

# STATE OF ALASKA

## **ANILCA IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM Office of Project Management and Permitting**

**SEAN PARNELL, Governor**

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January 31, 2011

Paul Anderson, Superintendent  
Denali National Park and Preserve  
P.O. Box 9  
Denali Park, AK 99755

Dear Mr. Anderson:

The State of Alaska reviewed the October 29, 2010 McKinley/Foraker Cost Recovery Special Mountaineering Use Fee News Release. The following comments represent the consolidated views of the State's resource agencies.

The State appreciates the efforts of Service staff and volunteers to operate and manage the climbing camps and assist with search and rescue on Mt. McKinley and Foraker. As North America's tallest peak, McKinley attracts a wide range of climbers. We understand the Service incurs considerable expense to maintain a safe environment for the more than one-thousand climbers attempting the summit annually, and that fees are necessary to maintain an appropriate health and safety infrastructure. Relative to other high-altitude peaks, the \$250 registration fee seems modest. However, the proposed \$500 fee, which may not be excessive for some, may negatively impact individual climbers and guiding operations.

As an alternative to a one-time fee hike, we recommend considering a stepped approach to increasing fees. This incremental approach would allow guiding operations to slowly increase prices for their services, and at the same time, allow the Service to evaluate the impact of fee increases on mountain use over an extended time period. We also recommend exploring corporate partnership programs or creating a foundation specifically for donations and bequests that benefit the program. Drastic funding cuts to state parks nationwide have forced state agencies to be more creative and explore new funding vehicles to accommodate public use while protecting park resources. We suggest the Service investigate and incorporate similar strategies to solve the funding shortfalls for the mountaineering program.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. Please contact me at (907) 269-7529 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Susan Magee  
ANILCA Project Coordinator

cc: Sally Gibert, ANILCA Program Coordinator