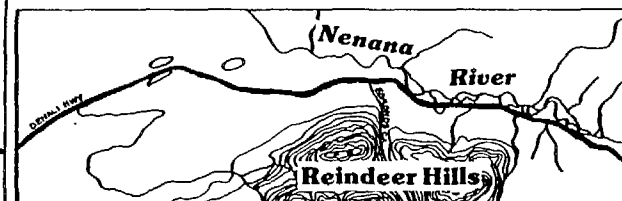


1 Cantwell Area



2 Reindeer Hills & Pyramid Peak

General Description

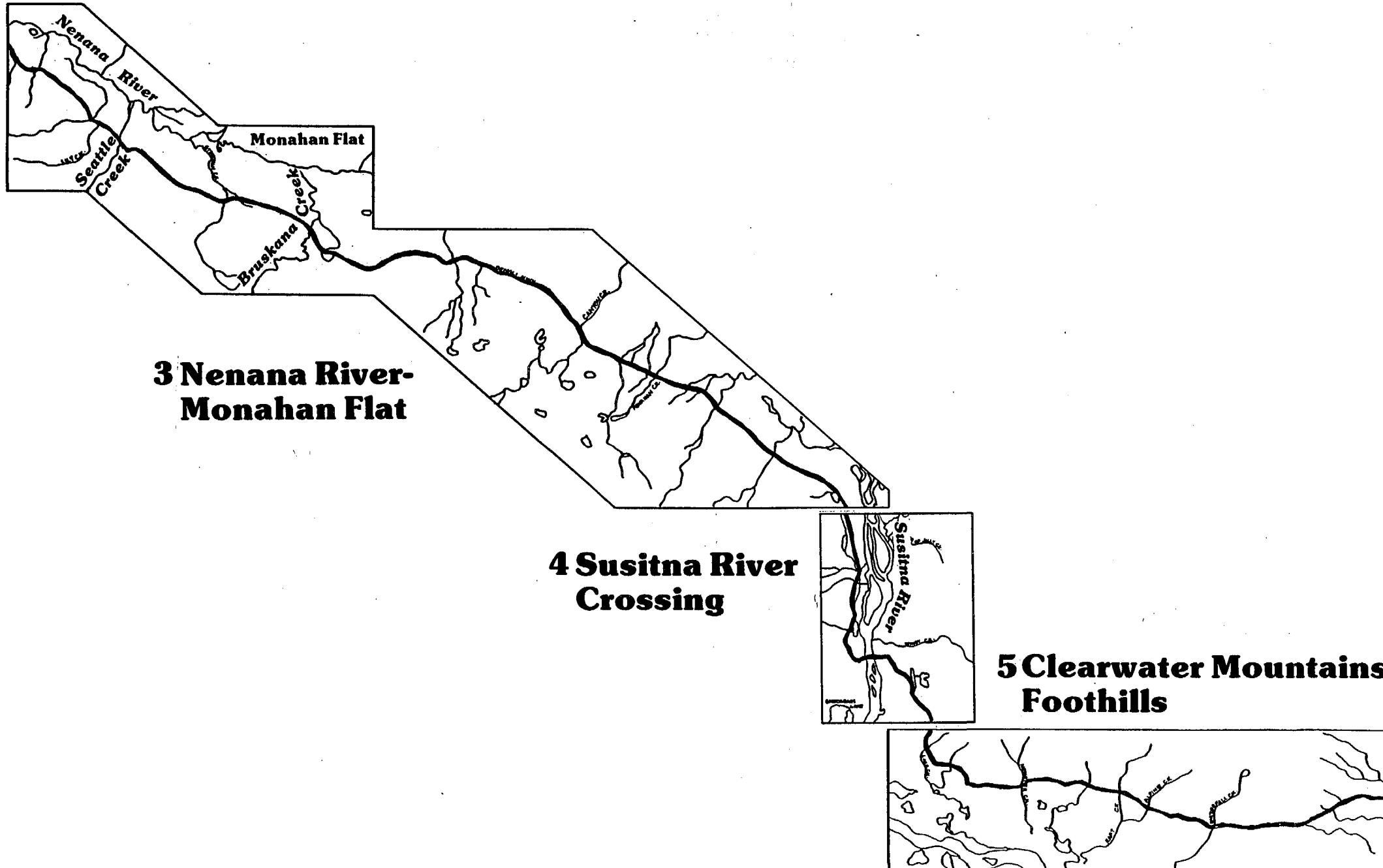
The Denali Highway, a 135-mile long road across the heart of Alaska, links the small town of Cantwell on the Parks Highway with the community of Paxson on the Richardson Highway. Completed in 1957, it was for many years the only road connection to Denali National Park (Mt. McKinley). In fact, the road takes its name from the mountain's original Athabaskan name meaning "Great One". Today, the Denali Highway offers an adventurous wilderness driving experience through some of Alaska's most scenic and diverse landscapes. From Cantwell, the road parallels the snow covered peaks and expansive glaciers of the Alaska Range. On clear days, Mt. McKinley, the highest peak in North America at 20,300 feet, is visible from the western end of the road. The Monahan Flat area provides a spectacular panorama of Mt. Hess and Mt. Deborah with the glaciers that give birth to the Nenana River.

First paralleling the Susitna River, the road then crosses the river into the broad glaciated valley of the Maclaren River, skirting the southern flank of the Clearwater Mountains. Here the undulating topography as the road winds

through eskers and moraines makes the driving experience a lesson in glacial geology. Climbing to Maclaren Summit, travelers enjoy a broad panorama of the river valley and the dramatic, glaciated peaks of the Alaska Range. The Amphitheater Mountains are the backdrop to the alpine tundra landscape at Maclaren Summit. In addition, there are outstanding views of the Alaska Range and even occasional glimpses of the Wrangell Mountains to the southeast. East of the summit, the Denali Highway follows the Amphitheater Mountains through the tundra landscape highlighted by views of Landmark Gap, Tangle Lakes, Summit Lake, the Alaska Range, and the rugged Wrangell Mountains.

Most of the Denali Highway is a rough gravel surfaced road that is impassable during the winter months. Only a 20 mile long portion of the road connecting Tangle Lakes to Paxson is paved. The rough gravel surface keeps travel speeds low, and as a result the Denali Highway is used almost solely for recreation purposes. Traffic volume is also low. The little development that exists is primarily related to recreation and mining. There are some scattered cabins and residences,

Management Units - Denali Wild & Scenic Road (West Half)



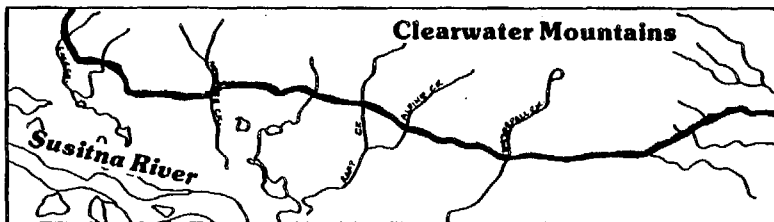
but they are generally concentrated in a few locations such as Cantwell, Denali, the Susitna River crossing, and Tangle Lakes. Thus, travelers have the opportunity to experience a predominantly pristine wilderness environment and observe the diverse wildlife populations that inhabit it. There are a minimal, but adequate, number of commercial services available to meet traveler needs. These establishments are spaced at convenient intervals along the length of the road.

Issues & Concerns

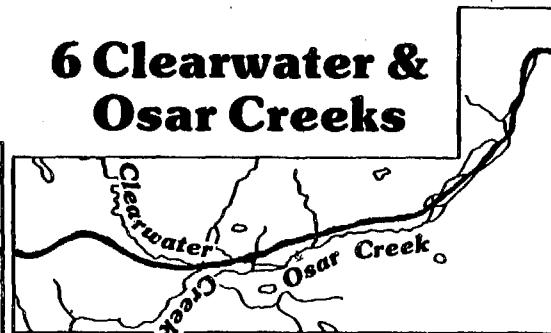
● Powerline Intertie Route Alignment

The Alaska Power Authority plans to locate the 100-foot high Anchorage to Fairbanks powerline crossing near Cantwell. This alignment could make the powerline a major visual distraction as it crosses Reindeer Hills. The Powerline Intertie crossing is discussed in Management Unit 1.

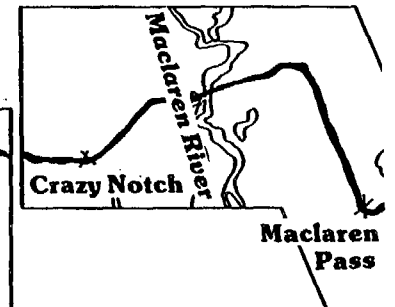
5 Clearwater Mountains Foothills



6 Clearwater & Osar Creeks



7 Maclaren River to Maclaren Pass



● Access Route to Susitna Hydroelectric Project

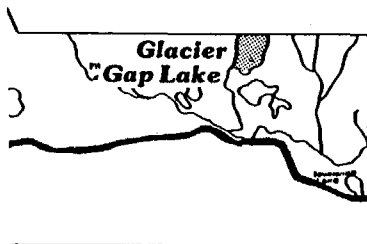
The western portion of the Denali Highway has been suggested as one of the alternative access routes for to provide access to the Susitna Dam project. If selected, the Denali would require significant realignment and upgrading from the Parks Highway junction to approximately Milepost 41, where the access road would turn south to the dam site. If implemented, this costly project would detract from the road's natural and wilder-

ness character by increasing traffic speed and volume, adding industrial use, and creating a straighter, wider alignment.

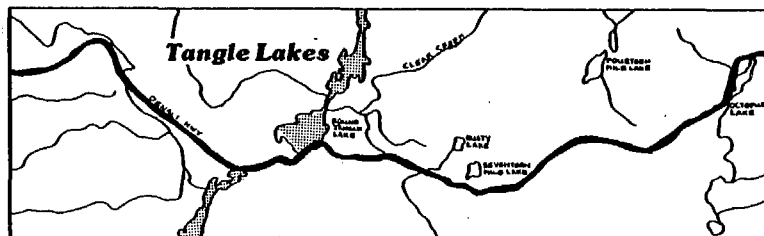
● Road Junction Information Turnouts

Because there is little development along its length, there is a need for travel information at the entrances to the Denali Highway. This information should cover road conditions, available services, the nature and speed of the driving

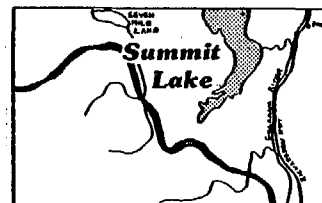
Management Units - Denali Wild & Scenic Road (East Half)



8 Tangle Lakes Area



9 East End- Denali Road



10 Paxson Junction