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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Improved trail heads in the area are needed.. The areas closest to the water should be left alone.

Additional rest rooms, theater and gift shop space should be built farther away from the waterfront nature area. Beaver and bird habitat near the lake should not be sacrificed for parking spaces.

A remote Glacier Visitor Center would take so much away from the experience. Visitors should not be allowed close and easy access to the glacier. Construction and eventual additional foot traffic will cause irreversible harm. 'Chase the ice' and it will just go faster.

Motorized Dock, Support Facilities and Floating Dock are incredibly insensitive to the area. I believe allowing motorized water craft access to the Portage Glacier near Anchorage lead to the quickened demise of the glacier. Please don't repeat that mistake here.

The West Glacier trail should remain wild. Leave the Skater's Cabin and Dredge Lake areas alone. There needs to be some portion of the area that local residents can enjoy without tour bus activity.

Beavers, birds and bears are an integral part of the experience at the glacier. The proposed plans seem to ignore the fact that they even exist.

I agree with comments from Laurie Ferguson Craig:

We need to fully understand bear habitat usage before extending trails and platforms into their most essential foraging areas. We need to avoid disrupting the bears' critical wild food source of salmon in Steep Creek. Without studies, we don't know what impact these construction projects will have or where the bears travel.

To make the glacier area safer and more human-friendly, let's concentrate all the buses away from the front by making the present bus parking lot into a welcome center with visitor facilities in buildings that can be shuttered and drained for winter. From there, visitors can either walk or board silent electric shuttles a few hundred yards to glacier viewing. For six months we can create a pedestrian-friendly zone without rumbling motor coaches, diesel fumes, and hazardous car traffic. That means our local vehicles will be parked elsewhere also, but it would be a fair compromise to make a truly clean-air vista. There is little consideration of improving air quality and reducing noise from traffic. Climate change is disregarded.

As envisioned now, the Forest Service's proposals would turn the Mendenhall Glacier from a unique natural area into a congested theme park. However, if we thoughtfully develop the glacier we can continue to accommodate visitors, residents, and most importantly the wildlife that makes Mendenhall unique. We need creative ideas for the future, not just old pave-over plans.

Alice Gates