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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Forest Service:

I live in Juneau and use the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area year-round for various purposes including kayaking, hiking, wildlife viewing, birding, and photography. I generally avoid the visitor center area during tourism season because of excessive crowding, traffic, and loss of area's natural qualities, including natural quiet. These impacts, including the retrieving glacier, are potent reminders of human's adverse role in the Mendenhall Lake ecosystem. These impacts should also guide Forest Service's management of the area. The agency's current "improvement" proposal for the Mendenhall Lake Recreation Area falls woefully short of protective, restorative, and precautionary action for our beloved glacier.

I urge the Forest Service focus on reducing the impacts of people and traffic on the natural values of the Mendenhall Lake Recreation Area, and not the other way round. The current proposal calls for more parking, more traffic, including motorized traffic on the lake, filling of wetlands, etc.-changes that will increase noise, pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, wildlife disturbances, and habitat loss and thereby reduce the area's natural values rather than enhance or restore them. The proposed changes, if implemented, will adversely affect the area and my current and future interests in it.

Rather than enabling more vehicles and parking near the lake, I urge you to limit traffic and human pressure in these most sensitive and scenic areas. Any mass transport to the glacier should be organized by electric vehicles which would be quiet and produce zero emissions. Rather than enabling and promoting increased mass visitation, consider capping bus and visitor numbers to protect the area's natural values and enhance user experiences for visitors and locals alike.

I strongly urge you to reject any alternative that allows motorized traffic on the lake; sound in and on the water will adversely affect fish, birds, and other animals as well as all other users of the lake, including kayakers. In addition to noise, motorized traffic introduces air and water pollution. At the minimum, any motorized traffic must be by electric engines only and be severely limited by days/hours leaving some days, including weekends, completely traffic free.

The goal for the "improvement" plan should be to reduce anthropogenic noises and other disturbances on the lake, not increase them. The goal should also include making the visitor center and all its services sustainable and 100% carbon neutral. Rather than chasing the the glacier up the mountain and adding infrastructure to that effect, the Forest Service should be in the business of educating visitors about the devastating impacts of climate change and humans' role in it. I believe it is important lesson for visitors to see the painful consequences of our actions: beautiful things like the Mendenhall glacier can no longer be seen and enjoyed (except via a remote camera and screen at the pavillion or visitor center?) because we have not cared enough, because we have not sustainably managed our relationship with the planet.

Thank you for considering my comments.