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Comments: Please accept my comments on the facility improvements project for the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area (MGRA). I support an Alternative 4 modified to incorporate ideas and suggestions noted below, and I support modifying/expanding the Historic Visitor Center over building a new facility.

I am strongly opposed to Alternatives 2 and 3, including: 1) a greatly expanded rezoning of the surrounding area into the high-capacity Visitor Center Unit; 2) permitting motorized vessels on the lake for any purpose (commercial or otherwise), including motor boat docks and the proposed Remote Glacier Visitor Center near the face of a very rapidly receding glacier, and 3) constructing a new Visitor Center in the best viewing location on the lake shore.

I encourage the USFS to revise Alternative 4 of the plan for the MGRA such that it: 1) emphasizes sustaining the natural character of the area, 2) tries to develop a vision of a "carrying capacity" for the Visitor Center Area, 3) includes a plan to minimize the energy required, noise, air pollution, and visual impacts associated with transporting hundreds of thousands of visitors from (mostly) the passenger ship docks, and 4) better balances the desires for expanded seasonal commercial use with the year around interests of Juneau residents.

I strongly disagree with the supposition the USFS needs to provide anybody with an opportunity to "touch the glacier", and most especially via any kind of motorized boat transport. Such foolish thinking is no better than the long-dismissed suggestion that the National Park System provide motorized (tram) access to the top of El Capitan. In the MGRA, one might argue that some existing access trails are inadequate or unsafe, and then proposed trail improvements (like in Yosemite) should be designed to maintain the character of the area. The plan for the MGRA should view most proposals in this way. With regard to access to the Mendenhall Glacier, that has, for the 40+ years I have used this area, been earned by hiking the West Glacier trail and by kayaking. This trail and other connecting paths/routes to the Glacier could arguably be improved.

Similarly, the trails in the Dredge Lake area could be improved to benefit tourists and locals who wish to walk, run, bike, bird, run, ski etc. through the area. Foremost in plans for the MGRA should be measures to reduce or eliminate very harmful impacts to the area's natural flora and fauna.

Year around access to restrooms near the visitor center and Dredge Lakes would be valuable.

Thank you,

Robert Marshall