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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. I am a year-round Juneau resident who visits the MGRA monthly (sometimes more), including in the winter months. I also have a master's degree in environmental conservation.

First and foremost, while tourism to the MGRA is important and valuable in many ways, it's also important to consider that the MGRA is used by the people who live here. Visiting Mendenhall Glacier is not a one-time sightseeing experience; the area is well-loved and well-visited by Juneauites (and others) who frequent it.

Constructing new buildings, bridges, and viewing platforms will detract from the year-round natural beauty of the area. There are better ways to accommodate increased tourism in the summer months, than structures that would remain year-round, taking from the viewshed value and from wildlife habitats. Managing visitation, and potentially metering commercial use of the most popular areas of the MGRA, should be considered at the forefront of any improvement project.

If we must go with an action alternative, I strongly feel that that alternative should be one with minor or negligible effects on the environment.

I am strongly against motorized boats in the MGRA. I am also strongly against the remote glacier viewing areas. I think these options would be harmful to the natural value of the area and should not be considered.

If a new Welcome Center must be constructed, the location of the Welcome Center in Alt. 7 seems like it would have the least impact on the viewshed properties of the area - however, constructing a viewing platform and amphitheater (as depicted in Alt. 7) seem unnecessary and I would be against that.

Additionally, while I do not think that additional parking areas would be necessary if visitation was properly managed, if additional parking must be created, the overflow described in Alt. 7 seems to be reasonable. However, I am against the filling of any part of Zig Zag Pond if it can be avoided.

I am against the selling of food in the MGRA. I think this would cause unnecessary danger to tourists, locals, and wildlife alike. It could increase human-wildlife contact, as well as result in littered trash that would diminish the natural beauty of the area and put wildlife at risk.

While I support the creation and maintenance of trails, I support doing so in a way that is least disruptive to the existing environment - gravel rather than paved trails, avoiding bridges where possible, avoiding or minimizing commercial use, etc.

Lastly, I am in strong support of habitat restoration, and in favor of Alts. 5-7 of the Steep Creek habitat restoration.

Thank you for your consideration.