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Title:

Comments: Here are my comments about the proposed projects in the MGRA:

VISITOR NUMBERS:

Have you considered Juneau's current limit of 5 cruise ships docking at one time and that the community desires to limit cruise ship visitors? The length of the tourist season is expanding, but the number of visitations are more spread out. Does this affect the requirement and the math for how many to accommodate at once? Do we really have to urbanize so many more acres?

LAKESHORE TRAIL AND OUTER DREDGE LAKES LOOP TRAILS:

Locals are discouraged from using the area around the glacier from APRIL 1-OCTOBER 31, more than half the year. So, we use the unique Lakeshore and Outer Dredge Lakes Loop Trails. There is no other area like this in Juneau. We retreat there to avoid the masses of visitors and commercial tours, for peace and quiet. We have spent hours on those trails, time that a cruise ship visitor does not have, but locals certainly do. We are awed by the dynamics of the changing shoreline and all that we find; we have a significant baseline for that area. Paving a trail out here would be like paving the Boy Scout Beach. A paved trail with a line dividing traffic will certainly remove people from the experience of wandering the lakeshore.

Also, I am a nordic skier who is not in favor of the Lakeshore Trail for the reasons above. I would rather meander on my skis without tracks through Dredge Lakes and on the Lakeshore. It is quiet, pristine and pleasant. If this is a road for skiers, walkers probably won't be very welcome. If this is for commercial use, will it be friendly to dog walkers or just walkers?

AT THIS TIME it IS multi-use: mountain bikers, hikers, skiers, dog walkers, bird watchers, bears, beavers and so on. Therefore, I am in favor of Alternative 1 for this area-No changes. Alternative 4 might be okay if it loops back into the Moraine Ecology Trail, but even this is a huge compromise. Locals currently share the MGRA with tourists at Nugget Falls, Steep Creek, Moraine Ecology Trail, Photo Point, MGVC, East Glacier Trail, and the West side of the lake. Please leave this untouched area alone. There are plenty of areas groomed for nordic skiers and plenty of pavement for bikes and rollerblades. There are FEW areas to wander along shorelines.

NUGGET FALLS TRAIL:

Why does the Nugget Falls Trail have to be a loop? Many locals walk the lakeshore to avoid tourists on the hardened, forested route to the falls. I never felt Nugget Falls Trail had more people than it was currently designed for and I sometimes walk that to avoid major water obstacles that I am uncomfortable with. However, I would never want those water obstacles to disappear for the more adventurous. Keeping the crowd inside the woods solves a visual problem and prevents their noise from carrying across the lake. Keeping that trail without the loop, also prevents another DEVELOPED shoreline where people just are blindly channeled along unable to appreciate the diversity.

CAMPGROUND:

I am unclear about the cabins still, but the campground should be a quiet place. It is unfair to campers to be on a throughway in the campground via the bridge. And I hope for campers' sake that the cabins won't be disturbing and are placed appropriately.

BOATS:

I am not in favor of boats (even electric ones) on the lake as any motorized noise will change the peacefulness of the area. I am not in favor of hearing boats over gulls, lapping water from the lake or the crashing of the falls. I

often use the lakeshore to get away and explore and boats would totally change (ruin) the experience.

The potential of pollution is too great-electric batteries or gas/oil spills. The boats themselves accelerate climate change that is melting the glacier in the first place. The lake is not charted, levels rise and fall drastically, so safety is questionable.

Commercial paddle tours already exist on the lake without the need for docks. They are quiet and do not disturb the peaceful experience though they do interfere in capturing the majesty of the glacier in photos. Boats with many passengers would certainly be more intrusive visually (and audibly) while viewing or photographing the glacier.

Our own visitors have stood in awe of the vastness, the size, the majesty of the glacier and surrounding mountains without having the boat option. Those who do not choose boats (the majority of visitors) would have a less desirable experience because of them. If I were a tourist, I'd choose whale watching for my on-the-water experience.

How many people have to be against boats to have these removed from these alternatives?

REMOTE VISITOR CENTER AREA:

I'm not in favor of any proposed use at the Remote Visitor Center Area. Currently, it is a nice, remote hike that both small commercial groups, locals, and independent tourists use. This will be quite crowded with up to 1000 tourists per day using the same spot. I'm not in favor of the modular and movable visitor center, hardened trails from the lake, and toilet facilities anywhere up there (this includes the barge option).

Many tourists are not very physically capable and have limited time due to the cruise ship schedule. Chasing the ice is misguided. In only a few years, the glacier on that side has retreated several hundred yards. This is only going to get worse in the coming years. We already have helicopter tours that place them on the ice and in the future that may become the only access.

EXPANDING MGRA:

Many items in the proposal seem contradictory to what I thought was the mission of the Forest Service: ensure visitor safety, enhance the visitor experience by protecting the natural beauty and its inhabitants. It seems a smaller development footprint makes much more sense. Can the regional Forest Service just decide on their own that the management area (ie development area) can be expanded just because they want to?

I am not in favor of expanding the MGRA as it is beginning to encroach upon residential neighborhoods. There should be no changes to the MGRA to expand it outside of the immediate visitor's center. Expansion of the MGRA seems to accommodate some of the project features that cater to guiding companies and cruise lines who stand to profit off of the design. But these features really don't protect the safety or the shorter visitor experience, but stand to have a great impact on the natural beauty of the area and its inhabitants. Where is the ability to solo explore and discover the magic of the area? Again, do you really have to urbanize more acres?

UNLIMITED GROWTH OF TOURISM

Exponential unlimited growth does not offer a meaningful visitor experience no matter how many bells and whistles are provided. Too many people in an area is more dangerous and detracts from one's ability to enjoy the experience. It degrades the local experience because the changes do not fit the community, discouraging any locals' use of the area. Unlimited tourism only benefits the greed and profit of private business, not the visitor experience. In every other public park, limited entry permits are necessary and should be considered here as well in this small area.

CHANGES THAT SEEM NECESSARY:

Because I feel that no one alternative is ideal and addresses all of my concerns, I have listed the proposals which seem relevant. Any and all changes should fit the existing cultural public land management that we have long enjoyed in this community. The changes should address public concerns and not cater to any particular population. Changes outside of that would not be appreciated by most residents who use the facilities and the area year round. If I have not mentioned other areas below, I strongly feel they do not need to be addressed in this project. I have addressed my reasons in the previous sections of my comments.

Crowding both by tourists and cars needs to be addressed in the drop off area. Better bathroom facilities and a larger center to welcome guests is necessary. I feel the alternatives which set it back in the current commercial lot or in the mountain side of the current visitors center would be the best options and would not affect the view, alleviate crowding and not fill in the pond completely. These alternatives also leave the Pavilion intact, which is favored in the community and removes the curved pathway proposal, replacing it with a viewing deck over the pond instead. The curved pathway would impact the view and the viewing deck is preferred.

Parking should be expanded with the minimal amount of Zig Zag Pond filled in and only if necessary. This is helpful to both tourists and residents.

The only trails that I am in favor of formalizing for this project are the West Glacier "scramble" trails to the glacier because they will prevent resource damage, would be safer and help avoid people from having to be rescued. This is helpful to both tourists and residents.

I am also in favor of realigning Steep Creek for better salmon management and viewing. I have no preferred alternatives as long as the solution will benefit the salmon, bears and people safety. It is one of the highlights at the glacier for everyone: to see the salmon and the bears.

I am also in favor of the trailhead parking lots on the Glacier Spur Road. This would be beneficial year round.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.