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Mendenhall Recreation Area Draft EIS Comments

I have previously submitted more extensive comments in an earlier iteration of this process.

I am a long time resident of Juneau and oppose most of the proposed "improvements" to the Mendenhall glacier area. Those of us who live here in Juneau know and love this area and recreate in it year round. We understand that many, if not most of the things we value about it will be degraded by many of the proposed changes. They will also provide our visitors with a diminished and inferior experience. It is more than a little obscene that these changes are being proposed to accommodate a cruise ship industry that has a huuuuge carbon footprint, an industry that is emblematic of the kinds of choices that have led us to the disappearing of the Mendenhall glacier and the many other manifestations of climate change. I love sharing the Mendenhall area with visitors but it is its wildness, not its amenities that they appreciate. These proposed changes will take away much of its unique character. This is our home. We love and cherish it and enjoy sharing it with visitors. We don't, however, expect or want them to trash it in the process.

No motorized boats, not even electric ones. The docks, noise, commotion, wakes, wildlife disturbance will all be a detriment.

No massive parking lots close to Steep Creek, the lake and the visitor center. The current bus lot should be a more than adequate space for parking. As others have proposed, electric trams or buses could ferry people from more remote parking to the visitor center.

No remote visitor center! This idea of chasing the glacier up the mountain seems absurd to me. If people want to get closer then stay longer and hike up to it.

No welcome center blocking the view, all 14,000 sq feet of it! And no food service. The USFS staff have worked hard to keep the resident bears from becoming garbage bears and providing food at the glacier will make that harder.

Though I am an avid cross country skier I don't support the bridge across the Mendenhall River or the Lakeshore Trail. The Dredge Lakes area gets a lot of use by locals. It is a place of respite for dog walkers, bird watchers, photographers, solitude seekers, cyclists and others. The more remote parts of it, including the lakeshore and the areas behind it serve as places where bears and other wildlife have some space to mostly avoid humans. We've already filled up most of the valley with our cars and houses. Can't we spare them a little space? Building that Lakeshore Trail, connecting it to the campground and inviting tens of thousands of tourists to walk along it every summer would totally change the character of the Dredge lakes trails and put a lot more pressure on local wildlife. Leave the trails as they are.

Not a fan of adding more boardwalks and viewing areas along Steep Creek either. Parts of Steep Creek needs to be left to the bears and other critters without the press of humanity. They are not zoo animals. Some of the

proposed changes to Steep Creek to improve fish habitat may be worthwhile, I'd like to hear from the hydrologists and fisheries biologists on that.

I'm fine with adding on to/modifying the current visitor center.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.