



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NPS STAFFING SHORTAGE SHUTS DOWN DENALI YOUTH CAMPS

Denali Education Center Forced to Cancel Camps, Citing Safety Concerns

Denali Education Center (DEC), a nonprofit partner of Denali National Park and Preserve since 1989, has announced the cancellation of Denali Discovery Camp (DDC) and Denali Backcountry Adventures (DBA) for 2025. Since 2001, the DEC-NPS youth partnership has brought hundreds of children into Denali, where they've camped, hiked, and made s'mores—creating lifelong memories.

DEC's youth programs have been rooted in a partnership with Denali National Park and Preserve, developed in response to local demand for youth camping experiences in the park. This long-standing collaboration has been the foundation of the programs, ensuring that children could safely explore and learn in the wild landscapes of Denali

Due to recent staffing changes within NPS, DEC can no longer ensure the safety of campers or uphold the program's mission. The sudden termination of key probationary staff has left critical supervisory gaps, preventing the full staffing necessary to run these programs safely.

"We are devastated by these cancellations, but even more so by the firing of our NPS Education Program Manager," said Jodi Rodwell, DEC's Executive Director. "Her unexpected termination suggested poor performance, but her work was exemplary—she stepped into the role after a 12-year veteran left last year. She was terminated on Feb. 14 along with some other probationary employees in Denali. She worked tirelessly with us to ensure the success, safety, and enjoyment

of our youth programs in the park that reach school-aged children from grades 1 – 12. We are crushed that she has been indiscriminately let go.”

NPS staff provide essential expertise in teaching the park’s mission, supporting risk management, assisting with infrastructure and equipment, and serving as trained, uniformed seasonal rangers who help ensure the children’s safety in the backcountry. Without this support, DEC cannot responsibly proceed.

For questions or concerns, please reach out to DEC at info@denali.org. DEC is encouraging families who want to take further action to contact their congressional representatives and share how this loss impacts their families and communities. All voices matter in advocating for the resources needed to sustain these vital programs.

About Denali Education Center

Through our NPS partnership and community support, we help visitors and Alaskans of all ages connect with Denali and the natural world. We provide fun, informative, and inspiring programs that build lifelong friendships, create lasting memories, and foster a new generation of land stewards.

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