

ATTACHMENT #9

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Ms. Jeannie Johnson, Manager
Juneau International Airport
1873 Shell Simmons Drive
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Ms. Johnson:

For many years, I, along with others, have been a frequent (if not daily) user of the dike trail and have observed the nesting eagles and the other wildlife that feed and thrive on the Mendenhall Wetlands.

Thus, it was with extreme disappointment, that I have just learned that Bill Wilmoth has made a recommendation to the Airport Board to remove the eagles nest overlooking the dike trail and the tree itself. While I certainly respect and support the need for airport safety, this recommendation frankly seems to take the "easy way" out and, in my opinion, will not definitively protect the public's safety.

This is more than a question of a pair of nesting eagles. The entire wetlands area and the fish-rich Mendenhall river is a feeding magnet for thousands of migratory birds; this is why it is a state game refuge.

For years, the issue of the birds and the dense spruce forest were debated publicly as an EIS was being developed. Many local observers have commented on both the spruce forest and the resident eagles as being a barrier and deterrent for other birds to fly over the airspace. Mr. Wilmoth's uses the example of a springtime congregation of eagles feeding on capelin as justification of his argument that the resident eagles will not deter other eagles or predators. This is but one extreme example and would undoubtedly occur whether or not the resident eagles were present. However, it doesn't take into account what is the norm.

Even more distressing is the lack of analysis and study of the particular and special circumstances within the Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge. It is my understanding that there was a requirement for the US Fish and Wildlife Service to study the barrier effect in the wetlands area but no study or analysis was performed; all that resulted was a literature search, insufficient and certainly not what had been envisioned.

Additionally, there is a Wildlife Hazards Working Group and its members have not been consulted on this most recent recommendation. It would seem that a collaborative effort involving this group would most likely result in some innovative and less severe measures that would allow the nest and the eagles to remain. Certainly, this group should be consulted and given time to consider various alternatives.

I urge you and the Airport Board to act conservatively and not make a decision in haste when there is, in place, a group that was appointed to deal with just issues.

Thanks you for your consideration and I would appreciate this letter be distributed to the board.

Sincerely,

Paula Terrel