



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

Department of Natural Resources

DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION
Office of History and Archaeology

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RECEIVED
OCT 15 2012

BY:

October 1, 2012

File No.: 3130-1R NPS
3330-6 HEA-00466

Paul R. Anderson
Superintendent
Denali National Park & Preserve
Mile 237 Parks Highway
P.O. Box 9
Denali Park, AK 99755

DENA ROUTING:		
	Initial	Date
☒ Supt		
☒ Asst Supt/Ops		
☒ Asst Supt/Res		
☒ PIO		
☒ Charles G.		
☒ Shina duVall		
File		

copy sent to

Subject: Determination of Eligibility (DOE) for the Horseshoe Lake Trail (HEA-00466)

Dear Mr. Anderson:

The Alaska State Historic Preservation Office (AK SHPO) received your correspondence (dated September 14, 2012) on September 19, 2012.

Following our review of the documentation provided, we concur with your determination that site HEA-00466 is **eligible** for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under criterion A.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact Shina duVall at 269-8720 or shina.duvall@alaska.gov if you have any questions or if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Judith E. Bittner
State Historic Preservation Officer

JEB:sad

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HDA 1
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National Park Service
Form

330 0 7L4W706

Determination of Eligibility



Eligible X Not Eligible

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Horseshoe Lake Trail

Other name:

AHRS number: HEA-00466

Field number: N/A

IDLCS number: N/A

Cabin number: N/A

2. Location

Map sheet: USGS HEA C-4, Alaska

Aliquot: Sec 33, T13S, R7W, FM

UTM:

Latitude: N 63° 44' 18.6504" **Longitude:** -148° 54' 44.7906"

Acreage: 3

Street and number: N/A

City or town: Denali Borough, AK

Land Status: National Park Service, Denali National Park and Preserve

3. Description

Ownership of property: Public Federal- National Park Service

Category of property: Trail

Property's function: Recreation, Interpretation, Visitor Services

Architectural classification: No style

Materials:

Narrative Description:

The Horseshoe Lake Trail (HLT) is the first formally constructed pedestrian trail in Denali National Park and Preserve (the Park) (Norris 2006). Built by the Alaska Road Commission (ARC) in June and July of 1940, the original 1 ½ mile long trail connected the McKinley Park Hotel (Park Hotel) (completed in 1939) to Horseshoe Lake (Figure 1) (Superintendents Monthly Report 6/40). The trail was immediately popular after its creation with visitors as it provided scenic views of the park entrance area as well as access to the reported excellent fishing in Horseshoe Lake (Superintendents Monthly Report 7/20) and to ice-skating on the lake in the winter months (Norris 2006: 108).

The HLT is currently constructed of 24"-48" tread of compacted imported gravel, with log checks along the steeper sections of the trail to mitigate erosion of the tread material; there is no documentation regarding the original construction material of the trail, or of its width. Currently there is an extensive network of visitor created social trails that begin along the HLT which provide access to vistas and natural features near the trail. The current HLT begins at mile post (MP) 1.2 of the Denali Park Road (Park Road, HEA-00429 and MMK-00171) and follows the northern section of the original trail to

Horseshoe Lake. The trail is an out and back trail with several seasonal creek crossings which require temporary bridge placement during breakup. The south and western sections of the original trail have been modified and renamed as other trails and are no longer considered part of the HLT (Figure 2).

Significance:

The HLT is significant on the local level as it is the setting of some of the first interpretive hikes at the Park, for its association with the formation of the interpretive program at the Park, and as it is the first formally constructed trail in the Park.

In the early years after the Park was established in 1917, the few staff the park employed had very little direct interaction with visitors and provided almost no interpretive services as the majority of staff time was spent conducting hunting patrols and constructing facilities for the park. It wasn't until 1932 that the first interpretive-type program was offered at the park when Joseph Dixon, a visiting wildlife biologist, gave a series of lectures on his work in the park (Norris 2006). Harry Liek, the Park Superintendent, also gave visitor lectures in 1932 at Savage River Camp (Norris 2006).

Beginning in 1938 park management began focusing on interpretation of park resources for visitors. The majority of the ranger led talks were being offered at this time at Savage Camp. When the Park Hotel opened on June 1, 1939, the base of the Park's interpretive activities shifted from Savage Camp to the Park Hotel and the entrance area of the park (Norris 2006 :136). Frank Been, then Superintendent, was a proponent of "active educational service" for the public and encouraged and promoted interpretation by park staff (Norris 2006 :136). The HLT, connecting the Park Hotel with the Horseshoe Lake, and was the choice venue for ranger led talks as it was easily accessible to visitors, had a length and difficulty level that families could enjoy, and offered a nature experience close to the Park Hotel and the entrance area of the park. The trail was one of the most visited the Park's early years and was one of the defining experiences for visitors to the entrance area of the park. The trail has been used continuously since it was constructed for interpretive programs, both Ranger led, and, starting in the 1950's, self-guided.

The trail's use as an interpretive platform continues to today. During the summer months there is a daily ranger led hike on the trail that begins at the Denali Visitor Center (DVC) (the Park Hotel burned to the ground in 1972 and the DVC was built at its location in 2005). This trail is still one of the most popular trails in the park, with over 200 people hiking it daily in peak summer months (Trail Counter Report 2012), and the trail is still used to access the Horseshoe Lake for fishing.

While much of Denali National Park and Preserve is composed of trail-less wilderness, there are dozens of formally constructed trails in the park; mostly located near the park entrance area. Since the construction of the HLT in 1940, 56 trails have been built in the park.

Alterations and Integrity:

At some unknown point in the last 30 years three sections of the HLT were renamed and classified as separate trails; these are the Taiga Trail, the Bike Path, and the Murie

Science and Learning Center Trail (Figure 2). Extensive alterations and reroutes have been completed on these three new trails. The creation of these three trails has modified the designation of what the HLT is. Because what is now known as the HLT does not include these three sections, the trail area under consideration for eligibility reflects the current HLT trail designation only and does not include the areas that have been renamed. This section of the HLT, which is identified as such on current park maps, is the only section of the original HLT that is being considered for eligibility to the National Register (Figure 1).

No documentation exists regarding the trails original construction materials or its width, and little is known regarding what type of alterations or maintenance has taken place on the trail since its construction, other than routine yearly maintenance.

Condition

Documentation indicates that the trail has been in good to excellent repair for the majority of its existence. In 1944 the trail was reported to be in good condition (Superintendents Monthly Report 6/44) and in 1951 the trail was reported to be in excellent condition (Superintendents Monthly Report 7/50). Due to the popularity of the trail, it's easy access from the park road, and its use as an interpretive trail, it is likely that the trail never fell into disrepair. Routine maintenance has been performed on the trail to keep it in good condition.

4. Applicable National Register Criteria

Criterion A: Yes

Criterion B: No

Criterion C: No

Criterion D: No

Areas of significance: Recreational Activities, Transportation

Significant date(s): 1940-present

Period of significance: 1940-Present

Level of significance: Local

Significant person(s): None

Cultural affiliation: Euro-American

Architect/Engineer/Builder: Alaska Railroad Commission (ARC)

Historical information:

Related National Register Eligible and Property Listing: None

5. Determination of National Register Eligibility:

The HSLT is significant under **Criteria A** of the National Register of Historic Places for its history of providing the visitor experience and visitor services at Mt. McKinley National Park, and because it is the first formally constructed trail in the park.

The trail's planning, design, or construction is not associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; therefore it is not eligible under Criterion B.

The trail also lacks distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, and does not represent the work of a master; therefore it is not eligible under Criterion C.

The trail is well documented through photos and maps, and is not likely to yield any further information important to history, and is therefore not eligible under Criterion D.

The HSLT is recommended as eligible to the National Register with a period of significance from 1940 to the present as the trail has been used throughout this time for interpretive programs. The trail has maintained significant continuity of original location, setting, feeling, and association. It is assumed that the materials and workmanship of the trail have not retained their integrity as the original construction and physical elements of the trail are unknown. The original design of the trail is also unknown, and so it is assumed that the trail does not retain integrity of design. Overall the trail retains its integrity as the significance for the trail is not in its actual physical components, but rather in the opportunities it affords visitors, its views of the surrounding area, its association with the interpretive services of the park, and of the start of the trails program at the park.

The trail retains integrity of location; the route of the trail that is presently known as the HLT is substantially unchanged since original construction. The easy visitor access to the trail is one aspect that has made it a popular spot for visitor hikes and interpretive programs.

The trail does not retain integrity of design, as the original design of the trail is unknown and the original materials used in its construction are unknown.

The trail retains integrity of setting by continuing to be the venue of interpretive programs to park visitors and provide them with vistas of the park entrance area. By being located near the Park Hotel and now the DVC it remains one of the most popular trails for visitors.

The trail does not retain integrity of materials as the original physical elements of the trail are unknown. The trail has been resurfaced multiple times with non-historic materials and non-historic log checks have been used to control erosion. The trail therefore lacks integrity of materials.

The trail does not retain integrity of workmanship. While the original workmanship of the trail has not been documented and is not known, the routine maintenance that has taken place on the trail for the past 72 years would have obscured the original workmanship.

The trail does retain integrity of feeling. The view and vistas from the trail along with the natural setting constitute a large element of its appeal to visitors and its use as an interpretive trail. While it is unknown how much the routine maintenance and resurfacing has changed the appearance and surface of the trail, the integrity of feeling is retained by the preservation of the opportunity to take part in interpretive programs and experience a nature hike.

The trail retains integrity of association due to its link with the start of the interpretation program at the park and the start of the trails program at the Park.

We are recommending the Horseshoe Lake Trail is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, at the local level for its association with the formation of the interpretive program and the trails program at the Park. The period of significance for the trail is 1940 to the present, from when it was first constructed to the present, as it is still used for interpretation of park resources today.

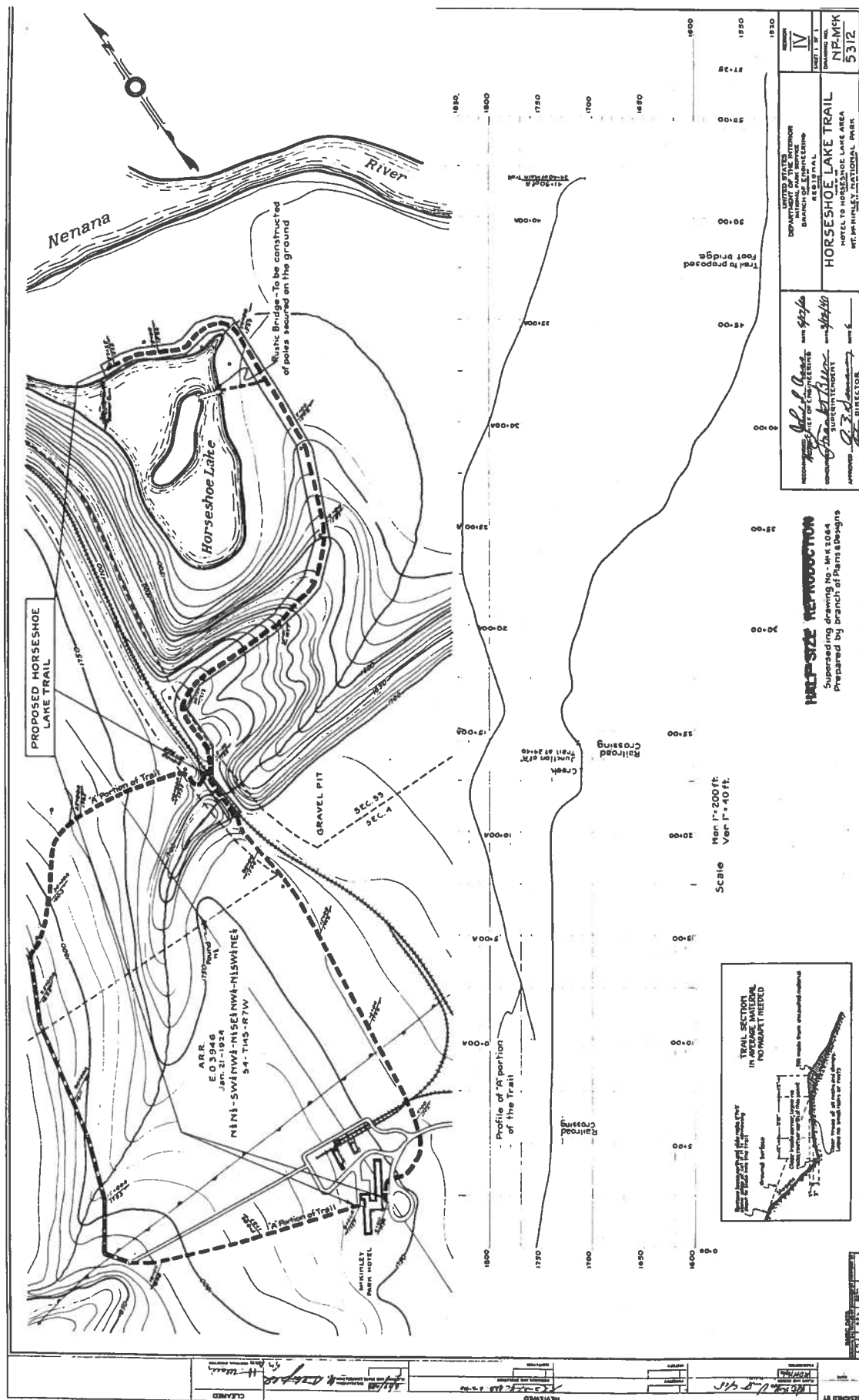


Figure 1-1940 Map of route for the Horseshoe Lake Trail, “A” Portion of Trail already existed. Section outlined in blue in is the current location of the trail under consideration for eligibility.

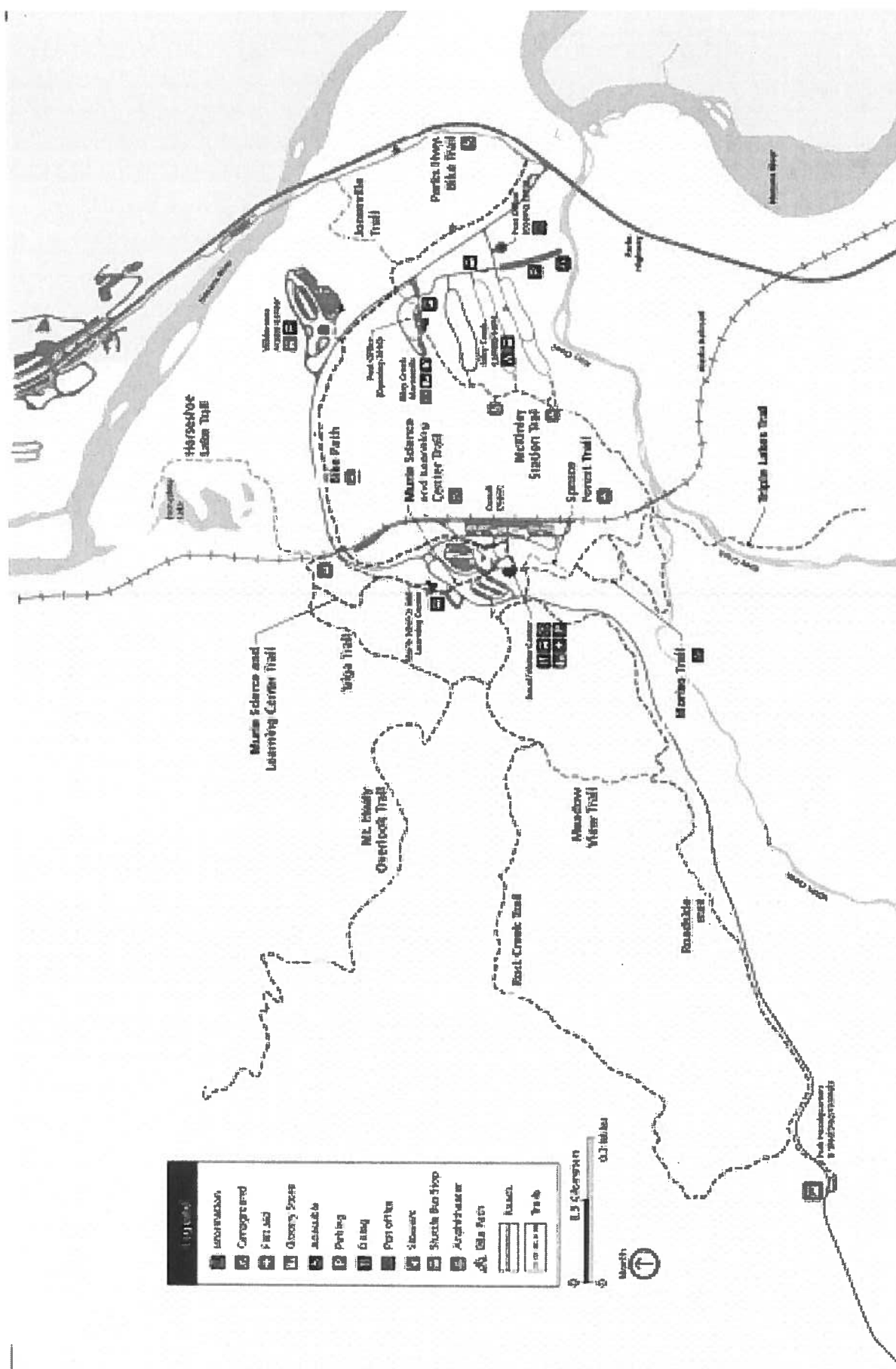


Figure 2- 2012 Map of the Horse Shoe Lake Trail and Entrance area

6. Major Bibliographic References:

Norris, F. B. (2006). Crown jewel of the north : an administrative history of Denali National Park and Preserve. Volume 1. Anchorage, Alaska, Alaska Regional Office, National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior.

Norris, F. B. (2006). Crown jewel of the north : an administrative history of Denali National Park and Preserve. Volume 2. Anchorage, Alaska, Alaska Regional Office, National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior.

Superintendent's Monthly Reports. (1923-1967). National Park Service, Denali National Park and Preserve Library Collection.

Trail Data Counter (2012). <http://www.trafx.net/datanet/>

7. Form Prepared By: Phoebe Gilbert, Archaeologist, Denali National Park and Preserve, Phoebe_Gilbert@nps.gov, 907-683-9540.

8. Additional Material

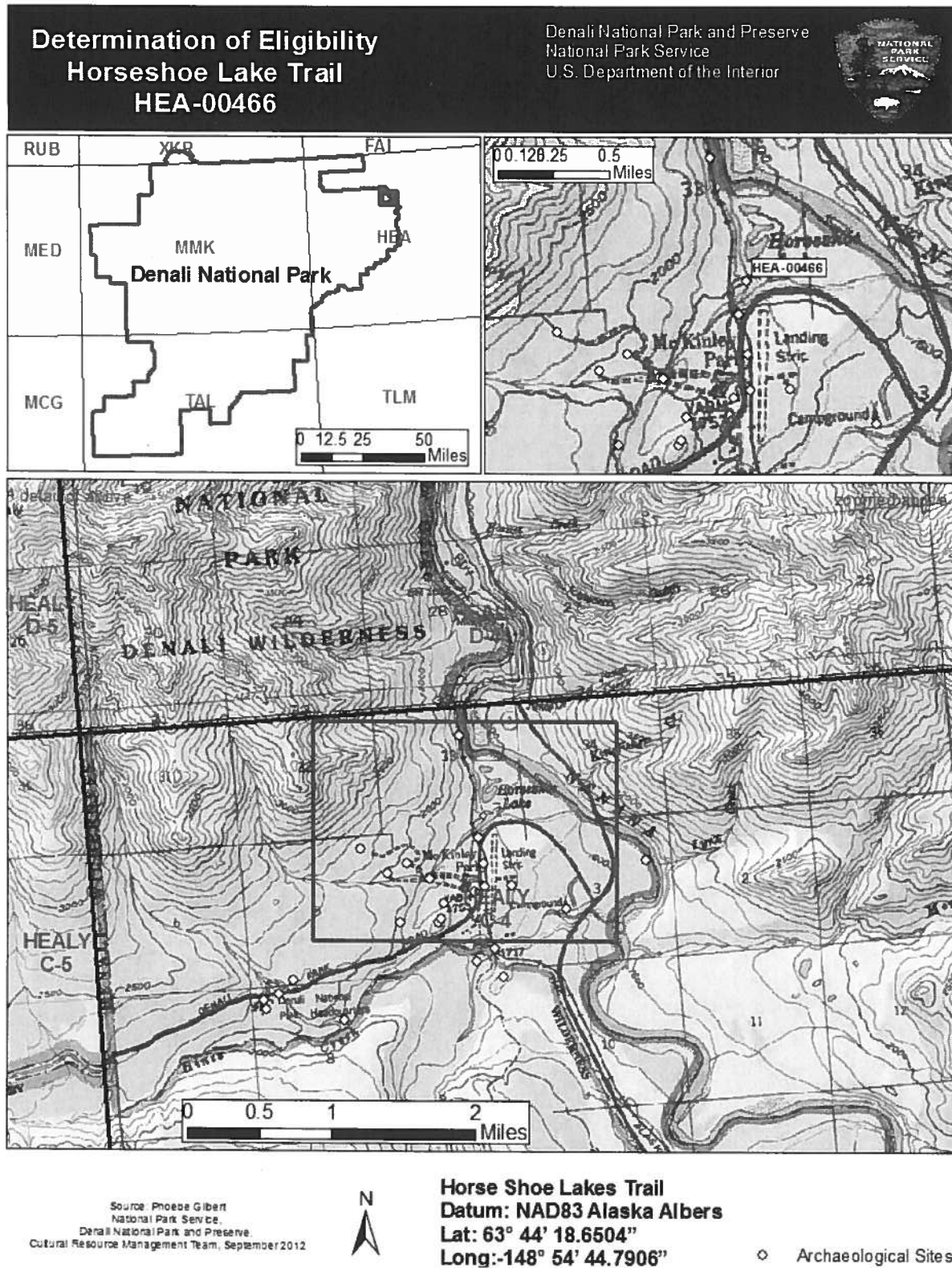
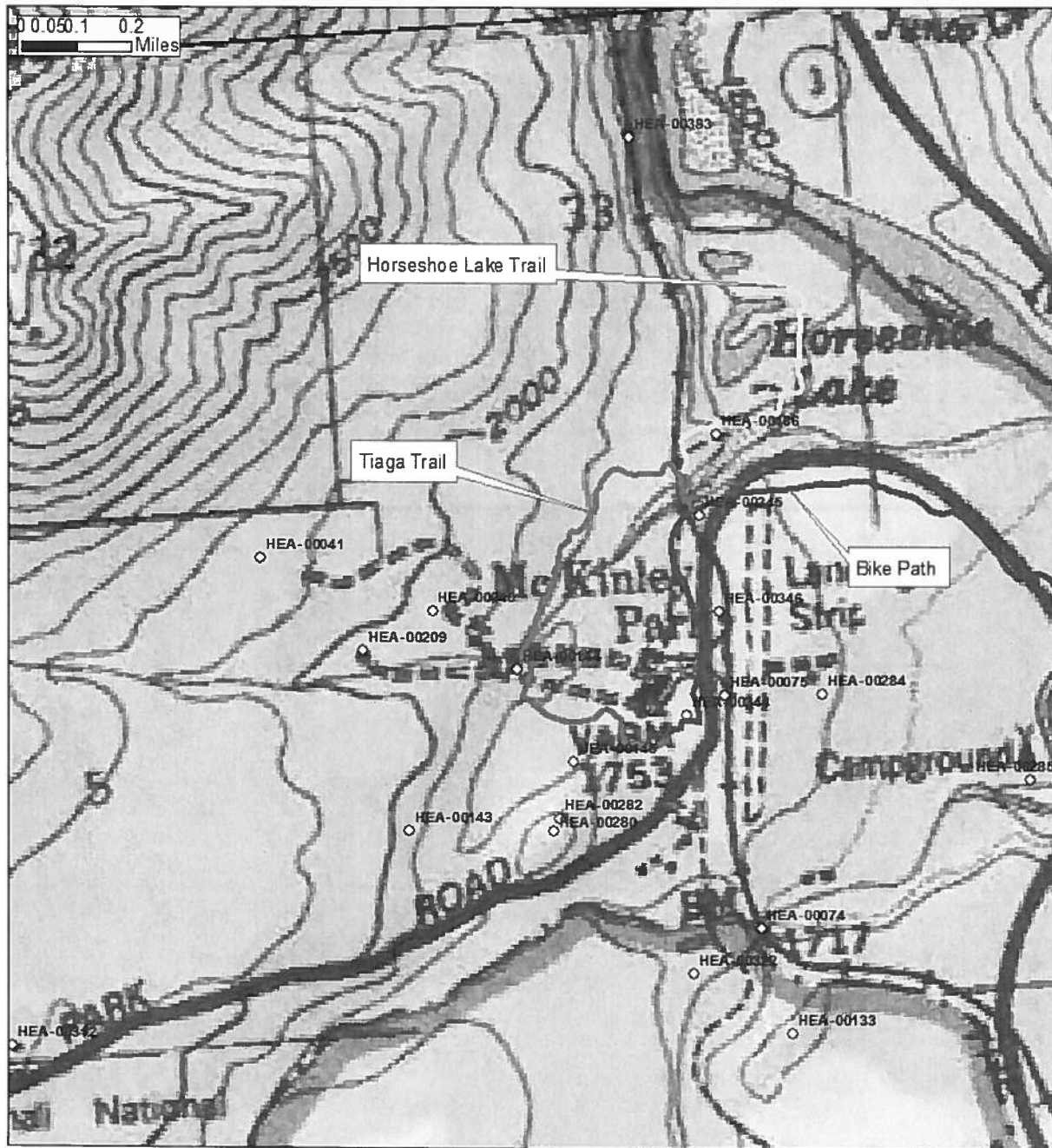


Figure 3- Overview (USGS Healy C-4 (Alaska))

**Determination of Eligibility
Horseshoe Lake Trail
HEA-00466**

Denali National Park and Preserve
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Source: Phoebe Gilbert
National Park Service
Denali National Park and Preserve
Cultural Resource Management Team, September 2012



Horse Shoe Lakes Trail
Datum: NAD83 Alaska Albers
Lat: 63° 44' 18.6504"
Long: -148° 54' 44.7906"

◊ Archaeological Sites

Figure 4- Zoom of the Horseshoe Lake Trail and Denali National Park and Preserve Entrance Area and associated Trails.



Figure 5- Ranger Led Nature Walk on Horseshoe Lake Trail, 1965 (DENA13-17)

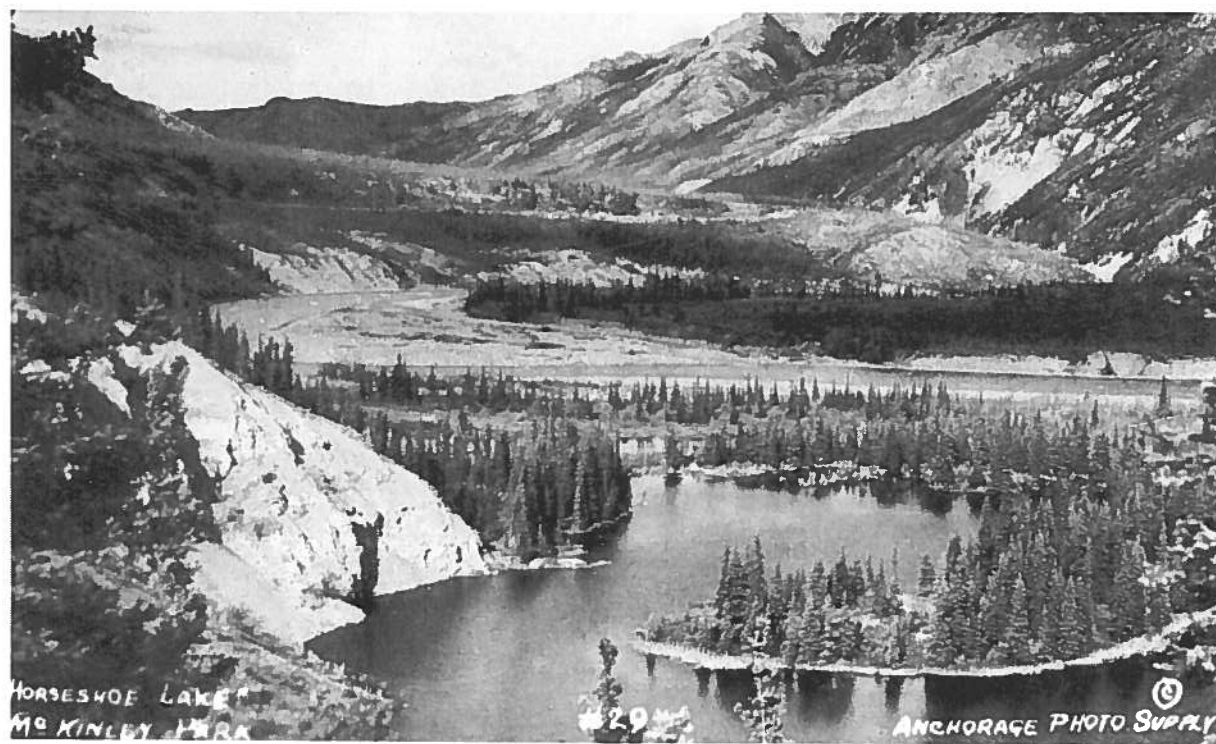


Figure 6- 1944 Postcard of Horseshoe Lake (Keers Collection)

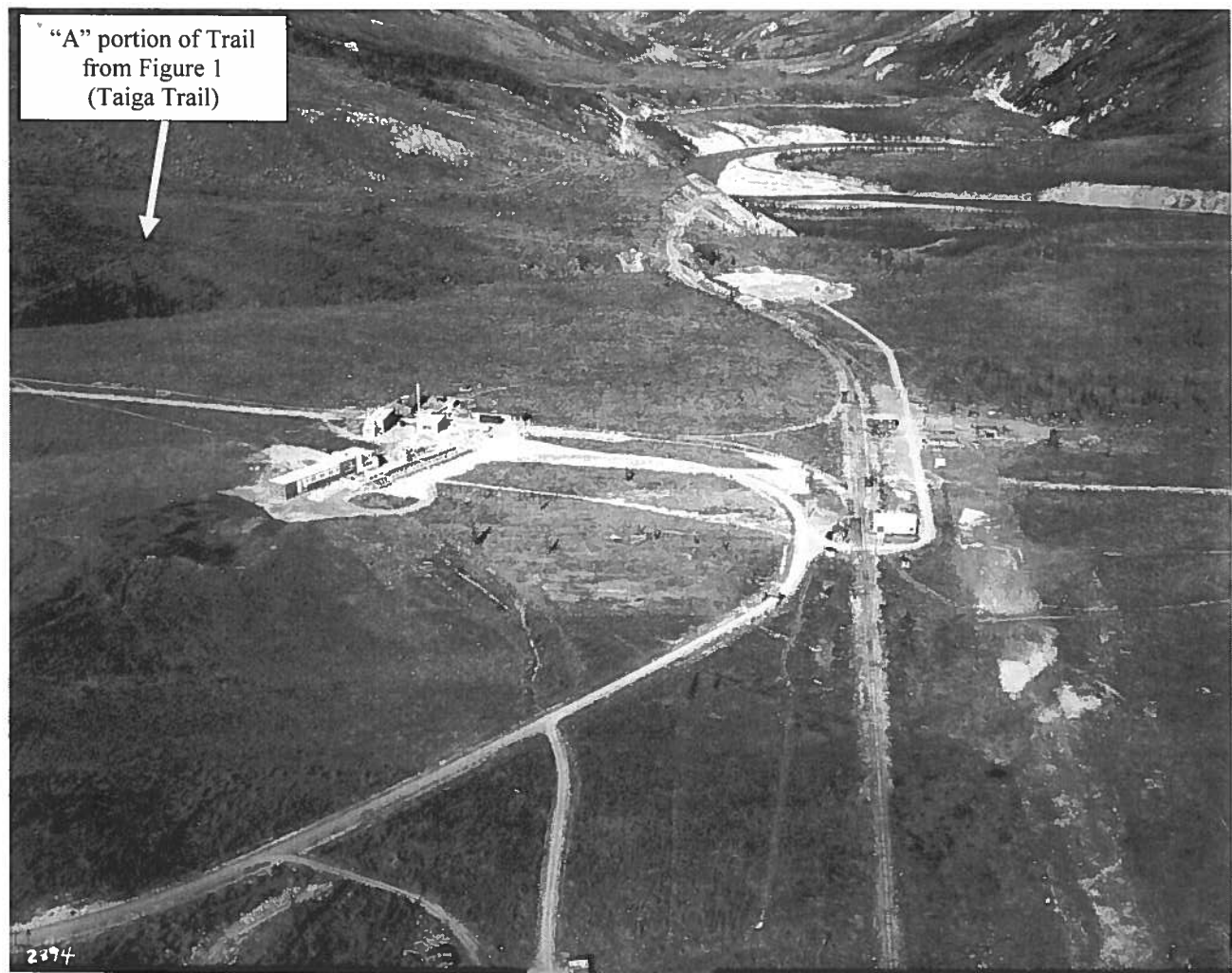


Figure 7- 1938 (Pre-Horseshoe Lake Trail) Aerial of the Park Hotel and the Park Entrance Area. Note that the “A” portion of the trail (Figure 1) is visible in this photograph; this section of trail is now the Taiga Trail (UAF Washburn Collection #2394).

