

From:
To: FS-comments-alaska-tongass-juneau; editor@juneauempire.com
Subject: MGRA
Date: Thursday, March 19, 2020 9:30:07 AM

The coronavirus should push reset buttons on the plan for expansion of facilities at the Mendenhall Glacier. Future tourism to Juneau will look much different than it has looked in the past. Visitation may have peaked and may be headed down the other side of a peak. Cruise ship tourism may collapse and at a minimum it will most likely drop off precipitously.

The glacier area may again become better bear habitat instead of than being paved over for parking lots and elevated platforms (bad idea!) Putting motorized boats on the lake is also a bad idea. The human powered boats allowed now are appropriate for the setting for giving people an experience of MGRA and the glacier that is consistent with the natural setting.

Filling in the salmon spawning pond to create parking is unacceptable. Constructing welcome center buildings that block views of the glacier and removable docks to accommodate motorized boat traffic that will be both noise and air polluting is unacceptable. Have we forgotten that this is first and foremost a NATURAL AREA?

We need a plan that protects salmon, bear, killdeer and Arctic Tern habitat. This plan does not put wild species first. There is also little consideration of climate change - something that should be front and center in the plan!

What has happened to the USFS that I worked for for 28 years? The agency I worked for would never have proposed such a flawed plan.

Once we come out on the other side of the coronavirus we may realize that we don't need additional parking after all. The current visitor center can use some updates and upgrades, outdoor restrooms can be expanded. I recommend that the entire plan be revisited once we have a better understanding of what the future holds.

Linda Kruger
Retired USFS,
PNW Research Station Social Scientist
Juneau Forestry Sciences Lab

I worked as a Social Scientist for the US Forest Service for 28 years, working at the Juneau Forestry Sciences Lab 2003-2018.