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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I have resided in Juneau for 31 years and visit the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area on a weekly basis. I hike, ski, walk my dog, view wildlife, and enjoy the relatively natural setting of the area.

For the last 10 years or more I have been excluded from a large portion of the area, primarily the Visitor Area because of overcrowding due to an overabundance of summer Cruise Ship visitors. The congestion, noise, and visual impact of the hordes of visitors make for an experience to be avoided. This density of visitors and associated disturbance and infrastructure substantially compromises the "natural" character of the area. As a result, I generally visit the Visitor Area (east side of the lake) only during winter and restrict myself to the west side and Dredge Lakes areas during the cruise ship season.

The Purpose and Need and Range of Alternatives of the DEIS are Flawed. The document assumes that the solution to current and projected overcrowding is to build more infrastructure and expand the footprint of the disturbance. "The solution to pollution is dilution." However, this cannot be done while maintaining the "unique character and outstanding beauty of the area.

I participated in scoping for this project, and I (and many others) brought up the approach of limiting the number of visitors. The project staff refused to entertain this approach. As a result, the Purpose and Need of the project was narrowly defined as building additional infrastructure. Why was this not a viable approach? The USFS regularly sets limits on helicopter landings and guiding, and limits visitation to areas like Pack Creek and Anan Creek on the Tongass to maintain the values and character of the areas. It is not clear why limiting visitation would not be part of the approach to maintaining the natural functions and viewing experience of this unique area. As a result of this flawed approach, the Range of Alternatives doesn't adequately address the main issue to be addressed, which is how to maintain the natural functions and quality of visitor experience to the area.

Given the narrow range of alternative, I am oppose to Action Alternative 2. I do support some components of Alternative 4.

Motorized Boats on Mendenhall Lake:

I'm oppose to use of motorized boats on Mendenhall Lake regardless of size. The noise and visual disturbance are not compatible with the natural setting. I and others (including commercial ventures) currently use paddle-craft on the lake, which has little adverse visual impact or disturbance to wildlife. Adding power boats to this mix presents risk of collision with paddlers as well as risks to water quality. I reference a recent opinion article in the Juneau Empire on May 4, 2022 by Mr. Sepal that describes many of my concerns.

Trail Development in the Dredge Lakes Area:

I do not want to see major development of trails or commercial guiding in the Dredge Lakes area or shore of the lake. I would be fine with a moderate width (<6') hardened trail near the shore and connecting via a bridge to the Mendenhall Campground. I do not want to see such a trail groomed for XC-skiing as it would detract from the more natural character of existing trails as "cross country" as opposed to "groomed" trails.