

Trapper Creek

Results of South Denali Interpretive Master Plan Community Meeting – September 27, 2007

What stories would you share with an out-of-town visitor? About your community... About Curry Ridge and this region...

- Pre-settlement days... Native Alaskans... First people stories
- Shem Pete's Alaska... travel along the Chulitna River... trading... hunting... tie to the view. James Kari and James Fall
- Trapper Creek archaeological site. Mat-Su historian
- Place names
- Mining History... Dunkel coal mine... Golden Zone Mine (west fork of Chulitna)
- Swinging bridges across the Chulitna river that accessed mines
- Early history of exploration... USGS expeditions... attempt to climb Denali... Visible from site
- 59ers. Homesteading... Mike Carpenter (Wal-Mikes)
- Curt Wagner... Talkeetna (history, artist)
- Natural history... moose, caribou (migrations in past), medicinal and useful plants
- Railroad history... building, surveying
- Curry Lookout, town of Curry, building of bridges, expeditions... looking for a route to the interior... bridge across river to Curry Lookout
- Ken Marsh... historian in Trapper Creek... Curry
- Swans (trumpeter recovery program)
- Sandhill cranes stop to feed on berries
- Bears... brown and black... prime feeding areas nearby... salmon, alpine, forest regions... tremendous amount of denning... Troublesome Creek and Byers heavily used
- Building of the Parks Highway... Scenic Byway study currently... bridges across Chulitna... historical route through the area... overgrown tractor trail... talk with Scenic Byway people... homesteads and native allotments...
- Aviation... military plane on Kesugi Ridge
- Climbing stories... Dave Johnston, Roger Robinson (NPS), Brian Okonek, Daryl Miller (NPS)
- Mining history... Chuck Hawley-excellent for geology (former USGS), business in Anchorage; Earl Foster
- Focus in on the smaller animals and plants
- Glaciers... shaped by glaciers... what it looked like at one time during glaciation... timeline... glacial erratics...
- Multiple seasons... what's it like in the winter... flagging trees

What effects do you foresee the South Denali facility having on the region, your community, or Curry Ridge? Potential benefits... Concerns...

- Negative impact on natural resources: habitat, bear denning areas, ease of use to high country
- Increased snow machine use could have impacts. Could also be a benefit... good way to get people up there to see the area
- Concern about "glitter gulch" at entrance of NP. Avoid concentration of businesses... need limits.
- Concern about airport at mile 131. Entire area needs to be planned... this would be the first step to development.
- Protect the integrity of the entire region. Denali has a great draw. Planning for the whole region, not just around the visitor facility. Variety of activities, private in-holdings. Won't have the same attraction if not protected. Ensure long-term income.
- Flight traffic (climbers on Denali)
- This area is special because it is undeveloped and unspoiled. More than just staying inside a visitor center looking at exhibits. Need to experience the site.
- Previous selected site is tucked into the Ridge... difficult to see the building from other places on Curry Ridge. Create the facility so it cannot be seen from the lake or other places higher on the Ridge. Don't want to see the parking lot either. Can tuck different facilities into the spruce trees.
- Tour busses should not be allowed to drop off visitors at the visitor facility site. How many shuttle busses needed to transport visitors. Don't need a large parking lot. Shuttles can be continuous route.
- New site... more buildings would be more exposed.
- What's the point of having an elaborate building if it is just a gateway to the site? Size, purpose.
- Any structure needs to blend in the landscape and use the resources on the site. Endemic materials. Wind and solar power to make self-sustaining.
- Three things to maintain natural opportunities
 - Avoid glitter gulch... purchase in-holdings along Parks Highway... land use controls south of the park
 - Need a comprehensive biological inventory of this area... identify important wildlife areas... protect or mitigate impacts
 - Budget related... operating and maintenance costs... burden on state parks... need a budget for maintenance. Long term sustainability and visitor experience quality.
- Avoid piecemeal development... secure the entire package... when developing the road, know that the visitor center will have funding.
- Address RVs. Camping areas.
- Connect to the South Denali Viewpoint, Troublesome Creek trailhead, trails, bike path. Number one thing at Princess Lodge people want is to hike. Make the entire area a destination. DOT should work on the highway for biking and pedestrian use. Bike Trail the entire length of the state park... bike between this visitor center and the Denali NP visitor center.

**How can the South Denali facility be developed to benefit Alaska residents?
Specific features of the visitor center Specific features of the site**

- Make it comfortable for people who cannot be outside. Linger and watch the view from comfort of inside the building. Expansive view of the Alaska range. Don't have people be in front of the windows
- Outside deck
- Change seasonally. Room that changes for lingering. Different uses in different seasons.
- Development of many trails will benefit Alaska residents. Not many trails in the state for just hiking... most are multi-use.
- Educational groups... use in shoulder seasons to bring in students from Mat-Su area.

What/who are some resources that we can investigate or interview to learn more about this area?

- NPS Staff... Phil Breese (geologist), Jane Bryant (cultural resources, historian),
- Local authors: Ken Marsh (Trapper Creek), Roberta Sheldon (Talkeetna author)... Don Sheldon's wife
- University of Alaska-Fairbanks: Museum, archives
- Fran Seeger-Boss (historian for Mat-Su)

If you have more information to add, see any errors in this report, or if you have questions about this project, contact:

Schmeckle Reserve Interpreters
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Ron Zimmerman, Jim Buchholz, and Michael Gross

Phone: (715) 346-4992 Fax: (715) 295-8918

E-mail: schmeckle@uwsp.edu

Website: www.uwsp.edu/schmeckle

Address: 2419 North Point Drive / Stevens Point, WI 54481