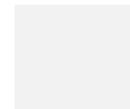


# **Fuels Reduction and Fire Mitigation in Denali National Park & Preserve**

Cultural Resource Report No. 2024-DENA-002

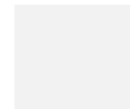
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## **ABSTRACT**

Denali National Park & Preserve (the Park) is proposing an undertaking to pile and burn mechanically thinned vegetation on site within designated areas of the Park's Frontcountry Fire Management Unit (FMU's).

There are 37 known cultural resources in the area of potential effect (APE), of which five have been determined eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NR), four have been determined not eligible for the NR, and the remaining sites have not been evaluated. For the purposes of this undertaking these remaining resources are being treated as eligible. No vegetation piles would be placed on, and no ground disturbance would occur on or near (within 20m), any resource eligible, listed, or potentially eligible for the NR. Any areas of the APE not surveyed within the last 10 years will be surveyed prior to any project work at those locations.

As designed, the project would not affect any historic properties. It is recommended that DENA approach National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106, consultation under 36 CFR Part 800.5(b) as "No Historic Properties Effected".

## 1 Description of Undertaking

Denali National Park & Preserve (the Park) is proposing an undertaking to pile and burn mechanically thinned vegetation on site within designated areas of the Park's Frontcountry Fire Management Unit (FMU's). The vegetation piles would be approximately 6ft. x 6ft. x 6ft. and depending on vegetation type and density could be spaced as close as 5ft apart. Currently vegetation is cut and then removed to a centralized location (gravel pits) for burning (an undertaking eligible for streamline review under section 7(a-e) (Hazardous Fuel and Fire Management) of the 2008 Nationwide Programmatic Agreement).

Mechanical thinning and pile burning is conducted to provide for firefighter and public safety in the event of a wildland fire. It also serves the purposes of restoring historical conditions at selected sites, and/or for reducing hazard fuel loads in the vicinity of resources requiring protection. Managing the amount of fuel at any given site is one of the primary tasks of the National Park Services (NPS's) fire management program and is essential to protecting Park resources such as historic structures, buildings, and other infrastructure.

Fire Management Unit (FMU)	Area Description	Park Acres	Proposed Treatment Acres
<b>Frontcountry FMU</b>	Park entrance area (as accessed from Parks Highway MP 237) including concessionaire-operated buildings, visitor center, park headquarters, and housing; Mile 0 – Mile 3.5 of the Park Road	4,740	1,592
Toklat FMU	Toklat Road camp administrative site and adjacent structures	1,145	242
Kantishna FMU	Lands around commercial services, private inholdings, and NPS-managed properties in the Kantishna area	8,103	1,059
Roadside FMU	Non-wilderness areas along the Denali Park Road including non-wilderness buffer extensions (i.e., campgrounds, Eielson Visitor Center)	9,257	267
Natural Area FMU	All NPS administered lands within the Park boundary (excluding areas identified in the FMUs above). Inclusive of critical and sensitive sites/structures throughout the Park/Preserve such as historic cabins.	6,003,478	15*

## 2 Legal Location for the Undertaking and Local Environment

The project area is located within the Healy C-4 USGS Quadrangle Map. The overall project area is in the frontcountry of the Park; north and south of the Denali Park Road from mile post (MP) 0.3 MP 3.5. The project area is located within F014S007W03-08 and F013S007W33-34 of the Fairbanks Meridian.

The project area is within a portion of the state characterized as the northern foothills of the Alaska Range. This area as flat-topped east-trending ridges 610-1,370 m (2,000-4,500 ft) in altitude, 4.8-11.2 km (three to seven mi) wide, and 8-32 km (5-20 miles) long, separated by rolling lowlands, 215-460 m (700-1500 feet) in altitude and 3.2-1.6 km- (two to ten mi) wide. The area is comprised of upland glacial topography (kettle and kame) (Wahrhaftig 1965). Vegetation is mixed spruce with ericaceous shrub undergrowth.

## 3 Area of Potential Effect

The Area of Potential Effect (APE) are selected areas with in the Frontcountry FMU where on site pile burning could take place and which totals 529.98 acres.

## 4 Results of Inventory and Records Check

DENA cultural resource records, previous cultural resource surveys reports from the area, GIS data, and Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRs) information were reviewed. There have been many surveys within the APE beginning in the 1980s with the most recent survey occurring in 2023 (Table 1). Within the past two years approximately 300 acres of the 528.98 acres have been surveyed.

Table 1- Overview of Previous Surveys in APE

Report Name	Year	Reference	Method
Denali National Park Survey	1981	Davis	Survey
Fuels Management Survey FY22	2022	Caselman, Hruban, Gilbert	Survey
Fuels Treatment Survey FY23	2023	Pope, Gilbert, Scott, Jarquin, and Johnson	Survey

#### 4.1 AHRS Sites located within the Project Area

There are 37 AHRS sites located within the APE, (summarized below). Most are historic sites which have not been evaluated for the National Register of Historic Places (NR). For the purposes of this proposed project, these sites are being treated as eligible for the NR.

AHRS Number	Name	Eligibility for the National Register
HEA-0312	Building 121, Mess Hall C-Camp	Determined Eligible, 2003
HEA-0615	McKinley Park Hotel Power House	Determined Eligible, 2016
HEA-0147	Mount McKinley National Park HD & CL	Listed, 1986, update in 2016
HEA-0469	Building 15	Listed in 2017
HEA-0517/429	Mount McKinley National Park Road Historic District and Cultural Landscape	Listed, 2020
HEA-0277	CCC Camp	Not Eligible
HEA-0428	6-Unit Employee Garage	Not Eligible, 1999
HEA-0468	Utilidor	Not Eligible, 2012
HEA-0465	Rock Creek Bridge	Not Eligible, 2012
HEA-0059	Morina Roadhouse/ Homestead Site	Treated as Eligible
HEA-0074	Riley Creek R.R. Bridge	Treated as Eligible
HEA-0132	Thompson Stubbs Complex	Treated as Eligible
HEA-0134	Riley Creek Camp	Treated as Eligible
HEA-0208	Workers Cabins	Treated as Eligible
HEA-0281	Northwest (*Meadows*) Dump	Treated as Eligible
HEA-0322		Treated as Eligible
HEA-0344		Treated as Eligible
HEA-0345		Treated as Eligible
HEA-0512	Lower Hotel Creek Site	Treated as Eligible
HEA-0617	Kennel Trail	Treated as Eligible
HEA-0618	Hydrant Berm	Treated as Eligible
HEA-0665	Hotel Creek Site	Treated as Eligible
HEA-0669		Treated as Eligible
HEA-0699		Treated as Eligible
HEA-0748		Treated as Eligible
HEA-0749		Treated as Eligible
HEA-0750		Treated as Eligible
HEA-0751		Treated as Eligible
HEA-0752		Treated as Eligible
HEA-0753		Treated as Eligible
HEA-0755		Treated as Eligible
HEA-0756		Treated as Eligible
HEA-0758		Treated as Eligible
HEA-0759		Treated as Eligible
HEA-0760		Treated as Eligible
HEA-0761		Treated as Eligible

## 5 Recommendations

For the purposes of assessing the overall effect of this proposed undertaking on historic properties, all unevaluated cultural resources located within the APE are being treated as eligible for the NR. No vegetation piles will be constructed on or near (within 20m) any eligible, or potentially eligible historic property, and no ground disturbance or pile burning will occur on or near (within 20m) those historic properties eligible or potentially eligible for the NR.

Approximately 230 acres of the APE has not been surveyed in the past 10 years, prior to project work in these areas, they will be surveyed, and any cultural resources located will be treated as eligible for the NR and no piles will be constructed or burned at or near (within 20m) of their location.

If cultural resources or items protected by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act are discovered during project implementation, all project-related activities in the vicinity of the discovery will be stopped and the park archaeologist will be notified immediately. DENA in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer and other consulting parties would determine a course of action per 36 CFR Part 800.13.

Based on our review, as designed, the project will not affect any historic properties as no piles or ground disturbance would occur where there are historic properties or cultural resources potentially eligible for the NR. It is recommended that DENA approach National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106, consultation under 36 CFR Part 800.5(b) as “No Historic Properties Effectuated”.

## 6 Maps & Figures

2024-DENA-003  
Onsite Vegetation Pile Burning in  
Denali National Park & Preserve



Denali National Park and Preserve  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

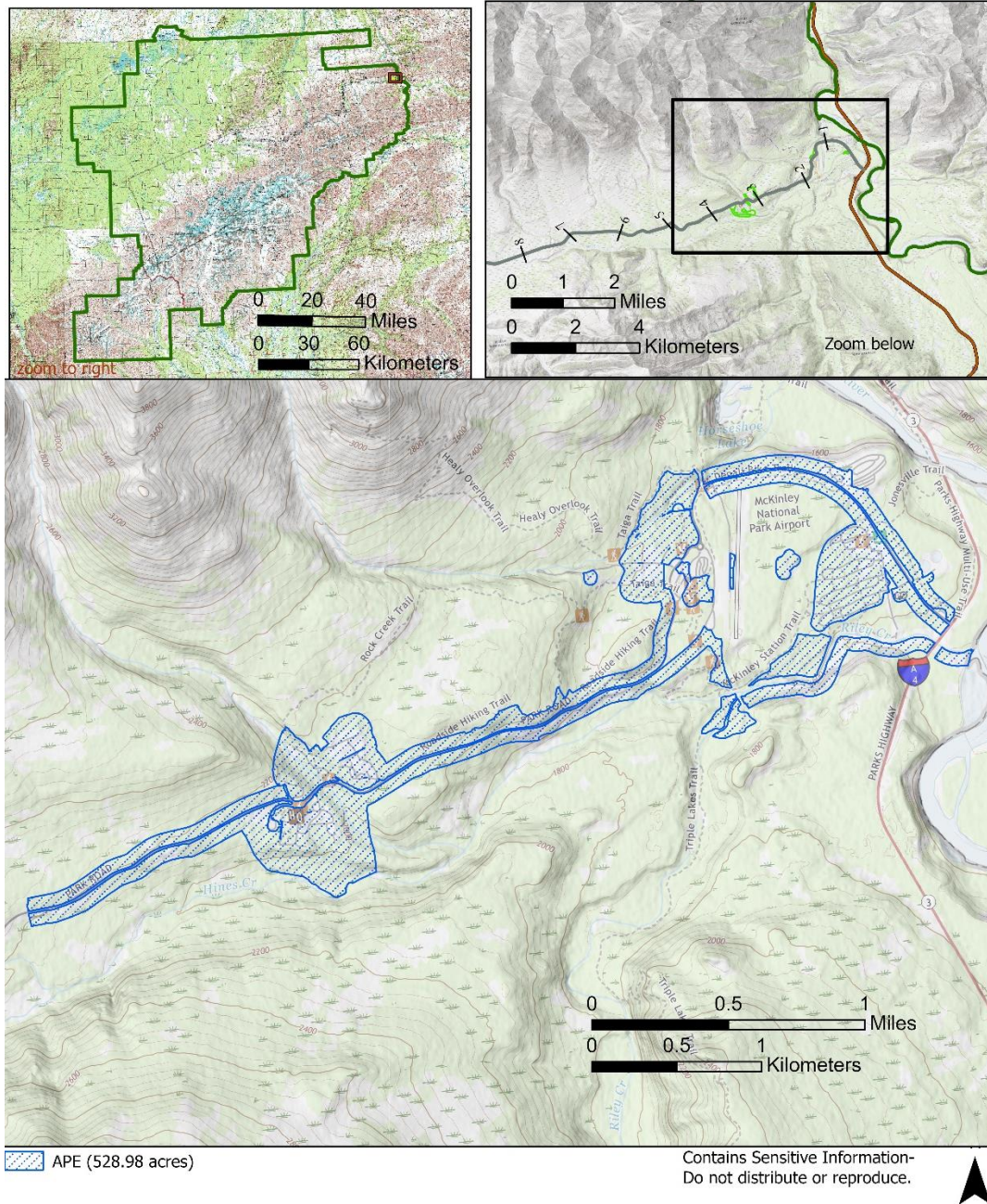


Figure 1- Overview of APE (528.98 acres).



## 7 References

Wahrhaftig, C.  
1965 Physiographic divisions of Alaska. *U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper*  
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Prepared by: Phoebe Gilbert, Elizabeth Gonzalez Negrete.