



GRAVEL PROPOSES MCKINLEY BUBBLE

Prepared Excerpts from the Denali City Sections of the
Mike Gravel Papers, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections,
Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks

DIRIGIBLES of DENALI
volume three

GRAVEL PROPOSES McKINLEY BUBBLE

Transcribed documents

From the 'Denali City' section of
The Mike Gravel Papers,
Alaska and Polar Regions Collections,
Elmer E. Rasmuson Library,
The University of Alaska Fairbanks

Edited and Prepared by NATHAN SHAFER

Gravel Proposes McKinley Bubble

Anchorage, Alaska, 2017

Mike Gravel Papers, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections,
Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks

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When the Archive Becomes Poetry

Nathan Shafer

While compiling the digital humanities anthology *Dirigibles of Denali*, a book reimagining the three unbuilt domed city proposals in Alaska from the mid-twentieth century, a series of decisions had to be made on how to display raw information that was meant to be living cities. We employed geolocation-based augmented reality to digitally create the cities on site, making them viewable through networked mobile devices (smart phones, etc.). Of the three cities, Denali City provided one of our largest struggles.

It is not that the proposal for Denali City was insufficient, on the contrary, it was rich, thoughtful and subtle in its weirdness, but it lacked what the other two cities had in abundance: visual imagery. Denali City, a recreational winter wonderland, was a dream shared by Senator Mike Gravel and his assistant Pat Pourchot, beginning in the wake of the fire that took the Mt. McKinley Hotel, (and its subsequent rebuilding efforts), becoming a futuristic fantasy for the State of Alaska, in what one concerned citizen referred to as the “Gravel Gambit”.

Currently, there are no biographies on Mike Gravel, or any books on his time as US Senator for Alaska, specifically. His myriad accomplishments are not discussed as openly as they should be, especially in the present media ecology, where they would be a shining example of bipartisanchutzpah. Gravel was responsible for many pieces of legislation that forever transformed Alaska and its citizenry. In many ways, he helped define contemporary Alaska. The extreme partisanship in today’s political environment prevents meaningful multilateral work, making the *megaprojects* of today, nothing more than unilateral aggravation games meant to rob philosophical opponents of dignity or hope, preferably both. Then curse their progeny in absolute perpetuity.

It is spiteful and wrong. But it is where we are. Reality television.

Though his passion has often been mistaken for temper, Gravel was not that kind of politician, and Alaskans were gone a serious champion when he lost reelection to Frank Murkowski in 1980. It can be argued that Denali City was a part of what cost him his seat, but that is a simplistic view. The proposal for Denali City was never really taken seriously, apart from a small consortium of entrepreneurs, who were able to look at it for what it is. Gravel had angered the left with his willingness to work with Republicans in securing the Trans-Alaska Pipeline’s construction. The right, leveled scorn at his methods for years, mocking his embrace of multiculturalism, Alaska Native rights and his determined protests against the nuclear testing in Amchitka, etc. But even in that old school political environment, Gravel was what FM-2030 identified as “up versus down, not left versus right.” He believed in progress.

At the end of it all, it was the purposeful misrepresentation of Denali City that took the dream of Denali City from Alaska. Everything else be damned. Journalists knew that Gravel did not intend to build a dome over Denali, but it made for interesting gossip. Like a villain in Scooby Doo, the newspapers transmogrified a simple misprision into an unbelievable speculative fiction only to display nothing but contempt when unmasked. This is why *Dirigibles of Denali* is also a speculative fiction anthology. Alternate history, fantasy and science fiction are part of the “gambit”. We wanted to imagine a world where Alaska’s domed cities were real.

Denali City would have been rad.

This little book of found poetry was collected from the 'Denali City' section of the Mike Gravel Archive at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Apart from this introduction, I have written nothing, it is all collected material. Like the bulk of Gravel's political career in Alaska, Denali City has never seen proper publication. In fact, today, very few Alaskans, let alone many Americans, are aware of the Denali City proposal, and its lack of visual imagery does nothing but compound this. I have tried to tell a story about how a futuristic city plan was taken out of context and blurred, then eventually left to be preserved in an archive in Fairbanks, all while using only the source material available there. Also, since I had very little imagery with which to build Denali City in augmented reality, I have decided to take out ALL imagery found in the source material. What we are left with is poetry, written by a determined group of people as their speculative city was maligned and put away. We can still build Denali City if we want.

Make no mistake.

This is not my poetry, I propose no claim of ownership here, it is simply a collection of things that I think are poetic, put in an order that tells a story. They are not photocopies. I transcribed all of them, by hand, into a text document, imitating the construction of concrete poetry. They are also augments, as this is an augmented reality work, in its largest form, even though only a handful of the pages in this chapbook are AR targets. These ARE the augments connected to the imagery in *Dirigibles of Denali*, that I have decided to place in this context, serving to supplement a larger body of work, about many other things. This is a presentation of previously unpublished source material in a way that I find more digestible and hopefully more interesting. I like to think of these poems as super-symmetries of historical significance that helped inform *Dirigibles of Denali*, quantum words in a hammerspace above the book.

DENALI FILES

A. Architectural

1. SBA-Rio de Janerio letter of 3/9/79 re; service available
2. Dome Winooski, Vermont
3. Teflon Structures
4. Frei Otto Reports and other related information
5. Underground Space for Building

B. Contact people various lists of persons attending the meetings on the project as well as persons who maybe of value when project moves forward

C. Denali Standley Notes-memos and other information generated by Standley not filled elsewhere

D. Early Study Proposals

1. Summary feasibility and development study for Mt. McKinley Recreational City
2. A Proposal for a Recreational City—Gravel
3. Summary of Preliminary Findings-Nat. Park Service
4. NPS-Stevens Proposal 7/25/77
5. Denali State Park Master Plan 1975
6. Feasibility and Development Study-Mt. McKinley City Gravel '75

E. Financial

1. Tokositna Budget for FY 80
2. Denali Appropriation Memo 5/30/79
3. Gravel Memo re: Budget and Contracts 3/13/79

F. Newspaper Articles

1. Tokositna: the money and politics 4/21/80
2. Mt. McKinley: Worries about the future 4/22/80
3. McKinley Resort: lodge or a covered city? 4/17/80
4. Rodey-Southface proposal 12/16/77
5. Proposed Denali City Anchorage Times 12/16/77
6. Dome City—various clippings

G. Photographs

1. Sno-engineering slide show with narrative
2. Johansen and other winter site photos
3. Site photos- summer
4. Denali slide Show /w narrative
5. Teflon Dome and Mag Lev Train

H. Proposals

1. Sno-engineering—various proposals for work elements
2. ERA various proposals for work elements
3. Original Request for Proposal for State of Alaska
4. V. Sung Memo and Gravel Memo re: ERA/FMC vs TAC proposals

I. Public Comment

1. Citizen's letters
2. Project correspondence
3. Washburn letters
4. Gov't agency correspondence
5. Business correspondence
6. V. Sung Memo 1/29/79

MT. MCKINLEY CITY

The almost total destruction by fire of the government-owned McKinley Park Hotel on September 2, 1972, offers both a challenge and a real opportunity for the development in the McKinley Park area.

The Opportunity

The existing hotel long had been considered inadequate for several reasons:

- (1) It is not possible to view Mt. McKinley from that elevation; a drive of several hours into the Park – which increasingly poses dangers to the wildlife – is required to see the mountains.
- (2) Accommodations were considered mediocre, at best, and they were increasingly inadequate to serve the burgeoning number of visitors to Mt. McKinley.
- (3) Provision of utilities (water, power, and sewer) has been a continuing problem.
- (4) There has been increasing opposition to operating concessions such as McKinley Park Hotel within park boundaries.

Thus, we are given the opportunity to undertake a new development, in the McKinley area that will better serve Alaskans and Alaska's growing tourism industry. There is even the opportunity to provide Alaska what it really needs and deserves – a top resort attraction which would catch the imagination of the entire world.

The Challenge

Several options are available when we consider development in the McKinley region. First is the construction of a new hotel complex within the Park, at a cost of several millions of dollars. There are distinct liabilities, however. If construction is done at the present Mt. McKinley Station site, none of the original problems are overcome, with the possible exception of meeting the need for adequate facilities. It also seems unreasonable to build further within the Park:

- (1) There would be – rightfully – an outcry against the environmental damage which would be inevitable in the large-scale development of a new portion of the Park.

- (2) The cost of construction far into the Park (where Mt. McKinley can be seen) would be prohibitive for the National Park Service.
- (3) Visitors coming to the Park from Fairbanks and Anchorage would have far too far to drive in one day and would have no place to stay overnight.
- (4) Development of winter recreation area would be unwise, and probably out of the question, within Park boundaries.

If facilities are not constructed within the Park, there is sure to be peripheral development, outside the Park. There is already a high interest in this sort of development (on either a small or mediocre scale), but at present it is stayed by the exclusive concessionaire rights within the Park. If this competition were to cease to exist, there would spring up an uncontrolled string of gas stations, campgrounds, and motels outside the Park. This poses the threat of a tacky development of the whole Mt. McKinley region.

There is also the prospect of development in Denali State Park on Curry Ridge. The state has already called for proposals for a recreation development at this site. There are several advantages to development on Curry Ridge:

- (1) Convenient access from Anchorage to Fairbanks;
- (2) Desirable location for viewing Mt. McKinley;
- (3) Opportunity to provide major visitor services including a ski area outside the Park;
- (4) No adverse effect on the wildlife migration or habitat.

There are also serious drawbacks to this proposed recreation area:

- (1) To date the State has outlined no land use plan which would limit development in the McKinley region to Denali State Park. Indeed, it would be unwise to do so because the development contemplated there probably could not meet long-term tourism demands.
- (2) Development within the State Park, no less than in the National Park, is a questionable practice.
- (3) A true recreation area on Curry Ridge is probably not economically feasible. The proposed ski area

Telegram

OVER NIGHT TELEGRAM

UNLESS BOX ABOVE IS CHECKED THIS
MESSAGE WILL BE SENT AS A TELEGRAM

John G. Stevens, President
Alaska Visitors Association
608 W. 4th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

John:

I agree that a program to restore Mt. McKinley facility should begin immediately. I am currently working with the National Park Service to restore the existing facility as much as possible for next season and ~~they~~ then design a new facility befitting the park. I will be in Alaska this weekend and will have more to say on this then.

Mike Gravel, USS

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

CHARGE TO THE ACCOUNT OF SENATOR MIKE GRAVEL

WILLIAM EGAN
GOVERNOR

STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
JUNEAU

September 13, 1972

The Honorable Mike Gravel
United States Senate
1251 New Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

Mike

Dear ~~Senator Gravel:~~

As you know, the Labor Day fire which leveled the hotel at Mt. McKinley National Park has left the area in dire need of accommodations for visitors.

It is my hope that you might support an early appropriation of funds to build the new facilities at the park before the beginning of the next tourist season.

Sincerely,
Bill
William A. Egan
Governor

Denali City .

a) Renewable Resources

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1- fisheries | 4- agriculture , |
| 2- Tourism | 5- Manufacturers , |
| 3- timber | |
| <u>note:</u> others. | 1- Military Protection |
| | 2- minerals , |
| | <u>oil & gas</u> |

b) Seasonal Impediment

- 1- cold
- 2- light.

c) Elements to a Tourist Phenomena ,

- 1- Natural phenomena – Mt McKinley
- 2- Transportation – Mag Lev
- 3- Energy – Susitna
- 4- Controlled Environment –
Teflon Tent – dome

d) Denali City – a controlled Environment .

- 1- Cultural Center – natural icicles – classical
contemporary – dance
- 2- Institute of Human Understanding
- 3- Ski – golf (p.) – tennis – sailing (ice & water)
- 4- World Trade Center

Denali Work Elements

A. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

1. OVERALL THEME OR FOCUS
2. COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN
3. ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN – ENVIRONMENT (DOME)
EL THEMATIC (STRUCTURES)
- ~~4. TRANSIT RESOLUTION FROM ANCHORAGE~~

B. FACILITIES ANALYSIS

1. TRADE CENTER
2. SPORTS FACILITIES
3. INSTITUTE
4. MARKET ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL INTEREST
5. SKI AREA REFINEMENT

C. PROJECT RELATIONS

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS
2. MARKETING AWARENESS PROGRAM
3. OLYMPIC BID INTERFACE
4. LEGISLATIVE REVIEW AND CONTROL

D. PLANNING

1. LONG RANGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2. PHASED DEVELOPMENT PLAN
3. LAND OWNERSHIP OF MINING CLAIMS

E. CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

1. CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT
2. OBTAINING PERMITS
3. SECURING CONSTRUCTION BIDS
4. CONSTRUCTION FACILITIES WITH MAJOR LEAD TIMES
5. ~~NEGOTIATING~~ CON SUPPLEMENTAL SITE ANALYSIS

F. MANAGEMENT

1. EST. LONG RANGE MGT. PLAN
2. DETERMINING OPERATING REQUIREMENTS + TRAINING PARK PER.

G. FINANCING

1. LAND STRATEGY
2. PROJECT FINANCING

H. TRANSPORTATION

1. ROAD ALIGNMENT – EASEMENTS – ETC.
2. ANCHORAGE INTERFACE

Mount McKinley

Interpretive Theme

The main interpretive theme is the story of Mount McKinley, (the highest mountain on this continent) the Alaska Range and its related glaciers and glacial streams. Equally important to the main theme is the story of the tundra lands; its vegetation cover, and the wildlife therein.

Although the views of Mount McKinley are outstanding from the north side it is considered to be an area for viewing wildlife; from the proposed southern extension the mountain massif will be the principal feature.

These stories are told through interpretive exhibits, talks, walks, campfire programs in the general McKinley station area; conducted bus tours to the Eielson visitor center; and interpretive wayside signs along the road. The view of Mount McKinley and the Muldrow Glacier are superb viewed from the Eielson visitor center. Here, too, the caribou herds, grizzly bears and other wildlife may be seen. Interpretive exhibits, walks, talks, and campfire programs would be initiated at the proposed Tokositna site and exhibits and signs would be placed along the Parks Highway at appropriate wayside places with outstanding views.

Geological, archeological and historical stories provide subthemes that can be enjoyed throughout the park. The interpretation of the dog sled history in the park and Alaska, plus the actual demonstration are popular with the visitors in the headquarters area.

DENALI CITY (TOKOSITNA PROJECT)

Most people are in agreement on the desirability of constructing new visitor facilities on the south side of Mt. McKinley in the Tokositna River area. The site is far superior from many standpoints from the current site of the "hotel" on the north side.

The controversy has centered on what the size and scope of the development should be. My vision is that we have a major hotel/visitor facility development which would attract international visitation on a year round basis. Others have felt that a rustic lodge-style development would be appropriate. But at the present time there are no specific development plans and no one, including myself, knows what the eventual development would look like.

Any development must be in keeping with the economic and environmental constraints and opportunities of the site and market conditions. We have begun these economic and environmental studies, but considerable more study needs to be undertaken. My ideas like those of others, must be in keeping with the results of such studies. Consequently, we are only in the conceptual stage of the project. Nothing is concrete.

DENALI CITY (TOKOSITNA PROJECT) SLIDE SHOW

1. STATE OF ALASKA MAP, PROJECT LOCATION
2. SOUTHCENTRAL AK. MAP, PROJECT LOCATION
3. CURRENT PARK SERVICE HOTEL ON NORTH SIDE NOW BURNED DOWN IN PART AND SUPPLEMENTED WITH OLD TRAIN CARS
4. VIEW OF MCKINLEY FROM WONDER LAKE ON NORTH SIDE, 90 MILES BY BUS FROM HOTEL, CAN BE VIEWED ONLY 40% OF TIME IN SUMMER
5. MCKINLEY FROM SOUTH SIDE, BETTER VIEWS, BETTER WEATHER, FEWER WILDLIFE CONFLICTS, CLOSER TO ANCHORAGE
6. LOOKING UP RUTH GORGE ON SOUTH SIDE
7. GOING UP SUSITNA VALLEY TO MCKINLEY
8. CLOSE UP MAP OF DENALI STATE PARK AND SITE
9. VIEW TO MCKINLEY FROM LONG POINT ABOVE SITE, UP TOKOSITNA GLACIER
10. VIEW TO MCKINLEY FROM LONG POINT
11. VIEW OVER SITE UP TOKOSITNA GLACIER
12. VIEW TO MCKINLEY FROM TOKOSITNA MOUNTAINS ACROSS TOKOSITNA VALLEY FROM SITE.
13. MODEL OF COVERED RECREATION AREA (16 acres) DESIGNED BY TAC FOR ICELAND GOVERNMENT
14. CONCEPTUAL DESIGN OF COVERED DEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY BE POSSIBLE AT TOKOSITNA
15. VIEW OUT OF COVERED DEVELOPMENT TOWARD MCKINLEY FROM SITE (CONCEPTUAL)

A FEASIBILITY AND DEVELOPMENT STUDY
FOR A MT. MCKINLEY RECREATION CITY

Presented in the
LAND USE PLANNING COMMISSION OF ALASKA

By Senator Mike Gravel

NATURAL SYSTEMS

Viewshed
Topography
Climate
Soils
Geology
Vegetation
Mammals
Birds
Fish

PURPOSE
OR
OBJECTIVES

NEED
FOR
SERVICES

LAND
SUITA-
BILITIES

CONCEP
TUAL
PLAN

PROSPECTUS
FOR
DEVELOP-
MENT

CULTURAL SYSTEMS

Archaeological
Historical
Tourism
Economics
Access
Land Status
Other Plans

OBJECTIVES

INVENTORY

ANALYSIS

RECOMMENDATIONS

* WORK PLAN *

RECOMMENDATIONS and FEASIBILITY REPORT

TOKOSITNA LODGE/VISITOR CENTER

DENALI STATE PARK

Arctic Ocean

Yukon River

CANADA

Fairbanks

Proposed
Park
additions

Mt. McKinley National Park

Bering Sea

Denali State Park

Proposed site

Anchorage

100 miles

Juneau

North Pacific Ocean

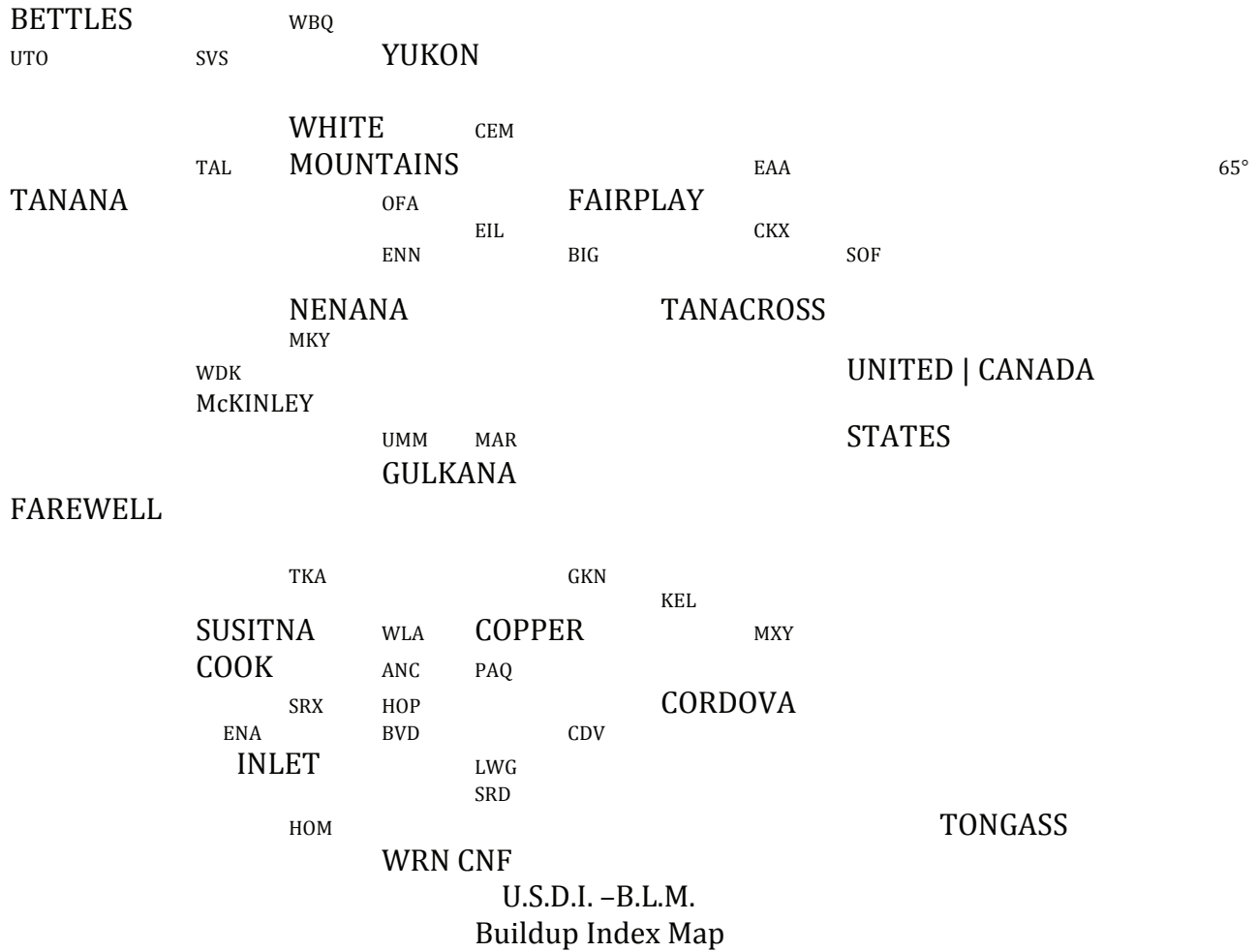
ALASKA

PROPOSED RECREATIONAL CITY DEVELOPMENT

SENATOR MIKE GRAVEL

OCTOBER, 1978

- | | | | |
|----|-----------|----|-----|
| 4. | Summit | -- | UM |
| 5. | Talkeetna | -- | TKA |
| 6. | Farewell | -- | FWL |



Date-----1500 hrs. ADT

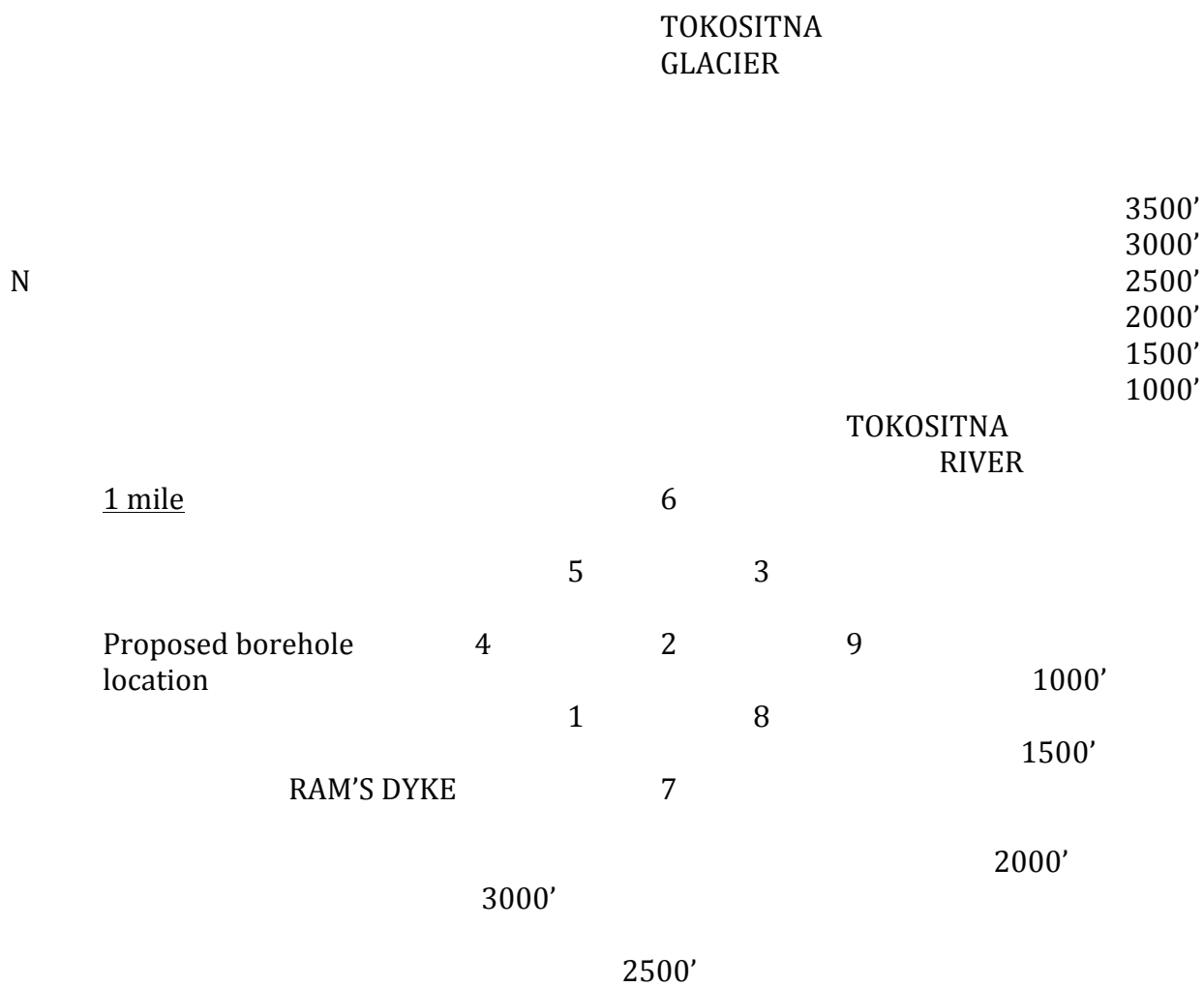


Figure 1
SITE LOCATION

MT. HUNTER

TOKOSITNA

RUTH

OVERLOOK

KANIKULA

GLACIER

GLACIER

GLACIER

BYERS LAKE

LODGE

HIKING TRAILS

CAMPGROUNDS

HIGHWAY REST AREAS

PICNIC AREAS

WINTER RECREATION

DENALI STATE PARK

TOKOSITNA

NPS – STATE FACILITY (PROPOSED)

LODGE

VISITOR CENTER

HIKING TRAILS

PICNIC AREAS

CAMPGROUNDS

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

RIVER TRIPS

WINTER RECREATION

TRAPPER

CREEK

NPS-STATE (PROP.)

INFORMATION

ADMINISTRATIVE

HEADQUARTERS

EMPLOYEE QTRS.

TALKEETNA
AIRPORT

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

DENALI STATE PARK

PROPOSED ADDITIONS MT. MCKINLEY N.P.

Sno-
engineering
Inc.

Resource
Management

October 3, 1979

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Mike Gravel

FROM: Stacy Standley

RE: North American Ski Industry Comments

You asked that we prepare some comments on the North American ski industry and the international competition as well as the role that is envisioned for Denali City. The comments are prepared for your use at the Alaskan Visitor Bureau Meeting on October 13th. You further asked that we include a series of five to ten slides with a brief narrative that you could use in explaining the concept of Denali City. Since you speak extemporaneously, I have picked out a series of key words and given you an explanation. These words form the nucleus of the industry jargon and should easily integrate into your overall comments regarding the development concept of Denali City.

SS: jf

Attachment

Cognitive dissonance -- Simply stated, cognitive dissonance means that a person did not experience what they thought they were going to experience. This concept is critical to Denali City. The entire development and marketing of the development must be predicted upon the idea that no unfulfillable promises will be made with by design or through the advertising message disseminated to the public. All elements of the product mix must work, must meet the needs of a specific market segment and must provide a high level of satisfaction. The incorporation of an element merely for the sake of promoting an amenity that does not have the ability of standing by itself must not occur. As an example, don't design white river rafter trips for the Tokositna if a ten-year old can wade the river in his sneakers. Similarly, don't sell the river as the greatest salmon fishery in Alaska if the last time a salmon was sited there was off the back of a fresh fish delivery truck. Behold and promote only those elements that the site and the Alaskan heritage can provide at a comparative advantage to the competition.

Auto-generative – Total product of in the case of Denali City, project concept is essential to the creation of a new town. If the facility can be designed which is not only responsive to the existing needs of the visitors, but comprehensively looks at what can be done with the Alaskan experience in a total concept dealing with all the elements of the various market segments of society, a new town can be created that will be successful because it will be auto-generative. It will thrive within itself and part of its purpose will be a real community fulfilling the needs of a broad spectrum of users. This should be strived for at Denali and it separates a total resort complex from a ski area or visitor's center and will create demand.

Synergy/shopping center syndrome – The concept of a bigger magnet being able to attract more iron filings from a greater distance is the underlying theory of synergy or the shopping center syndrome. As it relates to Denali and more precisely to Alaska, Denali can become another element of the Alaskan experience tied in with McKinley itself, Kodiak Island, the City of Anchorage, the Copper and Wrangle Mountains, the Eskimo culture, whale watching, hunting and fishing, as well as the cultural heritage of the state. All of these elements together create a large shopping center capable of attracting tourists and visitors from around the world as opposed to a few local shoppers to a local “7-11”. Denali City and Mount McKinley can become the Sears and Roebuck at one end of the shopping center with Anchorage and Montgomery Ward at the other. The myriad of activities offered at Alaska become the specialty shops in between. Without the two major attractions, none of the shops will do well, but with the major attractions, the entire shopping center prospers. This can be the underlying scene and justification for Denali.

6-30-79
TOKOSITNA BRIEFING

name

Maurice Wilson
Rod Schwilling
Larry Wilder
Mary Reardon
Terry McWilliams
John Cook
George Bryson
BILL KANE
STACY STANDLEY
Tim Jones
Michael Frome
HOWARD WAGNER
Bill Young
Vicky M. Sung
PAUL KALKWARE
JERRY WARD
PETER A. SANBORN
CLIVE JONES
Lynne Gravel
ADAM KRIVATSY
Van Radosevich
ALAN MEINERS
Mike Gravel

organization

DOT/ PF planning
MATSU Planning Dept
StAtE PARKS Mat-SU District
Matanuska Borough Planning Comm-
State Parks
NPS
Daily News
SNO-eNGINEERING
"
Alaska Magazine
Columnist, L.A. Times
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
AK. Div. Geol. & Geophy & Surv.
AK. Div. of Parks
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
STATE PARKS DEPT.
FAWCETT McDERMITT CAVANAUGH INC.
ECONOMICS RESEARCH ASSOC.

HKS Associates
Alaska Division of Parks
"

Southeast Alaska Empire
Juneau, Alaska
NOV 16 1977

Gravel Proposes McKinley Bubble

ANCHORAGE (AP) – Alaska Senator Mike Gravel says a recreational city built near Mt. McKinley under a glass dome could increase Alaska tourism and become “one of the physical wonders of the world”

The Democratic senator told the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce on Monday the city could offer a unique, controlled environment beneath a dome so high it wouldn't be threatened by golf balls.

He said the dome could be built on state park land with state funds, while the city itself could be developed in private enterprise.

Gravel said if Congress plans to double the size of Mt. McKinley National Park, it should help make it available to the public. So he intends to include a \$100 million provision in his d-2 legislation for a transportation system that also would serve the new city. That system would include rapid transit for a 40-minute trip from Anchorage to the park.

Gravel said the city's power could be provided by the Susitna Dam project, which

he predicts will be online by 1986.

He visited the proposed new city site at the foot of the Tokositna Glacier on Tuesday with a representative of TAC, a Boston architectural firm; Mayor Stacey Stanley of Aspen, Colo.; Alaska mountain climber Ray Genet and others.

Gravel said he is opposed to Aspen-style development at McKinley because “Alaska is not Aspen or Sun Valley.”

He said the new city will “have to compete with everything in the world at once. We've got to come out with something spectacular. The technology is there to do it.”

The proposal “may sound far-fetched and visionary,” Gravel said, “but I think it will be of benefit to Alaska.”

He said the plan is not tied in with the proposed new state capital near Willow.

“I expect legislation at some point that will say not one federal sou shall be used for moving the capital,” he said. “It is viewed Outside as conspicuous consumption.”

Gravel envisions Denali under glass

A resort community under glass, able to accommodate from 5,000 to 10,000 persons, is envisioned by Sen Mike Gravel as drawing worldwide attention as a new south entrance to Mt. McKinley National Park.

The city would contain a complex of major hotels under one roof, or a series of interlocking roofs, to provide year-around recreational facilities within Denali State Park by the mid 1980's.

Gravel spelled out the details in an Anchorage talk on Tuesday, then flew with a group of interested persons to the proposed site on the Tokositna River, approximately 10 miles north of Petersville and 15 miles due west of the Parks Highway.

"The site is widely accepted as one that would present few environmental problems," Gravel's legislative aide, Pat Pourchot, told the Frontiersman in a telephone interview.

"It's an aesthetically pleasing concept and would be a major, worldwide attraction at the border of an expanded national park."

Pourchot pointed out that under proposed legislation for the so-called d-2 lands, McKinley National Park would be expanded southward. However, the resort complex, which Gravel would call "Denali," would be on state lands. It would be connected with Anchorage by a mass transit system utilizing the "mag-lev" (magnetic levitation) principle, in which vehicles would travel at high speed on an air cushion. The journey from Anchorage to the new city would

take 40 minutes.

From the resort, visitors would take an aerial tramway to view points within Mt. McKinley National Park or utilize hiking trails and ski slopes in the area.

The resort would, moreover, be relatively close to the Susitna River hydroelectric dams at Devil Canyon and Watana, which are expected to be on stream and supplying power by 1986.

"The State of Alaska would be the prime sponsor in the senator's plan," Pourchot said, "It would be totally planned and coordinated by the state. There is no target date for its completion. We're at the bottom floor. Right now we're scoping the project. What we're hoping is that the state and the Department of the Interior can work together."

Pourchot and Gravel planned to incorporate his proposal as a major part of his d-2 legislation affecting the national interest lands under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Pourchot said Gravel had received "good reception" to the idea from state officials, including Gov. Jay S. Hammond.

"The governor has been very interested," he said. "Senator Pat Rodey has been very supportive."

Pourchot predicted the d-2 legislation incorporating the resort city concept would come to the floor of Congress sometime in the next session, in the summer or fall of 1978.

Covered city & Monorail touted

By AJC Staff

A glass-covered tourist city and a 150 mph monorail from Anchorage to McKinley National Park were envisaged by Sen. Mike Gravel for a meeting of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce.

And Gravel, federal and state parks officials and State Sen. Patrick Rodey, D-Spenard spent one day last week at the park site studying the land proposed for the city.

The site of the recreation city would be located on state park land near Mt. McKinley and would include an aerial tram to a peak within the federal park boundaries.

Gravel said he initially had the idea several years ago but shelved it recently due to pressing activity on D2 land withdrawals under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

"If we are to double the size of McKinley National Park via D2 legislation then the federal government has a responsibility to provide the resources to make the park available for all citizens," he said.

The city could be covered by a tent-like structure using the same type of Teflon used for friction points between pipe and supports on the trans-Alaska pipeline system or a huge geodesic dome such as those popularized by architect G. Buckminster Fuller.

"Such a dome would be two miles in diameter and five miles around," Gravel said. "By comparison, the downtown section of Anchorage from L St. to

Merrill Field would fit under it."

Bringing the park city closer to Anchorage would be a monorail transportation system using magnetic levitation and speeds of 150 mph to make travel time between the two a mere 40 minutes.

Final costs for such a complex have not been finalized, Gravel said, but also along for a fact-finding mission last week were representatives of Boston's TAC, the largest architectural engineering firm in the U.S.

A primary advantage of such a covered city, according to Gravel, would be the ability to control the weather within it. "We can't compete with an Aspen or Sun Valley because of limited daylight and cold temperatures," he said.

McKinley Park has the second highest overnight visitations of any national park," he said, "and that's with the current minimal accommodations and attractions."

With hotels running at 30-40 per cent capacity during the winter and related businesses following suit, he added, creation of the city and monorail would maximize our current capital investment in tourist related facilities.

And the Democratic Senator saw tie-ins with the Susitna Valley Watana dam project, which could be on line by 1986, and a new capital at Willow.

"Watana will be the second largest dam in the western hemisphere," he said. "What better use for the power it generates than such a recreation

•site is inspected

Continued from Page 1

city," he said, "and the monorail would make travel from Anchorage to the new capital a 15-20 minute trip."

Making the site inspection with Gravel and Rodey were Brian Harry, director of the state office of the National Park Service; Russ Dickinson, director of the park service's Northwest Region; Terry McWilliams, director of the state Division of Parks; Alex Cvianovich, director of Architects Collaborative of Cambridge, Mass.; Stacey Stanley, mayor of Aspen, Colo., and director of Aspen's snow engineering.

Continued on Page 15

Architectural Fabric Structures

DUPONT
TEFLON*
...makes it possible

“Teflon” was the natural choice for a permanent architectural fabric. Chemically inert and resistant to Sunlight and aging, the low coefficient Of friction of “Teflon” permits the Surface to be washed clean by rain. The technology necessary to coat “Teflon” on ‘Fiberglass’ with a permanent bond already existed having been developed to provide a nonstick coating for industrial conveyor belts.

The drama lab has a single mast and houses a 1215-seat theater. The four-masted campus center covers 57,000 square feet, including a two-story rectangular core which serves as a field house with 16,700 square feet of space on each floor. The upper level accommodates a basketball court with seating for 900 spectators. The lower level contains locker rooms, offices, exercise areas and a snack bar.

From the tops of the tension masts, one-inch bridge cables sweep down and are secured to the contoured earth and concrete block walls of the two buildings. Stretched over them is the roof, a translucent lightweight fabric woven of “Beta” glass yarns and coated with Du Pont “Teflon” TFE resin. The structures meet strict California building regulations and are, according to college officials, the first permanent, enclosed fabric-roof-structures in the United States.

The cost of conventional structures with equivalent facilities was estimated at \$5 to \$6 million; the La Verne College facility cost less than \$3 million.

4

**Campus Center
and Drama Lab
La Verne College
La Verne, California**

* Du Pont's registered trademark for fluorocarbon resins and film.

Now we're taking
u

TENSION

When an open structure may be desirable and spaces can be more moderate, the tension structure offers an affective alternative to air-supported structures. With unusual shapes and dramatic, architectural lines, tension structures provide visually stimulating forms while using minimal materials.

Tension structures take their stability only from shape and stress which give the almost weightless, flexible materials capacity to carry load in tension. Their characteristic double curved surfaces need support by cables, masts, or arches resulting in almost unlimited variations of shapes and spaces.

Tension structures of architectural fabric are the most direct way of utilizing materials. The fabric skin itself becomes one of the main load carrying components when reinforced by high strength steel cables and stressed to a predetermined level to take on a predetermined shape.

The shape and prestress of tension structures must be determined by strict mathematical methods requiring a computer for speed and accuracy. As the accompanying computer generated illustrations indicate, however, the engineering discipline is no barrier to visual imagination. The complex, flowing surfaces are inherently beautiful.

Stress in
Tension Structures
Computer Patterns

3

One of the first uses of the new architectural fabric with "Teflon" was at La Verne College in California, in a structure that effectively demonstrated the design flexibility afforded by the fabric.

The La Verne Complex consists of two mast-supported tension structures, a drama lab and a campus center.

**Now we are taking
0**

5

Pontiac Silverdome
Pontiac, Michigan

our experience to the top.

8

Schoolhouse
Anaktuvuk Pass, Alaska

Anaktuvuk Pass, Alaska, is 100 miles north of the Arctic Circle. Winters are long and bitterly cold. For their new vocational school the community chose a tension structure covered with architectural fabric coated with "Teflon".

The structure, enclosing 7,500 square feet and fully insulated with 8 inches of insulation, was built at a cost of \$90 per square foot. Building costs at this location normally run \$120 per square foot or more.

The structure consists of two 58½ foot diameter domed octagonal buildings joined by a 24-foot square domed vestibule. One of the octagonal structures contains vocational classrooms, while the other serves as storage for community vehicles brought there for repair and maintenance by students. Both octagonal units are 25 feet high from ground to crown, with the arch's spring line 18 feet above the ground in the classroom dome.

In the classroom structure, a 25-foot square enclosure houses the furnace room, lavatories and storage rises on the timber platform six feet above the ground. The vehicular storage dome has a concrete slab floor at grade.

The exterior cables run from the ring at the crown to bolts at the base of the legs of the A-frames. When tensioned, these give the domes their ridge and valley configuration.

"Teflon" is Du Pont's registered trademark for its fluorocarbon resins and films.

In Alaska a

9

Recreational Facility
Ryad University
Ryadh, Saudi Arabia

Spider's Houses Saurian Cranes

Light, plane bearing structures are being investigated and built at the Stuttgart Institute of Professor Frei Otto (left). The scientists are trying to imitate on a larger scale the structural principles of nature. The building housing the institute itself is an example of this (above, left). The model of the building (below, left) reveals its netlike construction: if the picture is turned upside down, the hanging net becomes the roof of the building. Below is shown a glimpse of the interior of one of the lecture halls of the university institute.

The same static forces as are found in a spider's web (above: a funnel spider) also act in Frei Otto's tent-like structure, which can be used as a conference and exhibition hall. The light, soaring structure presents an agreeable contrast to other monumental congress buildings, and is nevertheless very durable. A telescopic shaft in the centre supports the whole weight of the street net.

ENGINEERS BLOW

**Airplane passengers
descend a stairful of air.
inflatable escapeway
permits fast exits and
folds flat when
not in use**

“Company’s coming; inflate the guest house!”

“Inflate the guest house?”

It could happen. Today we lounge on air-filled plastic chairs; tomorrow we may sleep under air-filled plastic roofs.

For three months last year, Mr. and Mrs. David Schumacher sampled life in a balloon-type building near Wingfoot Lake, Ohio. Fans instead of walls held up the filmy roof of their dome home. On a grassy third-of-an-acre within, indoor and outdoor living merged. Furniture floated on room-size islands in a sea of greenery.

David Schumacher and his wife Vickie tested vinyl-covered living for the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. Later they reported that the lack of privacy sometimes gave them a bird-cage feeling they called “bubble fever.” The wide-open roof also produced “reverse claustrophobia.”

BUBBLE BUILDINGS

Photographs by Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company

“One night I got frightened because I felt small compared to my surroundings,” said Vickie. “But during the day we enjoyed the feeling of freedom and closeness to sunlight.”

Vickie suggested waterproof furnishings to reduce housework to a weekly hosing down. David liked the idea of a portable home.

Neither worried about the roof falling in on them in case of a puncture or fan failure. “It would be inconvenient but no great danger,” David decided. “The roof would just settle down slowly and gracefully.”

Men have toyed for years with the idea of blowing up such bubble buildings. The promise of a cheap, instant enclosure that folds suitcase flat appeals to nomadic moderns.

You can inflate a simple storage structure in your own backyard using an exhaust fan and a

At home in a dome, the David Schumachers cook, eat, and sleep under a vinyl bubble. An opaque covering arches over living areas (above). Transparent plastic lets the sun shine in on pool and patio at left.

Not only the bladder with which frogs call their mates is a pneumatic structure, but also other forms such as the tomato, egg yolk, grains of maize, or bubbles of foam on water. Pneumatic toys are only light and flexible, but also very durable and not dangerous.

This model crane was built on the lines of a spine and is capable of the most astonishing movements, as every single vertebra is operated by a control cable. That such principles prove their worth in practice was demonstrated by the saurian, who had to move their body-load of tons by means of such a structure.

There is hardly another slogan in the advertising trade which has been more successful than the good old saying: "has proved its value over several decades." As an "open Sesame!" for purses, it is used again and again, for anything that has succeeded in retaining the customers' favour for so long, a product of twenty or thirty years' evolution, so to speak, just must be good – and often it really is too. However, it is not only on the open market that the value of certain things is demonstrated over long periods, but also, above all, in nature, where products have successfully subsisted not merely for decades but for millions of years full of "hardness tests" and continual improvements. In this field, works of espionage would really be worthwhile. And, in fact, it is taking place. For in spite of all progress it is becoming ever more widely known that applied science of nature is always a few aeons ahead of human technology. And however paradoxical it may appear, the greater our insight into nature becomes, thanks to our technical progress, the greater is the distance

Although a short extension would tie the site to the existing road system, the primary means of transportation from Anchorage would be by modern rapid transit. The 100-mile "run" from Anchorage could be made in roughly one-half hour via a magnetic-levitation type system. Such a system could also be tied to the new State capital in the Willow area of the move is eventually approved by Alaskans. A possible power source for the system, as well as the recreational city, could be the proposed hydroelectric developments on the nearby Susitna River.

We are now only at the idea stage of this proposal. Much more study and planning are required. However, I think such a development could take place in a manner compatible with Alaska's magnificent natural environment and at the same time bring these values to people throughout the world.

MEMO TO SENATOR
FROM BILL HOFFMAN
Page 3

just three days ago. He is still very interested in your proposal and he thinks the first step should be a site selection study this summer, at minimal cost. Since he knows the McKinley area better than anyone else, mentioning his name to the Commission may be worth something.

them prior to us developing a proposal strategy are necessary at present.

The public hearing for feedback on the current proposals is scheduled for early December. The results of this meeting are going to give us a great deal more insight as to how enthusiastic a support we will find in the State Legislature, as well as in the Department of Parks. Evidently the "1984 Anchorage" group needs continued pacification. They evidently are jealous; they would like to see a project built closer in, which would obviate the need for skiing in Denali. Talking with Jim Branch, I've reviewed the list of alternate ski sites that were investigated both by Sno-Engineering and by others over the years, and Denali sits by itself in terms of quality. There are no other projects that could come on line with the same ski potential as we have identified at Denali. Doing some public relations work with some of these people on a rather quiet basis is going to be necessary, it would seem, to get either their support or, at least, get them to be not openly hostile to the project.

Conflicting reports surround the position of the Anchorage Visitor's Bureau, and I think this needs to be assessed; perhaps Bob Mitchell has completed that assessment by the time I've written this memo, but it sounds as though they've moved from a position of endorsement to perhaps one of wait and see. Bell Sheffield should have a feel for their position and work as a person to strengthen their position for Denali.

medical problems. I hope if you are in

In addition to these work items, several others come to mind as being necessary in order to give proper focus, scope, a scale to the project. These include:

1. Identification of the appropriate theme for the overall project;
2. Architectural design and standards;
3. Olympic bid interface;
4. Market analysis of international opportunities;
5. Discussion, determination of international institute of center;
6. Development of a comprehensive master plan
(separate from a development plan);
7. Resolution of access from Anchorage'
8. Construction management.

There obviously is no shortage of work to be done to get the project ready for groundbreaking. However, the biggest drawback seems to be in enlisting enthusiastic support on the part of the state park as well as national park personnel, and getting a commitment for continued funding out of the State Legislature. We can develop a research proposal and a work program for subsequent phases of inquiry, but without a sympathetic and supportive ear Denali City will go nowhere. I envision our most important next Step as one of developing a strategy to insure the project does Not deteriorate into a day center with coin operated telescopes And Stewart hot sandwich lunches.

perhaps as long as Stevens is in a role controlling their budget. A great deal of thought is going to be necessary to figure out how to successfully keep the project alive at a level that keeps you interested.

CONCLUSION

Rather than suggesting a concrete course of action, it seems that in the short run “wait and see” is appropriate until we can identify the players. Secondly, a covert role for the near term (six months to a year future) will be appropriate. Finally, moving ahead with the Institute, treating it as a separate, free-standing element that may be developed in Alaska whether or not Denali City comes to life, appears to be a sound direction in which to move.

UNITED STATES SENATE
MEMORANDUM

DIRIGIBLES FOR DENALI

DEC. 2, 1980

Our blimp man from the Navy, David Baily called today with two pieces of information.

1. In Hawaii, State Rep. Gerald de Heer has been involved in getting state funding to study blimps for passenger use in the Islands.

They have done concept studies at this time and other research is on-going.

808 548-7804 (13th Dist. Honolulu)

2. International meeting in Edmonton, Alberta June 1981, sponsored Int. Cargo Handlers

One session will address potential of lighter than air passenger applications

Meeting be coordinated by:

Deputy Premier, Rollie MacFarlane
403 427-2081

NON-RIGID AIRSHIP SIZING TRENDS
AS AFFECTED BY CHANGE IN PAYLOAD
(PASSENGERS)

DBB
19 NOV 80

- ASSUMPTIONS:
- 1) CREW OF 6 (3 ARE STEWARDS)
 - 2) BUOYANCY RATION, B IS FIXED @ 0.86
 - 3) MISSION IS 4 DAILY 200 NMI
ROUND TRIPS
 - 4) DATA IS BASED ON EXTRAPOLATION
FROM MARITIME PATROL AIRSHIP
STUDY

LARGEST PAST
NAVY AIRSHIP
(ZPG-3W)

X10²

$$V= 90 \text{ KNOTS (CONST) } \sqrt[3]{VOL}$$
$$V= 50 \text{ KNOTS (CONST) } \sqrt[3]{VOL}$$
$$V= 30 \text{ KNOTS (CONST) } \sqrt[3]{VOL}$$

NOTE.
FOR CALCULATION OF
VEHICLE LENGTH AND
DIAMETER...
L= 3.394
D= 0.771
(FITNESS RATIO,
LENGTH/DIAMETER,
IS CONSTANT AT 4.4)

GOODYEAR GZ-20A
ADVERTISING AIRSHIP

NUMBER OF PASSENGERS @ 200 LBS EACH

50	100	150	200	250
----	-----	-----	-----	-----

570 FT

320 FT

119 FT

131 FT

Figure 14. General Arrangement of Hybrid Deltoid Airship

The hybrid *Guppoid* airship is illustrated in Figure 15. The hull may be that of a conventional rigid as shown here or tailored to particular requirements. A large, high-aspect-ratio wing provides 50 percent of the lift. Although superficially resembling a conventional airplane, the fuselage structure must be extremely efficient in the structural weight-to-wetted area ration: 10 to 15 times

better than that of a typical airplane. The pure STOL approach is shown here with prop-rotors disposed along the wing. However, the layout shown for the Deltoid can also be adapted here for its advantages in controllability as well as its elimination of ballast. Since a lower buoyancy ration appears to be optimum, this approach would be even more desirable on the *Guppoid* type.

435 FT

160 FT

720 FT

730 FT

Figure 15. General Arrangement of Hybrid Guppoid Airship

DIRIGIBLES

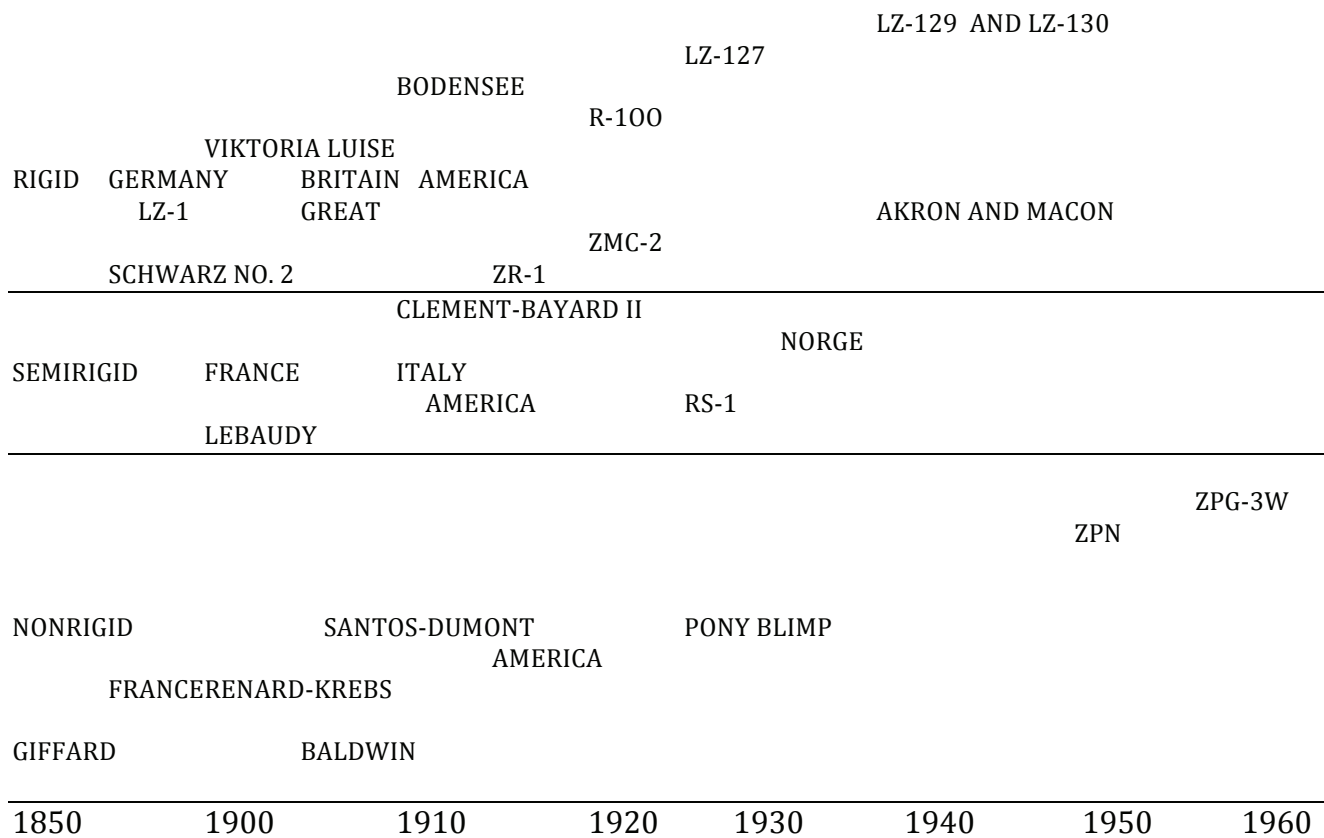


Figure 1. Historical Overview of Airship Development

11/20/77
--Anch. Alaska
2942

Dear Senator Gravel,

I heard something on the radio about some domed city near Mt. McKinley and think the whole idea is irresponsible and crazy.

I have been attempting to get some updated information on the national helium reserve since before my book:

Move Over Jet
Here Comes The

were published and

ZEP

it sums people (think?) would rather talk about doomed cities.

So anyway, it would be nice to know whether or not the government is still producing helium +/- or whether or not the private industries are still producing helium for the government (not just storing it).

Also, what are the density and purity levels and what exactly, is the difference?

Anything you can find concerning these matters would be greatly appreciated.

Most Sincerely,

Move Over Jet
Here Comes The
ZEP

MR. GARY O. BRIGGS
|||||
/////

Gravelsburg, Alaska

Domed city without helium

Gravelsburg, Alaska, Domed city
with plenty of helium.

where's the helium report?

MR. GARY O BRIGGS

210.5/BRIGGS, Gary O.
Pat/Hilda

December 22, 1977

Gary O. Briggs
////////////////////
\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\

Dear Gary:

Thank you for your additional thoughts on my proposed recreational city. As I emphasized in my letter, the specific design and construction time frame is still a ways off. However, I, too, envision a structurally supported roof rather than an air "bubble" concept.

Your thoughts on Zeppelin travel are quite intriguing. I, of course, share your enthusiasm for "futuristic" concepts and the need for long-range thinking.

Kindest regards.

Sincerely,

Mike Gravel

Enclosures

0.634-4122
H 703-687.6579

0.634-4122
H 703-687.6579

PO BOX 2314
FAIRBANKS, AK 99707
AUGUST 14, 1979

Senator Mike Gravel
3121 Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Gravel,

Your proposal to create a "Denali World" at the Mt. McKinley (Denali) Park area strikes me as incongruent. However, to be sure I understand the situation, I request that you forward some information on the idea.

I have enclosed a copy of an article from the Spring 79 issue of Alternative Futures, the Journal of Utopian Studies, which discusses Disney World and its implication on the desires of the American public. Regardless of the similarities or dissimilarities of it to your idea, a close reading of the article should bring out a clear understanding of what really appears to the American public. Whether or not you can agree with its synopsis will dictate whether you choose to exploit the findings or on the contrary, to work towards a redirection and rethinking of what we SHOULD want.

Sincerely,
//////////|||\\

Alternative Futures

SPRING 1979 THE JOURNAL OF UTOPIAN STUDIES

Irony and Anarchy

DVID L. HALL

Science Fiction and the Real Future

JOHN WOODCOCK

The Steel-Gray Saviour

W. WARREN WAGAR

A Radical Nominalist

Looks at Community

ROBERT S. FOGARTY

Jack C. Wolf on Disney World

Charlotte Waterlow: Utopia is Coming!

Book Reviews

New Center

\$2.50

Observations

JACK C. WOLF

Disney World: America's Vision

*It is time, in the West, to
defend not so much human rights
as human obligations.*

-Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn
Harvard Commencement,
Spring, 1978

When Solzhenitsyn made the above statement at the Harvard commencement ceremonies, he was articulating a problem, which has plagued utopian thought, very probably, since its inception. The problem of individual rights versus the rights of society has always been a complex one, and I do not intend to try and resolve it here. All I want to do is suggest how the problem has been influential in changing popular concepts of utopia as a result of the accelerating transformation of the basis of society, especially American, from the producer economy to a consumer economy. Disney World, as the quintessential representation of a consumer economy, is, logically, one of the most favored of American diversions.

In earlier stages of history, utopian thought could largely ignore the inherent conflict between the rights of society and those of the individual, because the thrust of utopian concern was in the direction of fulfilling

ALASKA

MIKE GRAVEL

UNITED STATES SENATE
Washington, D.C.

September 21, 1979

\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\
//////////
\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\

Dear Thomas:

Thank you for your letter regarding my proposal for a recreation development on the south side of Mt. McKinley. I read with great interest the enclosed article by Jack Wolf on Disney World.

Although Mr. Wolf presents an interesting academic analogy of Disney World as representative of this nation's decadent, child-like tendencies, he appears to know little about recreation or people's leisure time activities. Recreation is, almost by definition, something we do, possibly need to do, which is quite dissimilar from our day-to-day lives. It is not that we all would like to live permanently in a Mickey Mouse world of childishness and exaggeration, but rather that the Disney World Environment offers a break from our normal work. The extension of the author's arguments would be that people should not indulge themselves in fictional reading, viewing Salvador Dali paintings, or watching football games. All of these scarcely depict real life and could readily be accused of fostering our secret desires for "immortality". At some point I think we all must admit that some surrealism in life is a necessary ingredient for realistic living.*

(...)

(*excerpt*)

ARTHUR R. TIMM

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT

//////////
\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\\

November 22, 1977

The Honorable Senator Mike Gravel
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C,

Dear Senator Gravel:

In connection with your proposed enclosed city at Mt. McKinley National Park and connecting monorail: as you envision it, would the monorail parallel existing traffic corridors or would it cross Knik Arm near Anchorage (thereby eliminating tens of miles of distance and minimizing costly land acquisition)?

Very truly yours,

A. R. Timm

MIKE GRAVEL
ALASKA

UNITED STATES SENATE
Washington, D.C.

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Senator Gravel

FROM: Stacy Standley

RE: Current Status of Denali City

DATE: October 22, 1980

INTRODUCTION

I have reviewed and organized all of the reports and files available in our offices here in Washington. Three reports are not currently in our library, however they have been requested from Alaska. I will summarize the current status of the development proposals that have been proffered by the consultant consortium. Additionally, I have discussed the project with several of the consultants, as well as the National Park Service, in order to determine how the project should proceed, what is the current status, what is the response to the proposals that have been made, and how best we might proceed with developing the funding for the subsequent stages of the study.

Finally, we have looked at a strategy that seems appropriate for keeping the project alive and getting your involvement back at a level where some direction and guidance can be given to the ultimate development plan.

MIKE GRAVEL
ALASKA

UNITED STATES SENATE
Washington, D.C.

DENALI

\$1 MIL. PROJECT
OUTLINE PROPOSAL FOR NEXT PHASE
18 MONTH PROJECT

JAPANESE
EUROPEANS

|
|

MKT. RESEARCH
OLD PROPOSAL OF SS

FOCUS GROUPS:
WORLD TRADE
CULTURE CENTRE
\$ CONTRIBUTIONS FROM COUNTRIES
ENERGY INSTITUTE ?
TRANSIT-
DIRIGIBLES, ETC.

FINANCING OF PROJECT
DEVELOPMENT PLAN

MICROENERGY

CURRENT STATUS

At present, the Denali project is bogged down. There seem to be several reasons that it has temporarily come to a halt. Among these are the apparent lack of a champion in Alaska. Senator Rodey is not taking an active, aggressive role in moving Denali ahead. Vickie Sung has been out of touch for a period of time, due to personal illness and, when she was involved, her role and enthusiasm were dictated by State Park policy as opposed to a genuine enthusiasm for the project. She is additionally perceived by consultants as being in over her head. At the State Park level, Chip Dennerlein has evidently become jealous of the Park's involvement because of a comment attributed to the Senator that Parks are in over their heads. With the outcome of the Senate election up in the air, it seems as though nobody has a feeling whether or not the project has a future now that you'll not be influencing it as Senator.

Adam Kravatsky, with HKS, feels that the project is bogged down for many of the reasons stated above, and he feels that the project won't move without your support and direction. However, he gets the feedback in Alaska that there is a great deal of misunderstanding involving your concept of the City, and that a strong overt position with high visibility on your behalf would not be in either your best interest or the best interest of Denali City. His recommendation is that you become a backroom strategist for a period of time to allow feelings and misunderstandings to get put back into the proper perspective.

Alaskan Advocate
Anchorage, Ak.
NOV 23 1977

Benjamin's Byline

John
Greely

Gravel: dealers choice

Anchorage

Sen. Mike Gravel returned to the state from Washington this week, carrying with him a grandiose plan for a dome-covered city at the southern base of Mt. McKinley to be called "Denali." (See *For the Record*, page 20).

This is not a new idea. Gravel first proposed a weatherproof ski resort (presumably with Styrofoam snowflakes) several years ago, but it didn't even get off the bunny trail.

It's Gravel's contention that "we have to come out with something spectacular" to attract the dollars of skiers and tourists away from the popular slopes of Idaho and Colorado. Maybe so.

To be sure, "something spectacular" is part of Gravel's style.

During the first term in the Senate for example, the Democrat walked a one-man picket line in front of the White House to protest the underground nuclear test on Amchitka Island.

The following year, in 1971, Gravel made national headlines by convening his subcommittee at midnight one night and rendering an emotion reading of the then secret Pentagon Papers.

DOME CLIPPINGS

opinion and feedback

The next year, he flew around the country and then appeared in Miami to promote himself on national television for the Democratic vice presidential nomination with George McGovern.

In 1973, the senator defied all the conventional strategists by winning narrow approval of an amendment exempting the trans-Alaska oil pipeline from further environmental lawsuits. It was a daring move that helped him to re-election in 1974, the only off-year in his series of spectaculars.

In 1975, Gravel startled state officials when he urged them to pony up the multi-billion dollar backing needed to build a huge hydroelectric dam on the Susitna River. Unlike the Amchitka nuclear blast, the Pentagon Papers case, his vice-presidential bid and the pipeline, Gravel's proposal for the Susitna Project is still pending. Sort of.

The year 1976 was not a real spectacular period for Gravel—unless you count the headlines generated by his alleged dalliance with Elizabeth Ray—but then came 1977.

After visiting Central America, Gravel decided Alaska should get behind building a new Panama Canal to ship Prudhoe Bay oil to the East Coast with supertankers that can't make it through the existing passage.

The canal scheme is still hanging fire, but it appears to have been sidetracked temporarily by the Carter Administration's approval of an overland pipeline from California to handle surplus Alaskan crude.

So, here comes the senator with his domed-city idea, replete with a super-speed train between the mountain and Anchorage. To add weight to his announcement, Gravel flew over the Great One with a handful of would be domed-city promoters.

I just wonder if they played cards along the way. A friend of mine recalls a poker game with Gravel while they were in a high-flying military aircraft a few years ago over Nome.

Gravel seemed to be only an average player, my friend remembers. That is until you noticed he won whenever it was his deal.

There was no sleight of hand, but since it was dealer's choice, Gravel could be counted on to call a game almost nobody had ever heard of.

Of course, there were usually plenty of chances to draw extra cards in Gravel's game, and, my friend recalls, there were always quite a few wild cards.

ALASKA JOURNAL OF COMMERCE
ANCHORAGE, AK
NOV 21 1977

Maturity

Here we go again—more examples of the coming of Age of Alaska. On the one hand the first indigenous news service for the state, while on the other a bold idea for making government plans for federal land withdrawals serve Alaskans and our growing economy.

The Alaska Radio Network as a first is a sleeper. Its importance as an indicator of Alaska's maturity sneaks up on you. A prerequisite for a state radio news network is two fold: there has to be a need and there has to be an ability to fill it.

Only when a state has sufficiently matured will the need become obvious. Until that point the state's people will be satisfied with outside networks for national news with an outlet of a national wire service sufficient for state news.

We've reached the point. Match this with the abilities of our friend Gordon Parker and you have another Alaskan benchmark.

No one has ever said Sen. Mike Gravel was a wallflower. And although we may differ with his politics, we certainly won't fault his vision in proposing a covered city near McKinley National Park, an aerial tram to nearby peaks and a 150-mile-per-hour monorail system linking the new city with Anchorage.

The possibilities are endless: year-around tourism at full bore, rapid transit to Mat-Su, etc. And the reasoning is solid: if the feds are to double the size of McKinley Park via D2 land withdrawals, then let them help Alaska realize the full potential McKinley affords in a positive manner.

Let the pundits have their fun with the idea. After all, they'd probably scoff if someone were to suggest a multi-billion dollar oil pipeline system that crosses the entire state.

Dome is doomed, not the proposal

Perhaps every Teflon dome has a silver lining.

From the grandiose concept of a tent-covered city on the slopes of Mt. McKinley to the most recent proposal for a simpler “world class” resort, the planned Denali recreation development has undergone a healthy metamorphosis. The dream of a major tourist development in the shadow of North America’s tallest peak remains a reality; much of the flashy furbelow once associated with the plan has been shed.

The idea surfaced first as the brainchild of Sen. Mike Gravel, and drew more jeers than cheers as he outlined a futuristic vision of the resort sheltered in perpetual summer beneath a city-sized Teflon umbrella. Both the senator’s penchant for grandiloquent description and his undeniable gift for promotion were much in evidence as the story of the Denali Dome unfolded.

Anchorage Daily Times
Anchorage, Ak.
NOV 23 1977

Dreaming With Mike

Dear Editor:

Here at Crestfallen Manor, with the moss now frosted as winter deepens, some reflective thinking seems in order.

If you believe the oldster on TV as he checks his pacemaker and then states, "It's an exciting time to be living in Valdez," I can tell you it is an exciting thing to dream along with Mike Gravel.

While Sen. Stevens works and works and works, his harness mate of the other persuasion dreams up three excitingly different things – one a brand new D2 land hill that sounds at first as if he really has the interests of Alaskan, secondly a brand new sea-level canal to replace the present Panama Canal, and now

a glass-domed city that will allow a Masters Championship to be played inside even if one sand trap is formed by the edge of the race track.

This is an interesting pattern. This has been the Gravel Gambit, all the more disturbing because it is successful. Let Ted do the work – the grinding, constant work so necessary to make this thing called the Senate operate – and Mike will do the dreaming.

It is an exciting thing to dream along with Mike – until the alarm clock of reality goes off. Then the thing that leaves you breathless is, after all, just a touch of asthma.

Irish Waller
Elmendorf AFB

Anchorage Daily News, Anchorage, AK, NOV 16, 1977

Sen. Mike Gravel, right, discusses his plan for a domed city Tuesday with mountaineer Ray Genet, left, Alex Cvianovich, director of Architects Collaborative, and state Sen. Pat Rodey.

Admittedly, a 'Buck Roger-ish' idea

Gravel tours proposed site of dome city at McKinley

U.S. Sen. Mike Gravel wants to see an enclosed city built at the foot of Mt. McKinley, with adjacent ski resort, all powered by electricity from a dam he wants to build on the Susitna River.

Gravel envisions a city of 5,000-10,000 capable of accommodating 20,000 tourists a day, and tied to Anchorage by a monorail that would shoot visitors to the park at 150 miles per hour.

Acknowledging that the idea "sounds awful Buck Roger-ish," Gravel is dead serious. The Democratic senator Tuesday led an entourage of federal and state officials and several architects to the site he has picked at McKinley.

THE glassed-in city would be north of Peter's Creek, in Denali State Park near the Tokochitna Glacier, Gravel said. In an interview with The Daily News, in a speech to the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce Monday, and in a press conference Tuesday, Gravel outlined his rekindled dreams for a Denali City, which he first proposed four years ago.

Gravel said he will tie the proposal for a city in with the d-2 legislation currently pending in Congress, with provisions for the city included in a package bill that will decide how much of the federal land in Alaska will be treated.

"It could be one of the great physical wonders of the world," Gravel said. "Can you imagine playing golf where the ball couldn't hit the roof, when it is 40 below outside?"

GRAVEL said he envisions a privately built city with a circumference of five miles, covered with a geodesic dome or "Teflon tent" which would enable the indoor temperature to be controlled.

Accompanied by aide Pat Pourchot, Sen. Mike Gravel walks up a slope to overlook the site of his proposed city Tuesday.

"In the winter months, we go into almost hibernation," Gravel told the chamber. "The capital improvements like hotels and restaurants lie fallow. If we could increase our tourist potential, we could maximize a potential we already have."

(Continued on Page 36)

•Gravel's city

(Continued from Page 1)

The state's junior senator said he plans to introduce legislation next year to pay for a study of such a city. He said the study would probably cost about \$500,000 with part of the cost to be paid from state funds.

STATE SEN. Pat Rodey, D-Anchorage, accompanied Gravel's entourage to the proposed site Tuesday, and he said afterwards he plans to introduce legislation to provide state funding for initial surveys. But, Rodey acknowledged his own visions for a city at the base of the mountain "are a little more modest," and don't include an artificial dome cover.

The city could become the center of visitor traffic to McKinley, taking much of the pressure off the existing visitor center at the eastern edge of the park, Brian Harry, director of the National Park Service's Alaska Office, said Tuesday.

Gravel did not put a price tag on the city, though he said "it would be expensive."

THE CITY could be completed by the mid-1980s according to Gravel. That would make the city a reality about the same time as the proposed Watana Dam project, which Gravel is shepherding through Congress. The Watana dam and a sister dam at Devil Canyon would pump almost seven billion kilowatt-hours of electricity a year into the railbelt area stretching from Seward to Fairbanks.

The dams – Watana would be about 25 miles from the city – would provide enough power to light up the enclosed city, illuminate a nearby ski slope and power its lifts, as well as to feed Anchorage's and Fairbanks' electricity demands.

Gravel will try to convince the federal government it should build a rapid-transit "magnetic levitation" monorail transportation system from Anchorage to the McKinley city.

Traveling with Gravel to the proposed site Tuesday were Rodey; Brian Harry, director of the Alaska office of the National Park Service; Russ Dickinson, director of the Park Service's Northwest Region; Terry McWilliams, director of the state Division of Parks; Alex Cvianovich, director Architects Collaborative of Cambridge, Mass.; Stacey Stanley, mayor of Aspen, Colo., and director of Snow Engineering of Aspen, and Mt. McKinley climbing guide Ray Genet.

Gravel said he did not expect the city proposal to draw fire from environmental interests, because he said his project would reduce tourist pressure on other areas of high environmental interest.

-- from the desk of martin j. wolf --

Larry Gage called:

National Park Service is scheduled to hold a news conference this Wednesday (covered by ABC and NBC) announcing decision to rebuild Mt. McKinley Hotel on same site and then later to provide satellite facilities Within the park.

Reportedly Begich's office has been ~~xxxxx~~ alerted and so has Stevens. We have received no ~~work~~ word.

Larry received the word from Howard de Spain.

I think we're being screwed!

Marty

ADAM KRIVATSY
Public Team Fell Apart
Split to private sector -- FMC

ULI PRESENTATION BY ADAM K.

1. IS STATE WILLING TO FUND CP. LOSSES
 2. SADDLE DEVELOPMENT WILL CAUSE
SOME DAMAGE TO ENVIRONMENT
 3. LONGS PEAK - RIDGES ARE HOSTILE
 4. CAN DOME OVERCOME ENVIRONMENTAL
DEGREDDATION – “CONTAINERIZE PROJECT”
 5. 600 AC AT KANAPPAULI 8000 PERSONS
AT ONE TIME – NO PERCEPTION OF CROWDING
GOOD SALES POINT!
 6. CONSENSUS IS THAT PROJECT IS OF BENEFIT
TO STATE – SCOPE AND NATURE ARE CONCERNS
 7. LET THE POPULUS MATURE INTO RECOG-
NITION OF NEED FOR GRAND PLAN –
-

SCHEDULE:

MIKE GRAVEL
ALASKA

UNITED STATES SENATE
Washington, D.C.

MEMORANDUM

TO: SENATOR

FROM: PAT

RE: MORE BAD NEWS ON DENALI CITY MONIES

DATE: SEPT. 26, 1978

I CALLED NEIL JOHANSEN OF STATE PARKS AND GOT FOLLOWING NEW
ESTIMATES FOR STUDY MONIES:

\$ 100,000	-----SKI STUDY CONTRACT
\$ 100,000	-----MARKET AND DEMAND STUDY CONTRACT (FOR HOTEL AND REALTED VISITOR FACIL.)
\$ 35,000	-----FUNDING FOR ONE ADDITIONAL STATE PARK PLANNER
\$ 10,000	-----TRAVEL ASSOC. WITH STUDY FOR STATE PARK PLANNERS
\$ 15,000	-----SUMMARY PUBLICATION BY STATE PARKS FOR LEGISLATURE, PUBLIC
\$ 260,000	TOTAL TO BE SPENT BY STATE PARKS
\$ 50,000	-----TO BE TURNED BACK INTO GENERAL FUNDS
\$ 310,000	-----ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION FOR PARK STUDY
\$ 80,000	-----APPROPRIATION TO DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION FOR ROAD ROUTING INVESTIGATION WILL STAY WITH DOT. STATE PARKS WILL COOPER- ATE ON MAPPING. IN-HOUSE STUDY TO BE DONE BY JULY 1, 1979.

RFP'S WENT OUT SEPT. 1, PROPOSALS DUE SEPT. 29, CONTRACT AWARDS OCT25

9/23/80
Wth KANE

DENALI

NPS-

DOG IN MANGER

1. INTIMIDATED BY GRAVEL
2. NPS- PLANNING SLOW
3. PHILOSOPHICAL HURDLES
 - a. McKINLEY – WILDERNESS EXP
 - b. NORTH PARK- RR CHR MOTEL
 - c. BUS RIDE TO NORTH FACE
 - d. DISCOURAGE USE
4. STATE INEFFECTIVE IN DISCUSSIONS
WITH NPS ON IMPORTANCE
OF McKINLEY - MORAL RES.
ECONOMIC IMP.
5. DENALI- STARTING PT
TOKOSITNA
 - a. 110 Mi. CLOSER TO ANCHOR.
 - b. NO WILDLIFE CONFLICTS
 - c. BETTER SUN
 - d. FULL RANGE RECREATION
EXP. COULD BE AVAILABLE

2—

JOHN

5. COOK, KOCKWORTH, LOPENSKI
NPS - WERE INTERESTED
NOW THEY ARE HIDING OUT
6. STATE TOO WEAK IN GUIDENSE
7. FEAR OF DOMED CITY

CHOICES -- MIKE'S

1. STRONG ARM APPCH.

BE FORCEFUL:

- a. DEVELOP. COMM.
- b. SUPERCEDE STATE PARK
- c. SCREW NPS + STATE PARKS
- d. ARGUE – SPECIAL PROBLEM
NEED AUTONOMY TO COVER IT
- e. MAY NOT WORK

2. SOFT SELL

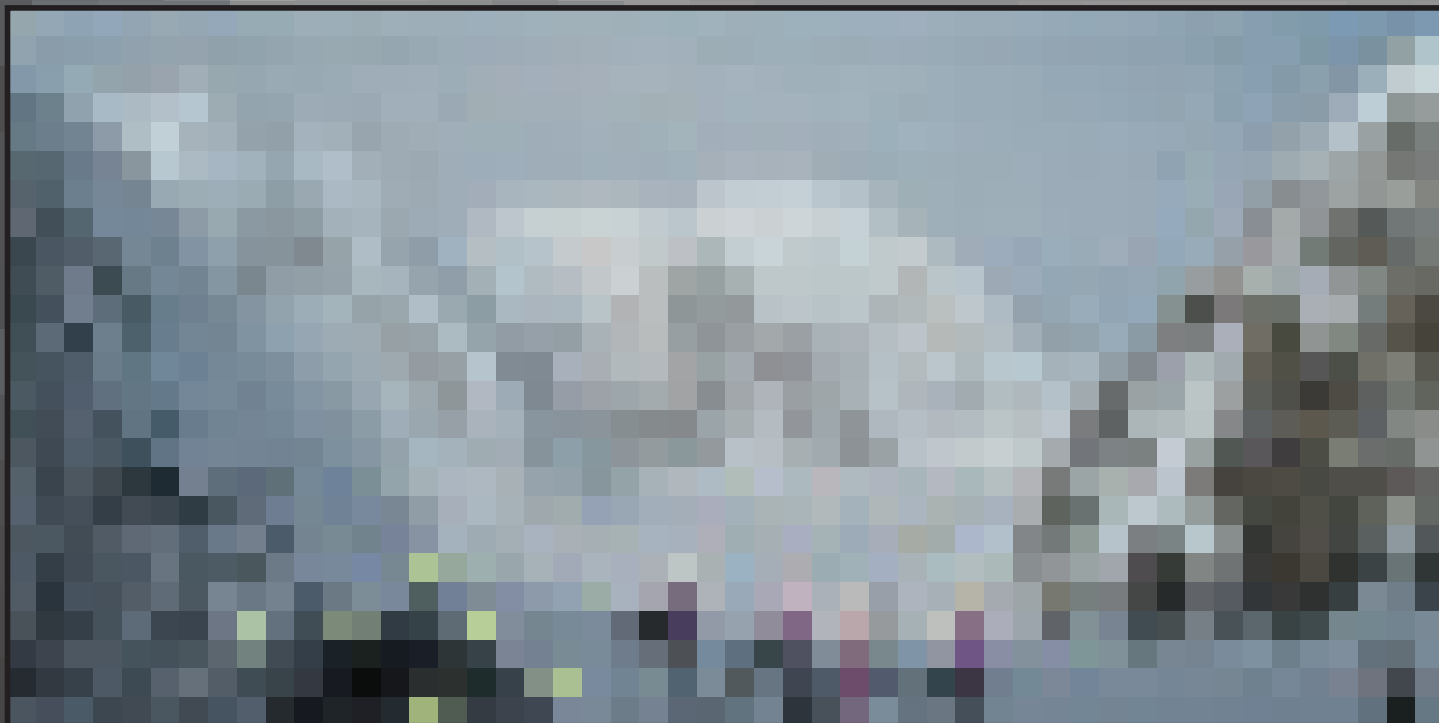
- a. OMBUDSMEN- REBUILD
SPIRIT, MEND FENCES W/ NPS
- b. SOLVE PROBLEM
- c. START SMALL—

3

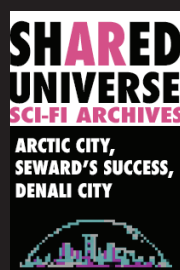
STATE IS NOT ORGANIZED

∴ NOTHING GOING ON

: NPS LENDS CREDIBILITY



cover image: “Łi Dnay, Tuqashitnu Łi’a, Basecamp” Nathan Shafer, 2018



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