
Chapter 9

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This plan will be implemented in accordance with a prescribed program and schedule. It should be emphasized, however, that plans are guidelines and are intended to be flexible so as to respond to changing conditions, such as new resource data, shifts in patterns of use patterns and demands, and availability of funds.

Management Recommendations

Implementation of management recommendations should begin immediately and proceed as opportunities allow, with the following proposals given high priority:

- Acquisition of inholdings (see page 68).
- Cooperation with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough to strengthen the provisions of the Denali State Park Special Land Use District (see Appendix D and page 76).
- Cooperative Management Agreements with appropriate entities (see page 76).
- Work with ADF&G and the Board of Game to establish wildlife management practices and regulations for enhanced wildlife viewing (see page 69).

Phasing of Facility Recommendations

The facility recommendations of this plan are intended to be implemented in phases, over a period of several years.

Implementation Measures for the South Denali Visitor Complex Proposals

This section is included to emphasize the importance of coordinated implementation and to illustrate the commitments being made by the planning partners, individually and collectively. Implementation would be closely coordinated to meet state, NPS, borough and local community needs. The partnership team would serve as an implementation and monitoring group, with substantial community involvement, to evaluate the progress of implementation activities and associated mitigation actions and to keep these functions linked. The partnership would be strongly committed to continued citizen/public meetings and other means of public involvement throughout plan implementation.

Implementation would occur under a logical and cost-effective phasing scheme. The partners are committed to developing a feasible funding strategy, which is key to the implementation of a south side plan.

Mitigation

This section describes measures that will be used to minimize the adverse effects of facility construction and later activities associated with South Denali Visitor Complex Proposals. These mitigating measures do not apply to facilities or actions not included under the South Denali Visitor Complex Proposals.

General Considerations

During the main summer season, State Parks will restrict vehicular access on the new access road to the visitor center. Vehicular access will be restricted to buses and administrative vehicles in order to minimize the effects of traffic on the viewshed, wildlife, air quality, and quality of the visitor experience. During off-hours when buses are not running and traffic is expected to be minimal, the road may be open to private vehicles. This option will provide opportunities to off-hour visitors without incurring the expense of running shuttle buses additional hours when demand is low. There are regulations already in place to mitigate impacts from uses that may be associated with the complex such. For example, the area is already protected by a no-camping buffer.³² Vehicles, with the exception of snow vehicles, are not allowed off established roads and parking areas in the park.³³

Construction will be restricted to the minimum area required. During all phases of construction, a project supervisor will review the work to ensure that work methods minimize impacts on lands near the construction site and that mitigating measures written into the contract are followed.

The visitor center and associated facilities will be simple in function, reflecting the wild setting. While detailed design solutions will emerge through subsequent planning, solutions will consider the effects of scale, natural/rustic appearance, materials, color, texture, continuity, furniture, and other factors related to the built environment that will contribute to the visitor experience and minimize visual and natural resource impacts.

Appropriate water and energy conservation technologies, sustainable practices, and materials recycling will be incorporated into the design and construction of the proposed facilities. For example, the visitor facility will be designed to absorb solar energy from the natural surroundings for light, heat and possibly power. To the extent practical, the visitor facility will be constructed with sustainable building materials.

³² From 11 AAC 12.230.

³³ From 11 AAC 12.020 and 11 AAC 20.425.

Physical Resources and Aquatic Resources

Best management practices (BMPs) will be used during construction to minimize potential erosion and sedimentation. Silt fences and settling ponds will be in place during construction to protect water quality. Proper siting and treatment of human waste will occur to ensure levels of nutrients entering the water are minimal. BMPs to minimize spills and leaks during pumping of sanitary facilities (checking hoses and equipment prior to pumping, ensuring connections are tight, using drip pans or absorbents at connection locations) and checking of holding tanks on a regular basis to ensure integrity will also serve to minimize spills of sanitary waste to nearby water bodies. Construction BMPs such as use of hay bales to block turbid runoff and timing to avoid construction during high flow periods and the presence of anadromous fish will lessen the magnitude of construction impacts.

Impacts to soils may be mitigated by bank and ground stabilization using geotextiles or revegetation. Additional soil testing prior to construction will be required to determine specific construction methods and BMPs.

A program to reduce dust and soil loss will be instituted, as appropriate, for excavation, grading, construction, and other dust-generating and soil-disturbing activities.

Where feasible, local fill material, preferably from the original site, will be used for trail construction activities. Material excavated during trail construction will generally be used as fill in other trail segments or construction areas.

Vegetation and Wetlands

Vegetation removed during construction will be salvaged to the extent possible for use in restoring areas disturbed by construction.

A disturbed area revegetation plan will be formulated that will require the use of native species. Specifications for soil preparation, native plant/seed mixes, fertilizer, and mulching will be provided for all areas disturbed by construction activities. A monitoring plan will be developed and implemented to ensure revegetation is successful, plantings are maintained, and unsuccessful plant materials are replaced.

All facilities will be sited to avoid wetlands to the extent practicable. In areas with sensitive natural resources, such as wetlands, muskeg, or streambanks, increased caution will be exercised to protect these resources from damage caused by construction equipment, erosion, siltation, and other activities with the potential to affect these resources. Measures will be taken to keep fill material from escaping work areas especially near streams or natural drainages.

Trail routing should be designed to reduce the impacts on vegetation. Trails would also be designed and maintained to discourage social (informal, user created) trail development. Trails would be built along the easiest, most conveniently located routes to specific attractions given the natural terrain. The number of people expected to use the trail would also be considered, and the size of the trail adjusted accordingly to reduce the need for people to step off trails to let others pass. Various types of barricades could also be used to keep people on designated trails and, thus, reduce the potential for social trails.

The second aspect of trail development needed to reduce vegetative impacts is a commitment to annual maintenance of the trail system. Annual maintenance will reduce the potential for trail deterioration and additional vegetation loss from erosion, groundwater disturbance, trail widening, and slope failure. Maintenance reviews could also determine whether trail modifications are necessary to reduce the number of social trails that have developed or may develop.

Trails will be designed and constructed concurrently with the other facilities so that social trails will be less likely to form. Fragile wetland and alpine environments must be protected and the use of decks, boardwalks, and railings may be employed.

Wildlife

Agencies will adhere to the statewide timing guidelines for migratory bird nesting which were prepared by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These guidelines represent time periods when vegetation clearing and other site preparation activities should be avoided. These site preparation guidelines will assist the partnership in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

In an effort to reduce wildlife conflicts and displacement, agencies will conduct vegetation surveys and a bear habitat assessment prior to facility construction. This information will be used in the design and construction phase of this project to properly site facilities away from high conflict zones. The agencies will work together to establish a baseline monitoring program for the park to study the effects of development on park resources. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the agency responsible for wildlife management in the park, will be an integral part of the design and construction phase of this project to assure that the facilities are sited in such a fashion to minimize the long-term impacts of development on park resources.

Measures will be taken to reduce the potential for bear/human encounters. Visitors will be educated on the proper behavior when recreating in bear country. Wildlife education and interpretation will be provided at the visitor center, campgrounds, and all new trailheads to reduce negative wildlife-human encounters. Use of bear-proof garbage containers will continue to be required around visitor centers, picnic areas, trails, interpretive waysides, and camping facilities in Denali State Park, and use of these containers may be required on private lands within or adjacent to Denali State Park. Backcountry users will be encouraged to carry bear-resistant food containers on state park lands. Trails or trail sections may be closed temporarily or during certain seasons to protect wildlife. As visitation increases, existing trails may be rerouted to further reduce the potential for bear/human conflicts.

To further reduce the chance of bear/human encounters, trail segments in high-density bear habitat will be kept as straight as possible, maximizing sight distances, and brushy vegetation would be cleared from trail edges and in areas around other visitor facilities. Where linear trail sections are not appropriate (e.g., due to an area being too wet to allow for a straight route), less densely vegetated sites will be selected. Areas of highly concentrated bear use such as salmon spawning streams will be avoided.

Cultural Resources

If any previously unknown archeological remains are discovered during construction, all work will be halted in the discovery area until the significance of the finding could be determined by cultural resource staff. For state actions, project planning must comply with state statutes that prohibit the excavation, damage, and removal of archeological and historic resources located on state land without proper permits. All projects should be coordinated through the Alaska Office of History and Archeology.

The Curry Lookout will be evaluated and repaired to ensure that the building is in stable and good condition. Preparation of a building condition assessment following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation will be conducted to provide appropriate guidance for making repairs while maintaining the historic integrity. Education/interpretation efforts will focus on the structure's preservation and significance.

The Curry Ridge Trail and associated features will be evaluated for potential eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Historic structures like the Curry Lookout will receive regular maintenance in order to preserve the historic integrity of the structure. Education/interpretation efforts should focus on the structure's preservation and significance. In addition, before a new visitor facility at the Parks Highway site would be opened, agencies would restore the structure and make sure the foundation of the Curry Lookout is stable and solid.

Monitoring

The interagency planning team is committed to improving the long-term protection of natural and cultural resources in the south Denali region. Monitoring is an essential component of resource management because it provides information on the relative success of management strategies.

Monitoring may be accomplished through formal research projects. Monitoring may be coordinated through the Central Alaska Network Monitoring Program and follow the National Inventory and Monitoring guidelines to enhance the efficiency and usefulness of the results. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the agency responsible for wildlife management on state lands, will be an integral part of the monitoring program for fish and wildlife resources on state lands. Land and wildlife management agencies will follow these general principles in implementing a monitoring program:

- Monitoring should integrate information about natural and cultural resources, including weather, air, land, water, soundscape, geoindicators, exotic plants, and other flora and fauna. These broad areas include monitoring for species listed under the Endangered Species Act; and activities subject to the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, and National Historic Preservation Act; and other laws, regulations, and policies.
- Monitoring should measure the impacts of actions on resources as identified in the Final South Denali Implementation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.
- Monitoring results will provide managers with the information to determine whether a goal has been met and whether to continue or to modify the management direction.

- Monitoring will be periodically evaluated to ascertain whether the monitoring questions and standards are still relevant and would be adjusted appropriately.
- Some monitoring activities and projects may be discontinued and others added as knowledge and issues change with implementation.
- Monitoring should be conducted at multiple levels and scales.
- Existing and previous monitoring activities will be considered for inclusion in this program if they provide appropriate information and employ appropriate protocols.
- The monitoring program should involve a long-term commitment to gathering and evaluating data.
- Monitoring information will be made available using tools such as Synthesis, Geographic Information Systems Theme Manager, Natural Resources Database template, and interconnected web and distributed databases.

Site Planning

Site plans will be prepared prior to the actual construction of many of the facilities recommended in this plan. Detailed site analyses performed during site planning may indicate a need to make minor adjustments or revisions in the number and specific locations of the facilities.

Plan Review, Modifications

The dynamics of recreation use patterns and demands, as well as analysis of site-specific data associated with specific plan recommendations, will result in adjustments to the plan over time. If proposed adjustments are a major departure from the plan's intent, the director may determine the need to initiate a public review process.

This plan reflects the best efforts of the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation to analyze the natural resources of the park and to provide recreational/interpretive opportunities that do not significantly compromise the park's natural resources or character.

The planned outlook for the document is 20 years, with the realization that intermediate reviews and modifications may be warranted and are appropriate. The director may initiate a review at any time and it is strongly recommended that the plan be reviewed via a public process at least every 10 years.

The following procedure will be used for plan deviations and modifications:

1. Periodic Review. The division will coordinate periodic review of the Management plan when the Director considers it necessary and so directs. The decision to review the Management Plan may be triggered by:

- written public or agency requests for review;
- policy changes within the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation,
- availability of new data;
- availability of new technology, or
- changing social or economic conditions that place different demands on the park or affect the Division's capabilities.

The management plan review will include meetings, as appropriate, with the local advisory board, interested groups, the general public, affected agencies, the area superintendent and other Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation personnel. The periodic review will lead to one of the following actions:

- no modification of the plan;
- modification of the plan; or the
- granting of a special exception.

2. Modification of the Plan. Plan modifications are of two types:

- Minor changes – These are changes which, if accomplished, would not cause a deviation from the original intent of the Management plan. Minor changes may be necessary for clarification, consistency, or to facilitate plan implementation. Minor changes do not require public review but should be coordinated with the area superintendent and appropriate staff.
- Major changes – These are changes which, if accomplished, would cause a deviation from the original intent of the Management plan. Major changes require public notice and review prior to adoption.

3. Granting of a Special Exception. Exceptions to the provisions of the Management plan may be made without modification of the plan. Special exceptions shall occur only when compliance with the plan is excessively difficult or impractical, and an alternative procedure can be implemented which adheres to the purposes and spirit of the plan.

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation may make a special exception in the implementation of the plan through the following procedure.

- A. The person or agency requesting the special exception shall prepare a written finding which specifies:
- the nature of the special exception requested,
 - the extenuating conditions which require a special exception,
 - the alternative course of action to be followed, and
 - how the intent of the plan will be met by the alternative.

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- B. The Director will review the findings and issue a determination. If warranted by the degree of controversy or the potential impact, the director will hold a public hearing before reaching a decision.
- C. The decision of the Director may be appealed to the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources, whose decision will be final.