



The Mini Page

Betty Debnam, Founding Editor and Editor at Large



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Park Pooches on Patrol

Sled Dogs of Denali

In Denali National Park in Alaska, sled dogs and their ranger partners patrol about 2 million acres of wilderness. When temperatures drop to 45 degrees below zero and high winds and blowing snow make it impossible to see, sled dogs are often the only way to get around.

The Mini Page talked with a ranger from Denali National Park and Preserve to find out more about these daring dogs.



photo by Daniel A. Leiffelt, courtesy NPS

A husky has long legs and loves to run. Its large paws help it balance on the snow. It has a thick, warm coat made up of two layers of fur. An adult weighs about 60 to 80 pounds. A husky is powerful and muscular. If it were as big as an ox, it would be stronger than the ox.



photo by Jacob W. Frank, courtesy NPS

Denali National Park and Preserve is the only national park that uses sled teams to patrol the park. There are usually about 35 huskies in the Denali kennels. This allows three dog teams to patrol at a time.

Denali and dogs

In the winter of 1907-1908, wilderness guide Harry Karstens led a **naturalist**, or an expert on animals and plants, through an area of Alaska. Harry knew how to survive outdoors in the frozen wilderness. He also knew that the best way to get around in this cold, wild land was on a sled pulled by dogs. Harry and the naturalist traveled by sled team.

The naturalist thought it was important to protect the animals and their habitat. He helped convince Congress to preserve the land as a national park.

The first ranger was the naturalist's guide, Harry Karstens. He set up the sled-dog program to help rangers care for the park.

Husky history

For hundreds of years, Alaskan natives bred dogs that did well in cold weather and were strong enough to pull sleds. These dogs are **Alaskan huskies**, or sled dogs.

Horses don't do well in the Alaskan wilderness. The best way to travel is by sled team. In pioneer days, mail was delivered by sled dogs.

In the early days of the park, rangers and dogs would be in the wilderness for months at a time. They sheltered in tents and blankets or in whatever they could find on the spot.

Sled dogs hauled logs and supplies through the park so rangers could build cabins to shelter workers, rangers and dogs.

A Dog's Life

Working dogs

No motorized vehicles are allowed in the 2 million acres of wilderness in Denali except for emergencies or special projects. Sled teams are the only way to transport supplies or break trails for the public. Traveling by dogsled is called **mushing**.

A sled-dog patrol might last anywhere from a day to six weeks. Sled teams haul supplies to the cabins. Rangers collect data for scientists and transport researchers and workers such as firefighters.



photo courtesy NPS

Workers often get close to the dogs and adopt them when the dogs retire.



photo by Jacob W. Frank, courtesy NPS

A sled-dog team usually has seven to 10 dogs. The numbers change depending on how much weight is on the sled. The sled, gear and musher could weigh a total of about 300 pounds or more.

Sled team helpers

People who go into the backcountry in the winter are usually experienced and don't need rescue. If there were an accident, it would be faster to send a helicopter than a dog team.

Dog teams help in other ways. For example, once a dog team mushed to a plane crash site to transport inspectors and rangers to clean up the oil.

Winter travel

In Denali, the easiest time to patrol is the winter. Traveling over hard frozen ground is easier than traveling over sticky, muddy ground.

When rivers freeze, they become highways that dogs and rangers can walk over. Rivers, marshes and lakes can be cold and dangerous in warmer weather, when ice begins to melt. Dogs don't patrol in the summer. Instead, they pull sleds on wheels to demonstrate mushing.

In winter, cold and storms can be a hazard. Deep snow can make travel slow. But rangers are prepared for winter conditions. If dogs and people are not near a cabin, rangers set up a tent.



photo by Jacob W. Frank, courtesy NPS

Dogs and rangers depend on one another in the huge Alaskan wilderness.

Ready Resources



The Mini Page provides ideas for websites, books or other resources that will help you learn more about this week's topics.

On the Web:

- nps.gov/dena/planyourvisit/kennels.htm
- bit.ly/1a2gOt8

At the library:

- "Dog Diaries #4: Togo" by Kate Klimo
- "Born to Pull: The Glory of Sled Dogs" by Bob Cary
- "The Bravest Dog Ever: The True Story of Balto" by Natalie Standiford



TM
Basset Brown
The News
Hound's

Sled Dogs

TRY 'N'
FIND

Words that remind us of Denali sled dogs are hidden in the block below. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find: CABIN, COLD, DENALI, DOG, FROZEN, FUR, GEE, HARNESS, HAW, HUSKY, ICE, KENNEL, MUSH, PARK, PATROL, PAW, PULL, PUPPY, RANGER, RUN, SLED, SNOW, SUPPLIES, TEAMS, TRAILS, TRUST, WILDERNESS, WINDS, WINTER.

SLED DOGS
DO BEST IN
THE SNOW!



S	R	E	G	N	A	R	F	P	V	Y	P	P	U	P
P	L	R	E	T	N	I	W	R	A	T	S	U	R	T
S	A	E	Y	K	S	U	H	K	O	T	H	S	U	M
U	C	R	D	S	M	A	E	T	C	Z	R	R	U	F
P	T	A	K	H	S	D	N	I	W	O	E	O	M	D
P	R	S	B	P	A	G	N	D	O	G	L	N	L	E
L	A	I	N	I	A	W	E	V	N	U	R	D	P	N
I	I	M	C	O	N	W	L	E	N	N	E	K	U	A
E	L	N	K	E	W	S	S	E	N	R	A	H	L	L
S	S	S	S	E	N	R	E	D	L	I	W	V	L	I

Mini Spy . . .



Mini Spy is on a dog-sled run! See if you can find:

- owl
- hourglass
- bell
- fish
- Santa
- dragon
- whale
- word MINI
- kite
- heart
- snake
- funny face



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Rookie Cookie's Recipe Oven-Baked Chicken Bites

You'll need:

- 3 boneless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1/3 cup Italian dressing
- 3/4 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/2 cup Italian bread crumbs
- cooking spray



What to do:

1. Place chicken cubes in bowl with Italian dressing.
2. Mix bread crumbs, parmesan cheese and basil in a separate shallow bowl.
3. Coat chicken pieces with bread-crumbs mixture.
4. Spray a medium baking pan with cooking spray. Place chicken pieces in one layer in the pan.
5. Bake for 30 minutes until chicken is done. Makes 4 servings.

You will need an adult's help with this recipe.

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Meet Jambo

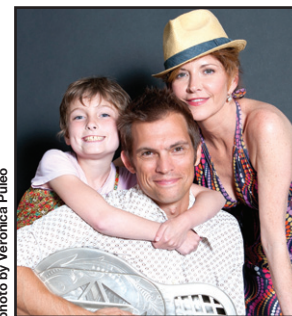


photo by Veronica Puleo

Steve Pierson is the founder of the American roots-style band Jambo. The band's latest CD, "Hootenanny," also features Steve's wife, Melinda McGraw, their daughter, Lucy, and some of her friends.

Steve is a composer, singer, guitarist and producer. He was born in Washington, D.C. He sang in the school choir and was a drummer in a band in grade school. In high school, he played keyboards in a reggae band. As an adult, he co-founded a blues-rock band.

He writes music for movies, TV shows and commercials.

Melinda is a singer and actress. She took piano lessons as a child and played saxophone in grade school and high school. She was in orchestra, marching band and jazz band. She has acted in several TV shows.

Lucy, 10, enjoys writing and making home movies. She sings and dances with Jambo.

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Gus Goodsport's Report

Supersport: Jabari Parker



Height: 6-8 **Birthdate:** 3-15-95
Weight: 235 **Hometown:** Chicago

Jabari Parker arrived at Duke heralded as one of the nation's hottest basketball prospects. In the first months of his freshman season, he's lived up to the hype.

In his first 17 games, the versatile forward has averaged 18.8 points, 7.3 rebounds and displayed the maturity of a veteran.

Parker can score from anywhere — short range, mid-range, long range. He plays hard, but doesn't gloat after making a shot, or grimace after a miss.

Already one of the nation's elite players, Parker also does much off the court. An honor student in high school at Simeon Career Academy, Parker has been active with the Salvation Army and other outreach programs.

Now, he's helping tradition-rich Duke pursue another title.

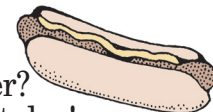
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MIGHTY FUNNY'S

Mini Jokes

All the following jokes have something in common. Can you guess the common theme or category?



Daryl: What should you give a dog with a fever?

Darwin: Mustard – it's the best thing for a hot dog!



Doug: What did the dog say when its tail was cut in half?

Denise: "It won't be long now!"



Dennis: What did the dog say when he sat on the sandpaper?

Darlene: "Rough, rough!"

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Fur Power

Water danger

One of the rangers' biggest fears is falling into open water. Getting wet when it is minus 40 degrees can be very dangerous.

If sleds do break through the ice, dogs are trained to run through the water, pulling the sled onto the bank. If a snowmobile falls through the ice, it just sits there.

When dogs get wet, the best way for them to dry off is to roll in the snow. The air is very cold and dry that far north. The snow is so dry that it actually pulls water from the fur.

But if the dog can't get dry, the team needs to get to shelter. If ice gets under its bottom coat of fur, the dog could have trouble warming up.

It is dangerous for people to be soaked and cold, too. Rangers always carry emergency parkas and an extra set of clothes in a waterproof bag. If people get wet, they need to get out of their wet clothes right away and start a fire to warm up.

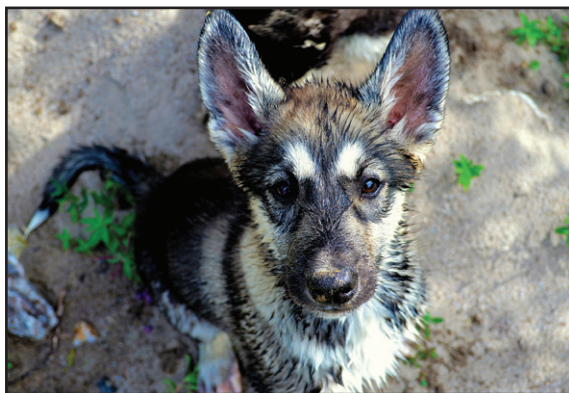


photo courtesy NPS

In the summer, rangers take puppies to open water to train them not to be afraid of the water.



photo courtesy NPS

New litters of puppies are usually born at the kennels each summer. By winter, they are eating solid food and ready to begin training with the teams. Volunteers and staff take the puppies for walks to teach them about life in the park.

Super senses

Dogs can feel and smell the trails even if people can't find them. The snow on a trail is packed down, so even buried trails feel different on the dogs' paws. Dogs remember trails they haven't been on for years.

Dogs can find trails and cabins even better than a GPS can. But sometimes the dogs don't want to go where the rangers need them to go. Rangers check the maps and GPS. They don't just rely on the dogs.

Rangers and dogs have a lot of trust in each other. For example, during one storm, a ranger's GPS said to go in one direction, but the dog refused. She found out the dog had been on the right path the whole time. Because she trusted the dog, they reached the cabin safely.

Puppy training

Huskies have a lot of energy. Rangers teach them to harness that energy by pulling the sleds. They put puppies into a little harness and attach it to a person on skis. An adult dog walks ahead, so the puppies pull the harness to get to the adult dog. They learn to pull.

Once the puppies are big enough to keep up, they are harnessed to the rest of a team for a couple of miles. Young puppies tire easily, and they lose interest quickly, so they don't actually work with a team until they are at least 2 years old.



photo courtesy NPS

Puppies learn to follow orders such as "gee" to turn right and "haw" to turn left.

The Mini Page thanks Jessica Toubman, assistant kennel manager, Denali National Park and Preserve, for help with this issue.

Look through your newspaper for stories about working animals.

Next week, The Mini Page is all about salt.

The Mini Page Staff

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