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First name: Teague

Last name: Whalen

Organization: Tongass Teague LLC

Title: Owner/Operator

Comments: Thanks for the opportunity to comment on this plan and thanks for considering my input:

OVERNIGHT ACCOMODATIONS: I support more construction of road-accessible and hiking cabins. Would love to see a cabin on Perseverance Lake. I also like the idea of the Signal Creek campground sites along the lake shore being flood protected if possible.

TRAILS: I support continual annual maintenance on the trails. If a boardwalk was to be built along the roadside trail on the southeast side of Ward Lake to protect the trail from flooding, this would have to be quite a high boardwalk. Not sure if this is really needed as we can walk the road when that part of the trail is flooded, which is part of the seasonal reality of the lake, which I'm okay with.

I would also like to see a new mountain-bike single-track trail be built in the Ward Lake Recreation Area and I would be happy to be involved in this project. Or if not there, somewhere else. I would also like to see a trail built around Perseverance Lake as well and a possible revitalization of an older trail that used to exist where there was once a swing bridge over Ward Creek that led to Perseverance-this could lead to a nice return loop back from the lake.

SAFE ACCESS: I'd like to echo other community member's suggestions that it would be wonderful if the road into Ward Lake could be plowed in the winter to offer more safe access year-round.

SPECIAL USES: I worry that the timing of this Ward Lake Recreation Area Master Plan may have been initiated by the cruise-ship developments at Ward Cove or even asked for from those involved in that part of the tourism industry-to quote from the Prescoping Letter: "Businesses have expressed interest in more areas to guide groups and/or allowing greater numbers. . . within the Ward Lake Recreation Area."

I support the continued use of the already designated Ward Creek and Connell Lake Trails for commercial guiding.

I also work in the tourism industry and own and operate a hiking tour company. Overall, the Ketchikan-area trails that allow commercial permits for guiding are very limited. And though I would love to guide people on the Perseverance Trail, instead it would be better to make Deer Mountain available for commercial guiding because many tourists are already climbing that mountain without guides; however, people get lost on this mountain every year. And besides only part of the Carlanna Trail, Ketchikan does not offer any mountain hikes commercially. Why not?

Instead of couching the "Special Uses" guiding as a Ward Lake Recreation Master Plan, I would like to see the 2012 Record of Decision for the Ketchikan-Misty Fjords Outfitter and Guide Management Plan revisited because the guiding issue is much larger than just the Ward Lake Recreation Area, and the discussion should consider the whole picture and not just the new developments in the Ward Cove area.

Additionally, I would strongly urge against any "commercial (guided) use" on the Ward Lake Trail. This place is an easily accessible local playground that is already heavily trafficked just by locals and should be kept that way. If the possibility of commercial guiding on the Perseverance Trail is being considered-and I'm still not sure how I feel about this because I enjoy the trail as a local and I'm also trying to sustain a hiking tour business-the permitting should be limited to 2 tours a day, possibly staggered, and no more than 7-8 people (including the guide). I would also suggest that commercial tours be banned from guiding Perseverance on the weekends, to

leave it for the locals. I would also suggest that either hiking tour companies enter a lottery system to apply for Perseverance permits that will only be given out to 2 companies for a given summer season, or designated weekdays assigned to permit holders. If a lottery system is put into place, it would be good to have a January deadline the year ahead of the season the permit would be for so that businesses could have significant time to plan and advertise for that next season.