



Denali's Resource Stewardship Strategy: Planning for the future of park resources



Denali is preparing a Resource Stewardship Strategy to guide how the park manages its resources, including Dall sheep, to ensure the park maintains the desired condition of these resources.

The Resource Stewardship Strategy serves as a bridge between the qualitative statements of desired conditions established in a park's General Management Plan (GMP) and the measurable goals and implementation actions determined through park strategic planning.

A few of the challenges Denali faces in the coming decades are increased visitation, new development and access near park boundaries, global warming, global contaminants, introduced species, changes in hunting pressure, and wildlife management control issues near the park.

How will Denali address these challenges? The National Park Service (NPS) has directed each park to develop a Resource Stewardship Strategy (RSS) as a 15- to 20-year program planning document. During the development of an RSS, the park will assess whether natural and cultural resources, as well as visitor experiences, are being managed to meet the desired conditions specified in the park's General Management Plan (GMP). Denali has taken the initial step by starting the development of an RSS.

What is a Resource Stewardship Strategy?

In 2001, the National Park Service instituted a new planning process through its NPS Management Policies, which changed the principal program document for resource management from the Resource Management Plan to the Resource Stewardship Strategy (Director's Order 2-1).

The RSS serves as a bridge between the desired conditions in a park's GMP and the goals and implementation actions determined through park strategic planning. Through the RSS process, parks identify indicators of resource condition, establish targets for each indicator, assess current indicator

values, analyze the difference, if any, between current conditions and desired conditions, and develop "comprehensive strategies" based on science and scholarship to achieve or maintain desired conditions.

The scope of an RSS is limited to two aspects of desired conditions established in a GMP—the desired conditions of resources (both natural and cultural) and the desired conditions for visitor experience that directly depend upon resource conditions.

Steps in a Resource Stewardship Strategy

The RSS includes a "getting started" phase, in which documents, team participants, and a timeline are organized, and four other phases. During Phase 1, a park reviews its GMP and other documents for desired conditions, and summarizes knowledge about park resources. Phase 2 includes meetings of the RSS team, subject matter experts (SMEs), and stakeholders; selection of indicators and target values; and analysis of gaps between current and desired conditions. In Phase 3, the comprehensive strategies are developed and peer-reviewed by subject matter experts, and in Phase 4, the RSS is released.

Denali's team for the development of its RSS consists of natural and cultural resource team co-leads, writers/editors, and staff members representing facilities management, resource protection, and interpretation.

