

**South Denali Visitor and Cruise Passenger Access Road Design and Construction**      **FY2009 Request: \$8,900,000**  
**Reference No: 45281**

**AP/AL:** Appropriation      **Project Type:** Construction  
**Category:** Natural Resources  
**Location:** Statewide      **Contact:** Leta Simons  
**House District:** Statewide (HD 1-40)      **Contact Phone:** (907)465-2400  
**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2008 - 06/30/2013

**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

This project will construct a road for a future visitor center with trails and amenities on Curry Ridge in Denali State Park, and provide additional recreational opportunities for visitors and residents. Access roads, campgrounds, trails and waysides are also part of this project.

<b>Funding:</b>	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	Total
Cr Shp Imp	\$2,500,000						\$2,500,000
Gen Fund	\$6,400,000						\$6,400,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$8,900,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$8,900,000</b>

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

**Operating & Maintenance Costs:**

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
<u>One-Time Startup:</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Additional Information / Prior Funding History:**

New Project - No Prior Funding History

**Project Description/Justification:**

South Denali is a planning project with a 30+ year history. The latest effort is progressing well based on thorough planning and inclusion of public and commercial input. We have a very unified support base for the project.

The road would begin at mile 134.6 of the Parks Highway and go for 3.5 miles to the future site of the visitor center. The road will have nine-foot wide lanes with one-foot shoulders making the road a 20-foot minimum width. It may be expanded to a 24-foot width for increased safety. The road will be paved but low profile with gravel shoulders for an aesthetic appearance. The access road will be designed for low speed traffic and to a preferred gradient of 8%.

The road will access a future visitor center with a world class view. The amenities that are planned to be included are visitor contact, interpretation, food service, theater, power generation and restrooms.

The National Park Service is estimating that income generated from entry fees into this facility will exceed over \$3 million a year and that the on-going operating costs would be about \$1 million a year.

As stated in the South Denali Visitor Center Congressional information pamphlet, it is estimated that annual visitation to the center will range between 250,000-350,000 people. This funding request is directly intended for road development only.

Shuttle buses that are used to access the visitor center could also be used for transportation to rafting, wildlife viewing, hotel and other visitor services. Visitation is expected to be around 400,000 users or more per year. This facility will be a

**South Denali Visitor and Cruise Passenger Access Road  
Design and Construction**

**FY2009 Request: \$8,900,000  
Reference No: 45281**

big attraction for all visitors with the added attraction of being able to stay in the Anchorage and Wasilla hotels before or after making a day trip to get there. This can truly be a day trip Denali experience.

The State of Alaska, Matanuska Susitna Borough, and the Federal government will participate in the development of this project. With the funding requested, the State will provide the access road and trail system for the ridge development.

**Why is this Project Needed Now?:**

The public need for additional recreational access in the South Denali area is growing exponentially. This facility and its associated amenities would provide a long term solution to this access need. The public process defined a visitor center on Curry Ridge and Parks Highway associated amenities as a priority needed now.

**Specific Spending Detail:**

<u>LINE ITEM</u>	<u>DOLLAR AMOUNT</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION (text)</u>
Personal Services	\$ 600,000	Planning and Design funding
Travel	\$ 100,000	Travel and Per Diem <i>pre-design work includes field reconnaissance and data collection in a remote area. Once there, staff will need to remain in the area for an extended period.</i>
Services	\$ 8,100,000	Professional Service Contracts for Design and Construction
Commodities	\$100,000	Supplies

**Project Support:**

National Park Service, Matanuska Susitna Borough, State of Alaska, Alaska Railroad, Cook Inlet Regional Corporation, Alaska Tourism Industry Association, local communities and general public.

**Project Opposition:**

Through the public process of the South Denali Implementation Plan, minor opposition was encountered. For example, there were requests for DNR to mitigate conflicts between the motorized and non-motorized users. The subject of opposition is addressed in the Record of Decision for this project. Page 245 lists the exact opposition. The Record of Decision can be found at [www.southdenaliplanning.com](http://www.southdenaliplanning.com)