

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

One of America's Greatest Natural Wonders

MOUNT MCKINLEY AND DENALI NATIONAL PARK

Alaska, U.S.A.

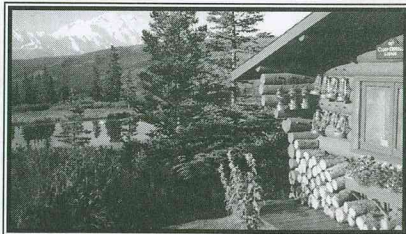
The tallest peak in North America at 20,320 feet, Mount McKinley and its regal reflection in the aptly named Wonder Lake are the primary attractions of Alaska's Denali National Park, but they're not the only draws. Visitors

return from the 6-million-acre wildlife reserve (larger than the state of Massachusetts) with excited tales of sighting grizzlies, wolves, caribou, moose, Dall sheep, and golden eagles cruising the skies. And then there are the views, sweeping vistas of subarctic tundra and taiga, glaciers and deeply gouged valleys, and a good number of massive mountain peaks that almost—almost—compete with McKinley, which was named after the twenty-fifth U.S. president but is always referred to among Alaskans by its Athabascan Indian name: Denali, "the high one."

Mount McKinley/Denali is often wreathed in clouds, but your best shot at a clear and close-up view is from a hillside in the very heart of the park, where you'll find the rustic Camp Denali, founded by two female ferry pilots (and one of their husbands) in 1951 when they homesteaded land not yet designated national parkland. If you stay at the camp's cluster of seventeen log cabins you'll be one of forty happy campers who not only enjoy the wonderful and knowledgeable staff and excellent cooking, but the chance to experience the park on naturalist-guided hikes, or during evening educational programs, and explore wildlife-sighting possibilities at a relaxed pace. (Otherwise, touring and tent-camping are widely restricted to protect the park's fragile ecology; there is only one 90-mile road, of

which only the first 15 miles are paved, and it is closed to private vehicles.) Summer brings long northern days, with sixteen to twenty hours of light in which to take in the scenery.

WHAT: site, hotel. **DENALI NATIONAL PARK:** 237 miles north of Anchorage. Tel 907-683-2294; www.nps.gov/dena. *Cost:* \$5. *When:* park road closed Oct–late May due to snow; May–Sept access is by official bus, \$17–\$33 depending on destination within park. **CAMP DENALI:** within the park, 89 miles from the entrance. Tel 907-683-2290, fax 907-683-1568; info@campdenali.com; www.campdenali.com. *Cost:* \$400 per person, double occupancy, all-inclusive, with round-trip transfer to/from gate. *When:* open early Jun–early Sept. **BEST TIMES:** Jun for wildflowers and birding; Jun 21 for the summer solstice, when almost-24-hour sunlight provides a unique wildlife-viewing experience; Aug–Sept for autumn foliage.



Mount McKinley and Nugget Pond as seen from Camp Denali

ON AND OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

1,000 PLACES TO SEE BEFORE YOU DIE

NEW YORK TIMES
#1 BESTSELLER



A TRAVELER'S LIFE LIST

by PATRICIA SCHULTZ

THE WORLD'S WONDERS: A BALLOON SAFARI OVER MASAI MARA
 ♦ THE TASMAN GLACIER ♦ SAILING THE GRENADINES ♦
 THE HIGHLAND GAMES AT BRAEMAR ♦ CANYON DE CHELLY
 ♦ GUBBIO ♦ OAXACA'S SATURDAY MARKET ♦ (continued on back cover)