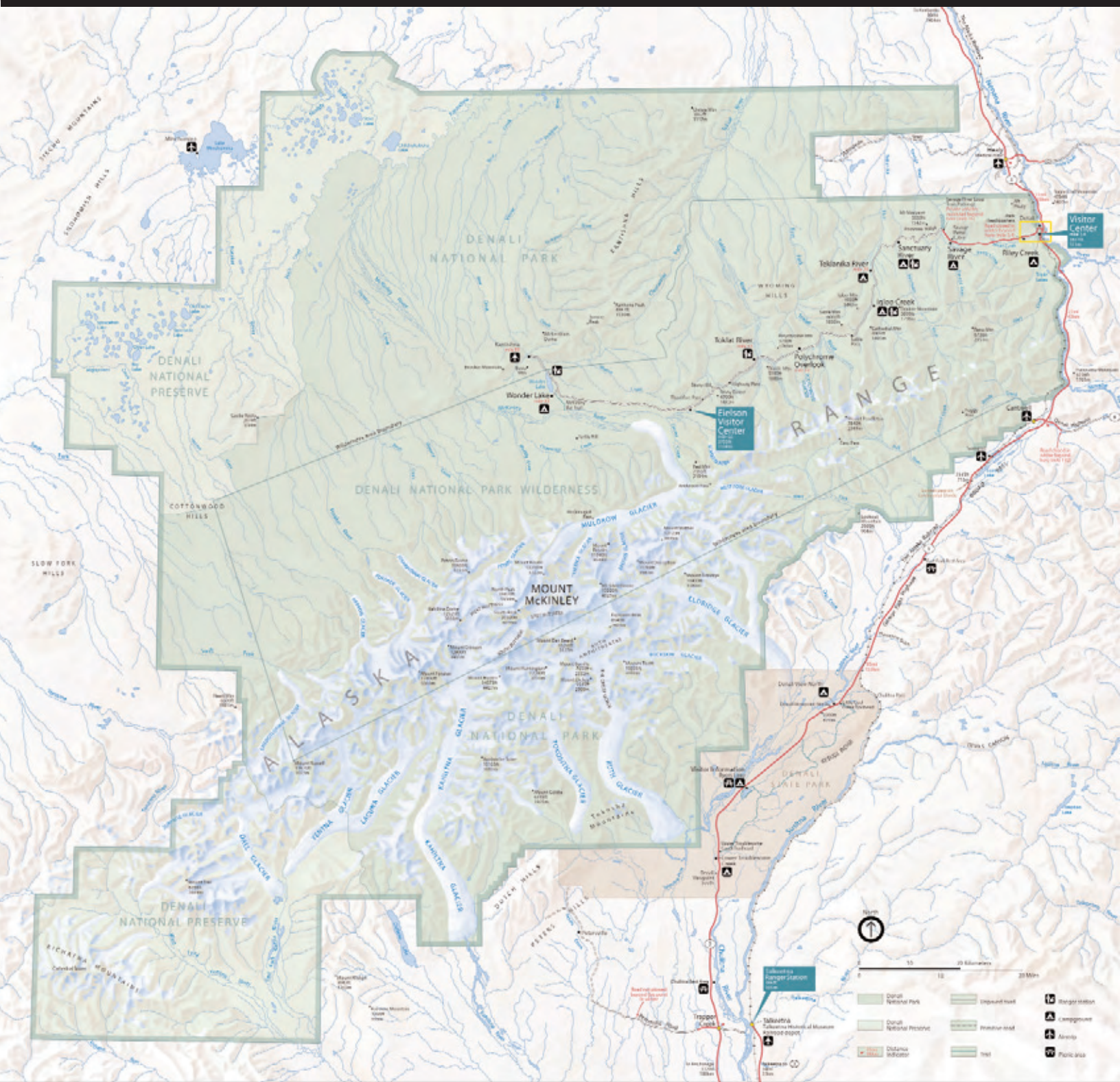


Denali National Park and Preserve

Annual Report 2005



Map of Denali National Park and Preserve



Denali National Park and Preserve encompasses areas north and south of the Alaska Range in the interior of Alaska. Although much of the park is remote, it can be reached from the east year-round via the George Parks Highway, which connects the cities of Anchorage and Fairbanks. Most park visitors come by train, buses or private vehicles during the months of June, July and August.

Visitors are encouraged to make advance reservations for buses and campgrounds during the summer. Wilderness permits are required for overnight travel in the backcountry, and they can only be obtained in person up to the day before the trip.

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Karen Ward

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Cover Photos: Mt. McKinley - Robert Valarcher, Denali Visitor Center and ranger/visitor - Chris Arend, Back Cover: Rick McIntyre



Rick McIntyre

Message From the Superintendent



Superintendent Paul Anderson (with skis on the right) prepares to lead the "ski with the Superintendent" activity at the 2005 Winterfest, an annual community-wide celebration of the state's longest season.

We are proud of our many accomplishments in 2005. With our partners, we celebrated the culmination of almost ten years of planning and hard work at the grand opening of the spectacular new Denali Visitor Center and its associated facilities in August. Through the educational opportunities offered at the Murie Science and Learning Center, which opened in 2004, and the expanded services and activities available at the new Visitor Center Campus, visitors will gain a much deeper understanding of the park's natural and cultural history.

Construction efforts moved to the heart of the park, where work began on replacement of the inadequate and deteriorating Eielson Visitor Center. When completed in 2008, the new Eielson Visitor Center will provide long-needed services to the growing number of visitors traveling into the park. A temporary Visitor Information Station was erected at the new Toklat Rest Stop to provide visitor services during the construction period.

Meeting the challenges of increasing demand for the Denali Park experience without damaging fragile park resources and destroying the special qualities that visitors come here to experience is an ongoing process. Hundreds of hotel rooms were added just outside the park entrance during 2005. With the additional rooms comes the demand for more buses on the park road. Portions of the park's bus system will likely reach capacity within the next few years. We are concerned that increasing the number of buses traveling the park road could adversely impact the quality of the visitor experience, and negatively impact the resources that the park is tasked with protecting. This year we initiated research to help us better understand road capacity. We are working with other interested parties to address the issue. We are also exploring alternatives to the park road experience, including finalizing a plan for new facilities on the south side of the park.

The following pages summarize some of the highlights of 2005. There will always be challenges. We are confident that our highly qualified staff of dedicated professionals, working with our partners and stakeholders, will continue to meet these challenges in creative and innovative ways, just as they have in 2005. I hope you find this annual report informative and useful. Thank you for your interest in Denali National Park and Preserve and its future.

Purpose and Significance of Denali National Park and Preserve

The purpose of Denali National Park and Preserve has evolved from the time Congress established the original Mount McKinley National Park to the present and has increased in complexity because of the different mandates that apply to the Old Park (the original Mount McKinley National Park), the national park additions (added by ANILCA), the national preserve (also added by ANILCA), and the designated wilderness (covering most of the Old Park).

Mount McKinley National Park (Old Park)

In 1917 Congress established Mount McKinley National Park as a “game refuge” to “set apart as a public park for the benefit and enjoyment of the people ... for recreation purposes by the public and for the preservation of animals, birds, and fish and for the preservation of the natural curiosities and scenic beauties thereof ...” (39 Stat. 938).

Denali National Park and Preserve

In 1980 Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA, 16 USC §§ 3101-3233, Pub. L. 96-487), which enlarged and renamed the park Denali National Park and Preserve. Section 101 of ANILCA describes the broad purposes of the new conservation system units throughout Alaska, including enlarged national parks and preserves such as Denali. These are the following:

- Preserve lands and waters for the benefit, use, education, and inspiration of present and future generations.
- Preserve unrivaled scenic and geological values associated with natural landscapes.

- Maintain sound populations of, and habitat for, wildlife species.
- Preserve extensive, unaltered ecosystems in their natural state.
- Protect resources related to subsistence needs.
- Protect historic and archeological sites.
- Preserve wilderness resource values and related recreational opportunities such as hiking, canoeing, fishing, and sport hunting.
- Maintain opportunities for scientific research in undisturbed ecosystems.
- Provide the opportunity for rural residents engaged in a subsistence way of life to continue to do so.

Section 202 stated that the Denali National Park and Preserve additions are to be managed for the following additional specific purposes:

- To protect and interpret the entire mountain massif and the additional scenic mountain peaks and formations.
- To protect habitat for, and populations of fish and wildlife, including, but not limited to, brown/grizzly bears, moose, caribou, Dall sheep, wolves, swans, and other waterfowl.
- To provide continued opportunities, including reasonable access, for mountain climbing, mountaineering, and other wilderness recreational activities.

Denali Wilderness

Section 701 of ANILCA designated the “Denali Wilderness of approximately one million nine hundred thousand acres” under the Wilderness Act as



Ron Weagant of Haines, Alaska, one of the 2005 Artists-in-Residence, paints on location along the East Fork River.

depicted on a map referenced in Section 202 of ANILCA and including 99% of the former Mt. McKinley National Park. According to the Wilderness Act, these lands are to be “administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their wilderness character, and for the gathering and dissemination of information regarding their use and enjoyment as wilderness.”

Denali National Preserve

Section 1313 of ANILCA addresses the purpose of national preserves created by the act.

A National Preserve in Alaska shall be administered and managed as a unit of the National Park System in the same manner as a national park except as otherwise provided in this Act and except that the taking of fish and wildlife for sport purposes and subsistence uses, and trapping shall be allowed in a national preserve under applicable State and Federal law and regulation.

Significance of Denali National Park and Preserve

Large Protected Area. Denali National Park and Preserve encompasses a vast six million acre area, about the size of the state of New Hampshire. Most of the two million acres of the original park has been in protected status since 1917. This large size enables a spectacular array of flora and fauna to live together in a healthy natural ecosystem and provides excellent opportunities to study subarctic ecosystems in settings largely undisturbed by humans. Because of these values, the United Nations Man and the Biosphere Program designated the park and preserve to be an International Biosphere Reserve.

Mountains and Glaciers The park contains a major portion of the Alaska Range, one of the great mountain uplifts in North America. The Alaska Range is dominated by North America's highest peak, Mount McKinley, with its summit at 20,320 feet above sea level. Towering 18,000 feet above the adjacent lowlands, the mountain's dramatic vertical relief rivals any other mountain in the world, exceeding the vertical relief of Mount Everest measured from base to summit. A number of large glaciers originate in the park's high mountains, including some of the largest in North America.

Wildlife and Habitat The park was originally established in 1917 as a refuge for large mammals. Backcountry visitors and visitors traveling along the park road often observe Dall sheep, caribou, wolf, grizzly bear, moose, and fox. While populations fluctuate, nowhere else in America can such concentrations of these large species of wildlife be observed in as accessible a natural setting. The park is also significant for its diverse avian habitat that attracts birds from all over the world. The park's rich and varied vegetation includes alpine

tundra, shrub-scrub tundra, mixed spruce-birch and spruce-tamarack woodlands, taiga, wetlands, and extensive riparian and lowland forest areas. Denali has more than 10,000 mapped lakes. More than 753 species of flowering plants inhabit the slopes and valleys of the park.

Scenic Resources and Air Quality

Outstanding views of natural features, including mountains, glaciers, faults, and rivers dominate the park landscape. On a clear day, Mount McKinley can be seen from Anchorage, more than 130 air miles to the south. The exceptional air quality in Alaska and the lack of city lights near the park provide the conditions for outstanding daytime views year-round and excellent night sky visibility in fall, winter, and spring. Denali National Park and Preserve is a designated Class I airshed under the Clean Air Act Amendments.

Cultural Resources There are 257 known cultural resource sites within Denali's boundaries, including both prehistoric and historic sites. Because cultural resource inventories have been limited to date, this number likely represents a small fraction of the park's total sites. Known resources include archeological and historic sites associated with Athabascan Indian groups, early explorers, mining history, and the early days of the park. Major prehistoric sites in the park include the Teklanika Archeological District, a property listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Many historic structures are in the park headquarters area, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a district, and on the boundaries of the Denali Wilderness (along the original park boundary). These are mainly patrol

cabins and other structures dating back to early years of park management. Historic mining activity dates back to the early 1900s in the Kantishna Hills (which includes the national register-eligible Kantishna Historic District), the Stampede area, and the Dunkle Hills near Cantwell.

Mountaineering Because it is the highest peak in North America, has a high northern latitude location, and is relatively accessible, Mount McKinley is considered one of the world's premier mountaineering destinations, drawing climbers from many countries. It is touted as one of the "seven summits of the world." Many other peaks in the park, including Mount Foraker, also offer outstanding expeditionary climbing opportunities.

Wilderness Recreation Denali offers superlative opportunities for primitive wilderness recreation. Outstanding cross country hiking, backcountry camping, and winter touring possibilities are available for those willing to approach the area in its natural condition. This huge park contains large areas with almost no trails and where evidence of human use is minimal to nonexistent. These conditions are in contrast to most wilderness areas in the contiguous 48 states where maintained trails, designated campsites, footbridges, and signs are standard. These conditions also contrast with much of Alaska, where similar opportunities abound, but are very difficult to reach. A large portion of Denali's backcountry is readily accessible to visitors who can reach the park by either highway or railroad from either Anchorage or Fairbanks - Alaska's two largest cities and major connection points for out-of-state visitors.

PRESERVE PARK RESOURCES

Natural and cultural resources and associated values at Denali National Park and Preserve are protected, restored, and maintained in good condition and managed within their broader ecosystem and cultural context.

Obsolete trails are restored by first removing asphalt, and breaking up the hard-packed surface. The vegetation mats and individual plants are then used to rehabilitate the unneeded footpath.

Restoration of Obsolete Trails, Campsites and Construction Sites

Long-Term Goal:

By September 30, 2008, 100% of the three acres of lands disturbed by the entrance area development will be restored

Annual Goal:

By September 30, 2005, 2.0 acres will be restored

STATUS: GOAL EXCEEDED

A total of more than 2.5 acres were cleaned up and restored. The park received five Public Lands Corps grants, for a total of \$100,000, to hire Student Conservation Corps (SCA) trail crew workers to obliterate and revegetate obsolete social trails in the entrance area of the park. Construction of the new Denali Visitor Center, Morino Grill, Denali Bookstore, comfort station, and baggage storage building created a large amount of disturbed ground in the area, which has been revegetated. Earthwork swales were built to give the area some contour and to make the new facilities less visible from the Park Road.



Trail crew members removed mats of vegetation and individual plants from areas slated for construction and utilized these materials to revegetate the disturbed areas.



Wildlife Monitoring

Long-Term Goal:

By September 30, 2008 eight (14%) of 58 native Species of Management Concern (wolves, moose, golden eagles, caribou, trumpeter swans, grizzly bears, Dall sheep, peregrine falcons) will have improved information regarding their occurrence, distribution, and abundance in the park, subject to the availability of funding. Monitoring plans will be written, and two (3%) of 58 of the species (wolves and grizzly bears) will be managed according to approved management guidelines.

Annual Goal:

By September 30, 2005, improved information on four of the Species of Management Concern will be available.

STATUS: GOAL EXCEEDED

Through ongoing monitoring, surveys and other mechanisms, the park obtained improved information about the distribution and abundance of five species: wolves, caribou, moose, golden eagles, and trumpeter swans. Twelve wolves from nine packs were captured and radio-collared in March

2005 to maintain the monitoring levels of the packs. During the year a total of 528 locations of radio-collared wolves were obtained from aircraft, and another 2000 daily locations were obtained via satellite upload from eight wolves with GPS units in the collars. In April 2005, parkwide wolf density was estimated at 4.51 wolves per 1000 square kilometers.

Through monitoring of the Denali caribou herd, it was estimated that there were 2000 animals in late September 2004, with the highest fall calf/cow ratio (28 calves per 100 cows) in 15 years. This suggests a potential for an increase in herd size.

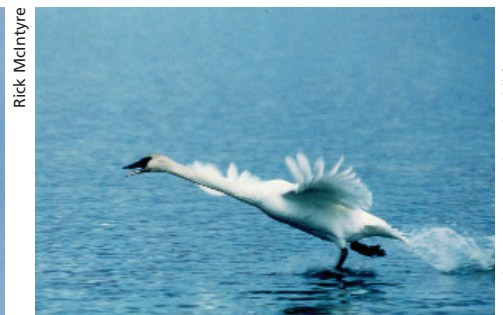
A survey of moose populations on the north side of the Alaska Range, scheduled every three years under Central Alaska Monitoring Network plans, was done in November 2004.

Four female grizzly bears were captured to change radio collars and a new female was captured and collared in May 2005 as part of an ongoing study on bear

populations on the north side of the Alaska Range. Bears were tracked via the collars approximately twice per month between May and September to determine cub productivity and survival.

Three sows (female bears) had a total of six spring cubs. By the end of September only one was alive, resulting in an 83% mortality rate. This rate is above the average of 70% for this project for first-year cubs. Six yearling cubs were counted in May, and three were known to be alive by the end of the season. The fate of one couldn't be determined. Two other sows had a total of four two-year-old cubs, all of which survived to the season's end. Three sows had six three-year-olds between them, none of which could be accounted for. These animals may have died or dispersed out of the study area.

Seventy-seven golden eagle nesting territories were monitored in 2005. Of these, 87% were occupied by territorial pairs and 61% of the pairs produced clutches. Reproductive success in 2005



Two of the species being monitored in the park are the caribou (left) and trumpeter swan (above). Not only have the number of trumpeter swans in the park increased, but they have also expanded their nesting range to include higher elevations.

Rick McIntyre

Hank Trimm, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

was slightly higher than the long-term mean. Nesting success was 70% and the overall population productivity was 0.60, with a mean brood size of 1.38 birds.

All known peregrine falcon nesting territories were monitored. Reproductive success was documented at two territories and six fledglings were produced. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel worked with park staff to conduct standardized aerial surveys

from a fixed-wing aircraft to count the number of adult swans and cygnets in the southwestern and northwestern regions of Denali as part of a five-year statewide trumpeter swan survey. Seven hundred swans were detected on the survey in Denali including 40 lone swans, 195 pairs (390 individuals including 62 pairs with cygnets), and 197 cygnets.

Parkwide patterns of plant communities, bird communities and factors of the physical environment are

being measured using a random sampling method to establish baseline data and long-term trends. In summer 2005, 31 permanent vegetation plots were installed and surveyed. Standardized counts for passerine birds were conducted at 261 sampling points in June 2005 during the breeding bird survey. Preliminary analyses of survey data suggest that the abundance of most species of passerines was slightly higher than in the last four years.

Dinosaur Track Discovered in Igloo Canyon

Long-Term Goal:

By September 30, 2008, one new site will be discovered, documented and officially added to the park's baseline inventory of paleontological sites.

Annual Goal:

By September 30, 2005, one site will be discovered and documented.

STATUS: GOAL ACHIEVED

A roughly 70 million year-old dinosaur footprint, the first evidence of dinosaurs in the park, was discovered in late June 2005 by members of a University of Alaska Fairbanks geology mapping class working in the Igloo Canyon areas, approximately 35 miles from the park entrance. The footprint is a cast of sandy material that is approximately ten inches long and seven inches wide. It is a well-preserved trace of a theropod, a three-toed, roughly 200 pound, carnivorous biped. Researchers had been looking for evidence of dinosaurs in the park in

that Cantwell rock formation for several years.

The specimen and its containing block of sandstone were removed from the field site in August 2005 to avoid loss from high water, and/or vandalism. The park plans to display the specimen in the Murie Science and Learning Center.



(Above) Track cast of a theropod discovered in Igloo Canyon. (Below) Left to right: Park geologist Phil Brease; NPS Director Fran Mainella; NPS Regional geologist Linda Stromquist; Dr. Anthony Fiorillo, Dallas Museum of Natural History; Brent Breithaup, University of Wyoming; Elwood Lynn, Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Jessica Haddon-Scherzinger, physical science technician.



PRESERVE PARK RESOURCES

The National Park Service contributes to knowledge about natural and cultural resources and associated values; management decisions about visitors and resources are based on adequate scholarly and scientific information.

East Teklanika Glacier, DENA, S.R. Capps, 1919



East Teklanika Glacier, DENA, R.D. Karpilo, 2004



Photographs taken of the East Teklanika Glacier, located on the north side of the Alaska Range, document dramatic changes in the glacier.

Resource Monitoring

Long-Term Goal:

By September 30, 2008, 100% of the identified natural resource datasets identified in the Resource Management Plan will be completed.

Annual Goal:

By September 30, 2005, 25 of the 28 databases on the base inventories for Denali will be completed.

STATUS: GOAL ACHIEVED

Work continued through the Central Alaska Network's Inventory and Monitoring Program in developing the base inventories for Denali. Some major projects included research into predator-prey dynamics through cooperative work with the Biological Resources Division of the U.S. Geological Survey. Numerous monitoring projects continued, strengthening the baseline datasets for the park. These included monitoring the impacts of the dust palliative applications on the park road, documenting resource conditions in the Toklat basin and monitoring the flow rates on the upper Kahiltna, Muldrow and Polychrome Glaciers. This was the 13th year of Central Alaska Network glacier monitoring program. Staff also prepared a public display of comparative glacier photos showing 50 years of change on Denali's glaciers that was displayed in the Talkeetna Ranger Station and at Park Headquarters. These photographs will be integrated into a display in the new Eielson Visitor Center.

An extensive effort was undertaken in the summer of 2005 to document resource impacts from all terrain vehicle (ATV) use by subsistence users in the Cantwell Creek/Dunkle Hills area of the park.

The hazardous fuels removal project begun in 2004 was expanded to the Toklat Road Camp area this summer to increase defensible space around park structures. Approximately 46,445 pounds of biomass such as trees, bushes, branches and other plant materials were removed from the 8.9 acres treated from mid-August until early September. Hazardous fuels were also removed from the vicinity of historical cabins in the park's backcountry. A portion of that project was devoted to collecting pre- and post-treatment vegetation documentation of the treated areas. The fire management staff also was engaged in a research project to develop more precise fuel models for the park.

Backcountry Management Plan

Long-Term Goal:

By September 30, 2006, Denali National Park and Preserve will complete an approved Backcountry/Wilderness Management Plan.

Short-term Goal:

By September 30, 2005, most of the work will have been completed so that a plan will be completed by 2006.

STATUS: GOAL ACHIEVED

A revised Draft Backcountry Management Plan was completed in early 2005 and released for public review. Over 15,000 comments were received before the comment period closed in mid-July. The comments were analyzed and incorporated into the final plan, completed in early 2006.

PROVIDE FOR THE PUBLIC ENJOYMENT AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and the quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.



Lobby area of Murie Science and Learning Center. The wolf skeleton was prepared by a class from Cantwell School, with the assistance of park staff and an articulation specialist.

Improving Visitor Facilities

Long-Term Goal:

By September 30, 2008, 88% of visitors to Denali are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

Annual Goal:

By September 30, 2005, 85% of the visitors will be satisfied with the services of the park. This will be determined by public comments and visitor surveys.

STATUS: GOAL EXCEEDED

95% of the visitors who responded to visitor surveys or sent in comment cards stated that they were satisfied with the park's facilities and services. This was no doubt due in part to a number of significant enhancements that took place this year, the culmination of years of public planning and hard work. The Murie Science and Learning Center, which opened in August 2004, is open year-round and functions as the park's first winter visitor center. The new 14,000 square foot Denali Visitor Center, located on the old park hotel site, was completed and opened to the public in late May 2005. The opening included the premier showing of the new 18-minute, high definition feature film, "Heartbeats of Denali". Other new facilities in the immediate vicinity of the new visitor center also opened in May, including the Denali Bookstore, operated by the Alaska Natural History Association; the Morino Grill, a food service facility operated by park concessioner Doyon/ARAMARK Joint Venture; a comfort station and a baggage claim

station. The grand opening and dedication of the new entrance area facilities took place on August 18.

The former Visitor Access Center was renamed the Wilderness Access Center, and is now operated by park concessioner Doyon/ARAMARK Joint Venture. The building continues to serve as the park's transportation hub, where visitors can obtain campsite reservations and tickets for bus tours and shuttle bus trips into the park.

The new Backcountry Information Center, located adjacent to the Wilderness Access Center, also opened in May, significantly improved the park's ability to provide backcountry hiking information, hiking safety information and overnight hiking permits. The staff assisted over 20,000 people, issuing in excess of 2,000 permits.

Replacement of the deteriorating Eielson Visitor Center, located at Mile 66 on the Park Road, began with the demolition of the aging facility in September. The new visitor center is scheduled to open in 2008. Temporary visitor facilities were installed at the Toklat River Rest Stop at Mile 53 to provide visitor services during the construction period. These included a large weatherport with interpretive displays and a book sales area, which was staffed by NPS and ANHA employees. Seven two-hole restrooms were constructed as part of planned improvements to the rest stop.



(Above) The Eielson Visitor Center is located about 30 air miles from Mount McKinley, and on clear days the site offers an unsurpassed view of North America's highest peak. Due to limited space for exhibits, the old visitor center provided minimal opportunities for visitors to learn more about the park. (Right) Deconstruction of the Eielson Visitor Center in progress. Most of the 1976 addition has been removed in this photo.



End of an Era - Eielson Visitor Center to be Replaced

Construction on the Eielson Visitor Center began in 1958, and it opened in late July of 1960, although the official ceremony wasn't held until the following year. It was named after Carl Ben Eielson, a Alaskan pioneer aviator who had landed a plane on the Thorofare River plain down below the visitor center site. Its annual visitation in 1961 was 25,000 people.

Additions were made to accommodate the increasing visitation to the area. A 1976 expansion, which included a restroom addition, wraparound galleria, walkway and the covered outdoor viewing platform, doubled the size of the building. The bus dispatcher's office on the corner of the galleria was added in the 1980's and the interior was rehabilitated with new displays and exhibits in 1995. But the building continued to deteriorate due to the harsh elements and settling, and was getting increasingly

crowded as visits soared to over 100,000 during its last years.

The new visitor center is scheduled to open in 2008. Although it will be larger, it has been designed to be less intrusive on the landscape and more effectively meet the needs of visitors. Improvements will include additional indoor and outdoor viewing areas, new exhibits, an interior eating space, informal seating for interpretive programs, and administrative support areas for staff. As part of a National Park Service sustainability initiative, the building design meets the Gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) accreditation, which includes the use of recycled materials and renewable resources, low water usage and the utilization of renewable energy sources. The new building was identified as a high priority need in the 1997 Entrance Area and Road Corridor Development Concept Plan.

Grand Opening and Dedication of New Entrance Area Facilities

The Denali Visitor Center, its exhibits, and the entire Visitor Center Campus were completed for the summer visitor season, and a Grand Opening Celebration was held on August 18.

Superintendent Paul Anderson was Master of Ceremonies for the main event, which was held in the Karstens Theater in the new visitor center. The keynote speakers were National Park Service Director Fran Mainella, and representing the park's partner organizations were Alaska Railroad Corporation Chairman John E. Binkley, Alaska Natural History

Association Executive Director Charles Money, and Doyon Chief Operations Officer Dean Rampy. Other ceremony participants were Bruce Fears, Executive Vice President of ARAMARK Parks and Resorts and Alaska Regional Director Marcia Blaszk. The Reverend David Salmon, First Traditional Chief of all Interior Athabaskan Tribes offered the blessing, and local Denali Borough students Jeremy Straughn and Bekah Ziegman joined the ribbon cutters. Bekah and Jeremy are active participants in the park's educational outreach programs, and represented the next generation of stewards.

A park Incident Management Team planned and implemented a wonderful day of activities that included the dedication ceremony, several different tours for invited guests, a variety of programs for the park visitors, music, refreshments, book signings, transportation, and a private luncheon for invited dignitaries. The music offerings included Athabaskan fiddling by Bill Stevens, and Native Alaskan dance performances provided by Alutiiq Anguyiit Dancers and the Nenana Inter-Tribal Dance Group.



(Left) The Denali Visitor Center was open to the public in its entirety when exhibit installation was completed in July. (Above) Representatives from all the partners involved in the construction of the new facilities cut a ribbon strung with origami cranes to culminate the dedication event. Pictured from left to right: Paul Anderson, Charles Money, Jeremy Straughn, Dean Rampy, Fran Mainella, John E. Binkley, Bruce Fears, Marcia Blaszk and Bekah Ziegman. Photo by Tim Thompson, Alaska Railroad Corporation



Sadao Hoshiko

Mountaineering and Winter Activities

A record breaking 1,340 mountaineers from 37 countries came this spring to attempt climbs of Mt. McKinley, North America's highest peak. Favorable weather and climbing conditions allowed a record 774 climbers to reach the 20,320' summit during the mid-April to mid-July climbing season, for a higher than average summit success rate of 58%. The previous record had been set in 2001, when 1,305 climbers attempted the peak, 772 of whom reached the summit. The average summit success rate is 52%, which is calculated since 1903, the year of the first attempt on the mountain.

Sadao Hoshiko, 74, of Japan on his 2005 summit day

This year also saw another mountain record fall. On June 15, 2005, 74-year old Sadao Hoshiko of Oita-shi, Japan, became the oldest person to successfully summit Mt. McKinley. The previous record holder was Mario Locatelli, of Montana, who summited in 2004 at 71 years, 6 months, closely edging out long-time record holder Donald Henry, who was 71 years, 5 months at the time of his climb in 1988.

The winter of 2004-2005 had some of the best snow conditions the park staff had seen in many years, which allowed several winter projects to take place. This included a week-long trip to the Lower East Fork Cabin on the north boundary to fell, limb and prep logs for cabin restoration work slated for 2006. On another patrol, 300 pounds of gear was hauled from Kantishna to Upper Cache Creek for a ranger patrol during the mountaineering season. The new "Spring Trail", which begins at park headquarters near the kennels and runs alongside the Hines Creek drainage south of the Park Road, opened to winter visitors for skiing, mushing and snowshoeing. The trail provides access to the park west of headquarters during spring road opening.



The higher of the two ranger camps on Mt. McKinley is located at Windy Corner at 14,200 feet in elevation. The mountaineering rangers and volunteers that patrol the mountain provide assistance to climbers and insure resource protection through the reinforcement of food storage and waste disposal regulations.

**PROVIDE FOR THE
PUBLIC ENJOYMENT
AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE**

Visitors safely enjoy and are satisfied with the availability, accessibility, diversity, and the quality of park facilities, services, and appropriate recreational opportunities.



(Above) Mt. McKinley looms over the crews and equipment installing new culverts at Mile 84.5. (Below) Denali Bookstore and Morino Grill are two of the new entrance area facilities that opened in 2005.

Park Facilities

Long-Term Goal:

By September 30, 2008, 71% of park visitors are satisfied with commercial services in the park.

Annual Goal:

By September 30, 2005, 79% of park visitors are satisfied with commercial services in the park.

STATUS: GOAL EXCEEDED

82% of the visitors who responded to park surveys stated that they were satisfied with services in the park. The bus systems operated by park concessioner Doyon/ARAMARK Joint Venture provided bus services into the

park for approximately 280,000 visitors. Multiple new services were introduced for the 2005 visitor season. These include food service at the Denali Visitor Center Campus and the Wilderness Access Center and a baggage claim facility near the Alaska Railroad Train Depot.

The park's maintenance division and its contractors performed substantial repairs on the Denali Park Road during the 2005 season. These included safety repairs of the false road edges, rehabilitation of the gravel road surface, roadside brushing, correcting a major slump at Mile 68 and the replacement of damaged or non-functioning culverts. The application of calcium chloride as a dust palliative on sections of the park road significantly reduces the dust from the bus traffic. A new well and solar powered pump system was installed at the Savage River Campground. This replaced a well that was powered by a noisy gasoline generator, and moved the well out of designated Wilderness.



Chris Arend

Visitor Safety

Long-Term Goal:

By September 30, 2008, the number of visitor accidents/incidents at Denali is at or below the FY 2000-FY 2003 annual average of 18.

Annual Goal:

By September 30, 2005, Denali will have no more than 18 accidents/incidents involving visitors in the park.

STATUS: GOAL ACHIEVED

The park experienced 18 accidents involving visitors this year. Rangers executed 17 major search and rescue operations during the year. At least four lives were saved during these operations. One mission was conducted at 18,000' on Mt. Logan in Canada's Kluane National Park. Another timely intervention and carryout of a young drug overdose victim at Horseshoe Lake saved the individual's life.

In September 2005 park rangers participated in a borough-wide mock disaster exercise, along with local fire departments, Alaska State Troopers, the local clinic, and representatives of the state emergency management office.

The park's mountaineering and aviation staff faced a new challenge inserting and removing the infrastructure and equipment needed to operate the two primary ranger camps on Mt. McKinley this year. The military personnel from the U.S. Army High Altitude Rescue Team who had traditionally done these operations using Chinook helicopters as part of military training exercises were

deployed to Iraq. Camp gear was flown into the 7,200' Kahiltna Glacier base camp by local commercial air taxi operators, and the NPS-contracted high altitude Lama helicopter then externally hauled, or slingloaded, nets

full of gear to the site of the 14,200' camp on the West Buttress. Without the military air support, it cost the park approximately \$75,000 to insert and remove the camps.



The high-altitude contract Lama helicopter is used for moving supplies and personnel to the highest points on Mt. McKinley. Its use is integral for the numerous rescues that take place on the mountain annually.

**PROVIDE FOR THE
PUBLIC ENJOYMENT
AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE**

Park visitors and the general public understand and appreciate the preservation of parks and their resources for this and future generations.

Park Staff Services

Long-Term Goal:

By September 30, 2008, 80% of Denali visitors understand and appreciate the significance of the park.

Annual Goal:

By September 30, 2005, 80% of visitors understand the significance of the park and preserve.

STATUS: GOAL EXCEEDED

In spite of having 50% fewer interpretive staff than in 2004, a compliment of nine interpretive programs was available for park visitors during the summer season, including all day Discovery Hikes which take place in trailless areas of the park. Three visitor information centers (Denali Visitor Center, Backcountry Information Center and the Toklat River Visitor Contact Station) and the Talkeetna mountaineering center were staffed to provide personal interaction with



visitors. With the assistance of park partners and local communities, many special programs and activities were available for a wide range of visitors, including those provided in the park, in local communities and on the internet. These programs included the Denali Discovery Camp for local school children, a community-wide Winterfest Celebration that takes place in February, school visits from students from Alaska and out-of-state, and virtual field trips. The results of surveys indicated that 87.8% of the visitors understood the significance of the park.



(Above) Park rangers provide a variety of interpretive programs and services to Denali's visitors. Three younger visitors become Junior Rangers. (Left) The park's sled dog demonstrations are given three times each day, helping visitors make a connection with Denali's history and the park's current management of its wilderness areas.

ENSURE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The National Park Service uses current management practices, systems, and technologies to accomplish its mission.

The Special Projects crew works on the rehabilitation of the park's Administration Building.

Building Preservation

Long-Term Goal:

By September 30, 2008, 68% of the 114 non-historic buildings in the park are in fair or good condition as measured by the FCI of .14 or lower.

Annual Goal:

By September 30, 2005, 67 of the 114 non-historic buildings are in fair or good condition.

STATUS: GOAL EXCEEDED

A total of 76 of the park's non-historic buildings are currently in fair or good condition. For one of the projects, the roof structure of the Administration Building was completely replaced. Funding was also available to retexture and repaint all of the interior walls and replace the carpets.

Vault toilets referred to as SSTs (Sweet Smelling Toilets) were constructed to replace portable chemical toilets at the Kennels and on both sides of the Savage River. The chemical toilets at Toklat Rest Stop were removed and replaced by seven two-seater SSTs.

Workplace Safety

Long-Term Goal:

September 30, 2008, the number of Denali lost-time injuries is maintained at or below the previous five-year annual average of three.

Annual Goal:

By September 30, 2005, the number of Denali lost-time injuries is no more than three.

STATUS: GOAL ACHIEVED

Denali employees worked 319,234 hours and incurred three lost time injuries, resulting in a lost time injury rate of 1.89 for the year. Dave Kreutzer, the park's Helicopter Manager based at the South District office in Talkeetna, was presented with the Alaska Regional Safety Award during the all-employee meeting in May. The award is given annually to an individual who has shown the highest standards in making a workplace safe for himself and his co-workers. Dave's work place is a bit different from most of the park staff, as he is responsible for the helicopter operations that support the park's mountaineering operations on the 20,320' Mount McKinley. This includes not only more routine operations such as moving equipment and staff (although weather can make any trip non-routine), but also the specialized needs for search and rescue operations on North America's highest mountain. Dave was honored for twelve years of outstanding and specialized service, for his innovation and attention to detail, and for his leadership and guidance in making certain that the helicopter operations are accomplished safely.



ENSURE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The National Park Service increases its managerial resources through initiatives and support from other agencies, organizations and individuals.

Denali Partnerships

Long-Term Goal:

By September 2008, Denali will initiate one additional community partnership designed to enhance its ability to manage recreation and/or education activities seamlessly.

Annual Goal:

By September 30, 2005, Denali will initiate one additional community partnership designed to enhance its ability to manage recreation and/or education activities seamlessly.

STATUS: GOAL EXCEEDED

Denali National Park and Preserve developed two new community educational programs as part of its partnership efforts. Denali Backcountry Adventures, a wilderness camp targeted at local high school students, was piloted during summer 2005. Local

high school students learned backcountry skills while doing monitoring activities for the park. The camp was conducted in partnership with the Denali Foundation, an existing park partner.

Denali also joined forces with a new organization, Kigluait Adventures, to develop a sustainable youth camp for the communities of the Upper Susitna Valley. The Southern Denali Exploration Camp was partially funded through a Parks As Classrooms grant. The 2005 camp was targeted at youths participating in the Youth Corps Program sponsored by the Upper Susitna Soil and Water Conservation District. The ultimate goal for this camp is the development of a core group of youths who can serve as instructors for future camps.



Participants in the Denali Backcountry Adventures Program experience the park's wilderness areas and gather data that will be utilized by park managers. Photos courtesy of Denali Foundation.

Expenditure Highlights from All Funding Sources

\$2,683,300 - Resource Protection and Management

After a study was undertaken to examine the historical use of off road vehicles (ORVs) in the new park additions near Cantwell, it was determined that ORVs are a traditional means of access in the area. An environmental assessment will examine a range of alternatives for allowing traditional ORV use will be released for public comment and review in 2006. Work continued on the cleanup and rehabilitation of abandoned mining sites in Kantishna. Data collected from five sound monitoring stations in the park was analyzed and forwarded to the park's planning team for revisions to the draft Backcountry Management Plan. Staff planned a large, multidisciplinary study of the impacts of traffic volume and patterns on the Denali Park Road to vegetation, wildlife, physical resources and park visitors. The study will be initiated in 2006 and run for three years.

\$5,711,200 - Visitor Services

The opening of the Denali Visitor Center and other new entrance area facilities in May significantly improved the level of visitor services in the park's entrance area. Work continued on exhibit design for the new Eielson Visitor Center and other exhibit upgrades. The park negotiated an agreement with Doyon/ARAMARK Joint Venture to invest an additional \$1.8 million in bus fleet upgrades over the remainder of the contract, which will provide an upgraded Tundra Wilderness Tour experience for park visitors. The

insertion and removal of the infrastructure and equipment to operate the two ranger camps on Mt. McKinley was done by local commercial air taxi operators and the NPS-contracted high altitude Lama, as the military personnel who usually assist in this operation as part of military training exercises were deployed to Iraq.

\$11,014,400 - Facility Operations and Maintenance

The maintenance staff secured funding for, planned, and implemented the largest maintenance budget in park history, which included \$8,000,000 in projects. Along with the construction of temporary visitor facilities at Toklat, new SSTs at several locations, and renovation of park office spaces, these projects included the remediation of contaminated soil from the vicinity of buildings, the replacement of over fifty culverts along the park road, and over 13,000 person hours of labor on the maintenance, construction and improvement of trails. This year the park tested and used 4,000 gallons of

syntroleum and began testing 9,000 gallons of fish oil biodiesel fuel in some park vehicles and in one of the two generators that provides the energy for the facilities at the Toklat Road Camp.

\$2,625,000 - Management and Administration

The 2005 Business Plan, which provides information on the park's financial resources, was completed. Work also began on the core operations analysis process for the park, which will review jobs and activities taking place to assist in making decisions on how the park will meet required goals and mandates within tightening budget constraints. The park developed and implemented a Position Management Review Board to review each new or vacant position and determine if it will be filled. The Information Technology branch completed the design and installation of wiring for computer access in the new park facilities and in those that were being rehabilitated.



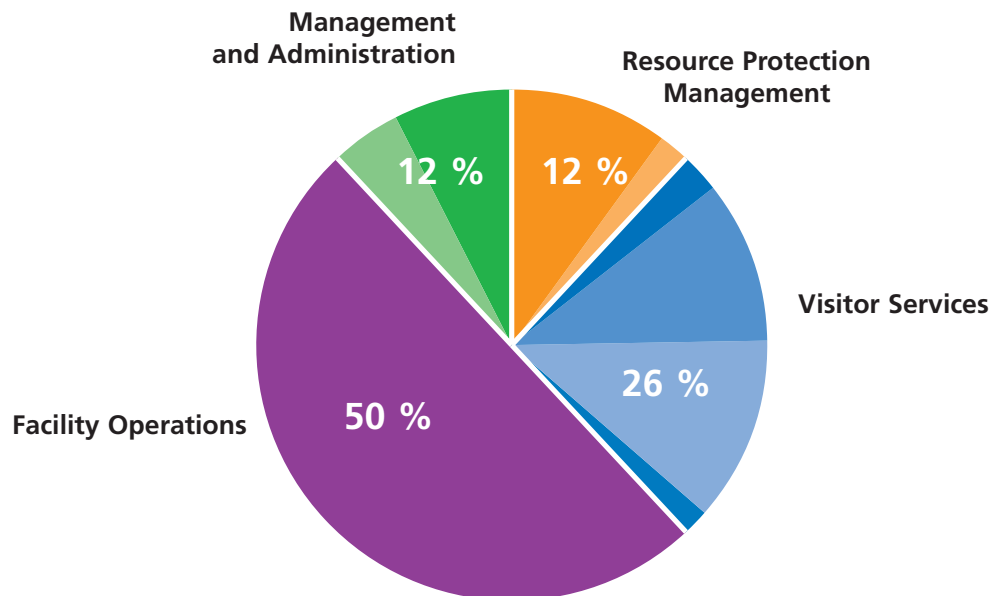
In June park staff erected a large weatherport to serve as an interim visitor contact station at the Toklat Rest Stop while the new Eielson Visitor Center is being constructed. The temporary facility includes exhibits and a sales area for the park's cooperating association.



FY 2005 Financial Summary

	All Funding Sources	ONPS Funding Only
Resource Protection Management		
Resource management	2,206,300	920,300
Cultural resources and subsistence	477,000	301,800
	\$2,683,300	\$1,222,100
Visitor Services		
Planning	528,700	343,000
Interpretation	2,254,500	765,400
Rangers	2,562,500	2,160,000
Concessions	365,500	216,100
	\$5,711,200	\$3,484,500
Facility Operations		
Maintenance	11,014,400	3,233,500
	\$11,014,400	\$3,233,500
Management and Administration		
Superintendent's Office	1,031,100	846,200
Administration	1,593,900	1,299,900
	\$2,625,000	\$2,146,100
	TOTAL \$22,033,900	\$10,086,200

All Funding Sources

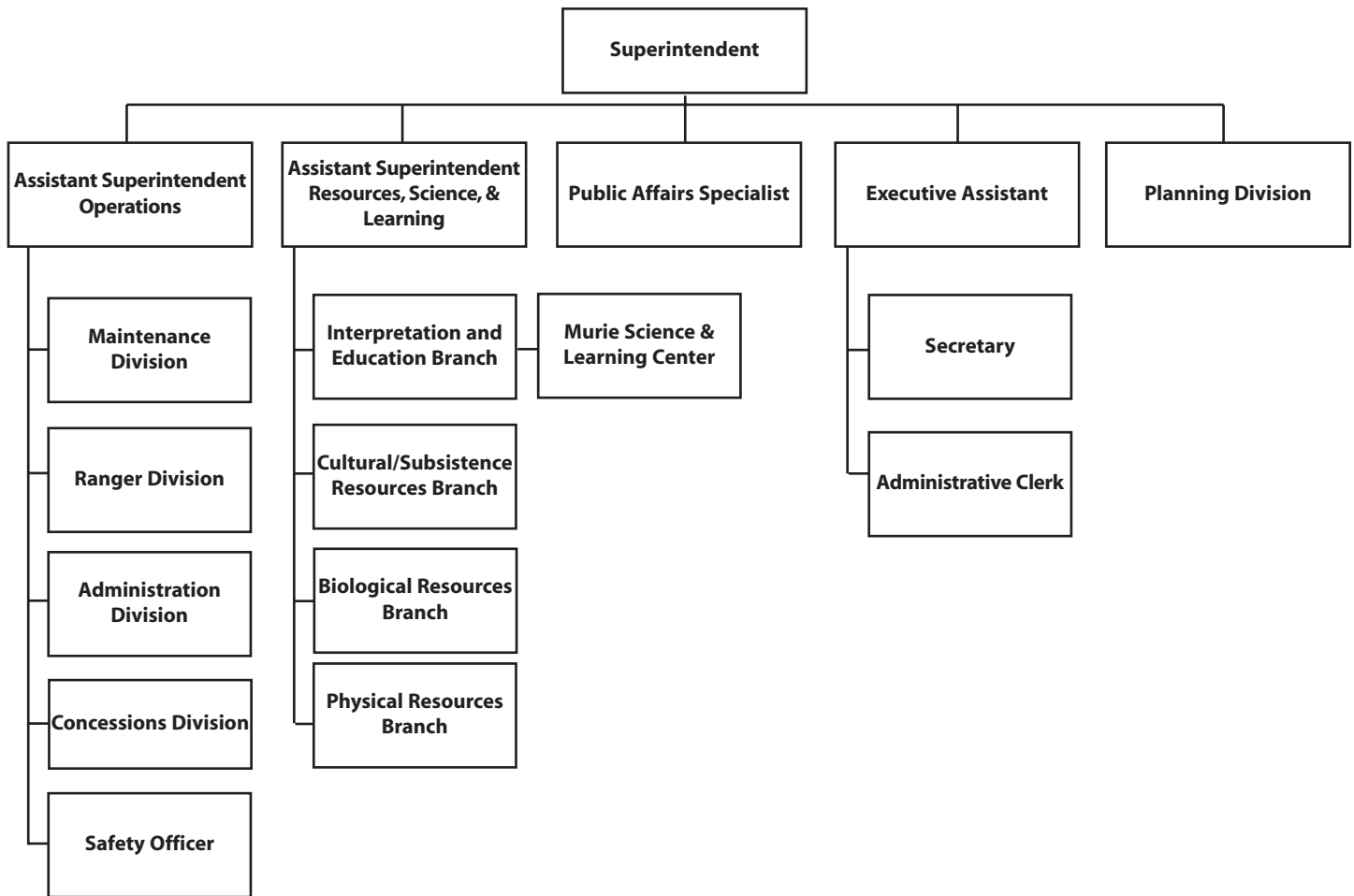




Park employees help to protect and preserve the resource in many ways. From top left, clockwise the employees pictured are: a wildlife technician doing the breeding bird survey, Dave Kreutzer overseeing a medical evacuation training exercise, Denali Visitor Center front desk staff fielding questions from park visitors, and the trail crew members making improvements to the Blueberry Hill trail in Kantishna.



Denali National Park and Preserve Organization Chart



Ranger-led Discovery Hikes provide an opportunity for visitors to experience the park and learn more about its natural and cultural resources.



