



Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) 1: Program definitions version 1.0

Vehicle Management Plan Monitoring Protocol *Denali National Park and Preserve*

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The main narrative for the Protocol for Monitoring related to the Vehicle Management Plan is available from the NPS Integrated Resource Management Applications (IRMA) Data Store: (<https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2258362>).

SOP 1 – Program definitions

Version 1.0 (December 2018)

Revision History Log:

Previous Version #	Revision Date	Author	Changes Made	Reason for Change	New Version #
Add rows as needed for each change or set of changes associated with each version.					

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SOP 1.0 – Introduction

SOP 1 outlines definitions as they relate to the implementation of monitoring for the Vehicle Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (VMP) of vehicle types, seasons, datasets, and etcetera, used by Denali National Park staff.

SOP 1.1 – Definitions

SOP 1.1.1 – Vehicle Types

- Government-owned vehicle (GOV) – a vehicle with government-issued license plates. Includes the pumper truck and the garbage truck (anything smaller than a 10-yard dump truck)
- Heavy equipment (HE) – includes dump trucks and other large construction vehicles, regardless of whether they are operated by NPS or contractors (and are not used for routine maintenance)
- Lodge – a bus operated by a private company with Right-of-Way access to Kantishna
- Privately operated vehicle (POV) – a vehicle without government license plates that is also not a bus that may have any vehicle permit type
- Routine maintenance (RM) – government vehicles conducting routine road maintenance (e.g. mowers, graders, water truck)
- Sprinter van – a non-bus vehicle that may have any vehicle permit type
- Tour – a bus operated by the concessionaire, usually tan in color, that transports passengers into the park with official interpretive services from the driver
- Visitor Transit Service (VTS) – a shuttle bus operated by the concessionaire, usually green in color, that transports passengers including hikers and campers into the park without official interpretation from the driver

SOP 1.1.2 – Seasons and times

- Bus operating hours – time of day the concessionaire buses are observed: 0600–2200
- Early season – based on the concessionaire bus schedule, the period from the Saturday before Memorial Day to mid-June
- Hour blocks – time of day blocks used by Road Ecology Program (REP) staff to stratify sampling efforts. We use six hour blocks:
 - 0600–0900, 0900–1200, 1200–1500, 1500–1800, 1800–2200
- Late season – based on the concessionaire bus schedule, the period from very early August to the second Thursday following Labor Day or September 15, whichever comes first
- Peak season – based on the concessionaire bus schedule, the period from mid-June to very early August
- Road Regulatory Year (RRY) – the Saturday before Memorial Day to the second Thursday following Labor Day or September 15, whichever comes first

SOP 1.1.3 – Indicators

(see VMP Narrative for further description and SOP 2 for locations)

- Large vehicle traffic – vehicles greater than 80,000 gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR)

- Hiker wait time – the length of time a hiker waits for a VTS bus from the side of the park road (not the ticketing and onboarding process)
- Nighttime traffic – traffic that occurs outside of bus operating hours: 2200–0600
- Rest stop – Teklanika, Toklat, and the Eielson Visitor Center (EVC)
- Sheep gap – a monitoring site used to measure breaks in traffic
- Viewscape – a monitoring site between one and two miles in length where traffic volume is monitored
- Wildlife stop – one or more vehicles stopped to observe wildlife on the controlled section of road

SOP 1.1.4 – Vehicle permits

POVs can obtain permits to access the regulated section of the Denali Park Road. Several types of permits are available and eligibility requirements vary. Denali uses a color system to differentiate permit types. All permit-holders are to register at the Savage Check Station (SCS) upon their entry regardless of entry hour.

- Blue – NPS approved; includes researchers, education partners, very important people (VIPs), etc.
- Green – NPS vehicle; most often there is no permit – the government-issued plates suffice
- Grey – NPS contractor
- Orange – Professional photography or commercial filming
- Purple – Accessibility
- Red – NPS or partner employee commuting to their place of residence and work within the controlled section of road
- White – Right-of-Way access
- Yellow – Hunting

SOP 1.1.5 – Data types and sources

- Daily dispatch report (DDR) – Adobe .pdf file of the actual bus routes for a day provided by concessionaire
- Daily dispatch sheet (DDS) – Excel file of the planned bus routes for a day provided by concessionaire
- Eielson dispatch data – passenger wait times outbound from the EVC provided by concessionaire
- Joint Venture (JV) manifest data – passenger pick-ups, drop-offs, and wait times along the controlled section of the Denali Park Road collected by VTS drivers and provided by concessionaire
- Matrix – an analog and digital record of NPSO
- National Park Service Observations (NPSO) – a protocol and dataset collected from a government vehicle by REP staff

- Park Observer zip file (POZ) – a comma separated value (CSV) file set of observations from a ROAR patrol
- Ride Observe and Record (ROAR) – a protocol and dataset collected while riding a concession bus by REP and volunteer staff. Mostly collected on VTS buses.
- Savage Check Station data – vehicle and passenger data collected on all vehicles entering the controlled section of road. These data are collected by NPS during operating hours (~0700-2100) and a self-check-in log after hours.
- Traffic counter – automated, battery-operated devices that count the number of passing vehicles and their headway (direction)
- Unique Bus Events – A dataset of bus events for a given year

SOP 1.1.6 – Miscellaneous

- Controlled section of road – any point west of the Savage Check Station
- Hiker – a passenger that disembarks a transit bus and later attempts to re-embark a transit bus to continue traveling or return to the park entrance area
- Iconic viewscape – the westward view from the Stony Overlook and vicinity
- Road Ecology Program (REP) – the program that implements the Vehicle Management Plan (VMP) monitoring program
- Savage Check Station (SCS) – a Ranger-occupied check station at mile 14.8 of the Denali Park Road. Travel beyond this point requires a permit.
- Vehicle Maximum – The maximum number of vehicles that are visible at the same time (not to be confused with a tally). The vehicles must all be stopped (Wildlife Stops, Rest Stops) or visible (Viewscapes) at the same time to count toward a maximum
- Wildlife event – begins when the first vehicle stops and continues as long as at least one vehicle is present. A wildlife event ends when the last vehicle leaves the animal
- Wildlife Viewing Subzones (see VMP Narrative for locations) – In the 1996 *Entrance Area and Road Corridor Development Concept Plan* amendments to the general management plan, the road corridor was divided into several zones. Crowding standards (number of vehicles at wildlife stops, number of vehicles at rest stops, and number of vehicles in viewscapes) are established at different levels for each Subzone.

SOP 1.1.7 – Acronyms

- CD or CDNFL – Camp Denali North Face Lodge
- CFR – Code of Federal Regulations
- CSV – Comma Separated Values
- DBD – Denali Bus Depot (formerly WAC)
- DBL – Denali Backcountry Lodge
- DNHT – Denali Natural History Tour (tan bus)
- DVC – Denali Visitor Center
- EIS – Environmental Impact Statement
- ERO – Early Road Opening
- EVC – Eielson Visitor Center
- FGDB – File Geodatabase

- GMP – General Management Plan
- GVWR – gross vehicle weight rating
- KE – Kantishna Experience (usually a green bus)
- KRH – Kantishna Roadhouse
- NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act 1970
- NFBL – North Face Backcountry Lodge
- NPSO – National Park Service Observations
- PO – Park Observer application
- POZ – Park Observer zip file
- REP – Road Ecology Program
- ROAR – Ride Observe and Record Program
- RRY – Regulatory Road Year
- SCS – Savage Check Station
- SOP – Standard Operating Procedure
- TWT – Tundra Wilderness Tour (tan bus)
- VIP – Volunteer in Parks, or Very Important Person
- VMP – Vehicle Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement
- VTS – Visitor Transit Service (green bus)
- WAC – Wilderness Access Center (now Denali Bus Depot, DBD)