

**Presentation at the
“Linking Tourism and Conservation in the Arctic”– Workshop,
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**Denali National Park and Preserve
Backcountry Management Plan
Motorized Transportation and Access Issues**

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Abstract

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA) doubled the size of the area administered by the National Park Service, adding several new units and extensive areas of designated wilderness throughout the largest state in the United States. Three existing national parks were significantly expanded. This landmark conservation law included access provisions for the use of motorized transportation to continue traditional activities such as subsistence hunting and gathering. During the past decade, motorized recreational activities such as snowmobiling and air tours have grown at an exponential rate in Alaska national parks such as Denali National Park and Preserve. The National Park Service has been challenged to interpret and apply the 1980 law to manage these activities. Different understandings of what the law intended, differing visions about the purposes of the national parks in Alaska, and rapidly increasing public interest combine, with the result that management planning and decision making involves substantial controversy. Through developing new ways of working with the public, expanded research and resource monitoring activities, and new approaches to sharing information, the National Park Service is making progress in protecting the internationally significant resources and outstanding visitor opportunities in Alaska's national parks.

Outline of Presentation

- I. Introduction
 - A. Motorized access to backcountry and wilderness areas
 - B. Different expectations of wilderness experience
 - C. Denali National Park and Preserve as an example
 - D. Park information
 - 1. 6 million acres, one of Alaska's major tourism destinations
 - 2. Bus access into the park interior – controlled access
- II. Resource Values, and Different Perceptions of Wilderness by Different People
- III. Topics Addressed in the Park's Backcountry Management Plan
 - A. The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA)
 - B. Rapid change - National Park Service responsibility to act, manage park
 - C. List of topics
 - 1. Snowmobile use
 - 2. Airplane landings and overflights
 - 3. Climbing and mountaineering
 - 4. Commercial uses
 - 5. Hiking, backpacking, and camping
 - 6. Additional topics
- IV. How the National Park Service Makes Planning and Management Decisions
 - A. The National Park Service Organic Act
 - B. Enabling legislation for individual parks: park purpose and significance
 - C. National Park Service management policies
 - D. Case law
- V. Management Areas and Allocation of Uses
 - A. Managing snowmobile use
 - B. Managing airplane landings and overflights
- VI. Linking Tourism and Conservation
 - A. Public expectations and involvement
 - B. The roles and responsibilities of backcountry users in planning and management
- VII. Conclusions: The geographical and historical perspective