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H4217 (KATM)

December 9, 2008

Ms. Judith Bittner
State Historic Preservation Officer
Department of Natural Resources
Office of History and Archaeology
550 W. 7th Suite 1310
Anchorage, AK 99501-3561

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OHA

Dear Ms. Bittner:

Under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, Section 110, we have prepared the enclosed multiple property submission, *Tourism and Early Park Development Resources of Katmai National Park and Preserve*, and submit it for your review. Included in the package is the following:

1. A completed Multiple Property Documentation form
2. National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Brooks River Ranger Station, Log Cache, and Boat Storage House
3. USGS Map
4. Sketch Maps
5. Floor Plans of the Historic Ranger Station before and after the 1998 addition
6. Photographs

Because the multiple property format is designed as a flexible tool, the multiply property listing will eventually be revised, refined, and expanded as new information is gathered, new properties are identified, and changes in the condition of the related property types are observed. Completed registration forms for related properties are expected to be added to this submission in the future, provided that all the procedures and requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 have been met.

On July 6, 1999, your office concurred that the Brooks River Ranger Station and Boat Storage House are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. In response to the document submitted on June 2, 2000, your staff made several comments and requested addition information, which were greatly appreciated. We have incorporated the appropriate suggestions into this final document.

As per the implementing 36 Code of Federal Regulations 60.9, we would appreciate your 45 day review and signature on page two of the Multiple Property Form as well as the National Register Nomination Form. Please return the submission package to Jeanne Schaaf at 240 W. 5th Ave Suite 236, Anchorage, AK 99501. If you have any questions, please call Jeanne Schaaf, Lake Clark/Katmai Cultural Resources Manager at 644-3640. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Ralph Moore

Ralph Moore, Superintendent
Katmai National Park and Preserve

TAKE PRIDE
IN AMERICA

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Determination of Eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

☒ New Submission ☐ Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Tourism and Early Park Development Resources of Katmai National Park and Preserve

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Era of Tourism and Early Park Development, 1950-1967

C. Form Prepared by

name/title Katherine Johnson Ringsmuth, Historian

street & number 240 W. 5th Ave Suite 236 telephone 907-644-3640

city or town Anchorage state AK zip code 99508

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature and title of certifying official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Signature of the Keeper

Date

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 120 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Era of Early Tourism and Park Development, 1950-1967

The vast and volatile landscape encompassing Brooks Camp in Katmai National Park and Preserve has maintained a cultural history extending back at least 5,000 years.¹ The history of the National Park Service (NPS) at Brooks Camp however, began in 1918, with the designation of Katmai National Monument, and the absorption of the Brooks River area in 1931. Today, most visitors recognize Brooks Camp as one of the premiere bear viewing areas in the world or as a gateway to the volcanic world of the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. These and other Brooks Camp-focused activities make the river the bustling nucleus of a visitor economy in Katmai National Park and Preserve. Initially, however, the National Park Service never intended this to be Brooks Camp's fate, for the agency had originally planned to disperse visitor destinations and park development throughout the monument.² But the challenges presented by a remote, inaccessible setting made any actual planning during these early years nearly impossible. In fact, management of Katmai was practically nonexistent, as underscored by the National Park Service's decision to keep Katmai National Monument closed to the public from 1919 to 1949, prompting recent historians to characterize the period of monument administration before 1950 as an "Era of Neglect."³

In 1950, the National Park Service opened Katmai National Monument for the first time to the public, ending the so-called "Era of Neglect." That year, Northern Consolidated Airlines (NCA) under the guidance of President Raymond I. Petersen, opened a series of five fishing camps—two located inside the old monument (Brooks Camp and Coville Camp, later renamed Grosvenor Camp), the other three north of it. The concessioner's early fly-in sport fishing activities, particularly those centered on the Brooks River were, in part, the catalyst for NPS to finally implement its first real presence in the park by constructing a permanent ranger station there in 1955. Further construction by both NCA and NPS ensued until roughly 1967, at which time most of the camps, structures, trails, and roads associated with the era of early tourism and park development had been built.

NCA fueled the growth of Katmai's visitor services and park development because it operated the primary means of accessing the remote camps. Moreover, in order to attract an elite clientele of sportsmen and nature enthusiasts, to court journalists and other outdoor writers, and to promote a national advertising campaign, NCA evoked two long-standing traditions: sportsmen conservationism and northern frontierism. Not only are these legacies central to the history of Alaska's first national parks, but sportsmen conservationism and northern frontierism are still reflected in the camps' comparatively sparse construction and "rustic charm." Most significantly, Petersen's association with sportsmen conservationism gained the concessioner his initial support from NPS officials, who at the time, were under pressure to protect Katmai's resources and open the monument to the public. This "green light" from NPS in Washington D.C. gave the concessioner unprecedented influence over the park's recreational expansion for decades to come, inevitably making Brooks Camp Katmai's visitor hub. It was the NPS's embracement of northern frontierism that influenced the agency's historic period of park

¹ The Brooks River Archaeological District National Historic Landmark (AHRS #XMK-051), listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978, authorizes the National Park Service to manage and protect the subsurface and surface cultural remains that are located along the Brooks River and its associated series of ancient beach ridges and river terraces.

² To Regional Director, from Superintendent of Mount McKinley Duane D. Jacobs, "Development at Grosvenor Camp and Revision of Mission 66 Prospectus, Katmai National Monument," August 27, 1957.

³ Frank Norris, *Isolated Paradise: an Administrative History of the Katmai and Aniakchak National Park Units* (Anchorage: Alaska Regional Support Office, 1996), 37-79.

improvement. Mission 66 encapsulated NPS development plans, specifically with the construction of the road to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes in 1963 that led to the nearly exclusive use of the Brooks River area for the next forty years. Therefore, the history of Katmai's development from 1950-1967 is intrinsically entwined with the history of Katmai's solitary concessioner. Not only did NCA bring new meaning to "flying fishermen," but the marriage of anglers and aviation commenced a new era in Katmai history of which many of the park's historic and architectural properties represent.

Early Discoveries of Katmai's Sport Fishing Resources, 1919-1945

The reason for creating the Katmai National Monument in 1918 was a volcanic eruption that created the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes in 1912. But in the decades that followed, visitors predominately came to the Brooks River to fish for sport. As early as 1919, Robert Griggs, the scientist charged with exploring the volcanically created landscape for the National Geographic Society, made a side trip to the Brooks Falls where he observed, "leaping salmon within sight of the volcanoes." Struck by the abundance of both salmon and trout, Griggs declared:

The fishing in these lakes and rivers makes the region an angler's paradise. Their waters are alive with giant rainbow trout, with such voracious appetites that the angler never need cast more than once or twice before he has a strike that keeps him busy.⁴

The National Geographic Society's final trip to Katmai in 1930 brought Griggs and his party back to Naknek Lake and the Brooks Camp areas, which were, at the time, located beyond the western boundary of the monument. Again, expedition members were so impressed by what they considered a primeval countryside that efforts began to expand the monument westward. Their advocacy for expansion convinced Washington D.C. and on April 24, 1931, President Herbert Hoover issued Proclamation No. 1950, which more than doubled the size of the monument.⁵

Expansion was a mixed blessing for NPS officials charged with protecting Katmai's resources. Although those responsible for creating the monument foresaw its possibilities, from the perspective of NPS officials working on America's East Coast, the Alaskan monument was too remote, it saw few visitors, and they believed that such isolated resources were hardly at risk. As a result, little attention was paid or money allocated to the management of the park.⁶ In fact, because staff was not available to protect it, NPS officially closed the monument to the public and continued to manage it as an adjunct of Mount McKinley National Park, located hundreds of miles away in the interior of Alaska.⁷ Despite reports of illegal hunting, trapping and fishing activities ongoing within the monument, funding and personnel were slow to arrive. "NPS officials," writes NPS historian Frank Norris, "knew virtually nothing about the park except for what had been explained in the *National Geographic Magazine*."⁸ Thus, NPS's management of the largest unit in the national park system was conducted from afar, considered a frontier, if you will, of Alaska's National Parks.

It was not until 1940 that Victor Cahalane and Frank T. Been made the first extensive NPS investigation of

⁴ Robert Griggs, *The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes* (Washington D.C.: National Geographic Society, 1922), 310.

⁵ John M. Kauffmann, "Katmai National Monument, Alaska, A History of its Establishment and Revision of its Boundaries" (Washington D.C. NPS, 1954) 8-19 in KATM/ANIA Administrative History Files, Box 4, Alaska Regional Support Office, Anchorage, AK.

⁶ "Katmai Aniakchak Budgets" Appendix C, in *Isolated Paradise: an Administrative History of the Katmai and Aniakchak National Park Units* (Anchorage: Alaska Regional Support Office, 1996).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 42-44.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

Katmai. Cahalane, an employee of the agency's Biological Survey, and Been, the Superintendent of Mount McKinley National Park, spent most of September walking, boating, and flying over the monument.⁹ Been and Cahalane made numerous observations of the large and abundant trout and salmon dwelling in what they called Brook's Creek. Been also noted several Native families fishing and drying salmon near the Brooks Creek outlet, an activity that he surmised, had gone on for generations:

Each autumn the Indians assemble here to gill net salmon at the mouth of Brooks Creek. Apparently, they have done so for generations as several sites nearby show signs of occupancy for years. The nature of the stream and the fine beach on the lake makes the place ideal for salmon fishing. Scattered along the stream bank are a number of fish drying racks that are used each season. The salmon are netted in large numbers and dried on the racks for dog food and food of the natives.¹⁰

Been referred to this occupation at the mouth of Brook's Creek as a "village," noting that, "Chief One-Arm Nick resided at one of the village's only two cabins," ... "while the other Natives arriving to fish pitched tents."¹¹ During a conversation with Nick at his cabin, the chief mentioned to Been that his people were drying salmon for themselves because they did not make much money fishing that year due to poor salmon runs. Been noted that about forty Natives occupied the river's outlet during the fishing season, after which they returned the salmon in fifty pound bales to their permanent homes down the Naknek River.¹² Admiring the autumn tinted slopes that framed this fishing scene, Been recognized the tourist potential of the area. Over the short term, however, the superintendent felt that "its remoteness precludes it becoming a tourist center for many years," but noted that "when the beauty of the Naknek, Brooks, Grosvenor and Coville Lakes becomes known and the splendid trout fishing becomes recognized, sportsmen may go to the lakes."¹³

As it turns out, Been was right. Usage increased exponentially in Katmai country as World War II opened the region to outsiders; specifically, outsiders with airplanes. In 1941, the U.S. Army Air Corps established Naknek Air Base (which was renamed King Salmon Air Station in the 1950s). Military and construction personnel seeking trophy rainbow trout used small aircraft to gain access to fishing areas throughout the region, including Brooks River and other parts of the upper Naknek drainage, where they reportedly pulled "thousands upon thousands of trout" from the water.¹⁴ Serving the military anglers were two rest and recreation camps established in 1943 by the U.S. Army Air Corp. Enlisted men used the Naknek Recreation Annex No. 1, known locally as Rapids Camp, and officers used Annex No. 2, known locally as Lake Camp.¹⁵ The Navy even considered building a camp "one-half mile east of Brooks Falls," a plan that never materialized, but signifies the military's strong interest in Katmai as a recreational destination.¹⁶

In fact, the Brooks area was considered such a coveted destination for the U.S. military that General Dwight D. Eisenhower, a fly-fishing enthusiast, along with Generals Alfred Gruenther and Howard Craig, flew to Brooks

⁹ Frank Norris, *Tourism in Katmai Country* (Anchorage: Alaska Regional Office, 1992), 4.

¹⁰ Frank Been, "Report on Katmai, August 28-October 6, 1940," 16, in KATM/ANIA Administrative History Files, Box 4, Alaska Regional Support Office, Anchorage, AK.

¹¹ Ibid, 9 and 15.

¹² Ibid, 16.

¹³ Ibid, 30.

¹⁴ Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 4.

¹⁵ Norris, *Isolated Paradise*, 273.

¹⁶ R.R. Lyons (Captain, US Navy, Commanding Officer, Kodiak Naval Operating Base) to Sup. Grant Pearson, Mount McKinley National Park, October 16, 1945, File 901, Box 313, RG 79, NARA, SB. Copy on file in KATM/ANIA Administrative History Files, Box 4, Alaska Regional Support Office, Anchorage, AK.

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Lake to wet their lines in the Brooks River in 1947.¹⁷ That year, General Gruenther was serving as joint staff director for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He later became a four-star general and served as the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR) from 1953 to 1956. General Craig was the Alaska commander-in-chief in 1947, and later that October he was designated deputy chief of staff for material in the newly created Department of the Air Force.

Popularity, however, had dire affects on the Brooks River fish resources. Observers described many of the lesser ranked military anglers attracted to the Brooks River as “hardware and bait” fishermen.¹⁸ As they increased in numbers, it is not surprising that the added pressure caused severe harm to salmon and trout populations that normally thrived there. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel, who had been conducting fisheries research at Brooks Lake since 1940, recorded that, as many as twenty anglers per week were rainbow fishing on the Books River and accumulating “so many of the huge fish they were scarcely able to carry the weight to their plane.”¹⁹ NPS officials could do nothing to prevent the onslaught or protect the resource. Lacking funds for a ranger staff, NPS had to rely on the cooperation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to patrol Katmai.²⁰

Bush Pilots Commence Commercial Access to Katmai, 1945-1950

After his visit to Katmai National Monument in 1929, Father Bernard Hubbard predicted that, “Alaska aviators will soon be taking tourists, by plane, into this remote but interesting region.”²¹ By 1945, commercial pilots, as Father Hubbard envisioned, were largely responsible for bringing fishermen into the area. Early tours of the volcanic country were provided by Anchorage Air Transport, Anchorage-based Pacific International Airways, as well as independent pilot John Walatka. One of the best known of these pilots serving the Katmai area in those days was Ray Petersen. Petersen had moved to Anchorage just before the outbreak of World War II and began flying packed fish out from the Bristol Bay canneries. As tales of legendary fishing began to spread about Katmai’s rivers, civilians began to demand trips into the area as well. As early as 1942, the Ray Petersen Flying Service had begun taking superintendents from Bristol Bay canneries into the Brooks Camp area on recreational fishing trips. The pilots and clients passed the word along, and by the end of the War even more fishermen throughout the Territory had heard of Katmai’s large, plentiful rainbow trout.

NPS responded to the rising popularity with several attempts to establish a presence at Katmai in hopes that it would curb ongoing illegal activities in the monument. Several times during the decade regional officials submitted proposals to fund a part time ranger. By early 1946, officials had set into motion plans for a possible tourist lodge, boat docks, trails, patrol cabins and administrative sites, but none of the plans came close to being implemented, because as one high official in the Interior Department explained, “there has not been sufficient

¹⁷ A Photograph showing Generals Gruenther, Eisenhower, and Craig at disembarking a float plane at Brooks Lake in 1947. Photograph courtesy of Frank Hill. Alaska Regional Support Office, Anchorage, AK.

¹⁸ Norris, *Isolated Paradise*, 275.

¹⁹ Hillory A. Tolson (assistant Director NPS) to RD/R4 April 23, 1948, in File 208, KNM Box 311, RG 79, Entry 7 NARA SB; Norris, *Isolated Paradise*, 275.

²⁰ The task to patrol Katmai was granted to lone wildlife agent, Carlos M. Carson, who worked with the Alaska Game Commission in Dillingham. After numerous letters of concern and even some arrests made due to illegal trapping, Carson was finally appointed “deputy park ranger” (without compensation) for Katmai National Monument. Memo to the Regional Director, from Huge Miller, March 14, 1948, in KATM FILES 1936-1952, in KATM/ANIA Administrative History Files, Box 4, Alaska Regional Support Office, Anchorage, AK.; Norris, *Isolated Paradise*, 77.

²⁰ Charles L. Peterson [Acting Supt. Mount McKinley National Park] to Alfred Andree [Koggiung, Alaska], February 26, 1946; Secretary of the Interior to E.L. Bartlett, undated (1950), both in KATM/ANIA Administrative History Files, Box 4, Alaska Regional Support Office, Anchorage, AK;

Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 5.

²¹ Barrett Willoughby, *Alaskans All* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1933), 20-21, 41.

tourist travel in Alaska to justify the appropriation of Federal funds to provide facilities in this location.”²²

By 1948, Katmai National Monument remained dormant and closed to the public. Critics, particularly wildlife agents, perceived NPS management as neglectful, and as a result, the agency came under fire for its inability to protect Katmai’s resources. On the other side of the spectrum, criticism also came from territorial leaders and Naknek residents, who were regularly using Katmai Country for trapping and other subsistence purposes. Tensions had begun to mount during the 1930s and 1940s when trapping was very profitable—arguably more so than the commercial fishing industry in Bristol Bay, depending on the given run size and/or labor conditions. The 1931 boundary expansion that absorbed the lake country into the park, besides transforming many trappers into outlaws in the eyes of the federal agents, did very little to actually prevent residents from trapping the Brooks River area.²³

The government had initially failed to alert local residents of the expansion, and therefore, trappers never knew they were in violation of monument regulations, at least during the 1930s. The underlying reason for the deficient communication and lack of enforcement was certainly the minimal allocation of federal funds. Not surprisingly, then, unhindered residents continued to rely on the land and resources necessary for their livelihood. But when the government finally began to notify (and to arrest) trappers in the 1940s, hostility began to grow between locals and the park. Residents argued that they should have been consulted about the 1931 expansion that included the Brooks River, and if they had, they surely would not have approved it.²⁴ On behalf of Naknek residents, Alaska delegates Anthony Dimond, and later, Bob Bartlett, questioned the agency’s decision to keep such an important parcel of land closed and even asked the National Park Service Director and the Secretary of the Interior to considerably reduce the size of Katmai National Monument.²⁵ In H.R. 206, one of many statehood bills, Bartlett went so far as to call for the transfer of all public lands, including those within Katmai National Monument, to Alaskans.²⁶ Questioning the federal government’s continued closure of Katmai, Bartlett wrote to Secretary of the Interior Julius Krug in 1947, stating that:

Katmai Monument is a principality in itself. It is substantially unknown even to the federal service which theoretically administers it, but every time an effort is made to do something constructive, the reminder is given that we must keep on thinking of the generations yet unborn and must give no thought to those now living. Of course, any sensible person will agree that if Katmai possesses scenic resources such as we are told it does (although no one knows very much about them), then perhaps a good argument can be made for saving scenic values applying unspoiled for those who are to come, but I submit this still can be done without applying such a heavy brush in the withdrawal orders.²⁷

As tension festered, criticism continued to mount from territorial leaders not only about the agency’s inability to

²² Charles L. Peterson [Acting Supt. Mount McKinley National Park] to Alfred Andree [Koggiung, Alaska], February 26, 1946; Secretary of the Interior to E.L. Bartlett, undated (1950), both in KATM/ANIA Administrative History Files, Box 4, Alaska Regional Support Office, Anchorage, AK;

Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 5.

²³ During their investigation of Katmai in 1940, Been and Cahalane discovered several active trapping cabins along Naknek and Brooks lakes.

“Report on Katmai, August 28-October 6, 1940,” p. 17-18.

²⁴ The few interactions and confrontation Been had with non-Native Naknek residents usually concerned the issue of illegal trapping. At the time, many trappers like John Munsen, Stephen Scott and John “Frenchy” Furnier had been arrested by Alaska Game Commission wildlife agent Carlos Carson, who Been described as “a relentless enforcement officer and feared by offenders of the game laws” p. 38.

²⁵ Norris, *Isolated Paradise*, 76.

²⁶ Ibid, 75.

²⁷ Alaska Delegate E.L. Bartlett to Secretary of the Interior Julius A. Krug, May 21, 1947, the Bartlett Collection, UAF copy on file in KATM/ANIA Administrative History Files, Box 4, Alaska Regional Support Office, Anchorage, AK.

provide legal access to the park, but the government's inability to do anything at all with the "locked up" land. In 1947, a frustrated Governor Ernest Gruening suggested that the monument be abolished. In 1948, an editorial appeared in the well-respected Fairbanks newspaper, *Jessen's Weekly*, that the monument should be returned the public domain because "absolutely nothing has been done to make its beautiful lakes and mountain scenery available to the public."²⁸

By the mid-1940s, NPS was in a major fix over its Katmai unit. The agency was faced with mounting pressures to reduce illegal activities, while at the same time, justify park values. Making matters worse, it lacked support from high bureaucrats in the Interior Department, who claimed Katmai was too inaccessible to justify the cost of opening and managing it. Still, NPS was quite aware of the growing interest in sport fishing on the Brooks River and the hand-full of pilots who were familiar with the area. The Park Service certainly recognized that travelers to the park were dependent upon planes for both access and safety, especially after Mount McKinley park superintendent Frank Been was stranded along Naknek Lake during his visit to Katmai in 1940. Been had unknowingly walked into an "aviator war" conducted by competing aircraft companies serving southwest Alaska. Originally, Been and Cahalane had made arrangements to fly to Katmai with one of the area's commercial pilots, John Wooley. But, for convenience sake, they instead flew with John Walaka, Wooley's competitor. As it turned out, the jilted pilot refused to allow the NPS officials on his plane during a scheduled pick up, and thus, left the superintendent and his party stranded on Naknek Lake for several days. In his 1940 report, Been emphasized that, "the incident illustrates the importance for maintaining good will [with independent pilots]." As Been reasoned:

...the traveler dependent upon plane service is therefore subject to the time or disposition of the company—and the weather. As parties in our position will be there whenever the plane arrives, it may be expected that the company will do that work which is closest at hand as we are like a bird in the bush that can't get away.²⁹

As Been's experience suggest, the critical, yet uncertain relationship fostered between local pilots and the Park Service during these early years began to chip away at Katmai's inaccessibility.

NCA evokes "the Code of the Sportsman" 1950-1954

In 1943, Ray Petersen purchased the Bristol Bay Air Service and convinced several other airline companies serving western and Interior Alaska to merge into one consolidated company. Companies included in the merger were the Ray Petersen Flying Service, Jim Dodson Air Service, Northern Airways, Walatka Air Service, Nat Brown Flying Service, and Northern Air Service. The companies entered into a corporate organization agreement on October 22, 1945, and three months later, the carriers formally applied to the Civil Aeronautics Board to create Northern Consolidated Airlines (NCA).³⁰

Although successful, the consolidation of NCA after World War II was hardly unique in Alaska. The construction of modern airfields, as well as improved communication and navigational aids by the U.S. military during the war years, created an infrastructure that was put into use by commercial carriers by the war's end. Eventually, most small air service companies merged into larger conglomerates: Wien Airlines, Reeves Airways, Alaska Airlines, and Pacific Northern Airlines, and thus, augmented a successful commercial airline

²⁸ *Jessen's Weekly*, October 29, 1948; Norris, *Isolated Paradise*, 76.

²⁹ Been, 43.

³⁰ Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 7.

industry that exists to this day.³¹ With consolidation of the rival air service companies in southwest Alaska, the aggressive regional competition, at least for the most part, came to an end. Consolidation, then, meant market stability, and with stability came consumer confidence. NCA, with its newly acquired aviation network in place, was in an excellent position to serve the Katmai area. By 1950, it was the only carrier which provided direct service from Anchorage to Naknek Air Base. As a result, the company emerged as the major airline for most of southwest Alaska.³²

Although NPS had continued to keep Katmai closed to the public, Northern Consolidated Airlines began chartering high-profile parties to "Naknek and vicinity" for sport fishing in 1947.³³ NCA's President, Ray Petersen, was a fervent fly fishermen and enjoyed hob-knobbing with the nation's elite and powerful while out on the rivers they fished. Petersen's business activities brought him into increasing contact with U.S. military and Washington D.C. political figures, and several suggested that he attempt to develop fishing camps in Katmai country. His work made Petersen an early advocate for the regulation of fishing on the Brooks River. During his trips into the area, Petersen encountered two distinct fishing groups that flew into the Brooks River area: Alaskans, who were the "hardware and bait" fishermen, and "stateside" anglers, who were fly fishing enthusiasts. According to Norris, "Petersen knew that any regulations that might be established would have to favor one group over the other. Petersen observed that fly fishermen outnumbered the "hardware and bait" fishermen; he therefore advocated that Brooks River be limited to fly fishing only."³⁴

Meanwhile, NPS was becoming concerned with the increasing illegal activities conducted by local trappers, as well as other abuses in the monument, such as over-fishing and littering along the Brooks River by personnel flying in from the local Air Base. By the summer of 1948, Fish and Wildlife Service representatives stationed at Brooks Lake noted "quite definitely that the rainbow trout have decreased as the result of the popularity to air borne sportsmen."³⁵ In 1949, Petersen approached NPS officials with a proposal to develop fishing camps in Katmai. The agency readily accepted his proposal, and the two signed a 5-year concessions permit in March 1950. The National Park Service's expedient approval of Petersen's proposal raises questions. For such authorization gave the concessioner practically autonomous control of Brooks Camp and fishing along the Brooks River.

To fully understand the appeal of the NCA proposal, it is necessary to point out the park's dilemma. The agency needed to find some way to protect Katmai National Monument and regulate the public's use of it. The agency was aware of two facts: 1) its reliance on pilots for access into the park and, 2) Petersen's support of fly fishing regulations for the Brooks River and his public admonishment for the so-called "hardware and bait" fishermen, who were inflicting the most harm to Katmai's trout and salmon. Those officials did not see the carrier as a profit-making, recreational juggernaut. Instead, they probably viewed NCA as a solution to their problem. From their perspective, NCA would supply two necessary services the agency could not: the airline would both promote Katmai to a national and Alaskan audience,³⁶ and provide access so that the unit could be officially opened to the public. Evidence that NPS had begun to prudently amend regulations to favor commercial pilots

³¹ *Alaska Geographic*, "Frontier Flight," Volume 25, Number 4 (1998) pp. 38.

³² *Ibid*, 7.

³³ *Ibid*, 13.

³⁴ Norris, *Isolated Paradise*, 275.

³⁵ Frank T. Been to Regional Director, Region 4, December 13, 1948, copy in KATM/ANIA Administrative History Files, Box 4, Alaska Regional Support Office, Anchorage, AK.

³⁶ In a letter to Assistant Secretary of the Interior William Warne, Petersen boasted that, "To date we have completed a film featuring sports fishing in the valley of ten thousand smokes area, primarily Brooks, Colville and Grosvenor Lake area." The film was distributed by Northwest Airlines, and used to highlight tour packages targeting elite sportsmen from around the country. Raymond I. Petersen to Assistant Sec. of the Interior William Warne, January 21, 1950, copy in KATM/ANIA Administrative History Files, Box 4, Alaska Regional Support Office, Anchorage, AK.

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came in 1949, the same year Petersen approached NPS with his proposal. NPS recognized that most illegal activities related to trapping were conducted during the winter months. Superintendent Grant Pearson of Mount McKinley National Park decided to relax aviation regulations at Katmai to allow legal aircraft landings between May 15 and September 15, which opened the park to summertime visitation for the first time since 1931.³⁷ But, perhaps most significantly, NPS reasoned that Petersen and his sportsmen clientele would serve as stewards of conservation principles, who would act to protect—rather than exploit—Katmai’s resources.

It is important, then, to place the complex relationship between pilot and park service into historical context. NPS attitudes toward sportsmen generally, and NCA particularly, stemmed from a long-standing, well-defined code of conduct and thinking, personified by the clientele and journalists with whom Petersen had begun to associate. It is widely believed that conservationism in this country—the protection and preservation of natural resources from unregulated commercial development—evolved during the Progressive era when middle class reformers fought for pragmatic legislation designed to manage the nation’s natural resource for public, rather than private use. Yet, today’s environmental historians argue that the practice of conservationism actually began as an effort by sport hunters and fishers from the upper echelons of American society in the years after the Civil War. The sportsmen’s original concept of conservation was articulated by a set of rules that historian John F. Reiger has termed “the code of the sportsman.”³⁸ The code regulated the hunter or fisher’s behavior, particularly in the taking of game, to ensure the survival of that game for future use. Thus, American sportsmen were the real vanguard of conservation, and the conservation creed that evolved out of the code of the sportsman had its origins in an elite, upper-class, world view.³⁹

By the mid-nineteenth century, American sportsmen had initiated a conservation movement composed of thousands across the country. Communication of conservation ideology spread throughout the nation by way of publications such as *American Sportsman* (1871), *Forest and Stream* (1873), *Field and Stream* (1874), and *American Angler* (1881), and one of their most popular topics concerned stories of fish and fishing. These periodicals kept readers informed on the most current findings on “natural history” and, according to Reiger, “illustrated a remarkable understanding of ecological principles.”⁴⁰ Increasingly, readers of Izaak Walton, George Bird Grinnell, Robert Barnwell Roosevelt, and Thaddeus Norris began to look upon themselves as members of a fraternity, in which the words “gentlemen” and “sportsmen” had virtually the same meaning.⁴¹

To obtain membership in this order of true sportsmen, one had to practice proper etiquette on the river, give game fish, such as salmon and trout, a sporting chance, and possess an aesthetic appreciation of the whole environmental context of fish and fishing.⁴² For example, if a fisherman abused or was wasteful of fish then, according to such writers of fishing literature, “he is at great risk to his reputation.” The code directed good sportsmen to “not only shun but expose him,” for “the man who kills an animal, bird, or fish knowing that it must be left to spoil, justifies the charge of cruelty against our class, and deserves the scorn and condemnation of all right thinking men.”⁴³ Moreover, true sportsmen upheld the philosophy of “Fair Chase,” which, in terms of fishing, instructed real fishermen to use “frail tackle” to catch game fish. Only then, according to the code, can a “true sportsman” know “Superior Fishing”⁴⁴ and certainly, in terms of Brooks River, these fishermen were

³⁷ Norris, *Isolated Paradise*, 77.

³⁸ Historian John F. Reiger makes this argument in his landmark study *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation*, 3rd ed. (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2001).

³⁹ Reiger, 3.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 72-76.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 74.

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superior to those fishermen who used “hardware and bait,” or most egregious, nets, to catch fish.⁴⁵

Therefore, in order for the sport’s perpetuation, sportsmen were to take the lead not only in the passage of game laws, which formalized the code of the sportsman and the “contract” between fisher and fish, but in seeing to it that fishermen who broke the code and contract were condemned by the sport fishing fraternity. Manifestations of the “sportsman code” were sportsmen’s clubs and associations that championed the guardianship and conservation of wildlife throughout North America. One of the most important and influential of these groups was the Boone and Crockett Club, an association of sportsmen-conservationists founded by Theodore Roosevelt, and whose well-known member, Charles Sheldon, led the campaign for the establishment of Katmai’s parent park: Mount McKinley National Park in 1917.

Charles Sheldon, the club’s long-time Game Conservation Committee chairman, was a wealthy sportsman from Vermont, who visited the Denali region on a sports hunting expedition in 1906. During his three years in Alaska, Sheldon became enamored with the grandeur and scenery of the Alaska Range. On his return to the East Coast, Sheldon painted a portrait of Denali as a virgin land—a Last Northern Frontier—where the sheep and caribou still roamed. Threatening those sheep and caribou however, was the Alaska Railroad, intent on opening up Alaska’s Interior and feeding hundreds of construction workers Alaska’s game. Sportsmen and writers of the Boone and Crockett Club were quite aware of the impact that railroads had on the on the American west. In their minds, railroads were potent symbols of industrial America’s domination over nature and destroyers of the so-called inexhaustible resources that dwelled within it. In 1915, the association formally resolved to endorse the proposal for park legislation with the aim to preserve what they considered that last remaining piece of the Wild West—primitive, undeveloped, game-filled, and thinly populated by prospectors who embodied the solitary, adventuring spirit of the Last Frontier. Sheldon’s park idea quickly captured the imagination of a significant part of the Eastern elite, including government leaders and scientists in the conservation and wildlife preservation fields. In 1917 Sheldon’s efforts were rewarded, as Mount McKinley had the distinction of becoming the first park added to the National Park system after the passage of the National Park Service Act of 1916. Two years later, Katmai National Monument would be added to the list of national parks of the Last Frontier.⁴⁶

Creating an Angler’s Paradise on the Last Frontier

In 1949, not only was Katmai being managed by Mount McKinley National Park personnel who understood and upheld Sheldon’s frontier ideal, but many of the anglers Petersen was flying into the Brooks River were associated with the sportsmen culture that inspired Alaska’s first national park. With a conservation philosophy that not only mirrored, but was historically entwined with its own mission for Alaska parks, it is understandable that NPS officials assumed that Ray Petersen and his elite angling clientele would aspire to the same sportsmen code, and thus, were willing to provide NCA a concessions permit for Katmai National Monument.

⁴⁵ In his unpublished dissertation, *In Common With All Citizens: Sportsmen, Indians, Fish, and Conservation in Oregon and Washington* (University of Oregon, 2002), historian Timothy Rawson looks at the history of angling culture as it emerged in Europe and was later transplanted in America. His study discusses the social demography of anglers and describes ways anglers differentiated between fish and fishermen in order to understand how these combined to eventually place at odds the interests of Anglo-American anglers in the Pacific Northwest against those of the Native American treaty tribes. This approach can also be used to understand how sport anglers at Brooks Camps perceived and valued the local and indigenous fishers in Katmai Country.

⁴⁶ For more information on Charles Sheldon and the establishment of Mount McKinley National Park see: William E. Brown, *Historic Resource Study of Denali National Park and Preserve*, Volume 1 - Historical Narrative (Santa Fe, New Mexico: United States Department of the Interior, 1991; and Theodore Catton’s *Inhabited Wilderness: Indians, Eskimos, and National Parks in Alaska* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).

On December 14, 1949, Petersen met with NPS and BLM officials in Washington and laid out his plans. With increasing abuse of park resources and mounting pressure to open Katmai to the public, Petersen found a receptive audience who recognized that a concession operation associated with a sportsman conservation legacy offered one of the most effective ways to combine increased visitation and park resource protection.⁴⁷ Accordingly, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior expressed that he was “very enthusiastic, and ... he intends[ed] to do everything possible, within the Department’s limitations, to help [the proposal] along.” The Assistant Secretary assured Petersen that the National Park Service would “regard the proposal sympathetically.” His reasoning suggested a *quid pro quo* relationship: “As we have no facilities there to care for legitimate visitors, I am inclined to think that this type of permit may be helpful to us in Katmai.”⁴⁸

On Jan 21, 1950, Petersen formally wrote for permission to operate two camps—Brooks Camp and Coville Camp—located within the monument, for a two-year period. Petersen had personally chosen the general locations for each camp, considering them the best fishing spots in the Katmai country. In order to create a “suitable environment” for his sport fishing guests, Petersen had relatively modest plans for the camps. The base camp, located at the mouth of the Brooks River, was to consist of “framed tents, sufficient to house and feed twenty to thirty people.”⁴⁹ On Feb. 15 Assistant Secretary of the Interior William Warne approved most of what Petersen had requested, and the NPS issued a draft concession permit, in the form of a Special Use Permit, of the two camps in the monument. With a permit in hand, NCA spent the next several months feverishly assembling its camps.⁵⁰

The NCA concession operation opened as scheduled. Because most of the construction meant the assembling of tents, the camps were built in a relatively short period of time. Within two months, NCA had two camps inside the monument boundaries open for business: Coville Camp, which featured a 16-square-foot cookhouse, guest quarters, a pump house, and a root cellar to store food and supplies, and Brooks Camp, which featured a 32’ x 16’ cookhouse and nine tents that accommodated a total of thirty guests. The camps’ structures were basically simple in design and reflected the practical limits of building in a wilderness area. Restricted transportation to the sites inevitably determined the types of materials that were used for construction. Petersen hired Vera Lieble, who had worked for numerous Bureau of Indian Affairs hospitals in interior Alaska, to design the five camps. All the tent-cabins had wooden floors, windows, doors with screens, and were covered with a rustic, olive-colored, canvas material.⁵¹ The three camps located beyond the monument’s boundaries—Battle Lake Camp, Kulik Lake Camp, and Nonvianuk Camp—were also constructed in 1950. These camps were absorbed into Katmai National Park and Preserve when the Alaska Lands Act became law in 1980.

The camps, which were collectively known as “Angler’s Paradise,” operated as part of system and were, as promised, constructed primarily for fishermen. They were promoted as a superb sports fishing destination and were the first full-time fishing lodges in Alaska.⁵² The first guest, a Texan named J.C. Hill, arrived in late May. Shortly afterwards, from June 3 to June 5, Ray Petersen invited four Anchorage newsmen to Brooks Camp for a weekend of rainbow fishing. The fishing scribes proudly proclaimed the opening of the new “sportsmen’s

⁴⁷ Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 15.

⁴⁸ Charles A. Richey to Conrad Wirth, December 19, 1949, copy in KATM/ANIA Administrative History Files, Box 4, Alaska Regional Support Office, Anchorage, AK.

⁴⁹ Raymond I. Petersen to Assistant Sec. of the Interior William Warne, January 21, 1950, copy in KATM/ANIA Administrative History Files, Box 4, Alaska Regional Support Office, Anchorage, AK.

⁵⁰ Concessions Permit No. I-34np-299, March 10, 1950, copy in KATM/ANIA Administrative History Files, Box 4, Alaska Regional Support Office, Anchorage, AK; Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 18-19.

⁵¹ Janet Clemens, “Grosvenor Camp Historic District,” NRHP Registration Form, 2002.

⁵² In 1999, the Alaska Legislature recognized Ray Petersen for his contributions to the tourism industry by proclaiming him “Father of Alaska’s Sportfishing Lodges.”

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heaven,” where one guest found himself “tossing back 16-inch rainbow trout because they were too small.”⁵³ Petersen eventually invited a host of outdoor writers to the camps—*The New York Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor* and *The Seattle Times* responded with extensive glowing reports and scores of new publicity. *Field and Stream*, *Outdoor Life*, and *Alaska Sportsman* echoed support for the camps. Petersen even invited a filmmaker to make a travel documentary which presented glowing descriptions of Katmai’s fishing possibilities.⁵⁴

In 1952, an NCA official noted that “99% of the present clientele were fishermen,” and as late as 1957, a guide noted that “almost everyone who visits the Monument is there to catch salmon and trout.”⁵⁵ Petersen hired local pilot John Walatka to manage the Angler’s Paradise camps. His daughter, Johanna Bouker, who spent her childhood at the camps, remembers that Petersen made it clear to employees that they always refer to fishermen as “guests” and to never refer to a fishing rod as a “pole.”⁵⁶ There were no restrictions, of course, as to who could visit, and independent travelers who stayed at the nearby campground were free to mingle with the lodge guests. But the cost of a Katmai trip, particularly for those who lived outside Alaska, was so prohibitive that only a select few were able to visit the camps. Many guests, therefore, were wealthy business leaders and politicians connected to America’s elite sportsmen culture.⁵⁷

Camp photographs from the 1950s, as well as the reminiscences of Katmai visitors, confirm that the camps contained many aspects of a wealthy, rustic fraternity associated with sportsman conservationism stemming particularly from the eastern region of the United States. For example, a few of the well-known guests whom Petersen catered to during the 1950’s included: Robert Sargent Shriver, first director the Peace Corps, who married President John F. Kennedy’s sister Eunice Kennedy in 1953 and eventually ran for the vice-presidency with George McGovern in 1972; famed expert angler and fishing promoter Chief Needahbeh of the Maine Penobscot Indians; members of the Rockefeller family; and Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson, who ran for president in 1952 and 1956.⁵⁸ Petersen also befriended *National Geographic* Magazine’s longtime editor and national parks advocate Dr. Gilbert Grosvenor and his wife Elsie, whose father was Alexander Graham Bell. Through his relationship with the famed editor, Petersen was not only able to gain substantial publicity, but was able to associate his Angler’s Paradise Camps with the conservation philosophy represented by the magazine itself.⁵⁹

According to NPS historian Frank Norris, Katmai’s early tourism reflected something new in the annals of the National Park Service. Granted, by 1950 there were several hundred concessions active in the various NPS units; some even operated airplanes in the parks. Never before, however, had NPS leased a concession operation to an airline company whose primary business was the transport of passengers and freight. It was also the first time that the NPS had depended upon an airline as a primary means of access to one of its units. As Norris points out, “The arrangement worked because the camps were some of the least accessible facilities in the nation park system.”⁶⁰ Certainly driving this relationship were avid sport fishermen, who sought a kind of

⁵³ *Anchorage Daily Times*, June 7, 1950, Louis R. Huber, “Flight to Katmai,” *Alaska Sportsman* 17 (April 1951), 9.

⁵⁴ *Christian Science Monitor*, September 22, 1950; Frank Dufresne, “Katmai Adventure,” *Field and Stream* 46 (May 1952); Enos Bradner, “Anglers’ Eldorado,” *Alaska Sportsman* 18 (April 1952), 18; Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 19.

⁵⁵ Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 31.

⁵⁶ Interview with Johanna Bouker, June, 2008.

⁵⁷ According to Norris, “Brooks Camp received many well-known guests over the years.” For example, Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson, who ran for president in 1952 and 1956, visited the camp in July 1954.

⁵⁸ Ray Petersen interviewed by Bill Hanable, Nov. 23, 1988; Louis R. Huber, “Cataclysm: The Second of Two Chapters of ‘The New Dawn,’” *The Alaska Sportsman* (May, 1951) 22; See Norris’s *Tourism in Katmai*.

⁵⁹ In addition to Mount McKinley National Park, Grosvenor was instrumental in the creation of Katmai National Monument in 1918. Ray Petersen discusses this visit during an interview with Bill Hanable on Nov. 23, 1988.

⁶⁰ Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 16.

“Last Frontier” experience at Alaska’s Angler’s Paradise. These individuals were the original consumers of what a later era would call “an Alaskan wilderness experience.”

Luring “Tomorrow’s Visitor:” NPS and NCA Evoke a “Last Frontier National Park” Presence, 1954-1960

Between 1954 and 1969, NPS and NCA seemed to operate in tandem when it came to planning for the future—both relied heavily on evoking a “Last Frontier” presence in an attempt to lure a larger percentage of the traveling American public to Katmai. With the establishment of Alaska’s national parks beginning in 1917, NPS had met the tourist’s desire to experience the so-called, “Last Frontier.” The agency consciously promoted a kind of frontier ambiance in its parks, with hardy rangers, dedicated to conservation, playing the role of frontier lawmen. Another manifestation of this frontier ambiance was the use of a rustic style of architecture in park buildings, particularly, gable-roofed log buildings that projected an image of frontier living.⁶¹ To preserve the feel of the frontier, park staff both worked and resided in such rustic buildings. At the end of the 1950s, a new modern America may have been headed toward a “New Frontier,” yet advertising campaigns marketing Alaska, the “Last Frontier,” were designed to evoke a nostalgic connection to the past. These campaigns attracted a different type of visitor to Alaska—one there to experience more than superior hunting and fishing. During the Post World War II years, wealth and optimism began to make national parks more accessible to a general public, who along with their automobiles had made outdoor recreation increasingly popular among America’s middle class. This growth of appreciation for nature resulted in the increasing desire to directly experience Alaska, particularly the Last Frontier’s main attribute—pristine wilderness—a luxury quickly disappearing in the modern world.

But by the mid-1950s, the crown jewel of Alaska’s Last Frontier Parks—Mount McKinley National Park—had, for the most part, become like other United States national parks, with more and more orientation to the automobilist.⁶² To employees whose task it was to prepare the park for the future, they recognized that Alaska’s other park, isolated Katmai, still met the expectations of “tomorrow’s visitors.” According to NPS planning documents, “tomorrow’s visitors” were individuals who would soon be traveling to Katmai, not for sport, but rather, “to see the many natural wonders the monument offers.”⁶³ As one NPS planner put it, “Alaska, considered by many to be America’s last frontier, holds an increasing fascination of the traveling American people. Katmai...,” he predicted, “...will share in this increase in Alaskan tourism.”⁶⁴ Accordingly, Katmai’s natural wonders would attract this new type of visitor northward. Thus, Katmai, with its remote setting, abundant wildlife, and picturesque scenery, remained Alaska’s true frontier park, a coveted Isolated Paradise.

Katmai’s present situation, however, demanded the protection of the monument’s natural resources from poachers, irresponsible fishermen, and other lawbreakers. As a result, NPS assigned its first seasonal ranger William Nancarrow from Mount McKinley National Park to patrol Katmai in 1950. The historic decision to supply the monument with rangers for the first time probably had less to do with NCA activities than it did with the desire to counteract the impression and growing belief, particularly on the part of local residents, that the NPS had no interest in the area and that the monument should be abolished. To accommodate his housing needs and to help establish a clear national park presence, Nancarrow built a two-room wall tent, a log cache, and a

⁶¹ For more information on Alaska’s Last Frontier Parks see Theodore Catton’s *Inhabited Wilderness: Indians, Eskimos, and National Parks in Alaska* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997).

⁶² Catton, 118.

⁶³ Park Planners called Katmai’s future visitor for whom their park plans would benefit, “Tomorrow’s Visitor.” Mission 66 for Katmai National Monument (Washington D.C.: Department of the Interior), 3 and 5.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

well at the present Brooks Camp campground, located one-half mile north of the Brooks River, and significantly separated from the concessions activities.⁶⁵ The following summer, ranger Morton S. “Woody” Wood and his wife Ginny patrolled the Brooks Camp area to enforce fishing regulations and photograph the flora, fauna, and scenery.⁶⁶ Ginny Wood is a person of historical interest. Wood and her friend Celia Hunter would later found Alaska’s first statewide environmental organization, the Alaskan Conservation Society (ACS) in 1960, which labored to establish the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and fought such environmental battles as Project Chariot and the Rampart Dam Project. During the next few years, the Katmai assignment was filled by a broad spectrum of rangers from Mount McKinley.

In the summer of 1954, NPS began to implement plans for a more permanent presence—a presence that would be clearly representative of an Alaska “Last Frontier” park. William Nancarrow returned that season as ranger and was given the task to cut, peel, and season logs from Mortuary Bay for the construction of a permanent ranger station. This would be the first building erected by the agency in Katmai, more than thirty years after the monument’s inception and more than twenty years after the Brooks Camp area was included in the monument. That summer Nancarrow also built a second log cache for ranger use at a site situated near the Lake Naknek beach, but much closer to the mouth of the Brooks River. The following summer at the second cache site, NPS Ranger Richard Ward and seasonal hire Russell Todd used the logs cut by Nancarrow to construct the ranger station, which replaced the campground wall tent as park headquarters. Three or four summers later, park rangers built the Boat Storage House with a 200-foot trail linking the two cabins.⁶⁷ Both buildings were eventually stained a dark brown color. As expected, rangers both lived and worked in these buildings. Besides the time-consuming, and frontier living tasks of hauling water and cutting fire wood each day, the rangers’ main priority was contacting planes and informing the fly-in anglers about Katmai’s fishing regulations. It comes to no surprise, then, that these early Katmai rangers, visitors themselves from Mount McKinley, constructed these buildings using the rustic log cabin design, construction materials, and colors that reflected the frontier architecture and ambiance of their home park.

Also fulfilling the American public’s “Last Frontier” expectations at Katmai was Ray Petersen, whose original intent, after all, was to attract and accommodate the nation’s sports fishing elite. To maintain the camp’s “rustic charm” few changes were made during the remainder of the decade. The only real improvement took place in the mid-1950s when many of the original tents were replaced by plywood boards, and overlaid by asphalt shingling.⁶⁸ As NPS historian Janet Clemens notes, “The buildings from this period were constructed with building materials and colors (green and brown) to convey a rustic camp setting.”⁶⁹ Therefore, Petersen’s building design for the camps was to emphasize the outdoor experience and not the accommodations. Communication with the outside world was by airplane or radio and guests continued to sleep in sleeping bags on cots, and were not bothered by such amenities as telephones, television, or motored vehicles. In fact, the avid anglers who visited the camp in the early days seemed to not only to enjoy, but preferred its club-like, rustic atmosphere.

One of the steps Petersen took to promote his camps was to hire a local homesteader, trapper, and hunting guide, Rufus Knox “Bill” Hamersley, to convey Katmai’s last frontier and rugged-individualist spirit to potential clients from the Outside. During the winter of 1950-51, the Nonvianuk homesteader toured the United

⁶⁵ William Nancarrow, interviewed by Frank Norris, Aug 1, 1988; Janet Clemens, Determination of Eligibility for the “Brooks River Ranger Station and Boat Storage House,” KATM Files, Alaska Support Office, Anchorage, AK; Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 21.

⁶⁶ Norris, *Isolated Paradise*, 84.

⁶⁷ Clemens, “Brooks River Ranger Station and Boat Storage House,” DOE.

⁶⁸ Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 31.

⁶⁹ Janet Clemens, “Grosvenor Camp Historic District,” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2002.

States, telling salty tales about life and fishing in Katmai to a wide range of radio and television audiences.⁷⁰ Tall, rough, and sporting a full, graying beard, Hamersley personified the image of an Alaskan pioneer. Indeed, Hamersley's life in the bush authenticated Alaska's last frontier image in the eyes of modern America. Like the pathfinder of the old frontier and the cowboy of the Old West, Alaska prospectors like Hamersley possessed the right qualities to be considered a kind of hero of the last frontier: he came from humble origins; lived a solitary, yet adventuring life, and maintained the skills to survive in Katmai's wild and uncivilized landscape. By 1954, Petersen was marketing this kind of "last frontier experience" to his guests by flying them out on sightseeing excursions to Native fish camps located on the nearby Alagnak or what was then called the Branch River.⁷¹

Meanwhile, as Petersen was establishing his fly-in fish camps, in forefront of Alaska life was the territory's battle to become the nation's 49th state. By linking the independent-minded pioneers of the last frontier to a forward-thinking generation who forged Alaska's constitution, it comes to no surprise that an entrepreneur like Petersen would join the choir of Alaskan boosters and supported the statehood movement. In his role as a statehood advocate, Petersen argued that for the state to pay for itself, it would have to develop its most lucrative resource, which he believed was Alaska itself. Petersen recognized that "tourists are the biggest thing that Alaska can develop," and further observed that "we are counting on them as our long-range, steady customers."⁷² Petersen, like a good booster noted: "the Katmai region is one of the greatest attractions the North has to offer. We [Alaskans] feel it is our economic duty to share it with the rest of the world."⁷³

Fishermen who stayed at the Angler's Paradise camps liked the certain quality of "primitive charm" and "Bohemian atmosphere" that tent cabins furnished and resisted attempts to change it. But as early as October 1952, the airline announced that it also hoped to attract the sightseeing tourist—the kind of visitor "who goes places just to be amazed." And, as one travel promoter put it, "that visitor expected more than tents and oil heat."⁷⁴ To accommodate such visitors, Angler's Paradise required certain updates. First and foremost, the airline found it necessary to make it easier for the average person to access the camps. As a result, Petersen made repeated attempts to build an airstrip south of Brooks River. In 1954, Petersen notified NPS officials that he wanted an airstrip in order to justify the construction of an expanded lodge complex, but NPS Director Conrad Wirth, declined his request. The Bureau of Land Management, however, granted Petersen permission to build an airstrip at Kulik, which was 2,000 feet long by 1955.

The second aspect of NCA's improvement plan included the addition of new wooden, permanent buildings for more efficient maintenance and increased comfort. In 1956, NCA constructed the first of such structures: a 20' x 24' precut, panabode-style building at Brooks Camp that functioned as a combination store, office, and manager's quarters. A similar building was constructed the following year at Grosvenor Camp. Both the Kulik and Nonvianuk Lodges were built between 1956 and 1960, but instead of using the panabode style materials, these building were constructed with local logs cut with the concessioner's own sawmill located at Kulik. Admittedly, these new constructed buildings added comfort for visitors, but the cabins—both the panabode and log cabins—still conveyed a last frontier feel and rustic camp setting. According to Mount McKinley superintendent Duane A. Jacobs, the new structures "retained ... a rustic manner befitting this true wilderness area" and that, "none of which are very imposing."⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Ibid., 32.

⁷¹ See Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, photograph section.

⁷² Louis R. Huber, "Flight to Katmai," *Alaska Sportsman* 17 (April, 1951), 9; Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 20.

⁷³ Louis R. Huber, "Flight to Katmai," *Alaska Sportsman*, (May, 1951) 20.

⁷⁴ Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 36.

⁷⁵ Memorandum from Mount McKinley Superintendent Duane D. Jacobs to Regional Director, Region four, August 27, 1957.

Although Petersen had improved access and accommodation at the camps, like a good fishermen he still needed to lure visitors to Katmai. As a result, Petersen launched an extremely successful tourism campaign marketed to include non-fishing visitors seeking adventure in America's Last Frontier. First, his company inaugurated a sales, publicity, and advertising campaign that marketed "the mysterious beauties and volcanic wonders of Katmai and the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, and the world-renowned angling to be had in that area." And by emphasizing both great fishing and scenic wilderness Petersen increased visitation to his camps from 134 in 1950 to 1083 by 1959.⁷⁶

Second, Petersen recognized the prestige that monument designation added to the marketing of his camps, and by the end of the summer he was moved to write that "the more I think of it the more I am inclined to agree that this area (Katmai National Monument) should be changed to a National Park."⁷⁷ To encourage the re-designation, Peterson even renamed his Coville Lake Camp to Grosvenor Camp in 1954. As Petersen recalls, "Old Dr. Grosvenor showed up, his wife, Elsie Bell Grosvenor, and he says, 'you're on Grosvenor Lake, why do you call it Coville?' ... I said, 'We don't any more—we call it the Grosvenor Camp Now!' ... His [Grosvenor's] nose was a little out of joint, [but] I'm glad we could be useful."⁷⁸ The renaming of the camp, of course, was useful to Petersen because it not only commemorated the famed editor's visit to Katmai, but Grosvenor was a well-known and respected advocate for the Katmai Monument who, in 1917, had also published a timely article just weeks before Congress voted on the Mount McKinley National Park bill entitled, "A Game Country Without Rival in America: The Proposed Mount McKinley National Park." It would seem like Petersen was not only flattering the long time editor, but lobbying for Katmai's national park designation, too.

Planning for "Tomorrow's Visitor": NCA and NPS Diverge Paths, 1960-1967

Relations between the concessioner and the NPS remained generally affable, even reciprocal, during the first several years of camp operation. In the 1950s the two operated on a complementary relationship. NPS valued the concessioner because it brought visitors into the region and thus opened up the park to outsiders, and the concessioner valued the existence of the National Monument because the designation helped underscore the value of the fishing and other natural resources and thus attracted both the conservation sportsmen as well as the sightseeing visitor seeking a last frontier experience to the camp. But the more Petersen pushed to develop recreational and commercial facilities at Brooks Camp that strayed from his original intent to build a minimalist rustic sportsmen haven, the more strain was put on this relationship.⁷⁹ By the end of the decade it was clear that NCA and NPS envisioned very different ideas as how to serve "tomorrow's visitor." To the concessioner, preparing for the future meant concentrating and developing visitor services at his fishing camps; to NPS it meant spreading facilities throughout the monument for "restrained" visitor use.⁸⁰

By 1960, both the agency and the airline had begun to implement their diverging development plans. That year, NCA erected Brooks Camp's red cedar panabode lodge, seven panabode cabins, and a bathhouse. It installed a Witte Diesel power plant, a cesspool, and a new water pressure system, as well as the wiring, plumbing and furnishing of the buildings—all with the intent of increasing visitor comfort and capacity of the camp.

⁷⁶ Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 37.

⁷⁷ Raymond I Petersen to George L. Collins, Chief Alaska Recreation Survey, September 26, 1950, copy in "Katmai Concessions Correspondences," KATM/ANIA Administrative History Files, Box 4, Alaska Regional Support Office, Anchorage, AK; Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 21.

⁷⁸ Ray Petersen interview by Bill Hanable, Nov. 23, 1988.

⁷⁹ Memorandum from Mount McKinley Superintendent Duane D. Jacobs to Regional Director, Region four, August 27, 1957; Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 35.

⁸⁰ Mission 66 report, 4.

Meanwhile, NPS was making plans to disperse visitation and activities to other areas of the Katmai wilderness. As Mount McKinley superintendent Duane Jacobs noted, "It should be the continuing objective of the National Park Service to emphasize to a lesser degree [Brooks River] and to encourage travel into the monument for its many other values and attractions."⁸¹ In fact, NPS intended to limit accommodations at the Brooks River and Grosvenor Camps, and was growing concerned with NCA plans to further develop them.⁸² By the early 1960s it was clear that NPS was far more engaged with Katmai's management and development needs and, as a result, was growing less and less dependent upon the monument's exclusive concessioner. At the time, the agency was under way with its Mission 66 program, which proposed to upgrade the condition of park facilities across the country. At Katmai, a 1.2 million broad based program was proposed to provide benefits to visitors. This was the first time that the government was willing to develop facilities and services for visitor use and not rely on the concessioner to provide such needs. And, according to Katmai Mission 66 prospectus, the monument had several glaring needs:

There are no means at present to appease his [the visitor's] desires for a long hike with prospects of seeing a moose, marten or wolverine. To strike out across country is of course possible, but not considered advisable for reasons of safety. We see therefore, that much must be done within limits, to make certain areas of the monument accessible to the average inquisitive visitor. If he travels by boat, he will in several instances require a docking facility. Once on the trail, and several are proposed, he must be directed safely to his destination. Presuming he visits the Valley he will get little from his trip unless someone is available who can accurately describe the volcanism that occurred and the present forces at work recarving the area.⁸³

The Mission 66 prospectus included an airstrip, several campgrounds and docks, a visitor center, 25 miles of trails, employee quarters, and interpretive programs, and other administrative facilities. To Petersen, however, the greatest unmet need in the monument was access to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. Petersen was certain that a road connecting the valley from Brooks Camp was the most viable, and at least to him, the most profitable benefit to the visitor. But NPS gave lukewarm support to the development of a trail to the valley from Brooks Camp.⁸⁴ Mission 66 aimed to disperse visitor activity patterns throughout the monument, and away from Brooks Camp. The plan did in fact envisioned a ten-mile road that would provide access to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, but that road was to begin at the Old Savonoski Village on Naknek Lake, and travel toward the Valley via the Ukak River—not Brooks Camp. Moreover, this or any road was not considered a top priority in 1961.⁸⁵

After an administrative aide to U.S. Senator Ernest Gruening informed Petersen of the status of the road project, the concessioner was admittedly very unhappy. Petersen recalls that Gruening arranged for a meeting the following day with both Petersen and NPS Director Conrad Wirth, the so-called father of Mission 66. At the meeting, Gruening convinced Wirth to commence road construction to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes from Brooks Camp.⁸⁶ As Petersen put it, "[The road] should be rightfully named the 'Senator Gruening Freeway' because he got it in there."⁸⁷ Needless to say, the congressional pressure threw the Mission 66

⁸¹ Memorandum from Mount McKinley Superintendent Duane D. Jacobs to Regional Director, Region four, August 27, 1957

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Mission 66 report, 3.

⁸⁴ NPS, "Mission 66 for Katmai National Monument," March, 1959, copy in KATM/ANIA Administrative History Files, Box 4, Alaska Regional Support Office, Anchorage, AK.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ray Petersen interview by Bill Hanable, Nov. 23, 1988

⁸⁷ Ibid.

program for the monument into disarray, for the funds spent on the road relegated all other park functions to a lower priority, and many of those projects never materialized at all.⁸⁸ Despite NPS protest, the following summer a party, led by Katmai's Chief Ranger Robert Peterson, surveyed the route. Construction of a trail began in 1962, was completed by the end of the season, and the first tours up the road began in 1963.⁸⁹

The new road, as Petersen expected, lured general tourists to Brooks Camp, and the airline increasingly began to tailor its tour packages to cater to the new market. Vacations that had attracted fishermen in the 1950s were dropped and three-day vacations that included Valley tours were promoted almost exclusively. The new class of tourists fished less than those that came before, and many did not fish at all. More important to them were excursions to the Valley of Ten Thousands Smokes combined with scenery and bear watching in the Brooks Camp area. Bus tour brought the first significant number of independent travelers to the monument, but ironically, they usually stayed at the Brooks River campground, rather than at the concessioner's lodge. Some of the three-day packages were purchased by fishermen, but by 1965, an observer remarked that "already enough tourists get to Brooks that the diehard fishermen are going to Grosvenor."⁹⁰ Others intent on fishing exclusively went to Kulik. With improved runway access and over twenty-six buildings, the privately owned Kulik Camp soon rivaled Brooks Camp in size, and by the 1960s was considered by fishermen the center of the Angler's Paradise system.⁹¹ Still, not all of NCA's camps were commercially successful. The three southernmost camps—Brooks, Grosvenor, and Kulik—were clearly better suited for tourism growth than the other two, and by 1965, the concessioner had mothballed Battle Lake and Nonvianuk camps.⁹²

As expected, the road spawned numerous auxiliary developments in the Brooks Camp area. In 1962, NPS extended the Dumpling Mountain trail from the overlook to the summit, cut the Brooks Falls trail on the south side of the river, and from the Valley road rangers added the Spur Trail to Margo Falls. Developments also included several more panabode style cabins and buildings used for employee housing and the visitor reception cabin at the Windy Creek Overlook. By early 1963, park rangers finished the one-and-one-half-mile trail that connected the overlook with the Ukak River at the Valley floor. By 1967, development activity at Brooks had begun to lessen. Reconstruction work on the subterranean native house began in 1967, but the only NPS structure built during the 1970s included an auditorium and generator building. Likewise, few buildings were constructed at the other Katmai camps during the 1960s or 1970s. NCA only erected the Skytel, a nine unit guest building, and began to phase out use of the old tent cabins in 1964. By 1965, only seven tents remained, all of which were used for employee housing. Thus, 1967 is considered a benchmark in Katmai history; "tomorrow's visitor" had indeed come, for annual visitation that year had reached more than 1,000 people, quantifying Katmai's appeal to the general tourist as well as sport fishing enthusiasts. In addition, NCA and NPS had constructed most of the current structures associated with tourism and early park development by 1967. Even Senator Gruening noted that, by the mid-1960s visitor activities in Katmai had come full circle: "Katmai National Monument, in my judgment, needs very little further [development]. The lodgings and sustenance are adequately provided...and with the...jeep trail...all visitors have access to that Valley which ...was the basic reason for creating the Monument [in the first place]."⁹³

⁸⁸ Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 43.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Norris and Clemens, 177-178.

⁹² Clemens, "Grosvenor Camp Historic District," NRHP Registration Form, 2002.

⁹³ Ernest Gruening to Stewart Udall, Secretary of the Interior, July 7, 1965. Copy in KATM/ANIA Administrative History Files, Box 4, Alaska Regional Support Office, Anchorage, AK.

Conclusion: From Fish to the Last Frontier

Between 1950 and 1962, NPS presence and the construction of ranger cabins coincided with private-sector tourism geared predominately to sports fishermen. By 1967, however, it was clear that a broad range of visitors were coming to Brooks Camp to seek a “Last Frontier” experience. Construction of the Valley road centralized most of the park’s resources on concessioner-oriented activities and ensured that future activities radiated from Brooks Camp, rather than the more dispersed program called for in the Mission 66 prospectus. As a result, Brooks Camp transformed into the park’s visitor hub around which most visitor activities rotated for nearly 40 years. Still, the establishment of fly-in fishing camps, combined with the agency’s long-awaited establishment of its first permanent presence in the park, evoked two very significant, intertwining legacies concerning the early history of national parks in Alaska: sportsmen conservationism and northern frontierism. Both legacies are apparent during Katmai’s period of tourism and early park development at Brooks Camp and reflect how anglers and aviation conspired to influence this significant time in Katmai National Park and Preserve, Alaska’s one-time Isolated Paradise.

F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

The major tourist-related historic properties that exist in the park today were erected by either Northern Consolidated Airlines or the National Park Service between 1950 and 1967. These individual properties share similar physical characteristics and/or historical associations. Properties associated with Katmai’s Era of Tourism and Early Park Development include asphalt-shingled tents, all-wood log buildings, panabode-style buildings, pathways, trails, roads, and other associated or contributing features. Many of the structures built during this period have retained their historic integrity and most continue to serve their original function. The varied, yet modest, architectural styles, combined with the types of construction materials used, reflect the challenge of building in a remote, wilderness area. Likewise, the rustic designs of many of these structures are well suited to the remote, camp-like setting and convey a “Last Frontier” ambiance, which is intrinsically linked to the early history of Alaska’s first national parks. Therefore, many such properties have the potential for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. These properties should be eligible under Criterion A for their association with early tourism, although a conservation theme may also be considered for properties erected by NPS. Moreover, because properties associated with tourism and early park development exist but have not yet been assessed, they may be considered eligible under Criterion D. By understanding these properties together, within their historic context, park managers and other personnel can 1) better understand the various historical phases of human activities in Katmai, especially at the mouth of the Brooks River; 2) evaluate the consequences of centralizing visitor activities rather than dispersing them throughout the park; 3) determine how tourism and other park-related activities impacted (and continue to impact) significant archeological sites located in the area and; 4) provide evidence as to how such activities might have affected Katmai’s cultural landscape.

Asphalt-Shingled Tents

Description

The earliest buildings associated with NCA camps began as wood frame, canvas covered tent-cabins, which offered basic visitor accommodations and services. Each visitor tent had wood floors, windows, doors and screens. Heat was supplied by oil-burning floor furnaces. The buildings from this period were constructed with building materials and colors (green and brown) to convey a rustic camp setting. Through the 1950s, NCA

made improvements to its fishing camps. Most, if not all, of the wall tents were covered or enclosed with plywood boards, then overlaid by green asphalt roofing shingling. The two remaining building of this style at Brooks Camp are no longer on their original footing. However, each camp still boasts several asphalt-shingled tents.

Significance

The asphalt shingled tents that still remain at the camps represent some of the oldest building erected by Northern Consolidated Airlines and are directly associated with tourism and early park development. Architectural style and materials used reflect the environmental limitations of building in a wilderness area. Moreover, the minimal tents were designed to emphasize the outdoor experience and not the accommodations. In many cases, these early structures were preferred by guests, many of whom were historic figures in their own right. Such properties may be eligible for inclusion to the National Register under Criterion A, for their ability to convey patterns of tourism and park development in Katmai National Park.

Registration Requirements

To qualify for the National Register of Historic Places, a tent must retain structural integrity. Some of individual buildings may no longer maintain their historic function, but the building as a whole must convey a strong sense of the historic activity associated with early tourism.

Log Buildings

Description

Both NCA and NPS used local lumber to construct several log buildings in Katmai, all of which are still standing. NCA built log buildings to serve as main guest lodges at its Kulik and Nonvianuk Camps. NPS built log cabins to serve park administrative activities. Log cabins were primarily constructed by alternating large and small spruce logs with quarter split log fillers. The logs were cut, peeled, and seasoned locally. Most log buildings maintained paned windows, doors, and originally, corrugated metal roofs. Some buildings may have contributing features, such as a log cabin cache, where both food and equipment was stored. Some log buildings were painted or stained dark brown. Such properties may be eligible for inclusion to the National Register under Criterion A, for their ability to convey patterns of tourism as well as early park development and administration in Katmai National Park and Preserve.

Significance

The log buildings in this submission are significant for their direct association with tourism and early park development, particularly the Ranger Station and Boat House, which are the second oldest set of buildings related to this theme and herald the establishment of the National Park Service's presence and authority within Katmai National Monument. The Kulik and Nonvianuk log cabin lodges were built between 1958 and early 1960s and represent the third oldest set of buildings associated with this theme. Moreover, the rustic log cabin design, the construction materials, and even the added colors evoked a legacy of Alaska's "last frontier," which was a theme associated with early Alaska parks and projected to visitors by both the concessioner and the agency.

Registration Requirements

To qualify for the National Register of Historic Places, a log building must retain a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of characteristics. Some of the components of a building may have deteriorated, but as a whole, the building must convey a strong sense of the historic activity which occurred there.

Panabode Buildings

Description

“Panabode” is a generic term that describes a building constructed of prefabricated milled cedar planking which is assembled in a manner similar to log construction. Between 1950 and 1967, both NCA and NPS erected prefabricated, simulated log panabode buildings that varied in size and function. Today, the panabode style is the most identifiable and uniform of Katmai’s architectural landscape. Most panabode buildings are rectangular, single level structures that serve[d] as guest lodging, combined store and offices, a central lodge with kitchen and mess hall, maintenance buildings, employee housing, protective housing for an interpretive site, and a reception center for visitors going to and coming from the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. The pre-cut materials, which could be boated or flown in to Katmai and constructed in a relatively short period of time, offered the most efficient way to construct permanent buildings for the individual camps. Moreover, the architectural style and materials used to construct the panabode buildings reflect the environmental limitations and constraints of building in a remote, wilderness area.

Significance

Each of the prefabricated buildings constructed during this period is associated with Katmai’s tourism and early park development, for the panabode style conveys a rustic camp feel, befitting the park’s wilderness area and frontier ambiance, and therefore, has the potential for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. In a report to the regional director, the superintendent of Mount McKinley, Duane D. Jacobs, commented on the concessioner’s proposed plan to first construct panabode buildings at Brooks Camp and Grosvenor in 1957. He noted that if the log veneer (panabode) building turns out satisfactorily, it is believed that he (Petersen) should be encouraged to construct similar lodging units to further the theme.”⁹⁴ And although NPS had constructed log cabins made with local lumber to serve as its first administrative buildings, once NCA began to employ the panabode style, NPS recognized that the architectural style was efficient, non-imposing, and rustic. Therefore, by 1962, the agency had adopted the panabode building style and employed it for all of its new buildings from that point on.

Registration Requirements

To qualify for the National Register of Historic Places, a building must retain a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of characteristics and must convey a strong sense of the historic activity which occurred within.

Pathways/Trails/Roads

Description

Many of Katmai’s historic structures and contributing resources are pathways, trails, and roads. Both NCA and NPS constructed gravel pathways that connect buildings and other properties throughout the camp complexes, one of the most historic being the pathway that connects the Historic Ranger Station to the Boathouse. In the late 1950s, NPS constructed two trails: one following the north side of the river from Brooks Camp to Brooks Lake via Brooks Falls; the other a 1.5-mile trail from Brooks Camp to the Dumpling Mountain overlook.⁹⁵ Only a few roads and jeep trails exist in Katmai that are associated with early tourism and development, the most significant being the 23-mile road to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes.

⁹⁴ To Regional Director, from Superintendent, Mount McKinley, “Development at Grosvenor Camp and Revision of Mission 66 Prospectus,” August 27, 1957.

⁹⁵ Norris, *Tourism in Katmai*, 42.

Significance

It is possible that some of the pathways could be considered as a contributing resource to property nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. Likewise, trails may also serve as contributing resources or perhaps be nominated as a single property. The most significant road constructed at Katmai is the road to the 23-Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. Initially, it was Petersen who pushed for road construction; NPS gave development of a 12 mile trail consideration, but wanted it to start near Old Savonoki and follow the base of Mt. Katolinat to the Ukak River. Due to Congressional pressure, however, a route that left from Brooks Camp was established instead. In 1961 a party led by Ranger in Chief Robert Peterson surveyed the route and a Project Construction Program Proposal for the \$205,000 road building job was drawn up shortly afterward. Construction, financed by the NPS, began in early 1962 and was completed by the end of the season. The first tours up the road began in 1963. Road construction had several effects. It centralized more of the park's resources on concessioner-oriented activities. It also ensured that future activities revolved around Brooks Camp, rather than the more dispersed program called for in the Mission 66 prospectus. The road spawned several ancillary developments such as the Spur trails to Margo Falls, the Summit of Overlook Mountain, and the 24' x 28' panadobe style reception center at Windy Creek Overlook were completed in 1962, and by early 1963 the one-and-one-half-mile trail that connected the overlook with the Ukak River was finished. Road construction ignited an array of development projects that facilitated the construction at Brooks Camp, but most significantly it attracted the general tourist to Katmai. As a result, NCA modified its advertizing campaign for Brooks Camp to focus more on the Valley and other scenic adventures rather than fishing. By 1967, Brooks Camp was no longer the fishing haven originally intended but had transformed into visitor's hub serving a board range of visitors coming to experience the Valley's volcanoes and other scenery and wildlife attractions near camp.

Registration Requirements

To qualify for the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing resource, a pathway, trail, or road must retain a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of characteristics and must convey a strong sense of the historic activity related to the primary resource. To be eligible under Criterion A in the area of transportation the property must have been able to serve as important link in the local road network and in the transportation of goods, raw materials, or people. The historic materials used to construct the road should be in tact.

G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Katmai National Park and Preserve is located on the Alaska Peninsula, in Southwest Alaska. It is located between Bristol Bay on the west and Shelikof Strait on the east. Iliamna Lake is to the north and Becharof National Wildlife Refuge is to the south. Brooks Camp is situated the center of a bouquet of deep, glacially-carved, freshwater lakes that make up the Naknek Lake complex which consists of Grosvenor, Colville, Brooks, and Naknek Lake, the fourth largest lake in Alaska. Providing the camp's northern backdrop is Dumpling Mountain and, from its rounded summit, one quickly gains a sense of Brooks Camp's remoteness. Clearly in view is the one-and-a-half mile Brooks River that connects Naknek Lake with Brooks Lake. Looking right, Katmai's northern terrain is a great expanse of lake and mountain country heavily covered with forest. To the east lies the broad ash-filled valley of the Savonoski River, giving passage to the coastal range, and eventually, the shores of the Pacific Ocean. To the south stand the glacier-covered volcanoes of the Aleutian Range, plainly visible for 120 miles from Mount Mageik to Mount Peulik. Beyond Brooks Lake the western terrain become flat as the great Hudsonian coniferous forest, originating along the shores of the North Atlantic, reaches its western limit and finally gives way to the tundra-covered Bristol Bay coastal plain that fronts the Bering Sea.

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The only road that exists within the 4.2 million acre park and preserve is the 23-mile dirt road that connects Brooks Camp with the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. The floral and fauna of the area are abundant and diverse, but the Park and Preserve is especially known for its bears and fish.

H. SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

The multiple property submission that pertains to the Era of Early Tourism and Park Development in Katmai National Park and Preserve is based primarily on historic research produced from the National Register project that seeks to identify and nominate historic properties located within Katmai National Park and Preserve to the National Register of Historic Places. Facilitation the National Register project is under the direction of Jeanne Schaaf, Chief of Cultural Resources, and is currently being implemented by Katherine Ringsmuth, a historian contracted by the National Park Service in January, 2008.

Previous work by National Park Service historians formed much of the basis for this project. In 1992, Norris researched and wrote *Tourism in Katmai Country: A History of Concessions Activity in Katmai National Park and Preserve*, which attempted to chronicle the history of commercial operation within the present boundaries of Katmai National Park and Preserve. In this study, Norris convincingly points out that Katmai's early tourism reflected something new in the annals of the National Park Service. Never before had NPS leased a concession operation to an airline company whose primary business was the transport of passengers and freight. It was also the first time that the NPS had depended upon an airline as a primary means of access to one of its units.⁹⁶ Working from Norris study, this multiple property nomination argues that driving the relationship between Katmai National Monument and the concessioners were avid sport fishermen, who evoked a long-standing tradition of sportsmen conservationism.

In 1999, Janet Clemens and Frank Norris completed a comprehensive historic resource study for Katmai National Park and Preserve.⁹⁷ Drawing from archival research, archaeological and architectural studies, *Building in An Ashen Land* brought attention to the fact that the development of tourism in Katmai is intrinsically intertwined with the active management of Katmai National Monument by the National Park Service.⁹⁸ In this study Norris and Clemens recommend that a Multiple Property Documentation form be employed to provide a streamline method for organizing and registering properties under such theme.⁹⁹

Supplementing Clemens and Norris' work, a review of updated information in the above mentioned sources was undertaken. In addition, information was gathered from discussions with Katmai Cultural Resource staff, such as Jeanne Schaaf and Dale Vinson, with Alaska Regional NPS staff, such as Janet Clemens and Samson Ferreira, and outside historical experts such as Alaska Pacific University history professor Timothy Rawson.

Ringsmuth used data from the fieldwork, archival research, and significant works in Alaska and Environmental history to construct the historical context, identify property types, and draft the multiple property and individual property submissions. Evaluation of significance and integrity was done by adhering closely to the National Register criteria and guidelines and utilizing previous histories, surveys, nominations and other associated work relevant to this subject. Research for this Multiple Property nomination was presented at the Alaska Historical Society annual conference on Oct 17, 2008.

⁹⁶ Norris, *Tourism in Katmai: A History of Concessions Activity in Katmai National Park and Preserve* (Anchorage: National Park Service, 1992), 16.

⁹⁷ Clemens and Norris 1999.

⁹⁸ Clemens and Norris, 174.

⁹⁹ Norris and Clemens, 184,

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic names: Brooks River Historic Ranger Station, Log Cache, and Boat Storage House

other names/site number:

Ranger Station and Log Cache NPS BR-1; AHRs Site No. XMK-093

Boat House/Office NPS BR-38; AHRs Site No. XMK-094

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number Katmai National Park and Preserve

not for publication N/A

city or town King Salmon vicinity x

state Alaska code AK county Dillingham census area code 070

zip code 99613

=====

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

=====

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

The Brooks River Historic Ranger Station, Log Cache, and Boat Storage House
King Salmon, Alaska

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does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant
nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See
continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register _____

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the _____
National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the _____
National Register

☐ removed from the National Register _____

☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

☐ private

☐ public-local

☐ public-State

☒ public-Federal

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Category of Property (Check only one box)

- ☒ Building
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>2</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<u>3</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: LANDSCAPE Sub: conservation

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: LANDSCAPE Sub: conservation

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

no style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: stone

roof: metal; wood

walls: log

other:

Narrative Description:

Brooks Camp, located in Katmai National Park and Preserve, maintains two unique log cabins and one contributing log structure, historically known as the Brooks River Ranger Station, the Boat Storage House, and the Log Ranger Cache. The cabins are part of the National Park Service's (NPS's) complex of approximately twenty buildings and structures, which are located along the shore of Naknek Lake, just north of the Brooks River mouth. These two buildings and associated cache are singled out because they were the first buildings erected by the National Park Service at Brooks Camp and distinctly represent a period characterized by tourism and early park management in Katmai National Monument. In addition, the layout and construction materials used to build these three structures set them apart from the rest of the NPS properties. These cabins are set close to the lake while the majority of later NPS-constructed buildings and structures are located to the west and form a linear pattern heading north. Moreover, the Ranger Station, the associated log cache, and Boat House are the only NPS structures that were constructed with locally cut logs within the NPS complex. The remaining NPS buildings and structures built after 1962 are prefabricated, wooden panabodes. Today, both the Historic Ranger Station and Boat Storage House remain the primary centers of visitors contact and park management activities at Brooks Camp and the three structures' log cabin saddle-notch building style evokes a sense of "northern frontierism" which was central to the early history of Alaska's national parks. The buildings are located within, but are not part of, the Brooks River Archaeological District National Historic Landmark (AHRS #XMK-051).

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Environmental Setting:

Brooks Camp is situated at the center of a bouquet of deep, glacially-carved, freshwater lakes that make up the Naknek Lake complex. The major lakes include Grosvenor, Colville, Brooks, and Naknek Lake, the fourth largest lake in Alaska. From the Dumpling Mountain Overlook, reached to by foot trail leading northwest away from the cabins, one quickly gains a sense of Brooks Camp's remote location and setting. In the forefront is the one-and-a-half mile Brooks River that connects Naknek Lake with Brooks Lake. Looking right, Katmai's northern terrain is a great expanse of lake and mountain country, heavily covered with forest. To the east lies the broad ash-filled valley of the Savonoski River, giving passage to the coastal range, and eventually, the shores of the Pacific Ocean. To the south stand the glacier-covered volcanoes of the Aleutian Range, plainly visible for 120 miles from Mount Mageik to Mount Peulik. Beyond Brooks Lake the western terrain becomes flat as the great Hudsonian coniferous forest, unbroken from its origin on the Atlantic coast, reaches its western limit and gives way to the tundra-covered Bristol Bay coastal plain that meets the Bering Sea. Because of such a remote environmental setting, Katmai was, and remains, one of the less accessible units in the National Park system, and the structures constructed during this period reflect the challenges and limitations of building in a wilderness area.

The three historic structures are located at the southeast end of the NPS complex in an environmental setting that has changed very little since the first cabin—the Ranger Station—was built in 1955. The three contributing structures are tucked within a boreal forest environment, which consists mainly of white spruce, balsam poplar, paper birch, alders, willows, high bush cranberries, fireweed, and a variety of seasonal wild flowers. Both cabins maintain an east-west orientation. In front of the two cabins' west elevations is a 200-foot trail linking the two buildings. A panabode style building constructed in 1967 for employee housing is situated just to the east of the Historic Boathouse, obstructing any view of the beach and lake. The Historic Ranger Station's east orientation, however, provides a panoramic view of Lake Naknek, the gapped lateral moraine that once separated Iliuk Arm from Naknek Lake, the granite slopes of the 3,000 foot Mount La Gorce, and the sedimentary pinnacles of Mouth Katoliat rising 4,700 feet above Naknek Lake. Built only 150 feet from the beach, the Historic Ranger Station served—and still serves—as the first point of contact for arriving visitors to Brooks Camp by floatplane, the primary mode of transportation into and out of the park.

The Ranger Station

(BR-1; AHR Site No. XMK-093)

Historic Appearance:

The original Ranger Station was, and remains, a rectangular-shaped, single story, log building with a gabled roof, and stained a dark brown color. The building originally measured 17'4" x 21'6". NPS rangers constructed the cabin using the classic method of round and/or saddle notching, a commonly used building style of log cabins in Alaska. Four seasoned spruce logs, elevated several inches above the ground by large river rocks at the corners and at intermediate points, formed the building's base or foundation. Two sill logs (north and south elevations) projected outward beyond the east end log, serving as the base for the front porch. Alternating large and small spruce logs, joined together by a common joint, formed the cabin's walls. Instead of chinking material, quartered split log were used to fill in the open spaces between the logs. The original cabin maintained three windows and two doors. Two windows—cut into the north and south elevations of the building—consisted of three nine-light windows with panes measuring 8" x 10". The third window, located

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just off-center of the east elevation, maintained two nine-light windows with panes measuring 8" x 10". The original cabin had two doors: one door with a single large pane window at the back (west) elevation in the southwest section of the building and a second door with a six-light window with plain surrounds located at the front (east) elevation in the northwest section of the building. The original gabled roof was covered with green corrugated metal. The gable was supported by purlins and maintained an east-west orientation. The gable ends were enclosed with vertical logs, which created an area for storage. The east gable extended over the front porch that faced Naknek Lake. Resting on the extensions of the cabin base logs, the front (east) elevation porch was integrated into the structure of the cabin. Three vertical posts providing support for the roof protruded upward from notches in the base log. The porch floor consisted of 2" x 6" planks and was enclosed by a small spruce log that served as a handrail. There was a small step up to the porch level. Moose antlers were fixed to the front of the porch along with a vertical pipe radio antenna.

Modifications:

In the mid-1970s, NPS added a short-lived, stud-framed, addition with plywood exterior to the back (west) end of the cabin. To keep consistent with the building's green corrugated metal roof, the addition's roof was covered with wood shingles that were painted green. The original structure, however, was not altered by the addition.

To maintain a more authentic rustic look, several other modifications were made in 1991 that today are reflected in the current condition of the building. First, the west addition was removed. In its place, an open porch measuring 6' x 14'2" was built. The west (back) porch as it remains today is covered by a modified hipped roof with cedar shingles and supported by four vertical poles. A wooden drain was attached to one portion of the porch roof and tin from the roof extended down over the top two courses of logs as a moisture barrier. Second, the original green-colored, corrugated metal roof that covered the main structure was covered with natural-colored wood shingles. Third, cedar planking was used to cover the east (front) porch ceiling. Finally, the interior ceiling and storage area was paneled with cedar planking as part of the building's conversion from the ranger station to a visitor center.

The most significant modification to the Historic Ranger Station took place during summer 1998, when NPS built an addition that altered the east and south elevations. A two-foot section of the roof's lateral support beam was cut to accommodate the gable extension and the exterior gable vertical logs were removed. The roof's wood shingles were removed to eliminate problems with bat guano and rot. The original metal roof was removed to access the 2" x 6" runners over the rafters. The new roof consists of 5/8" CDX plywood with 15-pound tar paper stapled over the plywood, and covered with brown weathered copper metal. Inside, the new addition's ceiling was covered with cedar paneling to match the paneling in the historic part of the building. The new addition was attached to, and essentially encloses, the cabin's original east (front) exterior wall and southeast corner. Although the enclosure altered the cabin's east elevation by incorporating the exterior log wall, window, and door into a modified interior, the addition left the log walls, ends, windows and door intact.

New Addition Description:

The new, rectangular-shaped addition, measures 12' x 26' and is oriented north to south. The foundation for the new addition is plank on grade. The exterior walls are sheathed with a split log veneer. The roof and walls are conventional wood frame construction.

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The modification consists of one addition with two significant sections: the northeast section that essentially replaced the front (east) porch and a southeastern section that extends several feet beyond the original building's southeast corner. Therefore, the current building maintains an overall "L" shape, but the addition itself is rectangular.

The new addition slightly altered the north, south, and east elevations. Besides the historic three nine-light windows, the modified north elevation now includes a small covered porch with a three-step stairs on the east and west sides of the porch; a modern door with a six-light window; and a large, single window to the east of the door. The new northeast elevation has three windows: a longer vertical single pane window in the center that is flanked by two single-pane windows that match the new north side window. To cover the northeast section of the addition, NPS extended the original east-west gable about fourteen feet. A north-south gable roof now covers the southeast section of the addition, thus slightly altering the historic southern elevation.

The argument can be made that the 1998 addition is reversible and, with a certain amount of craftsmanship, it can be removed without impact to the original historic structure. The National Park Service is considering the option of restoring the roof to its historic appearance by restoring it with green corrugated metal.

Contributing Historic Ranger Station Log Cache

Historic Appearance:

The Historic Log Cache was originally built approximately 50 feet to the west of the Historic Ranger Station, in an area known today as the visitor center's picnic area. It measures 8' x 6' and is 55" high. The structure is a rectangular, log structure with a gable roof. The floor consists of several plank boards placed side by side and nailed onto a log base. The walls consist of alternating, saddle-notched, spruce logs, with round corners. The roof consists of a bottom layer of green corrugated metal, covered by a top layer of wood shingles and it appears that it is the same pewter-green corrugated roofing material that was used to build the Ranger Station's roof. The door is constructed with vertical planks and attached by two metal hinges. Originally, the cache was placed upon four vertical spruce log poles, probably several feet high, braced by smaller crossed spruce poles. A ladder also made of small spruce poles, would have been needed to access the cache, however, the ladder is gone.

There is some question as to whether Brooks Camp's historic log cache is the structure that stood in front of the Historic Ranger Station. Evidence suggest two possibilities: It is indeed the log cache that was built in 1954 to serve as storage for the ranger station or, it was the original campground cache build in 1950 and was later moved to the Ranger Station location sometime in following years. If the second case proves true, then that would make the historic Brooks Camp log cache one of the oldest, if not the oldest, existing NPS structures in Katmai National Park and Preserve.

Current Appearance:

Up until two years ago, the ranger cache stood in the picnic area and was used by visitors to store their lunches, away from the reaches of the Brooks River bears. For safety reasons, however, the cache was taken down from its four spruce poles which had rotted and threatened to collapse. The cache remains at Brooks Camp and its

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current condition is good, although it has maintained some damage due to bears and typical wear and tear that a wooden structure exposed to the elements for nearly 60 years would be expected to show. It is clear that the structure has maintained its original building materials, minus the spruce log pole that kept it elevated. Although a new cache has been built to serve picnicking visitors, it has been recommended that the historic cache be returned to its original location in proximity to the Historic Ranger Station.

**Boat Storage House
(BR-38; AHRS Site No. XMK-094)**

Historic and Current Appearance:

The Boat Storage House is a rectangular shaped log cabin, measuring approximately 21'6" x 16'6". Like the Ranger Station, the Boat Storage House is constructed using saddle-notched logs. The base logs are set on rock piers that are raised approximately 6" above the ground for the foundation. The walls are constructed by alternating large and small spruce logs, joined together by a common joint. As with the Ranger Station, quartered split log were used to fill in the open spaces between the logs instead of filling in with chinking material. The west elevation maintains two six-light windows located at the southwest end and a non-historic, solid wood door with no surrounds at the northeast end of the elevation. A small rectangular plank porch with 2" x 4" railing rests on piles outside the west door, but was not incorporated into the original structure. The east elevation features large intact, but now non-functional, double plywood doors designed to accommodate boat storage. The north and south walls each have three centrally located, adjacent six-light windows. The roof is shingled with natural wood shakes which cover the original green corrugated metal on board stringers. The roof was probably shingled about the same time as the Ranger Station roof in 1991. 2' x 4' planks set on end support a relatively shallow gable. Modifications to the interior include paneling and conversions for residence and administrative functions.

Integrity:

The Historic Ranger Station and Boat Storage House at Brooks Camp continue to maintain historical integrity. Neither building has been moved, nor has the environmental setting changed much since 1955. Architecturally, the buildings remain in excellent condition. During summer 1998, the NPS's need for an expanded visitor center in the park resulted in an addition to the Ranger Station's east elevation. While the addition altered the historic appearance, it did not deter from the structure's historic ambiance. Furthermore, the addition is reversible, as the original walls and roof framework remain largely intact. The Boat House continues to maintain its structural integrity, for little has altered its original appearance. The Log Cache is also historic, making it a contributing resource to the Historic Ranger Station. To preserve the log cache's historic integrity, it has been recommended that it be repositioned somewhere near the Ranger Station where it most strongly represents and conveys the historic activity associated with early park management in Katmai. The structure would then retain the seven aspects of integrity: location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
conservation

Period of Significance 1955-1962

Significant Dates 1955

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder National Park Service

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Narrative of Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Significance:

The Brooks River Ranger Station, built in 1955, the Log Cache, built either in 1950 or 1954, and the later construction of the Boat Storage House in 1959, herald the establishment of the National Park Service's (NPS's) presence and authority within Katmai National Monument (now Katmai National Park and Preserve) and evoke the long-standing tradition of northern frontierism that is central to the history of Alaska's first national parks. These log cabins of similar construction were the first permanent buildings erected by NPS in Katmai, more than thirty years after the monument's inception and more than twenty years after the Brooks Camp area was included in the monument. Originally, park staff both lived and worked from these first buildings and, as they are today, the Ranger Station (now a visitor center and gift shop) and Boat Storage House (now the ranger station) are the primary buildings used for park management activities and contact services. The use of local building materials and a rustic style of architecture still project an image of frontier living and ambiance. The buildings also represent the revolutionary role of aviation as the primary means of access to the remote NPS location. Together these log buildings represent a period when the Service began to take an active management role to protect resources and to provide visitor services during Katmai's early tourism development.

1962 signaled a dramatic increase in development and visitation at Brooks Camp as part of the agency's nationwide Mission 66 program to upgrade and revitalize park conditions. Since that year NPS has constructed approximately twenty new buildings using a panabode construction style to accommodate the amplified need for new employee housing, maintenance, and other visitor services, including an auditorium and an interpretive exhibit. Although the Ranger Station, Log Cache, and Boat Storage House, were still being used for management and visitor purposes after 1962, the newer buildings alleviated many of these increasing demands from the aging structures. Because the new development lessened the burden put upon these buildings by rising visitor numbers and needs after 1962, the impact of a dramatic increase in development arguably prevented serious alterations and modifications to these buildings. Their continued use by NPS, however, justified necessary maintenance and upkeep which resulted in modifications that are arguably reversible. Thus, NPS has been able to preserve the historic integrity of the Ranger Station, Log Cache, and Boat Storage House over the last five decades. The buildings remain the sole reminders of a period when Katmai was little known and seldom visited and the log structures' historic architecture, association, use, and setting set them apart from the prefabricated, wooden NPS buildings and structures erected after 1962. Today, both the Historic Ranger Station and Boat Storage House remain the primary centers of visitors contact and park management activities at Brooks Camp and the three structures' log cabin saddle-notch building style evokes a sense of "northern frontierism" which was central to the early history of Alaska's national parks.

History:

For more than thirty years after the monument's formation in 1918, NPS's management was conducted from afar. In the eyes of NPS officials, the monument was remote, it saw few visitors, and its resources were not thought to be endangered. As a result, little attention was paid or money allocated to the management of the park. Pressure for NPS to take a more active role in the monument began following the 1931 monument boundary expansion. Despite reports of illegal hunting, trapping and fishing activities in the monument, funding

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and personnel were slow to arrive. The first NPS Katmai patrol occurred in 1937 and amounted to a one-day visit. For many years thereafter, NPS had to rely on the cooperation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to patrol Katmai.

World War II precipitated increased use of the Katmai area. The U.S. Army Air Corps established the nearby Naknek Air Base in 1941 (which was located close to where King Salmon was later established). Military and construction personnel seeking trophy rainbow trout used small float planes to gain access to fishing areas throughout the region, including Brooks River and other parts of the upper Naknek drainage. Charter aircraft services flew growing numbers of sportsmen into the monument. Throughout this period, the National Park Service had little active management presence in Katmai. Because it was hampered by a lack of funding and by personnel shortages, NPS personnel visited only occasionally. During the war, funding for national parks became even scarcer and construction limited. By 1948, NPS was under pressure to develop the visitor and administrative infrastructure within the park.

The arrival of Northern Consolidated Airlines as an NPS concessioner acted as a catalyst in the situation. In 1950, Ray Petersen, Northern Consolidated Airline's president, established a fishing camp at the mouth of the Brooks River. That same summer, NPS assigned its first seasonal ranger, William Nancarrow from Mount McKinley National Park, to patrol Katmai. The presence of rangers in the monument was vital to counteract the impression and growing belief, particularly on the part of local residents, that the NPS had no interest in the area and that the monument should be abolished. To accommodate his housing needs and to help establish an NPS presence, Nancarrow built a two-room wall tent and a cache and dug a well at the present Brooks Camp campground, located one-half mile north of the Brooks River mouth. However, with the rising number of sportsman arriving by airplanes, the need for a more central NPS base was becoming evident for ranger to increase visitor contacts.

NPS plans to build a ranger station began during the summer of 1954 when Nancarrow cut, peeled, and seasoned several spruce logs from Mortuary Cove. It was probably Nancarrow who constructed a second log cache at a location much closer to the mouth of the Brooks River that same summer. By February 1955, NPS ordered building materials from Seattle and arranged for delivery to King Salmon by a Fish and Wildlife vessel. In July 1955, NPS Ranger Richard Ward and seasonal hire Russell Todd began construction of the Historic Ranger Station (BR-1; AHRs# XMK-093) at the location where the second log cache stood. The new log building replaced the wall tent at the campground as the park headquarters. Although the interior plumbing and cabinetry work had yet to be completed, the main structure was completed by the end of that month. This was the National Park Service's first permanently constructed building in Katmai, thirty-seven years after the monument had been established.

Although seasonal rangers continued to be assigned to Katmai from this point forward, development of the NPS complex at Brooks Camp developed slowly. It was not until the summer of 1958 that the rangers secured and stored building materials in sufficient quantity to construct a "small warehouse" at Brooks Camp. The following summer Katmai rangers built the Boat Storage House (BR-38; AHRs# XMK-094) about 200 feet north of the Ranger Station.¹ The Boat Storage House provided much-needed storage space and has served

¹ There is some question as to the exact construction date of the Boat Storage House. But according to Ranger Bob Peterson, who was stationed at Brooks Camp between 1960 and 1962, the building was there throughout his tenure at Katmai.

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many functions over the years. It has served as a winter storage area for agency watercraft; in the summer of 1963 it was used for visitor interpretive talks; and in 1964 it was being used as a VIP residence. The Boat Storage House also functioned for a time as a visitor contact station, and today it serves as a ranger station.

As mentioned, a strong argument for historic significance is the log cabin architecture that sets these buildings apart from the other NPS buildings. It is important to note that such significance is tied Katmai's relationship to its parent park, Mount McKinley National Park and the establishment of Alaska's Last Frontier parks by Boon and Crockett member Charles Sheldon in 1917. Sheldon visited the Denali region on a sports hunting expedition in 1906. During his three years in Alaska, Sheldon became enamored with the grandeur and scenery of the Alaska Range. On his return to the East Coast, Sheldon painted a portrait of Denali of a virgin land—a Last Northern Frontier—where the sheep and caribou still roamed. Threatening those sheep and caribou however, was the Alaska Railroad, intent on opening up Alaska's Interior and feeding hundreds of construction workers Alaska's game. In 1915, the Boon and Crockett Club formally resolved to endorse the proposal for park legislation with the aim to preserve what they considered that last remaining piece of the Wild West—primitive, undeveloped, game-filled, and thinly populated by prospectors who embodied the solitary, adventuring spirit of the Last Frontier. In 1917 Sheldon's efforts were rewarded, as Mount McKinley had the distinction of becoming the first park added to the National Park system after the passage of the National Park Service Act of 1916. Two years later, Katmai National Monument would be added to the list of national parks of the Last Frontier.

With the establishment of Alaska's national parks beginning in 1917, NPS had begun to consciously promote a kind of frontier ambiance in its parks, with hardy rangers, dedicated to conservation, playing the role of frontier lawmen. This frontier ambiance was projected through the use of a rustic style of architecture in park buildings, particularly, gabled-roof log buildings that projected an image of frontier living. Both the Historic Ranger Station and the Boat Storage House were gabled roof log cabins built using the rustic round and/or saddle notching. Both structures were eventually stained a dark brown color, similar to those park building in Mount McKinley. As expected, rangers both lived and worked in these buildings. Besides the time-consuming, and frontier living tasks of hauling water and cutting fire wood each day, the rangers' main priority was contacting planes and informing the fly-in anglers about Katmai's fishing regulations. It comes to no surprise, then, that Katmai's early rangers, visitors themselves from Mount McKinley National Park, constructed these buildings using the rustic log cabin design, construction materials, and colors that reflected the frontier architecture and ambiance of their home park.

Between 1955 and 1962, NPS presence and the construction of ranger support cabins coincided with private-sector tourism development in the monument. Beginning in the late 1950s, the concessioner replaced the wall tents at Brooks Camp with prefabricated wooden panabode cabins to provide housing and a lodge. At this time, Katmai appealed primarily to recreational fishermen. The NPS seasonal rangers worked to aid tourists, develop trails, and protect resources. Park rangers dispensed information about Katmai resources from the Ranger Station, posted interpretive signs, and gave interpretive talks in the Boat House and the concessioner's lodge.

Summer 1962 saw a burst of NPS construction activity in Katmai as part of the agency's nationwide Mission 66 program to upgrade and revitalize park conditions. NPS built the twelve-mile Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes Road and flew in four prefabricated cabins: three for housing at Brooks Camp and one for a visitor cabin at the Windy Creek overlook. The road development led to an increase of non-fishing visitors and signaled the

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beginning of Katmai as a significant visitor destination. Subsequent NPS buildings and structures are not of log construction but are, primarily, panabodes. Since 1990, NPS has used the Ranger Station for the Park Visitor Center and the Boat House for ranger administration activities.

The most significant impact to the contributing structures was the conversion of the Historic Ranger Station to a visitor center and the addition of the gift shop in 1998. The addition essentially enclosed the original east porch, and extended beyond the south elevation by several feet, giving the current building an "L" shape. The biggest impact was to the building's roof, which was not only extended by fourteen feet but entirely replace. Still, the rectangular addition did not disrupt the historic integrity of the building, for it still maintains the historic east wall, ends, windows, and door.

The argument can be made that the 1998 addition is reversible and, with a degree of craftsmanship, it can be removed without impact to the original historic structure. The National Park Service is considering the option of restoring the roof to its historic appearance by restoring it with green corrugated metal. For safety reason, NPS maintenance staff took down the log cache at the ranger station. Once the four support logs are replaced, however, the cache can be returned to its historic setting, adjacent to the Historic Brook River Ranger Station.

Together, the Brooks River Ranger Station, its contributing log cache, and Boat Storage House have exceptional significance as the National Park Service's first established permanent presence in the Katmai National Monument; as such, they qualify as contributing historic buildings. Furthermore, the cabins continue to reflect ranger and visitor service activities. The cabins maintain the same setting with orientation to each other, the lake, and the rest of the Brooks Camp area. As originally constructed, the cabins complement each other in several ways: they are approximately the same size and shape. In addition, they show the same use of materials (local logs painted or stained dark brown, green metal roofs that were later changed to wood shingles and, in the case of the Historic Ranger Station, returned to weathered copper metal), and the same type of windows. The colors and construction style used are similar to those found in other national parks, including those at Mount McKinley Park (now Denali National Park and Preserve), home park to the Katmai rangers. Thus, the cabins' rustic architectural design, particularly, the gabled-roof log cabin workmanship conveys a "Last Frontier" ambiance, which was a central and unifying theme of Alaska's first national parks. The structures still maintains their historic feel and are directly associated to Brooks Camp's era of early tourism and park development that mark a significant period of history in Katmai National Park and Preserve.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Clemens, Janet and Frank Norris. *Building in an Ashen Land: Historic Resource Study of Katmai National Park and Preserve*. Anchorage: National Park Service, 1999.

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National Park Service. *List of Classified Structures*. Alaska Support Office. On-going.

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Norris, Frank. *Isolated Paradise: Katmai National Park and Preserve Administrative History*. Anchorage: National Park Service, 1996.

Norris, Frank. *Tourism in Katmai Country: A History of Concessions and Activity in Katmai National Park and Preserve*. Anchorage: National Park Service, 1992.

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☒ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: National Park Service, Alaska Support Office

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property < 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	
1	<u>5</u>	<u>338494</u>	<u>6493837</u>	<u>3</u>
2	<u>5</u>	<u>338479</u>	<u>6493896</u>	<u>4</u>

1. Brooks River Ranger Station and cache site
2. Boat Storage House

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

SE ¼, Section 6, Township 19 S, Range 39 W, Seward Base and Meridian, U.S.G.S. Mt. Katmai (C-6) 1:63,360 quad map

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary includes the ranger station, the site of the log cache, and the boat storage house that have remained at these sites as originally built in ca. 1954, 1955 and ca. 1959 respectively.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Janet Clemens, Historian; revised by Katherine Ringsmuth, Historian
organization National Park Service, Alaska Support Office
date February 15, 2000; revised, August 2008
street & number 240 West 5th Ave. #236
telephone (907) 644-3637
city or town Anchorage **state** AK **zip code** 99501

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Maps:

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs:

All current digital photographs taken by Katherine Ringsmuth, June 1-7, 2008; Historic Photographs are cited below.

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Current Photographs:

1. Brooks River Ranger Station
West elevation
2. Brooks River Ranger Station
North elevation
3. Brooks River Ranger Station
South-west elevation; note: 1998 addition
4. Brooks River Ranger Station
East elevation; note: 1998 addition
5. Brooks River Ranger Station
Original south-east corner now enclosed by the 1998 addition
6. Brooks River Ranger Station
Original east interior wall, window, and door
7. Brooks River Ranger Station
Site of Historic Ranger Cache (now the Brooks Camp picnic area)
Cache was located near the picnic table west of the building, on the other side of the path.
8. Historic Ranger Cache
Front
Current location near NPS housing at Brooks Camp
9. Historic Ranger Cache
Side view; note: room material made with green corrugated metal covered by wooden shingles
10. Boat Storage House
South-east elevation
11. Boat Storage House
North-east (back) elevation
12. Boat Storage House
North-west (front) elevation
13. Boat Storage House
South elevation

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14. Boat Storage House
Original metal roof covered with wooden shingles
 15. Trail (south-facing)
Linking Boat Storage House and Brooks River Ranger Station

Historic Photographs:

16. William Nancarrow peeling logs in mortuary cove, 1954
17. View north west, Russell Todd treading peeled sill-logs for the Brooks River Ranger Station, 1955
(note: the Log Ranger Cache already standing)
18. Historic Ranger Station, east (front) elevation, 1955
19. Historic Ranger Station, South east elevation, ca. 1957
20. Historic Ranger Station, west (back) elevation, 1962 (note: the short-lived plywood addition)
21. Boat Storage House, north west elevation, 1960
22. Ranger Cache under construction, 1954

Brooks Camp

Katmai National Park and Preserve



Legend

Trail Centerline

Building Footprints



Alaska State Plane Zone 5 Projection
on the North American Datum 1983



Tuckerville

Generator

Campground

Generator Trail

Park Ave

Campground Trail

Ranger Station Trail

Brooks Camp
Ranger Station

Brooks Camp VC

Cultural Building

Naknek
Lake

Overlook

The Oxbow

Fishermen
Trail

Brooks Camp
Lodge

Freezer

Brooks

Back Trail

The
Corner

Grassy Knoll

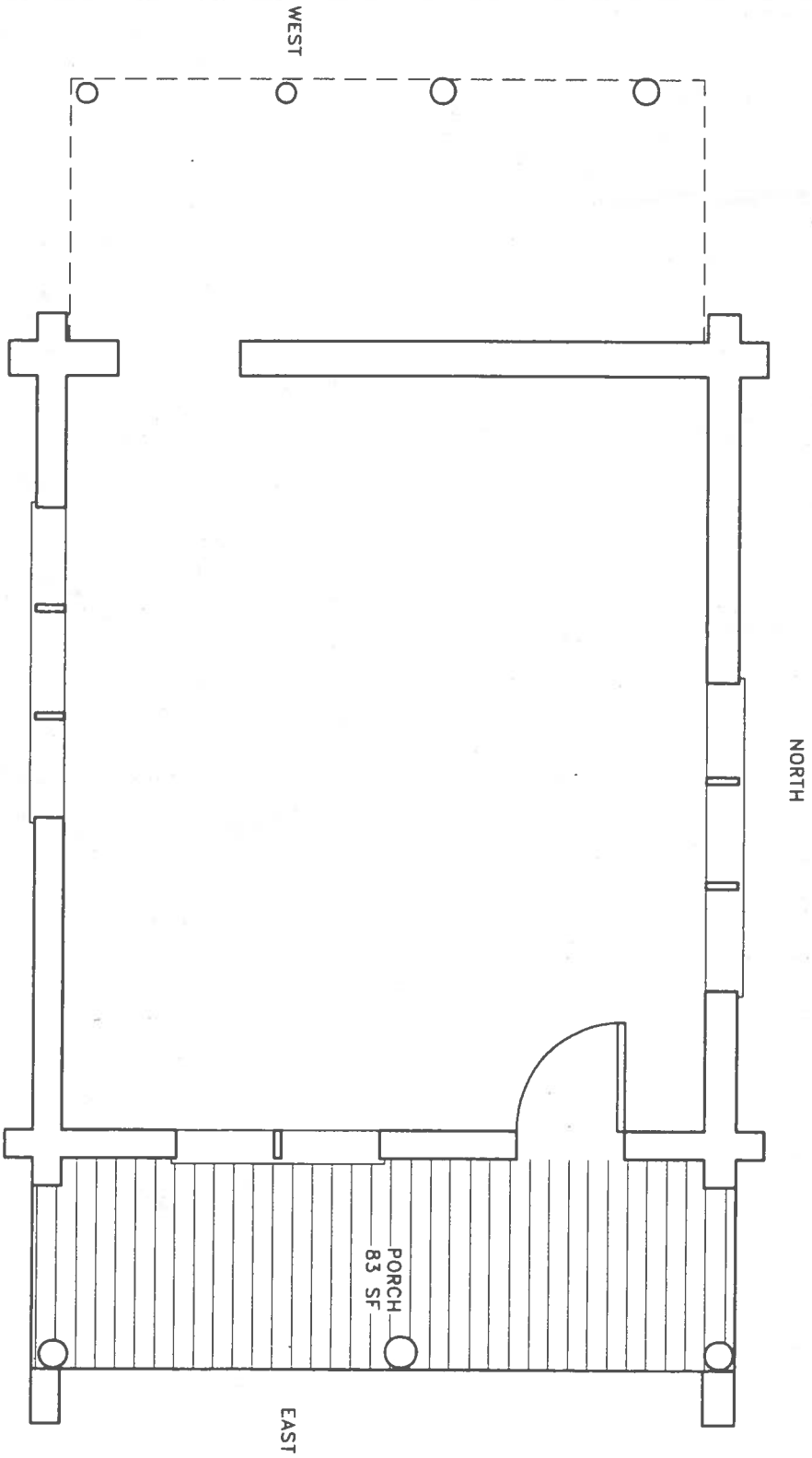
Downriver
Island

Upriver
Island

NOTE:

Historic Boat House is now called Brooks Camp
Ranger Station

Historic Ranger Station is now called Brooks Camp VC



BROOKS RIVER HISTORIC RANGER STATION

$\frac{1}{4}'' = 1' - 0''$



