

MOUNT MCKINLEY
NATIONAL PARK - ALASKA



A SUBARCTIC WILDERNESS Two hundred and fifty miles south of the Arctic Circle stands the highest mountain on the North American continent. A massive monument to the forces of nature, 20,320-foot Mount McKinley dominates an immense wilderness area. Mount McKinley National Park, containing 3,030 square miles, constitutes only a small part of this wilderness.

The park has a great variety of topography, from towering mountains to lowlands and stream valleys, and an associated variety of plant and animal communities. Here you can see the stark beauty of the subarctic, and sense the struggle for survival by its wild inhabitants. Grizzly bears and caribou wander over the tundra as they have for centuries, in an area scarcely touched by civilization.

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

To increase your understanding and enjoyment of the park, information and interpretive services are provided at the *entrance station*, *hotel*, and *Eielson Visitor Center*. Park rangers are on duty to assist you.

Interpretive programs at the hotel consist of daily slide shows and movies designed to acquaint you with the park. In addition, a sled dog demonstration is presented each afternoon at park headquarters. Schedules of these programs are posted throughout the park.

A self-guiding nature trail starts at the hotel and ends near Horseshoe Lake. Nature walks, led by a ranger-naturalist and originating at the hotel, provide opportunities for you to learn about the park's natural history.

Along the park road at convenient pullouts are interpretive signs with texts about specific mammals, birds, or geological phenomena. Each sign's location is significant because the subject being discussed is either a topographical feature easily viewed from the site, or wildlife commonly found in the nearby type of habitat.

Eielson Visitor Center contains exhibits on glacial geology and mountain climbing history of Mount McKinley and adjacent portions of the Alaska Range. A park naturalist gives short talks and answers questions.

THE PARK ROAD

A single, terminal road, *normally open from about June 1 to September 10*, penetrates to the interior of the park and enables you to see rugged mountain scenery, colorful tundra, and the many birds and wild mammals for which the park is famous. Since the road is in the process of reconstruction, a certain amount of delay and inconvenience may be encountered. The road surface is mostly gravel, but portions may have an oil treatment intended to reduce dust.

The road ranges in elevation from 1,600 feet, near the entrance, to nearly 4,000 feet; it is winding, hilly, rough in places, and has many sharp, blind curves on the unreconstructed section. In order to minimize artificial intrusions along the road, traffic control signs have been placed only at the most important points. Accordingly, drivers must keep alert, use good judgment, and drive slowly.

Intermittently traversing forests and tundra, the park road generally runs parallel to the Alaska Range and perpen-

Road Distances From Entrance Station

To	Miles	Elev.
Service station	0.4	1,720
Hotel	0.5	1,755
Morino Campground	0.6	1,735
Park headquarters	2.2	2,070
Savage River Campground	11.6	2,750
Sanctuary River Campground	21.6	2,450
Teklanika River Campground	27.8	2,550
Igloo Creek Campground	33.0	2,950
Sable Pass	38.0	3,900
East Fork Toklat River	42.4	3,040
Polychrome Overlook	45.0	3,760
Toklat River Campground	53.0	3,100
Highest point on road	57.3	3,980
Stony Hill Overlook	61.4	3,950
Eielson Visitor Center	65.2	3,730
Moose Creek Trail	73.5	3,150
Wonder Lake Campground Junction	83.8	2,300
Wonder Lake Campground	85.3	2,000
Wonder Lake Ranger Station	86.0	2,100
North boundary	87.2	1,950
Camp Denali	88.5	2,100

dicular to the many rivers whose sources are in the mountains. For the first 70 miles, the route is through or near the 4,000- to 6,000-foot Alaska Range foothills, commonly called the Outside Range. Most of the lower slopes are covered with vegetation. Higher up are talus slopes dominated by rugged cliffs. The remainder of the route is through rolling tundra and within view of the most spectacular part of the Alaska Range.

An ever-changing panorama of mountains, forests, tundra, and rivers unfolds as you wind along the road. The open country allows a sweeping view, making it easier to spot caribou, moose, grizzly bears, and other wildlife.

Mount McKinley is first visible about 8 miles from the entrance station; but the best views of the mountain begin about 60 miles out, and continue with few interruptions to the park boundary near Wonder Lake. The road nowhere comes closer than 27 miles to Mount McKinley's summit, but the ice- and snow-shrouded mountain appears much closer. The difference in elevation between McKinley River and the North Peak is about 17,000 feet.

Near the end of the road is the park's only sizeable body of water—Wonder Lake. The road comes to the lake's edge at two points, one of which presents a view of Mount McKinley and the Alaska Range across the expanse of water.

The road is usually fairly good as far as the Camp Denali turnoff, north of the park, but it deteriorates rapidly beyond the camp. The old mining town of Kantishna no longer exists and unless road conditions are improved, no attempt should be made to drive beyond the Camp Denali gateway. No accommodations or facilities are available at the old Kantishna site.

A LAND CARVED BY GLACIERS

The park terrain ranges from about 1,400 to 20,320 feet in elevation. The lowlands are cut by several broad rivers whose primary sources are glaciers high in the Alaska Range. These rivers, flowing in numerous channels over wide gravel bars, are termed braided streams. Such rivers are often difficult and dangerous to cross; therefore, it is imperative that good judgment be used when crossing them on foot.

Much of the park was once covered by glaciers, and evidence of glaciation is plentiful. Broad, U-shaped valleys; small kettle lakes formed by blocks of ice melting in glacial debris; old and new moraines; and erratic boulders—rocks carried by glaciers and deposited in unlikely places—all point to a day when ice and snow covered much of the park and surrounding regions.

Many mountain glaciers are still present and very active. Some, 30 to 40 miles long, exert tremendous forces capable of carving out solid granite. The snout of Muldrow Glacier, the lower portion of which is stagnant and covered with rock and vegetation, is within 1 mile of the park road. An extensive hike across tundra and river bars is required to reach an active glacier. Many glaciers are visible from the park road, and there are some outstanding views.

FOREST AND TUNDRA

Timberline in the park ranges from 2,500 to 3,000 feet above sea level. It is seldom a clear-cut line but rather a zone which separates two contrasting vegetation complexes. Above timberline, where most of the park lies, is found alpine tundra and sterile rock and ice, and below is boreal forest, or taiga.

The *taiga*, a term of Russian origin for the circumpolar forest belt, is predominantly coniferous with a scattering of deciduous trees. White and black spruce constitute the

bulk of the forest; the spruce are interspersed with quaking aspen, white birch, and balsam poplar. Many of the park's forests lie in narrow strips along the river bottoms, where environmental conditions are most suitable. Pure stands of deciduous trees usually occur where the original forest has been removed by burning or cutting.

The forest floor of the taiga is often covered with a thick carpet of moss and lichens. Walking on such a spongy mass is like walking on a springy mattress. Shrubs, including several species of willows, alder, dwarf birch, currants, and blueberry, are abundant in more open parts of the forest.

Alpine tundra lies above timberline in mountainous regions, and is distinguished from arctic tundra, which covers the land from the northern limit of tree growth to the regions of perpetual ice and snow.

Mount McKinley National Park contains only alpine tundra, but many plant and animal species found here are also typical of arctic tundra. Alpine tundra can be broken down into two general types—upland, or dry tundra, and lowland, or wet tundra. As may be expected, there are limitless gradations between the two extremes.

Wet tundra is characterized by scattered ponds and dense plant growth. Grasses and sedges, lichens and mosses, dwarf birch, blueberry, and several species of willows are abundant. The many low hummocks, sometimes surrounded by water, make hiking over the low tundra difficult.

Gravel bars along the braided streams often have a good growth of buffaloberry, lupine, and peavine.

The upland, or dry, tundra plants, forming the cover on better-drained soils, are typical of the plants of harsh environments. Vegetation is often low, dwarfed, and matlike, with prostrate stems. In spite of the severe climate, many of the plants produce a profusion of delicate blossoms. Though not as spectacular as those in many alpine meadows of lower latitudes, these fields of flowers have a beauty and charm of their own.

If one wildflower typifies the plants of the mountain slopes, it is the white-flowered dryas, which forms dense carpets over large areas. Other wildflowers known for their beauty include the forget-me-not—the Alaska State flower—dwarf fireweed, white heather, and dwarf rhododendron.

ANIMALS LARGE AND SMALL

Mammals. Mount McKinley National Park has two species of mammals unique in the National Park System—Dall sheep and barren-ground caribou. Dall sheep move about with the seasons; but almost always some are visible from the road. Keep a sharp lookout for white specks on the higher slopes.

Caribou are frequently seen near the road in numbers varying from one to several hundred and even thousands. During the period from late June through early July, caribou are migrating toward their wintering ground. Visitors fortunate enough to witness this movement will see several thousand caribou wending their way across mountain slopes, valleys, and river bars. The large bands of migrating caribou are within view from the park road for only a few days and the exact dates of movement are unpredictable.

Other large mammals commonly seen are grizzly bear and moose. Grizzlies are most frequently seen grazing on tundra grasses in the summer and digging for roots or eating berries in autumn. Moose prefer willow thickets in or near spruce forests, where willow browse is plentiful.

Smaller mammals readily seen in the park are red fox, porcupine, beaver, red squirrel, arctic ground squirrel (parka squirrel), hoary marmot, varying hare (snowshoe rabbit), and pika (cony). It is unlikely that you will see wolves, lynx, or wolverines. If you do, you are indeed fortunate, for these wild creatures are scarce and elusive.

Birds. Thus far, 132 species of birds have been identified in the park. They range in size from the tiny kinglet to the large, soaring golden eagle, and many come from distant lands. The long-tailed jaeger annually flies across the Pacific from its winter home on islands near Japan; from Hawaii comes the golden plover; and Asia is the winter residence of the wheatear.

Most migrant birds arrive in May and June. They are most conspicuous and most easily identified during the mating season. Later, while nesting and rearing young, many birds are secretive in their habits.

Although there is no distinct dividing line between forest birds and those of the tundra, some are found almost exclusively in one or the other. Typical tundra birds include two species of ptarmigan, Hudsonian curlew, northern shrike, wandering tattler, surfbird, Lapland longspur, snow bunting, and horned lark.

Birds closely associated with the taiga are the gray jay

(camprober), boreal chickadee, robin, varied thrush, spruce grouse ruffed grouse, slate-colored junco, and several others.

Willow ptarmigan, tree sparrows, and white-crowned sparrows are common in shrub-covered areas.

Numerous small ponds dot the landscape and provide nesting sites for several species of ducks, grebes, loons, and shore birds. Predatory birds, such as the golden eagle and marsh hawk, are common and are readily seen as they ride air currents searching for unwary prey or perhaps simply enjoying themselves.

Amphibians and reptiles. The park has only one species of amphibian: a small wood frog, which prefers a moist habitat and has been seen near Wonder Lake. No reptile inhabits the park because of the cold climate.

HIKING

Several foot trails start from the McKinley Park Hotel. One, a self-guiding nature trail, winds from the hotel to a point overlooking Horseshoe Lake and Nenana River.

Cross-country hikes on gravel bars and along dry ridges are relatively easy. However, if you contemplate making a cross-country trip, you should first obtain information regarding routes and conditions from a park ranger. It is advisable to have at least three in your party for help in case of accident and to keep a sharp lookout for grizzlies and moose. These animals are less dangerous if you see them first and avoid them.

FISHING

By Alaskan standards, fishing in Mount McKinley National Park is poor. Most of the rivers of the park are fed by glaciers, and in summer their waters contain glacial silt, or rock flour, that render them unsuitable for fish. However, in a few clear mountain streams arctic grayling can be caught with artificial flies. Lake trout (mackinaw) are taken in the cold waters of Wonder Lake.

CLIMATE

“Cool, wet, and windy” basically describes summer weather in Mount McKinley National Park. Fortunately, there is much variation, so it is well to come prepared for moderately warm, sunny weather as well. Cloudy days, though common, are not necessarily uncomfortable.

Summer temperatures rarely exceed 80°, and daily maximums are usually in the 60's and 70's from June through August. Minimum daily temperatures in summer normally range from 30° to 50°. Generally, June and July are the warmest months.

Summer rain accounts for much of the 15-inch average yearly precipitation. In a normal year, rain falls on about one half of the summer days, but it is usually light. There is no apparent pattern for summer weather, since clear days are as frequent in one month as another.

Winters are long and generally cold; temperatures range from -50° to +50°, with infrequent warm spells.

THE SEASONS

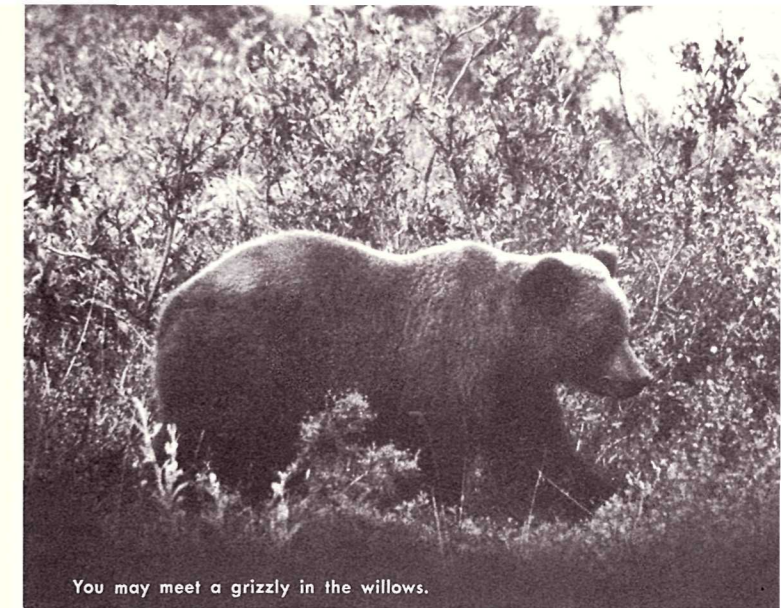
Spring arrives late in interior Alaska. Snow patches may remain well into June even at lower elevations, and leaves on woody plants often are not fully developed until the middle of June. Spring advances more rapidly at lower than at higher elevations.

Summer. June and July have the questionable distinction of being the months most favored by mosquitoes. Fortunately, with effective insect repellants now available, visitors need not suffer unduly.

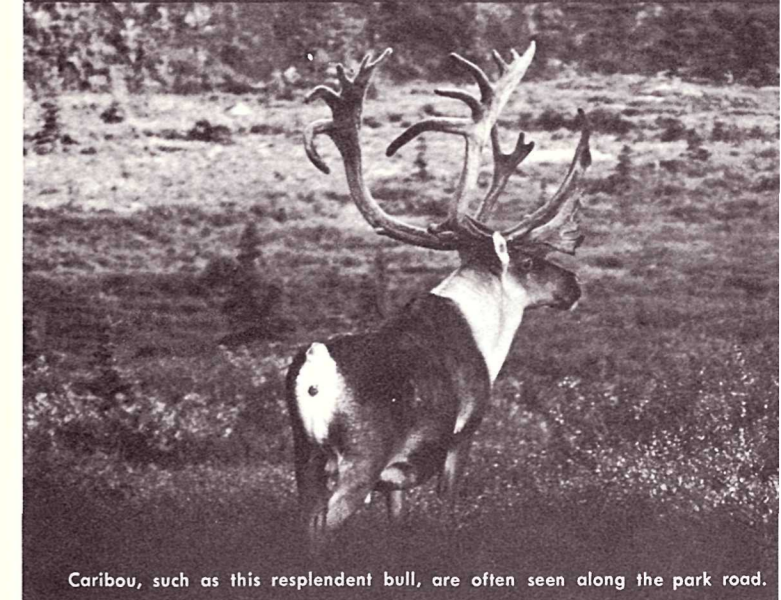
A more welcome protusion is that of the blossoms which add an endless variety of color; they are most abundant from mid-June to the end of July. These months have up to 18 hours of sunlight daily, with only semidarkness during the remaining hours.

Autumn. Beginning in late August or September, mammals appear in their new winter coats, and many bull moose and caribou have newly polished antlers. Their environments have taken on the hues of autumn and the settings are often exceptionally beautiful.

Aspens, birches, and poplars become conspicuous as their leaves turn yellow and orange in sharp contrast with the somber green of the spruces. The open tundra becomes a vast, varicolored carpet as dwarf birch, blueberry, and bearberry turn bright red; and willows take on a multitude of green-to-yellow-to-brown shades, contrasting with the light gray of some of the lichens.



You may meet a grizzly in the willows.



Caribou, such as this resplendent bull, are often seen along the park road.



Dall sheep rams band together in summer.

Winter. With the approach of winter, most birds begin their flights south; hibernating mammals return to their dens; red squirrels, beavers, and other winter-active rodents hurriedly cache additional quantities of food; and certain animals such as hares, weasels, and ptarmigan shed their summer browns for winter whites.

Although winters are cold, snow depths seldom exceed 3 feet on the level at lower elevations. The deeper snow, with its insulating value, is welcomed by small rodents, which burrow through it at ground level. Caribou and sheep, however, find deep snow a severe handicap in traveling, feeding, and eluding enemies. Winter is a critical period for most animals and one during which many perish.

Periods of daylight are reduced until, in December and January, many parts of the park receive only 6 or 7 hours of indirect sunlight. Pale green and occasionally faint reddish northern lights enliven the dark skies with their playful, racing, circling, waving, and glowing displays.

MEN AND MOUNT MCKINLEY

Before the arrival of white men, Indians living in the vicinity of the great mountain called it Denali (The High One). The musical, rolling syllables and appropriate meaning of this name have so endeared it to people that it is frequently heard today.

In 1896, W. A. Dickey, a prospector, was impressed by a mountain whose height he estimated at 20,000 feet. Through a magazine article he later kindled the imagination of the world, and gave the mountain its present name in honor of President McKinley.

Alfred H. Brooks and D. L. Raeburn of the U.S. Geological Survey studied the geology of the Alaska Range in 1902. Brooks was the first white man known to have set foot upon the slopes of Mount McKinley.

Charles Sheldon, noted hunter-naturalist, visited the Mount McKinley area in 1906, 1907, and 1908 to study Dall sheep and other wildlife. He believed the outstanding wilderness wonders of the area should be protected, and worked unrelentingly toward that goal. He was the prime figure in Mount McKinley's establishment as a National Park.

Four Alaskan sourdoughs, in 1910, pioneered the Muldrow Glacier route up Mount McKinley. Two members, William Taylor and Pete Anderson, completed the first ascent of the north peak. In 1913, Archdeacon Hudson Stuck,

Walter Harper, Robert G. Tatum, and Harry Karstens (later superintendent) conquered the south peak, or true summit, of Mount McKinley.

The President of the United States, on February 26, 1917, signed the bill which established Mount McKinley National Park. Eleven years had passed since Sheldon first conceived of a great wilderness reserve in the heart of Alaska.

Transportation highlights include completion of the wagon road to Savage River Camp in 1923, the Alaska Railroad in 1923, the park road in 1938, and the Denali Highway in 1957.

HOW TO REACH THE PARK

By road. Denali Highway, the only road to the park, connects with the Richardson Highway at Paxson. The road surface is gravel and is presently not designed for high speed. It is about 160 miles to the park entrance station from Paxson. The Denali Highway is passable from about June 1 to September 15.

By train. The Alaska Railroad provides daily passenger service in summer to McKinley Park from Fairbanks and Anchorage. It is a 4-hour trip from Fairbanks and 8 hours from Anchorage.

By plane. A 3,000-foot airstrip, within easy walking distance of the hotel, is available for small private and non-scheduled aircraft. Fuel can be obtained from the service station and cars can be rented.

WHAT TO BRING

To be comfortable in the park during the travel season you should have clothing for temperatures ranging from freezing to 80°. Wet-weather garments are a must. Those planning to hike should bring sturdy, water-resistant foot-gear. Insect repellent is necessary, and sunglasses may be very useful. Binoculars are invaluable for viewing wildlife and distant mountains. Telephoto lenses are extremely helpful in wildlife photography.

WHERE TO STAY

Hotel. McKinley Park Hotel offers lodging and meals on the European plan. Concessioner buses operate daily

from the hotel to Eielson Visitor Center, 65 miles distant, where one of the finest views of Mount McKinley can be enjoyed, weather permitting. For information on rates and reservations write to: Manager, McKinley Park Hotel, McKinley Park, Alaska, 99755, from May 15 to September 30; from October 1 to May 14, write to Mt. McKinley National Park Co., 2 East Congress St., Tucson, Ariz., 85701.

Campgrounds. Seven campgrounds are conveniently located along the park road from the hotel area to Wonder Lake. All have tent sites, fireplaces, picnic tables, water (piped or stream), and sanitation facilities, but no house-trailer utilities. You are advised not to take house trailers over 15 feet long beyond Teklanika Campground.

Nights are chilly, and campers are advised to bring plenty of warm clothing and good sleeping bags. Some type of waterproof shelter is imperative, as rainy days and nights are frequent. Campstoves are highly recommended, since firewood is not always readily available.

Camp Denali, a small resort just north of Wonder Lake, outside the park, provides overnight accommodations and meals on the American plan. For more detailed information contact Camp Denali, McKinley Park, Alaska, 99755, from June 1 to September 10; and from September 11 to May 31 write to Camp Denali, Box D, College, Alaska, 99735.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

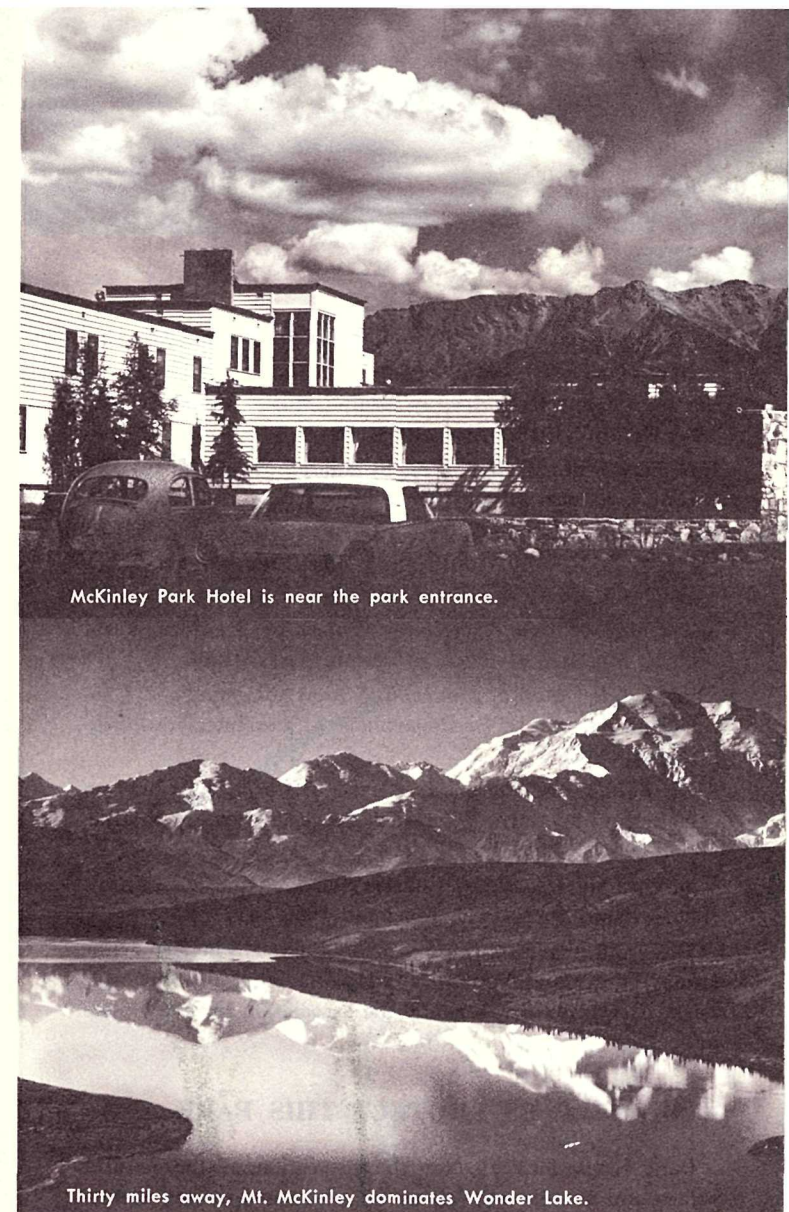
A service station at McKinley Park provides gasoline, oil, tires, normal auto service, and white gasoline for cooking. Only minor repair work can be accomplished at the station.

A small store, adjacent to the service station, provides a limited variety of groceries, first aid supplies, fishing equipment, and miscellaneous items.

The hotel dining room serves full meals, and sandwiches, soft drinks, and other refreshment a la carte; it is closed between meal times. There is no snack-bar within the park.

SUGGESTED READING

For your added enjoyment and understanding of the park, there are other books and publications you may wish to purchase before you come here or after you arrive. Following is a selected list of some of those on sale at the entrance station, hotel information desk, and Eielson Visitor Center.



McKinley Park Hotel is near the park entrance.

Thirty miles away, Mt. McKinley dominates Wonder Lake.



Eielson Visitor Center tells the story of Mt. McKinley.

A Naturalist in Alaska, by Adolph Murie, Devin-Adair Co., New York, 1961. 302 pp.

Birds of Mount McKinley, by Adolph Murie, Mount McKinley Natural History Assn. 1963. 96 pp.

Mammals of Mount McKinley, by Adolph Murie, Mount McKinley Natural History Assn. 1962. 56 pp.

Pocket Guide to Alaska Trees, by R. Taylor and E. Little, Jr., U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 1950. 63 pp.

Relief Map of Mount McKinley Proper, by Bradford Washburn, Museum of Science, Boston, Mass. 1961.

Shaded Relief Map of Mount McKinley National Park, Geological Survey, U. S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C. 1952.

Wild, Edible, and Poisonous Plants of Alaska, by Christine Heller, Cooperative Extension Service, Univ. of Alaska, College, Alaska. 1953. 87 pp.

Wilderness of Denali, by Charles Sheldon, Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1930, reprinted 1960. 412 pp.

These and other publications can be ordered by mail from the Mount McKinley Natural History Association, McKinley Park, Alaska, 99755. Write to the association for a complete price list.

HELP US PROTECT THIS PARK

Park regulations are for the protection of the natural values and scenery as well as for your comfort and safety. Complete regulations may be examined at park headquarters. The following synopsis is for your guidance.

Destruction, defacement, or disturbance of buildings, signs, equipment, or other property; or of trees, flowers, vegetation, or other natural features is prohibited.

Protection of wildlife. This park is a sanctuary for wildlife; feeding, hunting, killing, wounding, frightening, or capturing any bird or other animal is prohibited.

Camping. Written permission, obtainable at any ranger station, is required for camping at other than designated campsites. Refuse must be burned or placed in trash cans.

Fires. For fires outside of designated campgrounds, a permit must be obtained from a park ranger. Fires must not be built in duff or in any other place where conflagration might result. Only fallen dead trees may be used for

fuel. Extinguish fires completely after use. Matches and cigarettes must be completely out before discarding.

Firearms must be sealed, broken down, or made inoperative.

Fishing in any manner other than with hook and line is prohibited. The daily creel limit is 10 fish, of which no more than 2 may be lake trout. Possession of more than one day's limit by any one person at any one time is prohibited. A fishing license is not required in the park.

Boats. Permission to operate a privately owned boat, canoe, raft, or other floating craft on any waters other than Wonder Lake must be obtained from the superintendent. The use of motors on boats is prohibited throughout the park.

Prospecting for minerals on park lands may be undertaken only under a special permit issued by the superintendent.

Mountain climbing requiring the use of special skills and equipment may be undertaken only by permission of the superintendent.

Pets are allowed on park lands only if under physical restraint.

Motor vehicles or bicycles shall not be operated upon trails.

Maximum speed limit for trucks and trailers is 25 miles per hour; and for all autos, it is 35 miles per hour.

Penalty for violation of regulations is a fine of not more than \$500, or imprisonment not exceeding 6 months, or both, together with all costs of the proceedings.

ADMINISTRATION

MOUNT MCKINLEY NATIONAL PARK, established on February 26, 1917, is administered by the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior.

The National Park System, of which this park is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.

A superintendent, whose address is McKinley Park, Alaska, 99755, is in immediate charge. You can obtain information at park headquarters, located 2 miles beyond McKinley Park Station on the park road.

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For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402 - Price 15 cents

AMERICA'S NATURAL RESOURCES

Created in 1849, the Department of Interior—America's Department of Natural Resources—is concerned with the management, conservation, and development of the Nation's water, wildlife, mineral, forest, and park and recreational resources. It also has major responsibilities for Indian and territorial affairs.

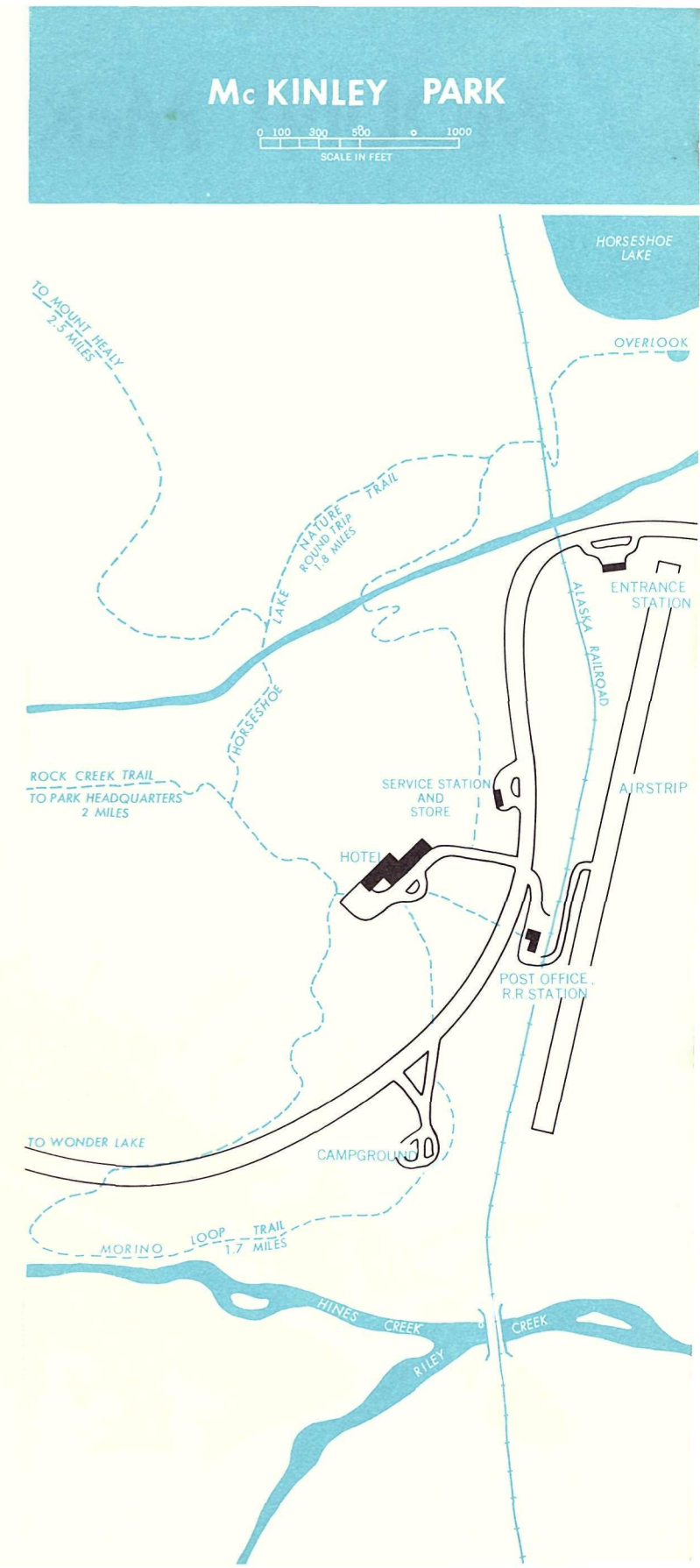
As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department works to assure that nonrenewable resources are developed and used wisely, that park and recreational resources are conserved for the future, and that renewable resources make their full contribution to the progress, prosperity, and security of the United States—now and in the future.

WARNING

Grizzly bears can be extremely dangerous. Never approach, feed, or trust them—or any of the animals of the park.

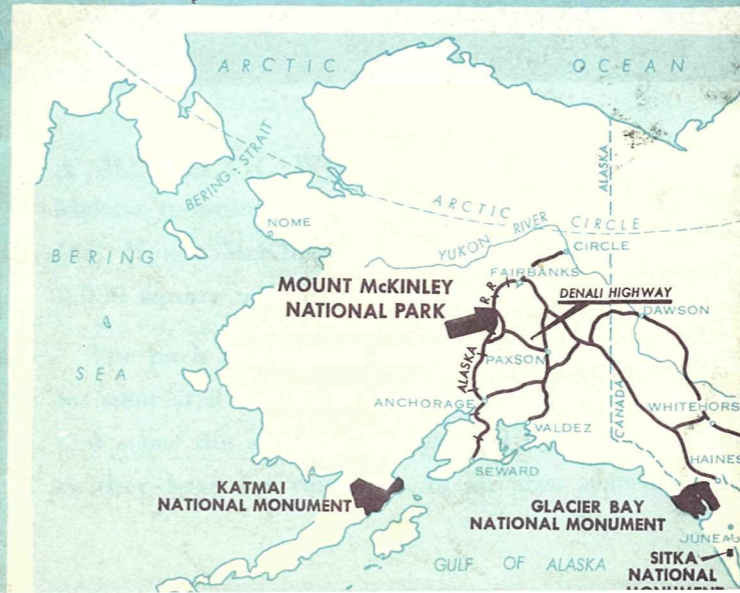
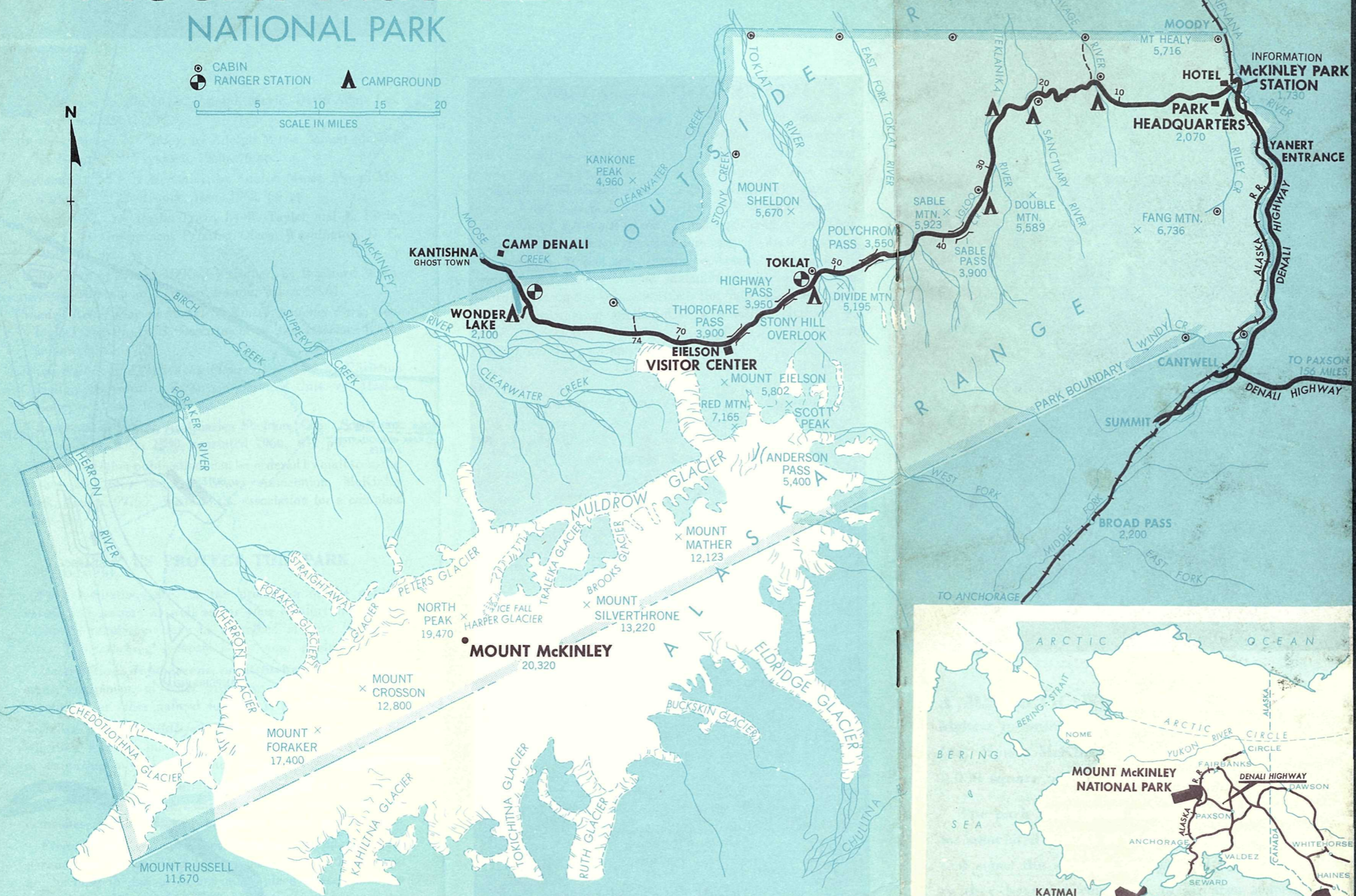
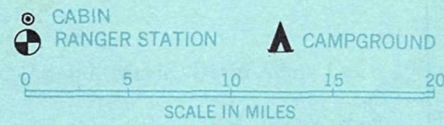


UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



MOUNT MCKINLEY

NATIONAL PARK



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NATIONAL PARK - ALASKA