

## Connor Comments on the MGRA SDEIS Visitor Facility Improvements Project.

Feb 21, 2023

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area (MGRA) Project proposals. I have lived in Juneau since 1982 and I have used the MGRA very often for glacier research (UAS & JIRP faculty since 1994), earth science education, hiking, skiing, skating, and wildlife viewing. I appreciate the geologic story recorded here as well as the areas' natural and scenic beauty. Winter skiing on Mendenhall Lake is often sublime.

Alternative 6 incorporates most of my concerns.

I am opposed to any motorized access to Mendenhall Lake including boats, boat docks, or a remote visitors center on west side rocks near the glacier terminus. This action would destroy the natural beauty of the area for everyone, including the tourists but especially for local residents. Any potential, new, motorized access will compete with long-established, non-motorized activities. Additionally, use of motorized boats on the lake would start a precedent that I certainly wouldn't want to impose on future Juneauites.

I'm opposed to any large change in the Management Unit Boundaries. Keep it close to the existing boundaries. There is no need to expand lake management beyond Nugget Falls.

I support the Lake Shore Trail development as outlined in Alternative 6. I am a member of the Juneau Nordic Ski Club, and I support the SDEIS' embrace of Nordic ski trail development. It's great that the USFS supports and advocates for non-motorized, winter sports activities in the MGRA Master Plan. Trails built to Nordic ski standards will also increase access for hikers, bikers and other users' year-around.

I don't support the Nugget Loop trail. It is unnecessary and would impact lake-side habitat.

I also support the idea of a new welcome center as describe in Alternative 6. I recently visited Volcano NP on the Big Island and they have a large open, easy-access, visitor gathering area that works well for information dissemination. By moving into the bedrock hill, under the present VC it would be less destructive to the view-shed of the glacier. I think that the welcome center is needed, but it should be not intrusive.

The traffic pattern should be better with circulating electric trams from a distant bus parking lot. The result should be much less diesel exhaust and a quieter scene at the new VC.

Love the separate people and bear tunnels under Steep Creek.

Of the projected 1.6 Million visitors in 2023, 90% will likely just want to stop by a glacier viewing spot and get a photograph. Efficient and non-polluting people moving systems should be very helpful.