

Lake Clark

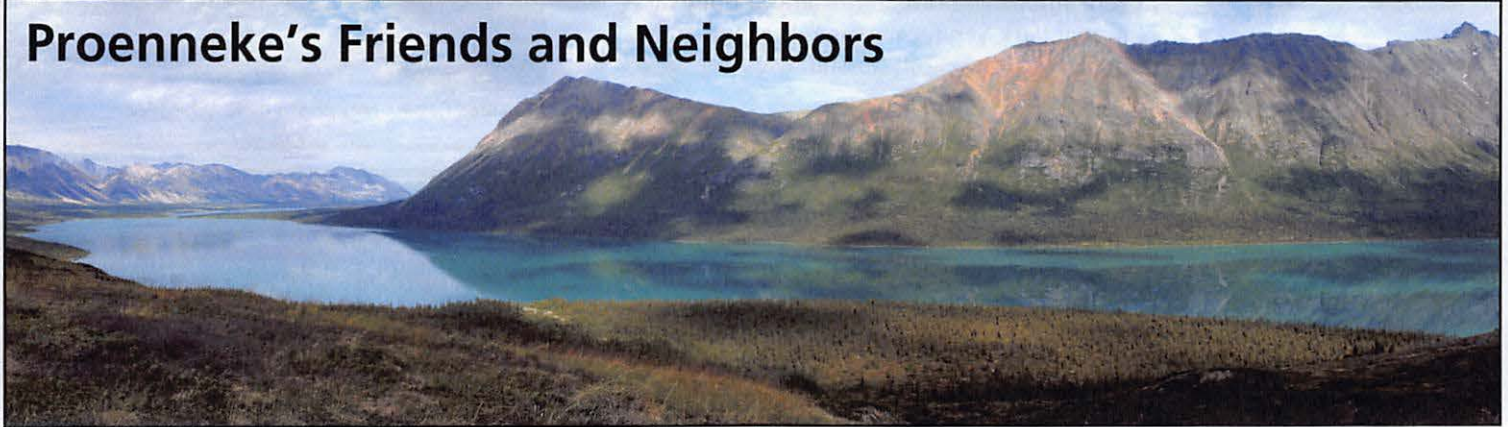
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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Lake Clark National Park & Preserve
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Proenneke's Friends and Neighbors



Cultural Tapestry

Upper Twin Lake was made famous by Richard 'Dick' Proenneke who resided on its shores for thirty years beginning in the late 1960s. Today the park protects and interprets the site as a symbol of the national wilderness movement and a source of inspiration sought out by visitors throughout the world. However, Dick Proenneke was but one of several men and women who found solace at Twin Lakes. The National Park Service preserves several other cabins from that era on Upper Twin whose stories are integral to the park's cultural tapestry.

Spike's Cabin and Hope's Cabin

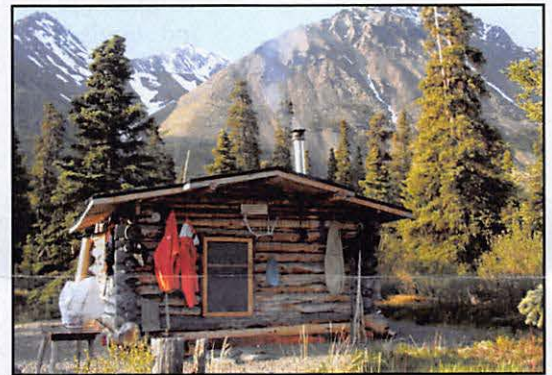
In February 1960 retired Navy captain Gale 'Spike' Carrithers and his wife Hope of Kodiak, AK applied for two 5 acre 'Small Track Leases' on the shores of Upper Twin Lake where Spike had hunted in previous years. Here they built a small vacation cabin.

By 1962 Spike had suffered a stroke. While he and Hope still wanted to spend time relaxing in their new cabin, they knew they would need some assistance, so they invited a friend they had known from their days at the Kodiak Naval Air Station named Dick Proenneke to spend two weeks with them at Twin Lakes.

Proenneke continued to vacation with Spike and Hope at their cabin in subsequent years. Later when the Carrithers decided they wanted to build a guest cabin on the property, Dick helped with the construction. Spike christened it 'Hope's Cabin' in honor of his wife.

Spike's health had deteriorated and he had sold his cabins to Bob Acheson of Kodiak by the early 1970s. The paperwork for the Small Track Leases were never completed, however, so Acheson did not retain rights to the land when the National Monument was established in 1978. At that time he was living in Washington State and did not contest the land rights nor the National Park Service's presence.

Today the park preserves the two cabins, which serve as summer residences for park staff and volunteers.



Spike's Cabin was finished by 1962. Today it serves as a summer residence for park staff. NPS photo.



Hope's Cabin was originally built for the Carrithers' guests. Today it serves as a summer residence for park staff. NPS photo by M. Udevitz.

Weisser's Cabin

Erhardt 'Dick' Weisser of Kodiak, also a friend of Spike and Proenneke, applied for a 5 acre Small Track Lease about 100 yards east of Spike's Cabin in February 1960. He finished cabin construction during his last visit to Twin Lakes in 1967, but never gained clear title to the land. Today the National Park Service manages the land and maintains for the cabin for staff use.



Weisser's Cabin. NPS photo by K. Schubeck

Proenneke's Cabin

By the late 1960s Dick Proenneke wanted to put down roots by building a cabin of his own at Upper Twin Lake. The perfect site was 200 yards west of Hope's Cabin. Proenneke's friend from Kodiak, Herb Wright, had applied for a Small Track Lease on the site in 1960; however, in a sad turn of events, Wright became terminally ill. He encouraged Proenneke to use the site instead.

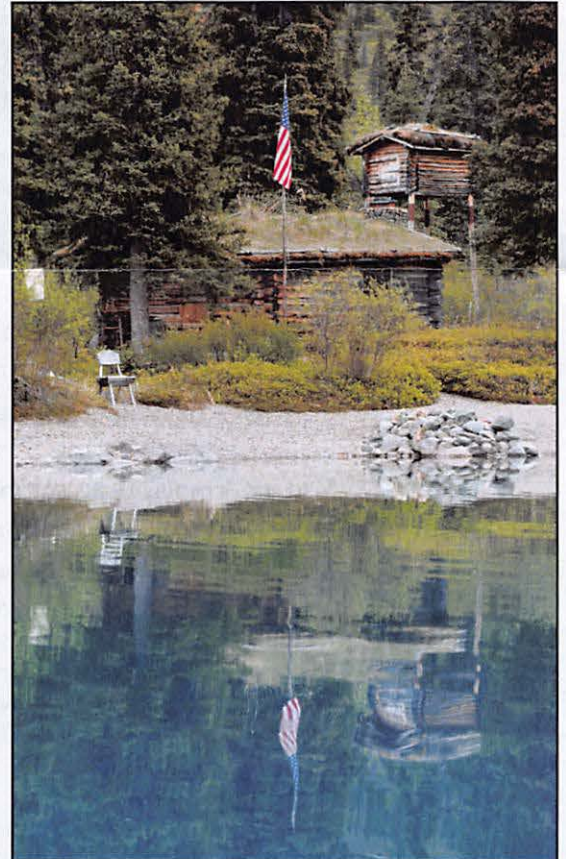
Proenneke began cabin construction in the summer of 1967 and applied for a Small Track Lease that October. His application was refused because a few short months earlier the Secretary of the Interior 'froze public land to entry,' meaning Homesteads and Small Track Leases could not be issued until Native Land Claims were settled. The next summer Proenneke returned to Twin Lakes and finished his cabin.

During the construction of his now famous cabin, woodshed-outhouse, and cache, Proenneke lived in Spike's Cabin. A master craftsman dedicated to living simply on the land, he used local materials and simple tools to craft a home and life in keeping with the wilderness.

Though he never obtained title to the land upon which his cabin stood, Proenneke continued to live in his Twin Lakes home after the National Park Service obtained management of the area in 1978. His wilderness and wildlife stewardship ethics had become an inspiration to people worldwide and exemplified the mission of the National Park Service. Upon his death in 2003 Proenneke left the cabin and many of his hand-crafted belongings to the care of the park.

In 2007 Proenneke's cabins and outbuildings were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in recognition of both their stature as an excellent and well-known example of an Alaskan bush log cabin, and for Proenneke's voice in the preservation of wilderness in Alaska.

Today the cabin is maintained by the National Park Service and can be toured by visitors to Upper Twin Lake.



The craftsmanship of Proenneke's Cabin is superior to the neighboring cabins at Upper Twin Lake. NPS photo by Kent Miller.



Aerial view showing the layout of Proenneke's cabin, cache, and woodshed-outhouse. NPS photo by Kent Miller