

At the northern edge of the continent, close to the Arctic Circle, stands the highest mountain in North America. A massive monument to the forces of nature, Mount McKinley reigns over an immense wilderness park where Dall sheep, caribou, grizzly, lynx, moose, and wolf dwell together in a balanced natural system.

"The High One" of the Alaska Range
Small wonder that the Indians of Alaska called Mount McKinley *Denali*—"The High One." No other mountain in the world, not even in the Himalayas, rises so dramatically above its own base and stands in such lofty isolation over its neighbors. McKinley's summit, crowned by twin peaks, soars above the surrounding landscape to a height of 4,800 meters (16,000 feet), and above sea level to a height of 6,194 meters (20,320 feet).

McKinley is by far the most impressive feature of the Alaska Range, a curved chain of mountains that stretches 930 kilometers (580 miles) across the lower third of Alaska. Though most of the peaks are less than half McKinley's height, the range acts as a natural land barrier between Anchorage on the coastal lowlands and Alaska's interior to the north. West of the park the range forms a drainage divide for rivers flowing west to the Bering Sea or south to the Gulf of Alaska.

McKinley's geology features a portion of the Denali Fault System, the largest crustal break in North America, that stretches for 2,100 kilometers (1,300 miles), across the full width of the State of Alaska. Associated with the Alaska Range, the fault passes through the park, separating the most ancient rocks in Alaska from those of much younger age. Events transpiring between these extremes have created a beautiful land with contrasting wide, low plains, and dark, somber mountains, brightly colored peaks, and sheer granite domes.

Surprisingly, much of Alaska north of the park never was covered by the last continental ice sheet, which retreated 10,000-14,000 years ago. The park lies at the northern limit of this ice age glaciation, which covered most of the northern hemisphere. From the park road you can see numerous ice flows still radiating from the high peaks of the Alaska Range, where extreme temperatures keep them refrigerated. The snout of Muldrow Glacier, 56 kilometers (35 miles) long, lies within 1 kilometer (about 0.6 mile) of the park road. Silt-laden streams that flow from these glaciers form wide gravel bars that serve as natural pathways into the wilderness.

A Land of Little Sticks and Tiny Flowers
Only plants that have adapted to long, bitterly cold winters can survive in this subarctic wilderness. Large areas of the park are locked in deep beds of permafrost—ground that has been frozen for thousands of years. Only a few inches of topsoil thaw each summer, enough to support life; and limited sun for most of the year stunts the growth of most plants and gives them little time for reproduction.

Taiga, "the land of little sticks," is a term of Russian origin that vividly describes the scant growth of trees near the Arctic Circle. Much of the *taiga* in the park lies in relatively narrow strips that follow the winding path of rivers through the park. Sometimes water-saturated surface soils slip downslope over the underlying permafrost and the *taiga* takes on the comic appearance of a "drunken forest."

White and black spruce are most common in the *taiga*, interspersed with quaking aspen, paper birch, and balsam poplar. Pure stands of deciduous trees occur along streamside gravel bars or where soils have been disturbed by fire and other causes. Frequently the woods are carpeted with a thick, springy mat of mosses and lichens. The more open areas are filled with shrubs such as dwarf birch, blueberry, and several species of willow.

Timberline, the limit of tree growth, occurs at about 823 meters (2,700 feet) in McKinley park, much lower in elevation than it does in warmer mountain regions to the south. On the wind-swept slopes above timberline, the *taiga* gives way to the *tundra*—a fascinating world of dwarfed shrubs and miniature wildflowers adapted to the short growing season and the thin crust of life-giving topsoil. The *tundra* habitat is of two main types, although there are many gradations between the two.

Moist tundra vegetation generally grows at the lower mountain elevations in flatter, poorly drained areas where glacial runoff, snowmelt, rain and ground thaw collect in many scattered ponds. *Moist tundra* varies in appearance and composition. In some areas sedges grow in compacted tufts, and tussocks of cotton grass, with roots intertwined, are present. In other places, dwarfed shrubs, especially willows and birches, predominate.

Plants of the *dry* (alpine) *tundra* live scattered among the barren rocks of the higher elevations, and upward to regions of perpetual ice. Here, the tiny plants of the highlands cling precariously to the ground, spreading outward like a mat, to soak up daylight. White flowered dryas, dwarf fireweed, moss campion, dwarf rhododendron, and forget-me-not—the Alaska State flower—all dot the rocky, well-drained landscape in a stunning display of delicate blossoms.

The *wet* (arctic) *tundra* characteristic of Alaska's north slope, where an unbroken bed of permafrost prevents ground drainage on the flatlands, is not found in the park.

Animals: The Challenge of Life in the North
McKinley's vast wilderness permits a spectacular array of wildlife to live together in a balanced, natural system. Caribou still follow ancient migration patterns as they move in herds of hundreds or more over open tundra and through mountain passes. Sure-footed Dall sheep survey the rugged country from high, rocky slopes, while moose browse below in willow thickets near the spruce forest. In fall or early winter, all three species enter the rut, and the mature males engage in energy-draining battles for the right to breed with adult females.

Wolves roam huge territories in search of weakened caribou, moose, or sheep that may provide their next meal. Ravens, magpies, and gray jays quickly clean up any scraps left over from a kill. The grizzly bear will feed on any carcass it comes across during its ambles along a river bar or over the open tundra. But its dietary staples are grass, roots, blueberries, peavine, and ground squirrels that it digs from their burrows.

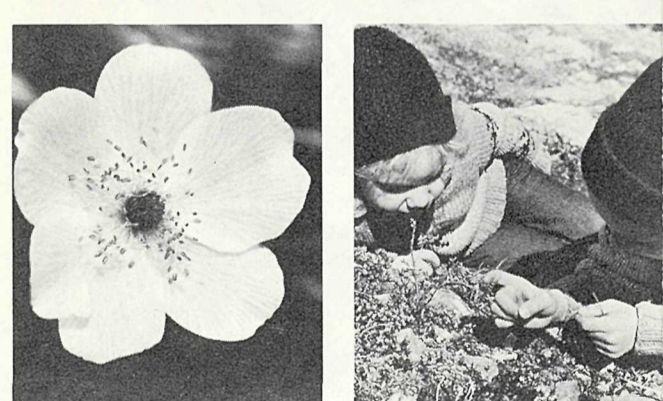
Smaller animals also pursue their livelihood with a diligence that makes up for their size. Beavers cut trees and build dams and lodges. The red squirrel caches spruce cones for the winter. The pika and singing vole "cure hay," carefully laying vegetation in loose piles in the underground nests to which they will retreat once

the snow flies. Marsh hawks and short-eared owls swoop low over the tundra in pursuit of voles, ground squirrels, and small birds. The golden eagle soars high overhead looking for small-mammal prey. The lynx hunts the snowshoe hare, its year-round major source of food.

Winter brings severe challenges to subarctic communities. Temperatures become frigid, plant growth ceases, and food is scarce. Grizzly bears meet the problem by fattening up in summer and sleeping most of the winter. Occasionally a grizzly stirs from its deep slumber; but the ground squirrel, a true hibernator, stays curled up with its body functions at a virtual standstill. Beavers and red squirrels subsist on cached foods. The weasel, ptarmigan, and snowshoe hare turn white and continue their struggle for survival above ground under extreme conditions.

Most birds escape the northern winter by flying south. The long-tailed jaeger winters in Japan, the golden plover in Hawaii, the wheatear and arctic warbler in Asia. The arctic tern may travel all the way to Antarctica.

The fragile web of McKinley's interdependent wildlife includes 37 mammals and about 130 birds. Extreme cold prevents most cold-blooded land vertebrates from living in the park; but one amphibian, the wood frog, makes its home here.



Snowy white is McKinley's abiding hue. It is there in bright patches of snow, where caribou find relief from pestering warble flies and nostril flies. And in the winter, the ptarmigan dons a white coat to match the relentless snows. The bird disappears into the tundra grasses in summer, its camouflage reversed to brownish. Dall sheep, the only white wild sheep in the world, bound from ledge to ledge with an incredible speed and agility. Among the many wildflowers that flourish in the tundra is the Narcissus-flowered Anemone, a small perennial with white-petaled blossoms at the ends of long hairy stems. Lying on the ground you can see a fascinating little world on a scale quite different from the massiveness of things as you hike into the white mountains far away.

The Four Seasons
SPRING . . . it begins with the first leaves on woody plants, as late as the middle of June. Glacier-fed streams are swollen with the new run-off, and snow still clings in patches at lower elevations. A feeling of desert spaciousness pervades the scene.

SUMMER . . . the landscape in June and July is clothed in endless varieties of color and flooded with sunlight up to 22 hours a day. Twilight lasts until dawn. Alaskan mosquitoes plague hikers and animals alike.

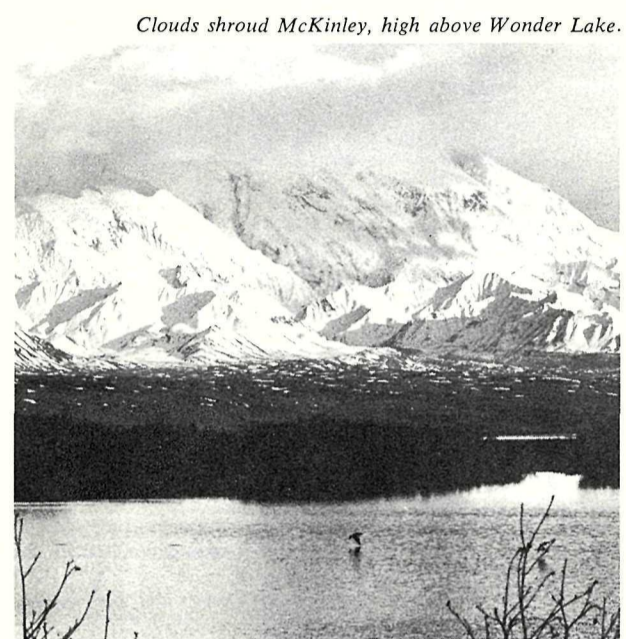
AUTUMN . . . it is late August or September. Mammals appear in new winter coats and many bull moose and caribou show off newly polished antlers. Aspen, birch, and poplar turn golden; dwarf birch, blueberry, and bearberry change to bright red, and the tundra becomes a vast, varicolored carpet.

WINTER . . . the long eight months are critical for most animals, and many perish. By January the land is nearly deserted by the sun and brutalized by extreme temperatures, ranging from -45°C (50°F below zero) to 10°C (50°F). Daylight, a brief 6 to 7 hours, may be followed by the Northern Lights, a dancing display of pale greens and faint red glows across the night sky.



Were the day clear I could see Mount McKinley from the window. As I picture in my mind its stupendous height, I compare it to our science. Many have assailed its flanks; some have proclaimed untruths about it; some have climbed by great effort well up the slopes; a very few, the best by natural selection, have reached the summit and there attained the broad vision denied those at lower altitudes. As for me, I am satisfied to have been able to traverse the great lowland to the base and to climb the foothills.

—Alfred Hulse Brooks



Men and Mount McKinley

On January 24, 1897, with national attention focused on the Alaskan gold rush, a New York newspaper carried a startling story. The author, a gold prospector in Alaska, had traveled inland from Cook Inlet, there to discover a great mountain higher than any he had ever seen before. The experienced mountain man, William A. Dickey, was confident he had gazed upon the highest peak in North America.

. . . it compelled our unbounded admiration, Dickey wrote; . . . never before had we seen anything to compare with this mountain.

Dickey's article would set others on a course northward, not for gold but to confirm the report of America's grand rival to Mount Everest. The mountain had long been known to Alaskan Indians by its name, Denali, "the great one." Soon most of the world would be calling it by the name Dickey gave it after he returned from the wilderness and heard of William McKinley's nomination to the presidency. It has been said, although some challenged the statement, that Dickey had been forced to travel with several "free silver men" and was reacting to their peevish arguments when he named the mountain after the 19th century's leading advocate of the gold standard.

A brief 20 years later, through the exploits of several energetic men, Mount McKinley would capture enough public admiration to be established as one of the nation's largest national parks. In 1902 Alfred H. Brooks and D. L. Raeburn of the U.S. Geological Survey studied the geology of the Alaska Range. Mount McKinley was placed on the map. And Brooks, for whom the Brooks Range in far north Alaska was named, became the first white man known to have set foot upon its slopes. The next year Dr. Frederick A. Cook contributed new geographic knowledge of the area by leading a daring trip completely around Mount McKinley.

Not long afterwards, Charles Sheldon, a noted conservationist, arrived on McKinley's slopes to study Dall sheep and other wildlife. Sheldon was a member of the Boone and Crockett Club of New York, which began as a hunting organization and later had broadened its efforts to include wildlife conservation. The wilderness wonders displayed within sight of the mountain convinced him that the area should be protected, and Sheldon became the prime figure in efforts to make it a national park.

In 1910 a party of four Alaskan sourdoughs pioneered the Muldrow Glacier route up the mountain, and two, William Taylor and Pete Anderson, made it to the top of the lower north peak at 5,934 meters (19,470 feet). The south peak, the true summit, was finally conquered in 1913 by Archdeacon Hudson Stuck, Walter Harper, Robert G. Tatum, and Harry Karstens, who later served as superintendent of the park. Both teams used sled dogs on the first phases of their climbs.

Meanwhile Sheldon's promotion of the park idea in the Congress had attracted valuable allies who wanted to promote travel to Alaska. But it was the provision calling for the protection of McKinley's wildlife that eventually cleared the way for passage of the bill. The act creating Mount McKinley National Park was signed by President Wilson in February 1917.

HELP PROTECT THE PARK AND YOURSELF
To preserve the park and to make your visit as safe as possible, please follow these regulations:

Hiking Permits. A back-country use permit for over-night camping must be obtained and then returned when the trip is complete. Permits are issued at the Visitor Orientation Center, Eielson Visitor Center, and at any ranger station during the summer season. In winter they must be obtained at park headquarters. A stove is recommended for backpacking; do not bury or leave behind any garbage or trash. Everything packed in must be packed out, litter in the back country destroys the wilderness values of the park for everyone.

Vehicles at Campsites. Only one vehicle is permitted at each registered campsite.

Safe Driving. The park road was built for scenic enjoyment and not for high speed. Maximum speed is 56 kilometers per hour (35 mph) and 40 kilometers (25 mph) for trucks and buses except where lower limits are posted. Fast driving is dangerous to you and the wildlife you have come to see.

Other Vehicles and Boats. Trail bikes and motorcycles must not leave the park road. Snowmobiles are permitted only along the shoulders of Alaska Highway 3 through the park. Off-road use of snowmobiles is prohibited. Motor-powered boats are not permitted on any park waters.

Natural Features. The park was established to protect a natural system. Destroying, defacing, or collecting plants, rocks, and other features is prohibited. Feeding, capturing, molesting, or killing any animal is prohibited.

Wildlife Protection Zones. The Sable Pass wildlife protection zone is prime grizzly bear habitat and

offers excellent opportunities to observe and photograph bears and other wildlife from the road. The zone is strictly off limits for hiking. Visitors who get out of their vehicles to view the animals must remain on the road. Other protection zones are established temporarily as the need arises. Check at the Visitor Orientation Center or any ranger station to learn the locations, and please do not enter.

Limits on Fishing. No fishing licenses are required. Limits for each person per day: lake trout (2 fish), grayling and other fish (10 fish or 10 pounds and 1 fish).

Hunting Prohibited. Firearms must be surrendered or made inoperative upon entering the park. The hunting ban is strictly enforced.

Controlling Pets. Pets and wildlife don't mix. Pets must be leashed or under restraint at all times. They are not permitted with you on trails or in the back country.

WRITING FOR INFORMATION
Further information on campground reservations, the park transportation system, and other details useful in planning your trip can be obtained by writing to: Superintendent, Mount McKinley National Park, P.O. Box 9, McKinley Park, AK 99755. A National Park Service information office is located at 334 West Fifth Ave., Suite 250, Anchorage, AK 99501.

A price list of maps and booklets about park animals, plants, geology, and hiking may be obtained by writing to the Alaska National Parks and Monuments Association, McKinley Park, AK 99755.

We're Joining the Metric World
The National Park Service is introducing metric measurements in its publications to help Americans become acquainted with the metric system and to make interpretation more meaningful for park visitors from other nations.



A healthy moose can stand off a pack of wolves with its powerful front legs.

ANIMALS: KEEP YOUR DISTANCE
Bear, moose, and other wild animals are unpredictable and potentially dangerous. They are always dangerous when protecting themselves, their young, and their territories. Take the following precautions:

- Make noise when you hike. Bears are especially dangerous when surprised. By announcing your presence and letting bears know where you are, you give them a chance to retreat.

- Do not walk toward bears, moose, or any animals. They think you mean harm.
- Never try to feed any wild animal.
- Photograph wild animals using a telephoto lens. Trying to get close because you don't have enough lens power will only disturb the animal and endanger yourself.
- Keep your campsite and your equipment clean. All food should be sealed in containers so odors will not attract any animals.

Administration
Mount McKinley National Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, park and recreation areas, and for the wise use of all those resources. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

National Park Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BEGINNING YOUR MCKINLEY ADVENTURE
 You probably will approach Mount McKinley's wilderness realm either from Fairbanks, 193 kilometers (120 miles) away to the north or from Anchorage, 385 kilometers (240 miles) away to the south on Cook Inlet Highway Alaska 3 is open all year, and buses run regularly from both cities.

The Alaska Railroad provides passenger and freight service to the park; 8 hours from Anchorage, and 4 hours from Fairbanks. For information write to Alaska Railroad, Traffic Division, P.O. Box 7-2111 Anchorage, AK 99510.

Registering for Campsites.
 If you plan to camp in the park you must choose a campsite and then register for it at the Visitor Orientation Center in the headquarters-entrance area.

Camping Gear. Camping gear should include a gasoline or propane stove because firewood is unavailable, a tent or waterproof shelter because of frequent rains, and rain gear for everyone. To receive personal mail while you are here, have it addressed in care of General Delivery, McKinley Park, AK 99755.

What to Bring. Typical summer weather is cool, wet, and windy. To be comfortable you should bring clothing for temperatures that range from 5°C (40°F) to 25°C (80°F). Rain gear, a light coat, sturdy walking shoes or boots, and insect repellent are essential. Binoculars are valuable for viewing wildlife and mountains. A telephoto lens helps with wildlife photography.

After you have registered,

CAMPGROUND	Km from Entrance	CAMPSITE			TOILET	WATER SUPPLY
		Tent	Camper	Trailer	Flush	Boil before using
*Riley Creek	.16	102	•	•	•	•
*Morino	1.6	10	•	•	•	•
*Savage River	19.2	24	•	•	•	•
*Sanctuary River	35	7	•	•	•	•
*Teklanika River	46.4	35	•	•	•	•
Igloo Creek	52.8	7	•	•	•	•
Wonder Lake	136	23	•	•	•	•

* First-come, first-served, following registration

WHAT TO DO IN THE PARK
 Detailed information and literature about the park may be obtained at the Visitor Orientation Center; visitors should make this their first stop soon after arriving, and campers must register here for a campsite. A current schedule of visitor activities is posted at the center, the hotel, or the park administration office. Activities at the major visitor areas include walks led by park naturalists, conducted discovery hikes, slide programs, evening campfire programs, and sled dog demonstrations.

You will almost certainly want to travel further into the park. The park road is 140 kilometers (87 miles) long. During the visitor season private vehicles are not permitted beyond Savage River except to proceed to a reserved campsite. Beyond Savage River, about 24 kilometers (15 miles) from the entrance to the park, the road is un paved.

Free Public Transportation. Since private vehicles are not allowed, there is free transportation. Buses regularly run from the Visitor Orientation Center to Eielson Visitor Center and on to Wonder Lake. The buses make scheduled stops at key points along the park road for your convenience, but you should feel free to get on and off at any point and to change buses as many times as you please. Bring all the food you will need, because there is no food service beyond the entrance area.

Wildlife Scenic Tour. Guided bus tours leave from the park entrance area and go to the central area of the park. You will need to buy a ticket. The driver will help you spot geological fea-

tures, plants, and animals.

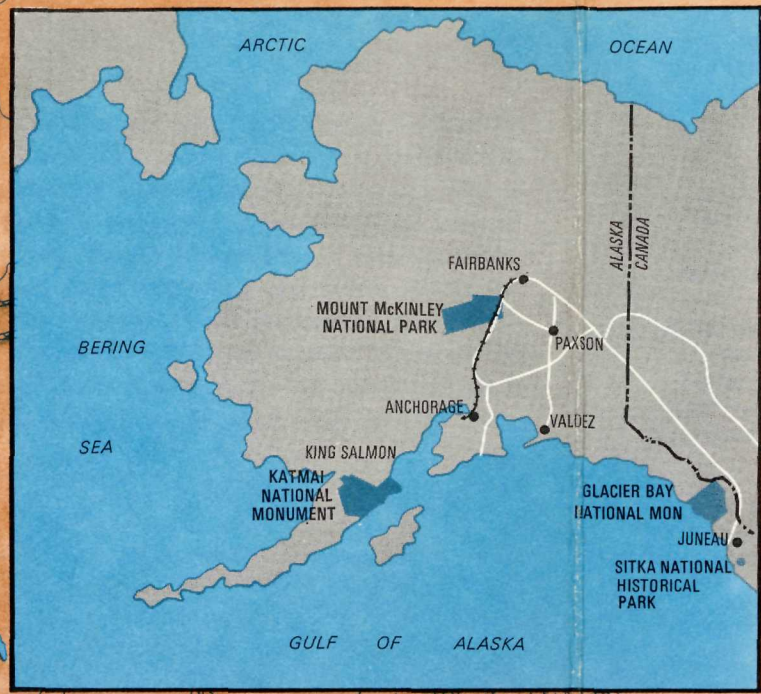
Air Tours. Aircraft can be chartered for geologic, wild life, and scenic tours of the park. Arrangements can be made at the depot near the airstrip.

Hiking in the Park. Hikers will discover exciting terrain for both short family hikes and for long-range overnight trips, even though the park has few established trails. Across this open tundra country and in the timbered areas, the best routes to take are along river bars and gravel crests. Take extra caution in crossing streams; they are swifter than they seem. All walkers need sturdy shoes or boots, insect repellent, and rain gear. A back-country use permit is required for overnight outings. (See "Help Protect the Park and Yourself.") Take reasonable precautions and allow time to discover the wild country. Bright-colored clothing or "flagging" material is advisable so you can be spotted in case of problems.

Fishing. Most rivers in the park contain a milky suspension of pulverized silt or rock flour, which makes them uninhabitable by fish. But arctic grayling can be caught in a few mountain streams that are clear, and lake trout, or mackinaw trout, are taken from Wonder Lake.

Seeing and Photographing Wildlife. The park's animals are wild and roam freely. You can't be sure you'll see them in any specific place. Look for bears, wolves, foxes, and caribou in open spaces along rolling hills, on river bars, and on tundra slopes; moose in the willow thickets and spruce forests, and Dall sheep on steep slopes and near rocky cliffs.

MOUNT MCKINLEY NATIONAL PARK



Information

- Ranger Station
- Campground
- Gasoline-store
- Post Office
- Tour bus Stop
- Paved Road
- Gravel Road
- Trail



The scales show the ratio between customary measurements and meters. Altitudes are in meters, distances in kilometers. One meter is 3,28033 feet. 1 kilometer is 0.62137 miles.

KILOMETERS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
0	0	0.62	1.24	1.86	2.48	3.10	3.72	4.34	4.96
10	6.2	12.4	18.6	24.8	31.0	37.2	43.4	49.6	55.8
20	12.4	24.8	37.2	49.6	62.0	74.4	86.8	99.2	111.6
30	18.6	37.2	55.8	74.4	93.0	111.6	130.2	148.8	167.4
40	24.8	49.6	74.4	99.2	123.8	148.4	173.0	197.6	222.2
50	31.0	62.0	93.0	124.0	155.0	186.0	217.0	248.0	279.0
60	37.2	74.4	111.6	142.8	174.0	205.2	236.4	267.6	298.8
70	43.4	86.8	130.2	161.4	192.6	223.8	255.0	286.2	317.4
80	49.6	99.2	148.8	179.6	211.2	242.8	274.4	306.0	337.6
90	55.8	111.6	167.4	202.2	233.8	265.4	297.0	328.6	360.2
100	62.0	124.0	186.0	221.4	252.8	284.2	315.6	347.0	378.4
500	310.7	621.4	932.1	1242.8	1553.5	1864.2	2174.9	2485.6	2796.3

USE THIS TABLE TO CONVERT KILOMETERS TO MILES.
 ROAD DISTANCES AND SIGN, FOR EXAMPLE, 24 KILOMETERS EQUALS 14.9 MILES.

