

Welcome to



## Area History

Once a bear and caribou hunting ground of the Native Dena'ina people, this slice of wilderness is blessed with striking views of a distant slab of granitic pluton that is the tallest mountain in North America. Established in 1970, Denali State Park encompasses 325,240 acres of land between the Talkeetna Mountains and the Alaska Range.

Although Denali itself peaks more than 24 miles away from the boundary of the park, Denali State Park's unique vantage allows you to see the mountain's dominating bulk in relation to the surrounding landscape, and offers commanding views of the Alaska Range.

Denali is known to the Dena'ina as *Dghelay Ka'a*, and to the Aleuts as *Tralieka*. The mountain's unsurpassed height on Alaska's landscape marks it with special significance to many Native cultures.

K'esugi Ridge, in Dena'ina means "Ancient One" and was used as caribou hunting grounds. The K'esugi Ken Campground is named after the "low ridge south of K'esugi" that we know today as Curry Ridge.



Moose love  
Photo courtesy of Larry Anderson

Red fox  
Photo courtesy of Phil Pringle



Denali View from Veterans Memorial  
Background photo courtesy of Anne Aleshire



# Denali State Park

### For More Information

Alaska State Parks  
Matanuska-Susitna/Copper Basin  
Area Office  
7278 E. Bogard Road  
Wasilla, AK 99654  
(907)745-3975

Alaska Veterans Memorial  
Denali State Park Visitors Center  
and Gift Shop  
Mile 147.1 George Parks Highway

[www.alaskastateparks.org](http://www.alaskastateparks.org)

## Welcome

With the Talkeetna Mountains to the east and the Alaska Range to the west, Denali State Park lays claim to some of the most magnificent views in Alaska. The park is roughly divided in half by the George Parks Highway National Scenic Byway, allowing for breathtaking vistas along the road and easy access to the backcountry. From kayaking the white waters of the Chulitna River to cross-country skiing and snowmachining, Denali State Park offers a wide range of recreational opportunities for all.

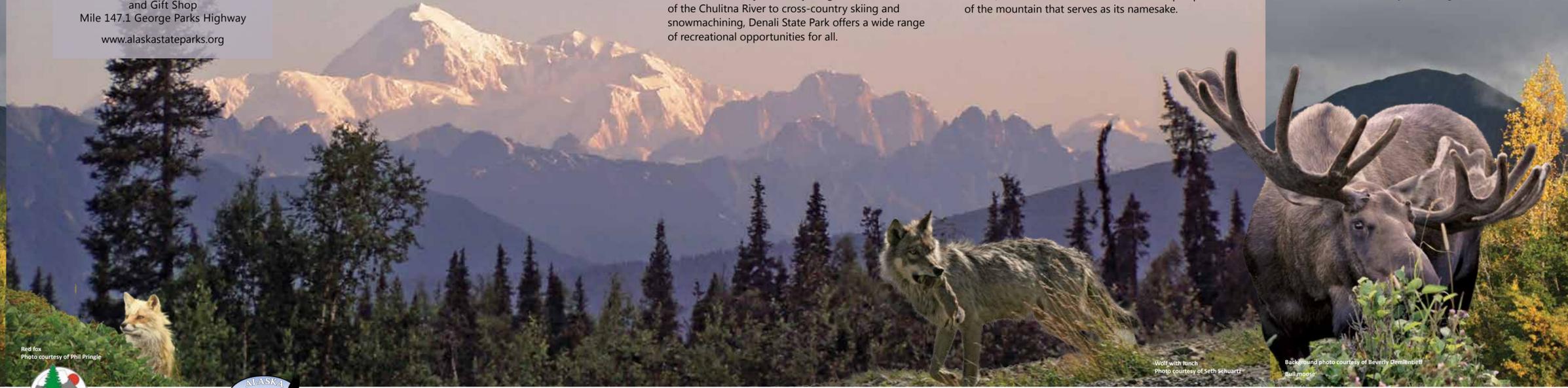
Denali, "The High One," looms large and proud on the horizon throughout the park. At 20,320 feet, the peak dominates the towering Alaska Range and is the highest point in North America. Whether you want to spy Denali through the clouds from a drive-in campsite, or hike an alpine ridge in search of that perfect 360° view of Interior Alaska, Denali State Park offers unmatched perspectives of the mountain that serves as its namesake.



Golden Eagle  
Photo courtesy of M. Herbert  
[www.captivelightuk.com](http://www.captivelightuk.com)

## Denali or McKinley?

Until August 30, 2015, the official name for the peak, according to the U.S. Board of Geographic Names, was Mt. McKinley, in honor of William McKinley, the 25<sup>th</sup> president of the United States. The mountain's original name (and the one preferred by Alaskans) is Denali, which translates from Koyukon as "The High One." Starting in 1975, the Alaska State Legislature requested to change the name back to Denali, but it was blocked by representatives from McKinley's home district in Ohio. After a 40-year procedural stalemate, the mountain is officially known again as Denali.



Wolf with lunch  
Photo courtesy of Seth Schuartz

Background photo courtesy of Beverly Dembanski  
Bull moose

Alaska State Parks

## Highlights

### Scenic Viewpoints and Camping

Perhaps the best roadside view of the Alaska Range is from the Denali View South wayside in Denali State Park. Interpretive panels familiarize visitors with the peaks of the Alaska Range, and nine drive-in campsites offer the chance to wait out the weather for that perfectly clear day. Denali View North offers 20 drive-in camping spots and equally gorgeous views. The Lower Troublesome Creek Campground also provides 20 campsites and is located near the Chulitna River.

The Byers Lake Campground, located at the foot of K'esugi Ridge, has 73 campsites and is a great place to relax and take in spectacular views of the lake. The Lakeshore Campground is across the water, about two miles from the loop trailhead, and offers six secluded campsites.

### Public-Use Cabins

Denali State Park has three public-use cabins around Byers Lake. All cabins are equipped with a wood stove, wood bunks, a picnic table, a fire ring, and outhouses. Cabin 3 is wired for electricity, but you'll have to pack in a generator. To reserve a cabin, go to [www.alaskastateparks.org](http://www.alaskastateparks.org).



Byers Lake public-use cabin 3

### Hunting and Trapping

The park is open to hunting and trapping. Hunters should consult with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game regarding applicable hunting rules and regulations. Weapons may not be discharged within one-half mile of a developed facility and the trail around Byers Lake, or within a quarter mile of the Parks Highway between mile 132 and 170.

### Chulitna River

Braiding through the heart of the park, the Chulitna River is a glacially fed, wild river that offers breathtaking views of the Susitna valley, Alaska Range and Tokosha Mountains. Rafting is the most popular way to travel the Chulitna, and rafters can access the East Fork of the Chulitna River near milepost 186, north of the park. The East Fork's water levels can be extremely high or low at times.



Photo courtesy of Anthony Olegario

There is no easy river access in the southern end of the park. The river can be accessed beneath the bridge at milepost 132 on the north side of the river. However, there is no public access up or downstream from the bridge. Remain within the highway right-of-way and climb a steep riverbank under the bridge to reach the highway. There is a small parking area just north of the bridge on the west side of the highway. The next access is in Talkeetna approximately 4.5 hours downstream.

Open fires are only allowed on gravel bars.

### Alaska Veterans Memorial

This multi-war memorial honors the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard veterans of Alaska. Each branch is represented by a plaque that shares a short history of their contributions to Alaska. The small visitor information center and gift shop is generally open Memorial Day through Labor Day.



This painting of Veterans Memorial was created at the "Camp, Canoe, Create" Arts in the Parks event held at Byers Lake, August 2011.  
Painting courtesy of Betty Atkins

### Wildlife

Many mammals, large and small, inhabit this land of mountains, valleys, streams, and lakes. The area's diverse habitat also makes it a haven for more than 130 bird species including majestic golden eagles and, the belles of the ball, elegant swans. Photographers, rejoice!



Swans at Byers Lake  
Photo courtesy of Kim Kruse



Scenic view of Mt. McKinley from Denali State Park  
Photo courtesy of Andre Kaeppele

Brown bear  
Photo courtesy of Steve Neel



Black bear  
Photo courtesy of Bill Evans

### Winter Recreation

Denali State Park offers plenty of reasons to visit after the snow flies. You can enjoy backcountry snowshoeing and cross-country skiing on K'esugi and Curry ridges, or explore the park by snowmachine or dog sled when snow depth is adequate.

If you enjoy speed in the cold, try the groomed trails in and around the Tokositna River area, and in the Peters Hills area. Be prepared for quickly changing conditions, particularly if traveling on frozen waters. Take a friend along for the ride and tell someone where you are going. Visit: [www.alaskastateparks.org](http://www.alaskastateparks.org) for snow reports.



Winter recreation in Denali State Park  
Photo courtesy of Kim Kruse

Rock Ptarmigan in winter  
Photo courtesy of Leanne Quirk



Winter camping in Denali State Park  
Photo courtesy of Jason Nielsen

