

From:
To: [Tighe, Cathy -FS](#)
Subject: Mendenhall Glacier Recreational Area Improvements
Date: Thursday, February 27, 2020 3:16:19 PM

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Master Plan for the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area. I appreciate the tremendous challenge you face in developing recreational access for a wide range of users, including local residents and hundreds of thousands of summer tourists. There is a lot to like about the plan but a couple of things that I am opposed to. I will start with my major concerns.

1. Shuttle ferry service from the Visitor Center across the lake to the terrain in front of the glacier. I object to this concept. A constant stream of motorized shuttle ferry will greatly distract from the magnificent view scape as viewed from the visitor center, lake shore, and surrounding viewpoints. You make a point how tourists want to “touch the glacier”. Such opportunities already exist with helicopter tours, guided hikes up West Glacier Trail, and non-motorized tours from the west side of the lake. The current level of activity is acceptable, but the shuttle ferry operation will make the lake look like a theme park.
2. A visitor facility near the ice on the west side. I object to this development. This area should be left natural, and more of a wilderness destination for hikers, guided and unguided.

I voice my support for the following improvements in the plan.

1. Improvement of the lakeshore trail system, including a connector bridge (wide enough for the ski groomers) across the Mendenhall River. This would spread out hikers, reduce stress of undeveloped trails on fragile wetlands, and provide enhance year-round recreational opportunities.
2. Development of electric shuttle service from a bus parking area to the visitor center.
3. Development of Nugget Creek hydro to offset carbon footprint of the tourist (and local) transport to the MRVC. The development should be done so it is also an educational tool about both the history of power use from Nugget Cree and about reducing carbon dioxide production that is driving the climate changes, the major factor causing the rapid shrinking of the Mendenhall Glacier.
4. Improvement of the Nugget Creek Trail, to and beyond an access trail to Heinzeman Ridge. The hike along Nugget Creek is fantastic, and with a bridge across Goat Creek leading into the upper Nugget Creek Basin, it would be world-class. The current trail is rooty, muddy, and difficult, and fording Goat Creek is not an option for most hikers.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Alex Wertheimer

