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A Case Study on the Use of Interpretation in Denali National Park and Preserve.

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Nature-based Tourism

Preface

This thesis is the final product to my two years master study in Nature-based Tourism, in the Department of Ecology and Natural Resource Management (INA) at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU).

The writing process has taught me a lot about working independently, with structure and discipline.

First, I would like to thank my advisor Jan Vidar Haukeland, for guidance and valuable knowledge throughout the process. Your feedback and support has been valued and essential to my thesis. I also want to thank my second advisor, Stian Stensland for valuable help finding literature and sources.

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Abstract

Nature-based tourism is growing worldwide. Today's tourists want more knowledge, activity and focus on the environment when traveling. We are exposing our remaining natural areas around the world to a tremendous pressure. Taking care of our natural resources is more important than ever. Interpretation can contribute to increased visitor knowledge, enhance visitor experience and create a desire in the tourists to preserve nature. The national parks in the United States are pioneers in interpretation and facilitation. This thesis focuses mainly on *why* and *how* Denali National Park and Preserve uses interpretation. Considering the US' long tradition, knowledge and research on interpretation, is it also natural to consider whether there is a transfer value to other national parks, for instance, the Norwegian national park system. My research objectives were (1) why and (2) how Denali National Park and Preserve is using interpretation, (3) which benefits interpretation gives Denali, (4) how they measure and evaluate the benefits of interpretation, and finally (5) if Denali's interpretation strategy can benefit others, for instance, Norwegian national parks. I used document analysis as method, based on a case study of Denali National Park and Preserve. The results show that the main reason for using interpretation in Denali is the benefits it provides. Interpretation can improve the visitor experience, provide knowledge and increase the visitor's appreciation of a place or a resource, which can improve the protection of vulnerable resources. This corresponds with the benefits Denali claims their interpretation achieves. Denali uses interpretation in many different ways, and includes interpretation in many elements of the park. Evaluation and measuring of the interpretation is performed through questionnaires, observation and conversations with visitors. Several elements from Denali National Park and Preserve's interpretation strategy can benefit Norwegian national parks if implemented correctly. However, differences in management, traditions and economy limits the degree of transferability. Overall, the results correspond well with the theory, and this analysis can give inspiration and knowledge to other national parks.

Keywords: interpretation, national parks, transferability, preservation, natural resources.

Sammendrag

Naturbasert reiseliv vokser raskt i hele verden. Turistene etterspør i dag reiser med mer kunnskapsinnhold, aktiviteter og fokus på miljø. De gjenværende naturområdene i verden er utsatt for et enormt press. Viktigheten av å ta vare på naturressursene våre er viktigere enn noen gang. Interpretasjon kan bidra til økt kunnskap, gi en rikere opplevelse og skape et ønske om å ivareta naturen hos turistene. Nasjonalparkene i USA har lenge vært ledende på interpretasjon og tilrettelegging. Denne oppgaven har et hovedfokus på Denali National Park og Preserve, og hvordan og hvorfor de bruker interpretasjon i parken. Siden denne nasjonalparken og dette landet har lange tradisjoner, kunnskap og forskning på interpretasjon, er det også naturlig å vurdere om det finnes overføringsverdi til andre nasjonalparker, f.eks. i Norge. Mine problemstillinger var å se på (1) hvorfor og (2) hvordan Denali National Park og Preserve bruker interpretasjon, (3) hvilke fordeler/nytte interpretasjonen gir Denali, (4) hvordan de måler og evaluerer interpretasjonen og til slutt om (5) deres interpretasjonsstrategi kan være til nytte for andre, f.eks. norske nasjonalparker. Jeg har brukt dokumentanalyse som metode, basert på et case-studie av Denali National Park og Preserve. Resultatene viser at hvorfor og hvordan Denali National Park og Preserve bruker interpretasjon samsvarer godt med hva teorien på området sier. Hovedårsaken til at interpretasjon blir brukt i Denali er fordelene og nytten: interpretasjon kan forbedre turistens opplevelse, gi kunnskap og øke deres verdsettelse av et sted eller en ressurs, som igjen kan forbedre beskyttelsen av viktige, sårbare ressurser. Dette er også det Denali oppgir som fordelene og nytten interpretasjonen i parken gir. Denali bruker interpretasjon på mange forskjellige måter, og inkluderer interpretasjon i mange elementer av parken. Evaluering og måling av interpretasjonen blir utført gjennom spørreskjema, observasjon og samtaler med turistene. Det finnes flere elementer fra Denali National Park og Preserve's interpretasjonstrategi som kan være aktuelle å implementere i norske nasjonalparker, men forskjeller i forvaltning, tradisjoner og økonomi begrenser graden av overførbarhet. Resultatene samsvarer for det meste med teorien, og denne analysen kan gi andre nasjonalparker inspirasjon og kunnskap.

Nøkkelord: interpretasjon, nasjonalpark, overførbarhet, bevaring, naturressurser,

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1 Introduction

For centuries, humans have been inspired and amazed by our grand nature. Nature is our source of life, and we depend on it. However, we are exploiting our natural resources at a high speed. The importance of conservation and preservation is pressing. To communicate this message, to make people care about our resources, to protect and to leave some of our grand nature behind, for the generations to come, is the important job of an interpreter. Interpretation is an important tool. It can help visitors get the most out of their visit, change the visitors attitudes about what is being interpreted and shape their behavior to protect and preserve these resources. Interpretation can be signs, videos or personal communication. The visitors get a “translation” of the natural resources or the feature (Hall & McArthur 1996). They might learn something about why the riparian ecosystem is so important, instead of merely watching it. Interpretation should make the visitors think their own thoughts and make their own personal connection to the park, resource or place. In Freeman Tilden’s words: “Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection” (Tilden 2009 p. 65).

The United States has long traditions using interpretation in their National Parks. In the late 19th century, John Muir and Enos Mills were the earliest authors contributing with literature about wildlife adventures, conservation and the value of nature (Hall & McArthur 1996). Freeman Tilden published “Interpreting our Heritage” in 1957, where he outlines his enduring principles of interpretation. These principles are relevant to this day, but in a revised and expanded version. Sam Ham is another remarkable researcher in the field of interpretation. He developed the TORE model, which is a systematic guide on how to execute proper interpretation.

It is natural to look to the United States, which have good and long traditions and up-to-date researchers on the subject. Rose (1991) writes about looking to others for examples. He talks about how you can adopt parts of a program, adjust a program, and combine elements from different programmes and so on, to enhance your own program. The National Parks in USA are well established in the interpretation and education department, and can be a good example to learn from.

Nature-based tourism is the most popular form of tourism, and as our world is growing smaller each day, the demand is growing bigger (Fredman & Tyrväinen 2010). Today people are more active as well as educated, and they want an active vacation with educational content (Kamfjord 2011). Tourists want more adventure activities, requiring more focus on safety and often the need of a guide (Breivik 2010). Our nature is under pressure, tourists care about the environment, and they seek knowledge and information on the topic. Educating the tourists and assisting them to make a connection to the place they are visiting, can contribute to them wanting to preserve and protect this area or our nature in general (Ham 2013). To achieve this, interpretation and good interpreters are important. Possible outcomes from interpretation can improve visitor experiences, impact attitudes and appreciation and finally shape visitors behavior to protect fragile resources (Ham 2013).

My purpose with this thesis is not new research on the subject of interpretation, instead a thorough review of why and how a National Park in a country with a long history and good reputation with interpretation implements it. I hope that parts of the case will be transferable to other countries National Parks, especially Norway. Nature-based tourism is developing and evolving, and a good case study on interpretation can increase the knowledge on the topic. I hope that one can draw some lessons from this thesis, and that it will be helpful to Norwegian National Parks with their work towards protecting their resources while enhancing visitor experience.

Research objectives:

Why and how is Denali National Park and Preserve using interpretation, and would this type of interpretation strategy benefit other National Park Systems, such as the Norwegian National Parks?

I have not found research looking at how one particular National Park does interpretation. However, there is a lot of research on interpretation in National Parks, outcomes from interpretation and several comparisons of National Park Management in different countries. My research can be interesting for other National Parks and places with natural resources they want to interpret. It contains inspiration, ideas and examples that might be useful for others wanting to interpret their resources.

2 Theoretical Framework

In the following section, I will present the relevant theoretical framework for my research questions.

2.1 What is Interpretation?

Interpretation is a word that different people associate with different things. People might associate it with someone that translates languages, someone that interprets religious texts or someone who talks about ancient items at a museum. Interpretation is all that, and so much more. According to Cambridge Dictionaries, interpretation can be both “an explanation or opinion of what something means” and “An interpretation by actors or musicians is the expression by their performance of their understanding of the part or parts they are playing”(Cambridge Dictionaries Online 2016). The type of interpretation I am focusing on also has many definitions.

Interpretation is communication, provocation, revelation, making emotional connections to the resource and helping the audience understand the resource (Beck & Cable 2011; Hall & McArthur 1996; Moscardo 2007; National Association for Interpretation No date)

Among the first to write about interpretation were John Muir, Enos Mills and Freeman Tilden, in the late 19th century/ early 20th century (National Park Service 2003). John Muir and Enos Mills were the first to mention and address interpretation. Enos Mills worked as a guide in Colorado’s Rocky Mountains, and was devoted to monitoring the visitor’s behavior. He also developed guiding principles and techniques (Hall & McArthur 1996). However, Freeman Tilden rules as “the father of interpretation”. He wrote, “Interpreting our Heritage” in 1957 which became, and still is, a fundamental book in the field of interpretation (Hall & McArthur 1996).

Tilden (2009) created six enduring principles about interpretation. The first principle stresses the importance of relevance to the topic, and its relevance to the audience. The second principle states that there is a big difference between information and interpretation. However, information is an important part of interpretation (Tilden 2009). The third principle describes interpretation as an art, and many different arts. It can be an oral presentation, a sign, a video, a picture or two or

more combined. Tilden's (2009) fourth principle states that interpretation should provoke the audience to think, and not merely instruct them. Following in the fifth principle, is the importance of interpreting a whole, and not only bits and parts. By that he explains the interpreter should present "a whole" and not "the whole" (Tilden 2009). The sixth and final principle addresses the different audiences. Adjust the interpretation to the audience. Especially kids under the age of twelve, should receive interpretation with an entirely different approach (Tilden 2009). However, love and passion might be just as important, according to Tilden himself. You will still find these six principles, somewhat in a modernized shape, in almost every article or book written on interpretation.

Beck and Cable (2011) are among those who bases their research on Tilden's work. By expanding Tilden's six principles, to fifteen, they offer a more comprehensive and modern interpretation philosophy.

- 1. To spark an interest, interpreters must relate the subject to the lives of the people in their audience.*
- 2. The purpose of interpretation goes beyond providing information to reveal deeper meaning and truth.*
- 3. The interpretive presentation—as a work of art—should be designed as a story that informs, entertains, and enlightens.*
- 4. The purpose of the interpretive story is to inspire and to provoke people to broaden their horizons.*
- 5. Interpretation should present a complete theme or thesis and address the whole person.*
- 6. Interpretation for children, teenagers, and seniors—when these comprise uniform groups—should follow fundamentally different approaches.*
- 7. Every place has a history. Interpreters can bring the past alive to make the present more enjoyable and the future more meaningful.*
- 8. Technology can reveal the world in exciting new ways. However, incorporating this technology into the interpretive program must be done with*

foresight and thoughtful care.

9. Interpreters must concern themselves with the quantity and quality (selection and accuracy) of information presented. Focused, well-researched interpretation will be more powerful than a longer discourse.

10. Before applying the arts in interpretation, the interpreter must be familiar with basic communication techniques. Quality interpretation depends on the interpreter's knowledge and skills, which must be continually developed over time.

11. Interpretive writing should address what readers would like to know, with the authority of wisdom and its accompanying humility and care.

12. The overall interpretive program must be capable of attracting support—financial, volunteer, political, administrative—whatever support is needed for the program to flourish.

13. Interpretation should instill in people the ability, and the desire, to sense the beauty in their surroundings—to provide spiritual uplift and to encourage resource preservation.

14. Interpreters can promote optimal experiences through intentional and thoughtful program and facility design.

15. Passion is the essential ingredient for powerful and effective interpretation—passion for the resource and for those people who come to be inspired by it”

(Beck & Cable 2011 pp. xxiv-xxv).

These fifteen principles are Tilden's six principles rewritten, and brand new ones. They reflect the new era of interpretation, with changes in society, new technology and more research on the subject (Beck & Cable 2011).

Beck and Cable are not the only ones developing Tilden's principles. Sam Ham is renowned as one of today's leading researchers on interpretation. His research and publishing's have

contributed to great lengths in developing interpretation. In 2013 Ham published “Interpretation-making a difference on purpose”, which is a practical guide to professional interpreters, as well as a demonstration of the importance of interpretation.

Ham’s (2013) book focus on TORE, which is Ham’s model of thematic communication. It contains four qualities: T-heme, O-rganized, R-elevant, E-njoyable and communicates the different characteristics interpretation must contain; if the endgame is holding the attention, make a point and provoke thoughts (Ham, 2013).

When working with interpretation, having a theme makes it easier to know what to include and not include. It makes the decisions about content easier, and it makes sure it captures the whole idea. Ham (2013) defines a theme as the main point or idea a communicator tries to pass on about a certain topic. Having a theme also makes it easier for your audience to draw the desired conclusion (Ham 2013).

When the desired outcome from the interpretation is to provoke thoughts in the audience, it is crucial that they pay attention. A simple way to keep the audience interested is to keep it organized. If it is hard to follow, jumping back and forth, the audience will no longer pay attention. Even if they want to focus and pay attention, if they have to work too hard to follow, they will not be able to focus. Ham (2013) says that to keep it organized and easy to follow, the number of your main points or ideas has to be four or less. Research shows that if you exceed four main points, people will not be able to handle all the information at once. This will make the interpretation easier to follow, more comprehensible and provoke more thoughts (Ham 2013).

The interpretation also has to be relevant. Ham (2013) stresses the importance of the information being meaningful and personal to the audiences. If the interpretation is both meaningful and personal, it is also relevant. Meaningful information is when the audience can connect the information to something familiar (Ham 2013). By using metaphors, examples, analogies, similes and contrasts, familiar everyday words can replace foreign words of geology, biology etc. To be able to make a personal connection to the audience, the information has to be about something they care about (Ham 2013). So how is it possible to find something everyone in the audience cares about? By using universal concepts. Symbolic and intangible connections to notions have always meant something special for humans. Intangible meanings describes what something represents to a person, and are often attached to a tangible meaning, a meaning that can be

objectively verified through smelling, hearing, seeing, touching etc. (Ham 2013). Universal concepts are emotions, biological imperatives, fascination with the uncertain, suspense and mystery. We find this in literature, film and entertainment. According to Ham (2013), interpretation well connected to universal concepts has the ability to move the audience deeply. When the information is personal and moving the audience, they pay attention, even if they try not to (Ham 2013).

To make the quality of the interpretation as good as possible, it has to be enjoyable as well. The audience has to have a good time, meaning that it satisfies the mind to pay attention to it. All of these four qualities combined, are necessary to achieve any of the three possible outcomes from the interpretation (Ham 2013).

2.2 Outcomes from Interpretation

The reason we are doing interpretation is for the outcome. There is a lot of research on the subject, and we can say with confidence that there are several potential outcomes from interpretation. However, as Ham (2013) specifies, not all interpretation will result in these outcomes. That is why it is important to specify that only excellent, properly conducted interpretation can lead to these outcomes. By following the TORE-model, which I described in the previous chapter, you will find the key to successful interpretation. Not the Tore, tORE or ToRE, but only the TORE will lead to successful interpretation (Ham 2013).

Among the research done on the subject is Powell and Ham (2008), who did a survey at the Galapagos Islands. They handed out questionnaires on the first and last day of the visitors stay. The survey's results tells us that interpretation with TORE quality during the guests visit can increase the knowledge of the host-area. It can also contribute to positive attitudes towards conservation in host-area and general environmental support (Powell & Ham 2008). Zeppel and Muloin (2008) found that interpretation at marine wildlife settings could lead to pro-environmental attitudes and on-site behavior changes. They also found that the interpretation

could promote long-term intentions, supporting and engaging in conservation and preservation of the marine ecosystem (Zeppel & Muloin 2008). Tubb (2003) did a study at the High Moorland Visitor Centre in Dartmoor National Park UK. The results say that interpretation added to visitors knowledge of the site and an attitude change occurred to some (Tubb 2003). However, the results suggest that the quality and design of the interpretation was crucial in achieving these outcomes. Well designed and good quality interpretation may contribute to visitors obtaining new knowledge and a change in their behavioral intentions (Tubb 2003).

Interpretation conducted by the TORE concept, can make these three differences, or in other words; these are the possible outcomes of interpretation:

1. It can enhance the visitor's experience.
2. It can affect their attitudes and promote their appreciation about a place, object or concept.
3. It can enhance the protection of important, unique or fragile resources by influencing how the visitors behave towards them (Ham 2013).

Ham (2013) has been working with research where interpretation deal with problems and issues. He has worked with a wide range of issues, where interpretation helped shape the behavior of the visitors. Interpretation can be effective in bear country, with proper food storage, keeping dogs on leashes and to get visitors to pick up litter left by others (Ham 2013).

You can compare these three outcomes Ham (2013) expresses to Freeman Tilden's famous quote "*Through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; through appreciation, protection.*" (Tilden 2009 p. 65). Interpretation leads to understanding. Increased understanding enhances the visitor's experience. The understanding leads to appreciation; appreciation for the ecosystem or specific area they are interpreting. This leads to changes in behavior, which promotes protection of the ecosystem or area of study.

Hall and McArthur (1996) also claims that interpretation can enhance the quality of the visitor experience, influence visitor behavior and decisions when at the site, and facilitate for positive thoughts, values and attitudes towards the site or the theme. The outcomes are by Hall and McArthur (1996) divided into "direct" and "indirect". "Direct" is the enhancing of visitor experience or the influencing of the behavior at the site, which happens directly. The "indirect"

outcomes are what happens at the site, but sticks with the visitor for a while. That can be a change in attitude, beliefs or thoughts (Hall & McArthur 1996).

Weiler and Ham (2010) developed a 5-minute visitor questionnaire to evaluate the outcomes of interpretation. It is a useful and practical tool for interpreters to evaluate their interpretation. Tubb (2003) did a study using pre-and post-visit questionnaires, and participant observation of visitors. The results document the effectiveness of interpretation at the particular location (Tubb 2003). The documentation of outcomes from interpretation is important (Weiler & Ham 2010). It influences the budget, the staffing and it can help improve interpretation programs, services and products. The questionnaire is an easy, user-friendly, cost efficient and reliable instrument, which makes it easy to monitor the outcomes over time (Weiler & Ham 2010).

2.3 Trends in Society

There is a growing demand for nature-based tourism around the world (Fredman & Tyrväinen 2010). The destinations experiencing growth need to address this, by developing their products to match the growing demand. There are big opportunities for rural societies, using their natural amenities, to develop their economy (Fredman & Tyrväinen 2010). However, the development of facilities and the product are important due to several reasons. As more people enter these beautiful, pristine natural areas, the need for protection and preservation also rises.

As well as nature-based tourism's popularity is increasing, the nature-based tourists are also changing. Our society is turning more and more towards a knowledge/information society. Tourists want their vacation to have substance and content, wanting to learn something new. The motivation for learning when traveling, is according to Ritchie et al. (2003), well positioned within the motivations for going on vacation. The eco/nature tourism and cultural heritage tourism are the two largest tourism segments where education and learning are important factors of the final product and experience. Ritchie et al. (2003), states the importance of recognizing and highlighting the emergence of educational tourism as an identifiable niche area of contemporary tourism. Linking the educational tourism to the environmental side of tourism is an

underdeveloped opportunity. Most people care about the environment, especially if they are visiting nature areas that are touching them in some way (Ritchie et al. 2003).

Another aspect of the nature-based tourism increasing is the safety/risk aspect. Adventure sports are becoming more and more popular, and is a part of the category of nature-based tourism. Since the 1970s, the adventure sports have increased. Adventure sports covers a wide range of activities. According to Breivik (2010) are “extreme”, ”lifestyle”, ”gravity”, “action sports” and “alternative” some of the labels put on the different kind of activities. These activities offer things you might not find in other sports. They express ideas like individualism, technology, self-realization and transcendence (Breivik 2010). The activities typically require skills related to both body and mind, the coping with stress and anxiety, and the possibility of mastering and the challenge from demanding environments. These activities requires something from you, but rewards you equally. It can be the strong and powerful sensation or experience. It can be your own body’s chemistry rewarding you with endorphins, adrenaline and catecholamines (Breivik 2010).

Breivik (2010) also emphasizes that anyone able to pay, can do almost anything. Commercial expeditions to the Poles, to Everest Base Camp and so on. The family can experience the wilderness of nature by doing whitewater rafting, top-rope climbing and wilderness safaris. By buying a package, a guide’s skills and experience, they can experience strong thrills and excitement without acquiring the skills themselves. Adventure sports can also be a mean to character building and personal development. Interpretation, educational services, summer camps and schools are contributors to that kind of development (Breivik 2010). People that are active in adventure sports should take care of the nature they are dependent upon, preserve the environment and develop more green and ecological versions of their activity (Breivik 2010). This is where interpretation work its magic. As people are more prone to use a guide, for safety and technical skills, the guides should aim to provoke the guest’s discovery of a personal meaning and the shaping of a personal connection with the places, people and concepts they are experiencing (Ham 2013). This will be additional to the guides technical and safety tasks. The trends in nature-based tourism are favorable for implementing interpretation. As mentioned in a previous chapter, there are several important outcomes from interpretation.

2.4 National Park History in USA and Norway

In 1804, Lewis and Clark led an expedition exploring the western territories. The exploration of the west was the first step towards the establishment of the National Parks (National Park Service No date-g). The first National Park to be established was Yellowstone, in 1872. By then Yosemite was already protected, but it was not established as an National Park until 1890 (National Park Service No date-e).

The purpose of the National Parks was to “*serve as a public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people*” (National Park Service No date-e). The Parks was as a last refuge for many species of animals and plants, that otherwise would have been lost forever. However, it was not just a refuge for animals and plants; humans found solitude, freedom and peace there. Escaping from daily life and worries, they brought their families to restore their spirits, make a connection to their land and pass it on to their children (Duncan 2009). The parks were protected for eternity, for everyone. The Americans believed that the greatest natural wonders belonged to no one; they belonged to all (Duncan 2009).

One of the greatest advocates for the preservation of these grand nature areas was John Muir. The way he wrote about the importance of preserving this pristine nature and the necessity of wilderness to our souls was later used in the process establish more National Parks (National Geographic No date).

” The Mount Rainier Forest Preserve should be made a national park and guarded while yet its bloom is on; for if in the making of the West Nature had what we call parks in mind—places for rest, inspiration, and prayers—this Rainier region must surely be one of them ” — John Muir (Duncan 2009)

Although the National Parks were established, they were not preserved appropriately. In 1916 the current president, Woodrow Wilson signed the act creating the National Park Service (NPS). This was a federal bureau, with the purpose of protecting the existing National Parks and Monuments, and all those yet to be created (National Park Service No date-e). The NPS main purpose is still to protect and preserve Americas open spaces; however, they have many additional responsibilities. Today the NPS have approximately 20.000 employees, taking care of 400 National Parks and Monuments (National Park Service No date-e). The National Parks and

Monuments are a part of the American heritage, and the access to the public has been, and still is important to the country and the Americans identity. The idea of National Parks spread around the world. In 1972, Yellowstone hosted a world conference on National Parks. Delegates from 80 countries, representing more than 1200 parks and preserves, were attending (Duncan 2009). The United States have been pioneers in the National Park department from the beginning.

The first national park established in Norway, was Rondane, in 1962. The conservationists were pleased about the National Parks, because it involved the protection of some of our most fragile and vulnerable ecosystems (Hafsten & Norges lærerhøgskole 1975). The approach to management is still a “classic nature protection”, where active management, visitor services and facility development has received little priority. Visitor strategies in the Norwegian National Parks have no or little priority, and the management and its resources are modest. The focus in the Norwegian parks is preservation and conservation of the resources (Aasetre 1998; Higham et al. 2016). However, since 2003, when The Ministry of Trade and Industry introduced “*Fjellteksten*”, where they lifted the ban of commercial activity in Norwegian National parks, it has slowly changed towards a focus on both preservation and use (The Ministry of Trade and Industry 2003). With this shift in focus it is a good idea to look to the US for lessons and inspiration.

The reason Norwegian National Parks still manage their parks by the approach of a nature protection only, and little tourism approach, might relate to Norwegian traditions. According to Higham et al. (2016), the Norwegian conservation management anchors to the historic tradition of *friluftsliv*. The tradition of *friluftsliv* is about the simple way of enjoying nature, without restrictions and organizing (Higham et al. 2016). The strong identity and cultural ties to *friluftsliv* links to the public right of access (*allemannsretten*). The law is outlined in Norway’s Outdoor Recreation Act from 1957, and allows anyone access (by foot) to all uncultivated land (Higham et al. 2016). The Norwegian tradition is in big contrast to the North American way of management and outdoor living. In addition, the purposes of the National Parks in the two countries differs. From the Norwegian nature protection, with the possibilities of enjoyment, to the American pleasuring and enjoyment of the people.

2.5 Lesson Drawing

Because this is a case study of a well renowned National Park, with long traditions with interpretation, it is relevant to look at the opportunity to draw lessons from it. For many decades the US have been pioneers when it comes to national parks (Duncan 2009), and Rose (1999) argues that lesson drawing is valuable in many areas and businesses.

Drawing a lesson from a company, a government or similar elsewhere, is what Rose (1993) explains in his article. For example during a disease outbreak, one can look to other countries experiencing the same outbreak. One can learn from their routines, vaccinations and so on, and save critical time, money and even lives. The distance travelled is insignificant, and lessons can be drawn from across international borders (Rose 1993). It is a short cut, exploiting relevant experience elsewhere to enhance or develop a program. Taking such a shortcut, although possible, may not always be beneficial (Rose 1993). Only if the lesson is positive, a policy that work will transfer, and only with the fitting adaptations. If the lesson is negative, the lesson will not transfer and is not beneficial. However, one can learn a lot about what not to do in such case (Rose 1993).

According to Rose (1993), lesson drawing is positive, even if the solution was unsuccessful. If they choose to transfer the policies, and that works, with or without adaptations, that is a positive outcome. However, if the solution they are looking at was unsuccessful in its area, they learn what did not work, and they can avoid doing the same mistakes. Learning from others mistakes is valuable, and can possibly save a lot of unnecessary work (Rose 1993).

When drawing lessons, Rose (1993) specifies the importance of using the obtained knowledge rather than copying the method used. By using the knowledge, rather than merely copying the method, chances of success is greater. When looking at how others addresses similar issues, gaining fresh ideas relevant to the issue should be the objective. Rose (1993) also stresses that no countries or companies are identical. To achieve the best solution, apply adaptations, changes and generic elements to create a conceptual model of the program. When drawing lessons across borders and oceans, some creativity is needed, to adopt to local circumstances (Rose 1993).

Rose (1993) explains five alternative ways of drawing a lesson:

“1. Copying. Adoption more or less intact of a program already in effect in another jurisdiction.

2. *Emulation. Adoption, with adjustment for different circumstances, of a program already in effect in another jurisdiction.*

3. *Hybridization. Combine elements of programmes from two different places.*

4. *Synthesis. Combine familiar elements from programmes in effect in three or more different places.*

5. *Inspiration. Programmes elsewhere used as intellectual stimulus for developing a novel programme*

without an analogue elsewhere.” (Rose 1993 p. 22)

With these different alternatives, there are opportunities to draw lessons in many cases. Whether the lesson is to copy the program one way or another, it will be beneficial to look to others before creating, making or doing something new and unfamiliar (Rose 1993).

2.6 Research Questions and Limitations

In this section, I will present the research questions and their limitations.

Why and how is Denali National Park and Preserve using interpretation, and would this type of interpretation strategy benefit other National Park Systems, such as the Norwegian National Parks?

This is the main research question, and by using the following clarifying questions, I will try to answer the two main questions.

1. *Why is Denali National Park and Preserve using interpretation?*

2. *How is Denali National Park and Preserve using interpretation?*

This research question is limited to how Denali National Park and Preserve use interpretation through programmes, buildings, trails, concessioners etc. I will not look specifically into how their personnel are conducting their personal interpretation.

3. *What are the benefits of interpretation in Denali National Park and Preserve?*

This research question is limited to which benefits Denali National Park and Preserve is claiming to achieve with their interpretation. I will not look specifically into how their personnel are conducting their personal interpretation.

4. How do they measure and evaluate the benefits of interpretation?

This research question is limited to how Denali National Park and Preserve is presenting their strategy for evaluation, not how they are executing it.

5. Will this type of interpretation strategy benefit, for instance, the Norwegian National Park system?

Since this research question has validity beyond American context, it is relevant to look at transferability to other countries. I will to some extent, give room to discuss whether my analysis may have implications for other countries, for example Norway. It might be valuable for Norway and other countries to learn from Denali's methods, by using lesson drawing, even if the management differs remarkably.

3 Methodology

The main purpose with methodology is to develop a strategy for ways to gather, manage and analyze data, using either a qualitative or quantitative research approach. The empirical data in this study is based on a case study of Denali National Park in Alaska, USA. Data was collected using a qualitative method, document analysis. A case study allows the researcher to obtain in-depth information about the situation in a specific case. The term “case” originates from the Latin word “casus” and emphasize the meaning of a single case (Jacobsen 2005).

3.1 Research Design

To be able to answer my research questions, a case study based on document analysis was a natural choice. Existing literature is my main data source. The National Park Service has an excellent selection of documents available on their website. I found all the necessary literature on Denali National Park and Preserves Interpretation program on their website. The research done on the subject interpretation is comprehensive, and it was easy to find literature on the subject. I used the references in Sam Ham’s “Interpretation; Making a Difference on Purpose” (2013), searched for “interpretation” and “interpretation in national parks” on Oria and I used the references in the articles I found, to find more relevant literature.

This thesis has a descriptive approach, as I describe and illuminate the interpretation strategy in Denali National Park and Preserve. According to Johannessen et al. (2011), a descriptive approach may contribute to complete and applicable descriptions. I also provide a short section on National Park history in the U.S. and Norway and on lesson drawing to illuminate and answer the last research question, whether Denali National Park and Preserve’s interpretation strategy can benefit the Norwegian National Park system. The last question of the thesis is explanatory, in order to discuss the issue.

What recognizes a case study is according to Yin (2009) that the attention is restricted to the particular case and there is a detailed description of the case. The case study consists in collecting as much data as possible about a particular phenomenon (Yin 2009).

The case study should include five components:

1. *Research questions.*

Usually the questions relates to practical issues or problems. The why, how and what questions helps the researcher in a specific direction (Yin 2009). I started my work with developing a research question. After working on the theoretical framework, and collecting some of the data, I edited and added questions. The thesis is written to answer these questions, although I have altered and changed them slightly through the process.

2. *Theoretical propositions.*

The researcher often makes some propositions after asking the basic questions. These propositions underlies the further research (Yin 2009). I started working on the theory chapters, which gave me a good overview and knowledge on the particular subject. That was essential to be able to define and narrow the thesis.

3. *Units of analysis.*

First, you define the research questions, and then it is natural to define and narrow the unit of analysis. The unit of analysis can be an individual, a group, a definition, an organization and so on (Yin 2009). After working on the theory, I learned what I wanted to focus on, what I felt was important to my thesis. That made it easier to write the units of analysis, which are the disposition of the results and discussion chapters.

4. *The logic linking the data to the propositions.*

There are two possible strategies, theoretical propositions and a describing case study. The first one is preferred (Yin 2009). I linked the theory to the data. The theory on the subject is good and well known; therefore, I chose to compare the data against the theory.

5. *Criteria for interpreting the findings.*

This is where you interpret the findings towards existing research on the field. According to Yin (2009), you should have an existing theory before collecting the data, and with underpinning the previous four components, you can relate the findings to existing theory (Yin 2009). To have an existing theory before collecting the data was helpful. It made the work on, progression and structure of the thesis easier to manage. I made the research questions at the very start, developed the theory based on the questions and worked towards answering them.

3.2 Case Selection

During a visit to Denali National Park and Preserve the spring of 2015, I thought about how well planned, managed and facilitated this park was. After my first visit and several re-visits that spring and summer, it left me with the opinion that Denali National Park and Preserve has an interesting strategy for interpretation and education. Besides my own observations, the USA is well known for their good interpretation programs in National Parks, National Heritage sites, state parks etc. There is a lot of research and writing done by the National Park Service and other authors and researchers, such as Freeman Tilden and Sam Ham. USA is one of the most recognized nations when it comes to interpretation in National Parks. The third reason why I chose Denali National Park and Preserve is that I would be located in Fairbanks, AK while writing my thesis. That would make it easier to contact informants or get help to find the relevant documents I need.

3.3 Data Sampling and Collection of Data

The main methodology in this thesis is document analysis. I based the empirical data on public documents provided by Denali National Park and Preserve or National Park Service. It became necessary to settle with a set of key documents after a while. Official documents like “*Module 101: Fulfilling the NPS mission: The process of interpretation*”, “*Denali National Park and Preserve Education Plan. A long range vision for education and interpretation*” and “*Consolidated General Management Plan for Denali National Park and Preserve*” are the plans I used the most. I found most of the information I needed online. All of Denali National Park and Preserve and National Park Service plans are public and available through their webpage, which makes finding information easy. I also had an informant at Denali National Park and Preserve that gladly answered any questions. I found it convenient to have an informant, as I needed answers on minor questions throughout the spring. I did not do an interview with my informant. I had all the information I needed available through the documents. By doing an additional interview, I could have obtained more information around the practices, and find out whether the plans actually are followed through. However, I got the information I needed in the documents available. Whether they follow the plan or not, is another research question.

I found it necessary to limit the research question “How is Denali National Park and Preserve using interpretation?” to how they use interpretation through programmes, buildings, trails, concessioners etc. I do not look specifically into how their staff are conducting their personal interpretation. To be able to answer that question, it would be necessary to interview the interpretation administration and the rangers conducting the interpretation.

I added limitations to “What are the benefits of interpretation in Denali National Park and Preserve?” as well. Since the benefits of interpretation depends on the quality of interpretation, I only assume they deliver interpretation in TORE quality. To be able to answer that question without assuming the quality of interpretation is good, I need information on how each interpreter are doing their interpretation. It would be necessary to interview the rangers conducting the interpretation, since the quality of the interpretation affects the benefits.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

Validity says something about how good or how relevant the data represents the research object (Johannessen et al. 2011). Reliability says something about how reliable the data is. The data should be so accurate, that if another researcher followed the same method, he or she would get the same data (Johannessen et al. 2011). I will discuss both the validity and reliability of my research in the discussion section.

4 Case Description

In the following section, I will present a short profile on Denali National Park and Preserve to provide the reader with necessary background information.

4.1 A Short Profile on Denali National Park and Preserve's Management

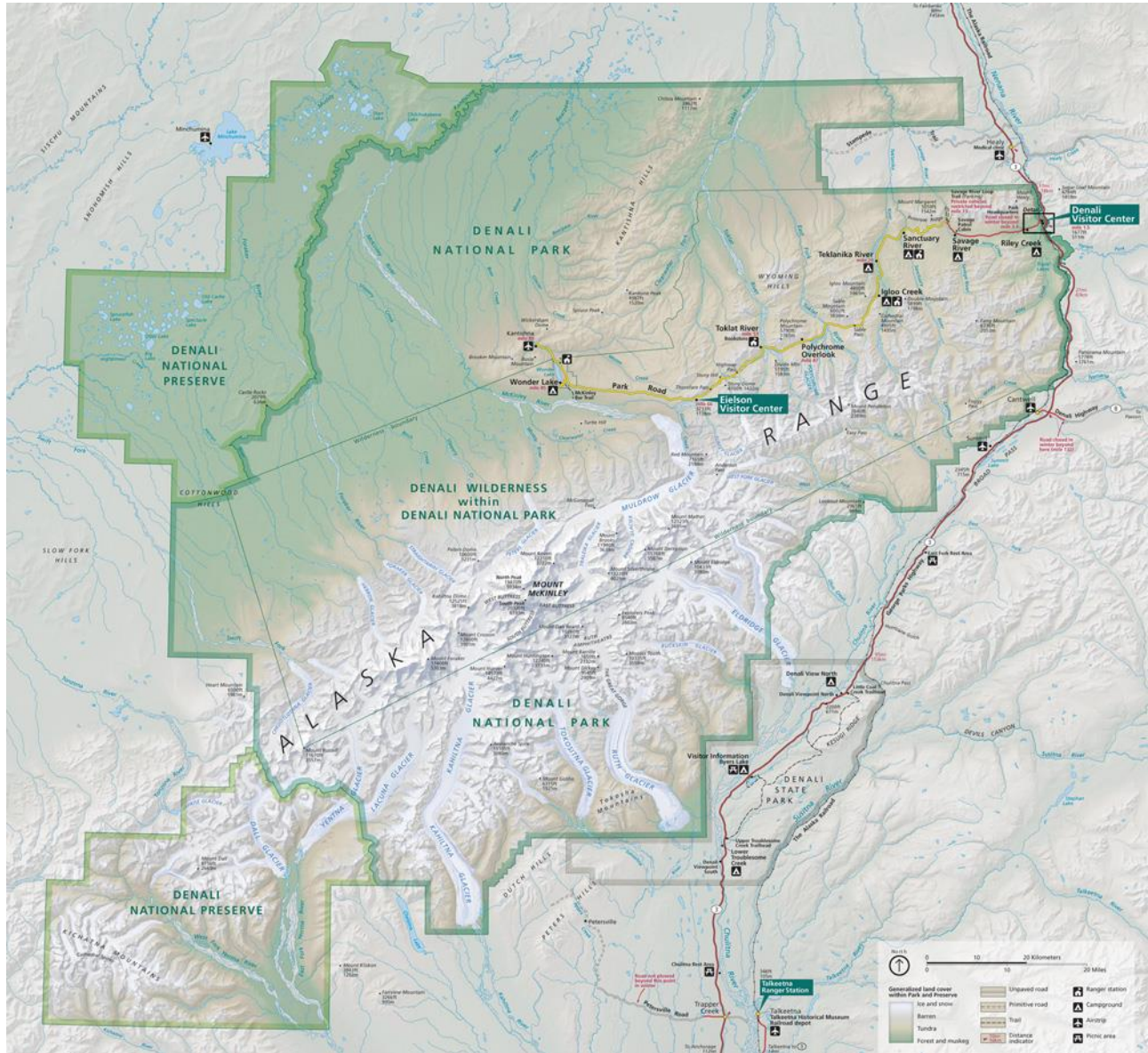


Figure 1 Map of Denali National Park (National Park Service No date-c)

History, location and natural environment.

Denali Park and Preserve covers an area of more than six million acres, and is located in interior Alaska. President of the United States Woodrow Wilson signed the bill that created Mount McKinley National Park February 26, 1917 (Brown 1993). A name controversy was going on for

a long time. Prospector William A. named the tallest mountain, Mount McKinley. He named it after William McKinley of Ohio, who was nominated for the Presidency. The Athabascan natives had named it Denali; “The Tall One” long before anyone climbed or wrote about the mountain (Brown 1993). In 1980, Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), which enlarged and renamed the park Denali National Park and Preserve (National Park Service 2008).

Towering 23,000 feet or 6190,5 meters above sea level, Denali (Mount McKinley) is North Americas highest peak (National Park Service 2008). It is a part of Alaska Range, which is a large part of Denali National Park and Preserve. Glaciers cover 16% of the total six million acres of the park, and some of North Americas largest glaciers can be found here (National Park Service 2008). During a visit to Alaska in August 2015, President Obama changed the name of the mountain from Mount McKinley, back to Denali (National Park Service No date-d).

Because of the Alaska Range and the high elevation, the climate is rough. The winters are fierce and long and summers are short. The growing season is usually short. However, you find over 450 species of flowering plants in the park. Spruces and willows dominate the forest; however, most of the park is tundra. Denali National Park and Preserve hosts numerous birds and mammals. The most popular and often most exciting animals to get a look at are grizzly bears, black bears, caribou, dall sheep, moose, and wolves. There is also an abundance of coyotes, hoary marmots, beavers, snowshoe hares, pikas and so on (National Park Service 2009b).

The only road within the park is the 92 mile long Park Road. It is running parallel with Alaska Range and ends in Kantishna. The road is closed to public transportation, but shuttles tourists in busses all summer. However, mid-September the park holds a “road lottery”, where you can win a day of access to the Park Road with your own vehicle. It is limited to 400 permits per day (National Park Service 1997).

Denali National Park and Preserve’s purposes stated in the consolidated management plan:

“Section 101 of ANILCA describes the broad purposes of the new conservation system units throughout Alaska:

- *Preserve lands and waters for the benefit, use, education, and inspiration of present and future generations.*

- *Preserve unrivaled scenic and geological values associated with natural landscapes.*
- *Maintain sound populations of, and habitat for, wildlife species.*
- *Preserve extensive, unaltered ecosystems in their natural state.*
- *Protect resources related to subsistence needs.*
- *Protect historic and archeological sites.*
- *Preserve wilderness resource values and related recreational opportunities such as hiking, canoeing, fishing, and sport hunting.*
- *Maintain opportunities for scientific research in undisturbed ecosystems.*
- *Provide the opportunity for rural residents engaged in a subsistence way of life to continue to do so.*

Section 202 stated that the Denali National Park and Preserve additions are to be managed for the following additional specific purposes:

- *To protect and interpret the entire mountain massif and the additional scenic mountain peaks and formations.*
- *To protect habitat for, and populations of fish and wildlife, including, but not limited to, brown/grizzly bears, moose, caribou, Dall sheep, wolves, swans and other waterfowl.*
- *To provide continued opportunities, including reasonable access, for mountain climbing, mountaineering, and other wilderness recreational activities.”*

(National Park Service 2008 pp. 7-8).

Tourism and recreation in Denali National Park and Preserve.

In 2014, Denali National Park and Preserve had 531,315 visitors (National Park Service No date-h). The most visited areas is the entrance area. Shuttle-, tour-, and courtesy busses runs on the 92 mile long Park Road. It is the Doyon Aramark Denali National Park Concession Joint Venture (JV), who provides the transportation services. They hold a concession contract, and serves most Denali visitors at some level. The drivers working for JV have many years' experience, and go through extensive training for interpretation. The bus is a great opportunity for wildlife and

scenery viewing. The tour busses are popular to most people as they have a detailed and fascinating program through the park (National Park Service No date-f).

There are six campsites inside the Park, some for tents and RVs, and some only for tent campers. You can also camp in the backcountry, however, hiking and camping in the wilderness requires a backcountry permit. The permit is only issued in person, and requires that you watch a 40 minute long safety video. During the busiest summer season, there is a limited number of backpackers allowed in each unit. The entire park is divided into 87 units (National Park Service No date-a).

5 Interpretation in Denali National Park and Preserve

Denali National Park and Preserves planning history spans over 80 years, and the number of visitors and their type of use have changed a lot over the decades. The park went from moderate visitation and railroad as the only access, to an excellent international destination (National Park Service 2009a). The numbers of visitors increased, and the level of visitor expectations rose. The opening of the George Parks Highway in 1971 had a big influence on the visitation, as it made it possible for visitors to drive to the park with their own vehicles. Today, Denali is one of the most visited National Parks in Alaska, and is an important element in Alaska's tourist economy (National Park Service 2009a).

Naturally, the Education in Denali National Park and Preserve has changed a lot over the past century. Additions to the park, followed by changes in the park's purpose, science that improves each day, new technology, changing visitor demographics and expectations and unstable budgets, have forced the education program to evolve and renew. Denali's educational teams embraced the changes, and consider themselves successful in their wilderness stewardship mission and simultaneously connecting people to nature and culture in meaningful ways (National Park Service 2009a).

Denali National Park and Preserve offers a wide range of education and interpretation possibilities. In the entrance area, you find Denali Visitor Center, The Murie Science and Learning Center, Denali Bookstore, Wilderness Access Center, Backcountry Information Center, Entrance Area Trails and the beginning of the Park Road. Farther into the park, you find Savage River Creek Station, Wonder Lake Ranger Station, Eielson Visitor Center and several campgrounds. These areas all have interpretation and educational approaches. Some offers ranger programmes, bus tours, trails with posts and signs, and junior ranger programs etc. (National Park Service 2009a)

Results

In the following section, I will present the results, in the following order:

1. Why is Denali National Park and Preserve using interpretation?
2. How is Denali National Park and Preserve using interpretation?

3. What are the benefits of interpretation in Denali National Park and Preserve?
4. How do they measure and evaluate the benefits of interpretation?
5. Will this type of interpretation strategy benefit, for instance, the Norwegian National Park system?

I will address and discuss most of the elements mentioned in the results, in the discussion chapter. That includes especially the parts where the management assumes or concludes with effects and value loaded statements.

5.1 Why is Denali National Park and Preserve Using Interpretation?

In the National Park Service's (NPS) Module 101: Fulfilling the NPS mission: The process of interpretation (2003), they explain why the Parks do interpretation. The goal is to help visitors understand and discover the meanings of the places they visit (National Park Service 2003). The interpretation ensures that the use of the Park is the finest and fullest in three ways: it explains the meaning of the key resources, promotes good visitor experiences and achieves the National Park Service's mission. The best way of achieving this is by interpretation, to translate the meanings of the resources, so the visitors can understand (National Park Service 2003).

The National Park Service's mission of 1916, by the organic act, is the overreaching mission in the agency. “. . . to conserve the scenery, and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations” (National Park Service 2003 p. 9). According to the Module 101: Fulfilling the NPS mission: The process of interpretation (2003), interpretation can help fulfill the mission. By helping the visitors understand the resources and expand the visitor experiences by revealing meanings and ideas (National Park Service 2003). Denali National Park and Preserve Education and Interpretation mission and purpose statement supports this. “While fostering preservation, understanding, and enjoyment of Denali National Park and Preserve, we challenge the public to explore the connections between themselves and Denali's diverse environment, and to integrate the resulting insights into their everyday lives” (National Park Service 2009a p. 15). To support this mission, the long-term

education plan expresses desired goals for the visitors. The desired visitor outcomes in Denali National Park and Preserve are:

***“Knowledge and Understanding** Visitors understand the meanings, values, and vulnerabilities of the Denali Wilderness. They gain knowledge about the plants, ecology, role of fire, geology, animals, and cultural history of the Denali region and come to understand how Denali’s intact ecosystem fits into the bigger picture of Alaska’s wildlands.*

***Enjoyment and Inspiration** Visitors experience Denali in a way that leaves them with a sense of satisfaction, pleasure, and peace. They develop a deep connection to Denali and a sense of responsibility for this landscape and other public lands in Alaska. They leave hoping to return.*

***Action** Visitors understand their personal actions make a difference. They understand the role they can play and the choices they have to make. They are ready to change their behaviors and act on behalf of public lands”* (National Park Service 2009a p. 17).

When the visitors understand the resource, they connect with the resource and their experience may be more memorable (National Park Service 2003).

Besides stating Denali’s education and interpretation mission statement and the desired visitor outcomes, the Long Range Educational Plan (2009) states four resource protection messages. These are guidelines to protect the resources within the park. Interpretation is the best way of conveying these messages, which is why interpretation is so important. These four messages, made by park resource staff in 2006, should be communicated to all that seek to learn about Denali (National Park Service 2009a).

- 1. “The protection of Denali’s resources and values depends on all individuals limiting their actions and impacts when visiting the park.*
- 2. Denali was created for specific purposes and can -not accommodate all human uses and activities.*
- 3. Denali’s subarctic ecosystem is susceptible to threats beyond its borders.*
- 4. The day-to-day conservation practices of individuals can make a real contribution to protecting Denali’s resources for the future”* (National Park Service 2009a p.15).

The National Parks are preserved because of their meaning and significance to our society. It is those meanings and significant resources that interpretation makes us aware of and not forget. Interpretation is important to protect and preserve the National Parks. The Module 101: Fulfilling the NPS mission: The process of interpretation (2003) states that visitors who discover meaning and personal relevance when visiting a park, are more prone to engage in protection and preservation. By discovering meaning and personal relevance, the NPS are proposing the experience may translate to a larger, overreaching support for resource protection (National Park Service 2003).

5.2 How is Denali National Park and Preserve Using Interpretation?

Denali's Long Range Interpretive Plan (plan) made in 2001, got quickly outdated, due to a major increase in visitation. The visitation kept increasing, and updates and upgrades around the park was much needed (National Park Service 2009a). The park reached its carrying capacity years ago, when access to the park improved. The most important and necessary improvements to prioritize was visitor education, transportation and information infrastructure. Without these elements in place, the visitors would have a hard time finding their way around and would not fully understand and appreciate the park resources. That leads to an overall poor visitor experience and possibly unwanted behavior, such as littering, wear on protected vegetation and erosion.

Denali's entrance area got major improvements to avoid poor visitor experience and to accommodate the increase in visitors. The improvements included the new Denali Visitor Center, visitor exhibits, new entrance area- and wayside displays and an extension of the trail system (National Park Service 2009a). Another addition to the interpretation and education in the park was built in 2008, the Murie Science and Learning Center. That same year the new Eielson Visitor Center at mile 66, opened as well (National Park Service 2009a).

During the period of 2001-2008, the funding for education has remained about the same, while the expenses have increased. This forced the park to come up with alternative ways of funding and new ways of delivering their education programmes. A new plan for education and

interpretation was necessary. Due to the pressing issue, they put together steering committees, visioning groups and writer/facilitator teams to create a new plan.

The plan describes a 20-year vision of the development of interpretation and education in Denali National Park and Preserve. The plan's overall purpose is to communicate the park's long-term vision, key interpretive themes, educational priorities and strategies to Denali National Park and Preserve staff, Alaska regional NPS staff and everyone that are, or might become educational partners with the park (National Park Service 2009a). It is adaptable to shifting trends, fluctuations in visitation, environmental conditions and economy. The plan is a flexible tool to achieve the original park purposes, mission and enabling statutes (National Park Service 2009a).

5.2.1 Education and Interpretation Themes

The plan describes Denali National Park and Preserves education and interpretation themes. The themes capture Denali's significance, tell the best stories and deliver the main message. These themes were developed through several meetings in 2006, as a cooperation between staff, partners and stakeholders (National Park Service 2009a).

The themes are based on Denali's resources, both tangible and intangible. The themes are:

***Theme 1: Extensive Natural Ecosystems** Denali's intact, natural ecosystem embodies a wisdom from which humans can learn and promote the workings of a healthy planet for a sustainable future.*

***Theme 2: Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat** The size and ecological integrity of Denali preserves a home of extraordinary quality for populations of large northern mammals, birds, and other wildlife, where they can live and be observed interacting with one another and their natural habitat with minimal human disruption.*

***Theme 3: Denali/Mount McKinley** Mount McKinley's magnitude captivates human imagination and inspires exploration and protection of the Denali region's landscapes, wildlife, and wilderness.*

Theme 4: Wilderness Values and Wilderness Recreation Denali's wild lands create a refuge from modern civilization where we can discover, challenge, and connect with the primal pulses and prevailing forces of nature.

Theme 5: People and the Land the ways Denali shapes and is shaped by the character, lives, and values of people past and present offers us insights into our relationship with our natural heritage.

Theme 6: Dynamic Change Denali preserves a dynamic landscape, ever shifting, changing and adjusting to cycles and processes, seen and unseen” (National Park Service 2009a p. 7).

Additional to the themes, a theme matrix includes concepts and ideas, tangible topics and stories and intangible and universal concepts that are compatible to the theme. This is a great tool for all interpreters, especially fresh ones, or interpreters new to this particular park. It is stated in the plan that the themes should be reviewed and revised regularly and communicated to partners, commercial operators and others that it will be beneficial to (National Park Service 2009a).

5.2.2 Visitor Experience Goals

The plan also expresses detailed visitor experience goals. The goals identifies desired experiences education and interpretive staff seek to facilitate through their time with the visitors. The goals can be achieved through natural resources, facilities in the park or one of the programmes (National Park Service 2009a).

“Visitors to Denali will have the opportunity to:

Core Interpretative Themes:

- *Learn the park's key messages/themes through a variety of means, including personal contact with an employee of the park, concessioner or park partner; formal interpretive programs; nonpersonal media; and curricula.*

Visitor Enjoyment:

- *Experience Denali National Park and Preserve in a way that provides them with a sense of awe and discovery without impairing its wild character.*
- *Easily access orientation information and choose from a range of high-quality visitor programs throughout the park and surrounding lands.*
- *Participate in safe, varied, and highly satisfying naturalist-guided and self-guided learning experiences.*
- *Visit park learning centers that are sustainably designed, well maintained, inspirational, and that provide access to a wide variety of learning tools.*

Science Literacy:

- *Discover how science is used to manage the park's natural and cultural resources.*

Curriculum-Based Learning:

- *Participate in curriculum-based educational programs in classrooms inside and outside the park, through distance learning technologies, face-to-face instruction, and through teacher training programs.” (National Park Service 2009a p.16).*

The visitor goals are followed by desired visitor outcomes, which I wrote about in the section about why Denali National Park and Preserve does interpretation.

To be able to give the visitors good experiences, reach the desired outcomes and satisfy their expectations, the park must know their visitors and their expectations. Wide ranges of people visit the park, from people in wheelchairs to people attempting to climb Denali. Visitor surveys play an important role in achieving these goals. Denali National Park and Preserve conducts visitor surveys regularly, and most recently in 2011 (National Park Service No date-i).

It is not possible to please everyone, and the plan states that Denali was created for specific purposes and cannot accommodate all human uses and activities (National Park Service 2009a). However, one of the main goals is that all visitors can easily navigate the park, from distance and on site. Primary needs are also the same for most Denali visitors, easy accessed information about the park, accommodation, food, recreational activities and so on (National Park Service 2009a).

5.2.3 Existing Conditions

The plan describes the existing conditions, and briefly looks into interpretation programs, education facilities and staff.

Center for Resources, Science and Learning (CRSL).

CRSL, built in 2004, serves, as a bridge between science and the public. One of their main goals is to make science understandable and available for schools as well as the public. The staff at CRSL specializes in biology, physical science, history, ethnography, archeology, interpretation and education. Their tasks are to work closely with the scientists at The Murie Science and Learning Center, and translate the scientists' research into more understandable material (National Park Service 2009a). The goal behind this "bridge" between science and public is to build public support for the parks stewardship mission. By doing this, the staff uses the opportunity to address sensitive management issues, such as fire effects, mining, off-road vehicle/snow machines, aircrafts, wildlife populations and habitat, sport and subsistence harvesting and so on. These issues are delicate and requires special attention (National Park Service 2009a).

Denali Visitor Center (DVC)

DVC, built in 2005 is located close to the park's entrance and is supposed to serve the majority of Denali's visitors. The DVC's purpose is to enhance the visitors experience by making it inspiring and powerful. The exhibits teach them about Denali and its people (National Park Service 2009a). The DVC has a theater that shows a movie about Denali, exhibits with 3D simulated environments, murals, interactive audio- visuals and much more. The goal is to serve 90% of the visitors, taking some of the pressure off the Park Road (which has a limit to the number of busses per year). It is also one of the largest non-personal interpretive areas in the park, and strives to teach the visitors about Denali's ecosystems, plants, animals and culture (National Park Service 2009a). Today, the challenge is to include the DVC in package tours' schedules, and to improve the navigation and transportation from the parking areas, the hotels in the area and so on, so that people more easily can find their way to DVC (National Park Service 2009a). The DVC also provides kids and their parents/adult supervisors with a free Junior Ranger program. It is an activity guide, which contains activities and information about Denali and its resources. There is

one guide for ages nine to fifteen, and one for ages four to eight. When the activities are completed, after showing it to a ranger, the children earn a Junior Ranger Badge (National Park Service No date-b).

The Murie Science and Learning Center (MSLC)

The MSLC, formed in 2003, serves all National Parks in Alaska. The purpose is to promote science and education in the parks. They work with creating educational partnerships, and engaging youths and kids (National Park Service 2009a). The MSLC hosts youth camps with an emphasis on science, create summer job opportunities and special projects for gateway community schools. One of their great accomplishments is the development of a model funding science education, by leveraging limited government funding with private funding and cost-recovery programs (National Park Service 2009a). The MSLC's goal is to foster a greater understanding of the Denali ecosystem and the stewardship mission of the park. The staff either does the research themselves or delegates it to someone else, preferably through their education projects. This will broaden the knowledge and understanding of Denali's ecosystems. However, the cooperation with CRSL is important. They make the research easier to understand for the public, as research can include a lot of terms and specific jargon (National Park Service 2009a).

Denali Bookstore

Alaska Geographic Association (AKGEO) runs the Denali Bookstore, and return approximately 10-12% of the gross sales to support the park interpretation and education staff. The parks interpretation staff approves all the items for sale, to ensure only the highest quality material are for sale. The goal is to provide the visitors with the best quality, natural- and cultural heritage material (National Park Service 2009a).

Wilderness Access Center (WAC)

WAC, which the Doyon/Aramark Denali National Park Concession Joint Venture (JV) runs, is the hub for Denali's visitor transportation system. In this building the visitors buy their bus tickets, reserve campgrounds and other concession activities (National Park Service 2009a). Every visitor taking the bus or using the campgrounds has to stop by WAC. That includes day hikers and backpackers who need to use the shuttle bus. When forced to stop to buy tickets and permits, the WAC has a great opportunity to reach out to a great portion of the visitors with

interpretation and education. The interpretive theme in WAC is “Portal to Wilderness”, and the interpretation is themed around this (National Park Service 2009a). The WAC has not fully realized its potential to reach out to visitors with their interpretation.

Backcountry Information Center (BIC)

BIC is located close to the WAC, and serves visitors that are spending one or more nights in Denali’s backcountry. The backpackers are required to obtain a permit, which includes choosing a unit they wish to camp in, watch a video about backpacking in Denali and talk to a ranger about their trip plans (National Park Service No date-a). Denali’s ranger division manages this unit and it contains landscape-based information on scenic views, river crossing, wildlife viewing areas and closures. The BIC has a great potential when it comes to interpretation. Many visitors stop by every day. However, the funding is limited, and the rangers working there are busy authorizing permits (National Park Service 2009a).

Entrance Area Trails

There are around 19 miles of trails winding around the entrance area. Several of them are accessible by wheelchair. Visitors can either walk alone, or join a ranger on a nature walk. The nature walks start at the DVC, lasts about two hours and covers about three miles. The topics interpreted vary from Denali’s taiga ecosystems to plants, berries and wildlife (National Park Service No date-j). In conjunction with Savage Destination Rest Stop there is an interpretive wayside trail with exhibits (National Park Service 2009a).

Denali Park Road

Riding one of the busses on the Denali Park Road is a comprehensive opportunity for visitors to experience Denali National Park and Preserve. Along the 92-mile long road, seeing wildlife is common, and the scenic views along the road are unique. The educational aspect of the ride is great, as the visitors are inside the bus, and available for interpretation over a longer period. The combination of travelling through Denali, while having a guide present, is creating countless opportunities for interpretation (National Park Service 2009a). The road itself is gravel and kept narrow. This is partly to prevent speeding and dusting, but also to maintain the wilderness feel to the park. The number of busses allowed on the road per season is always under evaluation and researchers are monitoring it. The consequences of too much traffic on the park road are

excessive dusting and wildlife not willing to cross the road, which makes the road a barrier for wildlife (National Park Service 2009a).

Savage River Check Station (SRCS)

At mile 15, you find Savage River Check Station. This is where the limitations for private vehicles starts. Rangers, who board all busses at the check station, make sure to welcome the visitors to the park (National Park Service 2009a). Since the Tundra Wilderness Tour, Denali Natural History Tour and VTS are all operated by the JV, the rangers contact with these visitors are minimal. The short time the ranger is onboard the busses, they convey the key stewardship message to the visitors. This short time is valuable and important to improve the visitor experience (National Park Service 2009a).

Eielson Visitor Center (EVC)

It was necessary to tear down the old EVC in 2005, due to many years of wear and tear. With sustainable design, and the building floating into the surrounding nature, the new EVC opened in 2008 (National Park Service 2009a). In clear weather, the EVC is great for viewing Denali (Mount McKinley), which is one of the themes in EVC. The center has many Denali (Mount McKinley) exhibitions, artwork and photos. Teaching visitors about the connection between ecosystems, people's place in the wilderness and preservation by design are the interpretive goals in EVC (National Park Service 2009a).

Campgrounds

Within the park, there are six campgrounds. They serve as a place to provide educational information. Many visitors seeking a non-guided experience jumps off the busses at the campgrounds. That gives the park another opportunity to reach these visitors with interpretation (National Park Service 2009a). Except from non-personal outreach, the campgrounds have campfire evenings and informal encounters with rangers (National Park Service 2009a).

Backcountry

The backcountry management plan from 2006, manages the backcountry of Denali. The backcountry starts 150 feet from the centerline of the Park Road. Denali's fundamental backcountry goals are resource protection and education (National Park Service, No date-b).

Non-personal interpretation is not allowed in the backcountry, and visitors can find interpretation and information about the backcountry in the entrance area. The Long Range Plan for Education and Interpretation (2009) states that education of backpackers hiking in Denali's wilderness is one of their most powerful tools to achieve the stewardship mission. As mentioned earlier, the BIC is responsible for educating the backpackers, but they are struggling with limited funding (National Park Service 2009a).

Talkeetna Ranger Station (TRS)

TRS provides the south communities with National Park information. They are a combination of a visitor center, ranger station and a mountaineering station (National Park Service 2009a). They work as the point of contact for mountaineering groups climbing Denali. This is where you have to register, get permits and get the mandatory orientation. They are also in charge of the ranger base camp and patrol and rescue coordination. The staff at TRS are also responsible for the interpretation and educating of the public. They host movie showings about climbing Denali, arrange evening programs at the ranger station, weekly kids programs and a daily program at the local museum during summer (National Park Service 2009a).

Arts At Denali

Denali National Park uses arts and culture to promote interpretation and education. Since 2002, they have hosted one or more artists during summer (National Park Service 2009a). The program, "Arts in Residence" is a competition, where the winning artist gets a 10-day stay at the East Fork Cabin. In return, the artist donate an original piece of art, inspired by their stay. The artist also presents at least one public presentation or program during their stay (National Park Service 2009a).

Denali Interpretive Ranger /Educating interpreters

Denali's seasonal staff consists of interpreters, Student Conservation Association Interns, volunteers and student interns. All will spend a portion of their time delivering front-line interpretation (National Park Service, No date-b). The number of returning seasonal staff has been low the past years, which impacts the number of new people the park has to educate every year. The seasonal staff receive interpretive training before the tourist season set in. The staff

receive classroom instruction and hands-on skill building to prepare them for the season (National Park Service 2009a).

The classroom instruction provides them with interpretive skills, and makes them familiar with the park info and resources. Park staff are responsible for the classroom instruction, but sometimes guest speakers are teaching (National Park Service 2009a). The skill-building part of the education is more practical. It gives instruction on leading guided walks and finding routes on off-trail hikes. First aid and area familiarization are also provided for those in need. After the three weeks of education, they ease the seasonal staff into the interpretive schedule (National Park Service 2009a).

Educational Concessioners/Stakeholders in Interpretation

Concessioners provide many different visitor services to visitors in Denali National Park and Preserve. They vary from small companies guiding small groups in the backcountry, to large corporations that provide guided bus services (National Park Service 2009a). There are about 20 businesses holding a concession contract with Denali, and they comprise the most of the commercial services in the park. There are another 40 businesses, authorized by a Commercial Use Authorization (CUA), that do occasional commercial activities in the park (National Park Service 2009a). Most of the visitors in Denali spend more time with concessioners than with park rangers. That makes the commercial operators very important in supporting the visitors' basic personal needs and providing them with quality interpretation. Some of the concessioners are only providing interpretation indirectly, while others provide interpretation directly to the visitors (National Park Service 2009a).

The CUA makes sure only necessary and appropriate services for public use and enjoyment of the park are authorized (National Park Service 2009a). It also requires that the needs are not, or cannot be met inside the park boundaries, and that they are provided in a manner that furthers the protection, conservation and preservation of the environment and park resources and values (National Park Service 2009a). With the concessioners being such a large part of the interpretive personnel in the park, it is important that the quality of their interpretation is high.

Denali National Park and Preserve requires that their concessioners, guides and outfitters can provide the necessary information about the Park. That includes knowledge about the resources, the park themes and its mission (National Park Service 2009a). The concessioners are, for the

most part, responsible for their own training and educations, however, Denali National Park and Preserve ensures they meet the minimum standard before authorizing each concession (National Park Service 2009a).

5.3 What are the Benefits of Interpretation in Denali National Park and Preserve?

Why Denali National Park and Preserve uses interpretation, is because of the benefits. According to Denali National Park and Preserve Education Plan (2009) and Module 101: Fulfilling the NPS mission: The process of interpretation (2003) there are several benefits that comes from interpretation.

The benefits interpretation offers are both practical and philosophical. The discovery of meaning and relevance by visitors are the most common benefit, found in the literature. The interpretation helps visitors to obtain a broader understanding for the resources (National Park Service 2003; National Park Service 2009a). By understanding what the resource means, the visitors will see the site with new eyes. This may inspire and lead to an appreciation for the richness and complexity of life (National Park Service 2003). As well as seeing the resource with new eyes, it may also lead to the understanding of the importance of the resource. The visitors relate and connect with the resources, and may understand the resources larger significance. All this new knowledge may inspire to participate in conservation and protection of the resources (National Park Service 2003; National Park Service 2009a).

In other words, they want the visitors to gain knowledge, so they have a good experience and develop a connection to the site. That will enhance the visitor experience as well as protect the resources. When the visitors feel a responsibility, they will think about their actions and choices. Personal actions make a difference (National Park Service 2003; National Park Service 2009a).

There is also many benefits from non-personal interpretation. Denali National Park and Preserve pays close attention to the placement and design of trails and signs. Especially the entrance area is important. This is where all visitors go through, and where most of the visitors spend most of their time (National Park Service 2009a). How trails, signs, opening hours, litter solutions are managed affects the preservation of the resource and the visitor experience. A few years before

the Education Plan was made in 2009, extensive redevelopment of the front country and entrance area was conducted. Changes were made to the visitor services, re-routing of the entrance road, programs and education infrastructure at the entrance of the park (National Park Service 2009a).

5.4 How do They Measure and Evaluate the Benefits of Interpretation?

In 2004, The National Education Council was established. Their objective was to renew and encourage the NPS's educational mission (National Park Service 2009a). Together they released a Service-wide Interpretation and Education Evaluation Strategy (SIEES), which serves the purpose of providing a solid foundation for evaluation at Denali (National Park Service 2009a).

The SIEES document describes the importance of evaluation culture. Evaluation is an important tool to ensure return on investment (National Park Service 2009a). Interpretation and education are big parts of the Denali experience, and the evaluation is important to show the results of this. The evaluation is a constant reflection on a program's successes and failures. The aim is to improve the program, based on information achieved through the evaluation (National Park Service 2009a).

An evaluation culture should promote learning by doing and ensure that the program links to the core values. Thinking new, trying and failing and taking risks are also a part of the evaluation culture (National Park Service 2009a). It is important to point out that an evaluation culture is not about judging and testing people. It is about learning from one's successes and failures (National Park Service 2009a). The actual evaluation comes from asking essential questions to visitors, program participants and educators. The questions should be open, and invite to conversation. To make the evaluation effective, it should contain post-program surveys and questionnaires as well as face-to-face dialogue (National Park Service 2009a).

The document recommends the following approaches to move Denali towards a culture of innovation and evaluation:

- Workshops for staff
- Create survey tools
- Create a permanent position for an evaluator

- Build in time for staff to gather data, reflect and response
- Monitor public satisfaction within the park
- Monitor public attitudes towards the park regularly (National Park Service 2009a).

6 Discussion

In this chapter, I will discuss the limitations and strengths associated with my data collection and choice of methodology. I will also address the potential bias. When it comes to the research questions, I will summarize the most important and relevant findings. I will look at findings and theoretical framework, and compare and link where possible. I will address the effects and values Denali National Park and Preserve is attributing to their interpretation. The structure is the same as the research questions are presented.

6.1 Why is Denali National Park and Preserve Using Interpretation?

The reasons why Denali National Park and Preserve is using interpretation are consistent with what I found in the literature. Interpretation is communication, provocation, revelation, making emotional connections to the resource and helping the audience understand the resource (Beck & Cable 2011; Hall & McArthur 1996; Moscardo 2007; National Association for Interpretation No date).

Denali National Park and Preserve describes what they achieve from interpretation in their Education Plan (2009), and the Module 101: Fulfilling the NPS mission: The process of interpretation (2003) describe similar statements. What they claim to achieve with interpretation is enhancing visitor experience and promote the parks resource protection messages, increase visitors knowledge and understanding of the resources. They desire to develop a deep connection and responsibility between the resources and the visitors and change the ways visitors think and behave towards public lands. By stating this, they attribute their interpretation with effects and values for which they do not have true data or a yet to measure the outcome.

Beck and Cable (2011) says that interpretation reveals a deeper meaning and truth, which is what Denali wishes to accomplish. Sam Ham (2013) talks about the endgame of interpretation, holding attention, make a point and provoke thoughts, which Denali expresses through their desired visitor outcomes (knowledge and understanding, enjoyment and inspiration, action), in the Education Plan (2009). From interpretations endgame, you can, according to Ham (2013)

accomplish three outcomes. Interpretation can enhance visitor experience, affect their attitudes and promote their appreciation about a place, object or concept. It can also enhance the protection of important, fragile and unique resources by influencing how visitors behave towards them (Ham 2013). This supports the statement of Module 101: Fulfilling the NPS mission: The process of interpretation (2003), saying that interpretation can help fulfill the National Park Service mission. The overarching mission of the National park Service is “. . . to conserve the scenery, and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations” (National Park Service 2003 p. 9). The theoretical framework supports that statement. Several studies show that interpretation conducted by the TORE principles may shape human behavior and believes, to the resource’s advantage (Ham 2013; Powell & Ham 2008; Zeppel & Muloin 2008).

As mentioned, the theoretical framework does support Denali’s statements, but it also points out how important the quality of the interpretation is, which Denali do not mention in this section. According to both the Education Plan (2009) and the statement of Module 101: Fulfilling the NPS mission: The process of interpretation (2003) interpretation will help fulfill missions and goals. They state this without mentioning what is required of the interpretation to achieve these outcomes.

Besides enhancing the visitor experience and promoting the resource protection messages, interpretation is a way of tackling a growing demand from tourists. According to Fredman and Tyrväinen (2010), the demand for nature-based tourism is growing. However, the development of facilities and products is not following the demand. Besides the growing number of nature-based tourists, the tourists are also expecting more of their experience. Tourists wants a vacation with substance and content. Our society is changing towards a knowledge/information society, and tourists want to learn during their vacation (Ritchie et al. 2003). Denali National Park and Preserve strives to meet the demand, and accommodate the visitors as best as possible (National Park Service 2009a). Denali experienced a boom of tourists several years ago, and struggled to meet the growing demand. The solution was to re-structure the entrance area with infrastructure and education and interpretation programs. According to Denali National Park and Preserve, the

facilities and interpretation and education products match the demand in Denali today (National Park Service 2009a). Consequences due to not meeting the expectations to the growing demand are several and serious. The visitor satisfaction decreases and interpretation might not reach out to everybody. That may lead to other problems, like crowding, erosion, littering, dangerous situations and dissatisfied visitors. To conclude, by not matching the demand from tourist, the opposite of fulfilling the National Park Service Mission is happening. The tourists may ruin resources and not have as good of experience. Ham (2013) states that interpretation is a good tool to shape visitors behavior. Interpretation can make visitors pick up litter left by others, ensure proper food storage, keep the visitors on the trail to prevent erosion etc. (Ham 2013).

With the general growth in nature-based tourism (Fredman & Tyrväinen 2010), Breivik (2010) also argues that there is a growth in adventure sports. More and more people wants to experience the wilderness. They seek the sensation of self-realization, individualism, feeling scared and adrenaline rush (Breivik 2010). For some a guided ranger walk in the entrance area is fulfilling their expectations of adventure. Others choose to hire guides to get them safe through a hike or trip in Denali's wilderness, or go all by themselves. Regardless of what level of "guiding" the visitors choose, the interpretation they receive is important to their safety and experience in the park. In the Education Plan (2009), I found that Denali National Park and Preserve offers short ranger walks in a safe setting, where people without the necessary experience and skills can enjoy the more wild and natural parts of the entrance area. Concessioners offer a range of guiding services, providing people with limited skills, or confidence to explore the wilderness of Denali in a safe and sustainable way (National Park Service 2009a). With concessioners guiding in the wilderness, Denali National Park and Preserve has a good offer to the segment of people wanting to buy safe but thrilling experiences, which Breivik (2010) talks about. When it comes to the people wanting to experience Denali's wilderness on their own, the Education Plan (2009) describes how they maintain the hiker's safety and protect the resources. Everyone spending one or more nights in the wilderness of Denali must obtain a permit. To get the permit, hikers must watch a safety video and talk to a ranger about where they plan to go (National Park Service 2009a). This happens at the Backcountry Information Center, where rangers are offering face-to-face interpretation, along with non-personal interpretation (National Park Service 2009a).

The last reason I want to connect to why Denali National Park and Preserve is using interpretation is the American National Park history. Teaching people about the National Park resources can be traced back to the late 19th century to John Muir and Enos Mills (Hall & McArthur 1996). The National Parks were established to serve as a public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people (National Park Service No date-e). This affects how Denali National Park and Preserve and every other national park in the U.S. use interpretation. There is a long tradition striving for visitor enjoyment while protecting the resources, due to the purpose of the American National Parks (National Park Service No date-e), and well executed interpretation can result in both visitor enjoyment and resource protection (Ham 2013; Powell & Ham 2008; Tubb 2003; Zeppel & Muloin 2008).

6.2 How is Denali National Park and Preserve Using Interpretation?

How Denali National Park and Preserve is using interpretation connects to why they use interpretation. As mentioned, the benefits from interpretation along with protection of the resources, is the reason Denali National Park and Preserve is using interpretation (National Park Service 2003; National Park Service 2009a). That will naturally give some implications to how Denali National Park and Preserve is using interpretation. The Education Plan, made in 2009, presents goals, purposes and existing conditions. The Plan emphasizes the importance of interpretation when it comes to facilitating for the visitors. The entrance area went through big upgrades to accommodate the visitors in the best possible way (National Park Service 2009a). As mentioned earlier, when interpretation facilities are missing, unwanted behavior may occur. Ham (2013) writes about how interpretation can help shape behavior. Interpretation can make visitors pick up litter from others, enhance their safety in the wilderness etc. (Ham 2013), resulting in enhanced visitor experience and protection of the resources.

How Denali use interpretation also reflects the trends and demands in society. Today's nature-based tourists want more education and activities in their vacations (Kamfjord 2011; Ritchie et

al. 2003). By meeting that demand, with interpretation, Denali National Park and Preserve increase their visitor's enjoyment and wish to visit the park.

6.2.1 Education and Interpretation Themes

Denali National Park and Preserve has a strong focus on interpretation and education. In every building, trail, road or program interpretation is integrated. To make sure the visitors get the opportunity to learn about the most important stories and the core messages, Denali National Park and Preserve has developed a set of themes. The themes captures Denali's significance, tell the best stories and deliver the most important messages to the visitors (National Park Service 2009a).

I find good support for using themes in interpretation. Ham (2013) mention themes as one of the most important aspects of conducting good interpretation. By using themes as an aid in the planning process, it is easier to present a whole theme instead of bits and pieces (Beck & Cable 2011; Ham 2013; Tilden 2009).

What I want to point out, is the effects and values Denali National Park and Preserve claims to achieve. These statements does not take into account that not all kinds of interpretation leads to these benefits. As an example, "Mount McKinley's magnitude captivates human imagination and inspires exploration and protection of the Denali region's landscapes, wildlife, and wilderness" (National Park Service 2009a p. 7). They can say that Mount McKinley is a beautiful mountain, and that visitors thinks it is beautiful. However, how can they prove that the beauty and magnificence of this mountain does anything to a human's imagination, and inspires them to explore and protect? These effects and values are indeed possible, but as Ham (2013) points out, they require interpretation of a certain quality. Denali National Park and Preserve cannot assume that all interpretation gives all humans these effects and values. One way of proving these effects and values is to do visitor surveys, since the visitors are the judges of this. I could not find evidence of Denali National Park doing these surveys or similar studies on effects from interpretation. However, Tubb (2003), Powell & Ham (2008) and Zeppel & Muloin (2008) did visitor surveys in the UK, Galapagos and in Australia to measure the effects of interpretation, and concluded with several benefits stemming from interpretation.

To conclude, the themes described in the Education Plan (2009) are very valuable as a tool for the interpretive staff at Denali National Park and Preserve. Considering many of the interpreters working in Denali are concessioners, the themes convey what the interpretive administration in Denali want to emphasize. However, the effects and values the plan describes should specify that the quality of interpretation determines the outcome.

6.2.2 Visitor Experience Goals

The Education Plan (2009), presents the visitor experience goals in detail. The goals states that the interpretive team as well as all other staff should seek to facilitate desired experiences during their time with the visitors. The visitor experience goals are divided into four subsections; core interpretative themes, visitor enjoyment, science literacy and curriculum-based learning (National Park Service 2009a).

As well as in the “themes” section, they describe effects and values without specifying or further explanation. The desired visitor experiences expresses that the visitors should be able to choose from high-quality visitor programs. They do not specify what high-quality means. The goals describes states and conditions, which they do not define or explain. Examples of this is “...high-quality visitor programs...”, “...safe, varied, and highly satisfying...”, and “...inspirational...” (National Park Service 2009a p.16). I get the impression of that they put more emphasis on the possible effects of what they do, than what they actually do. Denali National Park and Preserve describe what they do to reach the desired visitor experiences in the existing conditions section, but not to great extent.

When that is said, the visitor experience goals are achievable through quality interpretation and facilitation. Denali National Park and Preserve offers a wide range of interpretation services, which increases the chances of meeting the visitor experience goals (National Park Service 2009a). By offering different bus-services on the Park Road, Ranger walks and talks, Art’s in Denali Program etc., Denali National Park and Preserve strives to let the visitors experience the park in a way that inspires and provides them with a sense of awe, without impairing the resources or its wild character (National Park Service 2009a). As mentioned, interpretation in different forms but of good quality may enhance the visitor experience.

6.2.3 Existing Conditions

Denali National park and Preserve has interpretation and education braided into everything: buildings, trails, roads, campgrounds, programs etc. The Education Plan gives a comprehensive description on why interpretation is important, and how Denali National Park and Preserve uses interpretation in the different parts of the park.

The different ways Denali National Park and Preserve uses interpretation is inspiring. The Park Road is a great way for a large numbers of visitors to receive interpretation, experience and watch the wilderness and wildlife, without impairing it (National Park Service 2009a). There are negative sides to the Park Road, such as dusting, noise, wildlife disturbance etc. However, researchers in the park closely monitor these factors. In recent years, the entrance area got an upgrade, to accommodate the increase of tourists. The “Art’s at Denali” program is an inspiring and innovative way of using culture to promote education (National Park Service 2009a).

In the Education Plan (2009), all the different buildings and their functions are described. Denali National Park and Preserve staff and run all the buildings except the Wilderness Access Center (WAC), which the Doyon/Aramark Denali National Park Concession Joint Venture (JV) runs. The buildings have different purposes, but they all work towards the same goal; to improve the knowledge and/or the experience of the visitors (National Park Service 2009a). The Education Plan (2009) states that the buildings are powerful tools to achieve the stewardship mission, inspire and enhance visitor experiences. The different buildings offers many different interpretation services. The services range from making bridges between science and the public, safety in the wilderness, addressing sensitive issues as fire effects, subsistence harvesting etc. to offering Junior Ranger Programs (National Park Service 2009a). To summarize, the different buildings around Denali National Park and Preserve serve a great deal of the personal and non-personal interpretation in the park. The theory supports the statement made about the buildings helping achieving the stewardship message, being inspiring and enhancing visitor experiences (Hall & McArthur 1996; Ham 2013; Powell & Ham 2008; Tilden 2009; Tubb 2003; Zeppel & Muloin 2008). However, as mentioned several times before, the interpretation has to hold a

certain standard or quality to be able to achieve this (Ham 2013; Powell & Ham 2008; Tubb 2003; Zeppel & Muloin 2008).

6.3 What are the Benefits of Interpretation in Denali National Park and Preserve?

The Education plan (2009) and the Module 101: Fulfilling the NPS mission: The process of interpretation (2003) documents claims a number of benefits coming from interpretation. The theoretical framework supports this to a certain point. The research done on the subject suggests that all the benefits Denali National Park and Preserve and National Park Service is claiming are possible outcomes from interpretation. However, Ham (2013) is very clear on the fact that only excellent interpretation can achieve these possible outcomes.

Denali National Park and Preserve and the National Park Service claim to achieve several benefits with interpretation. The visitors are discovering relevance and meaning, getting a broader understanding of the site. They are inspired and appreciate the complexity and richness of life. When experiencing this the visitors connects to the resource, understanding the larger significance. This may inspire to participate in conservation and protection of the resources (National Park Service 2003; National Park Service 2009a). Even if the theory supports this, there is no guarantee that these effects happens. To be able to say this for sure, one has to measure the effects of interpretation, in Denali National Park and Preserve, preferably with an independent survey or study on the visitors experiencing the interpretation.

Recent research supports these benefits. Interpretation can increase the visitors' knowledge; enhance the quality of the visitor experience and influence visitor behavior, values and attitudes (Hall & McArthur 1996; Ham 2013; Powell & Ham 2008; Tubb 2003; Zeppel & Muloin 2008). The long-term success of interpretation can be witnessed in the changes in attitudes and behaviors of those on the receiving end. A change in long-term intentions, supporting and engaging in conservation and preservation, and overall concern for the environment is a direct result of interpretation success (Ham 2013; Powell & Ham 2008; Tubb 2003; Zeppel & Muloin 2008). Regardless of conclusions drawn by research, the quality of the interpretation is the key to achieve these benefits. Interpretation conducted with TORE quality or similar principles can lead to these outcomes (Ham 2013; Powell & Ham 2008; Tubb 2003).

With Ham's (2013) statements about benefits only occurring with top quality interpretation, we cannot assume that all of Denali National Park and Preserves and National Park Services statements of benefits from interpretation are accurate. If the interpretation is conducted without one or more of the TORE elements, the benefits will most likely not occur (Ham 2013). Finding the answer to this requires interviewing the interpretation administration and rangers working at Denali National Park and Preserve, to make sure the quality of the interpretation is excellent. In addition, visitor surveys and questionnaires would reveal which benefits the visitors are experiencing. However, I limited the research questions to how they use programs, buildings, trails etc. Therefore, we can only assume the rangers performing the interpretation delivers excellent interpretation, resulting in these outcomes.

Not specifically mentioned in Denali National Park and Preserve's and the National Park Service's documents, are the benefits of increased safety and less risk coming from interpretation. Even if they do not mention the safety aspect specifically, it is written between the lines and very important. Through their interpretive programs, services and products, Denali is increasing their visitors' safety. Adventure sports has increased in popularity, and is attractive to a large segment of the nature-based tourists (Breivik 2010). According to Breivik (2010) it is the individualism, self-realization and transcendence that draws people to adventure sports. The activities usually requires skills related to body and mind, the coping with stress and anxiety, and the possibility of mastering and challenge from demanding environment (Breivik 2010).

For some a guided ranger walk is an adventure. Others seek the unforgiving environment of Denali National Park and Preserve's wilderness or the challenging ascent of Denali, North Americas tallest mountain. The education and interpretation provided by the Wilderness Access Center, the Backcountry Information Center, Talkeetna Ranger Station, the campgrounds and the Rangers is very valuable. Information about bear proofing campsites, avalanche safety, river crossing and navigation in the backcountry can be a matter of life and death. Interpretation benefits in many ways, not only protecting resources and enhancing visitor experience.

6.4 How do They Measure and Evaluate the Benefits of Interpretation?

Denali National Park and Preserve is using Service-wide Interpretation and Education Evaluation Strategy (SIEES), developed by The National Education Council. SIEES describes the importance of evaluation and evaluation culture within the National Park (National Park Service 2009a). It aims to improve the interpretive programs based on information achieved through the evaluation. The SIEES recommends asking visitors questions, through both questionnaires and face-to-face dialogue (National Park Service 2009a). This is only recommendations for an evaluation strategy, and I was unable to find results from surveys like this in Denali National Park and Preserve.

However, I find support for the SIEES Denali National Park and Preserve is supposed to use, in Weiler and Hams (2010) work. They argue that feedback and return on investment is important to interpretation and education. It affects the number of staff, the budget for the education and interpretation department etc. They also argue that the most cost-efficient and reliable method is the use of a well-designed questionnaire (Weiler & Ham 2010). It is important to justify the staffing and the budget for interpretation. Without the evaluation, one cannot really tell what is working, and how it is working. A questionnaire can tell if one need more or less staff, if the staff needs more training, if the amount of programs are too many or too few. In all kinds of management, it is important to monitor and evaluate continuously, to know the effects of the programs and to know what decisions to make (Weiler & Ham 2010). Beck and Cable (2011) also argues how important the administration of the interpretation programs are. Their 12th principle says that the interpretation program must attract enough support to make the program flourish (Beck & Cable 2011).

Without any evaluation or research on the outcomes from the interpretation in Denali, they have no way of knowing what works well, and what parts needs adjustments. The evaluation and measuring of outcomes is also an important tool to maintain and get enough funding for the interpretation program. This is a weakness to their otherwise strong and good interpretation strategy.

6.5 Will this Type of Interpretation Strategy Benefit, for Instance, the Norwegian National Park System?

Due to big differences in management and funding, the interpretation strategy in Denali National Park and Preserve will not work as a copy paste lesson for the Norwegian National Park system. However, by adapting to the local management and funding there are several opportunities to draw lessons. Rose (1991) argues that adapting to the local circumstances is crucial. Creativity is key, and by adapting, changing parts or finding generic elements, one can create a conceptual model of the program (Rose 1993).

As mentioned earlier, the two national parks purposes, traditions, management and laws are different. However, the Norwegian way of managing is changing. Nature-based tourism is increasing (Fredman & Tyrväinen 2010), and with more tourists in our national parks, the need for facilitation and interpretation increase with the wear and tear that follows. By not acting, the damage will be greater than if we take thoughtful and contemplated actions now.

I believe that by adapting parts of Denali National Park and Preserve's interpretation strategy to each individual national park, it would be beneficial to the Norwegian national park system. By implementing simple facilitation and interpretation to a bigger scale in Norway's national parks, it could prevent crowding, erosion, littering and disturbance of fragile resources and wildlife. Poor visitor experience and dangerous situations is also manageable with simple facilitation and quality interpretation (Ham 2013; Powell & Ham 2008; Tubb 2003; Zeppel & Muloin 2008). As Rose (1991) mentioned, one does not have to copy the whole program, but one can get ideas and inspiration as well. It is no secret that facilitation in American national parks is extensive, and for Norwegians, maybe too much. However, that does not mean that Norwegian national parks cannot learn anything from the American national parks. With Rose's (1991) five alternative ways of drawing a lesson, it should be possible to find a golden mean.

There are parts that do not transfer well, and parts that are irrelevant or have poor quality. For instance, Denali National Park and Preserve's interpretation strategy does not emphasize the quality of the interpretation enough. According to Ham (2013), the quality of the interpretation is an essential element to achieve the desired outcomes from the interpretation. Another aspect is

the big differences in the two national park's economy and funding. With looking at how Denali National Park and Preserve use concessioners, Norwegian national parks may learn a thing or two about the value concessioners can have for their park.

With the benefits from interpretation in mind, the theory supports that interpretation should be a bigger part of Norwegian national parks. The Norwegian national parks have limited funding, and finding room for hiring interpretative staff may prove difficult. However, by looking at Denali National Park and Preserve's use of concessioners, Norway might find a functional approach to the same concept. By making sure concessioners can perform TORE quality interpretation, the national parks can offer quality interpretation without having to fund an interpretive staff.

Denali National Park and Preserve has several interpretation programs that does not require a lot of work, or a big budget. For example the Junior Ranger Program, or the Arts at Denali program. These and similar programs could work as a start in a Norwegian National Park, but they requires a park with a staffed visitor center or similar.

6.6 Choice of Methods

In this section I will discuss the limitations my choice of methodology has, and the consequences this might have for the thesis' validity and reliability. I found the most difficult part in this research to be the limitations. This theme is so wide, and I could have looked at so many angles and approaches for this study. I also felt a challenge towards the amount of documents available from both National Park Service and Denali National Park and Preserve. I spent a significant amount of time, to narrow down which ones were relevant to my research. I defend my decisions on using the Education Plan (2009) and the Module 101: Fulfilling the NPS mission: The process of interpretation (2003) with the fact that this is the official plan and foundation for interpretation in Denali and other American National Parks.

My method has its strengths and weaknesses. One of the weaknesses in this thesis is the lack of information about the measuring and evaluation of interpretation in Denali National Park and Preserve. I found some information about the SIEES, which provides a foundation for education in Denali National Park and Preserve, but that was not extensive. Evaluation and measuring the

actual effects of interpretation in Denali is important, especially due to budgets and the quality of the programs offered. There might be information that is more extensive and surveys done on the subject, but not that I could find. However, there is research done on measuring outcomes from interpretation in other national parks, which I used in this thesis.

According to Johannessen et al. (2011), the researcher's experience or contextual understanding might influence the selection and interpretation of the data. I tried to limit this by using the official *Education Plan* from Denali National Park and Preserve, and the *Module 101: Fulfilling the NPS mission: The process of interpretation*, which is the foundation document for interpretation in the National Park Service. By choosing these official documents, I was aiming to minimize my bias in selecting data. I tried to take a step back, and look at the data from another point of view. By doing this, I tried to limit my own role as a researcher, with a goal to improve the reliability.

Still, my experience and contextual understanding will affect how I interpret and analyze the data. Johannessen et al. (2011) points out that the researcher uses him- or herself as an instrument, and since no one has the exact same background (experience and contextual understanding) as the researcher, no one will interpret the data in the exact same way. The researcher can strengthen the reliability by giving a good description of the context and a detailed description of the process (Johannessen et al. 2011). By giving the reader an introduction to my case area, and a describing my methods and choices to detail, I hope to minimize this, and improve the reliability.

I believe by adding a set of interviews, I could have broadened the research questions. However, I chose not to, and limited the research questions instead. With the given limitations in the research questions, I believe my choice of method is strong and well described. If I were to add a set of interviews in early April (when I realized I would benefit from them), I would not have the sufficient time and capacity to analyze and use the data properly. If the plan was to combine interviews and data analysis from the beginning, I could have broadened the research questions. However, I believe that by limiting my research questions, I can go more in depth, instead of a wider, shallower perspective.

The weakness with only using Denali National Park and Preserve and National Park Service's documents is that they wrote them. I tried to be very aware of this, and worked hard to separate

what they actually do, and what is the values and effects of what they do. I describe how Denali National Park and Preserve does interpretation, but I do not necessarily vouch for the effects and values described. What the park describes can be correct, and might be an important motive for the interpretation they do. However, I tried to keep in mind that they have an interest in conveying their own success instead of shortcomings. Discussing the validity of these effects and values in the discussion chapter, and trying to be as subjective as possible, will strengthen the validity.

7 Conclusion

The goal with this thesis has been to illuminate *why* and *how* Denali National Park and Preserve uses interpretation in their park. Both *why* and *how* corresponds well with the existing theory on the subject. Benefits from interpretation is the main reason interpretation is profoundly implemented in the national park. Interpretation enhances the visitor experience as well as protecting the resources. Denali has managed to braid interpretation into every section of the park. Every building, trail, sign and program has elements of interpretation. However, the evaluation and measuring part is underdeveloped, and the evaluation and measuring of the outcomes should have a higher priority. This is a minor issue, and small adjustments can improve this.

Interpretation with TORE (Ham 2013) quality can be an answer to the growing demand in nature-based tourism and the trend of people buying safe and thrilling experiences. It addresses the growing numbers of tourists and their demands of acquiring new knowledge and being active/adventurous. Another aspect is the fragile resources around the world experiencing a rush of tourists, often without having the capacity to accommodate these tourists. Erosion, crowding, littering and dangerous situations is occurring. Implementing more interpretation could prevent many of these unwanted scenarios. These interpretation benefits are the reasons why other national parks should draw lessons from Denali National Park and Preserve. I believe that Norwegian national parks can look at programs, get ideas and get a lot of inspiration from

Denali's interpretation strategy, even if history, management and traditions in the two countries differs.

Due to the discussed limitations made because of the use of document analysis, further research may focus on how Denali National Park and Preserve is executing their plans. By using interviews and questionnaires on both interpretation staff and the visitors who receive the interpretation this should be possible. The field of interpretation and how it is implemented in national parks is an important issue, which has many different approaches in further research.

National parks around the world may use this thesis as a source of knowledge and inspiration (Rose 1993). This information is not only valuable for Norwegian national parks; there is no limits to where this information can come in use. Interpretation is a powerful tool when it comes to preserving and protecting our vulnerable and popular resources.

8 References

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