**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 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 25th 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 2017, 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.

**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 if one or dog died when snow depth is adequate. If you enjoy speed in the cold, try the groomed trails in and around the Toklat 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 for snow reports.

**Denali State Park Visitors Center**

7278 E. Bogard Road
727-9190
Denali, AK 99755
www.alaskastateparks.org

**For More Information**

Alaska State Parks
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
Area Office
727-7965
www.alaskastateparks.org

**Highlights**

**Scenic Viewpoints and Camping**

Perhaps the best roadside view of the Alaska Range is from the Denali View South half-mile 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 perfect clarity day. Denali View North offers 20 drive-in camping spots and equally gorgeous views. The Lower Tinklombie 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 72 campsites and is a great place to spend the night around Byers 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.

**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 152 and 170.

**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.

**Alaska State Parks**

www.alaskastateparks.org

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Trails Descriptions

For more information on trails in Denali State Park, visit www.alaskastateparks.org.

K'esugi Ridge Trail
Access: Little Coal Creek, Ermine Hill and Cascade Trailheads
Travel Means: Foot
Distance: 3.3 miles one way
Elevation Gain: 2,900 feet

The K'esugi trail system traces the K'esugi Ridge and is the centerpiece of the park, with miles of rolling alpine terrain offering incredible views of Denali's south face and the heart of the Alaska Range. However, this is a challenging country and it is imperative that you come equipped with a map and compass, and know how to use them. You should also be prepared to turn around or hunker down and wait out poor weather. It is best to traverse the trail from north to south and the best time to hike the trail is between late June and mid-September.

The northern end of the K'esugi Ridge Trail is the high point of the trail at 3,350 feet elevation. The route traces the top of the ridge and is exposed to the elements, but the 360° views of the Alaska Range and Talkeetna Mountains on a clear day are worth the climb. After the Ermine Hill Junction, the path drops about 900 feet before ascending past Skinny Lake to the 2,910-foot mounded summit of Godot. The rolling landscape offers good camping and jaw-dropping views of the peaks across the valley. The only restroom and designated campsite along the route is at Skinny Lake. If you plan to descend to Byers Lake, it is worth taking past the junction to check out Tam Point, a 2,480-foot scenic lookout about a mile down the trail.

Little Coal Creek Trail
Access: Little Coal Creek Trailhead (mile 163.9)
Travel Means: Foot
Distance: 5.3 miles one way
Elevation Gain: 1,700 feet

This trail winds through the woods and over Ganda Creek (not far) before ascending to the ridge in switchbacks. This route provides the easiest access to the K'esugi Ridge Trail.

Ermine Hill Trail
Access: Ermine Hill Trailhead (mile 156.5)
Travel Means: Foot
Distance: 3.7 miles
Elevation Gain: 1,000 feet

This trail works through the woods and over Ganda Creek (not far) before ascending to the ridge in switchbacks. This route provides the easiest access to the K'esugi Ridge Trail.

Cascade Trail
Access: Byers Lake Campground (mile 147)
Travel Means: Foot
Distance: Over 2 miles one way
Elevation Gain: 1,700 feet

Departing from the Byers Lake Loop Trail at the eastern end, this reconstructed trail ascends steeply past a tumbling waterfall and onto the ridge crest. Tam Point, a popular viewpoint and day hike destination, can be found a mile down the trail to the west from the trail junction.

Byers Lake Loop Trail
Access: Byers Lake Campground (mile 147)
Travel Means: Foot
Distance: 5.3-mile loop
Elevation Gain: <200 feet

This flat lakeside trail features spectacular views of Denali and provides access to three public-use cabins and campsites along the lake. Two bridges, one of them a long suspension bridge, assist hikers across the inlet stream and the outlet stream and offer views of spawning salmon in late July and early August. On the trail a short distance from the campground, an old salmon-ladder photographers to capture the salmon return to nature.

Troublesome Creek Trail
Access: Upper Troublesome Creek Trailhead (mile 127.6)
Travel Means: Foot
Distance: 11.6 miles to the junction of Cascade and K'esugi Ridge trails
Elevation Gain: 2,150 feet

Troublesome Creek Trail is now re-opened after damage from a storm in 2009. Repairs are ongoing, but it is functional. The trail offers great views as it parallels Troublesome Creek up to timberline. When salmon are spawning in July and August, encounters with black and brown bears are likely. Hikers are encouraged to be ‘bear aware’ during salmon season.

K'esugi Ken Campground
OPENING SOON! The K'esugi Ken Campground will have tent and RV camping, an interpretive center, trails, and two public-use cabins. It is the first phase of the proposed South Denali Visitor Center development to provide a wide range of recreational opportunities in the Curry Ridge region.

Tokositna Flats Winter Trail
Access: Mile 121 or 131 Parks Highway
Travel Means: Snowshoeing, snowmachining, or on foot
Distance: 11 miles one way within the park, connecting with a network of winter trails south of the park
Elevation Gain: <200 feet

The Tokositna Flats Winter Trail is the northern end of the 100+ mile Tokositna Valley winter trail system that originates at Big Lake. This 11-mile trail crosses the Tokositna River Flats and is only usable during the winter months. Although it is mostly used by snowmachiners, cross-country skiers and dog mushers also enjoy the trail.

Outdoor Etiquette and Safety Tips
- Always tell someone where you’re going and when you plan to return.
- Always bring warm, raingear: you can get hypothermia even in the middle of summer.
- Drinking water advisory: always purify drinking water to avoid Giardias.
- Be bear aware. Make noise to avoid surprising bears. For tips on safety in bear country, go to www.alaskabears.alaska.gov.
- Bear resistant food containers may be available at the Visitor Center at MP 147 of the Parks Highway. Call the area office at (907) 745-3975.
- Please be careful to minimize your impacts in the backcountry. For tips on minimal impact camping go to www.reisit.org.
- Backcountry chefs must bring a portable camp stove; open fires are prohibited in Denali State Park except on gravel bars.