

# Brooks Camp Historic District

## A Brief History



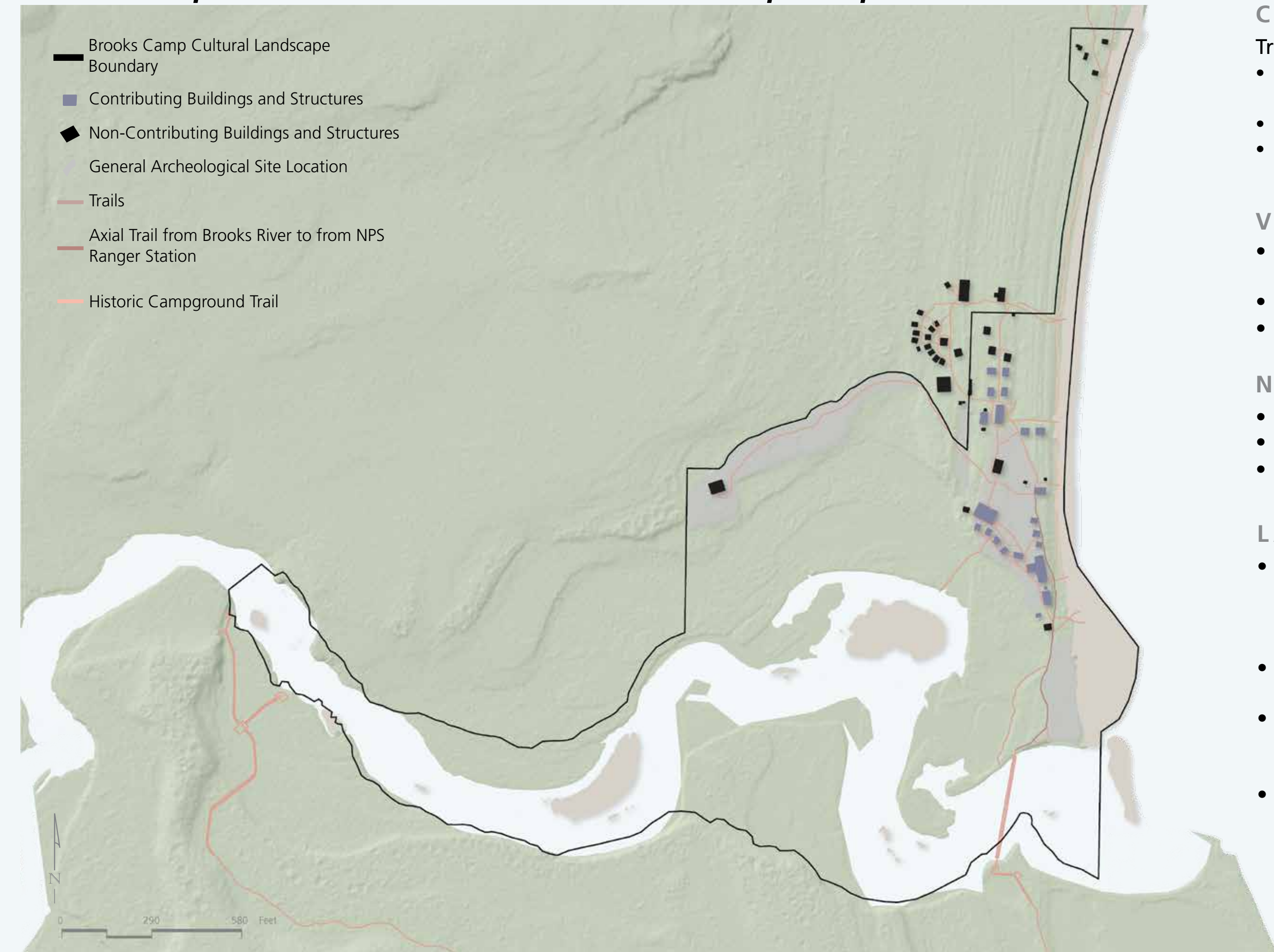
### Opening the Monument

At the urging of Ray Petersen and the Northern Consolidated Airlines (NCA), Katmai National Monument reopened to the public in 1950 for the first time in 30 years. The reopening of the monument coincided with the ecotourism movement geared predominantly to sports fishermen. In response to the need for regulation within the monument, the National Park Service stationed a single seasonal ranger at the modern campground before constructing a permanent ranger station.

### Infrastructure Development

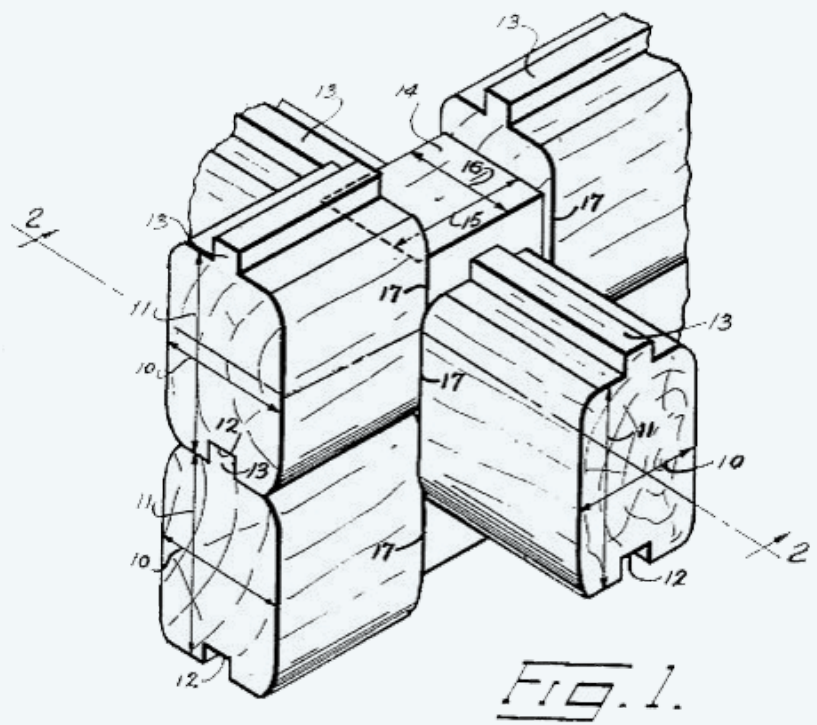
The 1950s and 1960s witnessed tremendous changes in visitation at Katmai. The influx of tourists led to the creation of new concessionaire cabins and a lodge, as well as the development of the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes Road and a cultural interpretation program. A broad range of visitors journeyed to Brooks Camp seeking a "Last Frontier" experience. The development ensured that Katmai activities would radiate from Brooks Camp as the hub of activity. Today most visitors recognize Brooks Camp as one of the premier bear viewing areas in the world and as the gateway to the volcanic world of the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes. These and other Brooks Camp-focused activities make the river a bustling center of tourism.

### Brooks Camp Historic District and Cultural Landscape Map



Vera Angasan holding a trout. Photo by Ranger Bill Nancarrow, 1950. NPS Archives.

July 12, 1955  
 A. JENSEN  
 2,712,678  
 TIMBER JOINT CONSTRUCTION IN RAFTS, PANELS, PARTITIONS, AND  
 PREFABRICATED TIMBERS THEREFOR  
 Filed March 22, 1950  
 2 Sheets-Sheet 1



### Significance and Condition

The site is locally significant under Criteria A for the National Register of Historic place for its association with broader patterns in history, such as entertainment and recreation.

**Period of Significance:** 1950 to 1968 CE

**Significance Level:** Local

**Condition:** Fair— Implementing the 1996 Development Concept Plan as written will adversely affect the Brooks Camp landscape by removing eligible structures. Cyclic maintenance backlog, nesting and gnawing rodents, non-historic facades and additions to listed structures, and impacts from concessioner and visitor use affects the integrity of the cultural landscape in the absence of proactive management.

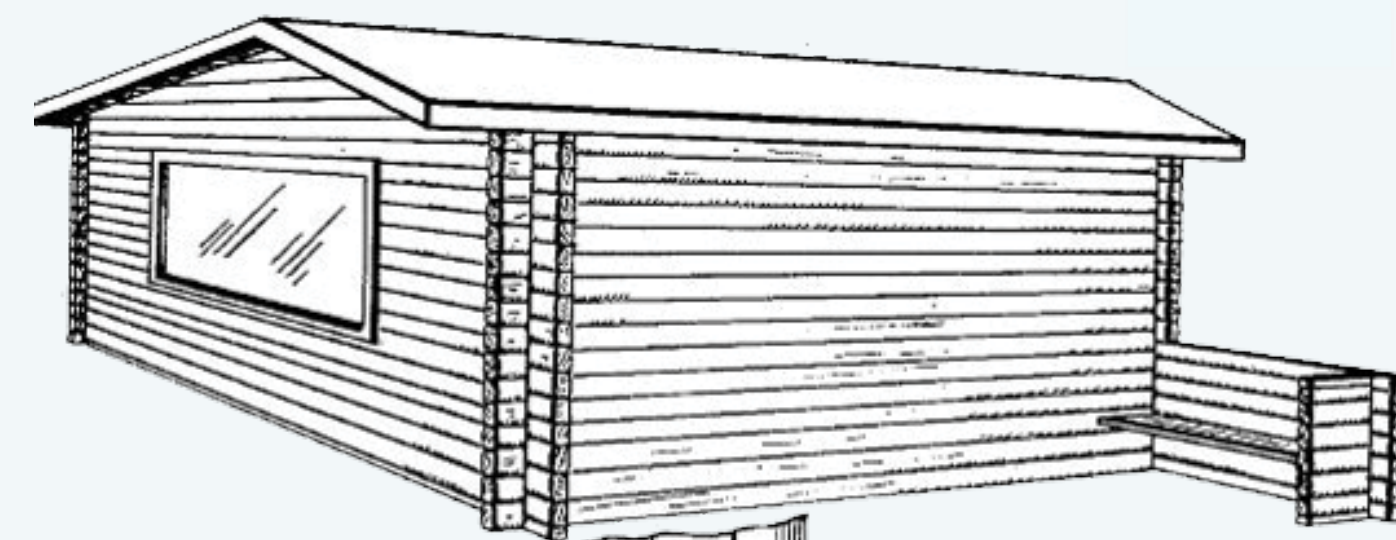


FIG. 4.



FIG. 5.  
 INVENTOR  
 Aage Jensen  
 BY *Geirid, Stephen, Huetting*  
 ATTORNEYS

### CIRCULATION

- Trails of particular importance include:
- Axial trail leading from the concessionaire Lodge to NPS Ranger Station
  - Trail to the NPS campground
  - Trail leading down to the river from the concessionaire office

### VIEWS

- View of the Brooks River from the core concessionaire area
- Views from the beach to Naknek Lake
- Views of Dumpling Mountain

### NATURAL SYSTEMS

- Lower Brooks River and the falls
- Naknek Lake
- Anadromous salmon migrations

### LAND USE

- The predominant land use from ancestral times to the present has been for the harvesting of natural resources, namely salmon and other fish species.
- Historic era site use includes indigenous fish camps and seasonal homes.
- Tourism evolved from sports fishing in the 1950s to include people seeking to experience the "Last Frontier."
- Bears began appearing in larger numbers around the camp in 1966 attracting visitors dedicated to bear viewing.



Men holding their catch in front of the Brooks Camp welcome sign, late 1950s or early 1960s. Katmailand Photo.



Bears on bridge over Brooks River, 1980s. NPS Photo.

### Character Defining Features

#### BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

##### Pan Abode Construction

A Pan Abode constructed cabin is a prefabricated, milled, western red cedar planking that is assembled in a manner similar to log construction.

- 3"x6", single tongue-and-groove cedar log construction
- Low-pitched metal roof with deep overhanging eaves
- Overlapping notches at the corners with bear bar corner
- Original wood-framed, multi-light picture windows
- Recessed entrance with rounded corners

##### NPS Log Construction

The Brooks River Ranger Station, Boat Storage House, and Elevated Ranger Cache represent the early period of tourism and park management in Katmai National Monument.

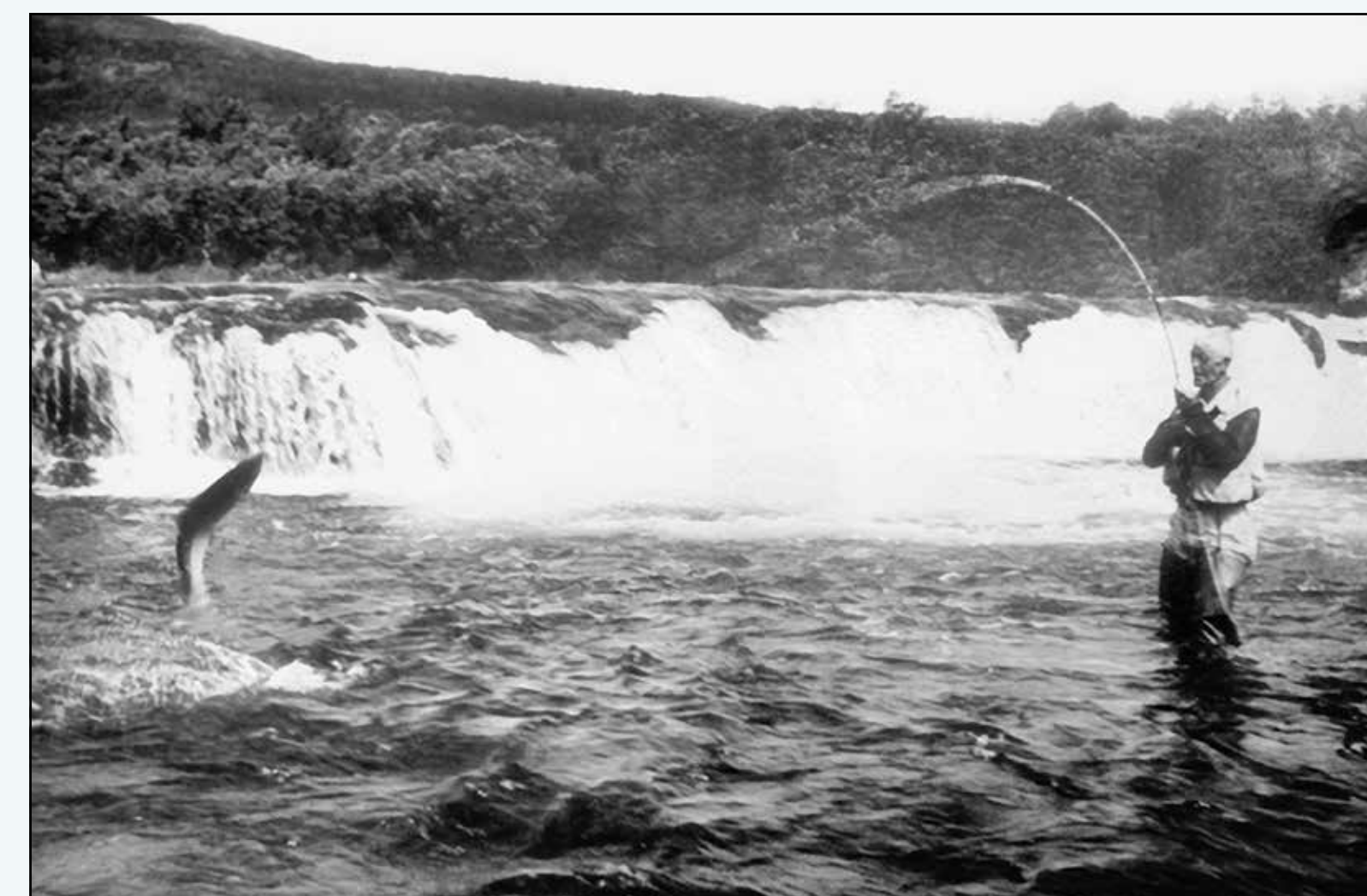
- Alternating large and small spruce logs construction
- Peeled saddle-notched log walls
- Quartered split log chinking
- Rock pier foundation
- Gable roof supported by purlins, exposed rafters
- Corrugated metal roofing on board stringers



NPS constructing Pan Abode housing in 1962. NPS Photo.



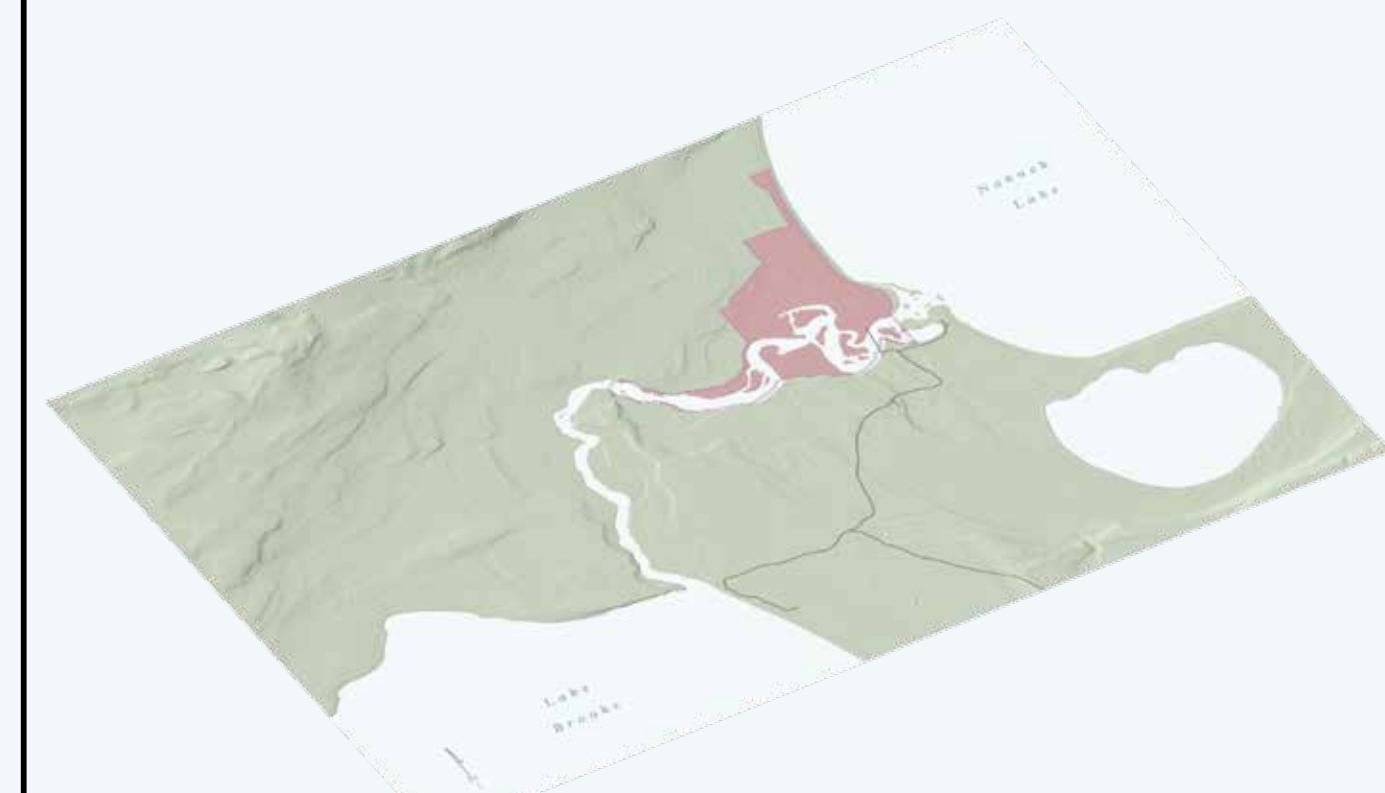
Boat House, May 1960. NPS Archives.



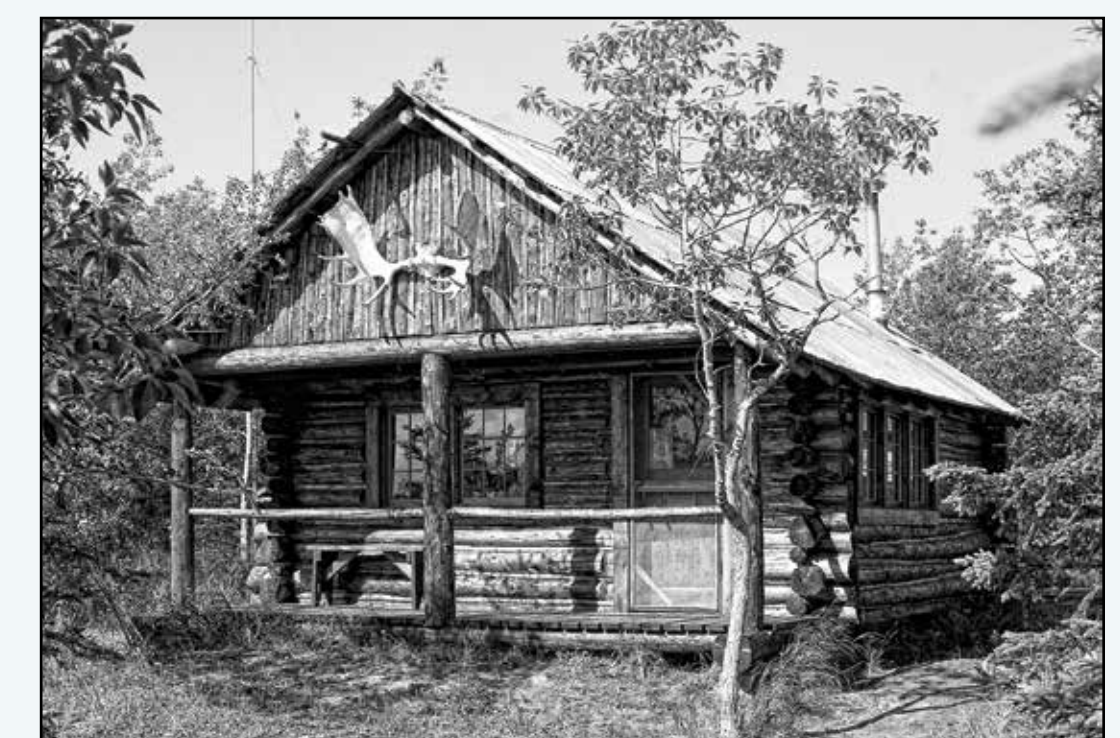
Enos Bradner, outdoor editor of the *Seattle Times*, fishing at Brooks Falls, 1951. Photo by Don Horter. Katmailand Photo.



Loading gear and food into the Elevated Ranger Cache in the campground, c. 1965. NPS Archives.



### BROOKS CAMP HISTORIC DISTRICT CULTURAL LANDSCAPE



Brooks River Ranger Station, late 1950s or early 1960s. NPS Photo.



Brooks Lodge, early 1960s. Katmailand Photo.