copper Center and up the McCarthy Road in their private vehicle; there are regularly scheduled flights and a shuttle bus service from Chitina to McCarthy. Visitors and locals leave their vehicles in privately-owned parking lots at the end of the McCarthy Road and cross the Kennicott River via footbridge to reach McCarthy or Kennecott. A freight bridge allows limited vehicular movement across the Kennicott River. From here, it is ½ mile to the town of McCarthy and 5 miles to Kennecott via foot, bicycle, or private shuttle.

The National Park Service, the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and the Alaska Department of Transportation produced a McCarthy Road Scenic Corridor Plan in November, 1997 that calls for road improvements and additional facilities along the road corridor. The majority of the actions in this plan have not yet been funded or implemented, and will require National Park Service and state coordination.

The experience at the end of the McCarthy Road is confusing for many visitors. The land at the end of the road is privately-owned. As a result, the National Park Service's orientation kiosk is located on the last piece of government-owned property along the McCarthy Road, approximately ½ mile from the end of the bridge. This facility, obscured from sight by trees, is a small restroom and an information kiosk. The kiosk has been staffed in the past but staffing reductions in 2003 left this facility as self-serve. The kiosk has an area map, campground closure information, and trip planning information regarding how to access McCarthy /Kennecott and what can be done in the area (lodging, guide services, food service, air taxi etc), and interpretive program advertising. Many visitors, anxious to get to the end of the road, bypass the Chitina Ranger Station and the kiosk on the McCarthy Road and arrive at the footbridge without key information they need to experience McCarthy and Kennecott. At the footbridge visitors find competing privately-owned "information" kiosks that are usually associated with for-profit activities. Visitors have a hard time finding unbiased, accurate information at the end of the road, and are often unsure about parking options, how to get to McCarthy and Kennecott, what there is to do there, and what visitor amenities are available.

For most visitors driving the McCarthy Road, Kennecott is the destination. The Kennecott Mine, at one time the world's richest copper deposit, operated between 1901 and 1938. Ore was removed and transported to market between 1911, when the first trainload of ore was shipped from Kennecott, and 1938, when the company vacated the camp, leaving it virtually intact. At the peak of operation, approximately 300 people worked in the mill town and 200-300 in the mines. Kennecott was a self-contained company town that included a hospital, general store, school, skating rink, tennis court, recreation hall, and dairy. The National Park Service purchased the privately-owned 2,839-acre Kennecott Corporation mine sites in 1998, including some of the historic structures. An Interim Operations Plan was developed for Kennecott, and the National Park Service is in the process of stabilizing and renovating some of the historic buildings. The Interim Operations Plan calls for coordinated management of the Kennecott National Historic Landmark through the National Park Service and community groups. An Accessibility Plan is also being completed for Kennecott – the old industrial site has hazards and impediments to access for both the physically able as well as people with disabilities. Today the Kennecott District's impressive structures and artifacts offer visitors a glimpse into an ambitious time of ex-

ploration, discovery and innovation. The nearby historic town of McCarthy (private land) was developed as a supply and recreation stop for the mining district, and today functions as a gateway to Kennecott offering dining, lodging, guiding services, and air taxis. There are currently no public campgrounds in the area, although the park is considering the development of one on park land in the Kennecott/McCarthy area. The funding for implementation is no longer available and this project has been postponed.

### **Kennecott Visitor Center**

Visitors to Kennecott arrive on foot, bicycle, or via private shuttle from the footbridge, and usually disembark in front of the privately-owned Kennecott Glacier Lodge. There is no National Park Service orientation or information here, and visitors must find their way down the main road halfway through town before encountering the park visitor center. The park visitor center is temporarily located in the historic Depot Building, and is staffed and open Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. It contains some small exhibits on bear ecology, Kennecott geology and human history, and a backcountry trip planning station. It also contains an information counter and limited ANHA sales. Longer term plans call for the renovation of the historic Kennecott Store and Post Office for use as a visitor center – these are very large facilities in need of significant stabilization and renovation, but are situated closer to the beginning of most visitors' Kennecott experience. Currently the windows of the Store and Post Office contain temporary displays on artifact significance and the stabilization and protection of historic buildings. These exhibits do not meet National Park Service standards for interpretation. There is also one bulletin board set in the middle of town that contains information on bear/human conflict reduction, a park map, a Mill Town map, and interpretive program promotion.

### **Publications**

The most frequently used publications include:

- Park Map and Guide
- K'elt'aeni
- Kennecott Site Bulletin
- USGS quad maps and National Geographic park map
- Wildflower handouts "What's up and blooming?"
- Backcountry trip/day hike route descriptions.

### **Formal Interpretive Programs**

- **Daily 1-hour nature walks** mid-June through Labor Day weekend. Topics include bear/plant ecology, glacial processes, geology of the Wrangell Mountains, plant succession, wildlife cycles (example: Lynx, Snowshoe Hare, Vole), wild edible plants and subsistence, and boreal forest ecology.

- **Daily half-hour history talks** mid-June through Labor Day weekend. Topics include Kennecott, national, regional and local human history.
- **Daily two-hour guided history walks (non-NPS)** mid-June through Labor Day weekend through the Mill Town, Mill Building, and Power Plant. These are conducted by a concessionaire and are fee-based. The concession agreement requires training, coaching and monitoring by the park. Topics include Kennecott, national, regional, and local human history.

### **Informal Interpretation**

Interpreters conduct regular interpretive roving in the Kennecott Mill Town, the Root Glacier Trail and the Bonanza Mine. Significant roving time occurs approximately 2-3 times weekly. Focuses include bear/human conflict reduction, safety, Kennecott human history, geology, plant ecology, and wildlife ecology.

### **Education and Outreach**

The park works in cooperation with local organizations to provide an annual program for local children (visitors are welcome too). Topics have included nature journaling, botany, drawing, observation skills, and art projects. The park also supports the Wrangell Mountains Center's educational programs for adults and college students with park staff teaching time. Topics include interpretive skills, wilderness philosophy, Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, park resources for classroom teachers, and Kennecott history.

### **Partnerships**

- The park is working with Friends of Kennicott to develop the management plan for the newly-restored Recreation Hall. This facility will house educational, interpretive, and community recreation programs.
- The McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum (located on the outskirts of the town of McCarthy) displays photographs and artifacts for the McCarthy Kennecott mining era. The park is assisting the McCarthy Historical Museum with the creation of an interpretive Kennecott Mill Town Walking Tour brochure.
- The park supports the annual Arts and Lecture Series sponsored also by the Wrangell Mountains Center and Friends of Kennicott. This is an annual evening lecture series that recruits local lecturers on topics such as plant ecology, bear ecology, wildlife, subsistence lifestyles, and Kennecott history. This program has a strong local following by both lecturers and audience members.
- The Wrangell Mountain Center (WMC) conducts a summer-long college field studies course focusing on topics such as botany, wildlife biology, glaciology, geology of the Wrangell Mountains, social

construction of place, ANILCA, and backcountry/wilderness planning. They also offer a week-long teacher's workshop to teach methods and content for outdoor exploratory education for classroom teachers. In addition, they sponsor a writer's workshop that focuses on writing to explore of self and place. The park helps support WMC through financial and staff support.

### **Exhibits/ Waysides Exhibits elsewhere in the District**

The McCarthy Road Scenic Corridor Plan calls for the development of multiple interpretive wayside exhibits along the McCarthy Road. These proposed exhibits still require funding as well as significant planning and design.

Exhibits are funded and planned for development in 2004 for the Bremner Historic District, located in the Chugach Mountains in the southern part of the park. They will include a map, artifact protection messages, and historic stories.

### **District Staffing**

- 1 GS-II District Interpreter
- 2 GS-05 Seasonal Interpretive Park Rangers
- 1 Youth Conservation Corp High School Intern
- 1 SCA for 12 Weeks
- 2 SCA Ford Interpreters by grant in 2004
- Volunteers are utilized for projects in the winter months as funding allows and skilled volunteers are available

### **Total compilation of park permanent interpretive staff**

- 1 GS-12 Chief of Interpretation
- 1 GS-II HQ/Chitina District Interpreter
- 1 GS-II Education Specialist
- 1 GS-04 Visitor Use Assistant, subject-to-furlough
- 1 GS-09 Interpretive Park Ranger, Nabesna District, subject-to-furlough
- 1 GS-II Kennecott District Interpreter, subject-to-furlough
- 1 GS-09 Interpretive Park Ranger, Yakutat District (shared with Glacier Bay NP/P), subject-to-furlough

## APPENDIX F: PARK/PRESERVE MAP

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## **APPENDIX G: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART**

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