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Comments: I am a 49-year Juneau resident, and during those years I have frequently hiked in the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area. I am quite strongly opposed to our local Forest Service officials' mission of turning the MGRA into an amusement park. I am most particularly opposed to allowing any motorized vessels access to Mendenhall Lake, or the construction of any facility that might enable their use in the future.

To me, the seminal failing of your SDEIS is its assumption that the Forest Service is obliged to suffer unlimited future visitation, its power being limited to mitigating that growth. That isn't true, and that mindset is a violation of the Service's trust responsibility over this area. The Service has understood the need to limit visitation in areas such as Pack Creek and Anan Creek, but here the Service wrongly presumes that it is powerless.

This attitude likewise would seem to violate the Service's own Special Area rules in the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan (Dec., 2016). There, the Service touts these areas (of which the MGRA is one) as areas that "remain largely undisturbed by human uses or activities...and provide quality opportunities for public study, use and enjoyment." Id. at 3-39. Not anymore the MGRA won't, not after the area suffers what the SDEIS itself concedes will be "moderate" to "major" impacts on the area's core natural attributes of scenic quality, recreation generally and wildlife (2 alternatives would, for example, "decrease scenic integrity from high to low"). DSEIS at 2-96-99.

For the same reasons, each of Alternatives 2-7 would seem to violate at least the following mandatory Special Area objectives:

?Provide for public use in a manner that "do[es] not compromise[] the characteristics of each area";

? "Allow only facilities and recreational developments that contribute to the interpretation of natural features...and that blend in with the natural setting";

? "Apply the High Scenic Integrity Objective except around developed interpretive facilities..."

Tongass Plan at 3-39.

I would urge the Forest Service to reject the SDEIS; articulate a new statement of purpose aimed at protecting the existing core values of the MGRA, while allowing public use, but only to the extent that (in conformity with Tongass Plan's Special Area rules) such use does not compromise those values. That paradigm shift will, in turn, lead the Service to consider a much different range of alternatives.