



Alternatives Newsletter

Summer 2010

Dear Friends of Katmai,

As many of you know, in the spring of 2009 we began work on a plan to improve visitor access and resource protection at Brooks Camp. The primary project involves replacing the existing floating bridge and trails with an elevated bridge and boardwalks. We believe this action will reduce the risk of bear/human conflicts and thus improve visitor and employee safety, protect other key resources in the area (such as the Brooks River Archeological District National Historic Landmark), and provide dependable access across the river.

This effort is also intended to facilitate the phased relocation of Brooks Camp to the south side of the Brooks River, as called for in the 1996 *Brooks River Area Development Concept Plan*, and to amend several of the decisions on access in the 1996 plan. In addition, we are considering relocating the existing barge landing site and access road

away from the Brooks River, and making use of the new bridge to connect utility lines on both sides of the river.



In writing this plan, we are preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS). After seeking input from federal and state agencies, local governments,

recreational users, and the public on issues and concerns regarding the project, we began developing a range of alternatives for the

bridge, boardwalks, and barge landing site. This newsletter describes the alternatives that will be considered and evaluated in the EIS.

We are making good progress in the development of the Brooks River Visitor Access EIS. Our schedule calls for the EIS to be distributed to the public in early 2011. At that time we will be seeking your views on the draft document.

In the interim, if you have any questions about this project please feel free to e-mail us through the Katmai National Park website at <http://www.nps.gov/katm/contacts.htm> or write us at #1 King Salmon Mall, P.O. Box 7, King Salmon, AK 99613. You can also contact Daniel Noon at 907-246-2101.

Thank you for your interest in Brooks Camp, and Katmai National Park and Preserve.

Sincerely,

Ralph Moore

Superintendent,

Katmai National Park & Preserve

DRAFT ALTERNATIVES

The National Park Service (NPS) has developed five draft alternatives, including a no-action alternative and four “action” alternatives, which will be analyzed in an EIS.

Under all alternatives, existing floatplane access to the Brooks camp area, either to the shore of Naknek Lake or Lake Brooks, would continue. And unlike the 1996 plan, there would be no new floatplane dock, breakwater, road to the Beaver Pond Terrace, or shuttle system.

The following pages summarize the alternatives. The alternatives differ primarily in the design and location of the Brooks River bridge, the boardwalks that lead up to the bridge, and the location of the barge landing site. Each of the descriptions of the action alternatives includes

a map offering a conceptual depiction of the locations and facilities being proposed. All locations and measurements included in the newsletter are approximations. Readers



should keep in mind there may be some minor changes in these alternatives before they are published in the EIS.

The four action alternatives share several similar elements.

Both pedestrians and small service vehicles would use the new bridge. The four alternatives would all add viewing areas on the north and south sides of the Brooks River, with each area

designed to accommodate 20 to 25 people. The existing viewing platform on the south side of the river, with modifications, may remain in some alternatives. Pedestrian access to and from the river would be provided on

the south shore via a pedestrian or small service vehicle ramp. Emergency egress to and from the boardwalk would be available on the north shore of the river via a ladder.

To address safety concerns, the viewing areas would also function as pull-outs for pedestrians when small service vehicles are using the bridge. The existing trail that crosses through the Corner would be removed and the landscape restored in all four alternatives. Also under all of the action alternatives, both power and septic tank pump-out lines would be integrated with the bridge and boardwalks, and would use the bridge to cross the Brooks River.

(The power line connections are not shown in the alternative maps.)

ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)



This alternative represents a continuation of the existing situation and provides a baseline for comparing and evaluating the effects of the action alternatives. Under alternative 1 there would be no changes in visitor access, the bridge, existing roads, utility connections, or the barge landing site:

- Visitors, park and concession staff, and administrative small service vehicles would continue to access the north side of the Brooks River via a trail through an area known as the Corner. On the south side of the river, both people and small service vehicles would use the existing road system.
- The existing floating bridge would continue to be maintained on a seasonal basis, with the bridge being installed each spring and removed each fall. Both pedestrians and small service vehicles would continue to use the bridge.
- The existing viewing platform on the south side of the river would continue to be available for the use of visitors.
- Utility connections between the north side of the Brooks River and the Valley Road Administrative Area on the south side of the river would be considered at a later date as a separate action.
- The existing barge landing site on the south side of the mouth of the Brooks River, and the connecting administrative road, would continue to be maintained.



ALTERNATIVE 1 (NO ACTION)

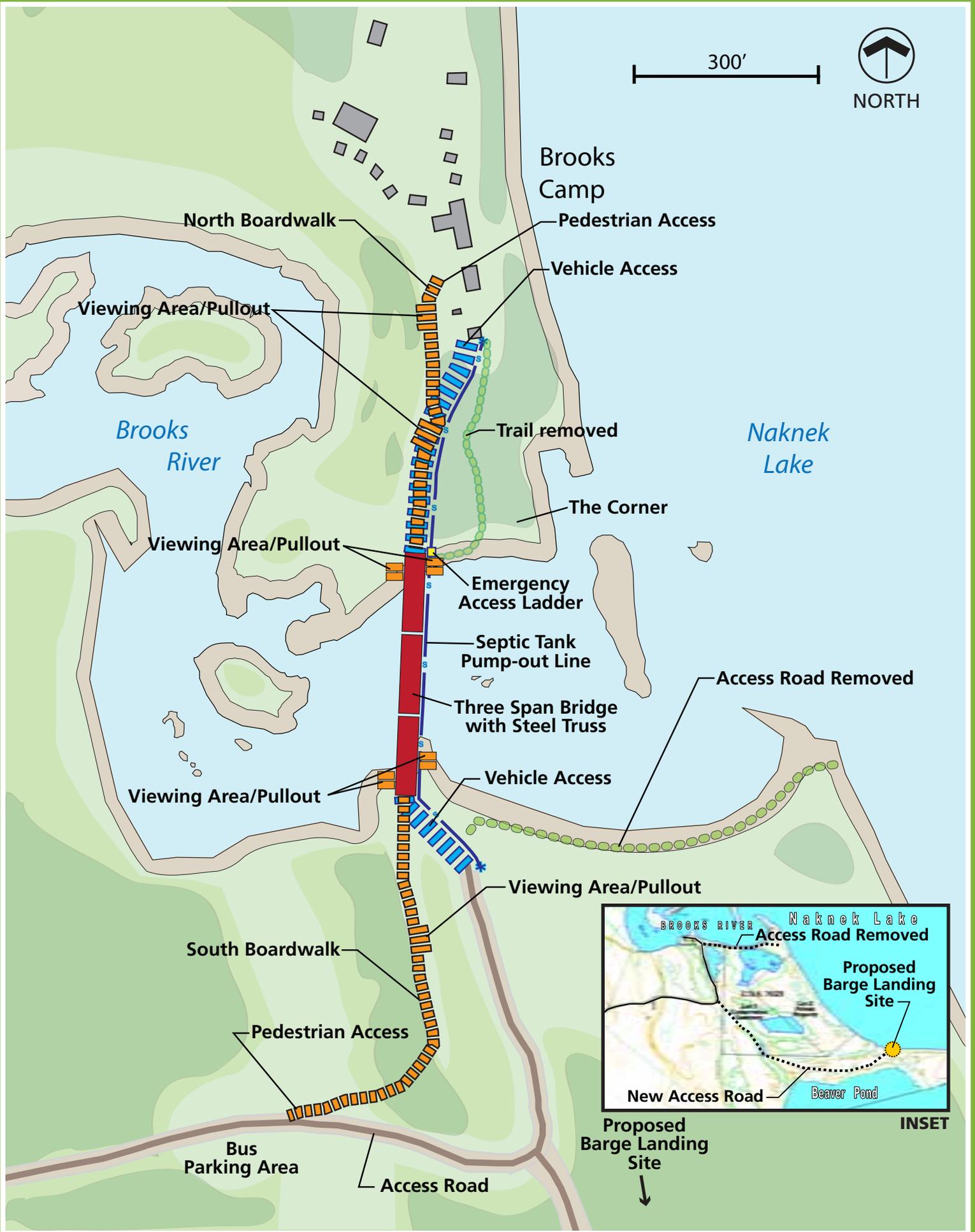
ALTERNATIVE 2



Alternative 2 would change the infrastructure in the Brooks Camp area through the construction of an extensive boardwalk system and a new bridge, and the relocation of the barge landing site. Unlike the other alternatives, small service vehicles would be separated from pedestrians on part of the boardwalks on both the north and south sides of the bridge.

- **Boardwalk:** A 10-foot-high, 6- to 8-foot-wide boardwalk would be built on both sides of the river, connecting with the bridge. The boardwalk on the north side of the river would run from the center of Brooks Camp, near the lodge, to the river and would be approximately 535 feet long. The boardwalk on the south side of the river would be about 715 feet long; it would follow the edge of a wetland then cut east along an old road corridor before ending 100 feet east of the existing bus parking area. Spur boardwalks on each side of the river would provide vehicle access onto the pedestrian boardwalk and bridge. The north spur vehicle boardwalk would start from the fish freezing station before merging with the pedestrian boardwalk, while the south spur vehicle boardwalk would run from the bridge to the existing access road.
- **Bridge:** A new three-span bridge, some 360 feet long, would cross the river at the same location as the present floating bridge. The bridge would consist of an 8-foot-wide bridge deck with a steel truss on each side. The spans would be approximately 120 feet long, and would require two sets of supports (piles) in the river. The bottom of the new bridge would be approximately 6 feet above the river.
- **Barge Landing Site:** The barge landing site would be moved to a new location approximately 2,000 feet south of the existing site. The landing site would include a hardened beach landing ramp and parking space for skiffs on trailers in the summer and for the barge over the winter. A new administrative road, about 1,500 feet long, would be built to the new barge landing site, while the existing landing site and approximately 700 feet of the access road would be removed and the area revegetated.





ALTERNATIVE 2

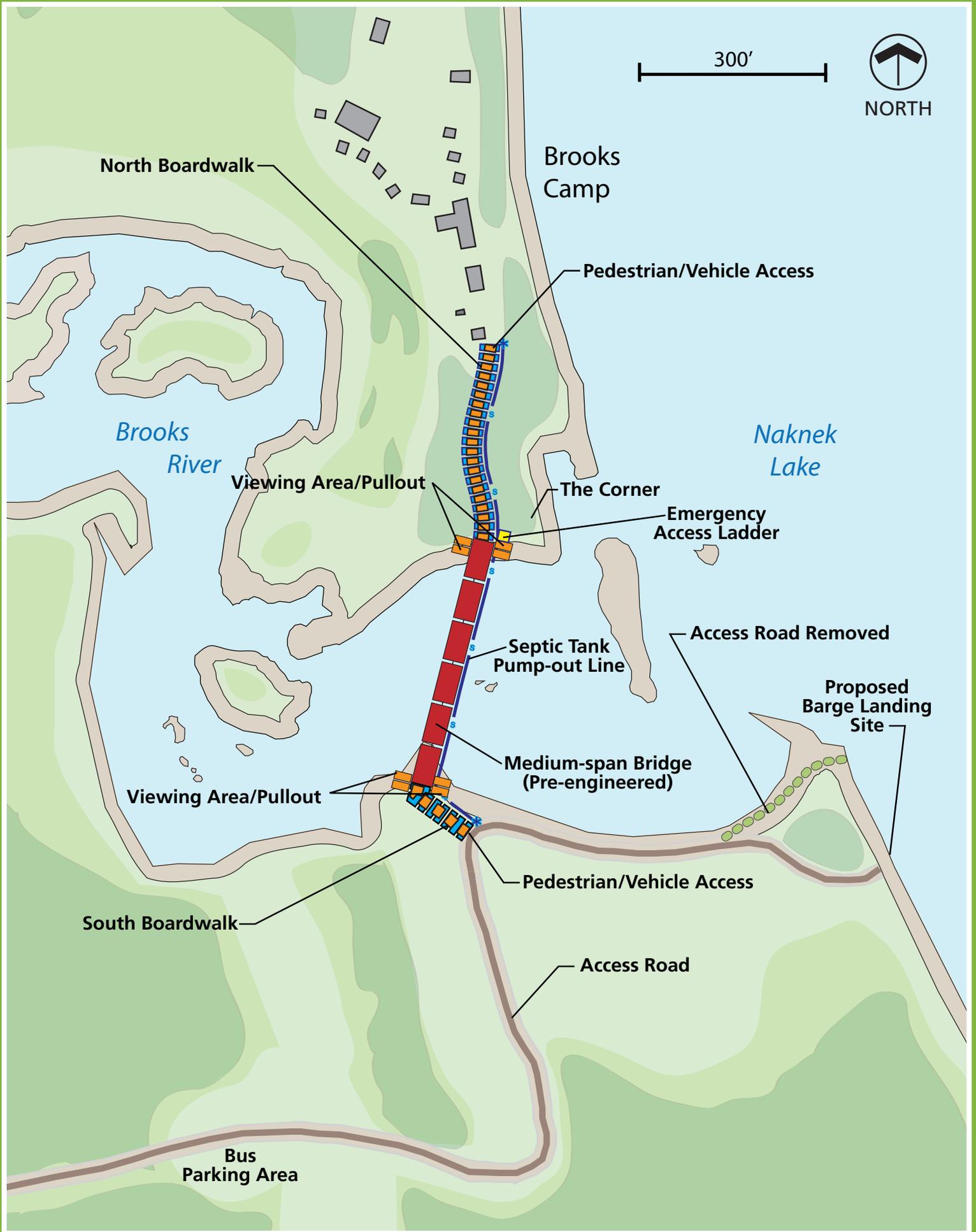
ALTERNATIVE 3



Like all of the action alternatives, alternative 3 would change access in the Brooks Camp area through the construction of a bridge and boardwalks. Alternative 3 calls for the least new construction in the Brooks Camp area. This alternative has the shortest boardwalks and a barge landing option that requires the fewest landscape modifications. Alternative 3 is the only one that has the north boardwalk cross through the Corner.

- **Boardwalk:** A 10-foot-high, 8-foot-wide boardwalk would be built on both sides of the river, connecting with the bridge. Both people and small service vehicles would use the same boardwalk for the entire length. The boardwalk on the north side of the river would begin at the fish freezing station and extend for approximately 330 feet along the existing trail alignment. The boardwalk on the south side of the river would be about 200 feet long and would connect with the existing administrative road.
- **Bridge:** In this alternative a pre-engineered medium-span bridge, about 415 feet long, would cross the river a little to the east of the existing floating bridge location. The spans would be approximately 50 feet long, and would require six sets of supports (piles) in the river. The new bridge would be approximately 10 feet above the river.
- **Barge Landing Site:** The barge landing site would be shifted about 200 feet south from its present location. The new landing site would include a hardened beach landing ramp and parking space for skiffs on trailers in the summer and for the barge over the winter. The barge landing site would be connected to the existing administrative road, which would require the construction of an estimated 100-foot segment of new road at the east end. The existing landing site and approximately 200 feet of the access road would be removed and the area revegetated.





ALTERNATIVE 3

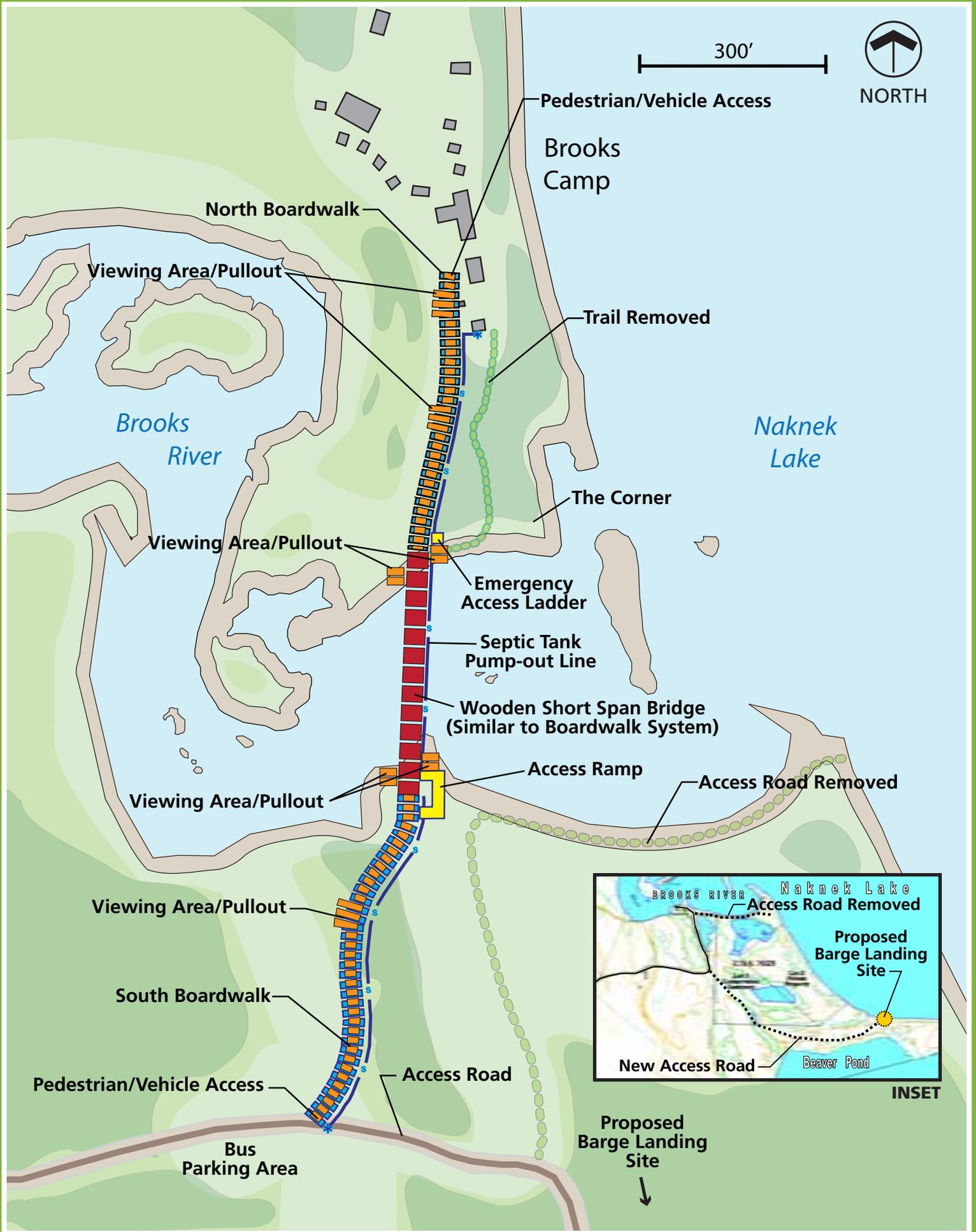
ALTERNATIVE 4



Under Alternative 4, both pedestrians and small service vehicles would use the boardwalk and bridge, with access points on both the north and the south sides of the Brooks River. Unlike the previous alternatives, in this alternative the bridge and boardwalk would look like one continuous structure, with little apparent difference between the boardwalks and the bridge. This alternative also includes the removal of the entire existing barge landing access road that is approximately 1,300 feet long.

- **Boardwalk:** Like the other action alternatives, a 10-foot-high, 8-foot-wide boardwalk would be built on both sides of the river, connecting with the bridge. Both people and small service vehicles would use the same boardwalks. In alternative 4, the boardwalk would start adjacent to the lodge and follow the edge of some wetlands for approximately 560 feet to the bridge. On the south side of the river, the boardwalk would run for about 630 feet, crossing a wetland south of the bridge, cutting west through a wooded area, and then following the edge of another wetland before terminating 100 feet from the existing bus parking area. A fully accessible ramp also would be provided on the south end of the bridge to provide access from the ground to the bridge.
- **Bridge:** The bridge in alternative 4 would follow the existing floating bridge alignment. It would be a wooden short-span bridge, approximately 350 feet long. There would be up to 14 sets of supports (piles) in the river bed, with a minimum distance of 24 feet between the piles. The bridge would be approximately 10 feet above the river.
- **Barge Landing Site:** The barge landing site would be relocated approximately 2,000 feet south of the existing site on the south side of Naknek Lake — the same site as alternative 2. The landing site would include a hardened beach landing ramp and parking space for skiffs on trailers in the summer and for the barge over the winter. A new administrative road, about 1,500 feet long, would be built to the new barge landing site, while the existing landing site and approximately 700 feet of the access road would be removed and the area revegetated.





ALTERNATIVE 4

ALTERNATIVE 5



Alternative 5 is almost identical to alternative 4 with the primary exception of the south boardwalk. Both pedestrians and small service vehicles would use a boardwalk and bridge, with access points on both the north and the south sides of the Brooks River. As in the previous alternative, the bridge and boardwalk would look like one continuous structure.

- **Boardwalk:** A 10-foot-high, 8-foot-wide boardwalk would be built on both sides of the river, connecting with the bridge. Both people and vehicles would use the same boardwalks. The boardwalk would start adjacent to the lodge and follow the edge of some wetlands for approximately 560 feet to the bridge. On the south side of the river, the boardwalk would run about 210 feet, joining the existing access road. A fully accessible ramp also would be provided on the south end of the bridge to provide emergency access from the bridge to the ground and vice versa.
- **Bridge:** The bridge in this alternative is identical to the one in alternative 4. The approximately 350-foot-long wooden short-span bridge would follow the existing floating bridge alignment. There would be up to 14 sets of supports (piles) in the river bed, with a minimum distance of 24 feet between the piles. The bridge would be a minimum of 10 feet above the river.
- **Barge Landing Site:** In alternative 5, the barge landing site would be the same as in alternatives 2 and 4. The barge landing site would be relocated approximately 2,000 feet south of the existing site on the south side of Naknek Lake. The landing site would include a hardened beach landing ramp and parking space for skiffs on trailers in the summer and for the barge over the winter. A new administrative road, about 1,500 feet long, would be built to the new barge landing site, while the existing landing site and approximately 700 feet of the access road would be removed and the area revegetated.





ALTERNATIVE 5

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT DISMISSED

The planning team considered other alternatives during the planning process. Based on conceptual design information and cost estimates, the planning team eliminated them from further analysis as part of the EIS.

One of these dismissed alternatives was to build a suspension bridge over the Brooks River. The conceptual design of this bridge was identified in the September 2009 newsletter #2. This alternative proposed the construction of a single-span suspension bridge, about 345 feet long, crossing the Brooks River. This bridge would have needed a superstructure at least 40 feet above the bridge deck to support the single span and a cable anchoring system extending up to 100 feet beyond each riverbank.

This alternative was dismissed primarily because of its high construction cost and significant visual impact.

SCHEDULE

The following is our anticipated schedule for completing the Brooks River Access Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):

MILESTONE	DATE
Publish draft EIS and distribute to public	Winter 2010-2011
Revise draft document and prepare final EIS	Summer 2011
Publish final EIS and distribute to public	Winter 2011-2012
Prepare record of decision	Late Winter 2012