

Discovery Hikes-Lead by a Park Ranger is a great way for the **adventurous** and **well-prepared** to explore the heart of Denali.



These ranger-led hikes travel everywhere, so expect uneven terrain, small stream crossings, close encounters with dense vegetation and unpredictable weather. Along the way, you can engage the park with all your senses and build memories of this special kind of "walk in the park."

Signing up-"Disco" hikes are offered daily during the summer, and are limited to 11 people. This limit exists because discovery hikes take place in the wilderness, where there are no trails - the limited number helps reduce human impacts on vegetation and facilitates a small-group experience.

You may sign up for a hike one to two days in advance, and you can only sign up in person at the Denali Visitor Center. There are **no exceptions** to this rule. For safety concerns, rangers may turn away unprepared hikers.

Please read our [***preparation guide***](#)

<http://www.nps.gov/dena/planyourvisit/upload/Disco%20Prep%20Guide%20rev%208-19%20FINAL.pdf> for more details on how to ready yourself for this specialized program.

Where you'll go-All disco hikes begin with a bus ride into the park, originating from the Wilderness Access Center. Plan on a bus ride lasting anywhere from one to four hours, to hike for three to five hours, and then a similar-length bus ride back to the park entrance. The disco bus leaves at 8 am every morning.

These ranger-led adventures vary from moderate (elevation gain less than 1,000 feet) to strenuous (elevation gain more than 1,000 feet, or will involve large river crossings). They may start from just about anywhere on the Park Road, which is why the bus ride has such a wide range of duration (i.e., the closer to the park entrance your hike begins, the shorter your bus ride will be).

Availability Discovery Hikes start around June 8 each summer, and last into late August or early September. Hike descriptions are available in one week increments.

A variety of ranger-led walks and hikes are offered throughout the park. Joining a ranger is an excellent way to learn more about Denali. While on a guided walk, you will experience the park with all your senses. You may or may not see wildlife, but you will certainly see signs of their passing. You will also see the indelible traces of winter, the dominant season that shapes all life in the subarctic. *Ranger-led hikes are offered from early June to mid-September each year.

Horseshoe Lake Hike-Offered daily at 10:00 am, the Horseshoe Lake Hike starts from the Denali Visitor Center, mile 1.5 on the Park Road. Parking is available at the center. No sign-up is required - simply arrive at the center a few minutes before the hike begins.

The hike is slow paced, though the trail does change from easy to moderate at various points. In wet weather, the trail can be muddy in areas. The hike lasts about 2.5 hours.

Difficulty: Moderate

Distance: 3 miles round-trip

Highlights: Scenic views of Horseshoe Lake and the Nenana River; occasional sightings of beaver and other wildlife

Elevation change: ~250 feet

Grade: 20% sections

Width: 60 inches

Surface: Native soils with roots and rocks

McKinley Station Walk-This 2 hour trail walk starts at the Denali Visitor Center, mile 1.5 on the Park Road. Parking is available at the center. No sign-ups are required - simply arrive at the center a few minutes before the walk begins, at 1:00 pm.

The McKinley Station Trail travels through an area that once housed early pioneers and, for a short while, National Park Service Headquarters in Denali. Occasional human artifacts can be found, including the remnants of a fox-farm. The trail eventually parallels Riley Creek and passes under the Alaska Railroad trestle which spans said creek.

The walk ends at Riley Creek Campground, where folks can catch a courtesy bus back to the Denali Visitor Center.

Difficulty: Easy

Distance: 2.6 miles (2 hours) round-trip

Highlights: Spruce forest; historic pioneer artifacts and remnants of habitation; views of Hines Creek and Riley Creek; views of a railroad trestle spanning Riley Creek, ~ 75 feet overhead

Elevation change: ~200 feet

Grade: 5% sections

Width: 72 inches

Surface: Well-compacted gravel

Eielson Stroll-The Eielson Stroll is offered daily at 1:00 pm, starting at Eielson Visitor Center. The center is located at Mile 66 on the Park Road, and is accessible by any Kantishna, Wonder Lake or Eielson shuttle bus. Choose a bus that arrives at Eielson Visitor Center before 1:00 pm. The stroll is at a leisurely pace. Expect to spend forty-five minutes to an hour exploring the trail with a ranger.

Difficulty: Easy

Distance: 0.5 miles

Highlights: High-alpine tundra, tremendous views of Mt. McKinley on clear days, and chances to see large mammals such as grizzly bears and caribou

Elevation change: Negligible

Surface: Well-compacted gravel

Eielson Alpine Hike-The Eielson Alpine Hike is offered daily at noon, starting at Eielson Visitor Center. Choose a bus that arrives at Eielson Visitor Center before noon. The hike is strenuous. Expect to spend two to two and a half hours hiking up and down Thorofare Ridge with a ranger. Hikes are limited to the first 11 visitors who sign up at the center that day, so arrive early to ensure a spot on this strenuous but memorable hike.

Difficulty: Difficult

Distance: ~2 miles

Highlights: High-alpine tundra, tremendous views of Mt. McKinley on clear days, and chances to see large mammals such as grizzly bears and caribou

Elevation change: 1,000' gain and loss

Surface: Native rocks, some gravel

Kennel Tours- Rangers and dogs work together to demonstrate a traditional Alaskan mode of travel. These unique, 30 minute programs include an opportunity to tour the park kennels and visit Denali's Alaskan huskies.

Free buses leave the Denali Visitor Center for the kennels approximately **forty** (40) minutes before each demonstration. No parking is available at the kennels, so please plan on using the buses or walking the 1.5 miles from the Denali Visitor Center to the kennels.

Some seating is available for the demonstration, and there is plenty of standing room. Programs are given rain or shine, so be prepared with an umbrella or rain coat if skies look forbidding.

No fees or reservations, for either the bus or demonstration, are required.

Demonstrations are given three times daily in peak season, at 10 am, 2 pm and 4 pm.

The **10 am demonstration** will be offered May 20 - September 17, 2012

The **2 pm demonstration** will be offered May 15 - September 17, 2012

The **4 pm demonstration** will be offered June 1 - September 1, 2012

Theater Programs-Located in the Denali Visitor Center, the Karstens Theater is normally the venue for "Heartbeats of Denali," the twenty-minute long park film. Twice a day in mid-summer, however, we offer interpretive programs - often featuring beautiful images of the park - in the Karstens Theater.

To attend a program, simply arrive at the Denali Visitor Center (mile 1.5) a few minutes before the program is set to begin. Programs are offered at **10:30 am daily** and **2:00 pm daily**. Programs are offered from early June through mid-September each year.

Topics vary from the very specific (e.g., bears or other wildlife) to the general (e.g., sustainable living), but all connect to the greater themes found in the story of Denali National Park and Preserve.

The programs run about 45 minutes, and are followed by a showing of "Heartbeats of Denali."