



# 2010 Brooks River Area Projects

## *Equipment Transport Activities on Naknek Lake*

Since access to Brooks Camp is limited to air and water transportation, bringing equipment, materials, and labor into and out of this area is extremely challenging. Beginning in July and continuing through September, visitors may observe large boats and barges on Naknek Lake near the mouth of Brooks River loading and unloading equipment, materials, and supplies for a number of large development projects. Park staff will make every effort to reduce this impact on visitor experience by limiting the time equipment and materials are positioned between the mouth of the river on Naknek Lake and the lower bear viewing platform. Visitors may also experience increased vehicle traffic on the road between the Brooks Falls Trail and the lower bear viewing platform.

## *Brooks River Visitor Access Improvements*

The NPS is evaluating a replacement of the current floating bridge and associated trails to improve visitor access across the Brooks River. The bridge replacement would support the same pedestrian and small vehicle traffic that currently utilizes the existing floating bridge. The NPS is also considering the relocation of the existing NPS barge landing and access road away from the river. The relocated barge landing and access road would also serve as the primary boat arrival area for park visitors. These access improvements are being evaluated under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) through preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).



Throughout the summer, a number of studies will be implemented to gather additional data for EIS development. One of these studies will involve the use of a drilling rig to bore a hole on the south side of the Brooks River near the lower bear viewing platform. The purpose of the drilling is to determine the depth of suitable bedrock needed to support one of the proposed bridge alternatives. The operation is scheduled in August and is expected to be completed in one day. Additional drilling will occur in the adjacent wetlands during the winter months when the wetlands are frozen. Results of this survey will be used for the proposed boardwalk alternatives.

## *Brooks Camp Picnic Area Improvements*

The NPS is proposing to improve the Brooks Camp picnic area by installing a picnic shelter, historic log cache, interpretive sign, and a restroom and storage cache building adjacent to the Brooks Camp visitor center. The proposed improvements would accommodate visitors before attending the required bear orientation session at the visitor center by providing a centrally-located restroom facility and a suitable place to store, prepare, and consume food. An environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed project is available for public review between mid-June and mid-July. If approved, it is anticipated that the project would occur in August.

## *Brooks Camp Visitor Center Maintenance*

In August, the NPS will be replacing the roof and flooring of the Brooks Camp visitor center. During this time, bear orientation sessions will be relocated to the nearby auditorium building.

## *Brooks Falls Web Camera Enhancement*

Through a partnership with the Pratt Museum in Homer, a webcam was installed at Brooks Falls in 2009. Tremendously successful, the webcam relayed live video footage of bears feeding on salmon to 3000 “virtual” visitors in Homer where staff interpreted their actions in real time. To enhance the camera’s capability, a directional microphone will be added to the system this summer allowing “virtual” visitors to hear bears as they feed on salmon and interact with each other.

## *Valley Road Administrative Area (VRAA) Maintenance Shop and Contractor Camp Water Well*

The NPS will begin construction on the new VRAA maintenance shop and installation of the shop’s underground water and septic system utilities this summer. To accommodate contractors working on projects over the next several years, a water well, pump, and underground water and electrical utility lines will be installed adjacent to the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes (VTTS) Road near the temporary contractor camp. This camp is located less than a mile from the VRAA.

## *VTTS Roadside Vegetation Brushing*

This summer, the NPS will continue roadside vegetation brushing on the single-lane VTTS Road. The brushing is needed to ensure a safe driving view for NPS and concession staff. Visitors may notice recently cut vegetation and stumps while traveling on the bus to the VTTS.



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### Greetings from Superintendent Ralph Moore

Exciting things are happening this summer in and around Brooks Camp. Anyone who visits Katmai National Park always has a memorable experience, and we constantly look for ways to enhance that experience. New and relocated facilities will ultimately reduce the development footprint both around Lake Brooks and within Brooks Camp. In doing so, existing impacts to both cultural and natural resources will be lessened.

To the greatest extent possible, we try to time construction periods to have the least impact on the visitor season. The interplay of concentrated bear activity, lake water levels, frozen ground conditions, the remoteness of Brooks Camp, and a short period of time in which to do work there all make for complex and challenging project logistics. While most visitors may not observe many of these projects being implemented, we feel it is important to inform the public on how the NPS manages the various stages of these projects in 2010. We appreciate your understanding and patience during this time and hope that you will view these construction activities as we do—a short-term necessity in order to produce long-term benefits in visitor enjoyment for years to come.

