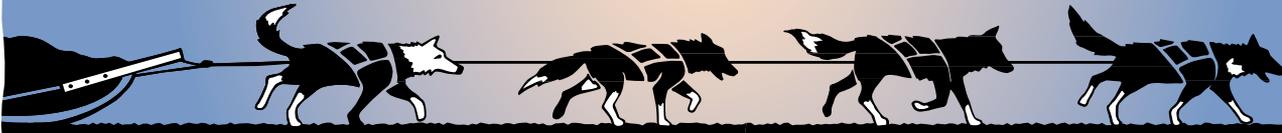




# ALPENGLOW

VISITOR GUIDE



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For information on summer trip-planning please visit our website [www.nps.gov/dena](http://www.nps.gov/dena)

## Welcome to Denali!

Winter in Denali means days are short, temperatures drop, and snow blankets the area. These conditions present some interesting opportunities for both locals and Alaska winter visitors!

Those who come prepared to explore Denali under their own steam or harnessing that of dogs are perfectly positioned to discover the stillness and wonders of this vast, untrammled landscape. Though you need to be self-sufficient, you are never alone out there. Like the neighborhood gossip, the snow will tell you who is also out and about. From the tiny shrew hunting ceaselessly for insects to the moose that bedded down for the night along the trail, they all leave signs that will alert you to their presence.

We invite you to begin your sojourn at the Murie Science and Learning Center, which serves as our Winter Visitor Center from mid-September to mid-May. There you can get information about the park, trail conditions, and a backcountry permit if you are doing an overnight trip. You can borrow a set of snowshoes for your own excursion or join a ranger on a guided walk on weekends after the first of the year. Explore the trails around the center or strike out for the unplowed portion of the Park Road.

Whether you are out for a few hours or a few days, you may find that getting out in colder winter temperatures makes that cup of hot chocolate on the trail or afterward seem all the richer and the physical activity lends itself to a solid night's sleep.

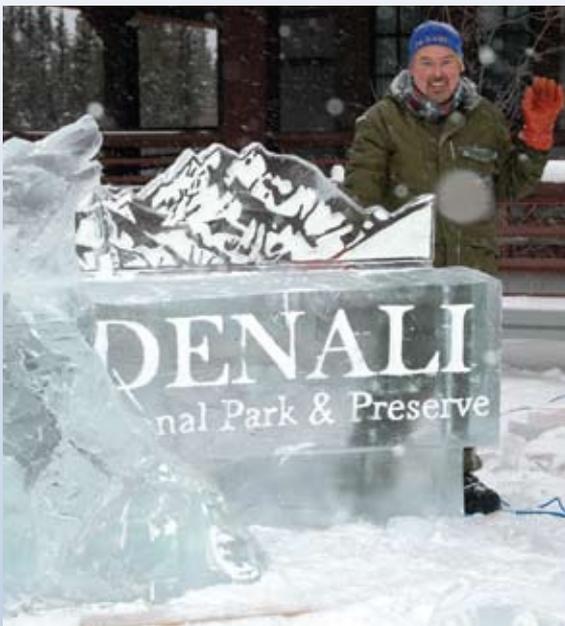
Come and discover why this place is special year-round.



*Paul R. Anderson*  
Paul R. Anderson, Superintendent

## Winterfest 2009

Celebrate Winter **February 20-22**



During this action-packed weekend, indoor and outdoor activities for people of all ages take place in the park entrance area and throughout the communities of Healy, McKinley Village, Anderson, and Cantwell. The activities are free and offerings vary from year to year, but they often include evening presentations, dog mushing demonstrations, avalanche safety training, winter ecology walks, ice carving demonstrations, a snow sculpture contest, events for kids, and much more!

Food and lodging are available in local communities. Riley Creek Campground is open to visitors wishing to camp; however, campers are advised that the water and sewer utilities have been shut down for the winter.

Winterfest is a community-wide celebration sponsored by the National Park Service, the Denali Borough, Alaska Geographic, Denali Borough School District, Denali Education Center, and Doyon/ARAMARK Joint Venture. Visit our website in late January to see the developing schedule: [www.nps.gov/dena](http://www.nps.gov/dena) Then bundle up and join us!

# What to do in the Winter

## Late Fall/Early Winter (mid-September to mid-October)

While bus engines fall silent in September, hiking remains a possibility until the weather turns. Depending on snowfall, the Park Road generally remains open to Teklanika, then to Savage River at Mile 15, and finally to a gate at park headquarters near Mile 3. Be prepared for winter's arrival anytime and for extreme cold after mid-October.

## Winter (October through March)

*View the Aurora.* The Northern Lights occur when charged particles from the sun interact with a magnetic field 50 to 100 miles above the Earth's surface. The best time to watch is from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

*Watch for Wildlife.* Although many creatures are dormant in winter, most of Denali's resident animals remain active. Watch for tracks in snow. Moose frequent riparian areas to browse willow, and Dall sheep search for food on high ridges where the wind blows away snow cover. While minimum distance restrictions still apply in winter, any distance that alters the behavior of a wild animal is too close.

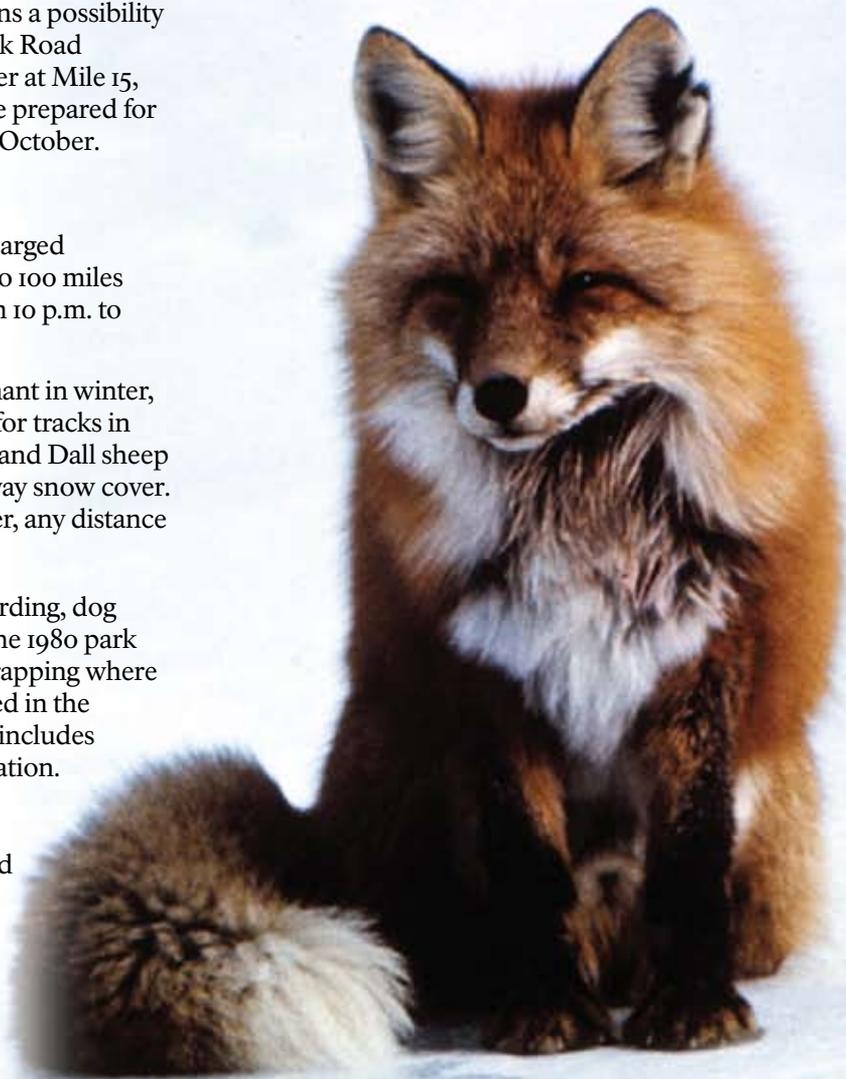
*Get Out and Go.* Enjoy skiing, snowshoeing, snowboarding, dog mushing, and skijoring. Snowmachines are allowed in the 1980 park additions for traditional activities such as hunting and trapping where those activities are legal. Snowmachine use is not allowed in the original area of Mount McKinley National Park, which includes the Park Road. Please contact the park for more information.

*Try Mushing.* Visitors who wish to explore Denali by dog sled, but who don't have a team of their own, should consider booking a trip with one of the concessionaires permitted to run guided mushing trips into the park.

- Denali West Lodge, Inc.  
Tonya and Carol Schlentner  
P.O. Box 40, Lake Minchumina, AK 99757  
888-607-5566, [www.denaliwest.com](http://www.denaliwest.com)
- EarthSong Lodge Dog Sled Adventures  
Jon Nierenberg  
P.O. Box 89, Healy, AK 99743  
907-683-2863, [www.earthsonglodge.com](http://www.earthsonglodge.com)

## Break-Up (April to mid-May)

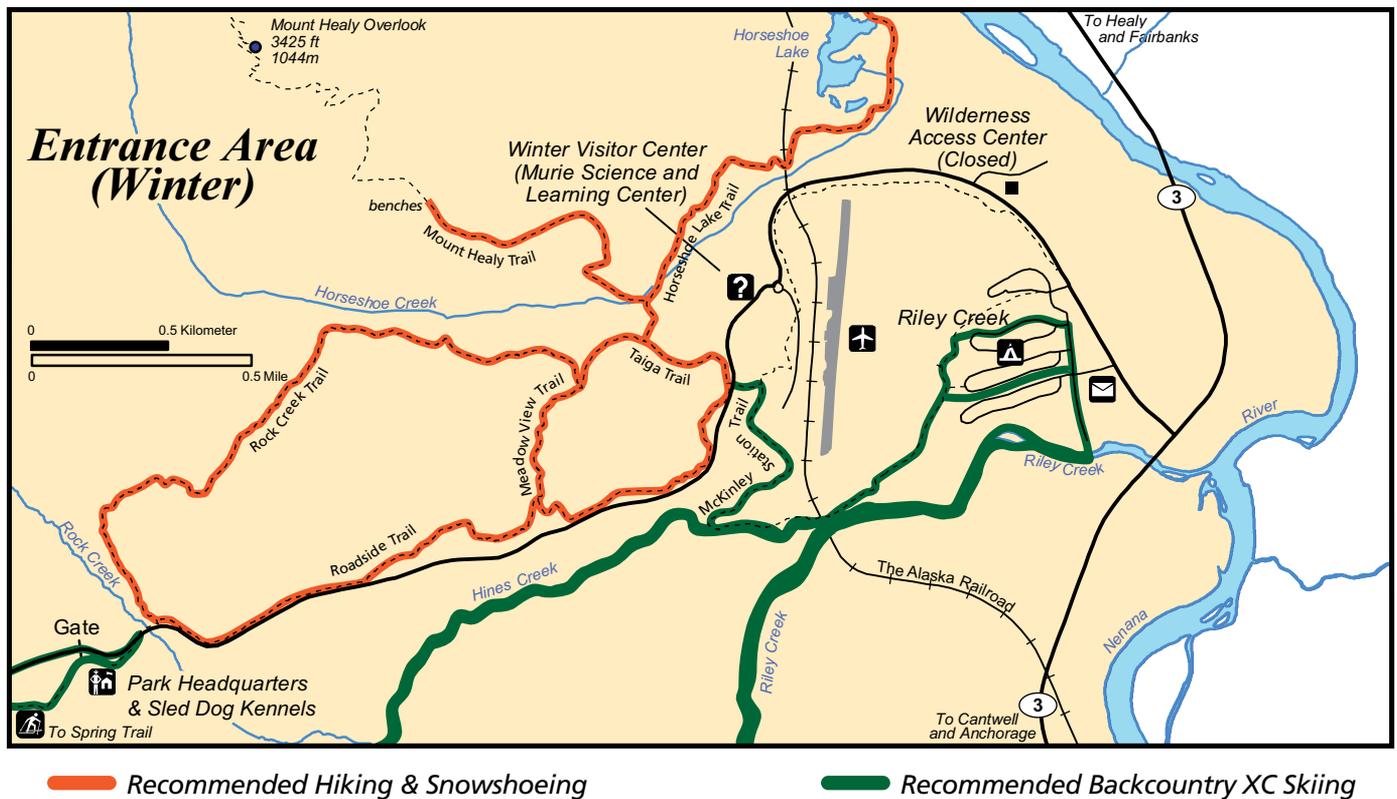
Mushers and skijorers generally hang up the harnesses until next winter. River ice is breaking up, rendering rivers and creeks impassable, and snow can be too mushy for travel. Hikers and bicyclists can enjoy portions of the Park Road while it is being plowed in mid-March and not yet open for motor vehicle traffic. Skiers and snowshoers can use the Spring Trail to get around windblown or plowed sections of the Park Road. More favorable snow conditions may yet be found at higher elevations, particularly once the road opens to Savage River or Teklanika.



## Winter Visitor Center (Murie Science and Learning Center)

Open daily, except major holidays, the center offers exhibits, bookstore items, restrooms, comfortable seating by a fireplace, and screenings of the award-winning park film, *Heartbeats of Denali*. Rangers can provide information about current conditions, trip-planning, and interpretive activities for all ages.

Ranger-guided snowshoe hikes are often scheduled on weekends after the New Year. Check at the visitor center. Snowshoes are available for visitors to borrow.



**Orange line:** Recommended Hiking & Snowshoeing

**Green line:** Recommended Backcountry XC Skiing

## Winter Trails

**Front-Country Trails** Roadside/Meadow View/Rock Creek/Taiga/Horseshoe Lake/McKinley Station (Hiking and Snowshoeing): Easy to moderate wooded terrain with some hills. Packed snow with occasional drifts.

**Mount Healy** (Hiking/Snowshoeing): Moderate on packed snow to a set of trailside benches. At higher elevations expect deep snow drifts, exposed loose rock, ice accumulation and high winds.

**Creeks Riley/Hines** (Backcountry XC Skiing): Non-maintained wilderness trails. May encounter shelf ice and open water that will require route finding.

**Park Road** (Mushing/Snowshoeing/Hiking/Skate and Backcountry XC Skiing/Skijoring): One lane cleared to Mile 7, suitable for skate skiing. Expect to encounter dog teams. May encounter overflow ice.

**Spring Trail** (Mushing/Skijoring/Hiking/Backcountry XC Skiing/Snowshoeing): Ungroomed. Snow is often packed by dog teams. Rolling hills with stream crossings. Snow conditions are often inadequate to cross this terrain until spring.

**Riley Creek Campground:** Open, level ground and loop roads well suited to family activities and beginner skiing.

**Triple Lakes Trail** (Backcountry XC Skiing/Snowshoeing): Moderate to strenuous. From the trailhead at McKinley Village, travel north across the three lakes then over the low divide to Riley Creek. Advanced skills required.

**Please avoid walking or snowshoeing on ski trails – footprints decrease grip and glide.**

**While one may encounter trails of previous users, no trail or creek is maintained or groomed.**

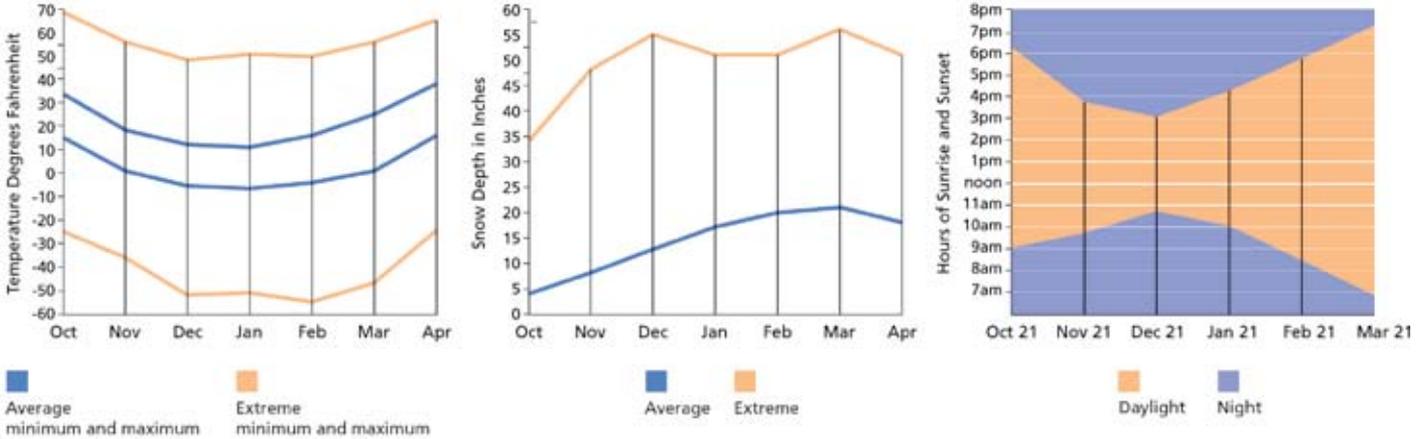
### For Extended Trips:

- Obtain a backcountry permit at the Winter Visitor Center.
- Notify someone of your plans and your expected return date.
- Consult with park rangers for an update on conditions.
- Be prepared to set your own course, be self-sufficient and perform self-rescue.

# Winter Conditions

Winter weather in Denali can be extreme, and proximity to the Alaska Range creates unpredictable and highly variable conditions. Visitors must prepare for the reality of deep, lasting, and severe cold weather.

The following measurements are provided as a general reference only. They were taken at Denali National Park Headquarters, which is often milder than much of the park.



# Safety Concerns

**Traveling alone** increases your risk dramatically. Any incident that immobilizes a solo traveler could easily become fatal. Traveling in groups is recommended.

**Avalanches** result from a combination of snowpack, weather, and terrain factors which are frequently present in Denali backcountry. Be aware of the dangers and avoid suspect slopes and drainages.

**Frostbite** occurs quickly at temperatures below freezing. Drink plenty of water and protect skin from exposure to cold.

**Overconfidence** can be the biggest danger. Be aware of the exertion required to travel in snow. Do not count on going more than a few miles each day.

**Overflow, thin ice, and weak snow bridges** along streams and rivers can cause an unexpected icy plunge. Carry dry socks, clothes, and emergency firestarter in a waterproof container.

**Hypothermia**, the critical lowering of the body's core temperature, is signaled by these early symptoms: shivering, numbness, slurred speech, loss of coordination, drowsiness, and exhaustion. Avoid hypothermia by eating plenty of high-calorie foods, drinking plenty of water, and staying dry. Layer clothing for your level of activity to minimize sweating.

**Moose** may fiercely guard winter trails, particularly in deep snow years. Make every effort to give moose the right-of-way.



Caribou, Moose, Dall Sheep, Lynx, Wolf, Fox, Coyote, Bird Nests, Baby Birds, Animal Dens



Bear

Keep a minimum of 25 yards from all wildlife to help them avoid stresses and to conserve valuable energy.

## Emergencies

**Developed Areas:** Dial 911. Be prepared to give your location as Denali National Park and Preserve.

**Backcountry:** There are no phones west of Park Headquarters and cell phone service is unreliable. Notify someone of your planned itinerary and expected time of return. Self-reliance and ability to self-rescue are essential.

## Backcountry Planning

**Backcountry Permits** for overnight use are available at the Winter Visitor Center from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. seven days a week, excluding holidays. Backcountry permits are free and required for all overnight use.

**Dogs** must be in harness or staked out at all times in order to minimize disturbance to wildlife. Dog feces should be scattered away from water sources, trails, and your camp. No straw is allowed for bedding unless it is seed-free.

**Leave No Trace** practices should be followed at all times within the park.

- ❖ Camp at least 100 feet from summer water sources and developed areas.
- ❖ Although winter fires are permitted using dead and down wood, camp stoves are recommended as down wood is scarce. Cutting green boughs for bedding is not allowed.
- ❖ Dispose of human waste at least 100 feet from summer water sources and developed areas. Scatter waste into available brush.
- ❖ Pack out all trash, including toilet paper.

## What to Bring

The level of self-reliance required of winter travelers sets Denali's visitors apart from adventurers elsewhere. Visitors should take the cold seriously and arrive prepared with quality gear and the knowledge of how to use it.

### Clothing

- ❖ Wind gear and neck gaiter
- ❖ Cold-weather parka with hood
- ❖ Wool/fleece pants and shirt
- ❖ Wool/fleece jacket and hat
- ❖ Balaclava or other face mask
- ❖ Wool/fleece mittens and gloves
- ❖ Long underwear
- ❖ Wool/synthetic socks (plus extras)
- ❖ Cold-weather boots and gaiters

### Camping

- ❖ Four-season tent
- ❖ Winter sleeping bag and sleeping pad
- ❖ Drinking cup
- ❖ Cooking gear and utensils
- ❖ Stove and fuel
- ❖ Candle lantern
- ❖ Personal care items
- ❖ Snow shovel and snow saw

### Trail Items

- ❖ Plenty of high-calorie food
- ❖ Ski gear, snowshoes, or other travel gear
- ❖ Pack with water-resistant cover
- ❖ Map and compass
- ❖ Pocketknife
- ❖ Headlamp with extra batteries and bulb
- ❖ Water bottles and insulator
- ❖ Thermos
- ❖ Chemical hand warmers
- ❖ Sunscreen and sunglasses
- ❖ Toilet paper

### Emergency Items

- ❖ Lighter, matches (waterproof container)
- ❖ First-aid kit
- ❖ Repair kit
- ❖ Extra food, clothing
- ❖ Avalanche beacon, probe, and shovel
- ❖ Waterproof bag



# Park Partners



Alaska  
Geographic

Connecting people to Alaska's parks, forests, and refuges is at the core of Alaska Geographic's nonprofit mission. Alaska Geographic operates 38 bookstores in public lands across the state, providing a link to Alaska's rich natural and cultural heritage. Through bookstore revenues, membership dues, hands-on education programs, and contributions from people like you, Alaska Geographic plays a vital role in supporting Alaska's spectacular wild places.

To find out more or to become a member, stop by the bookstore located in the Winter Visitor Center, the Talkeetna Ranger Station, or visit us on the web at [www.alaskageographic.org](http://www.alaskageographic.org)

Alaska Geographic offers hands-on learning programs at the Murie Science and Learning Center through its Institute. Visit [www.mslc.org](http://www.mslc.org)



The Denali Education Center partners with the National Park Service through the Murie Science and Learning Center on educational programs for adults and children. Visit [www.denali.org](http://www.denali.org)

Doyon/ARAMARK Joint Venture is Denali's concessioner and provides its support to many park programs and events.



DOYON, LIMITED



Denali National Park Concession Joint Venture



Denali Borough School District

The Denali Borough School District provides technical support and equipment to Denali and is a frequent partner in grant writing opportunities that make many park programs possible. Visit <http://denali.ak.schoolwebpages.com>

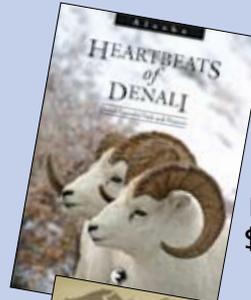
The University of Alaska partners with Denali in research and educational activities. For information visit [www.uaf.edu](http://www.uaf.edu)



The National Park Foundation provides support to parks throughout the United States, including Alaska. For more information visit [www.nationalparks.org](http://www.nationalparks.org)

Visit the bookstore in the Winter Visitor Center to find these useful guides. In addition to books, visitors will also find maps, journals, posters, field bags, and more.

## Planning Your Trip



**Heartbeats of Denali**

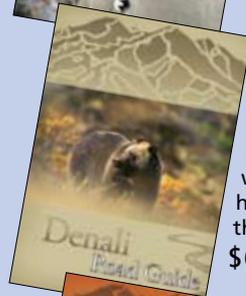
*Narrated by*

*Terry Tempest Williams*

View one of America's wildest landscapes and experience nature undisturbed.

DVD 28 minutes

\$14.95

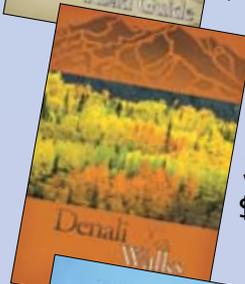


**Denali Road Guide**

*By Kris Capps*

A great companion for your excursion into the park. Learn about wildlife, habitats, geology, and the human history of Denali as you travel the Park Road.

\$6.95

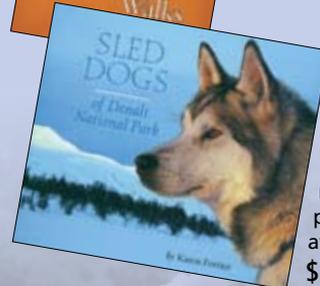


**Denali Walks**

*By Kris Capps*

A guide to twenty trails, from short walks to day adventures in Denali.

\$6.95

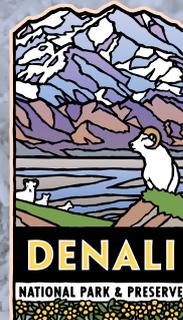


**Sled Dogs of Denali**

*By Karen Fortier*

Experience the fascinating history of Denali's dogs and the park's pioneering rangers as you head out on patrol with the team in this award-winning book.

\$8.00



Also available online at [www.alaskageographic.org](http://www.alaskageographic.org)

# Where to Stay

**Riley Creek Campground**, located at the park entrance, is open for primitive camping in the Bear Loop area all winter. Registration is not required. Toilets are provided and barrels are on-site to dispose of dog feces. Snow can be melted or creek water boiled for drinking. Water is also available at The Murie Science and Learning Center (Mile 1.3 on the Park Road). While the park still has an entrance fee, there is no charge for camping in winter.

**Local Accommodations** are offered year-round in Cantwell, 27 miles south, and Healy, 12 miles north of the park entrance. For more information on Healy area facilities, call the Denali Chamber of Commerce at 907-683-4636. The nearest large grocery store is in Fairbanks, but both Healy and Cantwell have small convenience markets and gas stations. There is no rental equipment available in the Denali area.

**The park entrance fee and backcountry camping permits are required year-round.**

### Entrance Fees

7 Day Pass: Individual .....	\$10
7 Day Pass: Vehicle .....	\$20
7 Day Pass: Motorcycle .....	\$15
Denali National Park & Preserve Annual Pass .....	\$40

### America the Beautiful Interagency Passes

Annual .....	\$80
Senior .....	\$10
Access .....	Free

# For More Information

Denali National Park and Preserve  
P.O. Box 9, Denali Park, AK 99755  
Call 907-683-9532 or email [denali\\_info@nps.gov](mailto:denali_info@nps.gov)  
[www.nps.gov/dena](http://www.nps.gov/dena)

For topographical maps and other publications contact:  
Alaska Geographic  
P.O. Box 230, Denali Park, AK 99755  
907-683-1272 or [www.alaskageographic.org](http://www.alaskageographic.org)

# How to Get Here

### By Car:

Take Alaska Highway 3 south from Fairbanks or north from Anchorage to the park entrance at Mile 237.

### By Train:

The Alaska Railroad arrives at the Denali Depot northbound on Saturdays and southbound on Sundays throughout the winter. Contact 800-544-0552 or 907-265-2494 in Anchorage, or visit [www.akrr.com](http://www.akrr.com)

### By Plane:

The Denali Park Airstrip is open for private, non-commercial planes on skis or wheels during the winter, although weather conditions and limited plow availability may mean that the airstrip is not plowed for wheeled landings at times. Parking is minimal. Please phone ahead to check on current conditions.

The Kantishna Airstrip at the west end of the Park Road is also potentially available for ski-equipped planes, but the strip is not maintained.

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