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Comments: This letter is my formal objection to the draft Record of Decision for the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Visitor Facility Improvements project.

I provided comments in response to the DEIS on 5/10/22, and to the SDEIS on 2/21/23 which gives me standing to object to this project.

I have said from the beginning of this process that limiting the number of visitors (comment #326-2) would not be unreasonable as many National Parks have done so in the lower 48. The response to this comment was a definition of the philosophies of the National Parks as opposed to the USFS. The Forest Service's mission is to "care for the land and serve people". While the National Park Service emphasizes "strict preservation of pristine areas". The response went on to say "Limiting the number of people allowed to visit the MGRA would not meet the purpose and need for this project to accommodate increasing visitation and provide quality opportunities for all visitors to enjoy the recreation area".

What I say to that is, if the number of visitors is limited, the need for such a massive project would not be necessary. And do these philosophies have to be interpreted in such opposite fashion? I would consider the MGRA a pristine area and to turn it into a Disneyland adventure does not care for the land OR serve the people. I would hope that the USFS would at least attempt to preserve this pristine area and employ at least part of the National Park philosophy.

If the number of visitors is not controlled, the projected increase in visitor numbers needs to be more scientific. The amount of trail monitoring has not been significant, thus putting into question how these large projected numbers have come to be. Why, with CBJ suggesting a limit on the number of ships allowed per day, would these projected visitor numbers not decrease?

I am not sure how the alternatives for the lake shore trail came about, but to have only one alternative without the trail, along with a bridge to the campground, is surprising to me. Why was a shorter version not considered?

As Brian Meissner suggested in a Forest Service webinar (1/26/23), the trail could end before the view of the glacier is obscured by the rocks on the other side of the lake. This would preserve more than half of the area proposed for this trail, thus saving fragile area from inevitable damage and thus "caring for the land".

A lakeshore trail of this length could provide access to the moraine ecology trail, and people could use it in order to loop back to the visitor center. This shorter trail would still provide an outlet to alleviate congestion near the immediate visitor center area. It would also provide handicap accessibility, thus "serving the people".

In my comment submitted 2/21/23, I talked about not making the nugget falls trail into a loop. I have observed that most visitors stick to the inland trail. When the lake is high, this is the only way to get to the falls. I don't understand why widening the existing trail was not presented as an alternative. It really is the only reasonable solution to high water situations. A loop trail would imperil sensitive habitat and certainly would not be "taking care of the land".