



Mount McKinley massif, by Bradford Washburn © 1979 National Geographic Society

Denali, the "High One." What nearby Athabascan native peoples called the massive peak is now the name of the new national park and preserve. As a result of the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the boundary of former Mount McKinley National Park was enlarged by 1.6 million hectares (4 million acres) and the area redesignated. At 2.4 million hectares (6 million acres), the park is now slightly larger than Massachusetts. The Mount McKinley massif remains named for former Senator—and later President—William McKinley, and still crowns the 960-kilometer (600-mile) long Alaska Range. The park exemplifies interior Alaska's character as one of the world's last great frontiers

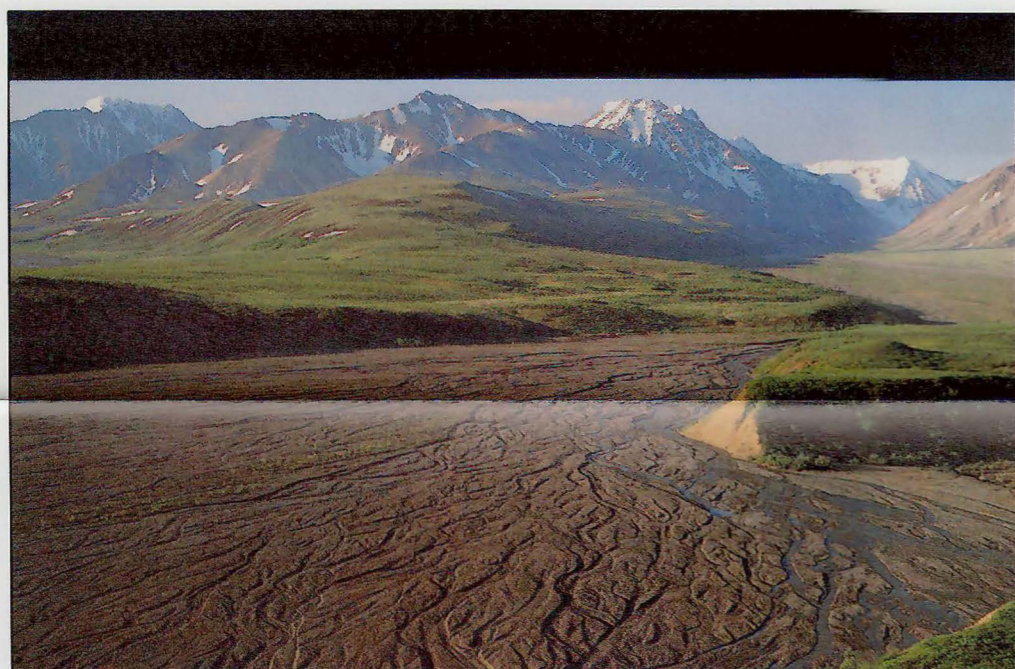
offering an opportunity for wilderness adventure. It remains largely wild and unspoiled, as the early explorers and pioneers found it.

Denali National Park and Preserve is managed as three distinct units, each under different regulations. *Denali Wilderness*, the former Mount McKinley National Park established in 1917, is managed to maintain the accessible but undeveloped wilderness parkland character. Backcountry use is regulated and most usual national park regulations apply here. *Denali National Park* (excluding Denali Wilderness) allows traditional subsistence hunting and trapping by local rural residents with permits.

This recognizes a long-standing dependence on wildlife, fish, and plant materials for subsistence in rural Alaska. *Denali National Preserve* allows the subsistence uses listed for Denali National Park, but also allows sport hunting, trapping, and fishing by state permit and under state regulations. There are two such preserve units.

Paradoxically, this expansive landscape possessed of large caribou, moose, and grizzly bears lies adorned with miniaturized plants. These exude a captivating, diminutive beauty that belies their importance as food to the animals that live or migrate through here. These plant and

animal life forms are long adapted to survive northern life, but there is newness in the landscape, too. The rivers are so young, and so laden with pulverized rock called rock flour, that they can wander across their broad, flat valleys to set new channels in a matter of days. The miniaturized beauty of the tundra plants and the youthful wanderings of the rivers are striking counterpoints to the lofty, isolated, and often cloud-hidden grandeur of the Mount McKinley massif.



East Fork of the Toklat River
Ed Cooper Photo



Alaska Range peaks above the Thorofare River.
Ed Cooper Photo



Climbers camp at 4,300 meters (14,000 feet)

The Land

More than 430 species of flowering plants as well as many species of mosses, lichens, fungi, algae, and others grace the slopes and valleys of Denali. Only plants adapted to long, bitterly cold winters can survive in this subarctic wilderness. Deep beds of intermittent permafrost—ground frozen for thousands of years—underlie portions of the park and preserve. Only the thinnest layer of topsoil thaws each summer to support life. After the continental glaciers retreated 10,000 to 14,000 years ago, hundreds of years were required to begin building new soils, and to begin the slow process of revegetation. Denali's lowlands and slopes consist of two major plant associations, taiga and tundra.

Taiga (pronounced *tī-ga*), a Russian term meaning "land of little sticks," aptly suggests the scant tree growth here near the Arctic Circle. Much of the park and preserve's taiga lies in the valleys along the rivers. White and black spruce, the most common trees, are interspersed with quaking aspen, paper birch, and balsam poplar. Stands of deciduous trees occur along streamside gravel bars or where soils have been disturbed by fire or other action. Woods are frequently carpeted with mosses and lichens. Many open areas are filled with shrubs such as dwarf birch, blueberry, and a variety of willow species. The limit of tree growth occurs at about 820 meters (2,700

feet) in the park and preserve. For comparison, the elevation at the park hotel is 580 meters (1,750 feet). Above the tree limit, taiga gives way to tundra.

Tundra is a fascinating world of dwarfed shrubs and miniaturized wildflowers adapted to a short growing season. There are two types, moist tundra and dry tundra, with myriad gradations in between. Moist tundra varies in composition: some areas contain tussocks of sedges and cottongrass; others contain dwarfed shrubs, particularly willows and birches. Plants of the dry tundra live scattered among barren rocks at higher elevations. Tiny highlands plants grow closely matted to the ground, creating their own livable microclimate. Flowered dryas, dwarf fireweed, moss campion, dwarf rhododendron, and forget-me-not (Alaska's state flower) dot the rocky landscape, offering stunning summer displays of delicate blossoms. Although small in stature they loom large in importance because their nutrients provide food that sustains even the largest species of park wildlife.

Steven C. Kaufmann



Arctic ground squirrel



Caribou

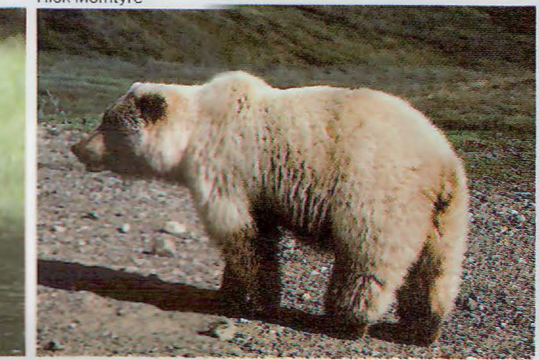


Wolf



Moose

Tom Bean



Grizzly bear

Rick McIntyre



Dall sheep

Tom Bean

Wildlife of Taiga and Tundra

The park was originally established to protect its large mammals, not because of the majestic Mount McKinley. Naturalist-hunter-conservationist Charles Sheldon first traveled here in 1906, and again in 1907, with a packer and guide named Harry Karstens. Sheldon was so impressed with the wildlife here that he began pressing for the area's protection. Karstens later made the first ascent of McKinley's South Peak and served as the park's first superintendent after its establishment in 1917.

Dall sheep, relative of the bighorn sheep, graze the alpine tundra for the young shoots of mountain avens. Ewes and rams live apart in summer, while the lambs are getting their start. In early summer sheep are at lower elevations, but they will follow the snowmelt higher and higher as summer progresses. Caribou, like the Dall sheep, travel in groups. Both sexes sport antlers, the only deer family members to do so. Caribou migrate great distances from their calving grounds south of the Alaska Range to their winter range in the western and northern reaches of the

park and preserve. The McKinley herd has fluctuated greatly in number over the last 30 years. Today a group of 200 or more may be seen from the park road, quite different from the thousands seen many years ago.

Moose, the deer family's largest members, are not herd animals. Bulls may group in threes or fours or wander alone until they pursue several cow moose during the rut, or mating season. The calves are born in May and will stay with the cow one or two years. In spring, the cow and calf feed on willows and other new green vegetation. At this time of year, be cautious about traveling in willow thickets. A cow moose can be very dangerous while protecting her calf from a perceived threat. Wolves are rarely seen, but play an important role in the natural scheme. In winter, wolves generally hunt in packs. Individuals, however, can be sighted as well. Pack organization is strongest during the whelping (pupping) season in spring. The presence of wolves in Denali is an indication of the quality of this wilderness. If you are lucky enough to see a wolf, consider it a rare and privileged experience.

Grizzly bears are omnivores, eating small plants, berries, ground squirrels, moose, or caribou calves, and occasional carrion. They are seen throughout the park. Sows generally bear two cubs, sometimes one, and rarely three. They too are fiercely protective of their offspring.

Smaller mammals abound within the limits of this harsh, northern environment: fox, weasel, wolverine, lynx, marten, snowshoe hare, hoary marmot, red squirrel, ground squirrel, pika, porcupine, beaver, shrew, vole, and lemming. There are 37 mammal species recorded in the park and preserve.

Birdlife is varied and interesting. Raven, ptarmigan, magpie, and gray jay are some of the species that winter here. Most birds migrate long distances between their nesting grounds here in the park and their wintering areas. Wheatears winter in Africa; arctic terns in Antarctica and southern South America; jaegers take to life at sea in the southern oceans. On the open tundra, you may easily see tree sparrows, Lapland

was the Republican candidate for President at the time.

Once confirmed as the continent's highest peak, Mount McKinley was destined to be climbed. Technically, the climb is not so difficult, but low temperatures and awesome winds conspire to make this mountain environment among the harshest on Earth. In 1910 four Alaskans, "The Sourdough Expedition," pioneered the Muldrow Glacier route and conquered the north peak at 5,934 meters (19,470 feet). The true summit, the south peak, was first successfully climbed in 1913 by Archdeacon Hudson Stuck, Walter Harper, Robert G. Tatum, and Harry Karstens. Harper, a young Athabascan from Nenana, was the first human to stand on the summit of Mt. McKinley.

Most parties now fly to 2,300 meters (7,500 feet) on the south side of the mountain to begin the ascent. Thousands of people of many nationalities have achieved McKinley's summit. Dangers are plentiful. Many have been killed, and many have required rescue, often at great danger to the rescuers. Avalanches, crevasses, and high altitude sickness can all prove fatal. Frostbite is the most common malady experienced, even by the best prepared groups.

Many generations of native Athabascans wandered over this region before Caucasians began to discover and explore the area. Nomadic bands of natives hunted the lowland hills of Denali's northern reaches spring through fall for caribou, sheep, and moose. Berries were preserved for winter, fish were netted, and edible plants were gathered for food. Much of the Alaska Range formed a mighty barrier between interior Athabascans and Cook Inlet Athabascans to the south. As snows began to fall, native bands would migrate to the lower elevations, closer to the river valleys, which afforded more protection from the severe winter weather.

Some native bands revered this tall mountain enough to ascribe supernatural powers to it. Groups may have even restricted or altered their travel routes to avoid the mountain because of its perceived power and influence over their lives.

Over the years names were attached to this towering mountain: Densmore's Mountain, Traleyka, Doleyka, Bulshia Gora (Russian for "Great Mountain"). Then in 1897 came William A. Dickey, a Princeton-educated prospector, who appreciated the great mountain's true height and gave it the name by which we know it today, Mount McKinley. Senator William McKinley

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Wildlife. Bears, moose, and other wild animals are unpredictable and potentially dangerous, especially when protecting their young or their territories. Make noise when

you hike so you don't surprise animals, especially bears. Do not walk toward bear, moose, or other animals. They may become threatened and react aggressively. Pho-

tograph wild animals with a telephoto lens. Close approaches only disturb them and endanger you. Keep your campsite clean. Store food in your vehicle, not in your tent.

For backcountry procedures and other safety messages see the Denali Alpenglow. Never feed any wild animals, including squirrels and gulls that frequent campgrounds.

longspurs, and various shorebirds. Short-eared owls and marsh hawks can be seen soaring low in search of rodents. Golden eagles patrol the higher elevations and ridgetops. Raptors, birds of prey, of the spruce forest are the hawk owl and goshawk. In these forests, you may also see the spruce grouse and varied thrush. Plovers, gyrfalcons, mew gulls, and snow buntings are among the 157 species of birds recorded here.

Winter challenges wildlife with frigid temperatures and the cessation of plant growth. Food is scarce. Grizzlies fatten up in summer and remain in a torpor or deep sleep most of the winter. Ground squirrels and marmots hibernate, their body functions virtually halted. Beavers and red squirrels hole up and subsist on food caches. Weasels, snowshoe hares, and ptarmigan, however, turn white and continue the struggle to survive above ground against extreme conditions.

Denali

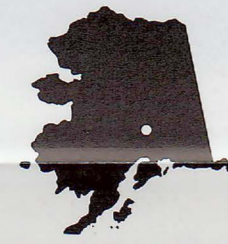
National Park and Preserve
Alaska

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

How To Get Here

By Road. Denali lies 385 kilometers (240 miles) north of Anchorage and 193 kilometers (120 miles) south of Fairbanks. Alaska Highway 3, connecting the two cities, is open all year. Cars can be rented in summer at the Denali National Park Hotel. Call (907) 683-2215 in Anchorage, (907) 243-4300 in Fairbanks.

Summer is cool, wet, and windy. Snowfall can occur in any month.



Bring clothing for temperatures from 35°F (2°C) to 75°F (22°C). A hat, mittens or gloves, and rain gear are essential. Sturdy foot gear, insect repellent, binoculars, and camera are desirable.

By Train. The Alaska Railroad provides daily summer passenger and freight service to the park from Anchorage (6 hours) and Fairbanks (3 hours). Passenger service is limited in winter. For information write or call the Alaska Railroad, Traffic Division, P.O. Box 7-2111, Anchorage, AK 99510, (907) 265-2685 or (907) 265-2494. In Fairbanks, (907) 456-4155. In Seattle, (206) 442-5416.

By Air. Scheduled air service to and from Anchorage is available only in summer. Contact the tour office at the Denali National Park Hotel, (907) 683-2215.

By Bus. Alaska-Yukon Motorcoaches provides bus service in summer. In Anchorage call (907) 267-1305; in Fairbanks (907) 452-5515.

What To Do In The Park and Preserve

General Park Orientation. Obtain the park newspaper, *Denali Alpenglow*, and other literature at the Riley Creek Information Center, near the park entrance. Make this your first stop upon arrival.

Free Public Transportation. Private vehicles are not permitted beyond the Savage River (mile 12). Free buses are available. Shuttle buses daily travel regularly from Riley Creek Information Center to Eielson Visitor Center and on to Wonder Lake. The buses make scheduled stops along the road but will also stop so you may view wildlife. You may change buses along the route, or get on and off the bus along the park road except at closed areas. In July and August buses may be crowded; check at Riley Creek Information Center for information and schedules. The round trip to Eielson Visitor Center takes 7.5 hours; to Wonder Lake and back takes 10 hours. There are no food services along the way, so bring food and drink with you. Warm clothing is advisable. Before Memorial Day weekend and after mid-September you can drive your vehicle into the park. Call park headquarters, (907) 683-2294, for road conditions.

Tour Bus. A narrated wildlife tour by bus along the park road is available through the park concessioner in summer (guide and food provided). Contact Denali Park Hotel for reservations and prices. (907) 683-2215.

Air Tours. Aircraft can be chartered for geologic, wildlife, and scenic tours. Arrange these with Denali Wilderness Air, (907) 683-2261.

Camping. You must register for all park campsites at the Riley Creek Information Center. Advance reservations are not accepted, but you may register for all consecutive nights of your stay up to 14 nights. You can choose a combination of campgrounds.

Once registered, you are issued a road travel permit. If your campground is beyond Savage, the permit allows you to drive only to your campsite. Once there you must use the free buses to other park points. Motorhomes, travel trailers, and pickup campers are not allowed beyond Teklanika. At an organized group campground at Teklanika, reservations are accepted.

Hiking. Denali offers exciting hikes for both novice and experienced hikers. The only established park trails are near the hotel, mostly short loops. Walk them on your own or join a scheduled ranger walk. Take longer hikes on your own, or take a ranger-led discovery hike. The best routes for hiking are along river bars or ridgetops. Glacial streams can be cold, swift, and dangerous to cross. Sturdy foot gear is essential. (Overnight hikers see Backcountry Permits.) Check at Riley Creek Information Center for backcountry information and closed areas.

Mountaineering. All Mt. McKinley and Mount Foraker climbers must register with the park superintendent. Groups heading for other peaks are urged to register. For information write: Mountaineering Ranger, P.O. Box 9, McKinley Park, AK 99755, or call (907) 683-2294.

Naturalist Activities. These include naturalist walks, hikes, evening programs, and dog sled demonstrations. Check the Denali Alpenglow, the hotel, campground bulletin boards, and park offices for schedules.

Fishing. Most park rivers contain a milky silt or rock flour that fish can't tolerate. Arctic grayling are caught in a few clear mountain streams. Lake (mackinaw) trout are caught in Wonder Lake. No license is required to fish in the Denali Wilderness unit.

Concession Services. From late spring to early autumn the park concessioner offers, near the park entrance, hotel and hostel lodging, food service, groceries, souvenirs, camper supplies (including propane), gasoline, showers, and a narrated wildlife tour by bus. There are no gasoline or food services elsewhere in the park. For information write: Outdoor World Limited, P.O. Box 87, McKinley Park, AK 99755, or call (907) 683-2215 in summer, (907) 275-1122 in winter. Other lodging and services are available outside the park. Check the Denali Alpenglow for other services.

Winter Activities. Check at park headquarters for weather conditions and backcountry permits. Denali Dog Tours, P.O. Box 1, McKinley Park, AK 99755, offers sled dog passenger trips.

Regulations

Backcountry Permits. A free backcountry use permit for overnight camping must be obtained and then returned when the trip is complete. Permits are issued in summer at Riley Creek Information Center and in winter at park headquarters. A stove is recommended for backpacking. Any garbage or trash must be packed out.

Campfires. No campfires are allowed in the Denali Wilderness except in the fire grates at developed campgrounds. Wood is sold at Riley Creek and Savage Campgrounds. Campfires are permitted in the park additions and preserve (see map).

Firearms. Make all firearms inoperative. Leave them at park headquarters in the wilderness area. Firearms are allowed in the preserve and park additions.

Pets. Pets must be leashed or physically restrained at all times. They are prohibited on buses and trails or in the backcountry. Pets are not recommended in the preserve or park additions.

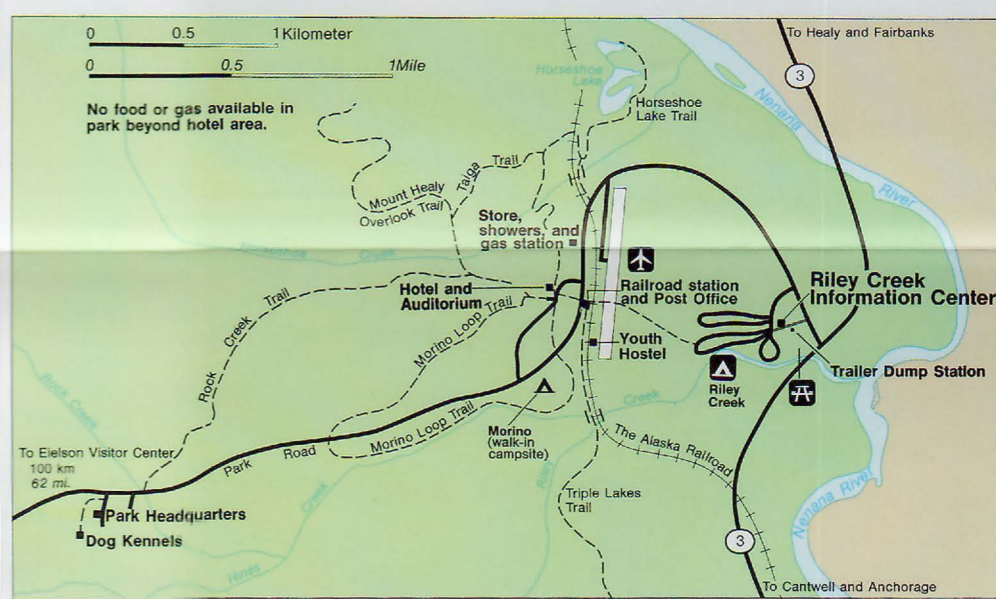
Sport Fishing. A State license is required in the

park additions and the preserve for sport fishing. No State license is required in the Denali wilderness. Limits per person per day are: lake trout (2 fish), grayling and other fish (10 fish or 4.5 kilos/10 pounds and 1 fish). Live bait or fish eggs may not be used.

Sport Hunting. Sport hunting is not allowed in the wilderness or park areas. You can hunt in the preserve with a State license.

Closures. Some areas may be temporarily closed because of bear or other wildlife activity. Check on closures at Riley Creek Information Center. The Sable Pass Wildlife Restricted Area 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. You must remain on the road.

Entrance and Headquarters Area Map



Campground	Distance from Entrance*		Campsite				Toilet		Water Supply	
	Entrance	Headquarters	Spaces	Tent	Trailer	Camper	Pit	Flush	Tap	River
Riley Creek	0.8	0.5	102	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Morino	2.4	1.5	10	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Savage River	19.2	12.0	29	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sanctuary River	35.0	22.0	7	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Teklanika River	46.4	29.0	50	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Igloo Creek	54.7	34.0	7	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Wonder Lake	136.0	85.0	20	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

*Kilometers/Miles

(boil before using)

