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First name: Zach and Alicia

Last name: Decker

Organization: Glacier Guides, Inc

Title:

Comments: Subject: Concerns Regarding Proposed Public Use Cabin in False Bay

Dear Marlene Duvall, Hoonah District Ranger

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to address the proposed construction of a public use cabin in the False Bay area, as the permitted guide outfitter operating in the Tongass National Forest under GUA 04-11.

We have significant concerns regarding the potential impacts of this new cabin on our guiding operations, especially given the existing facilities already in close proximity. Currently, there are several public and private use cabins, including the Eight Fathom Cabin, Kennel Creek Cabin with its associated dock, Neka Hot Springs LT Dock, and the Salt Lake LT site. The walking path and bear viewing platform at White Stone, along with the Wukuklook boardwalk and trail to the beach, further complicate our ability to operate effectively without conflict or contact with other users.

Additionally, the Forest Service has identified areas as large group sites for the growing small ship tours, including Neka Bay and Iyoukeen Cove. Additionally, there is a growing number of Small Cruise Ship operators that have chosen to "Opt Out" of participation in the BMP agreement and plan. Bear viewing via the road with the increasing cruise ships at the ISP dock increase human presence in the field. The increased traffic into Pavloff Harbor on state lands for bear viewing creates additional pressure, forcing us to more exposed locations in search of solitude.

The introduction of another cabin in this area raises serious concerns about where we can conduct our activities without interference. User conflicts are already prevalent, particularly around the Kennel Creek and Eight Fathom cabins. The Wukuklook boardwalk has further limited our access to crucial areas. We also strongly oppose the Forest Service's proposal to install a moorage, as this would facilitate bear hunting and exacerbate conflicts with our permitted activities. Shifting our operation around on the forest to accommodate new use creates ripple effect with existing and new proposed hunting operations.

Moreover, during the spring of 2024, we encountered individuals traveling from the road to the False Bay River, placing themselves in a potentially dangerous situation during a brown bear hunt. This highlights the importance of careful planning and consideration of existing use patterns in the area. A few years back a Local of Hoonah was upset just seeing us on shore in False Bay during a fall brown bear hunt and filed complaints with several State and Federal agencies. We received threats on social media of sabotage to our vessels and even death to us and our kids in the field. The local wanted all Freshwater Bay private users to "run us out of the area", saying further that "Forest Service should take our permit". Creating another public use cabin can give the user proprietary intentions of an area.

We urge you to reconsider the location of the proposed cabin and explore alternatives that would minimize conflict and ensure the safety and enjoyment of all users. We recommend improving the Neka Hot Springs area and considering a cabin installation there, like the White Sulfur Hot Springs cabin. ADF&G regulation closes NE Chichigof to the use of motorized land vehicles for bear hunting but this location would help local subsistence deer hunters and utilize this natural resource for public use. Whitestone Harbor would also have less impact on our guiding services, as there is already infrastructure in place there, but an additional cabin is not ideal.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Best regards,

Alisha "Mutts" Rosenbruch-Decker
Alaska Master Guide
Glacier Guides Inc.
907-321-2180