



Foundation Document Overview

Katmai National Park and Preserve

Alaska



Contact Information

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Purpose



The purpose of KATMAI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE is to protect, study, and interpret active volcanism surrounding the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, extensive coastal resources, habitats supporting a high concentration of salmon and brown bears, and an ongoing story of humans integrated with a dynamic subarctic ecosystem.



Significance and Fundamental Resources and Values

Significance statements express why Katmai National Park and Preserve resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes: Katmai National Park and Preserve protects the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, the site of the 1912 eruption of Novarupta Volcano, the world's largest eruption during the 20th century.

- Historic Scientific Expeditions
- Research and Monitoring
- Visitation (Volcano Tourism)
- Scenery
- Biology
- Cultural

Brown Bears: Katmai National Park and Preserve is home to the world's largest protected population of brown bears, offering visitors an unprecedented opportunity to study and view bears in their native habitat.

- Salmon
- Coastal Salt Marshes
- Bear Denning Habitat
- Research and Monitoring
- Interpretation/Education
- Management of Bear-Human Interactions
- Bear Hunting in the Preserve

Fundamental Resources and Values

Sockeye Salmon Runs: Katmai National Park and Preserve protects the Naknek Lake drainage, a significant spawning and rearing ground for Bristol Bay sockeye salmon, sustaining one of the largest salmon runs in the world.

- Spawning Habitat
- Ecology
- Social Fabric
- Research

Watersheds: Katmai National Park and Preserve contains vast multi-lake watersheds with hundreds of miles of rivers that link the freshwater and marine aquatic systems and provide critical habitat for fish and wildlife.

- Fish Populations
- Research & Monitoring
- Diverse Aquatic Habitats
- Coastal Linkages
- Historic Homelands

Science: Katmai National Park and Preserve provides an outdoor laboratory for studying the effects of volcanism, climate change, and other large scale landscape processes on cultural and biological systems.

- Volcanic Features and Processes
- Scientific Research
- Educational Tools
- Climatic Record



Cultural Heritage: Katmai National Park and Preserve contains a 9,000 year record of human adaptation to environmental and ecological change that continues today.

- Brooks River Archeological District National Historic Landmark
- Amalik Bay Archeological District National Historic Landmark
- Cultural Landscapes
- Historic Resources
- Archeology
- Museum Collections
- Subsistence

Wilderness Recreation: Katmai National Park and Preserve offers 3.7 million acres of remote, yet accessible, wilderness-based recreational opportunities.

- Wilderness
- Accessibility
- Partnerships
- Natural Soundscapes and Visibility

Alagnak Wild River: The Alagnak River, a designated Wild River, is internationally renowned for its scenic beauty, pristine condition, and wide range of outstanding recreational opportunities.

- Natural Conditions
- Recreation
- Fish
- Wildlife
- Ethnography and History



Description

Katmai National Park and Preserve was established as a National Monument in 1918 by a Presidential proclamation to preserve the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes and the landscape associated with the cataclysmic volcanic eruption of 1912. It was expanded over the years by four additional proclamations, then enlarged and re-designated a National Park and Preserve by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) in 1980 to protect habitats for, and populations of, fish and wildlife, including, but not limited to, high concentrations of brown/grizzly bears and their denning areas; to maintain unimpaired the water habitat for significant salmon populations; and to protect scenic, geological, cultural, and recreational features.

Katmai's rugged landscape is representative of the northern portion of the Alaska Peninsula. It contains two physiographic provinces—the Aleutian Range and the Nushagak-Bristol Bay Lowlands. These two provinces contain a diverse mosaic of natural features and ecosystems. Katmai's landscape contains vast multi-lake watersheds with hundreds of miles of wild, untamed rivers and streams. It's an outdoor laboratory for studying the effects of volcanism, climate change, and other large scale landscape processes. This is also place with a 9,000 year record of human adaptation to environmental and ecological change.

Katmai National Park and Preserve spans over four million acres of remote, wild, and spectacular country. In Katmai you'll find the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes and the site of the world's largest volcanic eruption of the 20th century. Katmai hosts an incredible density of brown bears, offering visitors an unprecedented opportunity to study and view bears in their natural habitat. Inside its boundaries are important spawning and rearing ground for Bristol Bay sockeye salmon, which help sustain one of the largest and economically important salmon runs in the world.

When most people envision Katmai, they think of bears. Katmai is one of the premier brown bear viewing areas in the world. About 2,200 brown bears are estimated to inhabit the park, and more bears than people are estimated to live on the Alaska Peninsula. As many bear populations around the world decline, Katmai provides some of the few remaining unaltered habitats for these amazing creatures. At Katmai, scientists are able to study bears in their natural habitat, visitors are able to enjoy unparalleled viewing opportunities, and the bears are able to continue their life cycle largely undisturbed. At Brooks Camp, brown bears congregate to feed on sockeye salmon in the Brooks River. Three wildlife viewing platforms along the river offer safe and spectacular wildlife viewing opportunities while minimizing our potential impact on the bears.

Katmai National Park and Preserve is located on the Alaska Peninsula, across the Shelikof Strait from Kodiak Island. Park Headquarters is in King Salmon, about 290 air miles southwest of Anchorage. Brooks Camp, approximately 30 air miles from King Salmon, is a common destination for visitors to the park and can only be reached via small float plane or boat because there are no highway connections with any sizable population centers.

