

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/21/2023 12:12:08 AM

First name: Lynda

Last name: Giguere

Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a member of the Juneau Nordic Ski Club, I am pleased that winter trails are included in the Forest Service proposals. I would like to reinforce the Club's position that:

The Forest Service should more fully incorporate winter ski trail improvements and acknowledge the heavy use the MGRA receives by locals during the winter. (Yes, we know this document is geared towards addressing tourist capacity issues during the spring/summer/fall, but let's not forget the fourth season!)

The addition of groomed ski trails will greatly enhance opportunities for both locals and visitors to experience and enjoy the MGRA during the winter months.

Climate change is directly impacting cross country skiing in Juneau. Therefore, the JNSC generally supports Forest Service decisions that help minimize the carbon footprint of the MGRA facilities.

Connectivity of the MGRA trail networks is a crucial part of the JNSC vision for accommodating the growing capacity issues our trails face in the winter. The proposed trails and infrastructure in these alternatives would enable skiers (and hikers and snowshoers and bikers and dog-walkers) to encircle the entire Mendenhall Valley without kicking off their skis. All of these trails would be multi-use, non-motorized, and multi-season.

Specifically, we are advocating for the following priorities:

Steep Creek Intertie - make this under/overpass skiable in the winter! A connection between the Dredge Lake trail system and the Powerline & Under Thunder Trails would allow for seamless skiing along the east side of the valley, through Dredge Lake, across the Mendenhall River, on up to the Montana Creek valley, and into Spaulding Meadows....without having to take your skis off!

Lake Shore Trail - it's in almost all the alternatives and we are huge fans of making this trail wide enough for our machines to groom for winter skiing!

Mendenhall River Bridge - this vital link in our expanding system is a critical component to making the Mendenhall Valley a world-class ski destination....keep it in!

Dredge Lakes Loop - encircling the Dredge Lakes area, a 12' wide trail would enable winter grooming for skiers, bikers, and walkers alike. This is only in alternative 6, but the JNSC is advocating for its full inclusion in all alternatives.

Mendenhall Campground Cabins - the JNSC suggests the proposed caretaker's cabin at the entrance double as a winter-time warming hut for skiers. The JNSC remains concerned about the impact the other campground cabins will have on deteriorating grooming conditions by non-skiers accessing cabins on foot, and suggest placing cabins elsewhere on the west side of the lake where there is road access.

Skater's Cabin Parking - the additional parking lots in alternatives 5 - 7 are preferred over adding parking inside the campground (alternatives 2 & 3) near the proposed Mendenhall Bridge.

Tolch Rock Spur Trail - located in the SW corner of the MGRA, this link would connect the MGRA network of trails to the Montana Creek drainage trail system.

West Glacier Trail Ski Loops - the JNSC encourages the Forest Service to keep the "high" and "low" loops in all alternatives, allowing for winter-time ski grooming (this may include improvements to the current West Glacier Trail to allow for winter grooming operations).

Boats do not belong on the lake. Please remove boats on Mendenhall Lake from the plan altogether. This is simply a bad and unnecessary idea to cater further to drive-by tourists by prioritizing their desires over the desires of those of us who live and play here year round.

Additionally, why don't we simply limit the number of tourists and buses in the park, as opposed to trying to accommodate everyone off every ship? That's routinely the approach used by other parks in the United States, such as the Grand Canyon, Acadia National Park, and The Arches in Utah, not to mention Denali. It seems we're trying to accommodate more visitors than it can handle at the expense of what makes people want to visit in the first place.

And, again, boats on the lake are a terrible, awful, no good idea.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my opinion.