2/17/2023

To: District Ranger, Juneau Ranger District, Tongass National Forest

From: Joel Nudelman

 3035 Nowell Ave.

 Juneau, AK 99801

Re: SDEIS, Mendenhall Glacier Visitors Facility Improvements Project comments.

Please consider my comments as part of the record for the Mendenhall Glacier Visitors Facility Improvement Project SDEIS :

1. I commend the USFS for this undertaking and for providing the opportunity for commenting. I applaud the efforts on the development of the DEIS, and the resulting output of the additional Alternatives (5, 6 and 7) outlined in the SDEIS.
2. My comments have elements from multiple alternatives, however Alternative 6 aligns best with my concerns and interests.
3. I do not support motorized commercial watercraft on Mendenhall Lake: Please do not authorize motorized boat traffic or any commercial ventures on Mendenhall Lake. With the high numbers of tourist traffic around the visitors center currently, the lake offers peace and solace to the local community for non-motorized boaters and paddlers. If motorized commercial activity is allowed I’m concerned that noise from the watercraft and onboard announcements will carry across the water and distract from the dramatic scenery and ambiance of the area.
4. Improving winter amenities will be important. I would suggest and hope for the following:
	1. Build all new trails to accommodate cross country skiing. New trails should be wide enough for daylight to capture snow and accommodate ski grooming equipment.
	2. Construction of the proposed Lake Shore Trail, with a pedestrian bridge over the Mendenhall River, connecting with the campground. This would be wonderful for winter recreation, providing that it could accommodate ski grooming equipment.
	3. The proposed trails on the west side of the lake should constructed and also be wide enough for ski grooming equipment and daylighting. Having a continuous ski trail from the GVC through the campground and to the west side of the lake would be a benefit to the community and enhance winter outdoor opportunities for residents and visitors.
	4. Connectivity of the MGRA trail system from the east glacier side to west glacier to Montana Creek is important to the community and especially important for winter recreation, as cross country skiing, snowshoeing and fat biking has a high number of local users. With the adjacent Montana Creek Master Plan currently under review, this is a great opportunity for long term trail planning to connect the three trail systems (east glacier, west glacier and Montana Creek). For the winter activities, the potential is a world class cross country trail system that would also support other non-motorized activities mentioned above.
	5. The Dredge Lake perimeter trail (added in Alternative 6) and the Tolch Rock Spur Trail are two trails of special interest to skiers and winter users due to their connectivity of the three trail systems. I would adamantly encourage the inclusion of those trails into the final plan.
	6. Please consult with the Juneau Nordic ski Club to coordinate efforts for long-term trail planning.
	7. Contracting with a professional Nordic ski trail designer would be prudent to ensure that the trails are suitable for skiing and other sports users.
5. I support the construction of up to four public use cabins, but new cabins within the confines of the Mendenhall Campground are of concern for winter recreation related to ski grooming. Users hauling overnight supplies between car and cabin across groomed ski trails could negatively impact the grooming efforts. Locating those cabins close to the expanded west side parking or along the west side road would be better.
6. Electric vehicle chargers for busses should be installed, to encourage tour operators to transition away from fossil fuels.
7. Electric vehicle chargers should be installed for private vehicles on the east and west side parking areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Supplemental Draft EIS.