

**Agency: Department of Natural Resources****Project Title:****Project Type:** New Construction and Land Acquisition

# South Denali Visitors Center - Phase I Completion

**State Funding Requested:** \$7,000,000**House District:** Southcentral Region (7-30)

Future Funding May Be Requested

**Brief Project Description:**

Phase I funding for design and construction of a 15-campsite walk-in campground, 5 miles of gravel trails, ranger office addition to maintenance shop, and access road.
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**Funding Plan:**

Total Project Cost:	\$25,000,000
Funding Already Secured:	(\$13,400,000)
FY2014 State Funding Request:	<u>(\$7,000,000)</u>
Project Deficit:	\$4,600,000

*Funding Details:**Prior year funding of \$13.4 million from state and private sources.***Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

The South Denali Visitor Center would provide a year-round destination on Curry Ridge in Denali State Park at mile post 135. The long term plan is for a facility that will include a 15,000 square foot visitor center, a transportation center, campground, trails, interpretive displays, and parking.

Visitors to Alaska have shown a demand for a "Denali experience" within one days drive of Anchorage. Alaska residents have expressed a desire for more opportunities in this area for snowmachining, skiing, hiking, camping, school group outings, and educational opportunities.

In 2008, the Institute of Social and Economic Research did an Economic Impact Study that estimated annual visitations of Alaskans and tourists to South Denali would number between 250,000 to 350,000. Economic benefits to the region would employment for 116-213 people over a period of 2-3 years, with ongoing employment thereafter between 221-549 jobs.

Private partners have contributed significantly toward the cost and development of this project. In 2008, UCI, a wholly owned subsidiary of the native village of Hooper Bay purchased a 160 acre tract immediately adjacent to the project site. UCI has a pending donation of 130 acres to the State of Alaska towards the development of access to the project site.

Princess Cruise company has a large visitor facility at the Chulitna River bridge on the Parks Highway, and has committed to providing \$1 million toward the cost of the electrical line extension to the area.

This project is a top priority by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

**Project Timeline:**

Receipt of funding requested would result in completion of design aspects by end of calendar year 2014. Construction aspects are estimated for completion by calendar year 2015.

**Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:**

Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks

**Grant Recipient Contact Information:**

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Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority?  Yes  No