
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Denali National Park and Preserve
Alaska

Cantwell Subsistence Off-Road Vehicle Management Environmental Assessment May 2007



Prepared by:
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Denali National Park and Preserve

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Front Cover Photograph: The Bull River on the Western Boundary of the Cantwell Traditional Use Area (Photo by Rob Liebermann, Denali National Park and Preserve)

DEFINITIONS

17b Easement: Section 17b of the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) authorizes public transit rights (“easements”) across lands selected by and conveyed to ANCSA Village and Regional Corporations for access to public lands.

Floodplains: Floodplains are land areas adjacent to rivers and streams that are subject to occasional or periodic flooding.

Aggressive Lugged Tire or Paddle Tire: An aggressive lugged tire is an ORV tire that has a centerline lug depth greater than 1 inch. A paddle tire is an ORV tire specifically designed for use in sand, though it could be used in mud, that consists of a smooth tire core which has a series of large rubber cups (or paddles) attached to it.

Cantwell Resident Zone: Regulations implementing the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) define a resident zone as “the area within, and the communities and areas near, a national park or monument in which persons who have customarily and traditionally engaged in subsistence uses within the national park or monument permanently reside” (36 CFR 13.42(b)). The Cantwell Resident Zone is defined as the area within a three-mile radius of the U.S. Post Office in Cantwell.

Curb Vehicle Weight: The weight of an ORV without driver, passengers, or cargo, but with all its standard equipment and full fuel, oil and coolant tanks.

Fall –Line: The straightest and steepest line down a slope.

Gross Vehicle Weight: The weight of an ORV with all its standard equipment and full fuel, oil and coolant tanks, as well as a driver, passengers, and cargo.

Maintainable Trail Segment: A “maintainable” trail segment is one that is not built with a specific set of design criteria in mind, but with appropriate and reasonable mitigation and maintenance, it will support a limited level of use without unacceptable environmental degradation or a decrease in travel surface utility.

NPS Qualified Subsistence User (for purposes of this EA): In the context of this EA, NPS qualified subsistence users are eligible subsistence users for Denali National Park and Preserve who comply with Federal subsistence regulations. In the ANILCA additions of Denali National Park this includes all people who: (1) are local rural Alaska residents *and* have a positive customary and traditional use determination for the species and wildlife in the management unit where they want to hunt *and* who permanently reside in the Denali National Park resident zone (i.e., are residents of the park, Cantwell, Nikolai, Minchumina, or Telida); or (2) are local rural Alaska residents who have been issued a 13.44 subsistence use permit by the superintendent of Denali National Park and Preserve.

Off-Road Vehicle: Any motor vehicle designed for or capable of cross-country travel on or immediately over land, water, snow, ice, marsh, wetlands, or other natural terrain, except snow machines or snowmobiles [as defined in 36 CFR 13.1(l)].

Ordinary High Water Mark: Per the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, the "portion of the bed(s) and banks, up to the ordinary high water mark" means (1) in the non-tidal portion of a

river, lake, or stream: the portion of the bed(s) and banks up to which the presence and action of the non-tidal water is so common and usual, and so long continued in all ordinary years, as to leave a natural line or "mark" impressed on the bank or shore and indicated by erosion, shelving, changes in soil characteristics, destruction of terrestrial vegetation, or other distinctive physical characteristics; (2) in a braided river, lake, or stream: the area delimited by the natural line or "mark," as defined in Part 1 above, impressed on the bank or shore of the outside margin of the most distant channels; or (3) in the tidally influenced portion of a river, lake, or stream: the portion of the bed(s) and banks below the mean high water elevation.

Pass: A narrow linear delimited surface area showing ground disturbance resulting from the single passage of an ORV.

Route: A delimited surface area used for passage of ORVs between two points, and without a visible, traceable travelway.

Sustainable Trail Segment. A "sustainable" trail segment is one that meets a specific set of design criteria formulated to provide a high level of environmental protection and long-term utility of the tread surface under all anticipated use levels and climatic conditions; *and* receives regular maintenance to remain within its original design specifications.

Trail: A narrow linear delimited surface area showing ground disturbance resulting from multiple repeated passage of an ORV.

Trail Segment: A section of a trail that displays a given set of physical characteristics as documented through a trail condition assessment process. A trail between point A and point B would normally have a series of individual trail segments of varying lengths displaying unique physical characteristics such as trail width, amount of soil compaction, etc.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

This EA is organized into five chapters and five appendices and has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.9). The major sections of this EA are:

- **Executive Summary** – Summarizes the purpose and need, alternatives, and environmental consequences of the alternatives.
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- **Chapter 1: Purpose and Need for Action** – Provides introductory material that explains the purpose and need for action, provides background information about the project area, pertinent laws and regulations, and describes the issues and impact topics to be addressed.
- **Chapter 2: Alternatives** – Describes the No Action Alternative and three action alternatives. Summary comparisons of the alternatives and of their environmental effects also are provided in two tables at the end of this chapter.
- **Chapter 3: Affected Environment** – Describes the existing environment for each of the specific resources and other impact topics being analyzed.
- **Chapter 4: Environmental Consequences** – Describes the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects likely to occur with implementation of each alternative.
- **Chapter 5: Consultation and Coordination** – Describes the public involvement process for the EA, including discussions with local, state, and federal agencies, as well as organizations and individuals.
- **Appendices**
 - Appendix 1: ANILCA Section 810(A): Summary of Evaluations and Findings
 - Appendix 2: Monitoring Strategies for Management Alternatives
 - Appendix 3: Implementation Cost Estimates for Management Alternatives
 - Appendix 4: Draft Best Management Practices Framework
 - Appendix 5: Trail Management Prescriptions
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