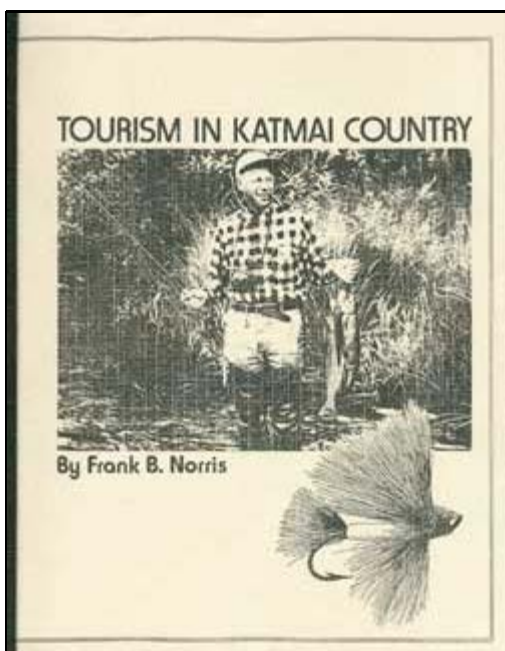


# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



## TOURISM IN KATMAI COUNTRY

### A History of Concessions Activity in Katmai National Park and Preserve

by  
**Frank B. Norris**  
Historian

**1992**  
w/2004 corrections

National Park Service  
Alaska Regional Office  
Anchorage, Alaska

### [TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

---

[katm/tourism/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/katm/index.htm)  
Last Updated: 13-Oct-2004

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

### [Cover](#)

#### Cover photograph:

Joe Phillips of Seattle with rainbow trout, taken on a fly on the Brooks River in 1951. During the 1950s, most fishermen visiting the camps sought out rainbows. Phillips used a Pflueger Medalist fishing reel. Interview with Raymond F. Petersen, December 19, 1991. Photo credit: Don Horter, Wien Collection, Anchorage Museum of History and Art.

#### Cover drawing:

The Katmai Slider is a dry fly composed of a white poly yarn body with a natural deer hair tail attached by bright red-orange thread. Excellent for silver salmon, steelhead, rainbow trout and grayling, it was developed on the Brooks River and is widely used on Katmai streams. Anthony J. Route, [Flies for Alaska](#) (Boulder, Colo., Johnson Books, 1991), 106-08.

### [List of Maps](#)

### [List of Tables](#)

### [List of Photographs](#)

### [Introduction](#)

### [Acknowledgements](#)

### [List of Acronyms](#)

### [Chapter 1.](#) Early History of Katmai National Monument

### [Chapter 2.](#) Establishing the Northern Consolidated Concession

### [Chapter 3.](#) Northern Consolidated Concession Operations

### [Chapter 4.](#) The Wien Consolidated and Wien Alaska Concessions

### [Chapter 5.](#) The Katmailand Concession Operation

### [Chapter 6.](#) Other Concession Operations

### [Chapter 7.](#) Commercial Licenses and Permits

### [Conclusion](#)

### **Appendices:**

### [A.](#) Holders of the Katmai Concession Contract

[B. Structures in the Concessions Camps](#)

[C. National Park Service Officials at Katmai](#)

[D. Katmai Visitor Use Statistics, 1956-1990](#)

[Bibliography](#)

Index *(omitted from the online edition)*

---

Original graphic design by Keith Hoofnagle, National Park Service.

Printed by Arbor Graphic Images, Portland, Oregon.

---

## LIST OF MAPS

---

[Map 1.](#) Katmai National Park and Preserve (overview map)

[Map 2.](#) Organized Camps in Katmai National Park and Preserve

[Map 3.](#) Brooks River Area

[Map 4.](#) Brooks Camp Buildings

[Map 5.](#) Areas of Commercial Use License Activity

## LIST OF TABLES

---

[Table 1.](#) Summary of Commercial Use License Activity at Katmai National Park and Preserve, 1980-1990

[Table 2.](#) Sports Fishing and Float Trip Activity in Katmai National Park and Preserve, 1980-1990

## LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

---

[1.](#) Capt. Joe Griffiths, a KLM pilot, fished at Brooks Camp in 1964.

[2.](#) Ray Petersen, barely old enough to vote, flew for Bethel Airways during the mid-1930s.

[3.](#) NCA advertised in various sportsman's magazines in the early 1950s.

[4.](#) An early-day NCA Katmai tour brochure.

[5.](#) In the late 1950s, NCA teamed up with Northwest Airlines to offer Katmai travel packages.

[6.](#) Chief Needahbeh, a Penobscot Indian and avid angler, helped publicize the Katmai camps.

- [7.](#) Bill Hammersly, a local homesteader, managed one of the NCA camps. In the off-season, he promoted visitation to the Katmai region.
- [8.](#) By the mid-1950s, Brooks River was being advertised as one of the world's top fishing spots.
- [9.](#) John Walatka operated his own airline in the 1940s. From 1950 until his death in 1970, he teamed up with Ray Petersen to run the Katmai camps.
- [10.](#) Grosvenor Camp, known as Coville Camp until 1954, was initially composed entirely of framed tents.
- [11.](#) This photo, looking south, shows a few of the original Brooks Camp cabins. The old camp structures were levelled in the mid-1980s.
- [12.](#) Anglers casting their line at Brooks Falls in 1954. Note the fish ladder on the left, which was constructed from 1948 to 1950.
- [13.](#) When Brooks Camp opened, Ray Petersen insisted on limiting Brooks River to fly fishing. Perhaps for that reason, fishing has remained excellent over the years.
- [14.](#) Breakfast preparations under way in the Brooks Camp cookhouse.
- [15.](#) Dining at old Brooks Camp was an informal affair in 1954.
- [16.](#) A corner of one of the Brooks Camp cabins was used as an informal gift shop.
- [17.](#) Adlai Stevenson, who visited in 1954, was one of many well-known personalities who has signed the Brooks Camp guest register over the years.
- [18.](#) John Walatka, the longtime camp superintendent, is shown at Nonvianuk Camp fileting a rainbow trout.
- [19.](#) A Native fish camp, downriver from NCA's Nonvianuk Camp.
- [20.](#) An aerial photo of Brooks Camp, taken about 1970.
- [21.](#) Brooks Lodge, August 1968.
- [22.](#) Brooks Camp cabins, 1971.
- [23.](#) Inside of one of the Skytel rooms.
- [24.](#) A sawmill and planing mill were installed at Kulik Camp in 1956. They operated intermittently until the early 1970s.
- [25.](#) Kulik Lodge in the late 1950s.
- [26.](#) The interior of Kulik Lodge, 1960.
- [27.](#) An overview of Kulik Camp in the late 1950s.
- [28.](#) A similar view of the camp with new improvements, 1960.
- [29.](#) A group of guests in front of the Panabode cabin at Grosvenor Camp.

[30.](#) During the 1950s, many of the guests bound for the Katmai camps flew out of King Salmon on an NCA Cessna.

[31.](#) In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the concessioner flew a Fairchild F-27B turboprop into the Kulik Lake airstrip from time to time.

[32.](#) Vice President Richard Nixon and his wife dedicated the new F-27B in Anchorage in December 1958. Ray Petersen looks on.

[33.](#) A Pilatus Porter, used by the concessioner from the early 1960s through the early 1970s.

[34.](#) The concessioner flew a Grumman Mallard to the camps in the late 1960s and 1970s.

[35.](#) Ray Petersen, president of NCA, and Sigurd Wien, head of Wien Air Alaska, agreed to merge in 1967 into Wien Consolidated Airlines.

[36.](#) Wien Consolidated's Board of Directors, taken in 1973.

[37.](#) Ray Petersen and Jim Flood. Flood took over the presidency from Petersen in 1976.

---

**Please note:** This report is a NPS publication, which is normally considered to be in the public domain. However, this report may contain illustrations that are copies of materials NOT in the public domain, for which one-time reprint permission was obtained prior to publication. Persons wishing to use these illustrations of non-NPS origin for any purpose beyond educational perusal must obtain their own permissions from the owners of the original materials.

---

---

[<<< Previous](#)

[<<< Contents >>>](#)

[Next >>>](#)

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



## INTRODUCTION

Since the creation of Yellowstone National Park, concessions operations have been integrally involved in the feeding, lodging, and transportation of park visitors. That idea was institutionalized when the National Park Service became a reality in 1916. The so-called Organic Act that year provided for two contrasting goals: protection and use. On the one hand, parks were established "to conserve the scenery and the natural and the historic objects and the wild life therein," but they were also asked "to provide for the enjoyment of the same" as long as they left the objects of that protection "unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." [1]

Since that time, a healthy tension has grown between the National Park Service and its concessioners. The agency has long recognized that the services provided by commercial operators are a key aspect of many visitors' trips to NPS units; as Stephen T. Mather once remarked, "Scenery is a hollow enjoyment to a tourist who sets out in the morning after an indigestible breakfast and a fitful sleep on an impossible bed." It is also well aware that concessioners, particularly those in the transportation business, play a major role in publicizing the national parks, and that they are glad to provide services which Congress has never shown a particular inclination to supply. [2] But at the same time, NPS officials recognize the necessity of regulation in order to ensure that concessioner operations are consistent with the overall goals of the national parks. The legacy of conditions at Yellowstone and Yosemite prior to the creation of the National Park Service was sufficient to convince early NPS leaders that unrestrained competition between concessioners resulted in overcrowded campgrounds, inferior transportation services, and generally negative visitor experiences. [3]

For almost fifty years after the establishment of the National Park Service, the attitude toward park concessioners was guided by a succession of informal policy directives, the general tone of which was established in a May 1918 letter to Director Stephen Mather signed by Franklin K. Lane, Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of the Interior. Lane's letter proposed that park concessioners operate as strictly regulated monopolies, which were to gain a fair return on their investments and enjoy a preferred right to renew their contracts or permits. [4] The only deviation from that philosophy developed in the mid-1940s when Harold L. Ickes, Franklin D. Roosevelt's Secretary of the Interior, and Julius Krug, his successor in the Truman administration, advocated a "public utility" approach to park concessions. The two men proposed Government acquisition of concession facilities, and fought to eliminate concessioners' preferred rights of renewal. But a Citizen Advisory Group formed to study the measure concluded that both parks and visitors were best served by the existing system. In 1950 Secretary of the Interior Oscar Chapman issued a policy memorandum which reaffirmed longstanding policies. These continued in force until the Concessions Policy Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-249) translated administrative directives into Congressional legislation. This act continues as the predominant instrument guiding the management of concessioners in the national parks. [5]

The following study is an attempt to chronicle the history of commercial operations within

the present boundaries of Katmai National Park and Preserve in southwest Alaska. This area was created as a national monument in 1918. Its acreage was substantially augmented in 1931, and for almost half a century afterwards was the largest unit in the national park system. But few visited the vast reserve until 1950, when Northern Consolidated Airlines (NCA), under the guidance of President Raymond I. Petersen, opened a series of five fishing camps. Those camps—two located inside the old monument boundaries, the other three north of them—remain the only concessioner-operated facilities in the present park.

During the 40-odd years that have taken place since the camps were founded, only one concessioner has been active within the park unit at any given time. That concessioner has been particularly instrumental to the park's development because it has also operated the primary means of access to the camps. Because of the general inaccessibility of the Katmai country, the concessioner was one of the few ways by which visitors could access the park's remote areas before fly-in operations, from lodges based outside the park, became popular in the 1980s.

The tensions that have traditionally existed between the agency and park concessioners have by no means been absent in Katmai. As might be expected, the concessioner has often wished to expand its operations and facilities in ways deemed unacceptable by the National Park Service. The agency, in turn, has denied or stonewalled development proposals which the concessioner felt were legitimate and proper. Deviousness and chicanery have occasionally been practiced by both parties, but most of the major players involved, bureaucrats and concessioners alike, appear to have honestly and conscientiously followed the mandates laid out by concessions contracts and agency regulations.

Although the park concessioner has consistently been the most visible commercial operator into the Katmai country, it has by no means monopolized commercial development. In the mid-1960s a present-day inholder began operating a fishing guide service—the first of several to do so—and military personnel based within the monument boundary were also longtime users of park resources. The concessioner, moreover, has been inconsistent in the use of its own camps; it has intermittently closed one or more camps, and has, at other times, leased their operation to others.

Since the late 1970s, a revolution in tourism has taken place within Alaska, and one aspect of that revolution is that a major portion of Alaska's so-called "bush country" has become increasingly accessible. Because of its scenic beauty and the excellence of its fishing resources, the Katmai area has been a prime witness to the recreational boom. In 1980, for example, only a smattering of commercial operators were known to visit Katmai's lakes, streams and mountains, but a decade later more than fifty such operators were bringing thousands of tourists into the park each year. In order to regulate the burgeoning traffic in temporary users, the National Park Service created the Commercial Use License system, and it is within that system that most of Katmai's commercial growth is currently taking place.

As can be seen, a diversity of elements has been responsible for the commercial development of the Katmai country. To simplify the story of that development, the author has first addressed the activities of the park's concessioner, followed by those of various inholders and other non-concession holders. Within those broad parameters has been organized a rough chronological sequence.

Chapter 1, a prologue, describes the area's commercial development before NCA established its fish camps. The next four chapters describe the history of those camps. Chapter 2 investigates the process by which NCA secured the Katmai concession, and its plans in laying out the camps, while Chapter 3 follows the history of those camps while under NCA control. In 1968, NCA merged with Wien Air Alaska to become Wien Consolidated Airlines

(WCA); Chapter 4 therefore discusses the operation of the camps under WCA and its successor, Wien Air Alaska. In late 1982 the administration of the camps changed yet again when Wien sold its interests in the camps to a new company called KatmaiLand. This company, known as Katmailand since May 1983, has operated the Katmai concession for the past nine years; its operations are discussed in Chapter 5.

The final two chapters discuss the myriad non-concessioner activities within the boundaries of the present park unit. Chapter 6 discusses the operations of present-day park inholders and leaseholders of the main concessions camps, while Chapter 7 is devoted to a discussion of the establishment and development of the park by operators based outside its boundaries. Three types of operators are discussed: 1) general users of Commercial Use Licenses; 2) users of Commercial Permits along American Creek, a rich trout-bearing stream which flows into the western end of Lake Coville; and 3) holders of commercial hunting permits in Katmai National Preserve, at the northern end of the park unit.

---

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>

---

katm/tourism/chap0.htm  
Last Updated: 13-Oct-2004

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

This project began, perhaps unwittingly, in the fall of 1988 when park and regional office staff interviewed Raymond I. Petersen, the founder of the various Katmai concession camps. In order to put his comments into their proper context, regional staff recognized the need to provide supporting materials. What follows is the product of the search for those materials, combined with the comments of Mr. Petersen and other individuals who have helped develop Katmai's tourism industry into what it is today.

There are many who need to be thanked for their gracious assistance in the preparation of this study. In the NPS, I first wish to thank Rebecca Kaiser, chief of the concessions division in the Alaska Regional Office. Her many years of experience in the field proved invaluable, and her recognition of the historical value of the concessions documents played a major role in providing the archival basis for this project. Her predecessor, Joseph Alston, took time to provide helpful information about the concessions field during the first several years after the creation of the regional office.

Also deserving thanks are the staff at Katmai National Park and Preserve. The present superintendent, Alan Eliason, has provided enthusiasm and encouragement for the project, and his predecessors, Ray Bane and David Morris, provided many insights regarding the problems of managing the park's concessions. David Nemeth, the park's concessions officer, was very helpful, and Janis Meldrum, the former resource management specialist, proved a gracious hostess during my stay there and a constant source of encouragement. Each of these individuals kindly consented to review and comment on early drafts of this study.

The various concessioners were also helpful. Mr. Petersen kindly acceded to several interview requests; he also provided photographs and memorabilia regarding the early days at the Katmai camps. His son, Raymond F. Petersen of Katmailand, was likewise gracious with his time. Others connected with Katmai tourism operations have included Perry Mollan, Bo Bennett, and Dennis Maloney. I particularly appreciated the back-ground information provided by Ray Loesche, longtime owner of Rainbow King Lodge; Michael and Dennis Branham, of Adventures Unlimited; Joe Klutsch, of Katmai Guide Service; and Ralph Stemp, who helped operate the Katmai camps in the early 1980s.

I also wish to thank those who have helped see the project through to its completion. William Hanable helped conduct the interview and organize the research which provided me a crucial head start; Kate Lidfors, the former regional historian, steered the project through to its draft stage; Sande Faulkner, who took over in her stead, has overseen the project through to its completion; and Linda Cook, for her photography. Many thanks to all those with whom I privileged to work. Finally, I'd like to pass along thanks to Edwin Bearss and Barry Mackintosh, in the agency's Washington office, for providing an editorial review.

---

[<<< Previous](#)

[<<< Contents >>>](#)

[Next >>>](#)

---

[katm/tourism/ack.htm](#)  
Last Updated: 13-Oct-2004

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



## LIST OF ACRONYMS

---

AAO - Alaska Area Office; what the Alaska Regional Office was before the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act was passed on December 2, 1980.

ACV - Alaska Consolidated Vacations, the corporate name for the NCA camps during the early 1960s.

AMHA - Anchorage Museum of History and Art

ANIA - Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve

ARD - (NPS) Associate Regional Director

ARO - (NPS) Alaska Regional Office

BLM - (U.S.) Bureau of Land Management

CAB - (U.S.) Civil Aeronautics Board

CUL - (NPS) Commercial Use License

DENA - Denali National Park and Preserve, AK, the successor to MOMC.

DSC - (NPS) Denver Service Center

FAA - (U.S.) Federal Aviation Agency; or Federal Aviation Administration, its successor

GMP - (NPS) General Management Plan

GPO - (U.S.) General Printing Office

KATM - Katmai National Monument (1918-1980) or Katmai National Park and Preserve (1980-present)

LAME - Lake Mead National Recreation Area, CA-NV

MOMC - Mount McKinley National Park, AK. This park, which was renamed Denali in 1980, managed Katmai from 1918 through 1969.

NARA - National Archives and Records Administration

NCA - Northern Consolidated Airlines, which managed the Katmai camps from 1950 to 1968

NPS - National Park Service

OAS - Office of Aircraft Services (U.S. Dept. of the Interior)

OC - (NPS) Concessions Division

ODM - (NPS) Facility Design and Maintenance Division

OL - (NPS) Lands Division

PNRO - (NPS) Pacific Northwest Regional Office, Seattle

RCR - (NPS) Cultural Resources Division

RD - (NPS) Regional Director

RG - (NARA) Record Group

RMS - (NPS) Resource Managment Specialist

RP - (NPS) Planning Division

UAF - University of Alaska Fairbanks; specific citations refer to the Alaska and Polar Regions Collection, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library

WAA - Wien Air Alaska, which managed the camps from 1973 through 1982

WASO - (NPS) Washington (D.C.) Service Office; headquarters

WCA - Wien Consolidated Airlines, the company that managed the camps from 1968 to 1973

WRO - (NPS) Western Regional Office, San Francisco

WSC - (NPS) Western Service Center, San Francisco

YELL - Yellowstone National Park, ID-MT-WY

---

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



### CHAPTER 1:

## EARLY HISTORY OF KATMAI NATIONAL MONUMENT

Katmai National Monument was created in 1918. Although those responsible for the creation of the monument foresaw its commercial possibilities, the area's remoteness caused it to be largely ignored for over thirty years. The onset of World War II, and the growing interest in the territory's sport fishing possibilities, reduced that remoteness. During the immediate postwar period the National Park Service, which has allowed the park to remain dormant, came under increased pressure to establish a presence in order to reduce illegal activities and justify park values. One of the people who knew the Katmai area best during this time was Ray Petersen, a one-time bush pilot who had recently organized the dominant airline in southwestern Alaska.

### Development of the Katmai Country Before 1950

President Woodrow Wilson, through Proclamation No. 1487, established Katmai National Monument on September 24, 1918. The monument was created to protect some 1700 square miles of southwest Alaska. The landscape included was deemed to be "of importance in the study of volcanism," and in addition was felt to be of "popular scenic, as well as scientific, interest for generations to come."[\[1\]](#)

One of the world's largest volcanic explosions had rocked the area beginning June 6, 1912. To investigate the extent of its devastation a scientific team, headed by U.S. Geological Survey geologist George C. Martin, began exploring the area in the summer of 1914. The expedition was sponsored by the National Geographic Society (NGS). The following year, Ohio State University botanist Robert F. Griggs began the first of five annual trips to the area. The wonders encountered on the Martin and Griggs expeditions were published in the National Geographic Magazine, and the publicity generated from those expeditions was in large part responsible for the creation of Katmai National Monument. [\[2\]](#)

The final NGS trip into the area took place in 1930. The course of that trip led Griggs and his party west to Naknek Lake and the Brooks Camp area, which were beyond the western boundary of the monument. Expedition members were so impressed by the primeval countryside and the large numbers of brown bears that efforts began to expand the monument westward.[\[3\]](#) As a result, President Herbert C. Hoover issued Proclamation No. 1950 on April 24, 1931, which more than doubled the size of the monument. The enlarged monument, 4214 square miles in extent, was the largest unit in the national park system.[\[4\]](#)

During his 1916 expedition, Griggs wrote that the wonders of the Katmai district "must be made a great national park accessible to all the people, like the Yellowstone." Despite the creation of the monument and the volcanic and scenic wonders it offered, however, few visited the area before World War II. The Katmai country was largely undeveloped and

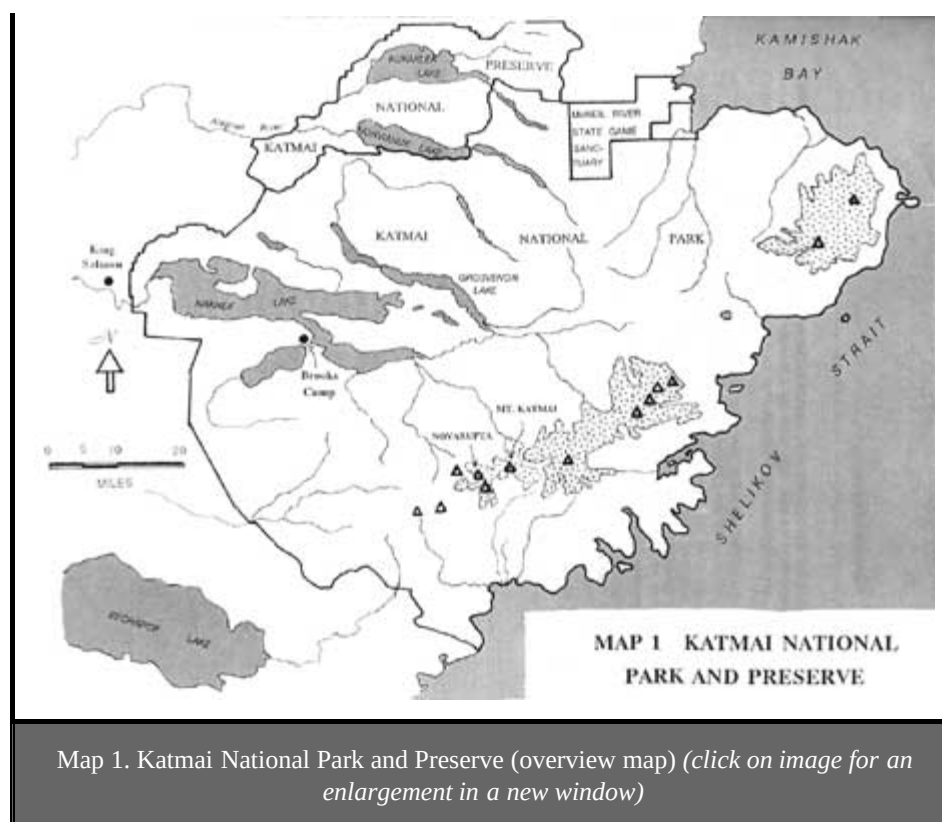
distant from the major shipping routes. Because of the high expense of travel and the lack of accommodations, few tourists were aware of its existence. Alaska interests had decried the establishment of the monument because of its potentially dampening effect on economic development; Governor Thomas Riggs, for instance, remarked that "Katmai Monument serves no purpose and should be abolished." [5]

A few early efforts were made to develop tourism to the area. Robert F. Griggs, discoverer of Geographic Harbor along the Pacific coast, noted that it would be easy for steamers to land people nearby. He added that "a few miles of road [from the harbor to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes] will render the valley as readily accessible as the geysers of Yellowstone National Park." [6] Shortly thereafter, the Alaska Road Commission responded to Griggs's suggestions by proposing the thirty-mile road, and Governor Scott Bone recommended its construction in his annual reports for 1922 and 1923. He soon learned, however, that because the proposed route traversed a large area of fresh ash deposits (a material which, witnesses noted, had the consistency of either snow or ground coffee) it was too unstable to support road traffic. Bone also learned that the budget for all of the country's national monuments was only \$12,500. The Department of the Interior noted, therefore, that it was "not in a position under present circumstances to lay out any sort of development program for Katmai." The road was never seriously considered again, although governors' reports for years afterwards bemoaned the monument's lack of access. [7]

Despite the difficulties in reaching the monument, a few tourists dribbled in before World War II. In 1923, a party of forty spent two weeks exploring the area. As part of their trip, they hiked Mount Katmai. Seventeen more visited in 1924. Throughout the 1920s, Kodiak advertised itself as the outfitting headquarters for trips to the monument, perhaps because it had been the jumping-off point for the various National Geographic Society trips to the Valley of the Ten Thousand Smokes. Tourists heading there crossed the forty-mile Shelikof Strait in small boats. The Alaska Railroad also offered to arrange trips to the monument. [8]

To provide visitors aerial views of the Katmai country, Anchorage Air Transport offered a one-day tour in 1929. For \$265, the company offered to fly visitors into the still-active Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes and provide them eight hours for exploration and sightseeing. The success of the company's advertising is not known, but in the early 1930s Frank Dorbrandt, a pilot who flew for Anchorage-based Pacific International Airways, took several parties into the volcanic country. Robert Ellis (of Alaska-Washington Airways) and other charter operators also visited the area during the early to mid-1930s. [9] By 1940 John Walatka, a pilot for Bristol Bay Air Service, had also become familiar with the monument. [10]





The Service showed almost no interest in Katmai in its early years. The monument, officially closed to the public because no staff were available to protect it, [11] was managed as an adjunct to Mount McKinley National Park (now Denali National Park and Preserve). But the first NPS personnel did not enter the monument until 1937 when Grant Pearson, the Chief Ranger for Mount McKinley National Park, flew over portions of it. [12] It was not until three years later that Victor Cahalane and Frank T. Been made the first extensive NPS investigation. Cahalane, an employee of the agency's Biological Survey, and Been, the Superintendent of Mount McKinley National Park, spent most of September 1940 walking, boating, and flying over the monument. [13] Been and Cahalane recognized the tourist potential of the area. Over the short term, they 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." [14]

Prior to the Been-Cahalane expedition, government personnel were already stationed at the monument. Personnel of the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries, in the U.S. Department of Commerce, had built temporary quarters on the eastern shore of Brooks Lake, pushed a tractor trail to the south side of the falls, and erected a weir at the outflow of Brooks Lake. The present Fish and Wildlife Service building was built a year later. [15]

Usage of the monument rose sharply during World War II. In 1941, the U.S. Army Air Corps established Naknek Air Base (which was renamed King Salmon Air Station in the 1950s). Construction and military personnel soon discovered that the nearby waters, because of their temperature and purity, offered superb sport fishing possibilities. [16] Military authorities reacted by establishing two rest and recreation camps nearby. Rapids Camp (called Annex No. 1 by the Air Force) was located at the foot of the Naknek River Rapids, five miles southeast of the base, while Lake Camp (Annex No. 2) was located at the west end of Naknek Lake, seven miles to the east. [17] Naknek River and the western end of the lake, therefore, were subject to heavy fishing pressure for the remainder of the war, but many plane loads of servicemen also flew into Brooks River, the Bay of Islands and other fishing

spots, where they reportedly pulled "thousands upon thousands of trout" from the water. The Service, lacking funds for a ranger staff, was powerless to stop the onslaught. All it could do was arrange with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the successor to the Bureau of Fisheries) for the enforcement of hunting and fishing regulations. [18]

Word soon leaked out about the fishing potential of the Katmai country, and before long civilians demanded 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. [19] Bud Branham, a fisherman who flew out of Kodiak and Fairbanks during the war, was another who visited the monument. The pilots and clients passed the word along to others in southwestern Alaska, and by the end of the war a smattering of fishermen throughout the Territory had heard of Katmai's large, plentiful rainbow trout. [20] Petersen himself piloted many of those flights; as he noted years later, "during [World War II] I fished all of the areas where the concession camps and lodges are now located. It was recognized at that time that these were the choice rainbow streams in Alaska and that the entire [Katmai] area was prolific in many other types of sport fishing." [21]

The Service responded to the new popularity of the park by attempting to establish a presence. Several times during the decade regional officials submitted proposals to fund a part-time ranger, but all attempts were unsuccessful. [22] In addition, officials began laying out plans intended to stimulate visitation to the monument. In 1942, for example, the regional director urged the construction of ten shelter cabins in the monument. [23]

Another idea which surfaced that year was a proposal to restore the Native village of Savonoski, which had been buried during the 1912 eruptions. Frank T. Been, Superintendent at Mount McKinley National Park, felt the project was timely, inasmuch as "the construction of the barabs (native houses) is still readily evident," and urged that \$25,000 be appropriated for the task. He further noted that the "restoration should be...done by natives and according to native standards" for reasons of cost as well as cultural continuity. Acting Regional Director Herbert Maier, however, held the project in abeyance, noting that "there is little justification for including it in the program at this time." [24]

The NPS began to develop even more ambitious plans as well. By early 1946, officials at Mount McKinley National Park had commenced planning the locations of a possible Katmai tourist lodge, boat docks, trails, patrol cabins and administrative sites, and had made preliminary inspections of the park with those questions in mind. The location of the proposed sites, however, remains a question mark, and none of the plans came close to being implemented, perhaps because high officials in the Interior Department felt that "there has not been sufficient tourist travel in Alaska to justify the appropriation of Federal funds to provide facilities in this location." [25]

## **Commercial Access to Katmai, 1945-1950**

Some of the first to hear about the excellent fishing in the area were the pilots which serviced the nearby canneries, mines, and villages. The northeastern end of the Alaska Peninsula, distant from Alaska's rudimentary highway network, was supplied by sea as well as by air. Private shipping companies, including the major fish packers, plied a healthy trade between the Lower 48 and the various Bristol Bay canneries, while the Alaska Steamship Company served scattered villages on both sides of the peninsula. Shipping companies, however, had neither an interest nor a means of access to the Katmai sport fishing country. Therefore, area pilots were largely responsible for bringing fishermen into the area.

One of the best known pilots serving that area was Ray Petersen. Petersen, a veteran bush pilot, was born in York, Nebraska, on August 10, 1912. He had been raised on a ranch in Wyoming but had learned to fly in 1929 in the Chicago area. He headed west to Bellingham, Washington, in 1933 and arrived in Alaska in April 1934. [26] He worked for Star Air Service (a predecessor to Alaska Airlines) beginning that September; he served the Lucky Shot Mine north of Anchorage in addition to a scattering of trappers and prospectors. The following February, he began flying for Marsh Airways between Anchorage and Bethel, with occasional trips out to the platinum and iridium mine at Goodnews Bay. By the end of that summer he had become a founding partner in Bethel Airways. His work with Marsh and Bethel airways, while brief, was a portent of things to come, because he spent the rest of his career developing the aviation industry in southwestern Alaska. [27]

A major break came in 1937 when he obtained a contract to haul goods to and from the mine at Goodnews Bay. Consistent work allowed him to form the Ray Petersen Flying Service (based in Bethel) that year, and for the next several years he carried goods from Anchorage to retail outlets, government offices, and individuals in the Lower Yukon and Kuskokwim river regions. [28] The Goodnews Bay mine owners, however, remained a consistent source of much-needed capital, and hauling miners and company supplies proved to be a consistent source of income. By late 1941, he had earned a modicum of prosperity. He moved to Anchorage just before the outbreak of World War II. [29]

Once the war began, the planes owned by many Alaskan pilots were sometimes commandeered to haul military supplies. But Petersen flew primarily for civilian purposes. He flew packed fish out from the Bristol Bay canneries and continued to serve the mine at Goodnews Bay, which remained open because both platinum and iridium were classified as either critical or strategic minerals. [30]

As the war progressed, Petersen and others recognized that Alaska aviation was changing. Increased business, the introduction of scheduled service and improved navigation aids all demanded the purchase of larger aircraft, and only through consolidation could the capital be raised to acquire the necessary planes. In 1943, therefore, Petersen purchased the Bristol Bay Air Service, operated by Bert Ruoff, and the Jim Dodson Air Service, which served Ruby, Beaver, and adjacent points out of Fairbanks. [31]

Before those purchase agreements could be approved, however, Petersen and several other airline companies decided to amalgamate. Included was the Ray Petersen Flying Service, owned by Raymond and Marie Petersen and Glen Dillard; Jim Dodson Air Service, owned by Jim and Mildred Dodson; Northern Airways, owned by Frank and Hazel Pollack and Terrence McDonald; Walatka Air Service, owned by John Walatka; Nat Browne Flying Service, owned by Nathan C. Browne; and Northern Air Service, owned by Robert and William Miller. [32] They entered into a corporate organization agreement on October 22, 1945; three months later, on January 30, 1946, the carriers formally applied to the Civil Aeronautics Board to create Northern Consolidated Airlines (NCA).

On May 8, 1947, the CAB approved Petersen's two airline purchases as well as the four-company consolidation. By that time, NCA had purchased several war-surplus DC-3s, its first large planes. [33] Peterson, the major shareholder, was elected president of the new airline, while Pollack and Miller served as the first treasurer and secretary, respectively. Petersen was to remain at the helm of the company as long as it operated, a total of more than 20 years. [34]

Northern Consolidated Airlines thus emerged as a major carrier for most of southwest Alaska. Although it did not offer service between Anchorage and Fairbanks, it used those two bases as jumping-off points to villages and towns along Bristol Bay, the Kuskokwim

River, and along the Bering Sea between Cape Romanzof and Cape Newenham. It also served a few villages along the middle Yukon River and in the Circle-Fort Yukon area. In all, the line boasted three mail routes and served some 45 villages on a regular basis. It also had irregular service authority over a large portion of western and southwestern Alaska. [35] Competitors in its service area included Wien Alaska Airlines, Reeve Airways (later Reeve Aleutian Airways), Alaska Airlines, and Pacific Northern Airlines. [36]

Because of its network, Northern Consolidated was in an excellent position to serve the Katmai area. By 1950, the line was the only carrier which provided direct service from Anchorage to Naknek Air Base (now known as King Salmon), as well as to nearby Koggiung, Egegik, and Igiugig. Two larger airlines, however, also stopped at the same four spots. Pacific Northern Airlines, which boasted the route certificate from Anchorage to Seattle, possessed the mail contract to the four locations. Alaska Airlines, holder of the lucrative Anchorage-Fairbanks route certificate, provided added competition. [37]

---

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>

---

katm/tourism/chap1.htm  
Last Updated: 13-Oct-2004

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



### CHAPTER 2:

## ESTABLISHING THE NORTHERN CONSOLIDATION CONCESSION

During the late 1940s Ray Petersen, President of Northern Consolidated Airlines, brought an increasing number of fishermen into the Katmai country. His business activities brought him into increasing contact with Washington political figures, and several suggested that he attempt to develop camps in the Katmai country. He approached NPS officials with that idea in late 1949; the agency readily accepted his proposal, and the two signed a concessions permit in March 1950. NCA spent the next several months feverishly assembling its camps. The National Park Service responded to Petersen's move by establishing its own camp nearby.

### Creation of the Concession Permit

The Katmai country was "discovered" by fishermen during World War II, and the cessation of hostilities brought new popularity to the region. Because no National Park Service personnel were stationed there the monument was still officially closed, and Federal regulations also prohibited airplanes from landing there. [1] Despite those regulations, however, a growing number of visitors, mainly fishermen, traveled into the monument. The influx numbered several hundred, but the exact number was unknown. [2]

Northern Consolidated Airlines (NCA), along with independent pilot Bud Branham, took excursions and charter parties to "Naknek and vicinity" for sport fishing as early as 1947. In 1948 Edwin Seiler, from King Salmon, began fishing Grosvenor River, the short stream connecting Coville and Grosvenor lakes, because it offered "the best Dolly Varden fishing in the area." By the spring of 1948 the Standard Oil Company of California had sponsored a color film which depicted the advantages of rainbow fishing on Brooks River. [3] Another factor pointing to the growing popularity of the area was Kokhanok Lodge, built on Iliamna Lake in 1949. Kokhanok, built by Bud Branham, was the first sportsman's lodge in southwestern Alaska, and before long the owner was flying fishermen to Brooks and other Katmai points. [4]

During the late 1940s, NPS officials continued to receive reports from Fish and Wildlife Service officials about the degradation of area resources. Officially, hunting and trapping were prohibited within the monument. Fishing regulations specified that no more than ten fish could be caught per day and that the total catch be limited to twenty fish. [5] The ugly reality, however, was that hunting and trapping violations were increasing, and the fish resource was being abused to the point where "poaching was rampant and the trout were caught with gobs of salmon eggs on giant Colorado spinners and hooks." [6] 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." [7]

During the same period, Alaskan interests began to covet other monument resources. During World War II, the NPS had allowed a company to harvest clams along the Pacific coast as an emergency food source. But in 1946, an application to carry on much the same uses was denied, and local residents howled in protest. In subsequent years came demands to extract pumice from the Kukak area, along the Pacific coast, and to allow hunting in the monument. One and all, it appeared, demanded that the monument be reduced or abolished. [8] NPS officials reacted to the pressure by seeking methods by which visitation to the area could be encouraged while simultaneously protecting area resources.

Ray Petersen, president of the newly-formed Northern Consolidated Airlines, played a major role in alerting others of the fisheries resources of the Katmai country. In conjunction with plans to build the present Anchorage International Airport, he befriended Lt. Gen. Nathan Twining, head of the Alaska Air Command. He also made frequent visits to Washington, D.C., in connection with route certification and related matters, where he met leaders such as Leonard Wood Hall, Congressman from New York; Judge J. Russell Sprague, another New York political figure; and Republican party stalwart Herbert Brownell. He invited these three to the Katmai area shortly after the 1948 Republican convention. Sprague and Brownell were taking a particularly well-deserved rest, having played major roles during the convention. [9]

As official and recreational trips to Katmai increased, Petersen and others recognized the desirability of establishing base camps. General Twining, during a Washington visit in the winter of 1948-49, may have been the first to suggest such an idea. [10] Other officials encouraged Petersen to go a step further and apply for a franchise for lodge operations in Katmai. They did so for several reasons: 1) bad weather, which often caused flights to be delayed, made independent tent camping uncomfortable; 2) existing tent campers were interfering with operations at the Brooks Lake Fisheries Station; and 3) problems with littering and overfishing were arising on an increasing basis. NPS officials, for their part, recognized that a concession operation offered one of the most effective ways to combine increased visitation and park protection. [11]

Petersen was initially unconvinced that such an operation would be economically viable, and he had additional doubts that a fishing camp was an appropriate or even legal adjunct to an airline operation. [12] By the winter of 1949-1950, however, he was ready to consider the project, primarily because he believed tourists were a necessary adjunct to regional growth in southwest Alaska. Petersen, head of a cadre of NCA managers characterized as "young and desperately earnest empire builders," 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. We feel that people, more than goods, spell success for us." [13]

Toward the development of that market, the company inaugurated a sales, publicity, and advertising campaign in late 1949. Petersen intended that the linchpin of the campaign, if it could be manifested, would be "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." The company also had its sights set on developing tours in other parts of its route network, and to that end it purchased a series of hotels or roadhouses at McGrath, Platinum, and Bethel. [14]

On December 14, 1949, Petersen met with National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management officials in Washington and laid out his plans. Although Petersen was still reluctant to drag his company into the lodging business, an observer noted that "they [NCA] found it necessary to do so to get the facilities started. [Petersen's] intention is eventually to sublet them or permit their operation by private individuals if this can be arranged." [15]

His proposal called for the establishment of four small fishing camps. A camp "near Brooks Lake" and another near Lake Coville were planned on land located within Katmai National Monument. The two other proposed camps, at "Nanwhyanuke Lake" and Battle Lake, were on Bureau of Land Management land. [16] Petersen had personally chosen the general locations for each camp, considering them the best fishing spots in the Katmai country. [17] In order to create a suitable environment for his guests, Petersen had relatively modest plans for the camps. An observer at the meeting, Charles Richey, noted that

the intention is to have a tent frame arrangement of two or three tents, where overnight facilities can be provided for six or seven guests. Mr. Peterson [sic] mentioned that the company wants to keep these parties small and to sort of feel its way. As I understand it, the company will provide a camp tender who will cook the meals and take care of the activities. [18]

Petersen found a receptive audience. Richey noted that the Assistant Secretary of the Interior

is very enthusiastic, and ... he intends to do everything possible, within the Department's limitations, to help it along. I told the group that I was sure the Service would regard the proposal sympathetically. 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. [19]

Petersen then proceeded to finalize his plans.

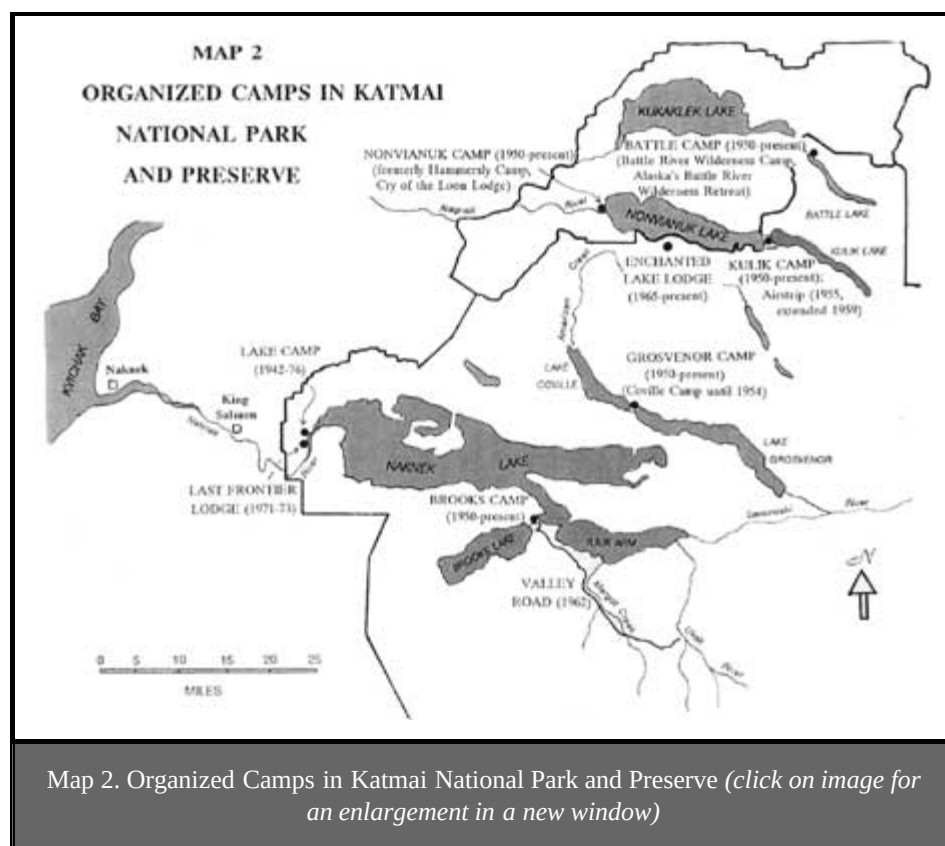
The project being proposed was something new in the annals of the National Park Service. National parks had been dealing with concessioners since the establishment of Yellowstone in 1872, and over the years had contracted with owners of hotels, gift shops, transportation companies, filling stations and other businesses. By 1950, there were several hundred concessions active in the various NPS units. Some of those concessioners operated airplanes in the parks. Never before, however, had the NPS leased a concession operation to a company whose primary business was the intercity transportation of passengers and freight. It was also the first time that the NPS had depended upon an airline as the primary means of access to one of its units. The arrangement worked because the camps were some of the least accessible facilities in the national park system. [20]

Because the Service was unable to consider staffing the monument, it proposed to allow an extraordinary degree of autonomy to the concessioner. For instance, there were no initial provisions for either resident or seasonal NPS staff in the area. To fill in the void, one NPS official suggested that Petersen might play a role in protection, remarking that

I think it is possible that we could arrange through this permit to get a certain amount of protection in the national monument area through the permittee. At least we could request that the permittee's representatives report any types of adverse use and be helpful to Service personnel in looking over and studying the area. [21]

On January 21, 1950, Petersen formally wrote for permission to operate two camps in the monument for a two-year period. Citing the need to conserve park resources, as well as the need to recoup capital outlays, Petersen requested an exclusive concession. He gave additional details about his proposed camps. The base camp, which by now had been located at the mouth of the Brooks River, had increased in scope; it was to consist of "framed tents, sufficient to house and feed twenty to thirty people." He also applied to operate another camp, to be "set up on the stream which connects Coville and Grosvenor Lakes." Plans for an expanded camp system outside the monument were not forgotten. Petersen made

arrangements for a meeting the following month in which he "would like to arrange for lease or purchase of three sites ... for the construction of camps." The fifth camp, although unspecified in his letter, was Kulik Camp, located on the north bank of Kulik River at the outflow of Kulik Lake. [22]



On February 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, for the two camps in the monument. Petersen was pleased to find that the permit was valid until December 31, 1954, three years longer than he had proposed. The permit allowed NCA the right to

carry on ... the business of camps and lodges with incidental facilities in connection therewith; and air and water transportation services on scheduled and nonscheduled bases, and to occupy land in said area....

The permit specified that NCA pay the government four percent of all revenue gained from camp operations and transportation to the monument, but excluding revenues from through air travelers visiting the monument on an incidental basis. [23]

The only changes requested by Washington NPS officials after the issuance of the draft permit related to reduced rates for accommodations while on official business within the monument. The permittee agreed to those changes, and on March 10, 1950, Concession Permit No. I-34np-299 was signed at the regional office in San Francisco. Ray Petersen signed on behalf of Northern Consolidated Airlines, and Alfred C. Kuehl signed on behalf of Grant H. Pearson of the National Park Service. Herbert Maier and E.M. Hilton, both regional officials, witnessed the signing. Regional Director O.A. Tomlinson approved the transaction. [24]

Many specifications contained within the permit differed little from those demanded of other lodge owners doing business in the national parks. The NPS, for instance, demanded approval

of all specific camp locations, as well as of all buildings, structures or other improvements, and reserved the right to require removal of any inappropriate structures. They retained control over rates charged by the permittee and were able to remove any employees of the permittee "declared by the Regional Director to be unfit for such employment." [25]

Several other clauses in the permit were peculiar to the Katmai situation. One limited the number of overnight guests in each camp. Another required the permittee to "burn all garbage daily and dispose of all ashes and other refuse to the satisfaction of the Superintendent." To limit the daily catch, NCA was prohibited "from serving fish caught in the Monument except those caught by guests and others for their own consumption." [26]

Petersen promised other conservation measures not specified in the permit. His exclusive permit allowed him to set specific regulations on the number of fish taken. He also insisted that the Brooks River be limited to fly fishing. Petersen planned to use fuel oil, not wood, for cooking and heating, and vowed not to cut incidental timber without first obtaining a permit. [27]

Petersen encountered only token opposition to his plans. On April 20, 1950, Bernard Martin, an "interested party in the guiding profession" based in Anchorage, protested the issuance of the permit. He did so because of the exclusive nature of the permit and because granting such a permit was, in his opinion, an "extremely arbitrary and discriminatory action ... which is not in accord with usual government practice." [28] By way of reply, the NPS Chief of Public Services agreed that Department of the Interior regulations did not permit "similar camps in the same general areas assigned to the concessioner." He noted, however, that anyone holding an applicable permit would be allowed to perform guiding services in the monument, and was invited to apply for such a permit if he wanted one. [29]

## **Establishment and Construction of the Camps**

By the time Petersen had gained approval for his camps, little time remained for designing and constructing the camps before the summer season commenced. He gave the job of designing the camps to Vera Lieble, who was known at the time as western Alaska's "petticoat pilot." [30] Lieble was also a nurse who had supervised the building of various Bureau of Indian Affairs hospitals in interior Alaska. She ordered each of the camps to be constructed of a series of tent frames covered by olive drab-colored G.I. tents. [31]

The camps were constructed in the spring of 1950. While ice held firm on the mountain lakes, a wheel-equipped DC-3 landed supplies at most of the camp locations. By March 17, Coville Camp was under construction, and by May 3 it was ready for business. Nine days later, a converted Navy PBV flying boat landed on the open waters of Naknek Lake with the materials for Brooks Camp. Inasmuch as many of the construction materials had been pre-cut prior to the flight, it required a relatively short period of time to prepare the camp. [32]

Those assigned to construct the camps included John Walatka, a pilot who was also conversant in bush construction techniques; John Pearson, who later built other lodges in southwest Alaska; and Bob Gurtler, a longtime Petersen acquaintance. They were assisted by several Eskimo craftsmen from the Kuskokwim area, including Nickenoff Evon and Raphael Kupanoak. Hired to supply kitchen facilities was Charles Blue, a Swiss chef who worked at the NCA camps for more than ten years. [33] Petersen had estimated in early 1950 that camp construction would cost between \$4000 and \$5000. When it came time to construct and equip the camps, however, Peterson urged the camp planners to supply whatever materials seemed reasonable and proper to the operation. As a result, the price tag for equipping the five camps ballooned to approximately \$60,000. [34]

The NCA concession operation opened as scheduled. The first guest, a Texan named J.C. Hill, arrived in late May. [35] Shortly afterwards, from June 3 to June 5, Ray Petersen invited four Anchorage newsmen to Brooks Camp for a weekend of rainbow fishing. The scribes proudly proclaimed the opening of the new "sportsmen's heaven," where one guest found himself "tossing back 16-inch rainbow trout, because they were too small." Another declared that the trip was "worth it just for the scenery. I've used up several rolls of film and wish I had more." Petersen, for his part, remarked that "the Katmai region is one of the greatest attractions the North has to offer. We feel it is our economic duty to share it with the rest of the world." [36]

The completed camps were much as Petersen had envisioned them in January. Each was composed of a series of tent frames covered by olive drab-colored G.I. tent material. Brooks Camp, located on the flats just north of the mouth of the Brooks River, featured a 32' x 16' cookhouse and eight or nine guest tents, most of which were nine feet square. It had an advertised capacity of thirty guests. The other four camps accommodated between twelve and 24 guests. Battle Lake Camp comprised a 16-foot-square mess hall and kitchen, two other 16-foot-square sleeping quarters, and five nine-foot-square sleeping quarters. Kulik Camp was identical to Battle Lake Camp, except that it had four instead of five smaller tents. Coville Camp, located within the monument boundaries, featured a 16-foot-square cookhouse at the south end of camp, and one large and four smaller guest tents. Nonvianuk Camp, the smallest of the five camps, had just one 16-foot-square tent (the mess hall and kitchen) plus two nine-foot-square sleeping quarters. In addition to these improvements, Coville and Battle camps had pump houses, while Brooks, Coville, and Kulik camps had root cellars. [37]

Guests at the camps were rewarded with few amenities. Heat was supplied by oil-burning floor furnaces; guests slept in sleeping bags on cots. Brooks Camp offered running water, flush toilets, and shower baths, but the other camps had pit toilets. [38] The camps operated on the American plan (in which the fares included meals as well as lodging); they charged \$25 per day that first summer. So-called transient guests were also able to stay and eat at the camps on a European plan basis, where food and lodging costs were itemized on an individual basis. [39] The first Brooks Camp manager was Doug Barnsley; the cooks were Vern and Vera St. Louis. The remaining camps were managed by husband-and-wife teams, some of which included children as well. The entire camp operation was managed by Hans Autur, a European-trained hotel man. [40]

The Korean Conflict, which erupted at the beginning of the summer season, depressed visitation levels throughout Alaska and moderated the expected tourist traffic to the NCA camps. Brooks Camp received 134 visitors, almost all fishermen, its first summer: one in May, 69 in June, 40 in July, and 24 in August. [41] Many of those visitors, however, were military personnel, guests of Mr. Petersen or NCA employees. Paying lodge guests, therefore, totaled 33 in June, eight in July, and an unknown number in August. The camp's capacity was never taxed; no more than ten anglers stayed at the camp at any given time. [42]

Tourists wishing to visit the NCA camps flew from Anchorage to King Salmon airport in one of the company's DC-3s, then headed down to the nearby Naknek River, where they transferred to either an eight-passenger, single-engine Norseman floatplane, an amphibious, war-surplus PBV, or a twin-engine Cessna T-50 on floats for the final leg of the trip. [43] The airline offered daily service. While many travelers made their own bookings, others took part in special three-day, all-expense-paid tours from Anchorage. Still others included a Katmai vacation as part of more extended NCA tours which lasted anywhere from ten to fourteen days. Short-term visitors probably limited their visits to the base camp at Brooks River. More long-term guests, however, were shuttled to the other four camps. [44]

Whether by accident or design, the National Park Service stationed its first seasonal ranger in

the monument the same year NCA opened its concession operation. For years the agency had sought funds to create a presence; in June 1948, the Superintendent at Mount McKinley had gone so far as to name the person to be assigned and the anticipated starting date for patrol work. Personnel shortages, however, had prevented the patrol from taking place that year. [45]

The 1950 ranger assignment was implemented with a minimum of complication. On March 21, just eleven days after the concession permit was signed, Mount McKinley National Park Superintendent Grant Pearson noted that "after July 1, 1950 a Park Ranger will be stationed within the boundaries of Katmai," and by late April he chose William J. (Willie) Nancarrow as the Katmai ranger "as he has proven to be a very good all around man." He had hoped that the ranger would leave for Katmai in mid-June and return to Mount McKinley National Park on September 15. [46] Budget considerations, however, reduced that time to a two-month assignment that lasted from July 1 to August 30. A total of \$2042 was authorized that summer for management and protection activities in the Katmai area. [47]

Following the dictates of staff at both Mount McKinley National Park and the regional office, Nancarrow took pains to establish his quarters and carry on his operations independently of the concessioner. [48] The ranger and concessioner, however, cooperated in several matters. Petersen, for instance, sold Nancarrow a surplus 9' x 9' tent which he used as a combined residence and headquarters. (This was located at the site of the present campground.) The concessioner was glad to have a ranger at Brooks Camp and occasionally offered him flights over the monument to assist in the patrol work. [49] Petersen recognized the prestige that monument designation added to 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." [50] What was to become a long-term relationship between Ray Petersen and the NPS, therefore, began on a solid footing.

## Land Acquisition and Patenting Process

Brooks Camp and Coville Camp (later Grosvenor Camp) were on National Park Service land and were thus not available for purchase. As specified in various concession contracts issued over the years, the Secretary of the Interior allowed concession activities in "such pieces and parcels as may be, in his judgment, necessary and appropriate for the operations authorized hereunder." The location and acreage delegated for improvements, however, was not specified. NCA had a large degree of control and responsibility over its camps; as noted in various early concession contracts, the company had "a possessory interest in all concessioner's improvements consisting of all incidents of ownership, except legal title which shall be vested in the United States." [51]

Outside of Katmai National Monument, Northern Consolidated was free to apply for parcels from the Bureau of Land Management. As noted above, Petersen indicated an interest in two BLM parcels (Nonvianuk Lake and Battle Lake) as early as December 1949. By January 1950, he was interested in the Kulik Camp area as well as the other two sites and told an Interior Department official that

I am in hopes the Land Sales Bill of 1949, Regulations and Authority, will have been released at the time of our [February 1] meeting. The five-acre tract lease or purchase method does not, in my opinion, provide enough space to set up an adequate camp with room for expansion such as the building of lodges, tourist cabins and camp sites. [52]

In the spring of 1950, NCA constructed all five of the camps in which it had indicated an interest. It made no immediate move, however, to secure legal title to the land surrounding the three camps located outside of the monument. Following a long-standing custom, hundreds of Alaskans during this period had homes and businesses for which they had no legal claim; had the land been more valuable, airline officials may have tried to acquire it sooner. But as a BLM field examiner later wrote about the area, "the isolation, inaccessibility, and distance from populated areas of these lands are factors giving most persons no interest in acquiring them." [53] Four years later the airline began construction of an airstrip south of Kulik Camp; it likewise allowed this parcel to remain in public ownership for the time being.

On May 25, 1955, the airline applied to obtain four different parcels of land under the provisions of the Alaska Public Sale Act, which had been passed by the U.S. Congress on August 30, 1949. It began the process by requesting that the four parcels be classified for disposal in accordance with the act. Included was a 330' x 660' parcel (five acres) at Battle Lake, a 700' x 300' triangular parcel (five acres) at Nonvianuk Camp, a 990' x 495' parcel (11.25 acres) at Kulik Camp, and 80 acres at the Kulik Lake Airport. As part of the public sale process, NCA announced the intended use of the parcels; it proposed "to develop the first three parcels into camp and recreational sites, suitable for the most discriminating fishermen and hunters." The fourth was intended for use as an airstrip. [54]

By April 1956 the Bureau of Land Management had classified and surveyed the four parcels. It reduced the size of the requested plots to 3.98 acres at Battle Lake, 2.36 acres at Nonvianuk Camp, and 10.64 acres at Kulik Camp. The size of the airstrip claim was not reduced. [55] The following month it announced that, under Classification No. 22 of the Public Sale Act, it was holding a public auction for the four parcels. The minimum bid prices for the parcels, as listed above, were \$350, \$325, \$300 and \$650, respectively. Because the land surrounding the tracts was neither timbered nor of agricultural use, the bid prices were quite nominal. The land itself was valued at \$2.50 per acre, to which the cost of the survey was added. [56]

On June 4, 1956, Alaska Public Sale No. 22 was held. NCA offered the minimum bid on all four tracts; its bid was accepted in each case. [57] Once the application process was underway, the BLM required a proposed program of use and development for the lands as well as proof of the financial means to carry out those plans. It also required that the lands be used for the same purpose for which they had originally been classified. [58] The airline had no particular difficulty in satisfying the various land acquisition requirements, and the patenting process was allowed to smoothly proceed. In April 1957 the airline was issued a Certificate of Conditional Purchase for each property. The office was provided an Application for Patent/Proof of Use in August 1958, and on October 26, 1960, NCA was awarded patents for each of the parcels for which it had applied some four years earlier. [59]

It took ten years, therefore, for NCA to gain full ownership over the three camps located outside of the monument boundaries. Combined with the concessions agreement it arranged with the National Park Service, the airline was thus recognized as the primary way for fishermen to gain access to the increasingly well-known fishing opportunities of the Katmai country. NCA never showed interest in opening up more camps than the five it established in 1950; the park service, in turn, never seriously entertained proposals to establish camps from rival companies. NCA and the NPS thus benefited from a mutually advantageous relationship. The camps helped publicize an otherwise little-known regional airline, and in so doing provided access to the monument for the general public as well as to camp guests. They thus provided a sufficient degree of development and access to legitimize the right of the agency to continue its jurisdiction over the monument. The park service, in turn, provided a degree of exclusivity to the camps. Their location on NPS land also lent a certain degree of prestige; although many Alaskans felt that the park service was a hindrance to development,

Outside visitors generally favored its presence. NCA and its successors have continued that relationship to the present day.

---

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>

---

katm/tourism/chap2.htm  
Last Updated: 13-Oct-2004

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



### CHAPTER 3:

## NORTHERN CONSOLIDATED CONCESSION OPERATIONS

---

Between 1950 and 1968, Northern Consolidated Airlines was the monument's only concessioner. During the 1950s the camps appealed primarily to fishermen, and provided basic levels of comfort. The airline proposed several improvements in the monument; some were fairly whimsical, while others, such as an airport near Brooks Camp, were rebuffed by agency personnel. In 1960 it undertook a major building program at Brooks Camp, and shortly afterward it pressured the NPS into constructing a road to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. Once completed, the improvements began to lure a growing number of non-fishing tourists, and the number of independent travelers became increasingly significant.

### Concession Activities During the 1950s

The first decade of Northern Consolidated Airlines camp operations was characterized by good relations between the National Park Service and the concessioner, rustic camp facilities, and a relatively limited array of activities offered to camp guests.

The camps that had been constructed in the spring of 1950 were improved little 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, then overlaid by asphalt shingling. Guests continued to sleep in sleeping bags on cots, and were not bothered by such amenities as telephones, television, or motor vehicles. Communications with the outside world were by airplane or radio. [1] These camps, which were collectively known as "Angler's Paradise," had been constructed primarily for fishermen. 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."

In order to publicize the camps, Petersen invited a host of outdoor writers to the camps. [2] The New York Times, the Christian Science Monitor, and the Seattle Times responded with extensive, glowing reportage, and a score of other newspapers also provided publicity. The major outdoor magazines, such as Field and Stream, Outdoor Life, and Argosy, also sent writers to Katmai. The major Alaska publications, including Alaska Sportsman and the Anchorage newspapers, supported the camps. In addition, several filmmakers came to the camps and featured Katmai footage on Alaska travel documentaries. [3] Both writers and filmmakers wrote glowing reports of the Katmai's fishing possibilities. They extolled the huge size of the fish and the ease of catching them; they also noted the wide variety of species available: rainbow, steelhead, Dolly Varden and lake trout, along with grayling, sockeye salmon, and northern pike. [4]

To personalize the NCA publicity campaign, the company hired a local homesteader, Rufus

Knox "Bill" Hammersly, to promote the camps. Hammersly had lived in Alaska since 1926, and had worked as trapper, prospector and hunting guide; by 1945 he had established a homestead at the outlet to Nonvianuk Lake. Five years later, NCA established a camp adjacent to his claim, and hired him as camp manager. Tall and rough-hewn, and sporting a full, graying beard, Hammersly personified the image of an Alaskan miner, and his life in the bush authenticated that image. During the winter of 1950-51, therefore, Hammersly toured the United States and told salty tales about life and fishing to a wide range of radio and television audiences. [5]

The publicity gained from the initial advertising campaign was successful in attracting a solid clientele. Customers evidently liked what they saw and told their friends, and before long, a regular customer base had been established. The continuing popularity of the camp experience obviated the need for additional articles or advertisements, and after 1953 only scattered articles on Katmai appeared in the various travel and outdoors magazines. [6]

When plans for the camps were first laid out, NCA officials espoused a variety of proposed activities at the camps. An article which accompanied the opening of Brooks Camp in 1950 noted that

present plans call for a 22-foot cabin cruiser for deep-sea fishing on Naknek Lake in search of mysterious giant fish described by natives, and establishment of another camp in the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. [7]

Shortly thereafter came the announcement that

the airline will co-operate with the National Park Service this summer in prospecting and laying out horseback trips. It is planned to provide these next summer, with overnight rides into the "10,000-Smokes" area and other spots of fascinating geologic interest. [8]

By the end of the summer, a travel writer noted that

the airline plans to establish tourist camps throughout this region, including possibly a Sun Valley of the northland near the famed Katmai Valley. [9]

Despite the optimistic statements, almost nothing more was heard from any of these plans. Good fishing and the scenery that accompanied it were the main attractions, along with the delicious, plentiful food offered as part of the stay. [10] Although advertisements were quick to note the nearby Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, the valley was available only to those who chartered planes. Due to the uncertainties of weather, however, many were unable to make the trip. [11]

Even though the concessioner advertised hiking as a camp attraction, the only trail available to lodge guests was one from Brooks Camp to the north side of Brooks Falls; this trail followed the same ridge used by the present Eskimo Pit House trail. In 1951, NPS ranger Morton Woods cut a trail from Brooks Camp to Brooks Lake; it was probably an extension of the existing Brooks Falls trail. [12] Fishermen who headed directly to the falls did not need to cross the river, but many of those who fished the banks along the lower stretches of the Brooks River, and the staff at the Brooks Lake fisheries station, had to use boats for the crossing. Several plans during the 1950s proposed the construction of a footbridge; in 1956 work was done on a bridge, but it was damaged the same year by high water. Nothing more came of the plans. [13] The only other form of travel around the monument was by boat. Fishermen rented skiffs with or without motors, and every few years the concessioner also had a large boat that was used for travel around Naknek Lake. [14]

When the Alaska Recreation Survey investigated the possibilities of the Katmai area in the early 1950s, they envisioned that many new activities could be developed over time, some by the concessioner. George Collins, chief of the Survey, agreed with Ray Petersen that "a diversified program for visitors" was needed. Elements of the proposed program consisted of a trail to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, which would eventually be followed by a one-way road with turn-outs, which went as far as the divide overlooking the valley. In time, Collins felt that "helicopters might answer the problem of getting visitors within short walking distance of Novarupta Volcano...which they should have the experience of actually touching if they can." He advocated Petersen's use of aircraft for flights over the volcanic area and hoped to see flights continue on to landing fields at Geographic Harbor and Kukak Bay. He envisioned the creation of tours of the clam cannery then operating in Kukak Bay and urged the eventual creation of a concessioner-operated boat trip on the principal lakes and rivers of the area. [15]

In retrospect, some of the ideas advocated by the Survey appear fanciful, just as NCA's ideas had been during its first year of operation. That more ideas have not been realized cannot be considered the fault of either the Service or the concessioner. Instead, factors that insured the continuation of the status quo were the tightfisted budgets of both parties, the relatively small number of guests to the vast preserve, and the escalating value that the public held toward the nation's wilderness resources.

In order to entice visitors to the various fishing camps, Northern Consolidated offered several different tour packages during the 1950s. These were sold by various U.S.-based airlines. [16] In 1951 and 1952, fishermen could choose between three-day and seven-day packages. A year later a one-day option was also available, but by 1956 the one-day trip had been dropped and a two-week tour added. Patrons on most trips did not sign up for a particular camp; instead, the airline offered to "take you to where the fishing is the 'hottest' at the moment." [17] For this reason, most fishermen did not sign up to fish at a particular camp; instead, most came to Brooks Camp first and were then flown out to one of three other camps. [18] (Battle Camp, found to be a relatively poor location for fishing, was rarely mentioned in company promotional efforts.) John Walatka was the chief pilot to shuttle fishermen to and from the various camps; [19] others were "Swede" Blanchard, an Anchorage-based guide and veteran bush pilot, and R.J. Stevenson, a longtime NCA pilot. [20]

Camp photographs from the 1950s, and the reminiscences of Katmai visitors, confirm that the camps contained many aspects of a wealthy, rustic men's club or fraternity. There were no restrictions, of course, as to who could visit, and independent travelers, who stayed at the nearby campground, were freely able 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 of the guests, therefore, were business leaders; both Alaskan and U.S. points of origin were well represented. A small though visible number of political leaders and Interior Department officials also paid a visit during the early years of the camps; because of the camp's superb fishing, the trip became a critical part of their Alaska tour. [21]

Each of the five camps, as noted in the ad, had a different optimum fishing period. Therefore, anglers arriving early in the season found the best prospects at Brooks Camp, for example, while those arriving progressively later in the season fished at Coville, Nonvianuk, Kulik and Battle camps, respectively. [22] The changing fishing peaks resulted in some camps being open much less than a full season. Coville Camp typically operated for four to six weeks during June and July, and the camp at Battle Lake did not usually open until August. [23] Brooks Camp was originally open only during June, July and August, in order to coincide with what was purported to be the best fishing season. In 1952, however, the camp was "kept

open well into September ... because fishing had turned very good just at the time the camp was scheduled to close late in August." Thereafter, the camp continued to stay open through the first or second week of September. [24]

One of the main reasons that airline management established the camps was to stimulate travel on its aircraft, and to be associated with the prestige of a well-known resort. [25] Considering the length of the season and the financial outlay required to establish the camp facilities, the camps were not expected to be profitable, at least over the short term. Those humble expectations were largely fulfilled for their first years of operation. An analyst of the first summer's operation noted that because of the "situation in Korea ... the success of the two camps installed within the monument was not financially satisfying." Scattered financial reports showed that the five Katmai area camps had negative net income figures for the next seven years. [26]

Relations between the concessioner and the National Park Service remained generally cordial during the first several years of camp operation. In the 1950s the two operated on a complementary relationship; the Service 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 resource and thus attracted visitors to the camps. During this period the concessioner and the National Park Service were generally happy with the existing level of development.

As the decade wore on, however, relationships between the two parties occasionally became strained. Part of this feeling developed because the concessioner began to assume a proprietary feeling for the camps. It had, after all, built five camps in or near the monument, provided for access, housed a large majority of Katmai visitors, and employed personnel at each camp. The NPS, on the other hand, was hard-pressed to support a single seasonal ranger. The concessioner, therefore, felt justifiably angry when it proposed developments that the Service could not support.

One factor complicating the relations between the concessioner and the NPS was the nature of the decision making structure in the two organizations. The concessioner was effectively represented by just two men, President Ray Petersen and Camp Manager (or Camp Superintendent) John Walatka, who also served as chief pilot. Others in the organization who dealt with the NPS included managers and cooks at the individual camps and financial officers in Anchorage. [27] Petersen and Walatka, however, made most decisions for the concessioner regarding camp operations. They formed an effective working team for some twenty years. Petersen's voice appears to have been the stronger of the two, for regardless of his other responsibilities he took a strong, personal interest in the welfare and operations of the Katmai camps. [28]

The decision making structure of the National Park Service, as it pertained to the early Katmai camps, was far more diffused. It consisted of a seasonal ranger at Brooks Camp, a superintendent at Mount McKinley, officials in the Region Four (later Western Region) headquarters in San Francisco, and national officials in Washington, D.C., all of whom created regulations, interpreted policy, or worked on the creation of new contracts. These personnel, moreover, were rotated or otherwise replaced every few years. As long as the camps remained at the status quo and regulations remained relatively simple, relations remained good. But attempts at camp development, the growing complexity of Federal regulations, and the multilayered, sometimes contradictory levels of NPS management often combined to anger and frustrate both concessioner and bureaucrat. These forces surfaced soon after camp operations began.

## Erection of Permanent Buildings, 1956-1964

For the first three years of camp operations, both guests and management were satisfied with existing facilities. Most fishermen liked the "certain quality of primitive charm and Bohemian atmosphere to tent cabins furnished with double decker bunks and sleeping bags," and resisted attempts to change it. [29] But in 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," as one travel promoter put it. This type of visitor expected more than tents and oil heat; therefore, the airline made plans to fly a prefabricated lodge up from Seattle. Brooks Camp, "on a site overlooking Brooks Falls," was considered, but NCA officials were also willing to investigate a site at the mouth of Margot Creek, which was located near the site of Savonoski, a former Eskimo village. They were apparently responding to recommendations of the Alaska Recreation Survey, which had recently reported that the monument's "main tourist center" should be located at Margot Creek, a salmon-bearing stream with easy access for a potential road into the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. [30] But by the following January, the Margot Creek site had been dropped from consideration, and the airline announced its intention to build, from local materials, a 30' x 60' log cabin along the Brooks River "to be used as a central hall for eating and recreational facilities." Superintendent Pearson flew out to investigate. [31]

In the spring of 1954, Petersen approached regional NPS officials with more sophisticated plans. Recognizing that he was in the last year of his five-year concession permit, he offered to construct a permanent lodge at Brooks River and additionally proposed to replace the existing tent frames with cabins, all in return for a seven-year contract. The Service liked the proposal.

After the contract had been prepared, however, Petersen complicated matters by conditioning the acceptance of his building plans on the construction of an airstrip in the vicinity. (He felt an airstrip was needed because winds made it difficult, and sometimes impossible, to land float planes on Naknek Lake.) The Service, for its part, muddled the waters when it told the concessioner that it would not finance the construction of a utility system at the camp. Petersen had apparently hoped or expected the NPS to underwrite such costs, but in a July 1954 memorandum an NPS official stated that "it is not feasible for the Service to provide such facilities for the concessioner, unless and until we have a development in the immediate vicinity requiring utilities." [32]

Regarding the airstrip idea, NPS Director Conrad Wirth responded in a February 9, 1955, teletype, noting that "if airstrip is to be built in Katmai, I am not sure Brooks Lake is proper location. Further study needed before answer can be given." [33] The Director, in fact, questioned the advisability of developing Brooks Camp into a major concession area; he felt that the Savonoski area, at the east end of Iliuk Arm, should be studied as an alternative concession area. [34]

The controversy temporarily held up the ability to renew the concession permit on time—a practice which was to be followed many times in the coming years—and the concessioner operated through the summer of 1955 without a valid permit. In June of that year, Park Landscape Architect Charles E. Krueger visited Brooks Camp to study the airstrip situation and identified two sites south of the Brooks River that would be acceptable for an airstrip. [35] But the concessioner refused to promise a building program, and a new three-year contract for the 1955 through 1957 seasons (Contract No. 14-10-434-80) was signed by the concessioner and Superintendent Grant Pearson on February 20, 1956. The agreed-upon franchise fee was changed from an unwieldy four percent of camp and air-travel revenues to a flat \$250 fee. [36]

Though the prospects for an airstrip near Brooks Camp appeared bright, NCA moved quickly to establish another airfield in the vicinity. The company recognized that areas outside the monument demanded less stringent bureaucratic regulations; in the summer of 1954, therefore, employees began to blade off a 1500-foot runway on Bureau of Land Management land just south of Kulik Lodge. The following year, NCA moved to have the airstrip extended to 2000 feet and presumably finished work by summer's end. By August 1956, workers had completed "a usable road satisfactory for the operation of a Willys Jeep" between the landing strip and Kulik Camp. To legalize its improvements, company officials in May 1955 applied to patent an 80-acre parcel which included and surrounded the airfield. NCA obtained a patent for the parcel on November 2, 1960. [37]

The first permanent wood frame buildings at the concessions camps were erected at Brooks Camp in 1956. NCA constructed a prefabricated, simulated log "Panabode" style building; its dimensions were 20' x 24'. Completed on August 3, it served as a combination store, office, and manager's quarters. That same summer the National Park Service built the Brooks Camp ranger station and the nearby generator shed. [38] The following year, NCA constructed a structure similar to its Brooks Camp facility at Coville Camp, which had recently been renamed Grosvenor Camp. The Panabode-style structure has served as a manager's office, residence, and lounge ever since. [39]

Visitation to the NCA camps increased sharply during the next several years. In 1950, as noted above, only 134 visitors had come to Brooks Camp. But by 1956, the number had jumped to 510, and by 1959 it had more than doubled to 1083. [40] While statehood-oriented promotions and general tourism growth helped spur visitation to the camps, at least some of their increased popularity during the late 1950s and early 1960s was due to successful tour marketing. Beginning in 1958, Northwest Airlines teamed up with NCA to promote three-day "Fishermen's Special" tours from Minneapolis-St. Paul (later Chicago) to the camps. Weekend trips were particularly popular. [41] Even so, about ten percent of Brooks Camp visitors did not fish. [42]

NCA responded to the increased visitation by adding new tents at its Brooks Camp facility. The camp grew from an estimated eight or nine tents in 1950 to a 22-tent complex in 1959; the latter complex included the Panabode store, office and manager's quarters, a kitchen and dining room, a bathhouse, a power house, a storage shed, and numerous dormitories and cottages. Development also took place at Grosvenor Camp; new construction consisted of a bathhouse and two cabins, all made of Panabode-styled cedar. By early 1960, the camp had grown into a complex that included four log buildings, six tent-covered structures, and a power house. [43]

Recognizing that future growth was dependent upon an improvement in facilities, Ray Petersen approached the agency in late 1959 with development plans for his camps. He met with regional officials in mid-November. During that meeting, he offered to undertake a camp construction program, but only if he could secure a long-term contract. (The existing contract, a three-year pact signed in March 1958 for the 1958 through 1960 seasons, was virtually identical to the one signed in February 1956.) [44] On January 2, 1960, he and John Walatka activated Alaska Consolidated Vacations, Inc. (ACV), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Northern Consolidated Airlines, and transferred the real and personal property of the five camps, which held a book value of \$65,000, to the new corporation. [45] The corporation was created to segregate camp affairs from those of NCA and to serve as a vehicle for camp development. It had the aggressive goal of increasing the capacity of the camps from 100 to 142 guests by the opening of the 1960 season "through the purchasing and erecting of additional log-type facilities at Kulik, Nonvianuk and Brooks Camps." [46] The camps were operated by the new subsidiary until January 1, 1963, when control of the camps was once again assumed by Northern Consolidated Airlines, Inc. [47]

In February 1960, Petersen told Samuel King, the superintendent at Mount McKinley National Park, that in return for a twenty-year concession, he intended to "plan and finance substantial improvements of facilities in the Monument in order to accommodate the rapidly expanding tourist demand." [48] Petersen went on to promise that the materials for the Brooks Camp facility would be landed on the ice early that spring. [49] King, meanwhile, approved the idea of a twenty-year concession in a letter to Regional Director Lawrence Merriam. But a meeting to discuss details of the proposed contract was postponed because revisions in the standard language for NPS concessions throughout the country were being proposed. [50]

Despite the slowdown in contract negotiations, development plans continued. During April 1960, the Park approved drawings to construct a mess hall at Brooks Camp. [51] The mess hall, which is the older portion of Brooks Lodge, was constructed that year. The building was described as a "red cedar Pan-A-Bode Lodge 50' x 24' with a 20' x 20' kitchen added on." In addition, seven Brooks Camp guest cabins, noted as "12' x 14' Pan-A-Bode red cedar cabins," were erected. They completed the outside of the buildings that year, as well as installing "a large approved cess pool" and a new Witte Diesel power plant. Such items as a new pressure water system as well as the wiring, plumbing and furnishing of the buildings were not finished until early 1961. [52]

Having thus stuck out its financial neck, the concessioner became more militant with the NPS regarding the creation of a long-term contract and also demanded that the agency provide its own funds for Brooks Camp improvements. In December 1960, Walatka remarked that ACV was negotiating \$150,000 in financing, "most of which will be used in Katmai and for working capital, in order to finish our program." To make the loan worthwhile, however, he implored that the Service allow "a ten or preferably a twenty year concession." He also hoped that the service would "do something concrete...such as docks, roads, trails, an airport, water, sewer and power and a museum as is done for other concessioners in the Park system." [53]

Although the regional director was cool to the idea of spending development dollars in a park that had received only about a thousand visitors per year (one of the lowest totals in the system), he was glad to send along his approval of a ten-year contract to Washington. [54] But when Petersen visited Assistant Director Jackson Price there in February 1961, he was told that all new concession contracts were now receiving qualified legal clearance, and all long-term contracts were thus being held up. Price urged Petersen to accept a five-year contract, which could be prepared and executed promptly, and further told him that "he could apply for a new long-term contract on the basis of the completion of his construction program." [55] On April 2, Petersen and Walatka met with Mount McKinley Superintendent Samuel King; they told him that the contract was acceptable to them for the five-year period specified. They did, however, point out that a contract of longer duration "would be preferable to the company." The concessioner further agreed to raising the annual franchise fee, from \$250 to \$900.

On April 25, 1961, Petersen and Walatka met with Elroy Bohlin, the acting superintendent, and signed Contract Number 14-10-0434-498, which certified that Alaska Consolidated Vacations would be the Katmai concessioner until December 1965. This contract and the original 1950 permit were the longest-running Katmai concessions pacts that had yet been signed. The parties had no way of knowing it, of course, but the 1961 contract, as amended, was to remain in force throughout the 1960s, all through the 1970s, and on into the following decade before it was finally replaced in the fall of 1981. [56]

With a concession contract in hand, the concessioner continued its improvements at Brooks Camp over the next several years. It completed and furnished the lodge and the seven small

Panabode guest cabins in 1961; the combination comfort station/bathhouse, located between the lodge and cabins, was finished the same year. But it still had 15 tent frames in use that summer. [57] In 1964, NCA added the Skytel, a nine-unit guest building. [58] It then began to phase out use of the old tent cabins to guests, and by 1965 only seven remained, all of which were used for employee housing. [59] Therefore, guest capacity in late 1964 was 36, only slightly higher than had been the case in 1950. [60]

Modernization also took place at two of the three camps located outside the monument. Kulik Camp, the largest camp next to Brooks, saw the largest amount of new construction. In the summer of 1956, the camp consisted of three 16 x 16 tent cabins, four 9 x 9 tent cabins and a root cellar. Over the next several years, however, NCA pushed camp development in order to coincide with airport and scheduling improvements. By early 1960, therefore, the camp had exploded into a 26-building complex, including eight log buildings and at least 13 tent frames. [61]

Key to development of Kulik Camp was a sawmill and planing mill. Installed in the summer of 1956, the mill first provided materials for the camp's 30' x 50' lodge building. The lodge was still under construction in 1958, but was completed by early 1960. Also completed by that time was a bath house, five cabins and a shop and power house, all made with logs cut on site. By the following year it had furnished logs for the camp's main office. The sawmill continued to operate until the early 1970s; its last project was the north wing of the shop and power house. [62]

The Kulik sawmill also cut the wood used in the main lodge building at Nonvianuk Camp. In early July 1960 construction began on the 60' x 16' building; materials were floated down Nonvianuk Lake. [63] The structure was controversial while still in the construction phase. Robert Hammersly, son of homesteader Rufus K. "Bill" Hammersly, was convinced that the building was impinging upon his family's property claim. Therefore, he lodged a protest to that effect to Bureau of Land Management officials. [64] The cabin was the largest of several new buildings added to the complex during that period. In August 1956, the camp consisted of just three tent cabins, a mess hall and kitchen cabin, and two sleeping cottages. By late 1960, however, the camp boasted a radio house, a power house, and two new sleeping cottages, as well as the main lodge building. [65]

A significant, if brief, spurt of activity also took place at the Kulik Lake Airstrip. During its first few years of existence, use of the 2000-foot facility was limited to small bush planes. In October 1958, however, NCA acquired the first of several Fairchild F-27B propjets, 40-passenger planes which offered a higher standard of speed and comfort than anything previously available. [66] In conjunction with the purchase, the airline chose Kulik Lake Airfield to fulfill the role of intermediate stop on the Anchorage-King Salmon run. It did so with the prospect that Kulik Lake might emerge as another major facility like that at Brooks Camp.

To accommodate the proposed traffic, the airline lengthened the runway 2000 feet to the east in 1958. The new construction extended well beyond the boundary of the 80-acre parcel which the NCA had applied for in 1955. In 1959, Federal Aviation Agency records reaffirmed the existence of the 4000-foot strip, with 600 additional feet of overrun and soft sand. The airstrip was approved for use by both DC-3s and F-27s. [67]

In early 1959, NCA began F-27 service to Kulik Lake. Over the next three years the airline continued to offer direct seasonal service from Anchorage. The airstrip was sometimes used as a regularly scheduled weekly stop, but at other times as a flag stop. [68] By 1963, however, NCA officials were forced to concede that service to Kulik Lake with such a large, noisy plane was not a paying proposition. Furthermore, guests at the nearby lodge let it be

known that they preferred a small facility. Direct flights from Anchorage to Kulik Lake were therefore discontinued. [69]

Although FAA records show that the original airfield was extended some 2000 feet onto public land in 1958 or 1959, NCA took no action for the legal use of that land until 1962. On January 10, 1962, the airline applied to the Bureau of Land Management for a twenty-year Public Airport Lease, which included two parcels surrounding the existing airfield. One parcel, 2500 feet long and 1320 feet wide (75 acres in extent), encompassed the late-1950s extension of the runway; the other was a 400-acre parcel, southwest of the runway, which was unrelated to airport operations. During the BLM's investigation of the lease application, the FAA informed the BLM that the location of the 400-acre parcel was inappropriate for a Public Airport Lease. The BLM, therefore, tentatively approved one part of the lease application while rejecting the other. [70]

NCA officials did not appeal that decision and were on the verge of signing the lease in June 1964. The necessary paperwork, however, was lost or mislaid by persons unknown, and the matter lay at a standstill until 1968, when the BLM again brought the matter to the airline's attention. NCA decided to accept the lease, and sent in the first year's rental payments. Before the lease was allowed to take effect, however, a Native protest suspended further action. On April 12, 1967, the Kodiak Area Native Association, the Bristol Bay Native Association, and the Alaska Peninsula Native Association had filed a protest over these and many other lands in southwestern Alaska. That action, for the time being, put leases and other conveyances on hold. [71]

Although half of the lengthened airstrip was on unleased public land, NCA ran it as a private facility. In 1960, for example, pilots visiting the airstrip were confronted with the following sign:

**KULIK AIRPORT**  
PROPERTY OF  
NORTHERN CONSOLIDATED AIRLINES  
INC.  
LANDING PROHIBITED WITHOUT PRIOR PERMISSION  
FROM NCA OPERATION MGR. AT ANCHORAGE  
LANDING FEE \$25<sup>00</sup> PER PLANE OR \$10<sup>00</sup> PER OCCUPANT  
— WHICHEVER IS GREATER —  
PARKING FEE \$5<sup>00</sup> PER PASSENGER PER DAY  
AFTER FIRST 24 HOURS

Arguing that the strip was "not certified for public use by the state of Alaska or the FAA," the airline declared that except for emergency purposes, "under no circumstances does the company permit the use of this private strip"; furthermore, it had "no intention of making this strip available for public use." The owners demanded written permission from all those who wished to land, and threatened legal action against those who did not obtain such permission. [72]

## **Development of Concession Activities, 1960-1968**

When Petersen met with National Park Service officials in late 1959 and early 1960 about his proposed construction program, he hoped to develop the Katmai camps by appealing to the non-fishing visitor. Until that time, fishing was the predominant activity. The only improvements built in the monument in the 1950s (aside from the camps themselves) had been 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, constructed by 1959, from Brooks Camp to the Dumphling Mountain overlook. Both had been cut by NPS rangers, and by 1960 were "already overgrown with brush and grass." [73]

Petersen felt that the greatest unmet need in the monument was access to the Valley of the Ten Thousand Smokes. Poor weather and the expense of chartering a plane often prevented camp visitors from flying over the valley, and Petersen was certain that a road connecting the valley from Brooks Camp was the most viable solution. He had advocated the construction of a road "from some point on Naknek Lake" to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes as early as September 1950. The following year the NPS gave lukewarm support to the development of a trail to the valley, but the only effort to secure a road during the 1950s was the Alaska Recreation Survey proposal noted earlier. [74]

By 1960, the agency was well under way with its MISSION 66 program, which intended to upgrade the condition of park facilities across the country. At Katmai a \$1.2 million, broad-based program was proposed which intended to disperse the activity pattern at the monument. It included an airstrip, several campgrounds and docks, a visitor center, 25 miles of trails, employee quarters, and other administrative facilities. [75] The plan also envisioned a road along much the same lines as that proposed by the Alaska Recreation Survey; that is, a ten-mile road that would "provide access from Naknek Lake to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes via the Ukak River Valley." The visitor center was intended to be at the base of that road. (The plan called for either planes or boats to connect Brooks Camp with the mouth of the Ukak River.) The road, however, was not a top priority; NPS employee quarters, a visitor center, and an airstrip were all considered to be more important. [76]

When Petersen met with the NPS in early 1960 to lay out his development plans, Director Conrad Wirth and other officials promised verbal support for a road if Petersen would enhance the facilities at Brooks Camp. [77] Petersen, true to his word, fulfilled his part of the agreement during the summer of 1960. But when Petersen returned to Washington the following February, Assistant Director Jackson Price noted that the best he could hope for would be "a pioneer road of about twelve miles in length around the base of Mt. Katolinat which could be reached by boat from Brooks River," the terminus of which would be the base for four-wheel vehicle trips into the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. [78] And according to George Sundborg, an administrative aide to U.S. Senator Ernest Gruening, even a twelve-mile road was not possible because of opposition from the Sierra Club or other preservationists. [79]

After Sundborg informed Petersen of the status of the project, Gruening arranged for a meeting the following day with both Petersen and Director Wirth. At that meeting, Gruening convinced Wirth to commence road construction despite objections; as Petersen remembers the conversation, "the old Senator grabbed this guy [Wirth] by the scruff, and says 'you don't treat a constituent like this.'" [80] Six months later, Katmai Ranger-in-Chief Robert Peterson led a party which 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. [81] The first tours up the road, using either a 16-passenger bus (a converted, surplus military ammunition carrier built on a cab-over 1961 GMC frame) or an 8-passenger Chevrolet carryall, began in 1963. [82]

The Congressional pressure which led to road construction threw the MISSION 66 program for the monument into disarray. The \$200,000 spent on the road relegated all other park functions to a lower priority, and budget realities combined with low visitor figures demanded that developments were significantly less than had been planned. Road construction had the practical effect of centralizing 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.

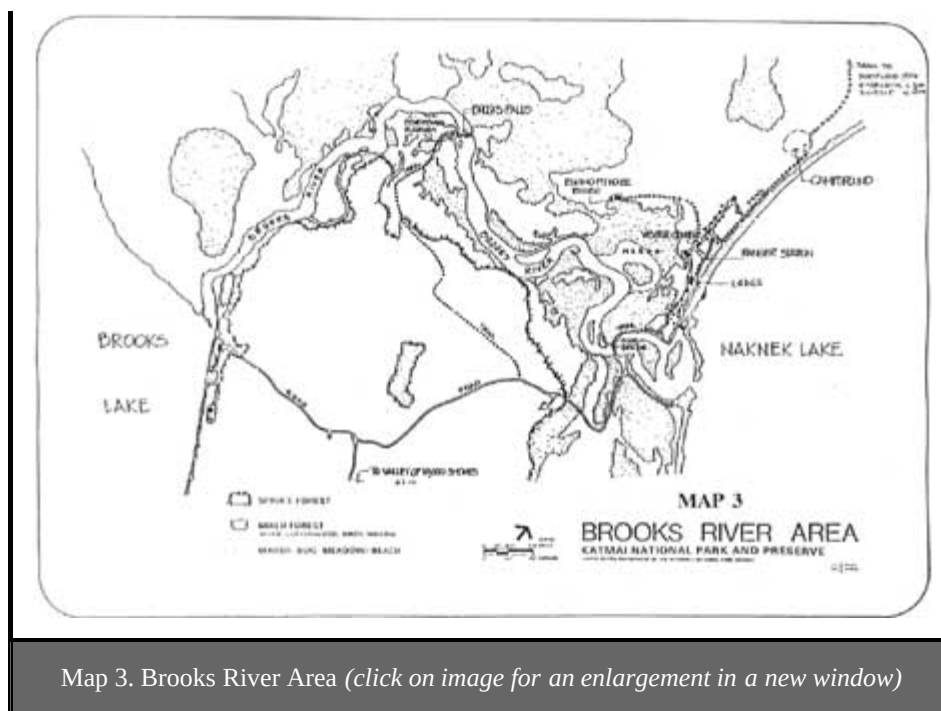
The road spawned several ancillary developments. Spur trails to Margot Falls and the summit of Overlook Mountain were completed in 1962. [83] By the time the road was complete, the NPS had built a 24' x 28' reception center at Windy Creek Overlook, and by early 1963 had created the one and one-half-mile trail that connected the overlook with the Ukak River. [84] In the Brooks Camp area, 1962 witnessed the extension of the Dumpling Mountain trail from the overlook to the summit; the same year, the Brooks Falls trail was relocated from the north to the south side of Brooks River. Materials for three Panabode cabins and the boathouse were flown that spring, and the following spring a DC-3 brought in the materials needed to construct a warehouse. The cabins were used by construction personnel during the road project. [85]

The road also brought a significant increase in the number of visitors who needed to cross Brooks River. To make the Brooks River crossing more convenient, small docks were constructed on both banks. On the south bank a small, L-shaped dock was built near the present bus loading area, while on the north side a linear dock was laid out at the head of a small embayment. This embayment, which no longer exists, was located just upriver from the mouth of the Brooks River and downstream from the road terminus. The concessioner used several small powerboats to carry the guests back and forth across the river. [86]

The new road, as expected, attracted general tourists as well as fishermen to Brooks Camp, and the airline increasingly began to tailor its tour packages to cater to the new market. The seven-day and two-week vacations that had attracted fishermen in the 1950s were dropped, and three-day vacations were promoted almost exclusively. Some of the three-day packages, of course, 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." By 1967, it had become apparent that a broad range of visitors were coming to Brooks Camp. [87] The new class of tourists fished less than those that came before, and many did not fish at all. More important to them was the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes Tour combined with scenery and wildlife observation in the Brooks Camp area. [88]

The establishment of Brooks Lodge as a general tourist facility, and success of the bus tour, also brought the first significant number of independent travelers to the monument. These visitors flew into Katmai in the same manner as guests at the NCA facilities, but independent travelers stayed elsewhere, usually at the Brooks Camp NPS campground. Available figures, which appear to be reliable, indicate that before the road was opened, the seasonal total of overnight stays at the Brooks River campground seldom exceeded one hundred. This averaged out to less than one camper per night during the summer season. Visitation grew during the next several years, however, and by 1967 some five hundred overnight campground stays were recorded. [89]





The swelling number of campers and the other independent visitors at Brooks Camp became a source of resentment for the concessioner, because they used NCA's facilities without paying for their use. These visitors, for instance, often loitered in and around the main lodge, and on rainy days some of the bolder campers used concession buildings for drying their clothing and equipment. [90] A deeper reason for resentment of the independent traveler was that Brooks Camp area was no longer dominated by the concessioner. In the 1950s few but NCA visitors ventured to Brooks Camp; perhaps as a result, several NPS observers felt that visitors were largely unaware that the camp was located in a national monument. They also sensed that the concessioner had acquired a proprietary, clubby feeling toward the camps. Part of this attitude, which lasted as late as the early 1970s, was that the proper role of the National Park Service was to serve the concessioner. [91]

While the prevailing attitude caused the NPS personnel to experience hard feelings toward the concessioner, NCA felt equally angry at the NPS because it would not fund general improvements. Shortly after it undertook its building program, John Walatka wrote the agency and wondered aloud why it could not do "something concrete for the Concessionaire such as docks, roads, trails, an airport, water, sewer and power and a museum as is done for other concessionaires in the Park system." [92] Many of these improvements were eventually provided, but as late as 1965 an obviously exasperated Ray Petersen complained to Ralph Rivers, Alaska's Congressman at the time, of the Service's "shabby" treatment of NCA, noting that the only significant improvement at the monument had taken place only after Senator Gruening had prevailed upon NPS Director Wirth to build the road to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. [93]

In an additional action intended to cater to non-fishing visitors, the NPS began to beef up its interpretive program. Rangers at Brooks Camp had given occasional talks since 1956, but interpretation became far more visible with the presence of a uniformed ranger on the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes tour. The ranger provided a running commentary on the area's natural and geologic history to the bus passengers, and also led a hike down into the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. [94] The bus tour interpretation, of course, required additional staff. Therefore, what had been a two-ranger force in the late 1950s evolved, over the next ten years, into a staff of five or six. [95]

One of the most vexing problems that preoccupied both the concessioner and the Service in the 1960s was garbage disposal. In the 1950s cans and bottles had been routinely sunk in Naknek Lake or were buried at the edge of camp, and most other materials had been burned. [96] By the early 1960s, material waste and garbage were sent via barge to two open dumps on the shore of Naknek Lake. Bears eventually discovered their whereabouts, and because bears at that time were relatively uncommon at Brooks Camp, the concessioner often took guests to the dump to watch them. In 1965, however, employees began to complain of the bears' presence at the dump. [97]

The concessioner responded to the problem by covering over the beachfront dumps and replacing them with one located along the road headed to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. Perhaps because of its relative inaccessibility, however, two new dumps were established within Brooks Camp. [98] The bears were soon attracted to the landfills. The Service and concessioner soon clashed on the issue. The Service's answer to the bear problem was to keep all food indoors until it could be hauled to the dump along the valley road. The concessioner, however, paid scant attention to the plan and took the attitude that it was the agency's responsibility to keep the bears away from the buildings, if necessary by relocating them. [99] NPS officials worked to educate all concerned to the nature of the bear problem, and by the end of the decade the problem had been overcome. Garbage was kept indoors until taken to the Brooks Camp dump, where it was incinerated. [100]

Petersen was correct in recognizing that the construction of more comfortable facilities, and diversifying the number of activities available, would attract a larger number of visitors. In 1962, before construction of the road to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, only 334 visitors were attracted to Brooks Camp. But the following year, with the road completed, more than twice as many came. That number continued to increase, and in 1968 some 1584 tourists visited Brooks Camp, almost five times as many as had visited six years earlier. [101]

Despite the increasing number of visitors during the 1960s, little construction took place after the 1964 erection of the Skytel at Brooks Camp and the guest cabins at Grosvenor Camp. Some felt that the existing level of construction was sufficient for the time being. As Senator Ernest Gruening remarked in 1965:

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. [102]

The only reason the concession was not developed further, however, was that the NCA was not in a position to contemplate new construction. As Petersen noted in December 1965, "in order to place this Company in a position to finance acquisition of new modern jet equipment, it is necessary that we carefully review capital expenditures of a non-transport nature." [103] He requested a one-year contract extension, which was approved as Amendment No. 1 by John Walatka and Superintendent Oscar Dick on April 28, 1966. [104] By the fall of 1966, when negotiations had opened for the 1967 contract, a directive from President Lyndon Johnson imposed a one-year limitation on concession contracts. The Washington office of the National Park Service, therefore, prepared a second one-year extension, which was signed by John Walatka in December 1966 and NPS Assistant Director Harthon L. Bill in March 1967. [105]

Johnson's limitation was soon lifted, however, and by the summer of 1967 the NPS wanted to issue new, long-term concession contracts, both at Katmai and elsewhere in the system. [106] By this time, however, the concessioner had a whole new set of priorities to consider,

because a proposed merger had been announced between Northern Consolidated Airlines and Wien Air Alaska. [107] The two airlines had begun merger talks in 1966 in order to obtain sufficient capital to purchase a fleet of Boeing 737-200 jets, and had announced the merger on March 15, 1967. [108] The effect of the merger announcement, as it related to the Katmai camps, was to table any new capital projects and to extract higher profits from the camps. The increasing number of visitors during the 1960s was a hopeful indicator of enhanced revenues, but a major stumbling block to greater development was the lack of easy access to Brooks Camp.

The access question had been festering for more than a dozen years. Since 1954, when plans for construction of a nearby airstrip had first been raised, the concessioner had intermittently tried to revive NPS interest in the project, particularly during the MISSION 66 construction program of the late 1950s and early 1960s. [109] The airline, which acquired its first Fairchild F-27B propjet in November 1958, hoped to establish Brooks Camp as a regular stop on flights between Anchorage and King Salmon. [110] When the MISSION 66 program statement was issued, agency officials promised that "an airstrip for wheel planes will be provided at a suitable location compatible with air currents, topography and landscape considerations near Brooks River Camp." But the Control Schedule for the program rated the construction of a \$180,000 airfield as the Service's fourth (and last) priority. [111] Inertia prevailed. As an explanation for its lack of interest, agency officials backpedaled, noting that "since the concessioner has developed and is using an airstrip at its Kulik camp outside the monument, we do not consider another strip inside the monument to be of vital importance at this time." [112]

The Kulik Lake Airfield, meanwhile, was chosen instead of Brooks Camp as a scheduled stop on Anchorage-King Salmon flights. To accommodate the larger F-27s which this service entailed, the airline doubled the length of the Kulik airfield. [113] But this new service, which began in 1959, did not bring many new visitors to the camps, and by 1963 scheduled service to the airstrip was discontinued. Brooks Camp continued to be served by float planes from King Salmon; the Cessnas which had been relied upon were replaced in 1962 with a single six-passenger Pilatus Porter, "an excellent short take-off and landing airplane built in Switzerland." [114]

NCA officials, however, refused to drop the idea of an airfield at Brooks Camp. In 1967, the concessioner felt so strongly about the necessity of the airstrip that they tied its development to the creation of a new long term contract. This runway was ideally to be 5000 to 6000 feet in length (long enough to land the Boeing 737s the airline was intending to purchase), but at a minimum needed to be 3000-3500 feet long to replace its amphibious aircraft with Twin Otters or a Skyvan SC7. [115] The concessioner argued that an airstrip was needed for reasons of safety and reasoned that inasmuch as Alaska's other NPS units contained airstrips, Katmai should offer one as well. [116] In May 1967 officials rejected the airstrip idea yet again, reasoning that such a facility would change the wilderness character of the monument. [117] Not to be dissuaded, however, NCA officials made plain their demand for an airstrip and/or a road from Brooks Camp to King Salmon, and only "very belatedly" submitted plans for a 20-year contract. [118] McKinley Superintendent George Hall noted, after an antagonistic meeting with the concessioner, that

the airline business is the paramount consideration to this company and they wish to conform Katmai to their equipment. They are inclined to development of Katmai...as a resort to assure full airplane loads. Development of general [non-lodge] traffic to the Monument is not particularly part of their program.

Regarding capital improvements, the concessioner indicated that it would "invest substantially in the area if it warranted such action," but unless the airstrip question could be resolved it

promised no new improvements. [[119](#)]

In January 1968, Acting Regional Director Raymond Mulvany deflected the airport issue by incorporating it within a larger planning framework. In a letter to Director George B. Hartzog, Jr., he noted that "it is apparent some long-range policy decisions will need to be clarified before the concessioner will talk about a new contract." With the understanding that a master plan study was programmed for the monument that summer, he recommended that a one-year extension of the existing contract be processed. [[120](#)] The Washington office, recognizing that the completion of a master plan would take more than a year, suggested a two-year extension, news of which was passed on to Ray Petersen on March 15. [[121](#)] John Walatka, probably with some reluctance, signed Amendment No. 3 to the 1961 contract on May 8, 1968; it was approved by Washington official Clarence P. Montgomery on June 25. [[122](#)]

Although the airfield and further camp construction were thus put on hold, the 1968 season culminated a decade which witnessed the construction of many of the major structural and transportation improvements seen in the park today. These improvements included the main lodge and guest cabins at Brooks Camp, Grosvenor Camp and Kulik Camp, the lodge at Nonvianuk Camp, the road to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, and trails emanating from both Brooks Camp and the Windy Creek Overlook. The NPS also expanded an interpretive program during this period. Several improvements have been built since 1968, but the activities available to visitors have changed little since that time.

---

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



### CHAPTER 4:

## THE WIEN CONSOLIDATED AND WEIN AIR ALASKA CONCESSIONS

Wien Consolidated Airlines, which became Wien Air Alaska in 1973, operated the Katmai concession from 1968 through 1982. During that time, Raymond I. Petersen became less active in the management of the camps; perhaps as a result, investment and growth at the camps stagnated. The only major improvements at Brooks Camp during this period were a utility system, a series of docks and a floating bridge, all constructed by the National Park Service. In 1976, Petersen stepped down as airline president; thereafter the concessioner became even less willing to invest in the camps while substantially raising lodging and tour prices. The signing of a long-term concessions contract in 1981 brought an extended period of short-term contract extensions to a close, but a continuing corporate struggle at Wien brought unstable relations with the NPS and prevented the construction of a much-needed concessioner employee housing complex.

### Effect of the Airline Merger on Camp Operations

The concession operations of Northern Consolidated Airlines came to an abrupt halt in February 1968, when the Civil Aeronautics Board approved its merger with Wien Air Alaska. The stockholders of both airlines approved the merger on March 9, 1968. The merger, effective April 1, was formally that of Wien merging into NCA; therefore, the surviving corporation's name, for business purposes, remained Northern Consolidated Airlines, Inc. But the new airline's operating name was Wien Consolidated Airlines (WCA), Inc., and that was the new name so far as the public and the NPS were concerned. The new airline was headquartered in Anchorage, where NCA's base of operations had been. The firm operated a system in excess of 10,000 route miles, the largest home-based carrier in the state. [1]

Ray Petersen, who had remained as the president of NCA since its inception in 1945-46, was named chairman of the board of the new airline, and Sigurd Wien was named president. In 1969, the two officers switched positions in order to allow Wien to devote more time to his personal life. Five years later Wien retired, and Petersen assumed the roles of president, chairman, and chief executive officer. The airline over which Petersen presided was known as Wien Consolidated Airlines from February 1968 until May 1973; its name was then changed to Wien Air Alaska, Inc. (WAA), out of respect for Noel Wien, the aviation pioneer. [2]

The airline that Petersen headed became the largest Alaska-based air carrier operating in the state, one which increasingly dominated the mushrooming trade between Anchorage and the King Salmon area. As late as 1957, four major airlines (Northern Consolidated, Pacific Northern, Alaska Airlines, and Reeve Aleutian Airways) connected the two points, although

only the first two provided regular service. [3] In January 1959, the Civil Aeronautics Board ruled that Reeve Aleutian Airways, not Northern Consolidated, could provide revenue service to the King Salmon Airport. [4] Shortly afterward, however, Northern Consolidated service was reinstated. [5] In October 1960, Alaska Airlines dropped out of the market, and eighteen months later Pacific Northern stopped serving the route on a permanent basis. [6] By 1968, the only remaining airlines to serve the area were Western Airlines (the successor to Pacific Northern Airlines), which had a seasonal certificate over the route, and Wien Consolidated, which served the route on a year-round basis and captured the lion's share of the traffic. In February 1970, even that modicum of competition disappeared when Western Airlines, as part of a larger agreement, gave Wien a temporary exemption to provide substitute service over the route. Six months later, Western Airlines permanently suspended all service over the route. [7]

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Petersen and Walatka had formed an effective management team for the Katmai camps. But that close-knit friendly style of supervision began to unravel shortly after the merger took place. Petersen, as head of a major statewide airline, was not able to devote as much time to the camps as before; this was particularly true after he became WCA president in 1969. A more crippling blow took place when John Walatka died on June 27, 1970. Walatka, who had been an Alaska bush pilot for some 32 years, was well-liked by everyone he met. One NPS official described him as "indeed a friend to all of us personally, a fine fellow to work with professionally, and the type of concession manager that we like to have represent the National Park Service." [8] Petersen's eldest son, Charles, was soon appointed to replace Walatka, and by late 1971 the elder Petersen had apparently distanced himself from all direct decision making in Katmai affairs. [9]

Because of the airline consolidation, it was perhaps inevitable that the camps were going to be run on a more professional, less personal basis. When established in 1950 the camps were, in some ways, a personal reflection of the efforts of NCA president Ray Petersen, and the camps provided some much-needed visibility to the small, low-key airline. But the growth of the camps in the 1960s—to four times the revenue earned in the early 1950s—strained that personal style of management. Once the Wien merger took place, the new airline no longer needed the visibility the camps provided, and the gross revenue from the two camps in the monument still totaled less than one percent of the company's total operating revenue. [10] After Ray Petersen turned over camp management to his son, the concessioner became increasingly wary about undertaking new investment; he was also concerned about gaining a fair return on existing facilities.

## **Activities Under the Petersen Presidency (1968-1976)**

When Wien Consolidated Airlines took over the management of the Katmai camps from Northern Consolidated Airlines in 1968, it had some relatively aggressive ideas on how it wished to develop its leasehold and fee-simple properties. It hoped to obtain a long-term lease, after which it wished to gain an airstrip and commence a substantial building program.

The National Park Service, however, favored a more cautious approach. The Service was not specifically opposed to the concessioner's building program. But its complex decision making structure, its necessity to tailor concessioner development activities within a prescribed planning framework, its demand that the independent traveler as well as the Wien lodge guest be served, and its innate sense of caution in development matters all proved highly frustrating to the concessioner. The establishment, in July 1969, of a full-time Katmai superintendent had the practical effect of exacerbating that caution, because it made permanent a new layer of decision making. [11]

As a result of their conflicting procedures and goals, and the Service's increasingly active management over camp affairs, the concessioner and the Service often clashed during the years in which Petersen presided over Wien. Some of those conflicts were based on development-versus-preservation issues; others, however, were more personal or structural in nature. By the time Petersen stepped down in 1976, the Katmai camps had changed little from what had existed in 1968. The only major change to take place was the installation of a utility system and various other small improvements at Brooks Camp.

During the first few months of operation under Wien Consolidated management, relations between the agency and concessioner were relatively placid. In December 1968, the agency invited the concessioner to submit a proposal for a long-term contract. In response, John Walatka requested a twenty-year renewal of the company's concession, and furthermore noted that WCA was willing to "invest a minimum of \$300,000 in facilities at Katmai over this period of time." The investment was to be used for "the construction of a thirty to forty unit two-story, or similar size unit of single story, for housing and feeding our Katmai visitors, plus other visitor use facilities." Still hoping for a favorable resolution of its airstrip difficulties, WCA noted that "if at a later date a better means of access to Katmai becomes available, the above figure could probably be doubled or more." [12]

At first, the agency attempted to accommodate the concessioner's plans. In January 1969, regional NPS officials met to firm up their own ideas on Katmai's development needs; once completed, they would be free to negotiate a new, long-term contract. Recognizing their tardiness, they hoped to expedite the master plan process; they noted, somewhat apologetically, that "we do not wish to again be in the position of being the delaying party because we do not have our planning completed." [13] But preparation of the master plan was slower than expected, and by October 1969, just two months before the expiration of the third contract amendment, officials were obliged to ask the concessioner for a contract amendment, to be effective for the next two years. John Walatka, trying to be accommodating to the agency, asked for a contract renewal for at least a year, or until the master plan had been "finalized and accepted by all parties concerned." He commented, somewhat drily, that "we realize that considerable planning and work must go into the Master Plan, but it does seem as though this particular one has been extremely slow in maturing." [14]

Based on that response, plans were made to create a two-year contract extension. [15] Walatka died, however, before signing the document, and Ray Petersen, who supervised camp operations during the months after Walatka's death, was less amicable to a short-term contract. On July 16, 1970, the general superintendent of the Alaska Group Office, Ernest Borgman, called Petersen to offer him the two-year extension. Petersen, in response, let out a lengthy fusillade of profanity, telling Borgman in no uncertain terms that he had no intention of signing the document. He meanwhile berated the agency for its procrastination and its lack of good faith. Feeling that he had, in effect, been promised a long-term contract in return for his investments a decade earlier, he again demanded a twenty-year contract, and darkly hinted that he wished to sell his interests to the NPS if contract negotiations did not improve. Meanwhile, camp operations continued as they had in other years, even though the concessioner had no formal authorization to conduct such an operation. [16]

Taken aback by such an emotional change in concessioner attitude, regional officials tried to meet Petersen halfway. In late July, the acting director wrote that he would be willing to accept a five-year contract. He noted that a five-year contract would be awarded without the company committing itself to a development program, but a long-term contract required completion of a master plan. Given that assent, Petersen signed a five-year contract extension on August 26, 1970. [17]

Bureaucratic inertia, however, prevented the contract from becoming effective for months afterwards. The five-year commitment had apparently been approved by regional but not by Washington officials. Noting that "the master plan will undoubtedly show the need for rehabilitation, expansion and construction of concession facilities," the acting deputy director of the NPS called a five-year extension unrealistic, and instead insisted on a two-year renewal. [18] The two sides clashed for the next three months. Petersen held his ground, and in January 1971 the national office finally gave in and agreed to a five-year extension. [19] The bureaucratic machinery slowed for the next several months, but in June 1971 the concessioner agreed to a revised five-year contract extension. On August 20, 1971, Amendment No. 4 to Contract No. 14-10-0434-498 was finally signed by the National Park Service, almost three years after contract negotiations began and more than 20 months after the expiration of the previous contract. The amendment was in force until December 1974. [20]

During the late 1960s through the mid-1970s few improvements were undertaken at Katmai National Monument. The lack of a long-term contract, and the difficulties entailed in the obtaining of the relatively modest five-year extension signed in the summer of 1971, tempered any development plans that the concessioner may have entertained. The Service, for its part, refused to fund any improvements at the monument before it completed its master plan.

The master plan, in fact, took far longer than either the concessioner or the Service could have predicted. The need for a master plan had been cited as a retardant to concessioner plans as early as January 1968. [21] A preliminary working draft of the plan was not completed until August 1971. A final plan, issued in December 1973, was prepared to accompany legislative proposals resulting from actions required by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. The so-called Master Plan for Katmai National Park was as much a response to statewide planning efforts that eventually resulted in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) as it was a logical follow-up to the draft plan. [22]

The Master Plan attempted to make a bold new change in the direction of development at Katmai. Just as the 1953 Alaska Recreation Survey and the 1958 MISSION 66 Program proposals had done, the Master Plan proposed a geographical diversification of facilities in the monument. The 1971 draft plan proposed that the monument's major "use-node" and transportation hub should be located on or near the boot-shaped Naknek Peninsula, and that a new all-weather road should be constructed from King Salmon to the site. Research Bay (along Iliuk Arm), the Bay of Islands (at the east end of Naknek Lake), and Kukak Bay (on the shore of Shelikof Strait) were also proposed as primary development zones. All but the latter were to be accessed either by floatplanes or tour boats. [23]

At the same time, planners attempted to de-emphasize the future role of Brooks Camp. As early as August 1969, officials had stated publicly that the camp was not the best tourist center. [24] Planners felt that the developments associated with a primary visitor facility were "incompatible with climatic wilderness and [the] economic values concentrated at Brooks Camp." An additional consideration for considering an alternate location was that the camp had become prime bear habitat during the 1960s, and park planners were nervous about the increasing number of bear-human confrontations taking place in the vicinity. During the preliminary planning stages, therefore, the NPS tentatively adopted a long-range policy of eliminating Brooks Camp as a primary visitor facility, [25] and when the draft plan was announced, the principal long-range objective for the area was the reduction of the number of visitors to that area. While conceding that Brooks would "remain a popular fisherman's camp," it would remain the gateway to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes only until an alternate site was developed at Research Bay. Over the short term, however, planners allowed the camps to grow in a virtually unhindered manner. They intended to allow Brooks Camp to

grow to a 100-guest maximum, which was "large enough to afford a profitable business operation, as well as to update the utility system and support facilities to comply with current standards and visitor needs." [26] Given such broad latitude, the concessioner was generally supportive of the draft plan; the airline, after all, had first-refusal rights over concession developments regardless of the proposed location. [27]

By the time the final master plan was issued, some of the more strident or futuristic statements regarding future use-nodes had been softened, and had been supplanted with more modest proposals. The plan noted that the park's major overnight use facility was to include lodge-type accommodations at the west end of the park. The Naknek Peninsula, however, was only one of three possible locations for that development; the other two sites were in King Salmon and on "the morainal ridge at the West End of Naknek Lake." Research Bay and Kukak Bay were also designated as primary development sites. The role of Research Bay, however, was de-emphasized, having been "tentatively selected as a possible visitor use-node," which "could become the gateway to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes." Regarding Brooks Camp, the strong anti-development rhetoric of the draft plan was replaced with more conciliatory language; it noted that "Further study is needed to determine the role of Brooks Camp and to stress the need of maintaining the camp's impact on the environment." The 100-guest ceiling suggested in the draft plan remained. Although the plan continued to suggest that Research Bay would eventually replace Brooks Camp as the base for bus trips to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, the growing recognition that "conventional lodge or hotel-type units" were not appropriate to the vast majority of the park militated against the growth of facilities which might have supplanted those at Brooks Camp. [28]

Once the master plan had been finalized, the way was clear for the NPS to implement its provisions. The plan noted that one of the most immediate needs for park operation was a limited expansion and upgrading of Brooks Camp. [29] The final master plan had not specified the nature of that upgrading, but the draft plan's recommendation of upgrading the camp's utility system was soon implemented. The agency, in fact, had informed the concessioner as early as 1968 that utility system development would take place as soon as the master plan was completed. [30]

The NPS moved to take over the concessioner's system because of the efficiency of combining all Brooks Camp operations into one system. In the 1950s, the minimal investment the agency made in Brooks Camp buildings warranted equally minimal infrastructure expenses. But with the construction of the boathouse, warehouse and the various NPS employee cabins, the Service began to move toward combining the two systems. In November 1967, John Walatka had approached the Service regarding the matter, and within the year difficulties with the concessioner's septic system resulted in its March 1969 purchase by the agency. [31] Thereafter, in return for a fee, the NPS maintained all sewers for the concessioner except within five feet of the concessioner-owned buildings. [32]

The utility renovation project took several years to accomplish. In 1967 preliminary plans, not acted upon, were made to install a new generator house; an oil and gas house; two freight docks; fuel lines, septic tanks, and leach fields; and an aircraft landing pad. During the 1971 fiscal year a more comprehensive utility renovation project was planned, and construction was initially budgeted the following year. [33] In January 1973, the NPS issued a notice for bids for the project. Specifications included the construction of new water, sewerage, fuel storage, and electrical systems; in addition, the project called for the erection of new boat docks, landfill fencing, and a fish cleaning station. The \$590,000 project was issued to the R.D. Peterson Company (no relation to former Ranger-in-Chief Robert Peterson), which commenced work in May 1974. The contract was completed by October 1975. [34]

In addition to a new fish cleaning shed, the contract resulted in the construction of two other buildings at Brooks Camp. The nerve center of the project, the 16' x 40' utility building, was located at the north end of the row of NPS employee housing units. In addition, the contractor erected a bunkhouse for its employees midway between the concessioner's Skytel and the NPS warehouse. [35] The bunkhouse was later converted to alternate uses; during the summer of 1977 it became the NPS visitor center. Evening talks and other interpretive programs were moved from the lodge to the new facility that year; they have been provided in the building, now known as the auditorium, ever since. [36] The new visitor center, and the creation in 1974 of a nature trail which led to and encircled the beaver pond located one-half mile south of Brooks River, were the only significant improvements to the monument's interpretive program during the 1970s. [37]

The construction of an improved dock was included in the contract to provide a safe anchorage for planes at Brooks Camp, and to better service the boat traffic crossing the Brooks River. Boats, of course, were a less-than-ideal method of crossing the river, and to overcome that handicap, two different planning studies in the late 1960s called for the construction of a footbridge. [38] By 1971, a Brooks Camp design directive noted that "a solution to the crossing of this river is necessary if the present concession bus operation continues." The draft version of that directive offered a more specific solution. It noted that "a trail bridge has been suggested to cross the Brooks River ... to transport fishermen, sightseers, supplies and solid waste across the river. The bridge width shall be limited to six feet in order to exclude conventional vehicles." It then proceeded to describe, in some detail, suggested locations and materials for the proposed bridge. A total of \$176,000 was budgeted in the 1972 fiscal year for bridge construction.[39]

No bridge was built, however, as a result of the design directive. The dock construction effort of 1974-75 (which, like the bridge, had also been considered in the planning studies of the late 1960s) was a tacit admission that bridge plans had been indefinitely delayed. On the north side of the river the short, linear dock which had existed since the early 1960s was expanded. That dock was lengthened from approximately 40 feet to 60 feet. In addition, a 68-foot extension was built on the west side of the embayment, and a 173-foot extension added to the east side.[40]

Most of the investments Wien made during the years of the Petersen presidency took place between late 1971 and 1974. This is not surprising, inasmuch as this was the effective period of the five-year contract. Investments within the national monument resulted in the replacement of existing equipment rather than in improvements to the physical plant.

Through much of the 1960s NCA had relied on the Pilatus Porter, along with an occasional Cessna, to carry visitors between King Salmon and the various camps. By 1970, Wien Consolidated had inaugurated use of a larger (11-passenger) Grumman Mallard floatplane.[41] The company found it so well suited to the service that by 1974 it set aside its other craft for the next several years.[42]

Another change the carrier undertook in 1974 was to abandon its charter business within the monument. Through the early 1970s Wien had stationed a small aircraft in the Katmai area that was available for charter side trips. But the company had been reducing its nonscheduled service for a decade, and it sold the last of its single engine aircraft in 1973. The following spring it petitioned the National Park Service to allow a new airline, Katmai Air, Inc., to provide air tours of the area and fly-out fishing trips. Katmai Air was owned and operated by Raymond F. Petersen, son of the founder of the Katmai camps.[43] The Service applauded the services which Katmai Air could provide to the visitors of Brooks Camp and the other local destinations. But a regional official noted that "a circumstance such as this does not fit in with the service's policy," and Petersen was instead encouraged to apply for an NPS

Special Use Permit. He operated on the basis of that permit for the next eight years.[[44](#)]

Before he began Katmai Air, the 22-year-old Petersen had become familiar with camps both inside and outside of the monument. He grew up around the camps, learned to fly in 1968, and worked for five summers as a fishing guide at Kulik and Brooks lodges.[[45](#)] In 1974, when Katmai Air began, a popular guidebook to the monument noted that it was the only carrier stationed in Brooks Camp. Fishermen, however, had far greater need for aircraft charters than did tourists on three-day tours. Petersen himself, therefore, noted that his primary responsibilities in his first year were to provide pilot and guiding service for Kulik Lodge (the largest Wien-owned fishing lodge), as well as support for the other lodges. By the end of the decade, his operation had grown considerably, but most flying took place out of Kulik and Grosvenor camps, not Brooks. [[46](#)]

Kulik, rather than the camps in the monument, witnessed the construction of new improvements in the early 1970s. Personnel there used the on-site sawmill to construct an addition to the garage. Then, about 1973, the sawmill was dismantled. In the mid-to-late 1970s, one or more Panabode cabins were erected at the camp. [[47](#)]

During this period, the airline was finally able to legalize its use to the eastern portion of the Kulik Lake Airstrip. In 1967, protests from Native organizations had prevented the company from obtaining a lease for the 75 acres of airstrip located on public lands. The protest remained in effect until the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) was signed by President Richard M. Nixon on December 18, 1971. The passage of the act cleared the way for the company to obtain its lease, but it was not until October 1973 that the applicant, which by now had become Wien Air Alaska, was informed that the BLM was able to resume processing the case. [[48](#)] Wien responded to the reopening of the case file by providing documents to the BLM which showed its legitimate right to the original NCA application. Finally, on February 5, 1974, the agency granted the airline Public Airport Lease A-056478. The lease, which was not obtained until twelve years after submission of the original application, was effective for a twenty-year period. [[49](#)] The creation of the lease did not change usage patterns at the strip; the airline continued, despite scattered protests from the public and BLM officials, to prevent landings from anyone not connected to the lodge operation. [[50](#)]

Changes also took place in the vehicles used on the day trip out to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. Through the 1960s, NCA had relied upon a 16-passenger bus and an eight-passenger Chevrolet van. In the late 1960s the bus was replaced by a 1960-vintage 40-passenger bus. [[51](#)] The larger bus, however, was unable to withstand service along the valley road for long. By 1973, it was suffering from broken windows and questionable brakes. The following year was worse; transmission repairs idled the bus for part of the season, and as the summer wore on the springs wore out and the brakes again became unsafe. [[52](#)] The concessioner responded by purchasing two new Dodge maxi-vans. The large bus, however, was not immediately mothballed; it saw sporadic service for the next three years. [[53](#)]

During 1975 and 1976, the last two years of Petersen's presidency, few improvements took place at the camps. The five-year contract signed in August 1971 terminated in December 1974, and was to be the last long-term pact signed during the decade. Correspondence relating to the creation and implementation of new contract extensions was a near-constant activity for the next several years. The period was, in many ways, a confusing stalemate because the growing complexity of park operations delayed the issuance of contract renewals. The concessioner, for its part, showed an increasing reluctance to provide services that did not provide an assured return on investment.

In the spring of 1974, negotiations began on the issuance of a contract to succeed the one due to expire that December. On April 17, the Associate Director of the NPS asked that the concessioner request a renewal. [54] Chuck Petersen, a Wien Vice-President and the eldest son of Raymond I. Petersen, responded by requesting a five-year contract extension.[55] For the next several months, however, negotiations languished because the NPS had to await the completion of an environmental assessment for the proposed concession contract. The assessment, which offered three scenarios for concession development at the two camps, was not particularly controversial, because both the concessioner and the Service were comfortable with a five-year contract renewal, which called for no particular capital improvements during the life of the contract.

The study, however, was not finished until the end of October. By the time officials in Washington could comment on the matter, time had run so short that the contract had to be extended "for at least one year" instead of the five originally proposed. [56] The concessioner, apparently content with the recent turn of events, agreed to a one-year extension in January 1975. Because of unknown delays, however, Wien operated its camps that summer without the benefit of a signed contract. The concessioner signed Amendment No. 5 to the 1961 contract on June 26, 1975. The agency did not sign until November 6, less than two months before it was due to expire. [57]

Negotiations for the following year's contract extension began almost as soon as the former extension was signed. Fortunately, they were neither as fractious nor as protracted as those for former extensions. The concessioner was in no mood to invest further in the camps, and the Service apparently felt that short-term extensions were appropriate for stand-pat operations. [58] Both parties, therefore, were comfortable with a one-year contract. On March 11, 1976, the concessioner was informed that a one-year extension was in the works, and by the end of the month Amendment No. 6 had been prepared and signed by Chuck Petersen, an assistant vice-president for Wien Air Alaska, Inc. An NPS official signed it on April 22. [59]

Despite the continuing sense of frustration the concessioner must have felt with the issuance of short-term renewals, relations between Wien and the National Park Service remained surprisingly good during the early and mid-1970s. The Service was generally pleased with the level of service Wien provided to Katmai visitors. It continued to rate the concessioner positively during periodic evaluations. [60]

Key to the master plan process of the early 1970s was the implementation of commercial boat access into the monument. NPS officials considered that the creation of tour-boat service across Naknek Lake was of high priority, because it provided the potential for dispersing recreation uses and access into the monument by those other than the concessioner. [61] NPS officials at the time predicted, in fact, that tour boat would replace aircraft within the next few years. [62] But the logistics and expense of setting up a marine operation militated against its implementation, and without the creation of a deep-water port on the north edge of Naknek Lake, formidable physical factors prevented start-up of such a service. [63] As one observer noted:

During times of low water only boats with a very shallow draft can complete this trip [to Brooks Camp]. Transporting people in this manner would require large boats and this does not appear to be feasible without dredging and consequently disrupting very important fisheries resources. It is considered that the cost of purchasing, operating and maintaining such boats would also be prohibitive. [64]

Despite those barriers, the concessioner investigated the economic practicality of such a service during the summer of 1976. The airline had been relying on the Grumman Mallard to

access Brooks Camp for the past several years, but had recently found the craft so uneconomical, and so unequal to the task of transporting an ever-increasing number of tourists, that it cast about for an alternative. [65] Its consideration of marine craft, however, was brief. The airline substituted other aircraft for the Mallard, and the idea of instituting boat service on Naknek Lake has not been seriously considered since that time. [66]

## Events During the Early Flood Presidency (1976-1979)

On September 28, 1976, newspapers announced that Ray Petersen was stepping down from the presidency of Wien Air Alaska. His replacement was James J. Flood, a member of Wien's board of directors, a 15-year Alaska resident and the former head of the Alaska Brick Company. Flood, chosen after the airline conducted a nationwide search, also became the chief operating officer, while Petersen remained as chairman of the board and chief executive officer. Petersen, at 64 years of age, chose to retire after almost a half-century of work. He had headed an aviation company, of one size or another, for more than four decades. [67]

The announcement had been anticipated for some time, and had little to do with the operations of the Katmai camps. Wien, indeed, needed new leadership. The company, for instance, had failed to gain an appropriate share of business from the pipeline boom, had not been able to successfully merge with a larger carrier, and had poor relations with its employees in labor negotiations. Perhaps as a result of each of these factors, the company's stock had lost more than 70 percent of its value in the last two years. Underlying the company's difficulties was the perception that the company had deep-seated management problems, and that more enlightened leadership was needed. [68] In retrospect, Petersen has recognized that the merged airline had been an imperfect fit at best, a clash of two separate business philosophies, and that the troubles which beset the airline stemmed from the inability to mesh the management goals of the two former airlines. Petersen's operation of Northern Consolidated had been consistently profitable, but he was not able to duplicate that success after the merger. [69]

Whatever the reasons for the changeover, it meant that Petersen, for the first time in more than 25 years, had lost management control of the Katmai camps. His tenure had been remarkable. He had dealt with some fourteen seasonal park rangers or management assistants, seven superintendents, eight regional directors, and six NPS directors. [70] While Petersen, as WAA president, had been divorced from camp operations since 1971, his influence had continued through his son Charles, who managed the camps from 1971 until May 1977. During the six seasons after Charles' departure, the only member of the Petersen family involved whatsoever in the camp operations was Raymond F. Petersen, who provided air taxi and flightseeing service. [71]

During the seven-year period in which Flood presided over the Katmai camps, the concessioner initiated relatively few site improvements, and no new activities were developed. Wien showed a continuing reluctance to undertake investments that did not offer a guaranteed return; once, in fact, the airline pointedly refused to replace obviously deteriorating equipment. The NPS during this period made several investments of direct benefit to the concessioner; the extent of those investments, however, was relatively modest. Although the agency and concessioner ironed out a 15-year contract during this period, negotiations preceding that contract were often antagonistic. Tension, in fact, characterized much of the relationship between the two parties in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Relations between the NPS and Wien Air Alaska were tentatively optimistic during the waning months of the Peterson presidency. During the early summer of 1976, Park Service officials hoped that they could engineer a five-year extension of the 1961 contract. Between

early July and mid-August, NPS officials at the national and regional levels seemed firmly committed to a five-year term. (Such an extension would have guaranteed Wien continued camp operations without having to undertake a construction program.) [72] But on August 21, an incident took place on Lake Grosvenor which demonstrated the lack of trust between the agency and concessioner. It strained relations between them for months afterwards.

On that date Van Hartley, the fishing guide at Grosvenor Camp, took a party of fishermen via jet-boat to the east end of the lake, at the mouth of Hardscrabble Creek. Hartley, who had worked out of the camp for less than a season, failed to slow down sufficiently in the shallows and went aground. Superintendent Gil Blinn, along with his son and an NPS employee, were canoeing in the vicinity, and offered to help. Using a block and tackle, Hartley and the NPS employees freed the jet boat. Hartley admitted only later that two of his party had sustained minor injuries in the grounding. [73]

The superintendent dutifully filled out a case incident record of the event, but before long an obviously embarrassed Hartley began to complain that the NPS employee with Blinn had refused to provide help in extricating the jet boat. Hartley also accused Blinn of refusing to provide first aid to the injured fishermen. Blinn denied both charges. [74]

Tempers eventually cooled from the incident itself, but a more vexing problem was the legality of motorboat access at the east end of Lake Grosvenor. Back in 1971, hearings had been held on the issue in conjunction with proposed wilderness designation at Katmai. Ray Petersen, representing Wien Consolidated, testified in support of much of the Service's proposed plan. Hoping to support the status quo, however, he also lobbied to keep Coville and Grosvenor lakes upon to power boating. [75]

In 1974, the NPS issued a Final Environmental Statement (FES) for the proposed wilderness at Katmai. That document proposed that the use of motorized boats be banned on all but the western end of Lake Grosvenor. (A major reason NPS officials made this decision was because the so-called Savonoski Loop was a popular canoe route. They felt that the popular canoeing route needed to be restricted to non-motorized craft in order to better maintain a wilderness setting.) The FES noted that "under existing administrative regulations," the use of power boats anywhere on Lake Grosvenor was not permitted. [76]

Superintendent Blinn did not immediately begin to enforce those regulations; by 1976, however, he felt that it was time to do so, at least in regards to Lake Grosvenor. He made no announcement; instead, according to the head of the concession operation, Blinn began to voice displeasure with motorboats on the lake "in late July or early August." It was not until September 1, ten days after the jet boat incident, that he officially notified the concessioner that it was operating in violation of park regulations. [77] At the end of an otherwise routine meeting, Blinn announced the new policy, effective immediately. His basis for the new policy, he noted, was not the Proposed Wilderness Environmental Statement. Instead, it was administrative regulations, implemented as soon as the environmental statement had been approved, which mandated that proposed wilderness areas be managed as "de facto" wilderness pending Congressional approval. [78]

Chuck Petersen, Wien's representative in charge of the camps, responded to the decision by writing a vociferous, lengthy letter of protest. He accused the superintendent of being arbitrary and evasive, and appealed his case to Pacific Northwest Regional Director Russell Dickenson, NPS Director Gary Everhardt, and Alaska's Congressional delegation. He then notified several of Grosvenor Camp's longtime guests of the decision, and organized an informal lobbying effort to overrule Blinn's administrative regulation. [79] The lobbying effort worked. By January 7, 1977, Director Everhardt notified Petersen that it would allow the use of motorized boat service, pending action by Congress on wilderness

recommendations. [80] (That usage has continued to the present day. ANILCA, passed in December 1980, gave Congressional approval to the administratively-designated Katmai wilderness. Section 1307 of the act, however, ensured that services that were active on or before January 1, 1979, could continue to operate if they were "consistent with the purposes for which such unit is established or expanded." Katmai staff have interpreted that motorboat usage on the lake has been consistent with the intent of that section.)

In retrospect, the furor over the issue could have been avoided. The superintendent's decision to enforce wilderness regulations in mid-season, shortly after an incident in which he was personally involved, appears ill-timed. Instead, he could have either announced the change in policy before the season began, or soft-pedaled the August 21 incident and delayed a more long-term policy decision until the end of season. Either way, he would have given the concessioner an opportunity to respond, protest, and perhaps work out a compromise. Given the fact that the concessioner had been using motorized boats on Lake Grosvenor since the early 1950s, it is doubtful that Wien would have readily acceded to the new regulation. But the company's use of the east end of Lake Grosvenor was sufficiently light that economic rather than emotional arguments might have prevailed. The concessioner, for its part, was also not blameless. Wien personnel were more emotional than rational in their description of the original incident which resulted in the superintendent's enforcement action. But its emotional protest to the new regulation, and the letter-writing campaign which followed, were justifiable measures in that their sole purpose was to protect existing conditions. [81]

The difficulties in resolving the dispute arising from the jet boat incident effectively stalled negotiations on the contract renewal for some six months. Neither side discussed matters relating to the contract until late February 1977, when a regional official told the Washington office to proceed with a one-year extension, followed by a new contract to be effective in 1978. [82] But by March 25, the contract extension advertised in the Federal Register had been expanded to two years. [83] John Nelson, Wien's assistant vice president of properties, signed Amendment No. 7 on June 13, 1977; by the time the National Park Service signed it on September 21, the summer season was effectively over. [84] The late date at which the NPS signed the extension and the lack of concern which either side expressed at the tardiness of the contract underlined the long-term interdependence which had developed between the concessioner and the agency. The summer of 1977 was the fourth season that decade in which the concessioner had operated the camps, for all or part of the season, without the benefit of a valid contract. It would not be the last year in which an unfinished contract extended into the camps' operating season.

The 1977-78 extension was the only contract between 1974 and 1981 which lasted more than a year. As such, it created a rare six-month hiatus in correspondence relating to contract matters, and allowed both the Service and the concessioner to concentrate more fully on other matters. The concessioner made few efforts to initiate camp improvements during this period. The NPS continued to make small, incremental improvements.

One of those improvements was the elimination of long-festering problems related to garbage collection in the Brooks Camp area. In the early 1970s, the NPS had instituted guidelines prohibiting garbage from being left in outside barrels and mandated that all garbage be burned before dumping. [85] Because of the difficulty in carting it to the dump along the Valley Road, garbage continued to be burned at the dump just west of the NPS maintenance buildings at Brooks Camp. The NPS burned garbage there until 1976; after that time, the dump continued to attract bears. [86] In July 1979, NPS officials responded to the problem by covering up the Brooks Camp landfill. Both the Service and the concessioner began to compact rather than burn their garbage. A barge hauled the garbage to Lake Camp, from which trucks removed the refuse to the Naknek dump. This system continued in use until 1991, when the construction of an incinerator reduced the volume of refuse that had to be

removed from the camp. [87]

The Service also had to contend with changes to its docks. In 1974-75, as part of the contract resulting in the new utility system, the Peterson Construction Co. had built a U-shaped dock on the north bank of the Brooks River which spread across all three sides of the embayment in which it was located. On the river's south side, boats continued to use a dock which had been in place since the early 1960s.

But no sooner had the new dock been installed than nature began to unravel the improvements. In 1977, high runoff caused the area surrounding the original concessions camp to flood, and continuing erosion threatened to undercut and destroy the new dock. The following year, NPS maintenance personnel dredged out the boat moorage area and tried to restore the dock to its former appearance. But in 1980, early runoff once again gouged under the north end of the dock and continued on into Naknek Lake, thus turning the embayment into a northern arm of Brooks River. The east side of the dock, by now severed onto an island, was manually removed in late May. The north side of the old dock, which was now protruding into Naknek Lake, was buttressed with scrapped sections of the former eastern portion of the dock. It began to serve as an impromptu fishing platform. [88]

The floods which had so greatly impacted the recently-completed dock on the north side of the river also played havoc with the older dock on the opposite bank. By 1978, floods had so weakened the small, L-shaped south side dock that NPS maintenance personnel had to dismantle it. It was not rebuilt. [89]

The elimination of the two docks, of course, complicated access across Brooks River. Until 1977, crossing the river had been fairly easy because of a reliance on motorized skiffs. The deterioration of the docks, however, made dockings more tenuous as new landing sites were sought. In addition, the noise and fumes of the motorboats—noted by at least one Brooks Camp visitor—and a national policy of greater energy conservation encouraged NPS personnel to pursue alternate methods by which visitors could cross the river. [90]

The first attempt was the installation of a boat pulley system. Raul Yoestrom, a seasonal ranger, designed and installed a makeshift system during the summer of 1978. The system, however, did not work well enough to be considered for more permanent use. [91] Edward Stondall, the maintenance chief at the Alaska Area Office, felt that a pulley system would not work over the long term, and suggested that a floating, removable bridge offered greater possibilities. Stondall designed the bridge during the 1979 summer season. Once the necessary approvals were gained, the bridge was constructed in 1981-82 with funds obtained from the Park Restoration and Improvement Program. [92]

The only other improvements were the addition of several new support buildings. At Brooks Camp, three Panabode-style seasonal ranger cabins were erected during the summer of 1980. These replaced four tent-frame residences which had been laid out in 1967. [93] The only structure put up by the concessioner during this period was a combination bath house and laundry building, erected at Grosvenor Camp about 1981. [94]

The end of the decade also saw a fundamental change in the way visitors reached Brooks Camp. Between 1950 and 1978 almost all Brooks Lodge visitors, along with most independent travelers to Brooks Camp, had arrived from King Salmon on the aircraft operated by the concessioner. But Wien Air Alaska, the concessioner after 1973, wanted to de-emphasize its use of small planes. The company had abandoned its charter operations in 1974, and in late 1978 it leased its Brooks Camp service to Peninsula Airways, a local service airline which had been serving Brooks Camp on a charter basis for several years. [95] Peninsula, known locally as "Pen Air," obtained a special use permit from the National Park

Service for the summer of 1979. Using Grumman Widgeons, a Grumman Goose and other aircraft, it provided the primary means of access to Katmai through the 1987 season. [96]

Despite the above changes, the concessioner's primary concern between 1978 and 1982, as it pertained to the operation of the Katmai camps, revolved around its attempts to obtain a long term contract and to extract a greater profit from camp operations. To attain these goals, Wien plunged into a number of financial negotiations, with both the National Park Service and with its own successors and/or subsidiaries.

Negotiations for a long-term contract began in early 1978, some nine months before the expiration of the two-year contract. The Service, as it had several times before, initially hoped to obtain a new contract. [97] These early hopes, however, proved premature. When the agency and the concessioner met in April 1978 to discuss such a contract, a series of disagreements between the two parties led the Service to recommend that the existing contract, initially signed in 1961, be extended for one more year. [98] Wien officials were in no mood to rock the boat, so on October 16, 1978, the company signed Amendment No. 8 to Contract No. 14-10-0434-498. The NPS signed the amendment six months later, on March 20, 1979. [99]

Of the various concerns raised in the April 1978 meeting, one of the thorniest related to housing for the Wien employees at Brooks Camp. Since the 1960-65 period, when NCA had constructed its Panabode-style units, Wien employees had been the primary users of the framed tents which were located between Brooks Lodge and the mouth of Brooks River. Several of these tents had been in place since the establishment of the camp in 1950. The Service had raised concerns about the adequacy of these tent cabins as early as 1974, when the construction of a new employee camp had been urged in exchange for the adoption of a ten-year contract extension. Wien, at that time, was not so eager to obtain a long term lease that it was willing to commit itself to a major construction program; therefore, that option was not exercised. [100] Four years later, the company showed no more willingness than before to allocate funds for the project, and the project was tabled again. In the meantime, however, the floods of 1977 had shown the vulnerability of the site, and the increasing number of encounters between humans and bears in the area raised the concerns of park officials. [101]

Even before Amendment No. 8 was officially put into effect, negotiations began again for a new ten-year contract. [102] This time, Wien officials were more amenable to the idea of a new concession housing area. However, Federal officials took more than a year, from March 1978 to December 1979, to prepare the contract. Despite the delay, the agency and concessioner continued to work toward resolution of a long-term agreement. By March 1980, both parties recognized that one more year-long extension would be necessary to bridge the time before a final contract could be hammered out. [103] Accordingly the two parties met and quickly ironed out their differences. On March 25, 1980, both parties signed Amendment No. 9 to the 1961 contract. [104]

## Household Finance Takes Over, 1979-1982

In July 1979, while contract negotiations were stalled, Wien made a move which had the long-term effect of straining relations with the National Park Service. Wien's board of directors announced that the airline was on the market, and Household Finance Corporation (HFC) and Alaska Airlines soon emerged as the major competitors for ownership. In mid-September, after several months of wrangling, Household Finance Corporation emerged victorious. The chairman of HFC was Gil Ellis. Wien, one of many HFC subsidiaries, remained as the holder of the concession. [105] It took several months for HFC to impose its management style over the Wien operation. Events were to demonstrate that Wien, after the

HFC takeover, was even less likely to invest in the camps than it was beforehand.

The obstinacy of Wien's new management began to be demonstrated as early as the spring of 1980. As noted above, several minor differences remained to be discussed before Amendment No. 9 was signed, and the largest area of contention dealt with the vehicles which the concessioner used for the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes tour. The two Dodge vans used on the tour, which had been purchased in the fall of 1974, were recognized as being in poor shape even in the spring of 1979. The concessioner, despite the condition of the vehicles, demanded a sharp increase in the price of the day tour; the Service responded by allowing the increase, but only if Wien purchased a new vehicle. Despite its promise, Wien refused to uphold its end of the bargain. [106]

In the spring of 1980, the agency repeated its demands for a new vehicle during negotiations for the contract renewal. In response, a Wien official replied that it was planning to offer a flightseeing tour (through a contractor) of the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. As a consequence, no new buses would be needed because of the reduction in patronage. The official also promised that Wien would overhaul its buses before the tourist season commenced. [107]

Confronted with this announcement, the director of the Alaska Area Office, "with great reluctance," allowed the contract extension without the purchase of a new vehicle. But the Katmai superintendent, David Morris, was opposed to Wien's shift in marketing strategy. Morris cried foul, charging that the air tours, which provided Wien greater revenues than the bus tour, were a violation of the jointly signed concession operating plan. As *de facto* spokesman for the independent traveler, he also feared that the de-emphasis on the bus tour would endanger the travel options of those who were not lodge guests. Morris, as it turned out, had good reason to worry. Wien raised the cost of the valley tour for the second straight year and again refused to upgrade its equipment. [108]

Considering the condition of the valley road that summer, it was perhaps fortunate that air tours were available. Katmai Air Service, the carrier which had begun as a charter outfit in 1974, operated under a contract to Wien that summer, and pilot Dan Bail provided 75-minute flights over the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes to some 800 tourists. [109] The bus tour was not as successful. The number of tourists, to be sure, was substantially reduced because of the air tour option. In addition, high water on Margot Creek closed the road from June 3 to July 23. Flooding forced the valley tours to be cut back to half a day; the buses on those trips turned around at either the first or second stream crossing. [110]

The concessioner ceased its promotion of scenic flights over the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes after the 1980 season. But despite the objections of the agency, the company continued to delay its bus purchase for another two years. The lack of improvements, however, did not prevent price levels from continuing their escalation. By 1982, the cost of the bus tour (with lunch) had risen to \$45, almost four times as much as had been charged just eight years earlier. Given the fact that it was a period of relatively high inflation—the nation's consumer price index rose more than 90 percent during those years—the bus fare increase was still substantial. [111]

Regarding the Kulik Lake Airstrip, the late 1970s and early 1980s witnessed the gradual softening of attitudes toward public use. From 1959 through the mid-1970s, the various owners of the western half of the strip (NCA, WCA, and WAA) had successfully prohibited its use to all but a few outsiders. But by the late 1970s, so many parties had complained to the BLM about the exclusion of the general public that a BLM employee, David Mobratten, was asked to investigate. According to his findings, Wien claimed that the airstrip was private because a clause in the lease permitted "the use of the airfield by any aircraft under

emergency conditions." But Mobratten found that the clause was "redundant and meaningless," and that the private use of the airport "would seem to violate and contradict the terms and conditions of the authority under which public airport leases are granted." He recommended that the lease be canceled if Wien did not allow public use of the strip. [112]

A branch chief, however, backtracked somewhat on that position. Neil Bassett felt that "for us to insist that the entire strip be made public puts us in the illegal position of dictating use of private lands and possibly of a 'taking' without compensation, not to mention tort claim problems." He instead recommended that Wien be issued a "Show Cause" notice, providing for cancellation of the lease for violation of the lease terms relating to public use. [113] For whatever reason, however, no such notice was sent, and the matter remained unsettled for the time being. [114]

After the National Park Service, in December 1980, obtained title to the eastern half of the airstrip, agency officials began to more strongly demand that the public be allowed to use the airstrip. This time, Wien was more conciliatory. By April 1982 James Flood, Wien's president and chairman of the board, told the Service that "Wien recognizes and understands the right of the public to use the runway ... located on federal land covered by the above described lease, as required by the lease itself and 49 U.S.C. §211." [115]

## **Creation of the New Concession Contract**

The obstinate attitude which Wien showed toward its purchases of capital equipment continued during its negotiations with the National Park Service on a new contract. As noted above, the two sides had agreed on an interim, one-year contract during the spring of 1980. Negotiations for a long-term pact began even before Amendment Number 9 was signed. They continued through the spring of 1981.

The National Park Service began to prepare a prospectus for a long-term contract in the fall of 1979. It originally envisioned one lasting ten years, but when the prospectus was issued on April 18, 1980, the contract period had been lengthened to 15 years. [116] The document was published in the Federal Register and delivered to Wien. During the 30-day review period, however, Wien's representative in charge of the camps, Morgan Richardson, "simply overlooked" the matter, and no other party responded to the prospectus within the designated time frame. By its failure to respond, Wien lost its preferential right of renewal. [117]

Hoping that a level playing field might entice a greater degree of interest, the NPS issued a second prospectus on August 21, 1980. Wien, the existing concessioner, was provided a hand-delivered prospectus the same day. The agency gave interested parties until October 15 to respond to the prospectus. [118] During the period that the second prospectus was out for bid, the NPS openly encouraged Wien to respond. Wien's representative, however, was in no mood to be prodded. He waited until nine days after the closing date before he responded.

Wien was the only firm to bid for the new contract. A four-member ad hoc panel, convened on November 3 and chaired by AAO official Richard Stenmark, found that the offer was "conditionally responsive" to the prospectus. The two parties, however, did not agree on several key points. The agency, for instance, wanted to substantially increase the franchise fees, because the \$900 fee being paid at that time was less than one-fifth of one percent of gross revenues. Wien offered a \$100 fee increase; as an absolute limit, it was willing to double it to \$1800.

NPS officials, however, felt that Wien should pay a percentage of gross profits rather than a flat fee. As far back as May 1974, the NPS had used concession management guidelines

developed from Public Law 89-249 (passed in October 1965) as the primary basis for new contract fees; at Katmai, officials calculated that any new contract should include a 1.2 percent franchise fee. Between 1974 and 1980, any discussion of a new contract included either a 1.2 or 1.25 percent fee. (The latter figure was offered as an initial bargaining position.) [119] Therefore, Wien officials should not have been surprised that the 1980 prospectus included a 1.2 percent fee. But company officials fought the new rate because, based on 1980 revenues, it would have been approximately \$5900—over \$4000 more than the airline was proposing. [120]

Another source of tension indicated in Wien's response to the prospectus concerned the construction of new housing for the employees of the concessioner. Since the 1950s, Wien employees had lived in a series of framed tents near the mouth of Brooks River. Guests had shared adjacent tent frames in the early years, but after the construction of the Panabode lodge units during the 1960-1965 period, guests stayed less often in the former tent frame complex. By the early 1970s the tents were no longer considered as guest cabins. By 1974, the land surrounding the cabins was recognized to be subject [121]to periodic flooding. The condition of the cabins had deteriorated to such an extent that the NPS proposed their replacement as part of the granting of a ten-year contract. [122] The floods of the late 1970s, noted above, served only to underscore the need for new employee dwellings. In 1979, the NPS approached the problem more directly when it drew up its first development concept plan for Brooks Camp, the primary purpose of which was the removal and replacement of the existing concessioner housing.

When contract negotiations began in 1980, NPS officials repeated their stipulation that any new contract include a provision for replacing the employee housing complex. Wien officials, however, responded to the Service's housing demands with only vague replies. The company had estimated that the construction of a new employee complex would cost more than \$600,000. Therefore, they were in no mood to undertake such a large investment. [123]

To iron out these and other differences, officials from Wien and the newly designated Alaska Regional Office of the NPS met on December 5. The meeting was inconclusive. Wien officials, who were now part of Household Finance Corporation, stated matter-of-factly that new company guidelines required a 15 percent after-tax return on invested capital. The two Katmai concession camps, in fact, had provided a return exceeding 15 percent during 1977 and 1978 seasons. In the two years since the HFC takeover, gross revenues had continued to increase, but camp expenses were reportedly so high that the company showed negative net income figures. [124] The lack of profits, combined with the rigid guidelines imposed by HFC, prohibited Wien from investing in employee quarters, and the company was equally uninterested in the prospect of purchasing new buses for the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes tour. Wien, in fact, told NPS officials that it was on the verge of "cashing out" its investment. The two sides were hopelessly deadlocked but agreed to meet again in an attempt to resolve their differences. [125]

The two sides met again on December 16. By this time Morgan Richardson, the previous Wien representative in charge of the camps, had been replaced by Ralph Stemp; apparently as a result of the personnel change, agency officials found Wien more willing to negotiate a contract than at their first meeting. The two sides, however, remained substantially at odds regarding franchise fees, the construction of employee quarters, and the purchase of new buses. [126] After the meeting, the stance of Wien officials reverted to that shown at the December 5 meeting, and when the two sides met at a hastily-arranged third meeting on January 23, 1981, Wien officials again suggested the possibility of being "cashed out." NPS officials responded by threatening to terminate the process if an agreement could not be reached before February 9. (This deadline was later extended to February 23.) [127]

At this point the situation looked bleak for both sides. Wien was on the verge of abandoning an operation which had been under continuous airline management for more than thirty years. The NPS faced the equally dismal prospect of having to go without an active concession operation—an operation responsible for bringing a large share of Katmai's visitors and providing a quality experience to thousands of its guests.

Confronted with the prospect of breaking their long-established working relationship, the two sides appealed to each other for an equitable compromise. Ralph Stemp, the company's new camp representative, was apparently given a wide latitude by company management to hammer out an agreement; NPS officials, though legally bound to follow Servicewide contract language to a large extent, worked toward the same goal. Stemp, overseen by Wien president James J. Flood, negotiated with Concessions Management Officer Joe Alston, Associate Regional Director Robert L. Peterson, and Regional Director John Cook. [\[128\]](#)

By early May, the two sides had agreed to a proposed contract. Wien still had concerns on matters related to the length of the tourist season, maintenance of the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes road, and the ability to construct new guest cabins at Brooks Camp. These problems, however, proved not to be insurmountable, and on June 4, 1981, Wien Air Alaska signed Contract No. CC-9100-1-0001, valid through the end of 1995. The National Park Service signed the contract on September 25. [\[129\]](#)

At the insistence of the National Park Service, the contract mandated a series of improvements at both Brooks and Grosvenor camps. It called for the replacement of all concessioner employee housing units at Brooks Camp. It also required the replacement of the existing Brooks Camp store and lounge (also located in the tent complex), the construction of an addition to the Brooks Camp dining room, and the replacement of the kitchen and dining room at Grosvenor Camp. Finally, it mandated the replacement of the current tour buses with a fleet sufficient to meet visitor needs and road conditions. A timetable giving dates by which each of the improvements was to be completed was incorporated into the contract. [\[130\]](#)

The first scheduled improvement, which was the replacement of the tour buses, followed soon after the contract was signed. The 1974 Dodge vans were in a ramshackle condition by the end of the 1981 season. To remedy the situation, Wien bought three new eight-passenger Chevrolet Suburban vans that winter. Placed into service at the beginning of the 1982 season, they were readily accepted by Katmai visitors. [\[131\]](#) Other amenities also began to improve. The quality of concessions employees, which had been questionable at best during the late 1970s, rose dramatically during the early 1980s. The camp's appearance also improved as with the removal of collected oil drums and related camp refuse. [\[132\]](#)

## **Household International Moves to Sell the Camps**

During the winter of 1981-1982, various proposals were made concerning the ownership of the camps. On November 23, 1981, less than two months after Wien had signed its 15-year NPS contract, Household International (the successor to HFC) announced its intention to sell Wien Air Alaska. The intended buyer was Eagle Enterprises, an air cargo and oil exploration firm; the announced purchase price was \$50 million. Eagle Enterprises was initially reported as two-fifths owned by the Doyon Native Corporation. On December 10, however, it was identified as a holding company wholly owned by Neil G. Bergt, the man who that day had become the chairman and chief executive officer of Western Airlines. [\[133\]](#)

Bergt's plan upon assuming the Western Airlines leadership was to push for the Eagle purchase of Wien so that Wien, in turn, could be purchased by Western and incorporated into the Western system. Both of those purchases, however, required the approval of the boards of

directors of the purchasing airlines as well as the U.S. Civil Aeronautics Board. During the winter of 1981-82 Wien's sale to Eagle was an off-again, on-again proposition; in November 1982, negotiations between the two companies were terminated. [\[134\]](#)

In November 1981, Household had made it known that they wished to divest Wien. Until that time, Wien had pinned its financial future upon the financial backing provided by Household International. When Wien became aware of the upcoming sale, its growth plans began to unravel and its fortunes began to slide. [\[135\]](#)

Although Household hoped to sell Wien, they had no such plans to sell the various Katmai camps. These included the Wien-owned camps outside the old monument as well as the concessions contract for Brooks and Grosvenor camps. [\[136\]](#) The prospect of Wien's separation, however, put Household in a quandary, because it recognized that if the sale went through, it would have neither the management expertise nor the contractual ability to operate them. Both lay with Wien; more specifically, they lay with Ralph Stemp and Randall Day, the management team which had spearheaded the camp operations the previous summer. [\[137\]](#)

To get around its dilemma, Household created a wholly-owned subsidiary of Wien, Household-Alaska Properties, Inc., which was responsible for the operations of the camps. It transferred the NPS concession contract from Wien Air Alaska to the subsidiary in April 1982; the transfer was made retroactive to December 31, 1981. [\[138\]](#) James J. Flood, the president of Wien, told the agency that no controlling interests were changed in the transfer. On June 6, 1982, Douglas Warnock, the acting regional director of the Alaska Region, concurred with Flood's assessment. Household-Alaska Properties, therefore, operated Brooks and Grosvenor camps during the summer of 1982, although the "controlling interest" of the camps remained with Wien Air Alaska. Stemp and Day continued to run the camp operations. [\[139\]](#)

During the winter of 1981-1982, the NPS was provided glimpses into the tumultuous internal affairs at Wien, the proposed sale to Eagle being just one symptom. In December, for instance, the agency was told that the camps were to become part of another holding company within Household International; [\[140\]](#) the following March, it heard that the camps might be sold or leased to Wien officials Ralph Stemp and Randy Day. [\[141\]](#) Westours, a large Alaska tour company, also expressed an interest in the camps. [\[142\]](#) The Service felt at one point that Wien wanted to donate its concession to the Federal government, and met with Household International officials to evaluate such a possibility. [\[143\]](#) During this period, the Service's reaction to each proposal was that it cared little who owned the camps. Instead, it was more concerned with the ability of the various potential buyers to effectively operate them, and with their willingness to engage in the improvement program as stipulated in the contract.

By the summer of 1982, Household International had expressed a public willingness to sell its interests in Katmai National Park and Preserve. In early August, Household chairman Donald Clark (the successor to Gil Ellis) received an offer to purchase the camps from a new corporation called KatmaiLand, [\[144\]](#) which was headed by Raymond I. Petersen and his son, Raymond F. ("Sonny") Petersen. [\[145\]](#) KatmaiLand offered \$110,000 in earnest money to purchase certain land, equipment, and leases owned by Household-Alaska Properties, Inc. These included "all of the property and concession rights in Katmai Park, and the Household owned land, buildings, and property including trucks, vans, boats and tractors needed to operate the camps and lodges [at] Battle Lake, Nonvianuk Lake West [sic], and Kulik Lodge ... also, an 80 acre fee simple airport at Kulik." Two airport leases were also included (one of which was at Kulik Lake), as well as the right to the certificate for air service between King Salmon and Brooks Camp. [\[146\]](#)

Household accepted the offer. The total purchase price, not including the required investment in concessioner housing, was \$1.1 million; this total did not include the \$350,000 needed for construction of the concessioner employee housing complex. After discussions with the buyer and the National Park Service, the purchase price was apportioned in the following way: \$930,000 for the three Wien-owned camps (Kulik, Nonvianuk and Battle), and "all buildings, improvements thereon and all interest in the Concessioner's improvements;" \$100,000 for "all fixtures, vehicles and personal property used in connection with" the three camps; \$50,000 for "all right, title and interest in the Concession Agreement;" and \$20,000 for "all right, title and interest in the [Kulik] Public Airport Lease and the King Salmon Airport Lease." To purchase Household-Alaska's interest at Katmai as well as the new employee buildings, the Petersens paid \$500,000 cash; they obtained an additional \$1.1 million from the Alaska Industrial Development Authority. [[147](#)]

The Petersens seemed to be an excellent choice to take over the camps. Neither man had played an active role in camp operations since the elder Petersen had stepped down as Wien's Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer in 1978. [[148](#)] The two were familiar with camp operations. Raymond F. Petersen, KatmaiLand's president, was a thirty-year-old pilot who had grown up in and around the camps; in addition, he had been head of Katmai Air Inc., a charter outfit and air taxi service, for the past nine seasons. (Though Katmai Air retained its business name, the company was liquidated at the time of purchase. Its operating certificate was transferred to KatmaiLand.) His father, KatmaiLand's secretary-treasurer, was 70 years old. Away from the camps for the last four years, he admitted he was "getting bored stiff" with retirement and relished the idea of being involved again. His experience with the camps was an enormous advantage; in addition, he contributed much-needed financial muscle to the fledgling corporation. [[149](#)]

The Petersens' bid for the camps was more serious than earlier offers, and the purchase proceeded with little delay. KatmaiLand informed Dave Morris, Katmai superintendent, of the proposed purchase in mid-September, and by late October the financing for the purchase had been completed. On November 19, 1982, the National Park Service approved the transfer of Concession Contract Number CC-9100-1-0001 (for the use of Brooks and Grosvenor camps) and Airport Lease Number A-056478 (for the use of the eastern half of Kulik airstrip) from Household-Alaska Properties, Inc. to KatmaiLand, Inc. After a four-year hiatus, Raymond I. Petersen had once again become active in the management of the Katmai properties which he had developed some thirty years earlier. [[150](#)]

---

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



### CHAPTER 5:

## THE KATMAILAND CONCESSION OPERATION

KatmaiLand, Inc. purchased the Katmai concession from Wien in October 1982. The newly-organized company, which changed its name to Katmailand the following year, was headed by Raymond F. Petersen, son of the former NCA president. The new concessioner undertook several building projects. The largest of these was the concession employee complex which was built in 1984-85, replacing the former tent camp. In 1986, budget cuts forced the NPS to drop its interpretive program on the Valley tour; the concessioner agreed to provide the service. Ongoing conflicts have taken place in recent years between Katmailand and the park over access to the Kulik Lake airstrip. Recent years have also witnessed a dramatic increase in visitation to Brooks Camp. The conflicts brought on by those visitors brought management pressure to concessioner and agency alike.

### Construction Activities at the Camps

KatmaiLand Inc. (known as Katmailand Inc. after May 1983) has owned the concession contract for Katmai National Park and Preserve since November 1982. Under the control of its new operators, the Katmai camps have witnessed a substantial amount of growth, both in the physical development of the camps and in the number of visitors attracted to them.

Much of the camps' physical growth, of course, was mandated by the terms of the 1981 concession contract. The pact called for the construction of the employee housing area as well as the Brooks Lodge dining room addition during 1983, and the following year it required the construction of a new store and lounge at Brooks Camp, along with a kitchen and dining room facility at Grosvenor Camp. Lacking sufficient capital to undertake such a project, the Petersens applied for, and received, a \$1.1 million bond through the Alaska Industrial Development Authority. [1]

With financial backing in hand, the new owners wasted little time in proceeding with construction plans. Design plans for the various buildings to be included in the employee housing complex were completed by November 1982. The National Park Service, for its part, followed quickly with an archeological survey. [2] But beginning in March 1983, the project was delayed for a year because of legal difficulties arising from the Melgenak Native claim. [3] Construction finally got underway in the spring of 1984, and by the end of the season Katmailand had nearly completed twelve new employee cabins. The cabins were readied for occupancy the following summer. The project cost totalled \$350,000, less than two-thirds of what Wien had estimated [4]

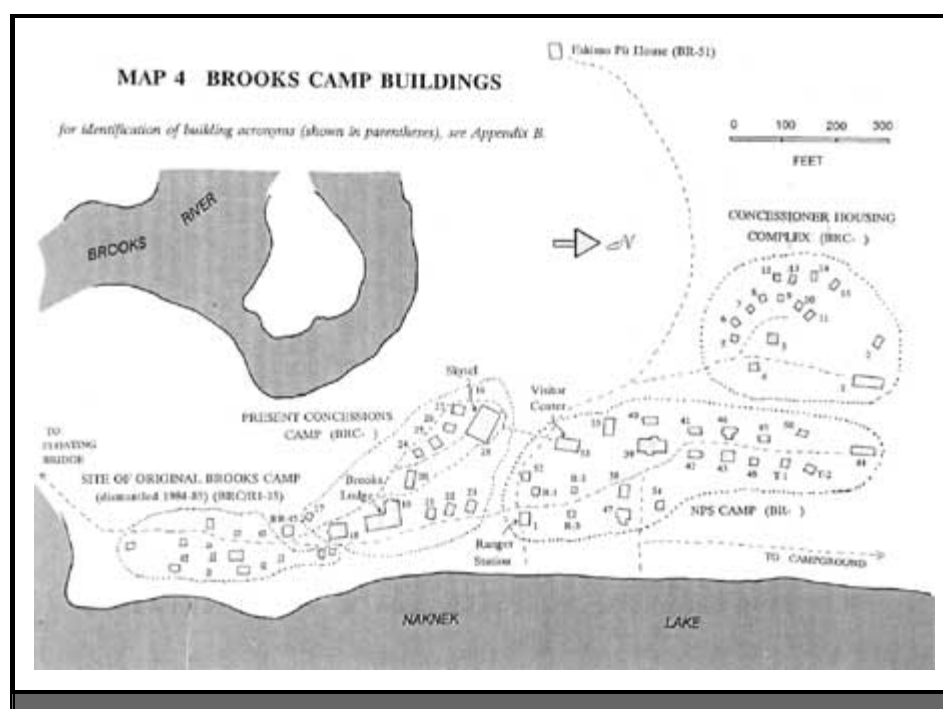
Other building projects were also begun in 1984. At Brooks Camp, most of the work on a dining-room expansion was completed. At Grosvenor Camp construction began on a new kitchen/dining area and generator house, designed to replace the old tar paper cook

house/dining room and generator house which guests had used since the camp was constructed in 1950. These projects were completed in the summer of 1985. [5] Construction of a large Katmailand warehouse began that same summer, and toward the end of the 1985 season, the old employee tent cabins—the original Brooks Camp structures—began to be razed. The construction of the warehouse and the destruction of the tent complex were completed in the summer of 1986. The only concessioner buildings to be constructed since the completion of the warehouse was a small employee cabin located west of the nine-unit Skytel, and a third Panabode guest cabin at Grosvenor Camp. Both were erected in the summer of 1987. [6]

Since the Katmailand takeover, the National Park Service has built its own improvements to complement those of the concessioner. The only structures it has erected in the last eight years have been two tent frames erected at the north end of the row of seasonal residences, along with a low-roofed shed used for the storage of ranger equipment. An incinerator, located south of the NPS warehouse, was completed in 1991; two more tent frames were also erected that year. [7]

In order to allow visitors to watch the bears at Brooks Falls in greater safety, the agency constructed a bear viewing platform southeast of the falls in August 1982. The following year crews rerouted the trail to the platform from its former route along the riverbank to a more roundabout route. The new route followed the road from the floating bridge to a point just before the Valley Road-Brooks Lake junction; from there a new trail headed north to the falls. The former (riverbank) trail remains open but is used by few other than those interested in fishing. [8] No trails have been cut in the Brooks Camp area since 1983.

The quality of the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes tour has remained high in recent years, and the legacy of substandard equipment and service from the final years of Wien operations has been all but eliminated. The concessioner had the luxury of operating new equipment—the 1982 Chevrolet Suburbans which Wien had purchased. As early as 1984, however, Katmailand began pressing the NPS to let it replace those vehicles with a larger, more rugged school bus. [9] Two years later, the agency relented and approved the use of a 4x4 bus carrying 29 passengers. The vehicle operated along the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes road beginning in 1987, and has been the primary carrier since then. One of the Chevrolet Suburbans was not removed from the park, but was held for supplemental use. [10]



Map 4. Brooks Camp Buildings (*click on image for an enlargement in a new window*)

In the mid-1980s, steps were made toward constructing a pedestrian bridge at one of the Margot Creek crossings. In 1985, high water at the crossing forced almost half of the season's tours to turn back prematurely. Officials from the Federal Highway Administration, brought in to resolve the periodic high-water problem, suggested that the best long-term solution might be the permanent placement of a vehicle on the far side of Margot Creek and the construction of a pedestrian bridge spanning the creek. [11] Prodded by the Alaska Congressional delegation, the NPS's Denver Service Center staff further developed the idea of a pedestrian bridge. By March of 1987, plans called for field work at the bridge site that summer and construction of a pedestrian bridge the following year. But DSC's plan proved unworkable. Fortunately, the introduction of the high-clearance school bus eliminated the need for the pedestrian bridge, and the bridge idea was discarded. [12]

In the last eight years the interpretive program has continued in much the same fashion at Brooks Camp, with one significant exception. In the spring of 1986, the NPS informed Katmailand that it would no longer be able to provide a naturalist guide to give an interpretive talk on the bus tour from Brooks Lodge to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. Budget cutbacks forced the change. The concessioner, which was informed of the move just a month before the season began, was understandably upset and railed, without success, to have the service restored. The Service, lacking other alternatives, agreed to train the three recently-hired drivers as tour guides, and the drivers learned their new duties sufficiently well that tour visitors were generally pleased with the new arrangement. [13] By the following spring, the agency recognized that it would be unable to re-establish service that season and was so discouraged over future prospects that it discussed the alternative of amending the concession contract to include tour guiding. Although the contract was not amended until the spring of 1990, the concessioner has provided tour guiding services each year since 1986. [14]

## Kulik Lake Airstrip Access Questions

When KatmaiLand, Inc., took over Wien's interests in the Katmai camps in late 1982, part of the purchase price included the patented property at the western end of the airstrip, as well as the public airport lease covering the east end. Shortly after he purchased the airstrip, new owner Raymond F. Petersen stated his intended use of the airstrip, noting that "The portion of the airport under lease will be operated in conformance with the provisions of the [1974] BLM lease. The portion of the airstrip that is owned by KatmaiLand Inc. will be closed to the public and will be marked accordingly." He passed that information on to the publishers of the Alaska supplement to the Airman's Information Manual. [15] NPS and KatmaiLand representatives, drawn together to update the language in the 1974 lease, attempted to further clarify the public's access to the eastern half of the airstrip by eliminating the lease clause that dealt with emergency use of the airstrip. The elimination of that clause, however, may have been variously interpreted by the two parties; the NPS, at any rate, did not sign it. [16]

In 1986, however, Katmailand reneged on its promise to uphold its provisions of the 1974 lease. Jim Riehle, a U.S. Geological Survey employee, called Petersen to request permission to land. He did so because he was flying an Argosy, a plane which needed at least 3500 feet of runway, too much for the public half of the strip. [17] According to Riehle, Petersen told him that the entire strip was private and that use without permission would be trespass. Petersen protested because he had been advised that allowing public use of the strip would expose him to liability problems. [18] Riehle then called Loren Casebeer, who allowed Riehle to use the airstrip as requested, and the geologist did so without difficulty. In retrospect, it appears that neither party was properly upholding the provisions of the 1974

lease. Because of the disparity of opinions brought forth, the incident raised legal questions once thought resolved. [19]

After hearing Riehle's complaint, Service officials inquired into the legalities of the situation, and insisted that the eastern half of the airstrip was available for public use. Petersen, however, renewed his claim that the airstrip was private. Several more intimidating encounters took place that summer, and early in the 1987 season as well; in a mid-September 1986 incident, a Naknek pilot was threatened by a Katmailand employee. [20]

The difference of opinion caused park personnel to seek legal advice in the matter. The regional Division of Lands requested the opinion of the Solicitor's Office. The resulting opinion reaffirmed the public's right to use its half of the strip. Furthermore, the Service had other grounds for canceling the Katmailand lease. First, the lessee had not paid its \$10 annual rental fee since 1979, and was thus guilty of violating the lease payment provisions. Also, the lessee's attempted restriction of public use violated the Airport and Airway Improvement Act, which obligated the lessee to maintain the strip for public use as well as its own. [21]

Ray Bane, the new superintendent beginning in August 1987, had several options regarding how to handle the airport lease. Had he chosen to, he could have rejected the lease outright. His primary concern, however, was that the public should be guaranteed access, free of impediments or harassment. [22]

Petersen had been apprised in March 1987 that the lease was technically invalid, both because the lease fee had not been paid and the lease had not been transferred. Perhaps because he realized the shakiness of his legal status, he did not dispute the findings of the park attorneys. Shortly afterwards the language in the Alaska supplement, requiring pilots to obtain permission to land at the airstrip, was modified to allow landings on the public half of the strip. [23]

Katmailand officials, understandably, were less than satisfied at the legal outcome of the airport lease case. Their goal throughout the proceedings had been to close the airstrip to outside users, and they were still concerned about potential liability problems. They also had no intention of abandoning the lease, so they embarked on a third alternative. Beginning in the summer of 1987, they began to speak with NPS officials about a possible land trade. [24]

In the spring of 1988, they presented an offer to give 39.495 acres of their airport land in return for 29.972 acres owned by the Park Service. The land they hoped to obtain came in two portions: a 20.264-acre parcel which consisted of the eastern half of the airstrip, along with another 9.708-acre parcel encompassing Kulik Cove, the embayment north of Kulik Lodge, and at the mouth of Kulik River, where Katmailand parked its planes and boats. The land offered to the Service was located in a long, narrow rectangle on the southwestern edge of the airstrip. [25]

Katmailand provided information on the proposed exchange to its attorneys who, in turn, discussed the matter with staff members in the office of Alaska Congressman Don Young. In late June, Ray F. Petersen, Katmailand president, discussed the matter with Ray Bane. He told the superintendent that he had two reasons for desiring the trade: to increase the value of his private land, and to control use of the airstrip. He mentioned that the NPS would be obtaining some ten acres more than it would be releasing, and that NPS title to lands south of the airport "would prevent Katmailand or any successor from developing or selling parcels of that land to other entities for remote cabin sites or development." [26]

Katmailand's desire to obtain the eastern half of the airstrip was obvious enough. In the Kulik Cove area, the parcel it hoped to receive would allow it to legitimize and broaden existing use patterns. In the 1950s, floatplanes flying in and out of Kulik used the exposed eastern

shore area of Nonvianuk Lake. In the 1960s, however, the lodge owners bulldozed out a more protected docking area at the mouth of Kulik River. Soon afterwards, they shifted landing operations to the new site, and roughed out a road connecting the shallow cove area to the lodge.

Operation of a docking area at Kulik Cove may have been valid under Bureau of Land Management regulations, but when the area came under NPS ownership in 1978-80, new regulations forbade several aspects of that operation. Katmailand, for instance, stored equipment at the site, a practice not allowed under the provisions of its commercial use license. NPS officials were also concerned because of increasing environmental degradation in the cove area; that degradation included spilled fuel, disturbed archeological remains and trampled vegetation. Recognizing that continued use of Kulik Cove would result in ever-greater friction from park officials, the concessioner hoped to eliminate the problem by gaining title to the airplane docking area. [27]

Over the next several weeks, Bane discussed the proposed trade with staff at the park and the regional office. He responded to Petersen on September 2. Although he did not reject the trade outright, the tone of his letter implied that it was not in the best interests of the NPS. He noted that Katmailand was attempting to obtain lands that were either 1) available for public use as an airstrip, or 2) excellent habitat for sockeye salmon, brown bears, and other natural predators. In return, it was offering lands which had been heavily impacted by the construction of the airstrip, and which had suffered some limited impacts from past off-road vehicle use. Bane did not appear eager to give up public access to a "highly scenic area with excellent sport fishing and wildlife viewing opportunities." Bane further cautioned Petersen that any proposed exchanges involving NPS lands would require archeological surveys, public use surveys, and other data. An environmental assessment encompassing such data would probably be required. [28]

Interest in a trade languished until the summer of 1989. On August 10, representatives of Katmailand, the National Park Service, and Congressman Young's office met to discuss new aspects of a proposed trade. Among other options, Katmailand was considering the sale of Kulik Lodge. If that option were to be exercised, it wanted to perfect its access to the site to assure marketability. To do so, Katmailand expressed an interest in selling its airport property. In return, it hoped to retain an easement for its use for the entire length of the airstrip; it also hoped to obtain an easement for access from its lodge property north to Kulik Cove. To guarantee uniform standards for the airstrip, the company considered a cooperative agreement with the NPS covering its use and maintenance. As an added incentive, Katmailand was willing to trade away title to its Battle Lake camp, which was currently being operated by others under a rental agreement. [29]

Ray Bane, who was unable to attend the meeting, favored the easement idea. He showed little interest in Katmailand's offer of its Battle Lake property; instead he hoped that the company might offer its Nonvianuk property, or at least be able to guarantee to the Service that it would not be further developed. And he continued to insist that the public be allowed access to the airstrip. [30]

NPS and Katmailand representatives discussed the matter again in a November 15 meeting. Katmailand, by this time, was no longer interested in selling Kulik Lodge, but both sides still hoped to resolve the long-simmering airport issue. But because of liability concerns, Katmailand stonewalled any NPS suggestions to share in airstrip maintenance. The company was also unwilling to accept any arrangement in which the entire strip would be open to public use. Given those differences, the two parties realized that they could not accomplish a mutually satisfactory exchange regarding the airstrip. Katmailand still hoped to obtain an easement for the use of Kulik Cove and access to the lodge, but by January 1990 even that

idea had been dropped. [31]

Meanwhile, friction over the use of the airstrip continued. In 1988 and 1989, Katmailand officials were as adamant as they had been in 1986-1987 that the entire airstrip remain off-limits to the public, and park staff continued to receive reports of harassment from members of the public using the eastern half of the strip. Katmailand staff continued to give visitors the clear impression that they were unwelcome in the area. One pilot, acting on his own, even instituted a \$100 fee for use of the company's portion of the airstrip. [32]

Since 1989, relations between the two parties have been relatively peaceful. Liability problems, which lay behind much of the contention between the two parties, have been partially addressed through revised language in the Alaska supplement used by the state's pilots, and by the clear delineation on the ground of the boundary between the public and private portions of the airstrip. No incidents of harassment have been reported for several years. The roles, moreover, of the two parties have been more clearly resolved. The NPS now recognizes that Katmailand's aircraft can use the entire strip if they so choose, and Katmailand realizes that the public has the right to use the eastern half of the strip.

Beyond the veneer of amicability, however, the issues which have divided Katmailand and the NPS on the lease issue have by no means disappeared. Katmailand staff still hope to restrict public use of the strip; its strategy in attaining that goal has been to abrogate its jurisdiction over the eastern half of the strip, and to treat it as if it were unimproved public land. Katmailand, in recent years, has maintained the western half of the runway and a small portion of the public strip; it has left the eastern end in a state of benign neglect. Visitors are instructed to park their planes at the strip's eastern end. The NPS, titleholder of the eastern half of the airstrip, is free to maintain it, but has thus far been uninterested in doing so. [33]

## **Effects of Brooks Camp Visitor Growth**

In recent years, the NPS has dealt with an accelerating rate of visitor development throughout the park. As is elaborated upon in Chapter 7, the growth in fishing activities has been so vigorous that several drainages demand monitoring, study, and possible regulation. But Brooks Camp has proven so popular, and so many competing demands have grown in such a limited area, that problems related to its management have commanded much of the park's personnel and budget. [34] Issues that have most occupied Katmai management in the mid-to late 1980s include the late-season behavior of bears and the effect of human populations on that behavior, and the ecological and psychological effects created by an increasing number of Brooks Camp day users.

In the early 1980s, the season at Brooks Camp ran from June 1 to September 10. The length of season had remained static for much of the past three decades, and had not been lengthened because little demand existed for lodging beyond those dates. [35]

By 1981, Wien management had begun putting pressure on NPS officials to lengthen the season, reasoning that the addition of a single day to the 100-day season could represent an increase of as much as three percent to gross receipts (and even more to net profit). National Park Service officials tried to sympathize with their plight. As guardian of the park's resources, however, they were more concerned about the camp's bear problems. They were so worried about bear-human conflicts, in fact, that they considered moving the camp away from the mouth of Brooks River. [36] Having had a long history of bear confrontations in the area, agency officials were understandably skittish about extending visitation into mid-September, when bear populations along the beach and river were known to be numerous because of a late salmon run.

To gain more information on problems taking place throughout the park, NPS officials undertook a major planning effort beginning in the spring of 1982. This effort, which included a series of newsletters and a plea for public involvement, also took place in each of the other Alaska park units that were established or expanded by ANILCA. The region-wide planning process lasted until the fall of 1986 and resulted in the a series of environmental assessments, general management plans, wilderness suitability reviews, and land protection plans. For each of the affected parks, a draft general management plan (GMP) was ready in March 1985, a revised draft in December, and a final plan in November 1986. [37]

The Katmai GMP emphasized resource protection and called for few new developments. The draft plan, which was particularly sensitive to the clash of resources at Brooks Camp, called for the camp's eventual relocation. Later versions, however, called for a stabilization of activities at the camp, and recognized that more data had to be gathered about those nature of bear-human interactions before a move could proceed. In addition, the final plan demanded that a Development Concept Plan (DCP) be prepared that will "address the need for, size, and location of visitor facilities" in the camp. [38]

In 1985, the park superintendent agreed to sponsor a study aimed at gathering data on bear-human relationships. It was directed by Dr. Barrie Gilbert, a biologist at Utah State University, and carried out over a three-year period. [39] In order to provide late-season data for the study, Superintendent Morris allowed the lodge to extend its season an extra week in 1986, and later extended the 1987 season a week as well. The study, when completed, showed that the likelihood of public safety problems was likely to increase if a sizable number of visitors frequented Brooks Camp during the end-of-season period. Specifically, Gilbert noted that the number of bears frequenting the Brooks River significantly increased between early and mid-September. Equally important, bears frequenting the camp late in the season tended to be less habituated to human activity than those seen in July and August. Therefore, they were more aggressive and demanding than those seen earlier in the season. [40]

Given the results of that study, Superintendent Bane ordered the concessioner to close Brooks Lodge on September 10, beginning in 1988. The concessioner loudly protested, but Bane held firm, and the September 10 closing date is still in effect. Much to the chagrin of the concessioner, Bane did not order the campground to be shut down the same day. The primary reason for his decision was that public use closures require a public comment period and other special procedures. A lack of time did not allow him to implement those procedures. Bane also knew that mid-September campers at Brooks River would be relatively small in number, for two reasons: the cold, rainy weather and the sharp increase in air fares to Katmai after the lodge closed. Bane's supposed inconsistency, therefore, was well justified. [41]

The other trend, the increase in day use visitors to Brooks Camp, has been caused by two factors: the increase of one-day fly-in fishermen and other day-trippers during the decade, and the decision to open up the camp as a major package tour destination. The increase in day use has, in turn, created myriad demands on a limited area. The extent of those pressures has been recognized only recently, and a mechanism intended to mitigate the scale of conflicting land-use demands is being developed in the Brooks River Area Development Concept Plan.

As Chapter 7 notes in greater detail, fly-in fishing began on a local scale in the 1950s. For the next two decades, most of those who stayed at the Katmai camps walked or boated to their fishing grounds. (A few of the wealthier fishermen chartered planes, but most stayed within 20 or 30 miles of their camp.) But in the 1970s, fly-in vacations began to become more common. Guests at the Katmai camps began to demand flights out to remote rivers and lakes for a day's fishing, and guests at lodges located up to 150 miles away began to demand

visits to the park. Guests at the Katmai camps, particularly those staying at Kulik, began to demand fly-out trips as early as 1974, but the popularity of fly-out fishing did not really take hold until the early 1980s. (American Creek, located at the western end of Lake Coville, was a primary destination of fly-out fishermen in the early days.) [42] Because of its status as a national park unit, and its fame as a fishing destination, Katmai became a major destination for visitors from resorts throughout the region.

As the tourist node of the park, Brooks Camp was a major point of interest of early fly-in day visitors, who were attracted by the site's bear watching opportunities, the beauty of Brooks Falls and the excellent fishing along Brooks River. The popularity of fly-in trips exploded during the 1980s. Statistics note that in 1981, three commercial use licensees brought only about sixty day-trippers to the Brooks Camp area, while eight years later some sixteen licensees flew more than 1850 visitors to the camp. [43] As noted in Chapter 7, the popularity of fly-in trips has by no means been limited to the Brooks Camp area. Despite the impressive growth of other Katmai destinations, however, the mouth of Brooks River has continued to be the park's largest point of interest for day visitors.

A major part of that growth, beginning in 1988, has been the package tour. Discussion of such large-scale tours apparently began in the summer of 1987, and by fall the agency and concessioner had discussed the need for a second bus on Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes tours the following summer. [44] The two largest tour operators in the state, Westours and Princess Tours, wanted to market a Katmai tour. They approached Katmailand in hopes of working out a deal using the company's planes as well as its ground transportation. Katmailand, recognizing the tour operators' flexibility, knew that the tour operators would contract with another carrier if agreeable terms were not worked out. Therefore, they cooperated in providing a new, day-long tour which began in the summer of 1988. [45]

The tour, which was organized by officials at the new QuinNat Landing Hotel in King Salmon, began with an overnight stay at the hotel and featured an early morning Katmai Air flight to Brooks Camp. After a short stay at the camp, visitors boarded buses and spent the next several hours taking the Valley tour. After returning to camp, tour patrons remained for dinner at the lodge. Most returned to King Salmon that evening; a few, however, remained overnight as part of a three-day tour package. [46]

Katmai Air, which had been operating since 1974 and become part of Katmailand since 1982, substantially expanded its operations in 1988. Katmai Air became the primary operator between King Salmon and Brooks Camp when it ceased the nine-year lease arrangement it had had with Peninsula Airways. [47] The popularity of the one-day package tour helped increase the company's total of passenger-miles; on some days, it hauled more than one hundred passengers from King Salmon to the camp complex. Since 1988, Katmai Air has gained competitors on the King Salmon-Brooks Camp route, yet it is still the most popular carrier used to fly visitors to Brooks Camp. [48]

Despite early fears that the surge in visitors would create demands for a second bus, expenditures for such equipment have thus far been avoided. In 1986 the concessioner seldom carried more than twenty people per day. Therefore, the amount of space provided by the Suburbans as well as the school bus was enough that demand had to double before new equipment would be necessary. The day tours in the late 1980s, however, have proven so successful that a new vehicle purchase has been considered. The school bus has been filled to capacity on an increasing number of days; this has caused several independent travellers to lodge an increasing number of complaints because of their inability to take the Valley tour. In 1990, to accommodate the larger demand, the concessioner occasionally operated one or two vans as well as the school bus on busy summer days. [49]

With growth at Brooks Camp has come the demand for more regulations. The concentration of people there vis a vis the rest of the park has long concerned planners; efforts were made during the MISSION 66 planning process, as well as the Master Plan process of the early 1970s, to shift new development to another area. By the mid-1970s, park officials had begun to worry that the summertime visitor-use levels were impinging on the health of the local bear and fish populations. [50]

By the early 1980s, a broader concern was registered among park officials who encountered a wide variety of public use problems, ranging from the scarcity of firewood to complaints of noise pollution in the Brooks Camp area. [51] These problems began to worsen when guests staying at lodges outside the park began to arrive in increasing numbers. As early as 1985, park officials recognized that the camp was becoming too crowded, [52] and in the late 1980s the advent of tours from the major tour operators exacerbated the worsening situation. One of the worst of those problems related to Brooks Camp air traffic.

Ray Bane, who assumed the superintendency in 1987, vowed to meet those problems head-on. Noting that "existing facilities in the Brooks River/Camp area are being stressed by visitor uses and demands," he initiated a series of management actions designed to ease the strain of overcrowding. Bane required that all pilots fly at least 1000 feet over the Brooks Camp area; he prohibited step-taxiing and takeoffs within 200 feet of the beach; and he imposed, and enforced, a limit of one fish per day on Brooks River. He also protested the concessioner's use of its camp tractor (a motorized luggage carrier with large, knobby tires). Recognizing the machine's tendency to trample vegetation, broaden paths and expose subsurface archeological remains, Bane limited the number of paths on which it could run and imposed additional restrictions on its use. [53]

Because of the increasing popularity of the park in the last decade, the concessioner has put intermittent pressure on agency management to enlarge the size of its facilities. But it realizes that much of Brooks Camp overlays a world-class archeological site; therefore, it has opted against constructing any new buildings which would entail a long, exhaustive survey and excavation process. The most expeditious plan, therefore, has called for the addition of a second story to the Skytel. [54]

The park's General Management Plan, which was finalized in 1987, directed that the current level of Brooks Camp development not be expanded until a Development Concept Plan is completed. A second DCP for the camp is currently being studied by NPS officials (the first was worked on in 1979-1982). One alternative within that plan would allow new NPS housing and a visitor center; one would add new concessioner cabins and the NPS visitor center while reducing the number of NPS residences; and the two remaining alternatives would raze all improvements, by both the concessioner and the NPS, north of Brooks River. [55]

National Park Service officials since the 1970s have recognized that Brooks Camp offers some of the greatest resource conflicts in Katmai. While the site may have been appropriate for a small tent camp, resource managers have increasingly recognized it as being unsuitable for a broad tourist population. They also recognize that the juxtaposition of bears and humans at Brooks Camp may well result in a series of encounters causing injury or death in one or both participants. It does not follow, however, that moving the camp will necessarily take place. Entrenched elements—the concessioner, sportsman's groups, influential clients, and some members of the NPS hierarchy—are strongly opposed to any change in the Brooks Camp status quo.

The results of the DCP process have not yet been finalized. Regardless of its outcome, however, it is unlikely that the existing conflicts will diminish any time soon. If the DCP

recommends the removal of Brooks Camp, the political process that will likely ensue may escalate into major confrontations within the agency. If it recommends the status quo, however, the existing resource conflicts will only worsen in the future. When viewed in retrospect, the present DCP may likely be seen as one of the opening volleys in a long-term engagement.

---

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>

---

katm/tourism/chap5.htm  
Last Updated: 13-Oct-2004

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



### CHAPTER 6:

## OTHER CONCESSION OPERATIONS

Although the concessioner has been the dominant (and most publicized) recreational service provider at Katmai, other camp-based operators have also thrived over the years. Some of these were lessees or subcontractors from one of the five main fishing camps. Others were commercial guides whose properties became surrounded by NPS land during the park expansions of 1969 and 1978. The military has also been an active user of Katmai's resources. Troops stationed at King Salmon visited the monument beginning in the 1940s, and Lake Camp, at the western margin of the present park, served as an officers' recreation facility until it closed in the mid-1970s.

Northern Consolidated Airlines and its successor organizations, Wien Consolidated Airlines and Wien Air Alaska, were the holders of the only concession contract within Katmai National Monument from 1950 through 1980. Because of that contract, the various holders of the Katmai concession contract were the only commercial organizations allowed to establish permanent facilities within the monument boundaries. When, in 1980, the monument expanded into Katmai National Park and Preserve, Wien advertised three other camps, also dating from 1950, which were included within the boundaries of the new park. Katmailand, the successor to the Wien contract, continues to administer the five camps.

These companies, however, have not been the only organizations to provide tourist services within the boundaries of the present-day Katmai National Park and Preserve. Two other inholders have also operated tourist camps, and the government has also operated a rest and relaxation camp for military personnel. In addition, the holders of the concession contract have been far from consistent in the operation of their camps. Camps have remained closed for years at a time; they have also been leased out to other operators. Finally, the last decade has seen an explosive growth in the number of recreational businesses, based outside the park's boundaries, which have used park lands for fishing, river floating, hunting, and similar pursuits. Those who have operated permanent facilities in the park are discussed below, while the history of the various temporary park users is outlined in Chapter 7.

### Usage Patterns at the Main Concession Camps

The number of camps which the principal concessioner operated over the years was by no means uniform. During the first decade of operation, there was sufficient demand to keep each of the five camps open each year; several of the camps, however, were open for only an abbreviated season. During the first few years of operation, the concessioner experimented with various camp schedules. Brooks Camp, for instance, closed in late August in its first two years of operation, but extended its season in 1952 and has remained open through early September ever since. [1] Regarding the other fish camps, their locations were such that each of their fish runs peaked at a different time of the season. Therefore, the first year's plan of operation called for shuttling guests to a different facility depending on the fish run. As a

consequence Coville, Nonvianuk, Kulik and Battle, in that order, opened and closed as the season progressed. Only one or two remained open at a given time. [2] The runs at certain camps were apparently so disappointing that in the spring of 1951 the concessioner told NPS officials that "only two camps will be operated, one at Brooks River and one outside the monument." [3] But none of the camps closed that season, or anytime during the rest of the decade. [4]

The concessioner soon recognized that some camps offered better, more long-lasting fish runs than others. That potential was reflected in the length of season that the various camps were open. The run along the Kulik River, just north of the monument boundary, remained good for a number of weeks each summer, and nearby Kulik Camp, as a consequence, soon rivaled Brooks Camp in size. Coville Camp (renamed Grosvenor Camp in the mid-1950s) was more intimate in scale, and was typically open for only a few weeks in June and July. Battle and Nonvianuk camps, both about the same size as Coville Camp, were open for only brief periods each summer; Battle Camp, in particular, proved to be a relatively poor location for a fish camp. [5]

Northern Consolidated continued to operate the five camps, for varying amounts of time each summer, until 1962. [6] By 1965, however, the airline had mothballed Nonvianuk and Battle camps, and the two camps remained closed for the remainder of the decade. In the early 1970s Nonvianuk Camp reawakened to see occasional use as a base camp for early fly-in fishing trips. Wien did not open it to a general clientele for most of the decade, but a few groups of fly-in fishermen probably used it each year. The camp was reopened on a full-time basis in 1979. [7]

Battle Camp, meanwhile, was taken over by Ben C. White, a registered hunting guide who used the camp as a base for guided hunts. White, a 35-year Alaska resident, leased the camp from Wien Consolidated, and in the spring of 1971 began advertising his Battle River Wilderness Camp. [8] For the next three or four years he offered both hunting and fishing from his camp; to accommodate his guests, he erected a couple of plywood tents at the camp. In 1976 and 1977, advertisements noted fishing as the only camp attraction. [9] For reasons of age or health, he probably did not operate the camp after the summer of 1977. He continued, however, to hold the camp lease.

With the takeover of Wien Air Alaska by Household Finance Corporation, the smaller camps entered a period of flux as management experimented with their revenue-producing potential. Wien personnel purchased the Battle Camp lease back from Ben White, [10] and in 1980, all five camps were again open for the first time in a decade and a half. They remained open the following year as well. Available data suggests that both Battle and Nonvianuk camps were open for only a few weeks each season. [11] But in 1982 Battle Camp closed again, and so-called Nonvianuk Lodge was used only in conjunction with float trips down the Nonvianuk River. Wien kept a caretaker there, but booked less than half a dozen guests there all summer. [12]

Katmailand's management chose a different approach toward the smaller camps. Battle Camp remained closed during 1983 and 1984, but Nonvianuk was leased to Bill Wright, who operated Alaska Campout Adventures (later known as Alaska Fishing and Wilderness Adventures). Wright renamed the camp Cry of the Loon Lodge, and to improve the site, he had Katmailand construct two additional Panabode guest cabins at the site. Wright ran the camp for three years; by 1985 he was overseer of a thriving operation which hosted 526 guests. [13]

In 1986 Katmailand regained direct control of Nonvianuk Camp, but the only known camp activity that year was a series of informal programs given by NPS rangers stationed nearby.

Katmailand has opened the camp on a sporadic basis during the last five years; they were inactive, for instance, in 1988, and hosted fewer than 30 guests in 1989 and 1990. [14] Operations at Battle Camp were equally sporadic. In 1985 the camp, managed by Tim Conway, a former guide for Bill Wright, opened "on a limited basis for special groups." The camp appears to have lain dormant the following two seasons, but in 1988 Conway and his wife Wendy, operating under a Katmailand rental agreement, opened Alaska's Battle River Wilderness Retreat. The Conways have continued to run the camp ever since. [15]

## Other Commercial Inholdings in Katmai

Although many private inholdings now exist within the boundaries of Katmai National Park and Preserve, only two landowners have attempted to offer commercial services. Facilities in the park which have competed against the principal concessioner are Enchanted Lake Lodge, just south of Nonvianuk Lake, and the Last Frontier Lodge, just below the outflow of Naknek Lake.

Both lodges were built in the 1960s. Edwin W. Seiler, the founder of the first Katmai lodge to compete with the Northern Consolidated camps, was a Maine native who had lived in Alaska since 1948. His interests soon turned to the Katmai country; according to George Collins, "he scouted the region afoot and with a rubber boat, and concluded that it was the place he wanted to make his career." By 1950, he and Ernest Weschenfelder were the co-owners of Air Martel, which served as King Salmon's restaurant, hotel, store, and social center. Seven years later, using his Cessna 180, he began flying visitors into the monument. In the 1960s, he became interested in the lands surrounding Enchanted Lake, a small (50-acre) lake located one-half mile south of Nonvianuk Lake and ten miles southwest of Kulik Camp. [16] In 1964, he began improving the property around the lake's northeastern shore for the purpose of opening a fishing lodge. The following August, having completed the construction of two Panabode guest buildings, Enchanted Lake Lodge took in its first paying customer. By 1966 Seiler had completed the lodge building, and constructed a 1-1/4-mile road connecting his lodge with Nonvianuk Lake. The following year he finished an adjacent warehouse. He built an additional Panabode in 1972. [17]

By 1973, the lodge property boasted four Panabodes, one and one-half miles of graded road, four outbuildings, two seaplane docks, and other equipment. It was described during this period as being "a luxurious facility" by wilderness standards, which accommodated four guests for stays of a week or more. Guest cabins featured central heating and private baths with showers; meals were served in the main lodge. As early as 1974, lodge guests took part in flights to nearby fishing holes. Due to Seiler's expertise guests were, in effect, able to follow the concentrations of sport fish during the summer. [18] Lodge guests typically flew to such locations as Brooks Camp, American Creek, Alagnak River, Moraine and Funnel creeks, Idavain Creek, and Kulik River. [19]

Although Seiler had staked the lodge property in 1964, difficulties in the land claims process delayed his ability to obtain a patent. Not until January 1981 did he obtain title to the 53.87-acre trade and manufacturing site. The following year, he obtained a Special Use Permit which allowed road access to Nonvianuk Lake. Seiler also began to make plans to sell his interest in the lodge property. [20] The lodge did not operate in 1983, but in February 1984 the lodge buildings and all but 3-1/2 acres of his property were purchased by Richard Matthews. Matthews, who still owns the lodge, expanded the main lodge building and built an additional guest cabin during his first year of operation. In 1987, he renamed his operation Alaska's Enchanted Lake Lodge, Inc. Development since that time has been limited, perhaps due to restrictive covenants Seiler placed on the land. [21]

While Enchanted Lake Lodge was notable for its remoteness, Last Frontier Lodge was relatively accessible. Located on the right bank of Naknek River, approximately one and one-half miles south of its outflow from Naknek Lake, the camp could be reached by float plane, by boat from Brooks Camp, or by road from King Salmon.

The proprietors of the lodge were Dean Paddock and his wife Diane. Mrs. Paddock filed a location notice for the 4.95-acre headquarters site on January 4, 1968. Just over a year later, on January 20, 1969, President Lyndon Johnson signed a proclamation expanding Katmai National Monument during the waning hours of his administration. [22] The Paddock's parcel was included in the 94,500 acres added to the monument.

Had their property been undisturbed on the date the monument was expanded, the Paddock claim would have reverted to Federal control. The couple, however, proved that they had transported a load of lumber onto their claim prior to the park expansion date, and the pile of lumber was sufficient to prove that the land was improved. [23] More than a year later, the first structure was built on the property. Foundation holes were dug by July 1970. Two months after that, an aerial field reconnaissance revealed that the outside walls had been erected. [24]

The lodge finally opened, amid appropriate fanfare, in the spring of 1971. In March, their first advertisement in Alaska Magazine announced the following: [25]

For 15 years a professional Fishery Biologist  
in the Great Bristol Bay country...  
DEAN PADDOCK will now help you make  
that "Fishing Trip of a Lifetime"  
Specializing in TROPHY RAINBOW,  
GRAYLING, KING SALMON,  
Float Trips on Wilderness Waters  
PERSONALIZED QUALITY SERVICES

The Naknek River camp soon became the headquarters site for a sport fishing guide service; satellite camps were set up on the Alagnak River and at the narrows between upper and lower Ugashik Lake. [26] By the end of its first season of operation, the headquarters camp consisted of a 20' x 16' residence (which had been partially finished the year before), a combination outhouse-storehouse, and a combination sauna-bathhouse. Within a few years, the lodge grew to the point that it consisted of two cabins able to accommodate up to six guests. [27]

The lodge continued to advertise its services through the 1973 season, and on January 31, 1974, Diane Paddock was awarded a patent for the parcel. Shortly afterwards, however, the lodge shut down. [28] Ms. Paddock still owns the parcel, but no commercial activity has taken place there during the last decade. [29]

## **Military Operations at Lake Camp**

As noted in Chapter 1, the members of various military branches were some of the first visitors to the Katmai country. Military personnel arrived in the area with the establishment of Naknek Air Base in 1941, and soon afterwards the U.S. Army Air Corps established two rest and recreation camps nearby. Naknek Recreation Annex

No. 1, informally called Rapids Camp, was the enlisted men's camp and was located at the foot of the Naknek River rapids, five miles southeast of Naknek Air Base. Annex No. 2,

called Lake Camp, was the officer's camp. It was located at the west end of Naknek Lake, eight air miles east of the base, seven miles upstream from Rapids Camp and only 640 feet north of the parcel where the Last Frontier Lodge was located. Because Rapids Camp is located outside of the boundaries of Katmai National Park and Preserve, the focus of this section is directed toward Lake Camp.

The initial public land withdrawal at Lake Camp took place on January 22, 1943. [30] By 1949 the Air Force applied to have Lake and Rapids camps withdrawn as recreation areas. On September 1, 1949, the Air Force applied to withdraw 329 acres for the two camps, but it later reduced its request to approximately ten acres at each site. That request was approved on October 23, 1956, with the passage of Public Land Order 1350. [31]

Improvements, meanwhile, had been in place since the 1940s. By 1949, "Camp No. 2" contained a 16x40-foot Yakutat Hut, presumably used as a barracks. [32] By September 1951, the camp had "been in use for some time by the military forces." Over the next few years a dock and quonset hut were built at the east end of the parcel; at the west end were erected a large, rectangular barracks/mess hall/recreation hall complex, a small quonset hut, and a group of corrugated metal shop buildings. By the early 1970s, the camp was able to accommodate fifty personnel at a time. [33]

In January 1969, roughly two-fifths of the camp (4.66 acres out of a total of 12.16 acres) fell within the boundaries of the expanded monument. The Air Force reacted to the new boundaries by obtaining a special use permit for the land within National Park Service jurisdiction; otherwise, activities at the camp continued as before. The camp offered rest and recreation to officers from around the country; those ranked majors and above visited because of its excellent fishing. [34]

In 1974, however, the status quo was shattered under charges that the two King Salmon recreation camps were wasting Federal funds. Sen. William Proxmire (D-WI), who received the allegations, asked the General Accounting Office to investigate the camps. The study, made that fall, revealed that Lake and Rapid camps cost the taxpayer, on the average, \$384 per guest. The per-guest cost was found to be more than five times that of a similar camp at Seward, and more than fifty times the cost of a camp at Birch Lake, near Delta Junction. [35] Based on the findings of that study, the GAO directed the Air Force to consider closing the King Salmon camps. The Air Force responded by closing the camps on a temporary basis in 1975, and finding them not cost effective, closed them permanently the following year. [36]

The Air Force notified the National Park Service that Lake Camp was excess property in July 1976. The military hoped that all of the Lake Camp acreage—not just the eastern two-fifths—would be included in the monument. When President Jimmy Carter, on December 1, 1978, proclaimed some 56 million acres of Alaska lands to be protected as national monuments under the provisions of the Antiquities Act, the western three-fifths of Lake Camp was included in the proclamation. Perhaps in response to that action, most of the abandoned buildings at Lake Camp were destroyed by fire the following day. Over the next few years, the remaining buildings fell into varying states of collapse. [37]

Since that time the camp has continued to lay unused, and most action related to the parcel has concerned land ownership. Paug-Vik, Ltd., the Native village corporation based in Naknek, claimed rights to Lake Camp in the mid-1970s; since that time the Cook Inlet Regional Corporation and the Bureau of Land Management have also expressed an interest in the land. Control of the parcel has further been clouded by at least one lawsuit. The NPS, however, feels that the primary forces contending for ownership are itself and the U.S. Air Force. [38] The two sections of the twelve-acre camp have undergone different legal sequences.

Regarding the 4.66-acre parcel along the river, title has been clouded because of the nature of the 1969 monument expansion. Presidential proclamation 3890, which expanded the monument, revoked the Air Force withdrawal, but it has remained unclear as to whether title passed to the NPS at that time. The Air Force has long been convinced that the land belonged to the National Park Service; its acceptance of a twenty-year Special Use Permit, obtained in June 1969, implied its recognition of NPS ownership. That recognition extended through 1979, when it told the Service to revoke its permit. But other Federal agencies assume that the Air Force, because of environmental hazards which may exist on the property, has not yet transmitted the parcel to another agency. These conditions suggest that the NPS either owns the parcel outright, or is in an excellent position to obtain the parcel once environmental cleanup takes place. [[39](#)]

The 7.5 acres on the west side of the camp were not included in the boundaries of the monument until 1978. The language of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act was more forgiving to those who had preexisting rights to new park lands. Therefore the U.S. Air Force, which had never relinquished its withdrawal for the west side of the camp, continued to own the western portion of the old Lake Camp property.

During the last decade the Air Force has tried to donate the parcel to the National Park Service; the Service, if possible, would like to receive it. But under the provisions of the Defense Environmental Restoration Program, the Air Force is required to clear its property before title can be transferred. To that end, military personnel demolished what was left of the burned or collapsing buildings in the late 1980s. The site is now vacant, but due to the lack of restoration funds it will take several more years before the site will be sufficiently clean to transfer title. [[40](#)]

---

[<<< Previous](#)

[<<< Contents >>>](#)

[Next >>>](#)

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



### CHAPTER 7:

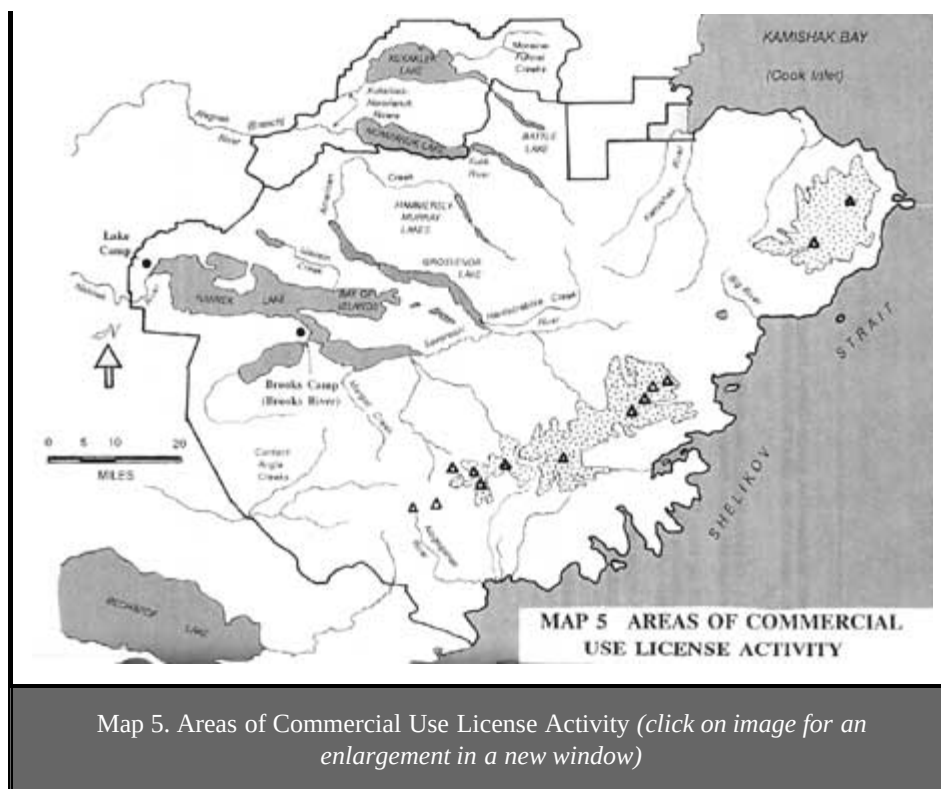
## COMMERCIAL LICENSES AND PERMITS

In the late 1970s, Katmai began to witness increased visitation by commercial operators based outside of the park. In order to regulate the usage of these operators, the Alaska Area Office (later the Alaska Regional Office) devised the Commercial Use License system, which was later adopted on a nationwide basis. Since the implementation of that system, the popularity of CUL operations has dramatically expanded; at the present time more than 60 operators per year visit Katmai, primarily for sport fishing purposes. Along American Creek, usage became so intense that both guides and park personnel demanded a change, and in 1986 a Limited Commercial Permit system was implemented. Other drainages have been considered for such permits. Within Katmai National Preserve, at the north end of the park unit, hunting has taken place for decades. Guides who used the area were required to obtain CULs in the early 1980s; after the dissolution of the state-imposed system of guide areas in 1988, the NPS began to issue commercial permits based on historical usage patterns.

Although the major concession facilities and inholdings account for most of the park's commercial improvements, thousands of people who visit the park each year arrange their trips with outside operators. Scores of commercial operations today utilize Katmai lands, a majority of which specialize in fishing trips. But many other activities are also offered. These include water sports such as float trips, kayaking and canoeing; overland pursuits such as hiking, backpacking, camping and mountaineering; and more relaxed activities such as photography and aerial sightseeing. Visitors carrying on these activities crowd the major rivers, lakes and trails and peaks each summer, and an intrepid few come during winter time as well.

Most of the guiding activities are only lightly supervised by the National Park Service. The agency encourages the use of these public lands as long as such use does not detract from the resource or from the experience of the visitors involved. During the last decade, most of Katmai's guiding activities have been sanctioned through the mechanism of Commercial Use Licenses (CULs). Only in two instances—sportfishing along one of the park's water courses, and sport hunting within the preserve—has it been necessary to institute a stronger regulatory mechanism. This chapter will first discuss the evolution and development of the CUL system, followed by a discussion of the park's two permit systems.





## Early Katmai Fishing Guides

The explosive growth of guiding activities in the park is of a recent vintage. Before the mid-1960s, the concessioner was the only entity which carried on commercial activities in the park, and before the mid-1970s few fishermen or other recreationists knew about, or participated in, vacations that took them far from the lodge where they stayed. The organized outdoor tour is also a phenomenon which, in Alaska at least, was seldom found before the 1980s.

Fly-in fishing, despite its recent surge in popularity, is a long-established recreational practice in the Katmai area. The first fly-in fishermen, in fact, were the established concessioners. Fishermen based at Brooks Camp began to charter planes to remote spots in the monument as early as the early 1950s. Most flew with NCA pilot John Walatka, but King Salmon pilot Edwin Seiler was also allowed to advertise at the camp. [1] Grosvenor Camp guests who wanted to fish elsewhere normally boated to their destination, but Kulik and Nonvianuk camps, as well as Enchanted Lake Lodge, became base camps for fly-in fishing by the mid-1970s. [2] These lodges, the acknowledged pioneers in fishing the more remote Katmai streams, continue to provide these services to their guests. [3]

The advent of trips into Katmai for guests based outside the park, however, is a relatively recent development. [4] The first known trips of this nature, aside from those guided by Edwin Seiler, took place during the early 1970s, and most if not all carried fishermen in from King Salmon. The first known fishing guide was John Prestage, whose Prestage's Fishing Lodge operated in the area through the mid-1980s. Most of the other early guides also hailed from King Salmon; they took visitors into the park via Lake Camp, and limited their operations to Naknek Lake and Naknek River. Early King Salmon guides included Dean Paddock, operator of Last Frontier Lodge; Joe Klutsch, whose Katmai Guide Service is still active; Jack Wood, owner of Wood's Alaska Sport Fishing, and active since the early 1970s; Chuck Wood, whose Wood-Z-Lodge was the largest outfit to take visitors into the monument; and Mike Morrison, of Morrison's Guide Service, who began guiding about 1978.

[5]

There were also, in those pre-ANILCA days, several guides who came into the monument from points outside of King Salmon. They flew into Katmai, and helped pioneer many drainages outside of the Naknek Lake system. Bud and Mike Branham, whose Kokhanok Lodge had been in operation since 1949, were two early guides. Ray Loesche, who was a hunting guide in the area in the 1960s, took visitors to the Kamishak and Big Rivers before 1972. He was the first fly-in guide to those drainages. He was also one of the earliest guides to visit Battle River as well as Moraine, Funnel and Nanuktuk creeks, having visited each of them by 1968. By 1980 several guides, promoting fishing and float trips, were already active along Nonvianuk River; in order to monitor their activities, the NPS dispatched a ranger to the lake outlet. [6]

## Establishment of the Commercial Use License

The National Park Service was becoming increasingly aware that the number of outside guides was growing. They were doubtless aware of the various fishing guides based in King Salmon, but they were probably less aware of the various fly-in fishermen who visited the more remote parts of the park, or of any companies engaged in backpacking, kayaking, or other activities.

The NPS, at Katmai, had some control over the established concessioner through the various stipulations of the concessions contract. But it was not able to regulate day-use visitors. As long as the number of guiding companies which used Katmai remained small, the resource was not being significantly impacted. Through the mid-1970s, this day-use problem did not exist in the other Alaskan parks and monuments, because existing regulations effectively prevented the proliferation of outside commercial operations.

In December 1978, however, the problem of how to manage day-use visitors became an issue throughout Alaska. When President Jimmy Carter created 56 million acres of new Alaskan national monuments, the staff at the Alaska Area Office realized that they needed some mechanism by which they could verify and sanction commercial activities taking place on those lands. In early 1979 officials approved and mailed letters of authorization to known commercial operators; these form letters approved a broad range of activities in specified park areas created by the 1978 proclamation. [7]

This admittedly ad hoc solution provided little information about either the operators or the activities carried on in the monuments. Officials recognized that the intensity of activities covered by many of the letters of authorization was sufficient to justify the creation of concession contracts. The time delay in creating concession contracts, however, made it impractical to consider that course of action as a stopgap measure; besides, Alaska's political climate at the time was such that the Service was in no position to impose high fees and myriad operating restrictions on Alaska's guiding community.

Officials at the agency's Washington office, therefore, set out to create a system which would provide a modicum of regulatory authority over outside commercial activities in Alaskan parks, but without the expenses and restrictions inherent in concession contracts or concession permits. On April 4, 1980, the Acting Associate Solicitor for Conservation and Wildlife paved the way for a separate licensing system when he concluded that "there are activities which need not be considered as concessions operations within the meaning of the [1965] Concessions Policy Act." But he warned that he could not authorize a license for Alaska that was not also available throughout the system. [8] He soon launched an effort to create a nationally applicable license. To assist the Alaska monuments, however, he issued a

draft Commercial License on May 2. He recognized that the license, which was approved in its final form later that month, was intended to be applicable only during the summer of 1980. [9] Meanwhile, efforts toward creating a more broadly applicable license continued for the remainder of the year.

The Commercial Use License (CUL) was finally approved in early 1981. Based on language contained in 36 CFR § 5.3, it was less restrictive than either of the other concession documents. The CUL, like the Commercial License which preceded it, required that as long as guides or other operators did not erect structures within the parks, they were free to do business by meeting a few, minimum standards of performance. Among these requirements were the possession of liability insurance, worker's compensation insurance, and an Alaska business license. The licenses were available for a nominal processing fee, and were available to any qualified party. [10]

The commercial licenses issued at Katmai in 1980, and refined the following year, represented a marked departure from "business as usual" in the Alaska concessions field. At Alaska's two other large, older NPS units, Mt. McKinley and Glacier Bay, superintendents had chosen to limit all but a few commercial licenses to the newly-expanded areas of those parks. At Katmai, however, usage levels were so low that, in the superintendent's opinion, the entire enlarged park could sustain commercial activity. Therefore, the commercial licenses issued at Katmai in 1980 (and in subsequent years) gave outside interests the authorization to operate anywhere in the park and preserve. The way was thus paved for the relatively *laissez faire* commercial development which has characterized the park in the last ten years. [11]

Although a primary reason behind the establishment of the commercial license system was the regulation of activities in America's parklands, the system has also provided park managers with a broad statistical database on the amount of visitation taking place throughout the parks. Each time individuals apply for the CUL, they are asked to indicate the park units they intend to use during the period encompassed by the license; they are also asked to delineate the nature of the activities that will be sponsored at those parks. In addition to the information on the license itself, users of Alaska parklands are asked to describe the nature of that use—the number of visitors, the length of stay, the type and location of use—on a so-called activity summary.

Many CUL holders, in order to cover all trip possibilities, have asked for authority to use parks they never visit. Other park users, particularly those who were active in the early to mid-1980s, failed to fill out activity summaries. (Existing licensees have had to complete activity summaries before license renewal; beginning in 1989, Katmai CUL holders have been encouraged but not required to complete a special statistical sheet that has largely replaced the activity summary.) Because no statistical measure accurately tracked CUL activity before 1989, the amount of commercial activity to take place in Alaska's parks cannot be known with precision; one can only be sure that the number of operators to visit a given park is at least as great as that provided in the activity summaries. The actual number of operators is probably fairly close to the number of recorded activity summaries, particularly in recent years; therefore, most of the statistical generalizations made in the following section are based on data provided in the activity summaries.

## Growth of Commercial Use License Activity

The Commercial Use License and the documents which preceded it have provided a framework under which commercial recreational activities have taken place within Alaskan national park units. This system, however, started somewhat late at Katmai. Only two commercial enterprises, Arcticsport: Expeditions North and the Enchanted Lake Lodge, were

provided letters of authorization in 1979 for the "new additions to Katmai National Monument." [12]

The following year fifteen businesses, one of which was Arcticsport, obtained commercial licenses for the monument. Park officials hoped that the system would be in place before the season began. Because the forms were not finalized until late spring, however, the first such licenses were not signed until early June. [13] Permits continued to be signed throughout the summer season; the last valid Katmai license was not signed until early August. [14]

Of those fifteen businesses, only four were known to sponsor trips into the park. Three of the four were fishing lodges based in the vicinity of the monument: Wood's Alaska Sport Fishing, operated by Jack Wood, and Wood-Z-Lodge, operated by Ron Archer and Charles Wood, and Mt. Peulik Lodge/Beluga Wilderness Outfitters, operated by Gerald Yeiter. The fourth, Sobek Expeditions, was a California-based outfitter who sponsored hiking, backpacking and kayaking expeditions; it served Denali National Monument as well as Katmai. The most popular 1980 visitor destinations for the guests of commercial use licensees were Naknek Lake and Naknek River, both of which could be reached by road from King Salmon. A sprinkling of visitors joined fly-in trips to Nonvianuk River and American Creek. [15]

The four companies which filed activity summaries should not be taken as an accurate count of the number of active Katmai guiding companies active at Katmai. But as noted above, ten or more such companies may have been operating. The gap existed because the NPS was slow to implement the CUL system. Public attitudes in Alaska urged a slow, steady approach, and it took several years before the guiding community became aware that a CUL was needed. Concessions officials have suggested that it was not until the late 1980s that the number of companies providing activity summaries was a relatively accurate reflection of the number of trips taken by guiding companies in the various Alaska parks. [16]

Although relatively few guides took people into the park in 1980, the next few years saw an explosive growth in that activity. The number of companies known to be using the park, for instance, grew from four in 1980 to 21 in 1981 (Table 1). By 1982, that number had increased to 30. At least 33 companies entered the field between 1980 and 1982, but five companies discontinued operations on either a temporary or permanent basis. Surprisingly, 15 of the original 33 Katmai guiding companies are still in business. [17] Some, perhaps most, of that growth was the result of new companies entering the field; the remainder of that growth was because an unknown number of existing users signed up as CUL holders.

| Table 1. Summary of Commercial Use License Activity at Katmai National Park and Preserve, 1980-1990 |                       |              |             |                                       |            |           |          |            |           |            |                |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|------------|-----------|----------|------------|-----------|------------|----------------|-------------|
|                                                                                                     | Number of CULs Issued |              |             | Number of Activity Summaries Received |            |           |          |            |           |            | Sport Fishing: |             |
| Year                                                                                                | Total                 | Present CULs | Former CULs | Grand Total                           | Pres. CULs | Fmr. CULs | New CULs | Pres. CULs | Fmr. CULs | Disc. CULs | # of CULs      | Activ. Summ |
| 1980                                                                                                | 17                    | 5            | 12          | 4                                     | 3          | 1         | 4        | 1          | 3         | 0          | 13             | 3           |
| 1981                                                                                                | 33                    | 7            | 26          | 21                                    | 6          | 15        | 17       | 5          | 12        | 3          | 20             | 18          |
| 1982                                                                                                | 50                    | 18           | 32          | 30                                    | 15         | 15        | 12       | 9          | 3         | 2          | 32             | 25          |
| 1983                                                                                                | 63                    | 24           | 39          | 36                                    | 20         | 16        | 8        | 5          | 3         | 7          | 38             | 27          |
| 1984                                                                                                | 61                    | 28           | 33          | 34                                    | 21         | 13        | 5        | 1          | 4         | 4          | 39             | 28          |
| 1985                                                                                                | 76                    | 34           | 42          | 42                                    | 29         | 13        | 12       | 8          | 4         | 3          | 51             | 32          |
| 1986                                                                                                | 75                    | 38           | 37          | 47                                    | 34         | 13        | 8        | 5          | 3         | 3          | 54             | 36          |

|      |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |   |   |    |    |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|---|---|----|----|
| 1987 | 85 | 46 | 39 | 52 | 39 | 13 | 8  | 5  | 3 | 9 | 59 | 39 |
| 1988 | 83 | 53 | 30 | 58 | 52 | 6  | 15 | 13 | 2 | 5 | 59 | 43 |
| 1989 | 74 | 67 | 7  | 58 | 57 | 1  | 5  | 5  | 0 | 1 | 54 | 42 |
| 1990 | 72 | 71 | 1  | 59 | 59 | 0  | 5  | 5  | 0 | 4 | 50 | 40 |

Source: Commercial Use License files, ARO-OC.

NOTE: "Pres. CULs" are those which were operating in 1991; "Frmr. CULs" are formerly active companies which had ceased operations prior to 1991.

Sport fishing remained by far the most popular activity during the early 1980s. At least 75% of the companies reporting CUL activity at Katmai from 1980 to 1982 provided sport fishing excursions. The majority of the 1982 Katmai license holders, in fact, visited the park exclusively to fish. No more than three lodges organized expeditions offering any other kind of recreational pursuit.

As the number of outside users of the park grew, the geographical diversity of their destinations expanded as well (Table 2). In 1980, the only places that outside guides were known to take visitors were Naknek Lake, Naknek River, the Nonvianuk River, and American Creek. But in 1981 the first known CUL trips to Brooks and Kulik camps took place; [18] pioneering trips were also taken to the Contact Creek and to the outlets of Gertrude Lake, Lake Grosvenor, and Nonvianuk Lake. In 1982 CUL holders first began taking clients to Idavain, Moraine and Margot creeks, to the Big and Kamishak rivers, and to Murray, Hammersly, Battle and Kukaklek lakes.

Table 2. Sport Fishing and Float Trip Activity in Katmai National Park and Preserve, 1980-1990

NOTE: Top figure for each geographical location and year is the number of active operators in that area; bottom figure is the number of clients appearing in the activity summaries.

| Location                               | 1980   | 1981    | 1982     | 1983     | 1984      | 1985     | 1986      | 1987      | 1988       | 1989       | 1990       |
|----------------------------------------|--------|---------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>A. Rivers</b>                       |        |         |          |          |           |          |           |           |            |            |            |
| <u>Alagnak River:</u><br>(unspecified) | 1<br>5 | 3<br>88 | 3<br>124 | 2<br>45  | 1<br>208  | 3<br>520 | 6<br>674  | 6<br>668  | 10<br>325  | 16<br>583  | 32<br>3769 |
| Kukaklek River                         |        |         |          |          |           | 1<br>5   | 1<br>2    | 2<br>16   | 1<br>6     | 2<br>19    |            |
| Nonvianuk River                        |        | 1<br>50 | 2<br>17  | 2<br>22  | 3<br>62   | 2<br>79  | 6<br>45   | 5<br>40   | 3<br>22    | 2<br>30    |            |
| American Creek                         | 1<br>3 | 1<br>15 | 3<br>21  | 3<br>630 | 3<br>1341 | 5<br>874 | 4<br>71   | 5<br>153  | 8<br>733   | 10<br>922  | 7<br>603   |
| Big River                              |        |         | 1<br>n/a |          | 2<br>66   | 4<br>153 | 4<br>175  | 6<br>158  | 9<br>359   | 7<br>345   | 11<br>511  |
| Brooks River/Camp                      |        | 3<br>60 | 6<br>243 | 8<br>631 | 9<br>854  | 7<br>581 | 10<br>274 | 11<br>146 | 19<br>1101 | 18<br>1871 | 34<br>7453 |
| Idavain Creek                          |        |         | 1<br>n/a |          |           | 2<br>79  | 1<br>60   | 2<br>43   | 5<br>252   | 3<br>147   | 2<br>93    |
| Kamishak River                         |        |         | 1<br>n/a |          | 1<br>468  | 4<br>117 | 6<br>619  | 7<br>438  | 8<br>527   | 10<br>566  | 8<br>974   |
| Kulik River                            |        | 1       | 3        | 2        | 2         | 3        | 3         | 5         | 8          | 11         | 10         |

|                                               |          |            |                |            |             |            |             |            |            |            |             |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------|------------|----------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
|                                               |          | 5          | 42             | 3          | 48          | 53         | 46          | 93         | 632        | 900        | 1115        |
| Moraine/Funnel Creek                          |          |            | 1<br>n/a       |            | 1<br>36     | 2<br>53    | 3<br>84     | 3<br>69    | 7<br>283   | 17<br>355  | 16<br>1715  |
| <u>Other Rivers:</u>                          |          |            |                |            |             |            |             |            | 7<br>314   | 7<br>333   | 13<br>361   |
| Alagogshak Creek/<br>Margot Creek             |          |            | (M) 1<br>n/a   |            | (M) 1<br>10 |            | (A) 1<br>12 |            |            |            |             |
| Contact/Angle Creek                           |          | 2<br>81    | 2<br>74        | 1<br>12    | 1<br>20     | 1<br>315   | 1<br>360    | 1<br>360   |            |            |             |
| Hardscrabble Creek/<br>Savonoski River        |          |            |                |            | (H) 1<br>12 |            | (S) 1<br>24 |            |            |            |             |
| <b>B. Lakes/Ocean</b>                         |          |            |                |            |             |            |             |            |            |            |             |
| <u>Park Lakes:</u>                            |          |            |                |            |             |            |             | 3<br>23    | 3<br>18    |            | 7<br>114    |
| Battle Lake                                   |          |            | 2<br>6         | 1<br>9     | 2<br>29     | 1<br>4     |             |            |            | 1<br>8     |             |
| Bay of Islands                                |          | 1<br>3     | 4<br>15        | 1<br>11    | 2<br>28     | 1<br>6     |             |            |            |            | 3<br>21     |
| Grosvenor Lake                                |          | 1<br>6     | 2<br>6         |            |             |            |             | 1<br>5     |            |            |             |
| Hammersly Lake/<br>Murray Lake                |          |            | (H/M) 1<br>n/a |            |             |            | (H) 2<br>41 |            |            |            |             |
| Naknek Lake/Naknek<br>River/Lake Camp         | 2<br>160 | 7<br>1020  | 9<br>760       | 7<br>1153  | 9<br>1219   | 8<br>1086  | 8<br>1483   | 9<br>1472  | 5<br>642   | 5<br>694   | 5<br>671    |
| <u>Preserve Lakes:</u>                        |          |            |                |            |             |            |             | 1<br>20    | 8<br>286   | 6<br>307   | 9<br>446    |
| Kukaklek Lake                                 |          |            | 3<br>80        | 1<br>n/a   | 3<br>51     | 1<br>38    | 3<br>34     | 5<br>90    | 2<br>127   |            |             |
| Nonvianuk Lake                                |          | 2<br>9     | 2<br>15        | 4<br>107   | 3<br>124    | 2<br>100   | 2<br>17     | 3<br>19    |            |            |             |
| <u>Coastal/Cook<br/>Inlet Areas:</u>          |          |            |                | 2<br>180   | 2<br>360    | 2<br>310   | 4<br>552    | 5<br>469   | 5<br>219   | 6<br>406   | 8<br>638    |
| <b><u>TOTAL, ALL<br/>AREAS:</u></b>           | 4<br>168 | 21<br>1337 | 30<br>1403     | 36<br>2803 | 34<br>4396  | 42<br>4373 | 47<br>4573  | 52<br>4269 | 58<br>5861 | 58<br>7514 | 59<br>22745 |
| Source: Commercial Use License files, ARO-OC. |          |            |                |            |             |            |             |            |            |            |             |

Despite the diversity of areas visited, most fishermen chose to carry on their fishing in just a few areas. In 1982, for instance, more than half (54 percent) of the 1403 fishermen that reportedly visited Katmai did so on Naknek Lake or Naknek River. Another 17 percent of those visited Brooks Camp, and ten percent fished along some portion of the Alagnak River. Only 20 percent of Katmai's visitors, therefore, ventured into the remainder of the park.

As noted above, most of the 1980 Katmai visitors who had been guided to their destinations arranged their trips through one of two King Salmon-based companies. But as the demand for Katmai trips increased, visitors sought out a wide variety of guiding outfits, which were

based in locations scattered across southwest Alaska and beyond. Of the 30 guiding companies known to be active in Katmai in 1982, almost half were based in King Salmon. But another third were scattered around the Lake Clark-Bristol Bay region. Only four holders of Katmai Commercial Use Licenses were based outside the region.

Between the early and mid-1980s the Katmai guiding industry continued to grow, though not as quickly as it had earlier in the decade. The number of active guiding companies increased from 30 in 1982 to 36 in 1983; then, after a slight drop to 34 in 1984, eight more companies were added in 1985. What accounted for the rise was that at least 25 new guiding companies (14 of which are still active) entered the Katmai market between 1983 and 1985. Fourteen other companies discontinued operations during the same three-year period.

Sport fishing continued to rank far and away the most popular reason to take a guided trip to Katmai, but a respectable number of lodges also began to offer float trips and photography/sightseeing expeditions. The number of air taxi companies was another sector of recreational use that witnessed significant gains between 1982 and 1985. As noted above, part of the activity increase during this period is doubtless related to the increasingly effective efforts which NPS officials made in convincing commercial operators to obtain Commercial Use Licenses. But there was also a substantial increase in the level of recreational activity.

During the mid-1980s guiding companies began to offer trips to several new areas; some of these areas grew to become some of the park's most popular fishing areas. Expeditions along the Pacific coast, for example, began in 1983. The first visitors were not registered along the Kukaklek River portion of the Alagnak River until 1985. No trips were recorded along Alagoshak Creek, at the southern tip of the park, until 1986.

By the mid-1980s, therefore, the organizers of Katmai fishing expeditions had had the opportunity to fully explore the park's rivers and lakes and the fishing possibilities within them. Overcrowding of the most popular areas, combined with an increasing knowledge of the park's more distant hinterlands, caused the fishing pressure to become more decentralized. Figures in the activity summaries show that between 1982 and 1985, the total number of outside visitors tripled, from approximately 1400 to more than 4300. The most popular area in the park continued to be Naknek Lake and Naknek River. Despite a 43 percent rise in the number of fishermen (to 1086), the Naknek drainage received only 25 percent of total visitation, a 29 percent drop from three years earlier. Likewise, the number of outside fishermen visiting Brooks Camp rose 139 percent between 1982 and 1985, but the area's share of total visitation dropped from 17 to 13 percent. Visitation levels to the Alagnak River were sufficiently healthy that its share of total visitation rose slightly, from ten to 12 percent; therefore, the three areas which, in 1982, accounted for some four-fifths of outside fishing visits, accommodated only half of those visits three years later.

Areas of interest that rose to prominence between 1982 and 1985 included American Creek, Contact Creek and the coastal areas. American Creek, which few visited prior to 1983, exploded in popularity in 1983 and 1984. (The ramifications of that growth are discussed in more detail in the next section.) Although the number of fishermen visiting in 1985 (874) was a significant decrease from the previous year (1341), it was still high enough to be the second most popular fishing area in the park, attracting 20 percent of the total number of fishermen who came with outside guides. Both Contact Creek and the coastal areas also grew from insignificant positions in 1982 until, three years later, both were attracting over 300 visitors, or seven percent of CUL traffic.

Between the early and mid-1980s, organizations from increasingly remote places began taking visitors to Katmai. While in 1982 fully half of the guiding outfits were based in King Salmon, that share had fallen to one-third by 1985. The number of guiding companies based

in the Bristol Bay and Lake Clark areas increased slightly; more remarkable was the increase in the number of companies based in Anchorage. In the mid-1980s a company based in Homer also signed on as a CUL; this was one of several outfits which serviced the expanding interest in fishing the park's Pacific coastline.

Since the mid-1980s, the Katmai guiding industry has grown in fits and starts. Between 1984 and 1987, for example, the number of active guiding companies climbed from 34 to 52, but the number of visitors brought to Katmai dropped from approximately 4900 to 4300. From 1987 to 1990, however, the number of guiding companies grew only modestly while the number of visitors more than tripled. The reason visitor totals levelled off in the mid-1980s is at least partially attributable to poor economic conditions in the state following the oil boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The subsequent increase in visitor levels is in part due to improving economic conditions in the state. The major reason why recorded visitor totals grew so dramatically is because NPS concession personnel began requiring completed activity summaries before new Commercial Use Licenses could be granted.

Sport fishing is still the prime reason guides take visitors to Katmai; in 1990, 40 of the 58 active guiding companies sponsored sport fishing expeditions. Remarkably, however, 20 companies (more than four times as many as in 1985) also took sightseers or photographers into the park. The number of air taxi operators roughly doubled to 15 between 1985 and 1990. Fourteen CUL holders sponsored float trips, while seven holders of CULs sponsored backpacking trips. Mountaineering, kayaking, hunting, and winter activities aroused a relatively minor amount of interest in 1990 as, indeed, they did throughout the 1980s.

Between 1985 and 1990 the number of visitors flocking to Katmai's fishing areas continued to escalate. In 1990, activity summaries estimated that more than 11,600 fishermen utilized guiding companies to visit the park. Brooks Camp, a world-famous fishing mecca, attracted 7400 visitors, the most popular destination within the park. (Many of those visitors did not fish, choosing to sightsee instead.) Other locations in the park, which attracted fishermen almost exclusively, were experiencing crowding problems of their own. Kulik River, the Naknek lake and river system, American Creek, and the Alagnak River system all attracted more than 500 guiding-company clients in 1989. Five other areas received at least 200 of these visitors; they included Kamishak River, Moraine and Funnel creeks, other Pacific coastal areas, the preserve lakes, and Big River. With the notable exception of the Kulik River, the five most popular areas were the same as those of 1985. [19] Most of the areas which received between 200 and 500 guided visitors in 1989 had been relatively unknown four years before.

The late 1980s witnessed a further decentralization in the location of the home bases of Katmai's licensees. In 1982, about half of Katmai's CUL holders had been located in King Salmon, and three years later about a third were. By 1989, however, only about a quarter were located there. The further decrease took place because the number of King Salmon-based CUL holders remained essentially stationary during the same time-period that the total number of licensees increased about 40 percent. In part because the Togiak National Wildlife Refuge began to limit the number of guides, the number of lodges and outfitters based in the Bristol Bay and Lake Clark areas grew from 12 to 17. Their proportion of all CUL holders in 1989 remained much the same as in 1985. The biggest growth took place outside the immediate region. On Kodiak Island and the Kenai Peninsula, the number of outfitters holding Katmai CULs rose from one to four during the four-year period, while the number of Anchorage-area outfitters with Katmai licenses increased from nine to 13 over the same period. As a result, the largest number of Commercial Use License holders are now held by companies which are located in southwest Alaska but outside of King Salmon. Outfitters located in southwest Alaska, including King Salmon, now constitute about three-fifths of all Katmai licensees, while another quarter are home-based in Anchorage. Less than ten percent

of active licensees are located outside of southwestern or southcentral Alaska.

## The American Creek Permit System

As Katmai's lakes and rivers increased in popularity in the early and mid-1980s, both NPS officials and commercial users began to become concerned that certain areas were becoming congested. Many individuals, of course, reacted to the growing crowds by moving on to more remote fishing locations; many guides as well as fishermen, however, have continued to return to areas offering consistent, quality fish runs. Katmai is extremely fortunate in having a good selection of excellent trout and salmon streams. In most areas of the park, the sheer breadth of the lakes and length of the rivers has been sufficient to spread the effects of the growing population of fishermen. Other waterways, however, are physically and ecologically unable to support a large fishing population.

American Creek, located in the northwestern section of the park, is one of Katmai's most famous, productive rainbow trout fisheries. It also offers excellent runs of salmon and char. [20] The stream, whose headwaters lie in Murray and Hammersly lakes, passes through a rocky gorge for some of its length, thus preventing fishermen from accessing all but the last eight miles before it debouches into Lake Coville. American Creek is a relatively shallow, meandering stream in its lower reaches; fly-in fishermen, therefore, can land either at the mouth of the river (after which they ascend the river by motorboat), or on the river a mile or two upstream from the mouth. On a quiet day American Creek can be an exceptional experience, but given too many fishermen, problems of congestion and noise may well erupt. [21]

Prior to 1979, relatively few people knew about American Creek. Northern Consolidated Airlines began flying Grosvenor Camp guests to the creek in the late 1950s; by the mid-1960s, it was flying Kulik Lodge guests there as well. Edwin Seiler, owner and operator of Enchanted Lake Lodge, began flying guests to the creek in 1964. [22] Beginning about 1971, Wien placed a boat at the river's mouth to transport guests upstream. By the early 1980s three other lodges, Mt. Peulik Lodge, King-Ko Inn, and Iliaska Lodge, were also flying guests to American Creek, and one of them left a second boat at the site. [23]

Available figures, generated from activity summaries, suggest that fewer than fifty anglers used the creek each year through the 1982 season. In 1983, however, the creek was "discovered." It attracted more than 600 fishermen that season; in so doing, it became as popular with anglers as the Brooks River area. News of the creek spread that winter, the result being that more than twice as many anglers descended on the creek in 1984 as in 1983. With more than 1300 visitors, most if not all of them fishermen, the creek became the most popular fishing hole in the park.

The sudden surge in popularity impinged on the quality of the experience for both fishermen and guides. The number of boats stationed at the creek mouth, which by 1984 had grown to eight, created congestion in the area. Safety hazards were created as a result of the inevitable encounters between aircraft that were under way, and between jet boats traveling around blind corners at the high speeds necessary to negotiate the shallow river. Seventeen areas along the river, boat storage areas in particular, lost soil and vegetation from recreational impacts. Although virtually all of the river's visitors subscribed to a rigorous catch-and-release philosophy—the only fish caught and eaten were a few arctic char—some guides felt that the high usage levels had decreased the size of rainbow trout. [24]

Because of these impacts, most users acknowledged that the existing system had to be changed to guarantee a high quality fishing experience along the creek. Local NPS officials

conducted a series of patrols along the creek during the summer of 1984, and felt that the best way to deal with the worsening situation was to host a series of meetings, to be attended by all interested parties, including the owners of lodges and the sport fishing guides who used the creek. Three such meetings were held: in August 1984, May 1985, and August 1985. [25]

Perhaps at the suggestion of Ted Gerken, who was one of the lodge owners, Chief Ranger Loren Casebeer and Superintendent David Morris moved toward the implementation of a permit system, which would limit the number of lodges allowed to leave a boat along the river. Recognizing the limitations of the CUL system in this situation, the park staff argued that the instigation of concession permits was the only way to legally allow the storage of boats inside the park. The permit system was also effective in dealing with problems of overuse. [26]

To gain more information on user patterns along the creek, the NPS stationed a seasonal technician in the area during the summer of 1985. [27] The employee lived in the former National Marine Fisheries Service quarters at the east end of Lake Coville, and commuted to the site by jet boat. [28]

By the time the prospectus calling for permit applications was issued in January 1986, it was announced that only six such permits would be awarded. [29] Eighteen lodges were requested to submit permit applications; another 35 persons, either CUL holders or other interested parties, were sent public notices describing the prospectus and permit. [30] The application deadline was set for March 7, a date which was later extended to March 21.

The new two-year concession permits being offered represented a higher level of regulation than the commercial use licenses then in effect. Whereas the current fee for CUL holders was \$50 per year, which included the right to access within any of Alaska national park units, each holder of a concession permit would be required to pay \$500 per year, plus an additional \$2.00 each time a visitor was taken out to American Creek. The permit would allow the holder to keep a boat overnight along the creek; that boat, however, could not exceed 17 feet in length, nor could its motor exceed 50 horsepower. The boat had to be registered with the Coast Guard and had to meet their standards of safety and operational performance. Each permit holder would be further required to limit its use of the creek, to four clients and one guide per day. [31]

Despite the costs and restrictions promised by the new system, thirteen operators responded to the prospectus. To evaluate the applications, a four-person panel was formed at the Regional Office. That panel met on March 27. They determined that the six most highly rated lodges were: [32]

| Name of Permittee               | Location    | Owner         |
|---------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Adventure Unlimited             | King Salmon | Mike Branham  |
| Branch River Air Service        | King Salmon | Van Hartley   |
| Bristol Bay Sportfishing        | Iliamna     | Bruce Johnson |
| Mike Cusack's King Salmon Lodge | King Salmon | Mike Cusack   |
| No See Um Lodge                 | King Salmon | Jack Holman   |
| Rainbow King Lodge              | Iliamna     | Ray Loesche   |

Letters were sent to winning and losing applicants in April 1986. Those who were selected quietly signed their permits during June and July. [33] Not surprisingly, however, a howl arose from those who were not selected. NPS officials, both at the park and regional levels, were challenged to defend the necessity of adopting a permit system as well as the process of

criteria selection. One applicant felt that the selection process had been rigged, another that financial criteria should not have been a basis for permit selection, and several charged that a newcomer (such as Bruce Johnson, owner of Bristol Bay Sportfishing) should not have been chosen over those with established use patterns. Challenges were made by the applicants themselves and their attorneys; the applicants also sought assistance from the Congressional delegation. [34]

One of the challenges was successful. Raymond F. Petersen, who represented Katmailand, Inc., was denied a permit in late April, and was ordered to remove his boat from the creek by June 10. But Petersen, feeling that "there was some flaw in the selection process," appealed the panel's decision. His appeal was initially denied. [35] Petersen, however, argued that the terms of his company's concession contract gave it preferential rights within the pre-1978 boundaries of the park; among those rights was its ability to keep a boat at the mouth of American Creek which, after all, was within those boundaries. By early June the National Park Service had recognized its mistake, and reversed its earlier decision. It allowed Katmailand to store its boat on the river without benefit of a permit; the boat, moreover, did not need to follow the guidelines required by the permittees. [36] Since that time, seven companies have been allowed to keep boats along American Creek. Katmailand has been allowed to keep one boat within the so-called "old park," while the other six permittees have been required to beach their boats in the "new park." [37]

As noted earlier, both the NPS and most of the guiding businesses agreed in concept to the two-year concession permits. The Sierra Club, however, protested the decision because it felt that a study of the creek's resources needed to be made before permittees would be allowed to leave boats on the banks. The park overruled that protest. [38]

The agency was as concerned as the Sierra Club about the creekside ecology. Therefore, in order to ensure compliance with the conditions of the American Creek permits, and to observe the effect that the permittees and contractor had on American Creek resources, the park stationed field personnel in the area for the second straight year. The agency also agreed to fund the first year of a proposed four-year research effort, the purpose of which was to determine if boating activities relating to concessions adversely affected the area. Funding for the study was shared between the park and the regional concessions office. [39] To provide housing for the field staff, the old National Marine Fisheries Service buildings were abandoned in favor of a Weatherport tent, located a mile up the creek from Lake Coville. Field duties were assigned to rangers Ron Antaya and Colleen Matt. [40]

The rangers were obligated to spend much of their time performing collateral duties away from American Creek. Therefore, they were unable to ascertain an exact number of fishermen who visited the creek. They did find that each of the permittees was "very cooperative and complied well with permit stipulations and park regulations." Two of the six permittees did not bring guests to the river, but several lodges which did not hold permits visited the area from time to time. Katmailand, for instance, maintained two boats (one from Grosvenor Lodge, another from Kulik Lodge), and the Alaska Rainbow Lodge flew a 13-foot Zodiac to the river each time it brought clients. [41]

The creation of the permit system had a significant impact on usage levels along American Creek. Total visitation dropped sharply between 1984 and 1986. Although statistics on visitor usage along American Creek (as elsewhere outside of Brooks Camp) are suspect before 1988, it appears that the annual number of fishermen visiting the creek in recent years is only about half that which took place during the peak summer of 1984. [42]

During 1987 Katmai staff, including a biological technician and a park ranger, continued to monitor the activities of the permittees. They noted that while two of the six permittees, for

the second consecutive season, did not use their permits, three permittees allowed other lodges to use their permits under specific terms and conditions dictated by the NPS. The result of this process was that a total of twelve lodges—ten via the permit system, plus the two Katmailand lodges—used American Creek in 1987. In this way, many of the lodges which had been denied a permit in the spring of 1986 obtained legal access to the creek.

A total of 922 fishermen used the creek that summer. Of that number, 648 (70.5%) came from lodges that held or used concession permits, while 270 (28.5%) came from the two Katmailand lodges. Grosvenor Lodge, which accounted for 217 guests, was the largest single generator of American Creek fishermen. Despite the large number of users, however, lodges spaced their activities to such an extent that problems with overcrowding did not take place. Rangers found that there were only two days all summer that five or more boats were on the river, and there were only six days where more than three boats were active. The only problems reported were relatively minor violations related to Coast Guard regulations for boat equipment, bear-proof food containers, accuracy in keeping up guide books, and similar matters. [43]

Because the concession permits granted in the spring of 1986 were valid for a two-year period, NPS officials met during the winter of 1987-88 to consider a new series of applications. The terms of the permit were similar to those offered in 1986; the only substantial change was that the fee was changed to a flat \$600 per year. By the time the application period closed on March 24, the Alaska Regional Office had received responses from ten businesses: the six original permittees and four new applicants. [44] On March 31, and again on May 26, a three-person rating panel met to evaluate each application. After some deliberation, the panel chose to recommend renewal of the concession permits to each of the six incumbents. [45]

In the summer of 1988, therefore, American Creek's permit holders were the same as had existed during the previous two years. To monitor their compliance with the provisions of their concession permits, and to determine if boating activities adversely affected the area, the park continued to staff personnel along the creek in both 1988 and 1989. The ranger and biological technician assigned to the creek in 1989, however, were unable to devote their full-time efforts to goings-on at American Creek, and they were similarly unable to finalize an end-of-season report. [46] The lack of a full season's work meant that the four-year Concession-sponsored research study aimed at determining the effects of boating activities on the area came to a sputtering, inconclusive halt; as a result, park resource personnel were unable to provide scientific estimates for recreational carrying capacities along the creek. [47]

By 1990, it had been hoped that a study evaluating the resources along the creek would have allowed permits to be effective for a four-year period. But because the study was never completed, prospectuses were issued for another two-year permit in late February and early March. The panel evaluating those applications met on May 15, then again on June 21. It decided that five of the six current permit holders should be awarded a new permit. The sixth permittee, Rainbow King Lodge, was replaced by the most highly-rated new applicant, Larry Suiter of Freebird Charters, Inc. The new permittee, based in King Salmon, was told of his success in a letter dated May 24, 1990. Letters were written to the remaining permittees a month later. [48]

At the present time, therefore, American Creek still has six permit holders, five of which have been active since the permit system went into effect in early 1986. [49] It also supports fishermen from one of the Katmailand lodges and others who may bring day boats into the area from time to time. The imposition of the permit system has, as expected, prevented further growth in visitation, this during a time when most of the other drainages in the park have witnessed substantial increases in fishing pressure. Limited data gathered in recent years

suggests that the creation of the permit system has slowed if not halted the spread of ecological degradation which had been taking place in the early 1980s. Whether the ecosystem can absorb higher use levels before degradation takes place is a question that remains unanswered. [50]

## **Watersheds Considered For Concession Permits**

As noted above, most observers recognized back in 1984 that the noise, crowding, and environmental degradation witnessed along American Creek demanded that an enhanced system of regulation be implemented. Similar conditions have also been witnessed in several other Katmai watersheds. These watersheds include Brooks River, Big River, and Kulik River. As of yet, however, no other areas have been seriously considered for inclusion in a permit-type system.

Most of the suggestions for enhanced regulation in other watersheds took place during 1984 and 1985, when the American Creek system was being proposed. Problems first surfaced during the summer of 1984. In his annual report the Katmai superintendent, David Morris, showed a primary concern for matters at American Creek. In addition, however, he noted that

Visitor conflicts became evident at Big River and Kashvik Bay [sic] where as many as seven planes and twenty-eight fishermen vied each day for favorable positions during the silver salmon run. Their behavior toward each other fell well short of exemplary. [51]

During a series of meetings between guides and the agency in the late summer of 1984, many of the same concerns were recognized. Participants recognized that a few of the park's rivers were major pressure points. On a more general level, guides expressed concerns that if American Creek became restricted, the resulting increase in use at other rivers would eventually cause every creek to be restricted. [52]

These concerns were recognized by local park officials. During the following winter, Superintendent Morris hinted that several park areas demanded an increased degree of regulation. He declared that Brooks River, Big River, Kulik River, and American Creek had "all experienced sharply increased use, which may be changing the character of the visitor experience. There may be other emerging pressure points of which we are unaware." [53]

Park staff further complicated matters when they began enforcing regulations against boat storage on Katmai's rivers in 1985. During a spring meeting, they warned guides that the number of boats on any creek would henceforth be restricted, because the agency had no authority to allow the storage of boats under the commercial use license system. [54] The message was implicit but clear: if guides insisted on leaving boats within park watersheds, park officials would have no choice but to implement a concession permit system.

The park, of course, went on to implement such a system along American Creek. Elsewhere in the park, however, guides were in no mood to accept these regulations. Since that time neither the commercial users nor park officials have felt that other watersheds demanded a permit system, and American Creek has remained the only area given serious consideration for such regulations. This is despite the fact that each of the watersheds which were noted as trouble spots in 1984 has grown sharply in popularity in recent years. [55]

At Brooks Camp, the conflict over fishing was just one of a host of problems witnessed along the river. In 1985, guides recognized that Brooks received more fishing than American Creek, but the Service was unwilling to limit the rights of commercial users unless there was

a consensus among those users to do so. [56] Superintendent Morris recognized that part of the problem was the role of Brooks Camp as a "meat fishery" for lodges throughout southwest Alaska—a place where lodge guests could be assured of catching and keeping four or five fish. He therefore instituted a rule limiting the catch along the river to two fish per person per day. Ray Bane, his successor in 1987, further reduced that limit to one. The new rulings preserved the fish stocks, slowed the traffic of "meat fishermen" to Brooks Camp, and reduced the number of bear-human incidents along the river. [57]

Big River, a coastal stream at the eastern end of the park, has been a problem area, even though it is not one of the park's most popular fisheries. Activity-summary statistics show that the first commercial guides did not visit the area until 1984. By the end of the decade, the river still ranked tenth in popularity among the Katmai watersheds. But by the mid-1980s, user patterns brought serious conflicts. What draws fishermen to the river is a short but plentiful silver salmon run which usually takes place in August. Calls for regulation of the salmon run, first heard in the summer of 1984, were in part based on overcrowding—"a three ring circus," in the words of a former superintendent—because takeoffs and landings can take place on only a short stretch of the river. Also, confrontations between fishermen and bears ensued because users did not properly clean and store their fish. [58]

To monitor the visitor influx to this and other coastal rivers, Katmai rangers established a coastal ranger patrol in 1984, and conducted patrols along several bays and rivers during the summers of 1984, 1985, and 1986. In 1985, staff observed "as many as six lodges and/or thirty fishermen per day" during the Big River salmon run. Noting that there was "a history of inappropriate behavior toward bears, and tensions between commercial operators have intensified in recent years," the staff was asked "to 'counsel' guides or fishermen who either don't understand policy or choose to ignore it." [59] During 1986 rangers carried on a similar task, and by the end of the summer were pleased to note that "as a result of the continuing effort, confrontations between bears and fishermen resulting from improper storage of fish were significantly reduced." Similar improvements were noted at Kamishak River and Hallo Creek. [60] Problems at Big River continue to the present day, but the methods encouraged by the ranger patrols, and their continued presence during the height of the salmon run, appear to have reduced the need for a permit-based regulation system. [61]

At Kulik River, located just north of Kulik Lodge (one of the Katmailand facilities), early users were almost entirely lodge guests. The river, and the lake east of the lodge, were visited by scattered guides during 1981 through 1983. In 1984, however, use skyrocketed. According to one guide, it all began "when one [outside] lodge started to use the river, [therefore] other lodges decided it was no longer exclusive for Kulik Lodge and that they could go there too." [62] Katmailand officials reacted angrily to the invasion of territory they regarded as theirs, and soon NPS officials were receiving reports that fly-in fishermen were being harassed by jet boats and low-flying planes. Calls for a permit-style system, which may have been encouraged by the staff at Kulik Lodge, continued into 1985. [63]

Kulik River remains one of Katmai's most popular fisheries; in 1989, for instance, the spot attracted more fishermen than any place else except Brooks Camp. Kulik Lodge guests numbered a plurality, though not a majority, of the total number of fishermen along the river that year. [64] Because crowds there continue to increase, overcrowding is a growing problem. Most of the fishermen have been respectful to the surrounding resources, but in the fall of 1988 several parties were observed harassing bears which had come down to the river to feed. [65]

## Katmai Hunting Permits

As noted at the beginning of the chapter, little hunting has traditionally taken place within the boundaries of Katmai National Park and Preserve. The "old monument," and present-day Katmai National Park, are off-limits to hunting; the activity is allowed only in Katmai National Preserve, a relatively small area north and west of Nonvianuk Lake. Through the mid-1980s, hunters in the preserve were primarily regulated by the state. More recently, the degree of regulation increased when the NPS organized its own system of hunting permits.

Before 1978, hunting was prohibited within the boundaries of Katmai National Monument. As noted in Chapter 1, the fear of depleting the existing game population was a major factor responsible for expanding the monument in 1931. Almost twenty years later, a major reason behind establishing a seasonal presence within the park was related to the enforcement of the existing hunting and trapping regulations.

On December 1, 1978, President Jimmy Carter expanded Katmai National Monument by 1,370,000 acres. The land included in that expansion was closed to hunting. [66] The proclamation creating the expanded monument was intended to be in force only until Congress passed a more comprehensive legislative Alaska lands package. Such an event took place two years later when the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act was signed into law. As noted in Chapter 4, ANILCA expanded Katmai into a national park and preserve; the total size of the NPS unit, however, changed little from its interim (1978) acreage. Compared to the acreage that had existed prior to 1978, the passage of ANILCA added 1,037,000 acres to the national park; a provision in the act decreed that Katmai National Park, unlike other Alaska national parks, would be closed to subsistence as well as sport hunting. In addition, ANILCA create a 374,000-acre national preserve in which both sport and subsistence hunting was allowed. The preserve was a single, irregular block located at the north end of the newly-established NPS unit. [67]

When the monument was expanded in 1978, several hunting guides lost territory that had been allotted to them by the State of Alaska. M. Edward King, an area guide since the early 1960s, was deprived of more than 300,000 acres from Area 9-43, over which he had had exclusive jurisdiction. Those 300,000 acres, located between the old monument boundary on the south and Nonvianuk and Kulik lakes on the north, became part of Katmai National Park when ANILCA was passed, and thus remained off-limits. [68]

Ray Loesche was another guide who lost territory. Loesche was a licensed big game hunting guide who had been operating across the Alaska Peninsula since the mid-1950s. His camps were located on Upper Ugashik Lake and Alinchak Bay. Prior to the expansions, he had hunted extensively all around the park perimeter: in the Douglas River drainage, the Kamishak and Strike Creek drainages, the areas surrounding Kulik and Kukaklek lakes, and the Kejulik River drainage. All but the latter area were eliminated by the 1978 expansion. With the passage of ANILCA, only the Kukaklek area was reopened to hunting. [69]

Ben White, who represented Far North Guide and Outfitters, was yet another victim. White, who had an exclusive permit to hunt in Area 9-80, had been leasing Battle Lake Camp from Wien since 1971 if not before. [70] Most of his hunting area was eliminated by the 1978 monument expansion. Then, with the passage of ANILCA two years later, he regained control of most of his hunting area because it was designated part of Katmai National Preserve. Alaska lands legislation, however, does not appear to have impinged upon his operation. According to advertisements in Alaska Magazine, the elderly White did not promote hunting at the camp after 1975, and his operation appears to have shut down in 1977. [71] Battle Camp reopened in 1980 and 1981 under Wien's direct control, but guided hunting was not one of the featured attractions during that two-year period. [72]

Several other hunting guides were also affected by the 1978 monument expansion. At the

southern end of the monument, around Alinchak Bay, boundary changes deprived Mario Salimchak of part of his hunting territory, while off to the northwest, Jim Cann also had his hunting area reduced. Others who had led guided hunts within the newly-expanded part of the monument included Denny Thompson, Reinhold Thiel, and Jack Myers. As of 1972, 15.5% of all Alaska Peninsula guides who registered bear camps located those camps within areas proposed for expansion. These camps were well-placed, because 42 brown bears (15.3% of the total peninsula harvest) were taken that year within the same area. [73]

Hunting was one of several activities which brought guided visitors onto national park lands without permanent structures being built. Therefore, hunting was regulated by Commercial Use Licenses beginning in 1981. Thereafter, the NPS and the state shared jurisdiction over the territory allotted to hunting guides. The Alaska state government, through its Guide Licensing and Control Board, controlled the allocation of hunting districts (both exclusive and joint-use districts) throughout the state. But the National Park Service controlled access and land use within areas under its jurisdiction. [74]

Because relative few hunting permits encompassed the lands included within Katmai National Preserve, a small number of companies conducted hunts during the early and mid-1980s. Commercial Use License records indicate that four companies obtained sport-hunting CULs between 1980 and 1988. Two of those four did not take advantage of hunting privileges. Ben White's Far North Guide and Outfitters, mentioned earlier, held an exclusive state permit for Area 9-80. Even though the size of the guide area which remained after the passage of ANILCA was substantially smaller than had existed until 1978, it still encompassed more than three-fourths of the preserve. White obtained a CUL for use of the territory from 1981 through 1984. NPS records indicate, however, that he never exercised his state hunting permit during the 1980s, an action that incurred the wrath of the state's Guide Licensing and Control Board. [75]

Another inactive guide was M. Edward King, owner of King Flying Service. King had lost most of his hunting rights in 1978; in 1980, however, he regained the right to hunt in that portion of the preserve located south of the Nonvianuk River. King apparently conducted several hunts in that area during the 1980s; due to a lack of accurate maps, however, Katmai staff did not feel that his area was within the preserve boundaries. Shortly after King's death in early 1988, his son Jay requested that the company's CUL for the area be amended to allow sport hunting. In May 1989, park staff belatedly recognized the company's legitimate right to hunt within the preserve. [76]

The other two CULs were active on a limited basis. Between 1983 and 1988, Katmai Guide Service was given permission to invite hunting parties into the "open" portion of the preserve (that is, that part of the preserve which had not been assigned by the state to another guide). The company's activity in the area, however, was limited to three moose-hunting trips in 1983 and 1984. Rainbow River Lodge, operated by Chris Goll and Marie Toler, used the area more extensively. In March 1985, guide Chris Goll obtained Ben White's state permit to Guide Area 9-80. The permit has been used at various times thereafter for the May bear hunt, the August caribou hunt, the September moose and caribou hunts, and the October bear hunt. [77]

On October 15, 1988, the system under which the state allotted its hunting areas was rent asunder. The Alaska Supreme Court wrote an Opinion in response to a suit filed by guide Kenneth D. Owsichuk. That Opinion declared it unconstitutional for an appointive body (such as the Guide Licensing and Control Board) to assign exclusive commercial hunting areas. [78]

The abolition of such a system opened the door to an unrestricted number of hunting parties

being allowed access to each of the state's national preserves. To forestall such a consequence, the Service quickly moved to establish an interim program for guided hunting. That program involved the issuance of concession permits, the number of which was limited to that which had existed previously. The concession permit system was intended to last only until the state could reestablish a sanctioned system. But such a system has not yet been implemented; therefore, the Service's interim system remains in force today. [79]

To guarantee the same degree of exclusivity which they had previously enjoyed, a new relationship had to be established between the NPS and the new permit holders. The permits, which were designed during the winter and spring of 1989, demanded a significantly stronger regulatory framework. It also required higher fees: \$500 in 1989 and \$1000 in 1990 instead of the \$75 annual fee required of CUL holders. [80]

Companies which had held active CULs for sport hunting during the 1988 season were given an opportunity to apply for 1989 Concession Permits. At Katmai, two companies qualified. The Rainbow River Lodge, which held a CUL since 1985, obtained its permit in May 1989. The King Flying Service, which had not conducted hunts in recent years but had applied for a CUL in May 1988, obtained an approved permit in September 1989. [81]

Since that time other guides have tried to enter the hunting business in the preserve, but Rainbow River and King Flying Service have remained the only two businesses with valid permits. [82] Both companies obtained "satisfactory" ratings in 1989 and 1990 for their adherence to the conditions listed in the concession permits; King Flying Service gained a positive rating in 1989 even though it conducted no hunts that year. Both were awarded one-year permit extensions in January 1991. The new permits were similar to those issued in 1989, the only major difference being that the cost of the permit was changed from a flat fee to a \$500 fee plus one percent of the guide's annual gross receipts. [83]

---

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



## CONCLUSION

The history of concessions at Katmai is inextricably tied to that of the park itself. Many of America's largest national parks have been developed in conjunction with the efforts of one or more concessioners. In Katmai's case concessions played an even more active role because the first park concessioner, Northern Consolidated Airlines, was a singlehanded force responsible for development. That concessioner continued to be the active shaper of Katmai's growth for the next two decades. Two men—NCA President Raymond I. Petersen and Camp Superintendent John Walatka—were primarily responsible for guiding that growth.

In retrospect, it appears that Katmai has witnessed three phases of concessions development. Between 1950 and the early 1970s most park development resulted from concessioner activities. NCA was responsible for the initial development of the two camps situated in the monument. A decade later the concessioner went out on a financial limb when it undertook its Brooks Camp building program. The NPS, however, was at best a passive player. It waited until after Northern Consolidated signed its first concessions permit before it established its first rude facilities. During the 1950s the agency suppressed several concessioner-sponsored projects, such as the Brooks Camp airstrip; it was, however, unable or unwilling to fund its own projects because Katmai attracted such a small number of visitors. In the early 1960s, the Valley Road and other agency-sponsored improvements took place only because of political pressure applied by the concessioner. Later in the decade the agency continued its reluctance to develop the scant number of facilities. Furthermore, it continued to refuse funding for an airstrip near Brooks Camp, a step that NCA officials considered crucial to further camp development.

The second phase of concessions development took place from the early 1970s through the early 1980s. With the departure of Petersen and Walatka as decision makers over camp affairs, the concessioner was no longer guided by individuals who had a close personal association with the camps. In addition, the airline holding the concession was much larger than it had been in the 1950-1968 period. This caused the camps to be treated more as a profit center than as a method of publicizing a struggling regional airline. The increasingly corporate attitude became more pronounced in 1979, when Wien was taken over by Household Finance Corporation (later Household International, Inc.). During the 1972-1982 period the concessioner increasingly perceived that the camps held little potential as a profit center; therefore, the company saw little need to provide new investment at the camps.

During this period the NPS undertook a more active management of its Katmai lands. By this time the park had become administered from King Salmon rather than far-off McKinley Park. Because independent travelers composed a significant percentage of Katmai's visitors, the agency insisted on a more active role in directing affairs, particularly at Brooks Camp. The master plan process and the imposition of Servicewide environmental regulations served as vehicles by which the NPS increased its visibility within the park. The agency's growing role, combined with the concessioner's diminished desire for development, meant that the concessioner built little during this period. And although the NPS made plans to reduce the role of Brooks Camp by creating visitor nodes elsewhere in the monument, such plans were

never consummated. Indeed, the agency appears to have tacitly accepted the preeminent role of Brooks Camp by 1973, because it funded several large projects there including a utility system, NPS employee cabins, dock facilities, and a floating bridge.

The third phase of Katmai concession development began in 1982, when KatmaiLand, Inc., purchased the concession contract from Wien Air Alaska. The purchase signaled the return of the concession from a large corporation to a more personal operation. More important, the new owners—Raymond I. Petersen and his son, Raymond F. Petersen—had had a long association with the camps; they thus had a personal as well as financial interest in the camps' success. During the last nine years, KatmaiLand (known as Katmailand since 1983) constructed a long-delayed concessions housing complex as well as several additional buildings, and has pressured the NPS to allow expanded facilities. But the NPS has also played an active role; as guardian of park resources, it has allowed development only under an increasingly complex maze of planning and environmental constraints. The effect of those constraints has been to delay and even prevent new construction.

The history of concessions operations at Katmai has been marked by widely varying degrees of cooperation between the concessioner and the National Park Service. Two factors have been primarily responsible for a breakdown in that cooperation. To a large extent, this can be traced to the different roles of the two parties. The concessioner is a business which seeks to maximize a profit based on its investment, while the NPS is required to administer its lands for purposes of protection as well as use. The uses that take place must be consistent with the overall goal of land protection.

Another reason problems occasionally surfaced is because of the dynamic management structure of the two parties. The concessioner changed from a small regional airline to a large statewide airline, then to a subsidiary of a Fortune 500-sized multinational corporation, and finally to a small, father-and-son corporation. The NPS, for its part, exhibited an almost continual changeover in personnel having influence over Katmai operations, and the multi-layered nature of agency decision making often proved frustrating to those with whom it worked. Because of these two factors, it is expected that periods of genuine harmony between the two parties would be relatively rare, and that occasional periods of rancor would by no means be unexpected.

Considering the nature of the NPS-concessioner relationship, it is not surprising that relations have been quite variable. They cooperated well, for instance, during the early 1950s, when the NPS as well as the concessioner welcomed development. The remainder of the decade, however, was characterized by sporadic conflict because of divergent goals regarding the proposed Brooks Camp airstrip. After a temporary reconciliation, the parties clashed again in the early 1960s because the NPS refused to fund planned improvements.

Because the NPS constructed the Valley Road, relations improved through the mid-1960s. By the end of the decade, however, the concessioner became increasingly frustrated over the agency's inability to issue a long-term contract. So far as is known, the NPS did not conspire to prevent such a contract, and it was always able to cite legitimate reasons for its delays. The effect of the delays, however, was that the concessioner spent the period between 1965 and 1981 limping from one contract extension to the next. (A total of nine such extensions were issued; none were valid for more than three and a half years.) No significant capital investments could take place in such an atmosphere.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s relations between the NPS and the concessioner were particularly strained. The so-called Lake Grosvenor incident of 1976, when a minor jet-boat mishap ballooned into a policy dispute that eventually involved Congressmen and the NPS directorate, was an indicator of the lack of communication between the two parties.

Thereafter, the NPS became increasingly frustrated with the concessioner because it insisted on raising tour and lodging prices while refusing to replace the aging vans used on its Valley tour. Miscommunication and occasional acrimony characterized the relationship between Wien and the NPS during this period, particularly in the months preceding the creation of a new concessions contract. After the contract signing tempers cooled somewhat, but relations remained unstable because Wien made little secret of its desire to divest itself of camp operations.

The Katmai Land purchase of the concessions contract promised an improvement in relations between the NPS and concessioner. The agency was pleased, of course, that the new concessioner was willing to undertake each of the construction provisions required in the 15-year contract. Since that time occasional disputes have rankled relations between the two parties; they have included access and ownership issues at Kulik Lake, and the NPS's failure to provide interpreters on the Valley tour buses. On the whole, however, relations during the mid- to late 1980s have remained significantly better than those during the 1972-1982 period. Based on the short history of the Katmai operation, one may wish to generalize that visitors are most effectively served, and relations with the concessioner are best maintained, when the NPS deals with relatively small concession companies. It is not known, however, if this generalization can be extended beyond the case study examined here.

One is tempted, in the writing of an NPS concessions history, to limit one's scope to relations between the agency and the concessions contract holder. In the Katmai case, however, such a methodology would result in a necessarily incomplete, fragmented view of the park's commercial history. The concessions contract holder has been the most long-standing commercial operation, but many others have also shown an interest in Katmai's lands and waters.

These users have been visiting the park for decades. The first known users were military officers; they, in turn, were followed by inholders, who began to establish guide outfits beginning in the mid-1960s. By the late 1970s a number of commercial operators, based outside the park, began to arrive on day-long trips. Most early operators (primarily fishing guides) hailed from King Salmon and other nearby areas, and traveled to Lake Camp, Brooks Camp, and the Alagnak River. But as the park's popularity spread, an increasing number of operators came from Anchorage and Lower 48 points, and the destination for which they headed spread into most of the major watercourses. Commercial interests came to Katmai for a wide variety of purposes, but a strong majority favored sport fishing. Of secondary interest was float trip activity, primarily along the Nonvianuk River.

The continuing growth in visitation to Katmai has sparked several new issues in recent years. Along American Creek, west of Grosvenor Camp, fishing proved so popular that park management and fishing guides worked together to create a limited concessions permit system. Other drainages have been considered for such permits, and as visitation rises may be implemented at some future date. At Brooks Camp, the rapid influx of day-trippers, many of whom are guests of large tour companies, has strained resources. And at the northern end of the park, the NPS has replaced the state as the agency responsible for issuing and regulating hunting permits.

The half century covered by this study have witnessed an overwhelming degree of change. In the 1940s, Katmai attracted only the hardiest, most independent fishermen, and in the 1950s development was limited to rustic facilities catering to the exclusive fishing fraternity. In the 1960s facility improvements allowed non-fishermen to begin arriving in significant numbers. The 1970s witnessed a further growth in both fishing and non-fishing tourists, and tourists from outside lodges began to arrive. During the 1980s, growth was no less than explosive; tourism rose sharply, and for the first time broad areas of the park began to support

commercial activities. Future decades promise continued growth, and demand increasingly sophisticated solutions in order to allow the park to perform its twin duties, protection and use, as outlined in the 1916 organic act.

---

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>

---

katm/tourism/conclusion.htm  
Last Updated: 13-Oct-2004

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



### APPENDIX A:

## HOLDERS OF THE KATMAI CONCESSION CONTRACT

| Name of Concessioner                  | Date Concession Acquired | Concessions Contracts Held | Contract Signing Date† | Contract Validity Dates |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Northern Consolidated Airlines, Inc.  | 3/10/50                  | I-34np-299‡                | 3/10/50                | 2/15/50-12/31/54        |
|                                       |                          | 14-10-434-80               | 2/20/56                | 1/ 1/55-12/31/57        |
|                                       |                          | 14-10-434-212              | 3/31/58                | 1/ 1/58-12/31/60        |
| Alaska Consolidated Vacations, Inc.   | 1/ 2/60                  | 14-10-434-212              | 3/31/58                | 1/ 1/58-12/31/60        |
| [subsidiary of Northern Consolidated] |                          | 14-10-434-498              | 4/25/61                | 1/ 1/61-12/31/65        |
| Northern Consolidated Airlines, Inc.  | 1/ 1/63                  | 14-10-434-498              | 4/25/61                | 1/ 1/61-12/31/65        |
|                                       |                          | same, Amendment 1          | 4/28/66                | 1/ 1/66-12/31/66        |
|                                       |                          | same, Amendment 2          | 3/ 2/67                | 1/ 1/67-12/31/67        |
|                                       |                          | same, Amendment 3          | 6/25/68                | 1/ 1/68-12/31/69        |
| Wien Consolidated Airlines, Inc.      | 6/25/68                  | same, Amendment 3          | 6/25/68                | 1/ 1/68-12/31/69        |
|                                       |                          | same, Amendment 4          | 8/20/71                | 1/ 1/70-12/31/74        |
| Wien Air Alaska, Inc.                 | 5/ 5/73                  | same, Amendment 4          | 8/20/71                | 1/ 1/70-12/31/74        |
|                                       |                          | same, Amendment 5          | 11/ 6/75               | 1/ 1/75-12/31/75        |
|                                       |                          | same, Amendment 6          | 4/22/76                | 1/ 1/76-12/31/76        |
|                                       |                          | same, Amendment 7          | 9/21/77                | 1/ 1/77-12/31/78        |
|                                       |                          | same, Amendment 8          | 3/20/79                | 1/ 1/79-12/31/79        |

|                                                                               |          |                      |         |                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------------|---------|----------------------|
|                                                                               |          | same, Amendment<br>9 | 3/25/80 | 1/ 1/80-<br>12/31/80 |
|                                                                               |          | CC-9100-1-0001       | 9/25/81 | 1/ 1/81-<br>12/31/95 |
| Household Alaska Properties, Inc.<br>[subsidiary of Wien Air Alaska,<br>Inc.] | 12/31/81 | CC-9100-1-0001       | 9/25/81 | 1/ 1/81-<br>12/31/95 |
| Katmailand (KatmaiLand), Inc.                                                 | 10/25/82 | CC-9100-1-0001       | 9/25/81 | 1/ 1/81-<br>12/31/95 |

---

Notes:

† Date is that of NPS signature. Until 1966, Concessioner and the NPS representative signed on the same day; after 1966, NPS representative signed contract (or amendment) 1-1/2 to 12 months after Concessioner did so.

‡ The document signed in March 1950 was a Concession Permit, not a Concession Contract.

---

[<<< Previous](#)                      [<<< Contents >>>](#)                      [Next >>>](#)

---

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



### APPENDIX B:

## STRUCTURES IN THE CONCESSIONS CAMPS

---

Note: to identify structure locations, see Map 4 (page 105).

NPS building designations (BR- or BR/R-) were assigned by NPS Facility Design and Maintenance Division staff; concessions building designations (BRC- or BRC/R-) were provided by author. Sources used in compiling building names and construction dates are listed at the end of the appendix.

### BROOKS CAMP

#### Concessions Buildings:

BRC-1 = Laundry/Warehouse/Shop, Panabode construction. **1985-86**

BRC-2 = Employee cabin, tar paper construction. **c. 1950; moved from tent complex to site c. 1985**

BRC-3 = Bath House, Panabode construction. **1984-85**

BRC-4 = Eagles Nest (residence for manager or married employees), Panabode construction. **1984-85**

BRC-5 to BRC-15 = Employee Quarters, Panabode construction. **1984-85**

BRC-16 = Employee Cabin, Panabode construction. **c. 1987**

BRC-17 = Storage building, tar paper construction. **c. 1950**

BRC-18 = Lodge Office/Manager's Residence/Trading Post; Panabode construction, 32x22 (as the manager's residence, called the "Eagles Nest" before 1984). **1956**

BRC-19 = Brooks Camp Lodge (lodge/lounge/kitchen/dining room); Panabode construction, 40x60 with two underground storage cellars. Built on the site of original (tent-frame) Brooks Lodge (erected 1950, razed 1960). **1960-61, expanded 1984-85**

BRC-20 = Shower/bathhouse, Panabode construction, 12x32. **1960-61**

BRC-21 to BRC-27 = Cabin #21-27, Brooks Lodge; Panabode construction. **1960-61**

BRC-28 = Skytel (Units 28-36), Panabode construction. **1964-65**

#### NPS Buildings:

BR-1 = Visitor Contact Station, log construction, **1956**. Ranger station until 1990; also called NPS-1.

BR-38 = "Boathouse/Ranger Office," cedar log structure, **c. 1962**. Boat House in 1963, converted to a VIP residence in 1964, "NPS Cabin" in 1966 & 1973, Boat House in 1981, Admin Cabin in 1987; also called NPS-2.

BR-39 = Maintenance Shop, Panabode construction, **1963**. Warehouse in 1963/66/73, multi-use building (warehouse & comfort station) in 1976, dry storage/bath in 1981, laundry/warehouse in 1987; also called NPS-4.

BR-40 = Ranger Cache, cedar log construction, **1963**. Generator in 1963, Power House in 1966 & 1973, Utility Building in 1976, Maintenance Building in 1981, Boat/Office (Koehler Shed) in 1987; also called NPS-5.

BR-41 = Employee cabin, Panabode construction, **1962**. Called "Rangers" in 1987. Called #1 in 1963, also called NPS-6.

BR-42 = Employee cabin, Panabode construction, **1962**. Called "Maintenance Residence" in 1987. Called #2 in 1963, also called NPS-7.

BR-43 = Employee cabin, Panabode construction, **1962**. Called "Rangers" in 1987. Called #3 in 1963, also called NPS-8.

BR-44 = Generator Building, Panabode construction, **1975**. Called Utility Building in 1976; Power House in 1981; Generator/Water Treatment in 1987.

BR-45 = Fish Cleaning Station, Panabode construction, **1970**. Replaced open-mesh structure, same function, blt. 1950.

BR-46 = Employee cabin, Panabode construction, **c. 1967**. Tent site in 1966. Called NPS-9 in 1987.

BR-47 = Employee Cabin, Panabode construction, **c. 1967**. Called NPS-3 in 1987.

BR-48 = Employee cabin, Panabode construction, **1980**. Tent frame site from 1967-79. Called BR-42 in 1987.

BR-49 = Employee cabin, Panabode construction, **1980**. Tent frame site in 1967-79. Called BR-41 in 1987.

BR-50 = Employee cabin, Panabode construction, **1980**. Tent frame site in 1967-79. Called BR-43 in 1987.

BR-51 = Eskimo Pit House Exhibit, **c. 1968**.

BR-52 = Weather instrument shelter/weather station, **1966-73**.

BR-53 = Auditorium, wooden frame construction, **1974**. Built as the contractor's bunkhouse; called the Visitor Center 1977 through 1989.

BR-54 = Storage shed for ranger equipment, plywood construction, **c. 1988**. This low-roofed shed has been moved several times; it was once 30 feet NNW of BR-47.

BR-55 = Incinerator Building, Panabode construction, **1990-91**.

BRT-1 = Tent Quarters, tent frame and canvas, 12x12, **1967, 1983**. Tent frame site 1967-79, vacated 1980, rebuilt 1983. Called "Tent Frame #1" in 1987.

BRT-2 = Tent Quarters, tent frame and canvas, 12x12, **1983**. Called "Tent Frame #2" in 1987.

#### Razed Buildings:

BRC/R-1 to BRC/R-16 = former Brooks Camp concessioner complex. Served as guest complex, 1950-1960; guest and employee complex, 1960-65; employee complex, 1965-84. They were **built between 1950 and 1960 and razed in 1985-86**. The complex consisted of:

- 9 residence cabins, of tar paper construction;
- 2 cabins/storage buildings, tar paper;
- 1 cabin/bathhouse building, tar paper;
- 1 maintenance building (generator house), tar paper;
- 1 maintenance building (fuel storage), tar paper;
- 1 trading post/laundry, tar paper; and
- 1 painthouse/storage building, metal.

BR/R-1) storage cache (called BR-3 in 1976) **1956, razed 1981-87**.

BR/R-2) wood shed **1963-66, razed 1981-87**.

BR/R-3) generator house (called BR-2 in 1976) **1956, razed 1981-87**.

#### Campground Structures (built by NPS):

2 tent frames, **1950**.

3 adirondack-style shelters, **1972**.

2 caches: **1966, 1981**.

#### **GROSVENOR CAMP (all built by concessioner)**

#### Standing Structures:

GC-1) maintenance/storage, tar paper construction, **1950**.

GC-2) generator house, tar paper construction, **1950s**.

GC-3) storage, tar paper construction, **1950s**.

GC-4) manager's office/quarters/lounge, Panabode construction, **1957**.

GC-5) employee cabin, tar paper construction, **1950**.

GC-6) employee cabin, tar paper construction, **1950**.

GC-7) bath/laundry building, Panabode construction, **c. 1981**.

GC-8) kitchen and dining room, Panabode construction, **1984-85**.

GC-9 and GC-10) outhouses, tar paper construction, **1950**.

GC-11) guest cabin, Panabode construction, **c. 1959**.

GC-12) guest cabin, Panabode construction, **c. 1959**.

GC-13) guest cabin, Panabode construction, **1984**.

Razed Buildings:

GC/R-1) cookhouse/dining room, tar paper construction, **1950, razed c. 1985**.

GC/R-2) employee cabin, tar paper construction, **c. 1950, razed c. 1981**.

GC/R-3) root cellar, tar paper construction, **c. 1950, abandoned 1985-89**.

Sources for Appendix B  
(listed chronologically):

"Katmai National Monument, Topography of Brooks Camp (N.C.A.)", July 30, 1963 (Drawing #3013), in ARO-ODM Map File.

"Brooks Camp Field Drawing," c. 1966, updated to October 1967 (Drawing #NM-KAT 3028), in ARO-ODM Map File.

Management Assistant KATM, July 4, 1967 to Supt. MOMC, Monthly Narrative Report for June 1967, in File A2615, "Superintendent's Monthly Report, 1957-1968," DENA.

"As Built Drawings, Utility System and Boat Dock," May 1973 (Drawing #127/41,001A), sheets 1 to 3, in ARO-ODM Map File.

Carper, Robert, "Classified Structure Field Inventory Report," April 15, 1976, 1-2, 4.

ARO, "Combined Environmental Assessment and Development Concept Plans for Concession Facilities, Operations and Services Within the Brooks Camp and Grosvenor Camp Areas, Katmai National Monument, Alaska," October 1980, p. [9].

"Development Concept Plan, Brooks Camp," October 1980 (Drawing #127/40,029), in ARO-ODM Map File.

Yoas, Carl [Maintenance Mechanic, KATM] to Pan Abode, Inc., January 7, 1981, in "Buildings" File, KATM.

Aerial Photographs, "Grosvenor Camp" and "Brooks Camp and Vicinity," June 5, 1981, in ARO-ODM Map File.

"Environmental Assessment, Draft Development Concept Plan," January 1982, p. 4.

"Brooks River Area, KATM," March 1983 (Drawing #127/20,019).

"Site Plan, [Concession Housing at] Brooks Camp," April 1984 (Drawing #127/80,504), in ARO-ODM Map File.

"Site Plan, Grosvenor Camp," May 1984 (Drawing #127/80,506), in ARO-ODM Map File.

"Building Inventory [KATM]," January 19, 1987, in KATM Concessions Management Specialist files.

"As-Built, Brooks Camp" (2 sheets), July 1987, update to September 1988 (Drawing #127-80,519), in ARO-ODM Map File.

Petersen, Ray, interview by William Hanable and Janis Meldrum, November 23, 1988.

Stondall, Ed, interview by William Hanable, September 15, 1989.

"Construction Drawing, Incinerator Building-Brooks Camp," June 1990 (Drawing #127/80,522), in ARO-ODM Map File.

Wemple, Bob [Civil Engineer, ARO-ODM], interview by Frank Norris, December 19, 1990

Meldrum, Janis [former RMS at KATM], interview by Frank Norris, December 20, 1990.

---

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



### APPENDIX C:

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE OFFICIALS AT KATMAI, 1921-1991

#### **Mt. McKinley Superintendents with Authority over Katmai (1921-69):**

|                             |                             |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| July 1921-October 1928      | - Henry P. (Harry) Karstens |
| November 1928-May 1939      | - Harry J. Liek             |
| June 1939-May 1943          | - Frank T. Been             |
| May 1943-January 1947       | - Grant H. Pearson (acting) |
| January 1947-February 1949  | - Frank T. Been             |
| February 1949-June 1949     | - Grant H. Pearson          |
| June 1949-August 1949       | - Grant H. Pearson (acting) |
| August 1949-November 1956   | - Grant H. Pearson          |
| November 1956-January 1960  | - Duane D. Jacobs           |
| January 1960-September 1962 | - Samuel A. King            |
| December 1962-February 1967 | - Oscar T. Dick             |
| March 1967-June 1969        | - George A. Hall            |
| July 1969-[June 1973]       | - Vernon Ruesch             |

#### **Mt. McKinley-based Seasonal Rangers (1950-1957):**

|                                                            |                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1950 - William J. Nancarrow                                | 1953 - George L. Peters           |
| 1951 - Wm. Nancarrow (to 8/1),<br>Morton Woods (after 8/1) | 1954-55 - Dick Ward               |
| 1952 - George B. Chaffee                                   | 1956 - Richard Riegelhuth         |
|                                                            | 1957 - Warren (Scotty) Steenburgh |

#### **Mt. McKinley-based Rangers-in-Charge (1958-1960):**

|                              |                        |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1958-59 - Theodore E. Roeder | 1960 - Robert Peterson |
|------------------------------|------------------------|

#### **Mt. McKinley-based Supervisory Park Rangers (1961-1964):**

|                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1961 - Robert Peterson | 1962-64 - Dave Bogart |
|------------------------|-----------------------|

#### **King Salmon-based Supervisory Park Rangers (1965-1966):**

|                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1965-early 1966 | - Darrell Coe |
|-----------------|---------------|

#### **King Salmon-based Management Assistants (1966-1969):**

|                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| August 1966-1967 - Darrell Coe | 1968-69 - Thomas E. Atwood |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|

**Superintendents of Katmai National Monument/Park (1969-present):**

|                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| September 1969-June 1979 | - Gilbert E. Blinn     |
| June 1979-August 1979    | - Roy Sanborn (acting) |
| August 1979-April 1987   | - David K. Morris      |
| July 1987-August 1987    | - Jim Pepper (acting)  |
| August 1987-March 1990   | - Ray Bane             |
| March 1990-May 1990      | - James Ryan (acting)  |
| May 1990-present         | - Alan Eliason         |

---

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



### APPENDIX D:

## KATMAI VISITOR USE STATISTICS, 1956-1990

| Year  | Total Park Visitation | Brooks Camp Lodge | Camp Visitations: Cpgd. Day Use | Brooks Camp Visitation | B.C. Overnight Stays: Total | B.C. Overnight Stays: Lodge | B.C. Overnight Stays: Cpgd. | B.C. Overnight Stays: Total |
|-------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1956  | 510                   | ...               | ...                             | ...                    | 510                         | ...                         | 21                          | ...                         |
| 1957  | 566                   | ...               | ...                             | ...                    | 566                         | ...                         | 59                          | ...                         |
| 1958  | 727                   | ...               | ...                             | ...                    | 727                         | ...                         | 53                          | ...                         |
| 1959a | 1083                  | ...               | ...                             | ...                    | 1083                        | ...                         | 115                         | ...                         |
| 1960  | 595                   | ...               | ...                             | ...                    | 595                         | ...                         | 59                          | ...                         |
| 1961  | 558                   | ...               | ...                             | ...                    | 558                         | ...                         | ...                         | ...                         |
| 1962  | 334                   | ...               | ...                             | ...                    | 334                         | ...                         | 112                         | ...                         |
| 1963b | 693                   | ...               | ...                             | ...                    | 693                         | ...                         | 228                         | ...                         |
| 1964  | 521                   | ...               | ...                             | ...                    | 521                         | ...                         | 82                          | ...                         |
| 1965c | 773                   | ...               | ...                             | ...                    | 773                         | ...                         | 449                         | ...                         |
| 1966  | 861                   | ...               | ...                             | ...                    | 861                         | ...                         | 315                         | ...                         |
| 1967  | 1178                  | ...               | ...                             | ...                    | 1178                        | ...                         | 498                         | ...                         |
| 1968  | 1584                  | ...               | ...                             | ...                    | 1584                        | ...                         | 547                         | ...                         |
| 1969d | 7754                  | ...               | 204                             | ...                    | 1407                        | ...                         | 512                         | ...                         |
| 1970  | 11816                 | 857               | 168                             | 412                    | 1437                        | 2143                        | 412                         | 2555                        |
| 1971  | 10424                 | 799               | 193                             | 153                    | 1145                        | 1598                        | 386                         | 1984                        |
| 1972  | 12670                 | 925               | 210                             | 47                     | 1182                        | 1850                        | 420                         | 2270                        |
| 1973  | 9054                  | 902               | 281                             | 67                     | 1250                        | 1744                        | 562                         | 2306                        |
| 1974  | 12483                 | 873               | 345                             | 101                    | 1319                        | 1746                        | 750                         | 2496                        |
| 1975  | 9966                  | 919               | 574                             | 97                     | 1590                        | 1838                        | 1148                        | 2986                        |
| 1976  | 10590                 | 930               | 670                             | 137                    | 1737                        | 1860                        | 1340                        | 3200                        |
| 1977  | 10107                 | 904               | 522                             | 258                    | 1684                        | 1808                        | 1801                        | 3609                        |
| 1978  | 11445                 | 1005              | 790                             | 313                    | 2108                        | 2010                        | 2072                        | 4082                        |
| 1979  | 10706                 | 1214              | 946                             | 496                    | 2656                        | 3100                        | 2746                        | 5846                        |
| 1980  | 11868                 | 900               | 808                             | 471                    | 2179                        | 2408                        | 2401                        | 4809                        |
| 1981e | 13140                 | 979               | 847                             | 503                    | 2329                        | 2487                        | 2396                        | 4883                        |
| 1982  | 14466                 | 1123              | 957                             | 806                    | 2886                        | 2721                        | 2781                        | 5502                        |
| 1983  | 14105                 | 1487              | 844                             | 702                    | 3033                        | 2952                        | 2742                        | 5694                        |
| 1984  | 20329                 | 1931              | 829                             | 1535                   | 4295                        | 3127                        | 2786                        | 5913                        |
| 1985  | 25340                 | 1633              | 767                             | 1274                   | 3674                        | 2778                        | 2360                        | 5138                        |
| 1986  | 41776                 | 1128              | 686                             | 2079                   | 3893                        | 2561                        | 2368                        | 4929                        |

|       |       |      |     |      |      |      |      |      |
|-------|-------|------|-----|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1987  | 38310 | 1257 | 855 | 2374 | 4486 | 3774 | 2253 | 6027 |
| 1988  | 45730 | 990  | 835 | 4698 | 6523 | 2495 | 3149 | 5644 |
| 1989f | 49254 | 1353 | 964 | 3223 | 5540 | 3442 | 3227 | 6669 |
| 1990  | 42769 | 1476 | 981 | 3401 | 5858 | 3809 | 3133 | 6942 |

Notes to Appendix D:

- =Figures higher due to Alaska statehood promotions.
- =Valley road opened.
- =Skytel opened.
- =Lake Camp included in the monument.
- =First season with expanded park.
- =First season after interim DCP regulations imposed.

Sources: File A2615 (Inactive), KATM; "Brooks Camp Recreational Use" charts, 1970-1990, KATM Concessions Office.

# Katmai

## Tourism in Katmai Country



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### I. Archival Collections

Alaska Regional Office (National Park Service), Anchorage:

Concessions Division: 1) "Katmai Concessions Contract History" notebooks, 2) Concessions archives file folders, 3) Commercial Use License (CUL) files; 4) "Commercial Use License" [history and development] file; 5) "KATM American River" file; 6) Limited Concession Permit (LCP) files; 7) KATM General Correspondence file.

Facility Design and Maintenance Division: Katmai map collection, ARO-ODM

Lands Division: 1) Kulik Lake Airport Lease file, 2) Petersen Land Exchange file.

Alaska State Archives, Juneau: RG 101 (Territorial Governor's Correspondence), Box 219.

Anchorage Museum of History and Art: 1) Ward Wells Photograph Collection, 2) Wien Air Alaska Photograph Collection.

Bureau of Land Management, Alaska State Office, Anchorage: various case files and summary sheets.

Denali National Park and Preserve, McKinley Park, Alaska, Historical Collection: 1) File A2827 (Reports to Chief Ranger), 1950-1954; 2) File A2621 (Superintendent's Annual Reports), 1953-1972; 3) File 1M1 (Monthly Narrative Report), 1960; 4) File 2M1 (Monthly Superintendent's Reports), 1947-48 to 1965 (microfilm); 5) "Annual Report, Information and Interpretive Services Division," 1958-62; 6) File A2615 (Chief Ranger's Monthly Narrative Report), 1957-1968.

Federal Archives and Records Center, San Bruno, California: RG 79 (Records of the National Park Service), Box 311 through 313.

Federal Aviation Administration, Anchorage, Airports Division Files: 1) "Record of Facilities, 1959-63; 2) "Airport Inspection Check Guide," 1958-62; 3) "Airport Master Record" for Kulik Lake, Alaska.

Federal Records Center, Anchorage; RG 79 (National Park Service), Accession 83D, Box 13.

Federal Records Center, Washington, D.C.: various Bureau of Land Management case files ordered from BLM, Alaska State Office, Anchorage.

Harpers Ferry Center, NPS Archives, History Collection, "Serendipity File."

Katmai National Park and Preserve, King Salmon, Alaska: 1) File A2621 (Superintendent's

Annual Reports), 1972-1990; 4) File A2615 (Monthly Public Use Report), 1956-1980; 5) File L58 (National System of Trails), 1965; 6) File A58 (Inactive Records), 1963; 7) File N1615 (Wildlife Management, Bear), 1976 to present; 8) "Bear Management (historical) in Katmai" file; 9) "Katmai Master Planning 1968-70" file.

Katmailand, Inc. Office, Anchorage: 1) "Northern Consolidated Airlines, Inc. of Alaska" [scrapbook], c. 1953, 2) Brooks Camp Log, notes taken from May 1953 through May 1961.

University of Alaska Fairbanks: 1) Ernest F. Gruening Collection, Box 4, Folder 48 (National Parks, Alaska); 2) E.L. "Bob" Bartlett Collection, Federal Departments and Agencies, Interior, NPS (Box 1-3).

University of Washington (Seattle): Map Collection and Pacific Northwest Collection.

## **II. Theses, Dissertations, Government Agency Reports and Unpublished Reports**

Alaska Planning Group [National Park Service], "Katmai National Park, Alaska, Master Plan," December 1973.

Annual Report of the Governor of Alaska (Washington, DC, GPO) for 1922, 1923, and 1956.

Been, Frank T. (Supt. MOMC), "Field Notes of Katmai National Monument Inspection," November 12, 1940.

Dean, Frederick C., "Brown Bear-Human Interrelationship Study," (NPS), 1967.

Denfeld, D. Colt, The Defense of Dutch Harbor, Alaska from Military Construction to Base Cleanup (Defense Environmental Restoration Program, Alaska District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), December 1987.

Dumond, Don, Archaeology of the Alaska Peninsula: the Naknek Region, 1960-1975 (Eugene, University of Oregon Anthropological Papers No. 21), 1981.

Hanable, William, "Brooks Camp History" (draft report), May 1, 1989.

Hussey, John A., Embattled Katmai: A History of Katmai National Monument (San Francisco, NPS), 1971.

Jope, Katherine L., "Monitoring Resource Conditions Related to Commercial Use on American Creek, Progress Report, 1986," February 1987.

Kauffmann, "Katmai National Monument, Alaska, a History of its Establishment and Revision of its Boundaries" (Washington, DC, NPS), 1954.

Manski, David, "Summary of Data Collected on Visitor Use Activities at American Creek, Summer 1985," c. 1985.

[National Park Service], Alaska Commercial Hunting Guides, Briefing Statements (notebook), October 27, 1988, in ARO-OC.

National Park Service [AAO], "Combined Environmental Assessment and Development Concept Plans for Concession Facilities, Operations and Services Within the Brooks Camp and Grosvenor Camp Areas, Katmai National Monument, Alaska," October 1980.

National Park Service, "Environmental Assessment, Draft Development Concept Plan, Katmai National Park and Preserve," January 1982.

[National Park Service,] "Environmental Assessment, Management of Visitor Use at American Creek, KATM," n.d. [1985?].

National Park Service (PNRO), Final Environmental Statement, Proposed Katmai Wilderness, Katmai National Monument, Alaska (FES 74-35), June 13, 1974.

National Park Service, General Management Plan, Wilderness Suitability Review and Land Protection Plan, Katmai National Park and Preserve, October 1986.

National Park Service, Historical Listing of National Park Service Officials (Washington, the author), May 1, 1986.

[National Park Service,] "Katmai National Park and Preserve, Resources Management Plan," April 15, 1982.

[National Park Service,] Katmai National Park and Preserve, Brooks River Area Development Concept Plan, Alternatives Workbook, Summer 1991.

National Park Service, "A Master Plan, Katmai National Monument, Alaska" (preliminary working draft), August 1971.

National Park Service, The National Park Service: Index (Washington, GPO), 1989.

Norris, Frank, "Gawking at the Midnight Sun: The Tourist in Early Alaska" (Anchorage, Alaska Historical Commission Studies in History #170), 1985.

Office of the Federal Register, Code of Federal Regulations 36 (Washington, DC, GPO), July 1, 1988.

Orth, Donald J., Dictionary of Alaska Place Names, USGS Professional Paper 567 (Washington, GPO), 1971.

Starr, Frank and Penny, "End of the Season Report, Katmai National Park and Preserve," 1985.

U.S. Air Force, History of the Alaskan Air Command, 1 July 1974-30 June 1975 (Anchorage, the author), February 19, 1976.

U.S. Air Force, History of the Alaskan Air Command, 1 July 1975-31 December 1975 (Anchorage, the author), 1976.

U.S. Air Force, History of the Alaskan Air Command, 1 January 1976-31 December 1976 (Anchorage, the author), 1977.

U.S. Civil Aeronautics Board, "Docket No. 350/Bethel and Nome Additional Service," Economic Decisions of the Civil Aeronautics Board 12 (1950), 363-65.

U.S. Civil Aeronautics Board, "Docket No. 2209/Northern Consolidated Airlines, Inc., et. al. Consolidation," Economic Decisions of the Civil Aeronautics Board 8/April to December 1947 (Washington, D.C., GPO, 1949), 110-20.

U.S. Civil Aeronautics Board, "Docket No. 4805 et. al./Alaska Route Modification Case,"

Economic and Safety Enforcement Cases of the Civil Aeronautics Board 17/March 1953-September 1953 (Washington, D.C., GPO, 1958), 943-944.

U.S. Civil Aeronautics Board, "Docket No. 57/Intra-Alaska Case," Economic and Safety Cases of the Civil Aeronautics Board 28 (Washington, D.C., GPO, 1959), 176-77.

U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and National Ocean Service, Supplement, Alaska [pilot's guide], November 16, 1989.

Williss, G. Frank, "Do Things Right the First Time": The National Park Service and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (Denver?, NPS), September 1985.

### **III. Public Documents**

Federal Register, April 8, 1977, p. 10536.

64th Congress, Public Law No. 235.

U.S. Statutes at Large 63 (81st Congress, 1st Session), 679.

### **IV. Newspapers**

Anchorage Daily News, June 30, 1970, 13; October 3, 1970, 1; September 28, 1976, 2.

Anchorage Daily Times, June 7, 1950, 7, 12; August 2, 1950, 7; March 15, 1967, 1; June 27, 1970, 2; June 30, 1970, 2; July 1, 1970, 4.

Christian Science Monitor, June 16, 1950, A8; September 22, 1950, 11; August 2, 1969, 3.

Commerce Business Daily (Chicago, U.S. Dept. of Commerce), January 15, 1973.

Jessen's Weekly (Fairbanks), October 29, 1948.

New York Times, August 22, 1965, X:17; January 21, 1969, 1; April 18, 1969, 43; July 24, 1979, IV/6; August 29, 1979, IV/2; September 19, 1979, 5; June 27, 1981, 30; November 24, 1981, D4; December 10, 1981, D2; January 1, 1982, 37; May 26, 1982, D4; November 1, 1982, D5.

### **V. Books**

Alaska Northwest Publishing Co., "Katmai Country," Alaska Geographic 16:1 (Anchorage, the author), 1989.

Alaska Travel Publications, Exploring Katmai National Monument and the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes (Anchorage, the author), 1974.

Albright, Horace M. as told to Robert Cahn, The Birth of the National Park Service (Salt Lake City, Howe Brothers), 1985.

American Aviation Associates, Official Airline Guide (Chicago, the author), various issues, September 1958 to January 1963.

Anchorage Centennial Commission, Aviation Committee, One Hundred Alaska Bush Pilots (Anchorage, the author), 1967.

Atwood, Evangeline and Robert N. DeArmond, comp., Who's Who in Alaskan Politics (Portland, Binford and Mort), 1977.

Davies, R.E.G., Airlines of the United States Since 1914 (Washington, Smithsonian Institution), 1972.

Dunkle, W.E., A Birds Eye View (Camarillo, Calif., J. Sellers Press), 1988.

Gerken, Ted, Gamble at Iliamna; the Story of What Happened When Two Alaskans Put Their Entire Life Savings in a Frontier Fly Fishing Lodge (Homer, Anchor Publishing), 1988.

Satterfield, Archie, The Alaska Airlines Story (Anchorage, Alaska Northwest), 1981.

Stevens, Robert, Alaskan Aviation History (Des Moines, Wash., Polynyas Press), 1990.

Taylor, John W.R., ed., Jane's All the World's Aircraft, 1973-74 (London, Jane's Yearbooks), 1973.

Who's Who in America; A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Living Americans 26 (Chicago, A.N. Marquis Co.), 1950. Note biographical sketches of "Herbert Brownell, Jr." (p. 351) and "Leonard Wood Hall" (p. 1108).

## **VI. Articles**

"Alaska's Land of Steaming Volcanoes," Sunset 118 (April 1957), 24-32.

Barry, Mary J., "Wings Over the North: Jim Dodson," Alaska Sportsman 31 (April 1965), 19-21.

Blodgett, Peter J., "Striking a Balance: Managing Concessions in the National Parks, 1916-1933," Forest and Conservation History 34 (April 1990), 60-68.

Bradner, Enos, "Anglers' Eldorado," Alaska Sportsman 18 (April 1952), 16-21, 33-38.

Coe, Darrell L., "Katmai National Monument," National Parks Magazine 40 (June 1966), 4-9.

Coe, Darrell L., "Katmai National Monument," Alaska Sportsman 35 (March 1969), 28-34.

Dufresne, Frank, "Katmai Adventure," Field and Stream 56 (May 1952), 42-45.

Dufresne, Frank, "Too Many Mackinaws," Field and Stream 57 (May 1952), 40-41, 101-04.

Eastman, Ford, "Catch 'Em Anywhere," Alaska Sportsman 21 (September 1955), 26.

Fuerst, Judith, "Alaska Business Hall of Fame: Ray I. Petersen," Alaska Business Monthly (January 1988), 32-33.

Grosvenor, Elsie May Bell, "Alaska Warmer Side," National Geographic 109 (June 1956), 737-75.

Gruening, Ernest, "Lonely Wonders of Katmai," National Geographic 123 (June 1963), 800-31.

"History of the Concessions Policy Act (Public Law 89-249)," unpub. mss. in ARO-OC files.

Huber, Louis, "Cataclysm," Alaska Sportsman 17 (May 1951), 22-25, 31.

Huber, Louis R., "Flight to Katmai," Alaska Sportsman 17 (April 1951), 6-9, 38-41.

Hummell, Don, "The Concession System in National Parks," unpub. mss. in ARO-OC files.

Johnson, Robert Lee, "Alaskan Fliers: Travel's Fishing Adventure," Travel 109 (July 1958), 6-8.

"Katmai Exploring, Fishing...On Your Own or On a Tour," Sunset 154 (June 1975), 38-42.

Katmailand, Inc., "Greetings from Katmailand [Christmas newsletter], 1985-1990 editions.

Ryder, Keith, "On Foot in the Valley of Fire and Ice," Alaska Sportsman 30 (September 1964), 24-25, 58.

Sand, George X., "Alaska's Valley of Death," Science Digest 69 (April 1971), 22-27.

Wien Airlines, "Celebrating 60 Years of Flight, 1924-1984" [pamphlet], July 1, 1984.

Williams, Ogden, "Katmai and its Future," National Parks and Conservation 52 (March 1978), 4-9.

## **VII. Interviews**

Alston, Joe [former Concessions Analyst, ARO], by Frank Norris, February 6, 1991.

Alston, Joe, by Rebecca Kaiser, ARO-OC, June 14, 1991.

Bane, G. Ray [former KATM Supt.], by Frank Norris, February 7, 1991; June 13, 1991; and February 18, 1992.

Bennett, Bo [Manager, Kulik Lodge], by Frank Norris, April 17, 1991.

Blinn, Gilbert [former KATM Supt.], by William Hanable, August 26, 1988.

Funk, David [ARO-OL], by Frank Norris, February 12, 1992.

Kaiser, Rebecca [Chief, ARO-OC], by Frank Norris, June 22, 1990, February 4, 1991, and April 1, 1991.

Kennedy, Kay [Fairbanks journalist], by Frank Norris, June 7, 1991.

Klutsch, Joseph [Katmai Guide Service, King Salmon], by Frank Norris, January 16, 1992.

Maloney, P. Dennis [former Senior Vice President, Wien Air Alaska], by Frank Norris, January 3, 1992.

Meldrum, Janis [former KATM Resource Management Specialist], by Frank Norris, December 20, 1990; April 9, 1991; and February 18, 1992.

Mollan, Perry [Brooks Camp manager, Katmailand], by Frank Norris, August 8, 1990.

Moody, Robert [Chief of Planning and Programs, NPS Concessions Division, WASO], by Frank Norris, June 28, 1990.

Morris, David K. [former KATM Supt.], by William Hanable, November 2, 1989.

Morris, David K., by Frank Norris, April 29, 1991.

Nancarrow, William, [first KATM ranger], by William Hanable, August 1, 1988.

Nancarrow, William, by Bill Tanner, May 12, 1983, in Melgenak Case File, ARO-OL.

Nemeth, Dave [Concessions Management Officer, KATM], by Frank Norris, March 28 and 29, 1991.

Petersen, Raymond F., by Frank Norris, December 19, 1991.

Petersen, Raymond I., Affidavit of September 20, 1982 and Testimony of May 31, 1983, both in Palakia Melgenak Case Files, II/109-136, ARO-OL.

Petersen, Raymond I., by William Hanable and Janis Meldrum, Anchorage, November 23, 1988.

Petersen, Raymond I. and Raymond F., by Frank Norris, August 9, 1990 and April 17, 1991.

Peterson, Robert [KATM ranger, early 1960s], by William Hanable, June 24, 1988.

Peterson, Robert, by Bill Tanner, May 19, 1984, in Melgenak Case File, ARO-OL.

Stemp, Ralph [former Wien Air Alaska executive], by Frank Norris, February 4, 1992.

Stondall, Ed [Chief of Maintenance, KATM], by William Hanable, September 15, 1989.

Strunk, Mike [Chief, Planning Division, ARO], by Frank Norris, February 7, 1991.

Svoboda, Lee [Anchorage OAS pilot], by Frank Norris, March 29, 1991 and February 27, 1992.

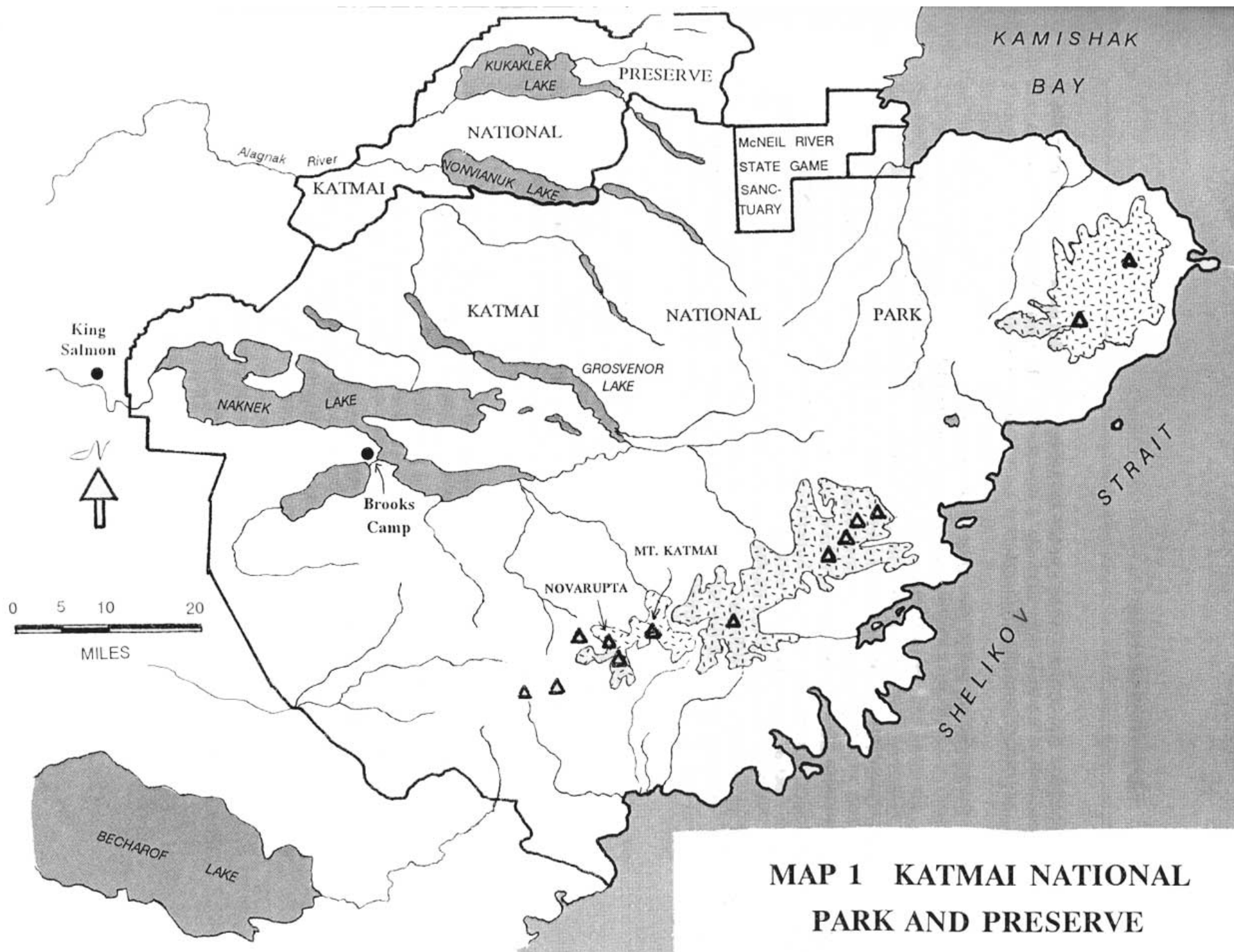
Wemple, Robert E. [Facility Design and Maintenance Division, ARO], by Frank Norris, December 19, 1990.

Wood, Virginia [wife of early KATM ranger], by Bill Tanner, May 10, 1983, in Melgenak Case File, ARO-OL.

---

<<< [Previous](#)

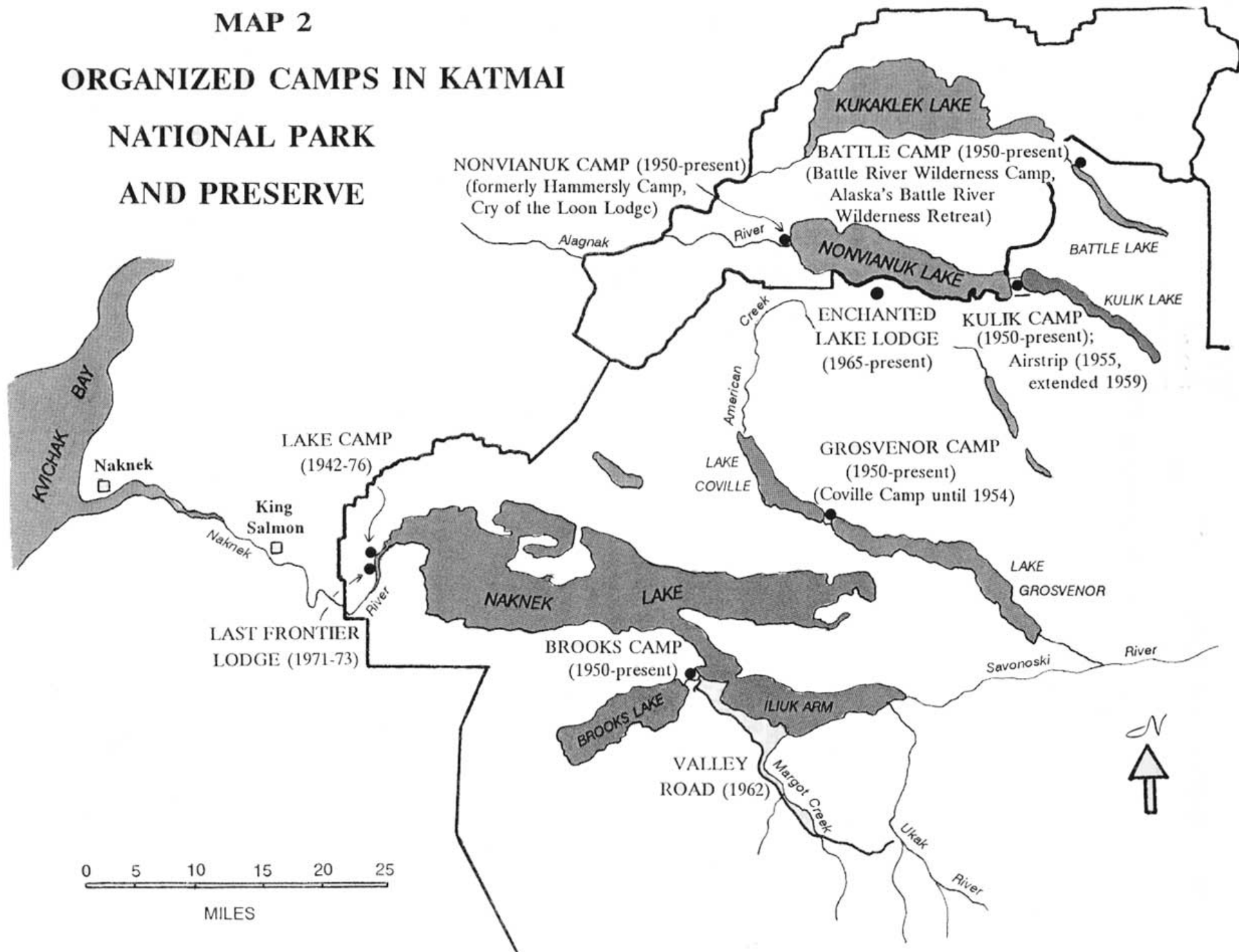
<<< [Contents](#) >>>

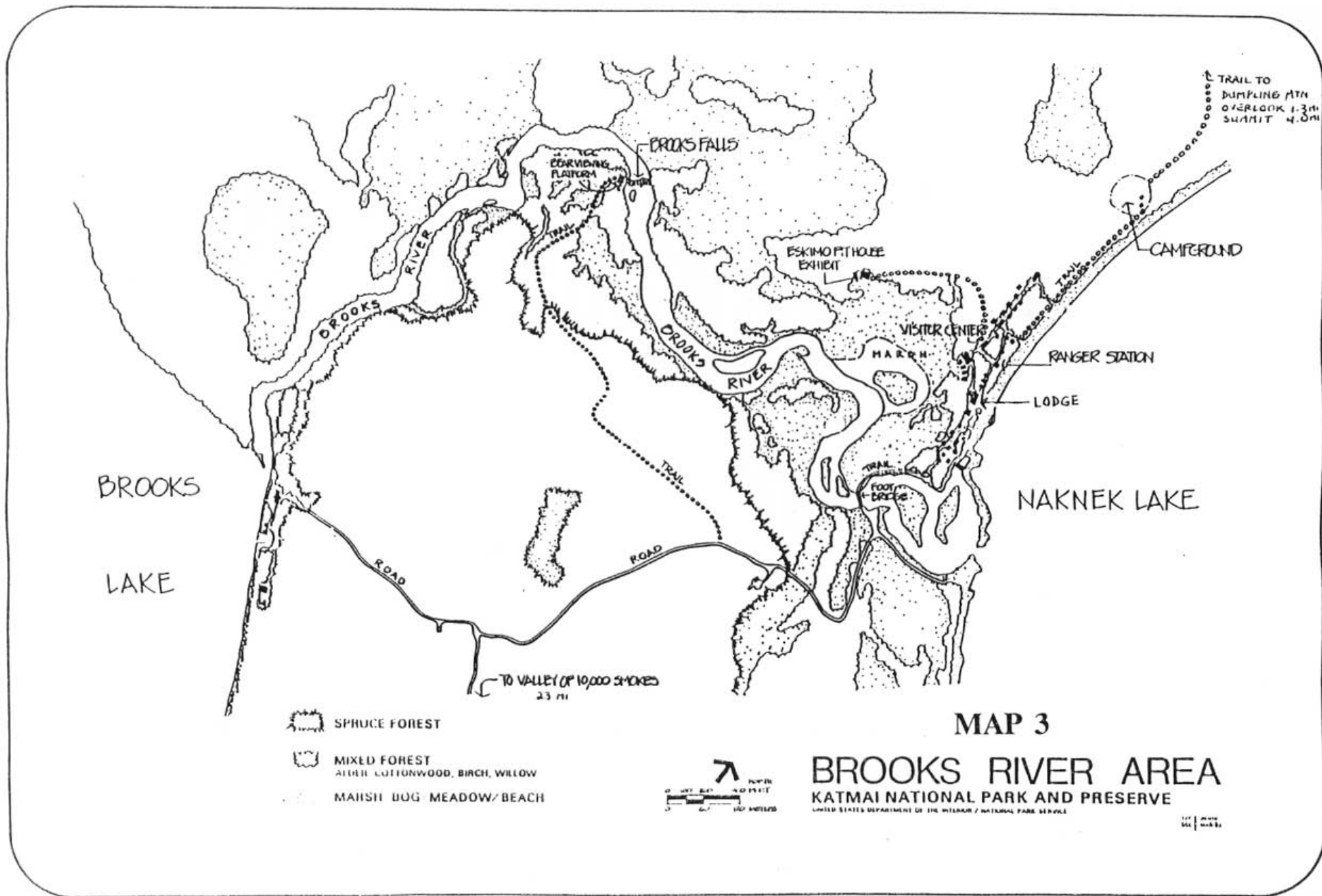


**MAP 1 KATMAI NATIONAL  
PARK AND PRESERVE**

# MAP 2

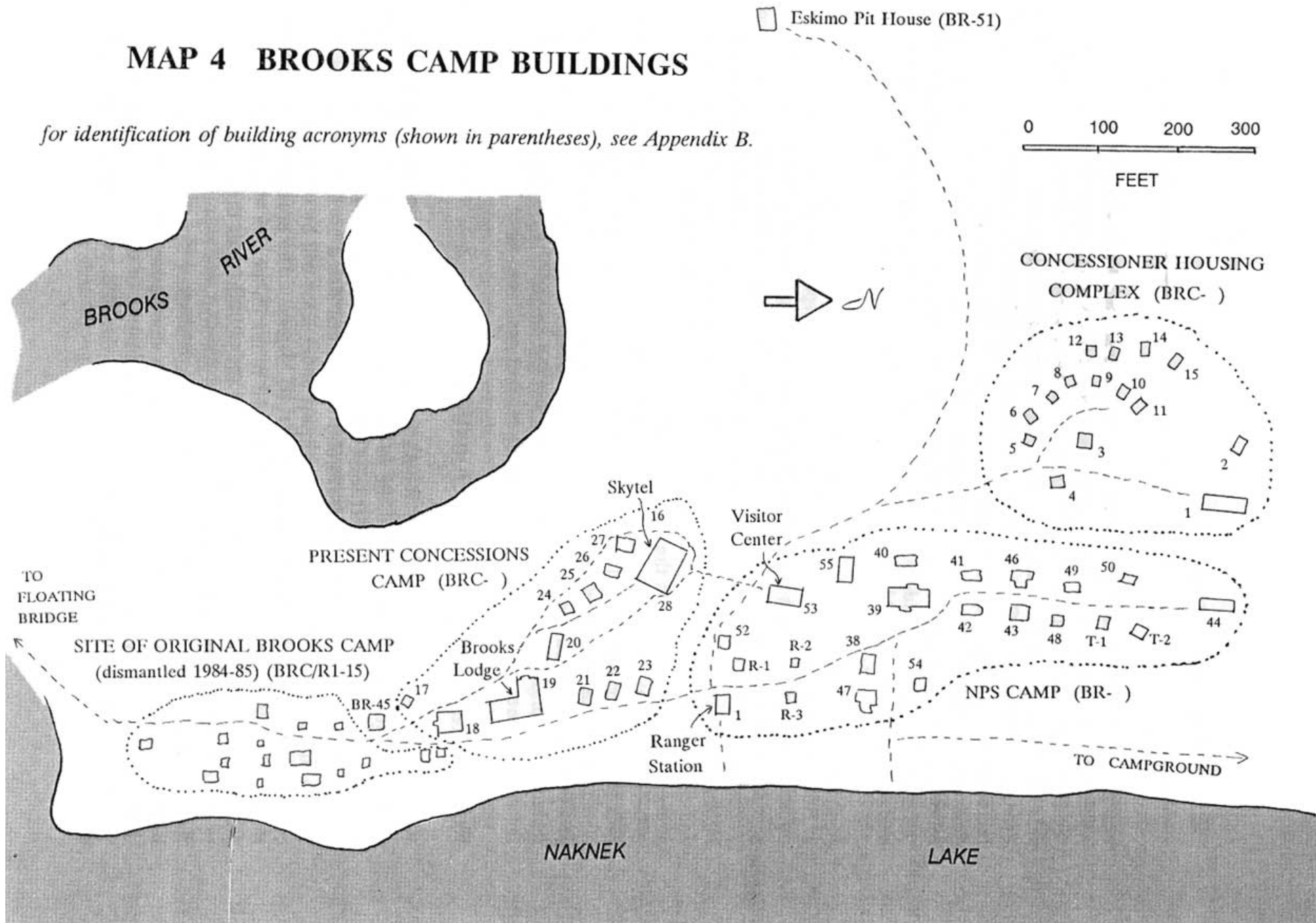
## ORGANIZED CAMPS IN KATMAI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

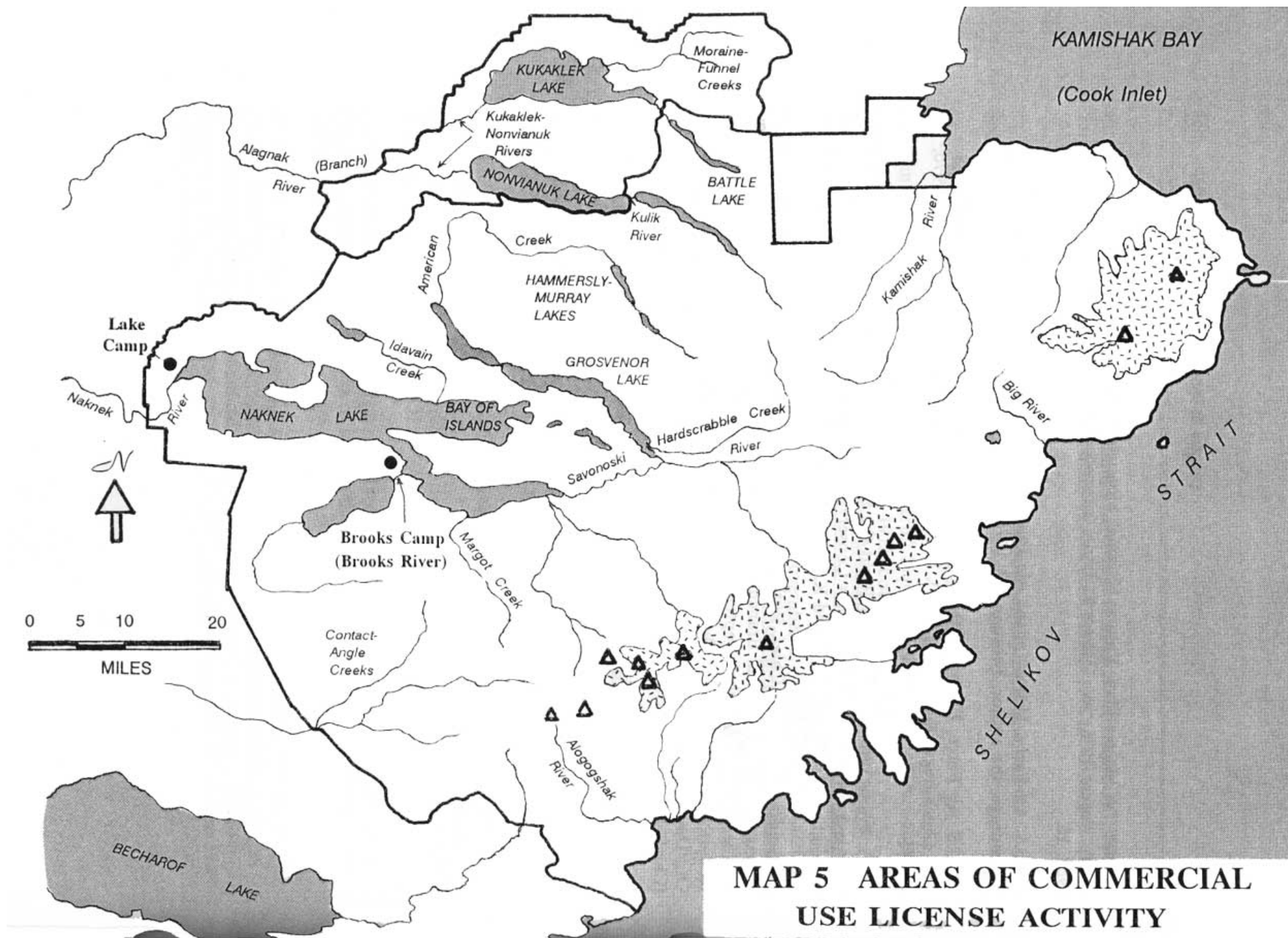




# MAP 4 BROOKS CAMP BUILDINGS

for identification of building acronyms (shown in parentheses), see Appendix B.



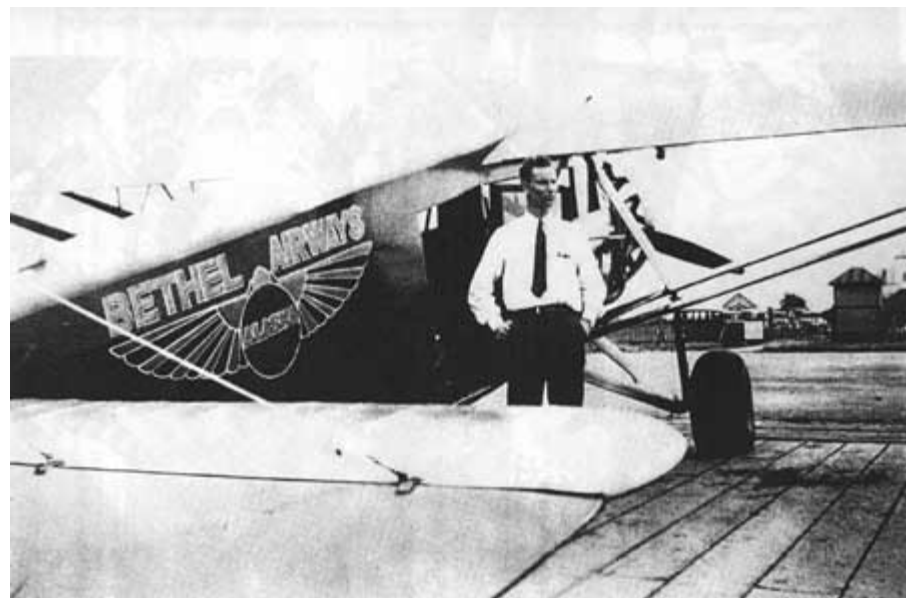


## TOURISM IN KATMAI COUNTRY



By Frank B. Norris



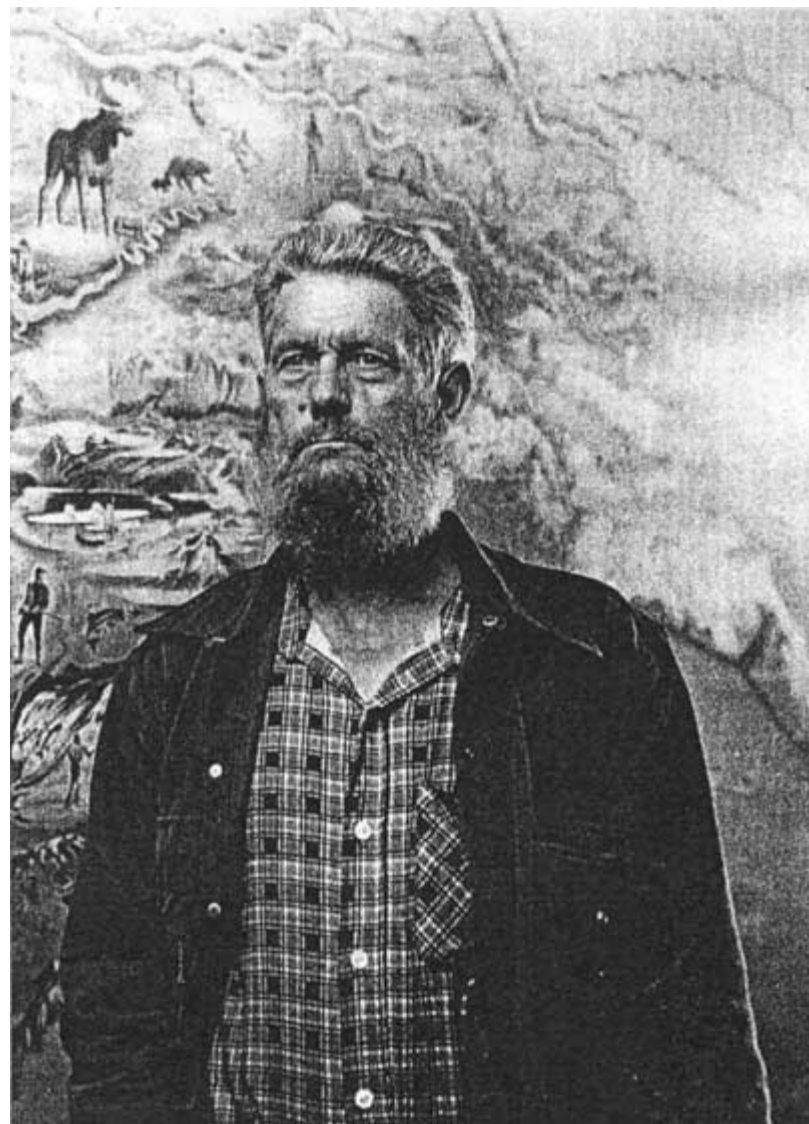












FOR THE BEST FISHING IN THE WORLD

*Fly, Fisherman,  
Fly!*



Four fat, succulent rainbows just caught from Brooks River and ready for cooking. They are bound to rough plaids by trout grass that has been wetted down. When the grass burns through, the meal is ready.



## "We flew to Alaska for fabulous Trout and Salmon"

Eight weeks out of Seattle and we were fishing Alaska's famous Brooks River with shoals of large rainbow trout around us. It was the second week of July, the height of the season which extends from June through September. In six weeks our party of three caught and released 546 rainbows averaging better than four pounds. Most amazing, we fished six days out of our seven day vacation; and the round trip plane fare from Seattle to Anchorage was only \$162 plus tax.

Yet Alaska is only one of hundreds of the greatest fishing grounds which enterprising fishermen are reaching by air. It's a fishing world with a week's vacation—or in some cases less—each day. It may cost far less than you think—as any reliable travel agent will show you—to fly to such famous fishing grounds as Alaska, Maine, Wisconsin, Quebec, and also the most fishing grounds overseas.

world's best fishing if they knew how little the air trip cost, how quickly they can reach their destinations. United Airlines Corporation has prepared a beautiful 30" x 40" full-color map of "100 of the World's Best Fishing Spots," together with a 56 page booklet. They give air fares, air-time, spots, recommended tackle, climate and other facts. The color map is perfect for framing. Both only \$4.00—no handling. Send coupon today—then discuss with us or any airline representative or travel agent.



United Airlines Corp., Dept. A, P.O. Box 100,  
New Hartford, Connecticut

Circle 100

Please send me a map/booklet by enclosing \$4.00 to  
New Hartford, Conn.









