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Title:

Comments: My preference is for Alternative No. 1, or a combination with Alternative No.4, because of the negative impacts from the other alternatives. Following are comments on some of these actions. Although visitor capacity is defined as the maximum amount and type of visitor use than an area can accommodate, there appears to be little direction toward limiting visitor numbers. Rather than development designed to accommodate a projected increased volume of visitors, visitation should be limited to protect irreplaceable resources. Currently, because of uncontrolled visitor use, there is severe loss of sedge and forb meadow vegetation and wildlife habitat along the lakeshore between the visitor center and Nuggett Falls. Converting the Nugget Falls trail to a loop trail returning along the lakeshore could exacerbate this loss by increasing the number of people using the lakeshore. The Nugget Falls trail should remain a two-way trail. All trail use should be designated to official trails. The proposed new lakeshore trail along the south shore of Mendenhall Lake should not be developed. It would directly impact a narrow area of marsh, sedge and forb meadow vegetation that borders the lake. This area supports a unique combination of alpine and lowland vegetation that should be protected rather than used for recreation. Access to this area from a pedestrian bridge across Mendenhall River and Skater's Cabin Road would only increase impact to these areas. In addition, climate change is causing increased flooding of this area, and would cause recurrent damage to a trail in this area. The Mendenhall Lake should remain pristine and kept free of boat use. This would continue to minimize human presence and disruption of wildlife and probably would result in trash on the lake bottom. Further, as indicated by Sepel (2022, Juneau Empire, 5 May), power boat use on the lake is not safe due to the depth and unmapped bottom of the lake. No new parking areas should be developed.