

## Managing Cultural Resources in Alaska's Parklands

by Frank Norris

The year 2005 is a watershed in the history of the National Park Service in Alaska, because it marks the 25th anniversary of the federal law that transformed the bureau's mission and scope in the state. President Jimmy Carter signed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act or ANILCA (16 USC 3101 et seq.) into law on December 2, 1980, after a decade-long struggle. The lands designated by ANILCA—43.6 million acres in 10 new national parks units and 3 expanded parks—comprise more than 80 percent of all NPS acreage in Alaska. As a result, the National Park Service's role in Alaska has been largely shaped by that law.<sup>1</sup> (Figure 1)

Alaska's parks are significantly different from those in other states in several fundamental ways. Because virtually all of the ANILCA parks along with most of the parks established prior to 1980 were authorized for scenic, wilderness, or wildlife values, cultural resource management in Alaska's parks has long been perceived as a secondary park function. In addition, circumstances surrounding ANILCA's passage, and national attitudes prevalent while ANILCA was being considered, have resulted in a relatively strong role for Native populations and

FIGURE 1. NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM IN ALASKA, DECEMBER 2, 1980

Name of Park	Size (in acres)
Aniakchak National Monument and National Preserve	593,000
Bering Land Bridge National Preserve	2,699,000
Cape Krusenstern National Monument	649,000
Denali National Park and Preserve*	6,075,000
Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve	8,472,000
Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve*	3,283,000
Katmai National Park and Preserve*	4,093,000
Kenai Fjords National Park	670,000
Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park	13,200
Kobuk Valley National Park	1,751,000
Lake Clark National Park and Preserve	4,030,000
Noatak National Preserve	6,570,000
Sitka National Historical Park*	106
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve	13,186,000
Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve	2,526,000

\*Portions of the parks marked with an asterisk (\*) predated the ANILCA planning process.

other rural residents in park regulations and management. The Alaska park experience, in turn, has influenced how the National Park Service addresses Native and other local-residence issues in the lower 48 states.

Until 1971, the lion's share of Alaska's national parklands was in three large parks: Mount McKinley, between Anchorage and Fairbanks, was a 2.2-million-acre expanse focused on game-rich tablelands adjacent to North America's highest peak; Katmai, in southwestern Alaska, was the site of one of the world's most explosive volcanic eruptions; and Glacier Bay in southeastern Alaska was home to many tidewater glaciers. The three parks were established between 1917 and 1925 through the efforts of sportsmen and scientists.<sup>2</sup>

Alaska's parklands, however, offered more than just scenery, game, and scientific wonders. Sitka National Monument, signed into law by President Taft in 1910 (Executive Order 959), contained a remarkable assemblage of Haida and Tlingit totem poles that had been exhibited at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904 and the Lewis and Clark Exposition in Portland in 1905. The monument also protected a major battleground where Tlingit warriors had fought against the Russian military. In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed into law a second national monument (Presidential Proclamation 1351) that protected the remarkably preserved Haida village of Old Kasaan on Prince of Wales Island.<sup>3</sup>

During the 1920s and 1930s, little was done to maintain or improve America's existing national monuments, including those in Alaska. Advocacy groups suggested new Alaska parks and monuments but, for the most part, the groups did not propose parks based on their historical or cultural value. In the early 1930s, Skagway residents floated the idea of a Chilkoot National Park to preserve the landscape made famous during the Klondike Gold Rush. Later that decade, Territorial Chief Ernest Gruening prevailed on the National Park Service to consider a Kennecott National Monument that would include the recently abandoned Kennecott mine and mill complex along with 900 square miles of surrounding wilderness. (Figure 2) The National Park Service, however, showed little enthusiasm for either proposal, and by the early days of World War II, both had been quietly shelved.<sup>4</sup>

A few attempts were made prior to the mid-1960s to discuss cultural resource concerns in Alaska's existing parks. At Mount McKinley, a team of University of Alaska archeologists investigated a Teklanika River site in 1961 that was initially dated at some 10,000 B.P. Their findings, however, did little to stimulate archeological research elsewhere in the park, and one of the park's most important historic sites, the Charles Sheldon cabin, built in 1907, was allowed to collapse and disintegrate.<sup>5</sup> At Katmai, a treasure trove of wooden ceremonial masks was found during the 1930s in a lakeside cave. Given the total lack of park staff, however, nothing was done to provide protection. Several years later, the masks were removed from the park and scattered by trappers and other area residents.<sup>6</sup>

FIGURE 2

The Kennecott Mill that operated from 1911 to 1938 was once the world's largest copper mill. Shortly after it closed, it was briefly considered as a national park. In 1980, the surrounding area became part of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, and in 1998, the National Park Service purchased the mill and surrounding properties. (Courtesy of the Historic American Engineering Record Collections, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress)



At Katmai and Glacier Bay, National Park Service policies discouraged entry by nearby residents, many of whom were Native Americans. The policies had various ramifications. At Katmai, local Natives respected the park's pleas to stay away. White trappers, who ignored the regulations, became so entrenched in the park that the Department of the Interior dispatched a special investigator to coax them out.<sup>7</sup> At Glacier Bay, the no-entry policy was a major affront to the Hoonah Tlingits, who had long considered the bay—rich in fish and marine mammals—as the “Hoonah breadbasket.” Beginning in the late 1930s, National Park Service officials and local residents engaged in a long stalemate over the issue. Eventually, locals were tolerated if not accepted. The park, however, was uncomfortable with their presence, and in 1974 park management issued an expulsion order.<sup>8</sup>

At the state's two cultural resource-based parks, the National Park Service had mixed success trying to preserve the artifacts in its care. At Sitka, the National Park Service—forced to manage affairs with a single employee until the late 1940s—did its best to maintain the totem pole collection and associated artifacts. But Old Kasaan, which was isolated from all but the most adventure-some visitors, fell victim to neglect. The site, deep in the rain forest, became so degraded that maintaining the decaying remnants proved impossible. In July 1955, Congress dedesignated the site as a national monument and turned the area over to the U.S. Forest Service.<sup>9</sup>

The National Park Service's first broad-based study of Alaska's cultural treasures was the *Preliminary Survey of Alaska's Archeology, Ethnology, and History* completed in 1952 by Arthur Woodward, an anthropologist affiliated with California's Southwest Museum. The study was neither widely distributed nor widely publicized.<sup>10</sup> Further action to describe and evaluate cultural resources had to wait until Alaska became a state in January 1959. Just a year later, U.S. Senator Ernest Gruening of Alaska, chagrined by the bureau's omission of

Alaska from its historical theme studies, convinced the National Park Service to focus on the new state. The regional office staff in San Francisco scrambled to compile a list of Alaska's most significant historic and prehistoric sites. In the early summer of 1961, historian Charles Snell visited 19 Alaskan historic sites and evaluated their eligibility as National Historic Landmarks.<sup>11</sup> A year later, the National Park Service commissioned Dr. J. Louis Giddings to prepare a similar study of the state's aboriginal sites; as part of that study, 14 sites were evaluated for National Historic Landmark eligibility.<sup>12</sup> As a result of these studies, by 1966 15 sites had been recommended by the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments for landmark designation.<sup>13</sup>

Snell's and Giddings's research provided the data needed when future proposals for new parklands were advanced. Such proposals were not long in coming. In January 1964, newly appointed National Park Service Director George Hartzog vowed that the protection of the "surviving landmarks of our national heritage" would be one of his primary goals. Hartzog appointed a special task force to analyze "the best remaining possibilities for the service in Alaska." The analysis, called *Operation Great Land*, laid out a bold blueprint for future bureau operations by identifying 39 "zones and sites containing examples of recreation, natural, and historic resources." Of these, almost half were primarily or exclusively of historical interest, broadly defined; most of the "historic" zones and sites, in fact, had been previously identified by either Snell or Giddings.<sup>14</sup>

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Because Hartzog did not want to antagonize other Interior bureaus, he decided not to distribute *Operation Great Land*. The document, however, remained available for planning purposes, and before long, several proposals began to move forward. In 1965, a feasibility study was initiated for the Russian-era Erskine House in Kodiak. Two years later, two "alternatives studies" were prepared for areas with significant cultural values: Attu Island at the far end of the Aleutian chain, which had been occupied by Japanese forces during World War II, and the Skagway area, which had witnessed dramatic activity during the 1897-1899 Klondike gold rush.<sup>15</sup> Neither the Erskine House nor the Attu Island proposals resulted in movement toward a national park designation. The Skagway study, however, generated great interest among Alaskans and Canadians, both of whom shared a high degree of enthusiasm for a Klondike-

FIGURE 3

*These Skagway commercial buildings date from the Klondike gold rush period. The National Park Service first became interested in the Skagway area in the 1930s. In 1961, a National Park Service historian visited the site and nominated it as a National Historic Landmark. In 1976, President Gerald Ford signed legislation that authorized the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park. (Courtesy of the Historic American Engineering Record Collections, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress)*



based park. Before long, plans were afoot for parks in British Columbia and Yukon Territory as well as in the Skagway area.<sup>16</sup> (Figure 3)

Another National Park Service idea during this period was to create cultural centers as a way to preserve Alaska Native heritage and to exhibit and interpret that heritage to visitors. Several major Native groups lived in areas that were remote from the typical tourist routes and cultural centers provided the possibility of presenting a broad range of Native cultures in one or more easily accessible locations. A preliminary plan in 1968 called for cultural centers in Nome, Fairbanks, and Ketchikan. Because there was widespread worry during this period among both Natives and non-Natives that traditional lifeways were declining, the plan also recommended designating “some of the most representative native villages” as National Historic Landmarks “to give them proper recognition and encourage local preservation efforts.” The plan initially went nowhere. But the seeds of the idea had been sown. As shall be seen they later bore fruit, with the National Park Service playing a supporting role.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act**

A dominant theme in Alaska during the 1960s was a growing recognition that the rights of Alaska’s Native peoples should be taken into account in anticipation of widespread growth and development. During the mid- to late 1960s, a series of events portended a vast new role for the National Park Service in Alaska, in recognizing the lifestyles and rights of Native and non-Native residents near Alaska parks.

Prior to the 1960s, Alaska’s Natives—almost none of whom had experience with Indian reservations as in the lower 48 states—had not settled with the Federal Government regarding land rights. Lacking a settlement, the new State



of Alaska began to select, for its own purposes, tens of millions of acres throughout the state. In so doing, the state ignored any recognition of Native land rights. During the same period, a series of environmental crises threatened the Native lifestyle. These included Project Chariot, a late-1950s Atomic Energy Commission proposal to detonate a nuclear device along the northwestern Alaska coastline; the Barrow "duck-in" of 1961, a mass protest against federal wildlife law; and the Rampart Dam proposal of the early to mid-1960s that would have inundated 7 predominantly Native villages and 10,000 square miles that had long been used for subsistence purposes.

In response to the environmental and land-rights crises, Natives met in Anchorage in October 1966 and formed what became known as the Alaska Federation of Natives. That meeting was important because, just two months later, Natives were able to prevail on the Secretary of the Interior, to impose a "land freeze" that prevented the State of Alaska or private parties from further land selections.<sup>18</sup> The meeting also proved timely because, just one year later, vast quantities of oil were discovered along the North Slope in the region surrounding Prudhoe Bay. Once the reports were confirmed, political leaders and industry officials began to focus on how to get the oil to market. A broad consensus soon emerged that the best transport method would be a pipeline from the oil fields south to Valdez. Such a pipeline, however, could not be built until the question of Native land rights was settled.<sup>19</sup>

Native lands settlement bills were introduced in Congress beginning in June 1967, but few initially paid attention to the issue. After Prudhoe Bay became front-page news, however, Natives recognized that their input would be needed to resolve Native land-claims issues before a bill could be passed. The Federal Government's initial proposal to provide Natives with 4 to 7 million acres of land, along with a \$100 million cash payment, was countered by a Native proposal for a grant of 40 million acres and a \$500 million payout.<sup>20</sup> In the rush to gain access to the "black gold" of Alaska's North Slope, oil companies and development interests were in no mood for delays on a land-rights bill. The bill that emerged from Congress and landed on President Nixon's desk in December 1971, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), called for conveying 40 million acres and \$925 million to Alaska's Natives.<sup>21</sup>

Two ANCSA provisions played a major role in how Alaska's cultural resources would be managed. One provision allowed Native groups to select up to 2 million acres of Alaska land to protect cemeteries and historic sites; these were known as "14(h)(1) sites" after that section of ANCSA. The National Park Service and the University of Alaska later identified more than 7,000 sites, more than 4,000 of which were claimed by one of Alaska's newly-created Native corporations.<sup>22</sup>

The other provision, Section 17(d)(2), foreshadowed a long future battle. The provision called for the Federal Government to recommend “up to, but not to exceed, eighty million acres of unreserved public lands...for addition to or creation as units of the National Park, Forest, Wildlife Refuge, and Wild and Scenic River Systems.”<sup>23</sup> At first glance, Congress appeared to have stressed natural rather than cultural resources in the provision. Indeed, most of the proposals for new or expanded national forests, wildlife refuges, or wild and scenic rivers had little direct relevance to the preservation of cultural resources.



FIGURE 4  
Inupiat hunters have long depended on marine mammals for food, clothing, and other necessities. Here, Inupiat hunters haul a seal killed near Cape Krusenstern National Monument. (Photograph by Robert Belous, courtesy of the National Park Service)

The National Park Service, however, did not ignore cultural resources in its advocacy of new areas. During the fall of 1971, National Park Service officials—in full recognition that a native-claims bill with a lands provision would pass—prepared a list of 37 potential national parks and monuments. While most of the recommended parks were natural and scenic areas, 23 of the 37 contained areas of historical or archeological interest. Seventeen of the 23 were archeology-based, of which 8 had already been designated National Historic Landmarks. The remaining 6 of the 23 were historic: Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, Old Kodiak National Historic Site, Attu Island National Monument, Alaska Highway National Historic Road, Pribilof Islands National Historic Site, and an addition to Sitka National Monument.<sup>24</sup> Two of the 6 historical proposals were acted upon. With additional acreage that included the 130-year-old Russian Bishop’s House, Sitka National Monument

was renamed Sitka National Historical Park in October 1972. The proposal for Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park was signed into law in June 1976.<sup>25</sup>

One major area that ANCSA did not address was subsistence resources. The law helped to guarantee the permanence of Native lifeways by allotting tens of millions of acres to newly formed Native corporations and providing permanent rights to hunt, fish, and gather. (Figure 4) But the 1971 bill was silent on the legal rights of anyone, Native or non-Native, to carry out such activities on Alaska's federal lands, which constituted more than three-fourths of the state's land area. The Senate bill provided these rights, but the House bill omitted any reference to subsistence. Alaska's Congressional delegation was asked to resolve the issue. During a tumultuous meeting that was held just two weeks before Nixon signed the final bill, the delegation decided to not include a subsistence provision. The decision was accepted by the Congressional conference committee and, as a result, ANCSA was enacted without resolving the subsistence issue.<sup>26</sup>

#### Towards an Alaska Lands Act

Section 17(d)(2) of ANCSA detailed a hectic seven-year schedule by which federal agencies would address the disposition of the remaining unreserved public lands. Interior Secretary Rogers Morton had to announce the first land withdrawals—for lands to be reserved for future inclusion in conservation areas—within 90 days of ANCSA's passage. Given that timetable, officials from Alaska's land management agencies quickly assembled a list of areas of interest. The first National Park Service list, issued in early January 1972, included 12 natural areas and 9 cultural areas. (Eight of the cultural areas were archeology-based; the ninth was a gold rush park that included areas near both Skagway and Eagle.)<sup>27</sup> By the time the National Park Service list was evaluated and compared with other bureaus' lists, the nature of the lands debate had changed. In his withdrawal order of March 15, 1972, Morton concluded that the highest priority among 17(d)(2) lands was the protection of large-scale ecological reserves. Based on that conclusion, the list of proposed National Park Service withdrawals—12 new areas and 2 additions to existing park units—focused almost entirely on areas with natural and recreational values.<sup>28</sup>

Three months later, when the National Park Service was asked to recommend to the Secretary potential additions to the National Park System, the bureau recommended nine new parks and extensions to two existing parks, all with the same natural-area focus. A report justifying the recommendations noted that several of the areas were utilized for subsistence hunting by local residents and that many included historical and archeological sites. The only proposed area in which cultural resources played a significant role in its justification was the Tanana Hills-Yukon River area—which is present-day Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve—where “the most noteworthy potentials and fea-



tures" of the area included history along with scenery, recreation, and natural history.<sup>29</sup>

By now, the main thrust of what the National Park Service hoped to achieve during the post-ANCSA period was clear. For the next two years, the National Park Service and other Interior Department bureaus continued to refine their land proposals, issuing environmental impact statements in December 1973 and December 1974. During this period, the National Park Service improved its approach toward cultural resources. Not only was the bureau trumpeting a park (along the Yukon and Charley rivers) with a subtle blending of cultural and natural resources, but it was also proposing a park based primarily on archeological values—Cape Krusenstern National Monument north of Kotzebue—that had not been considered in mid-1972. It had also broadened its basis for establishing the Chukchi-Imuruk area to include a strong cultural component, "the preservation of a representative portion of the Bering Land Bridge for archeological, anthropological, paleontological, and ecological study and for future related cooperative efforts with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."<sup>30</sup> The proposed park later became known as Bering Land Bridge National Preserve.

During the post-ANCSA period, the Department of the Interior also grappled with the thorny issue of subsistence. While ANCSA had left the issue unresolved, the National Park Service in environmental impact statements declared that all of the proposed parks and park additions would specifically sanction subsistence activities.<sup>31</sup> Similar recommendations were made for proposed additions to the national forests and for the newly-proposed national wildlife refuges. Most federal officials recognized that Natives and non-Natives in rural Alaska needed access to subsistence resources for both economic and cultural reasons, and that the bureaus' allowance for subsistence activities would favorably influence Congressional consideration of the proposed areas.

Although ANCSA had decreed that Congress needed to resolve the 17(d)(2) lands issue by the close of 1978, no significant legislation was advanced until January 1977 when Representative Morris Udall of Arizona introduced H.R. 39. Udall, who chaired the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, vowed that the passage of an Alaska lands bill was a top priority. Working with Udall was Representative John Seiberling of Ohio, who headed the Subcommittee on General Oversight and Alaska Lands.<sup>32</sup> H.R. 39 started as little more than a conservationists' wish list, but as the committee and subcommittee began to modify the bill in response to public input, they relied heavily on Department of the Interior environmental impact statements and related materials. Udall's revised bill, not surprisingly, reflected many recommendations that the Interior Department had made more than two years earlier.<sup>33</sup>

One of many issues that Udall, Seiberling, and other Congressional negotiators had to face was subsistence. Who if anyone would have the right to hunt, fish, and gather foods for personal or village consumption? While a broad consensus supported the concept of subsistence, Congress needed to tackle the more contentious issue of deciding which of the proposed conservation units would allow subsistence activities. That question was resolved in May 1978, when House negotiators decided that subsistence activities would be sanctioned in a large majority of the new conservation areas. Congress also needed to decide two other important questions: whether race or residence would be the primary factor in determining access to subsistence resources, and whether the state or Federal Government would administer subsistence activities. Addressing these questions would take considerable political acumen, inasmuch as existing fish and game regulations administered by the state favored urban, non-Native residents. Seiberling's subcommittee dealt with subsistence in late January 1978 and recommended that rural residents would have the highest priority access to subsistence resources without racial qualification. The subcommittee also decided that subsistence would be regulated by the state government under broad federal guidelines.<sup>34</sup>

When it passed ANCSA in 1971, Congress decreed that if the Alaska lands issue was not resolved within seven years, the reserved lands would be released to the public domain. The House of Representatives, taking the lead, passed its version of the lands bill in May 1978. The Senate, however, was slow to act. During the final days of the 95th Congress, senators from opposing sides struggled to resolve differences. At 5:30 on a Sunday morning in early October, a filibuster threat effectively killed all hope for a compromise and Congress adjourned without acting on the bill. President Carter, assisted by Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus, responded to the seven-year deadline by issuing presidential proclamations for 17 national monuments totaling 56 million acres (Presidential Proclamations 4611 through 4627). Thirteen of those monuments, totaling 41 million acres, would be managed by the National Park Service.<sup>35</sup> The president's actions angered many Alaska residents, and several protest events were held, both in the major towns and on the margins of the newly-designated park areas.

Recognizing its unfinished business, Congress went back to work in January 1979 to develop a mutually acceptable lands bill. The House passed its version that May, but the Senate showed little inclination to act until July 1980. Feverish activity continued until mid-August, when the Senate passed its own version. Significant differences between the House and Senate bills prompted new attempts to produce a final bill that bridged the gaps between the two versions. Little action, however, took place before the November 1980 elections. With President-elect Ronald Reagan an avowed opponent of both bills, House and Senate leaders accepted the Senate version and President Carter signed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act on December 2, 1980.<sup>36</sup>

During the nine-year period between the passage of ANCSA and ANILCA, great efforts were made to expand what the National Park Service knew about cultural resources in both the established and proposed parks. At Katmai National Monument, for example, University of Oregon archeologist Don Dumond continued his long-term investigations, and highly regarded historic resource studies were completed for the Katmai and Klondike Gold Rush parks.<sup>37</sup> Most cultural resource work, however, took place because the National Park Service, in 1972, established a Cooperative Park Study Unit at the University of Alaska's Fairbanks campus. National Park Service veteran Zorro Bradley headed the part of that office that focused on archeology and historic preservation. Working with the university allowed the bureau to tap the energy and skills of budding professionals, and during the next decade the office produced more than 35 studies on the archeology, cultural anthropology, history, and subsistence patterns inside and outside the proposed parklands.<sup>38</sup>

### Cultural Resource Management in Alaska: 1980 to the Present

President Carter's 1978 proclamations, and the passage of ANILCA 2 years later, swelled the National Park Service's land management responsibilities in Alaska from approximately 7.6 million to 54 million acres.<sup>39</sup> (Figures 5a and 5b) While the primary purpose of most of the new and expanded national park units was to preserve wilderness ecosystems and wildlife populations, there was a broad recognition that establishing and expanding these park units included the responsibility to learn about and protect cultural resources.

Fulfilling these responsibilities was a daunting challenge. Congress did not immediately respond with new funding commensurate with its new responsibilities; thus slow, incremental growth was the result. During the early to mid-1980s, most of the new parks operated with skeleton staffs, and as a consequence, cultural resource management was largely delegated to the National Park Service's regional office staff in Anchorage. Compounding the labor shortage problem was an unexpected workload increase. In 1981, the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, which had administered historic preservation programs during the Carter Administration, was abolished and its functions were merged into those of the National Park Service.<sup>40</sup>

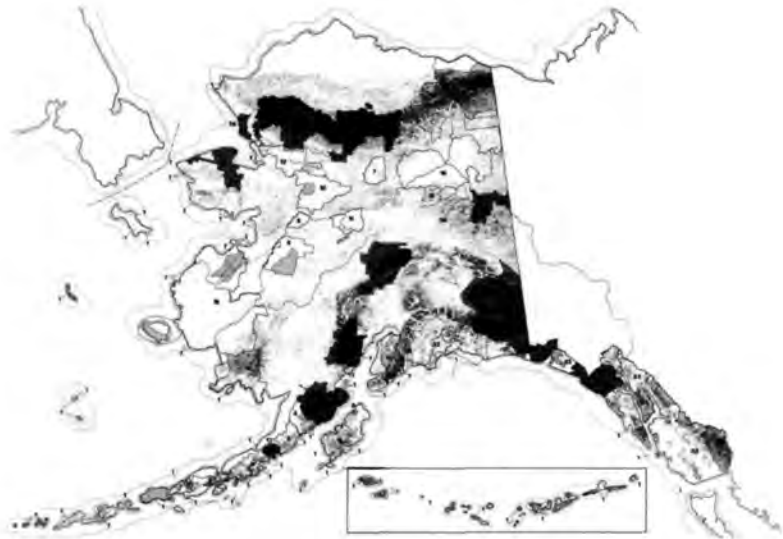
Regional office staffing in Alaska grew slowly over the years, but it was not until 1984 that the Anchorage office could boast a full four-person complement of cultural resource specialists. The specialists recognized that the state's huge park acreage and minimal staffing demanded that cultural resources be treated in novel, more flexible ways than in the lower 48 states. One aspect of the flexible approach was minimal separation between internal programs geared toward the parks and external partnership programs related to the National Register of Historic Places, National Historic Landmarks, and federal historic preservation tax incentives. Another aspect was the unusually strong

FIGURE 5a: NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM, ALASKA-1971



In 1971, the National Park Service managed four national parks in Alaska, including Mount McKinley that was later incorporated into Denali National Park and Preserve. Sitka National Monument was the only national park in Alaska established with a cultural theme. (Courtesy of the National Park Service)

FIGURE 5b: ALASKA NATIONAL INTEREST LANDS CONSERVATION ACT, 1980



The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) of December 1980 established most of Alaska's national parks. As important as acreage added, the Act forged new methods of park management. (Courtesy of the National Park Service)

emphasis on cultural resources related to mining and the skills and staff needed to develop historic mining properties as parklands.

Subsistence issues were considered as well. Immediately after ANILCA's passage, the regional cultural resource staff was asked to assist in managing subsistence activities, but this function was later assigned to a separate subsistence office. (Figure 6) Since 1990, cultural resource management in Alaska parks has been anchored on a considerably firmer footing than during the immediate post-ANILCA period. Additional funding has helped overcome the most obvious program deficiencies. By 1997, almost all Alaska parks were staffed with at least one cultural resource professional, due in part to increased funding and in part to a trend that shifted personnel from the Anchorage office to parks.



FIGURE 6  
*Rural populations throughout Alaska depend on game, fish, and other subsistence resources for personal consumption to supplement store-bought foods. In this photograph, an Inupiat woman flenses a sheefish. (Photograph by Robert Belous, courtesy of the National Park Service)*

Congressional action during the 1990s resulted in several new cultural resource initiatives. Beginning in the mid-1980s, cultural resource staff began working with federal and local officials on projects in the Unalaska-Dutch Harbor area and, in 1990, regional office staff continued that local involvement by compiling a preservation plan for the area. The plan prompted an increased community desire to preserve and interpret key World War II-era structures, and before long that interest resulted in a plan to provide broad federal protections for the area. Local residents approached Alaska's Congressional delegation on the subject, and the result of that collaboration was the passage of a November 1996 bill authorizing the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area.

In February 1999, Congress added a new affiliated area, the Inupiat Heritage Center in Barrow, which was thematically related to the New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park in Massachusetts.<sup>41</sup> Three months later, the long-planned Alaska Native Heritage Center opened on the outskirts of Anchorage. As noted above, the National Park Service had studied the "native cultural centers" idea in 1968 and again in the early 1970s, but the idea did not take hold until the 1990s. Native groups were primarily responsible for the center's construction, although the National Park Service has provided financial assistance for both construction and day-to-day operations.<sup>42</sup>

### The National Park Service in Alaska Today

Following the model established in the 1980s, cultural resource staff in parks and the regional office remain committed to flexibility and problem solving. Throughout the state, cultural resource personnel have played important roles in resolving problems related to past management practices. At Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, as noted above, a policy prohibiting area Natives from carrying out subsistence harvests in the bay had long been a point of contention. The park's cultural resource specialist worked with the Hoonah Tlingits and found innovative ways to bring local residents into the park and to



create cooperation and understanding. A spirit of cooperation is also evident at Sitka National Historical Park where, since the 1960s, the park visitor center has been co-located with a Tlingit cultural center. In recent years, that interaction has grown; the Sitka Tlingits, for example, have erected a totem pole and performed potlatch ceremonies in the park.<sup>43</sup>

Another important function of Alaska's cultural resource staff is the "Section 1318" program. This key section of ANILCA directs the National Park Service to "provide advice, assistance, and technical expertise" to Native corporations or Native groups "in the preservation, display, and interpretation of cultural resources, without regard as to whether title to such resources is in the United States."<sup>44</sup> Since 1990, the bureau has provided assistance and training in preservation planning, museum management, historic architecture, archeology, ethnography, and interpretation.<sup>45</sup>

Similar to the Section 1318 program but with an emphasis on education and training, the bureau participates in the University of Alaska's Rural Development Program. In recognition of the growing value of partnerships and civic engagement, National Park Service personnel have sponsored a cultural resource seminar for rural Alaskan college students in each of the past several years. The seminars have taken students to academic conferences, park areas, and similar venues. They have fostered learning opportunities and increased staff awareness about rural Alaskan development and land use issues.<sup>46</sup>

ANILCA reflects a more modern, enlightened attitude toward both Native Americans and other local populations than bills that established many of the earlier national parks. In so doing, ANILCA has transformed the bureau's mission in Alaska. Bureau staff strives to partner with local residents at every opportunity while managing Alaska's parks in ways consistent with bureau regulations and policies.

Alaska regional personnel have worked hard to improve relations between the bureau and Native American groups. ANILCA's subsistence provisions have given Native and non-Native local residents the legal right to use most National Park Service lands in Alaska for subsistence purposes. Since 1980, repeated interaction between Natives and bureau officials has resulted in a broad understanding that the aims of the two groups can be mutually inclusive.

Today, 25 years after ANILCA's passage and 95 years after the establishment of Alaska's first national park, the cultural resources of Alaska's parks are being professionally and actively managed. The new paradigms established by ANILCA and the innovative programs that the National Park Service has developed in response to those paradigms, offer practical, proven models of modern cultural resource management.

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## Notes

1. National Park Service, *The National Parks: Index 2001-2003* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 13. The largest Alaska national parks are Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, 13.2 million acres; Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, 8.5 million acres; Noatak National Preserve, 6.6 million acres; Denali National Park and Preserve, 6.1 million acres; and Katmai National Park and Preserve, 4.1 million acres. Death Valley National Park, the largest park in the lower 48 states encompasses 3.4 million acres, and ranks sixth among all U.S. national parks.
2. Congress established Mount McKinley National Park in February 26, 1917; President Wilson proclaimed Katmai National Monument in September 24, 1918; and President Coolidge proclaimed Glacier Bay National Monument in February 26, 1925. In 1917, the area of each national monument was approximately 2.8 million acres: Glacier Bay slightly more, Katmai slightly less.
3. Joan M. Antonson and William S. Hanable, *Administrative History of Sitka National Historical Park* (Anchorage: National Park Service, 1987), 10-16; Frank Norris, "A Victim of Nature and Bureaucracy: The Short, Sad History of Old Kasaan National Monument," *Proceedings of the Alaska Historical Society Annual Meeting* (2000), 87, 89. The management of Old Kasaan between 1916 and 1933 was delegated to either the U.S. Forest Service or the Alaska Road Commission; after 1933, the monument was entrusted to the National Park Service. None of the agencies, however, ever stationed personnel at the site or otherwise actively managed the area.
4. Frank Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time: The National Park Service and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980" (Denver, CO: National Park Service, September 1985), 26; Frank Norris, *Legacy of the Gold Rush: An Administrative History of Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park* (Anchorage, AK: National Park Service, 1996), 52-53.
5. Kristen Griffin, *An Overview and Assessment of Archeological Resources, Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska* (Anchorage, AK: National Park Service, September 1990), 22, 62-63.
6. Frank Norris to Pat McClenahan, "Compilation of Data on Katmai's Indian Caves," March 8, 1993, in Katmai Administrative History Collection, Alaska Region Curatorial Center. The National Park Service had no staff at either Katmai or Glacier Bay until 1950 when it began sending seasonal rangers to the two parks.
7. William E. Brown, *A History of the Denali-Mount McKinley Region, Alaska* (Santa Fe, NM: National Park Service, 1991), 147; Frank Norris, *Alaska Subsistence: a National Park Service Management History* (Anchorage, AK: National Park Service, September 2002), 33-40; Frank Norris, *Isolated Paradise: An Administrative History of the Katmai and Aniakchak National Park Units* (Anchorage, AK: National Park Service, 1996), 52-53, 57-60.
8. Theodore Catton, *Land Reborn: A History of Administration and Visitor Use in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve* (Anchorage, AK: National Park Service, 1995), 102-103, 115-116, 128-132, 192-193, 210-219.
9. Andrew Patrick, *The Most Striking of Objects; the Totem Poles of Sitka National Historical Park* (Anchorage, AK: National Park Service, 2002), 93-121; Lawrence Rakestraw, *A History of the United States Forest Service in Alaska* (Anchorage: Alaska Historical Commission), 98-106, 149.
10. Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 31; Arthur Woodward, *A Preliminary Survey of Alaska's Archeology, Ethnology, and History* (San Francisco, CA: National Park Service, 1952).
11. Charles Snell, "The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, Theme XXI, Political and Military Affairs, 1865-1910, Special Study, Alaska History, 1741-1910" (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1961), 1-8.

12. National Park Service, "The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, Theme XVI, Indigenous Peoples and Cultures, Special Study, Alaska Aboriginal Culture" (Washington, DC, 1962), i-iii.
13. *National Register of Historic Places, 1966 to 1994* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1994), 17-21.
14. Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 35-41.
15. *Ibid.*, 42-45.
16. Norris, *Legacy of the Gold Rush*, 84-158.
17. Norris, *Alaska Subsistence*, 41, 59-60, 83-84.
18. *Ibid.*, 10-11.
19. Walter R. Borneman, *Alaska, Saga of a Bold Land* (New York, HarperCollins, 2003), 444-445, 462-470.
20. Norris, *Alaska Subsistence*, 46-47.
21. Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 89. Most of the funds were entrusted to Native corporations formed at both the regional and village levels. Alaska's Natives largely avoided the reservation system that characterized governmental relations with most lower 48 Native groups.
22. *Ibid.*, 90, 265-269.
23. *Ibid.*, 72, 92.
24. *Ibid.*, 51-53, 76-79.
25. National Park Service, *The National Parks: Index 2001-2003*, 19.
26. Norris, *Alaska Subsistence*, 48-50.
27. Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 1, 97-99.
28. *Ibid.*, 104-107.
29. *Ibid.*, 114-116; National Park Service, "Recommendations Regarding Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act 17(d)(2) Withdrawals," July 1972, *passim*.
30. Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 135, 143, 160; Alaska Planning Group, *Proposed Chukchi Imuruk National Reserve, Alaska, Final Environmental Statement* (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, 1974), 5, 247-248. These changes reflected the influence of Robert Belous, a National Park Service employee who had considerable experience in northwestern Alaska.
31. Norris, *Alaska Subsistence*, 55, 61.
32. Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 172.
33. *Ibid.*, 142-151, 190-196.
34. Norris, *Alaska Subsistence*, 71-73; 162-164, 242-254. As it turned out, Federal Government oversight loomed large in later years. Because of a series of court decisions and the state government's inability to meet guidelines issued subsequent to ANILCA, subsistence activities on many of Alaska's federal lands are now managed by federal agencies.
35. Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 203-224.

36. Norris, *Isolated Paradise*, 335-343; Norris, *Legacy of the Gold Rush*, 103.
37. Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 263-269.
38. National Park Service, *Index of the National Park System and Affiliated Areas as of January 1, 1975*, 23, 28, 30; Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 239-240.
39. Williss, "Do Things Right the First Time," 284-286; National Park Service, *Alaska Regional Office, Division of Cultural Resources, 1981-1986* (Anchorage, AK: National Park Service, 1987), 70-71.
40. National Park Service, *Alaska Regional Office*, 7, 24, 39.
41. National Park Service, *The National Parks: Index 2001-2003*, 98-99.
42. Norris, *Alaska Subsistence*, 41-42, 58-60, 83-84; "Annual Budget for NPS Alaska Park and Program Areas, 1919-Present" (chart), 2004, author's files.
43. Antonson and Hanable, *Administrative History of Sitka*, 101-02, 143-144.
44. Public Law 96-487 (December 2, 1980), Sec. 1318.
45. Ted Birkedal, "Cultural Resource Management in Alaska Region of the National Park Service," *International Scientific and Practical Conference, Beringia Days, 2003* (Moscow: Sovetsky Sport, 2004), 249.
46. Ted Birkedal to author, email correspondence, December 16, 2004.

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