

RC 038

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Wolf Townships – History of land ownership

1965 – state selected 92,000 acres in the wolf townships

1970 – small area closest to Healy was subdivided

1971 – NPS included entire area in proposed park expansion

1972 – NPS proposal redrawn to exclude wolf townships once planners learned the area contained state and private land, especially because the state-

- Recognized the wolf packs as an important resource
- Agreed in 1973 to close the area to further homesite entry
- Agreed to exclude future transportation development within the area

(Above info from Crown Jewel of the North: An Administrative History of Denali, Vol. I, by Frank Norris, page 235)

1980 - Panguingue Creek subdivision created - located along mile 2 to mile 4 of the Stampede road. (seemingly in opposition to 1973 agreement mentioned above)

1980 – Senate report accompanying ANILCA recommends land trade

The prime resource for which the north addition is established is the critical range necessary to support populations of moose, wolf, and caribou as part of an integral ecosystem. Public enjoyment of these outstanding wildlife values would thus continue to be assured.

Senate report 96-413, 1980, page 166

In the northeast portion of the area, near the existing headquarters, there are some 3 townships of state lands which are critical for sheep, caribou, and wolf habitat and should eventually become a part of the park. ... The Committee recognizes that these areas are important to the park and recommends that the Secretary seek land exchanges with the State of Alaska that would serve to bring these areas into the Park.

Senate report 96-413, 1980, page 167

1986 – Denali General Management Plan (GMP), pgs. 98- 99 (full text follows bullets) → next page

- Recommends land exchange with the state for the wolf townships. Of the approximately 95,000 acres only 41 small tracts (totaling 206 acres) have been patented.
- Specific concerns are that **“the Savage wolf pack populations have dropped drastically in recent years”**. “Adding the wolf townships to the park would complete the habitat and range protection of the Toklat and Savage wolf packs and the wintering caribou herd.”
- The state of Alaska’s 1984 draft Tanana Basin Plan is considering adding the exchange. (JF note: I believe this never happened.)

1986 Denali General Management Plan

The National Park Service will seek a land exchange with the state of Alaska to place the "wolf townships" inside the northeast park boundary. These lands were recognized by Congress as important habitat for park caribou and wolf populations, and they are also used by park bears and moose. Acquisition of these townships is needed to protect the natural ranges of these populations from incompatible development and sport hunting. Specific concerns for the wolf townships are that the Savage wolf pack populations have dropped drastically in recent years and also that wintering caribou are particularly sensitive to human disturbances (NPS, Singer and Beattie 1984). Adding the wolf townships to the park would complete the habitat and range protection of the Toklat and Savage wolf packs and the wintering caribou herd.

This exchange of approximately 95,000 acres has been identified for possible consideration in the state of Alaska and is a recommendation of the draft "Tanana Basin Plan" (ADNR 1984). Lands involved are primarily state lands which recently have been excluded from the state land disposal program. A total of 41 small tract entries (206 acres total) have been patented by the state from previous small tract sales, and these will not be included in the exchange or relinquishment. Uses on these lands, which are primarily recreational, will be monitored for any

adverse impacts on wildlife within the new park boundary. The lands also include Eight-Mile Lake and portions of the Stampede Trail.

The secretary of the interior is authorized to acquire by donation or exchange available state lands contiguous to the park boundary by notifying Congress of this intention. If acquisition of these townships is possible only through an exchange, the National Park Service will consider exchanging certain lands of approximately equal acreage and value. Congressional approval is required to increase or decrease the total amount of land within the boundary by more than 23,000 acres.

The state intends to leave the wolf townships open to mineral entry and coal prospecting and leasing. However, the National Park Service recommends the exclusion of these lands from mineral entry until they are acquired by the federal government. Once the area is within the boundaries of the national park, it will be closed to mineral entry.