DECISION NOTICE AND FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
MENDENHALL VALLEY SNOW STORAGE
U.S. FOREST SERVICE
TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST
JUNEAU, ALASKA

Mendenhall Valley Snow Storage Environmental Assessment – Key Acronyms and Other Terms

ADF&G	Alaska Department of Fish and Game	FSM	Forest Service Manual
ADEC	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation	GAS	Gastineau Aeromodelers Society
ANILCA	Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act	LUD	Land Use Designation
BMP	Best Management Practices	NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
CBJ	City & Borough of Juneau	NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
EA	Environmental Assessment	NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat	ROS	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum
ESA	Endangered Species Act	SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact	SOPA	Schedule of Proposed Actions
Forest Plan	Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan	SUA	Special Use Authorization
FSH	Forest Service Handbook	USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service

INTRODUCTION

The Forest Service is considering whether or not to issue a special use permit to the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ) to construct and operate a snow storage site in the tour bus parking area near the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center. The site would occupy approximately one acre within the existing tour bus parking area, and one additional acre of previously disturbed vegetation would be cleared in the southwest corner of the tour bus parking area. The site would consist of a snow storage pad and a snow melt water detention pond. The site would be maintained and operated by the CBJ Street Maintenance Department. Snow hauling typically occurs during daytime hours, but hauling and equipment operations on the site occur throughout the day and night during periods of high snowfall. The site would only be used for storage of snow from the Mendenhall Valley service area.

DECISION

Based upon my review of the Mendenhall Valley Snow Storage Environmental Assessment (EA), I have decided to implement Alternative 2. This alternative will result in the Forest Service issuing a 5-year special use permit to the CBJ to store snow in the bus parking area. Depending on the results of the monitoring actions identified in this decision, and given that there will be no change in the chemicals which are added to the snow on the road system, the permit will be considered for renewal after the initial five year permit.

There are two components of the snow storage site; a snow storage pad and a detention pond (EA Figure 2 attached). The snow storage pad will be a low gradient v-swale designed to collect and control melt water at the site. The v-shape of the pad diverts melt water inward and through the snow pile, focusing the melt water along flow routes that minimize erosion of the pad and surrounding areas (EA Figures 4 and 5 attached). The pad is designed with a 1% gradient such that the majority of sediment will be retained on the pad, rather than be discharged with melt water into the receiving detention pond. A berm surrounds the pad to minimize the potential for melt water to leave the pad without filtration. Armor rock is placed along the edges of the berm and through the bottom of the v-swale; the rock is pervious enough to allow flow between the void spaces in the v-swale, but solid enough to prevent erosion. Fencing of the site along the vegetated boundaries to the south and west will help retain litter on the site for removal.

The detention pond has been designed to provide 24 hours of detention for snow melt water. Detention of melt water serves two functions: it allows sediments and heavy metals that were not retained on the pad to settle out of solution, and it ensures chlorides found in the collected snow are adequately diluted before the melt water enters surrounding surface waters. The pond capacity is designed to be approximately 20,000 cubic feet, based on anticipated volumes of stored snow and subsequent melt water. The depth of water in the pond is two feet to maintain separation between the detained water and the shallow ground water located three to four feet below the surface. The surface area of the pond was sized to accommodate the desired capacity and depth. The berms of the detention pond will measure three to four feet high and the outfall will be constructed of pervious material that allows water to seep out over time. When high rain events occur, melt water that exceeds the capacity of the detention pond will be directed out an

overflow outlet. Due to the height of the berm and the release of water through the outfall, the detention pond would not be accessible to fish.

Neither the pad nor the pond will be lined, as native soils found under and surrounding the parking lot fill material are relatively impervious glacial sands and silts. Due to the impervious nature of the native soils and the likelihood that the pad surface will be frozen or saturated during melt periods, ground water infiltration from melt water from the storage pad is not expected, and the pond is sized accordingly.

To avoid and minimize potential environmental impacts from the project, the following mitigation measures would be implemented:

- Best Management Practices (BMPs) for the design and operation of snow storage facilities will be implemented. The BMPs are focused on addressing chlorides, hydrocarbons, heavy metals and sediment in melt water, as well as control of litter associated with the plowed snow. The BMP's will be amended, as necessary, if potential contaminants or contaminant regulations change in the future. The BMPs will be identified in the Special Use Permit authorization and can be found in FSH 2509.22 *Soil and Water Conservation Practices* (2006) and *National Best Management Practices for Water Quality Management on National Forest System Lands, Volume 1: National Core BMP Technical Guide* (FS-990a, April 2012).

- The collection and control of melt water at the site will be accomplished by the shaping and storing of snow on a v-swale pad to allow sediment to settle before melt water is discharged to a receiving detention pond.

- The detention pond will allow further settling of sediment and provide for dilution of chlorides. An absorbent boom will be placed near the outfall to absorb any hydrocarbons.

- Removal of sediment from the detention pond and the snow storage pad will be addressed in a CBJ maintenance plan to be submitted to and approved by the Forest Service before use of the area. Sediment will be removed from Forest Service lands periodically as the rate of accumulation dictates.

- BMPs to avoid and minimize erosion and to control sedimentation during construction will also be implemented to minimize the impact to water quality, wetlands, and aquatic species. The project will have an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan from which the Contractor will prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan and Hazardous Materials Control Plan. These plans would detail erosion and siltation control measures and other pollution prevention measures that would be used during project construction to minimize water quality impacts. The measures will include Forest Service Manual Supplement direction on Noxious Weed Management regarding use of weed-free erosion control materials, guidelines for re-vegetating disturbed areas with native plants and seed mixes approved for the Tongass National Forest, preventing introduction and spread of invasive plants, and the procedure for conducting risk assessments for ground disturbing activities.

- Specific BMPs for fueling would be incorporated into a site operations plan as part of and attached to the special use permit. These BMPs would include, but are not limited to, the measures listed below.

    - Fuel transfer personnel must be properly trained in fuel handling and transfer procedures and emergency response actions.
    - Fuel trucks will be equipped with emergency spill response kits adequate to handle a release equivalent to the volume of the storage capacity of the truck.
    - Fuel truck driver must conduct visual inspection of all hoses and connections prior to initiating transfer.
    - Fuel transfer should occur in a single designated area away from wetlands and/or surface waters.
    - Prior to departure, driver will confirm all truck valves are secure and no leaks are present, as well as confirm that all valves/covers on the receiving equipment are secure and no leaks are present.
    - Any releases should be reported to the Juneau District Ranger immediately.
    - The operator will work with the Forest Service to ensure proper spill remediation, as well as other required agencies.

- A long-term, consistent water quality sampling program will build on existing sampling efforts to monitor effectiveness of melt water filtration and ensure downstream water quality is protected. The Forest Service and the CBJ will jointly develop a water quality sampling program; CBJ will be responsible for implementing the program.

- The project area boundaries will be clearly marked; no vegetation clearing beyond what is necessary will occur.

- Although construction and operations work areas will have restricted access to ensure public safety, access for recreation activities will be maintained or reasonable alternative access provided during construction and operations, if practicable. If construction at the bus parking area occurs during the cruise ship season, it will be undertaken in such a way that the lot would continue to serve its purpose as a tour bus parking lot.

Other permits to be obtained by CBJ include an Alaska Construction General Permit (Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation [ADEC]), Section 404 Permit for a Discharge of Fill Material (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers [USACE]), and Section 401 Water Quality Certification (ADEC). A Title 16 Fish Habitat Permit from Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) may be obtained for in-stream work, if necessary.

DECISION RATIONALE

I selected the Proposed Action Alternative because the environmental consequences to identified resources are negligible to minor (EA Table 2 Summary of Environmental Consequences Associated with Each Alternative attached). The action is also compatible with the urban

classification of the Visitor Center Management Unit of the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area, as identified in the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area 1996 Management Plan (1996).

Snow storage has been an on-going activity at this location for the past 6-7 years. During this same time period the Gastineau Aeromodelers Society (with growing club membership) has been actively flying their model airplanes at this same shared location. The Selected Alternative could have temporary direct impacts on outdoor recreational use of the area during construction activities. Although access to the construction area will be restricted, access to recreation areas will be provided during construction. Operation of the site could also have direct impacts on recreation users during snow hauling operations. Given the relatively low number of recreation users in winter months at the bus parking area, I expect these impacts to be minor. Although concerns have been raised regarding the potential for the site's berm to affect model aircraft operations, the low height of the berm and its setback from the runway should have minor effects given the existing conditions in the area. Therefore, I expect direct and indirect adverse impacts to be minor.

Construction at the bus parking area could result in direct short-term water quality and aquatic habitat impacts due to the release of petroleum hydrocarbons from construction equipment, or release of sediment during ground disturbing activities. Construction BMPs would reduce the risk of unintentional release of hazardous materials and sediment. Given these measures, I believe direct adverse impacts on water quality and aquatic habitat during construction of the Selected Alternative would be negligible to minor.

Construction of the Selected Alternative will result in minor direct adverse impact on vegetation at the bus parking lot; approximately one acre of previously disturbed vegetation will be cleared and 0.18 acres of disturbed wetland vegetation filled. Project area vegetation is comprised of early successional and pioneering species that do well in recently disturbed areas and the vegetation is not unique in the Mendenhall Valley. The vegetation provides nesting and foraging habitat for migratory birds, which would be disturbed or harmed if clearing occurs during the nesting season. To prevent this disturbance the area would be thoroughly surveyed for active nests prior to clearing, if scheduled during the nesting season. Construction could also result in localized disturbance, which could temporarily displace some individuals of a variety of species. Due to the area of clearing required, I expect the disturbance to be localized, of short duration, and likely to result in negligible effects on those individuals. Construction activity could also disturb individual goshawks if it occurs during the goshawk breeding season. The area is not considered optimal habitat for goshawks, but is within the foraging area of a known goshawk nest; clearing of vegetation could therefore have a direct minor impact on individual goshawks, again, I expect disturbances would be localized and of short duration.

The Mendenhall Valley Snow Storage EA documents the complete environmental analyses and the conclusions upon which my decision is based.

ISSUES

The Forest Service identified 13 topics raised during scoping as significant issues to be considered in the EA. These issues included air quality; noise; floodplains; surface water; ground water; wetlands; terrestrial wildlife habitat or species; aquatic/riparian wildlife habitat or

species; vegetation; compatible land use; outdoor recreation; environmental justice; and economic and fiscal considerations.

The majority of public and agency comments received fell into three issues categories: outdoor recreation, water quality and aquatic habitat. CBJ consultants and ADF&G conducted field work to better define the surface water connections from the bus parking lot to anadromous fish habitat, and to identify and delineate jurisdictional wetlands and waters of the U.S. During the public and agency scoping process, specific concerns were voiced about potential impacts to Steep Creek, a known spawning habitat for sockeye salmon. Further assessment of the site determined that the underlying topography of the parking area directs melt waters from the snow storage site away from Steep Creek and south toward the beaver pond. Fish trapping results clearly indicate that the pond provides rearing habitat for Coho salmon and is connected to the anadromous Dredge Creek. Water quality and aquatic habitat issues related to the Selected Alternative are addressed through the design of the snow storage site and BMPs to be implemented, as described above.

Consideration of recreation interests resulted in changes to the location and layout of the site to move it further from the existing aeromodeler club runway, and modification of the fencing plan to limit the number of obstacles near the runway approach.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Two alternatives were evaluated and compared in the EA; Alternative 1 (No Action) and Alternative 2 (Proposed Action). A No Action Alternative typically assumes the continuation of current activities and uses. However, snow storage has been occurring at the bus parking area under a temporary agreement. The Forest Service wants to bring the activities under current policy by either stopping the storage activity (No Action Alternative) or issuing a permit to allow it with certain terms and conditions to mitigate any potential effects (Proposed Action).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This project was originally listed on the July 2011 Tongass National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions and updated periodically during the analysis. The public was invited to review and comment on the Environmental Assessment, the legal notice was published in the *Juneau Empire* on April 3, 2012, and a public meeting held April 17, 2012. The EA lists agencies and people consulted on page 43.

The majority of public comments were from people affiliated with, or supporting the activities of, the Gastineau Aeromodelers Society (GAS); a group with an interest in flying radio-controlled airplanes. They created and maintain a runway at the tour bus parking area that was developed with help from the CBJ. In general, the GAS is concerned that their ability to continue to use the area in the manner in which they are accustomed may be compromised by the development of the snow storage site in the bus parking area. Specific concerns were expressed about: the siting of the snow storage site relative to the runway and its approach, the location and height of a berm around the perimeter of the snow storage pad, use of a temporary or permanent

fence along the runway side of the snow storage pad, periods of operations that could infringe on flying time, the presence of litter associated with the snow cleared from city streets, and the appearance of the snow pile itself.

In response to these comments, the design and layout of the snow storage area were modified as practicable. The snow storage site was located in the far southwest corner of the parking lot, and will expand to the west, thus placing as much distance between it and the existing runway and approach as possible. Design engineers determined that the three to four foot berm is a necessary component of the snow storage area, and it was not modified; however, fencing around the perimeter has been reduced to two sides only: the southern and western boundaries. The fencing is, in part, intended to help control the litter associated with snow removed from city streets. It will retain the litter on site, simplifying and improving efficiency of clean-up efforts. As prevailing winds are from the north (the glacier), the fence along the eastern edge of the snow storage closest to the runway approach is not absolutely necessary to contain blowing litter. In response to GAS's request to reduce the number of obstacles along the runway approach, it is no longer included in the layout plan. Finally, site operations primarily occur during weekdays, but may also occur on weekend days during periods of heavy snow fall; this is unlikely to change due to time critical snow removal and storage efforts required by CBJ during those periods. However, GAS will continue to have the opportunity to fly on most winter weekend days.

GAS members and the Juneau Audubon Society also expressed concern about potential impacts to surface water quality, aquatic/riparian wildlife (anadromous fish) habitat, and terrestrial wildlife. The proposed snow storage site, including the snow storage pad and the detention pond, is designed based on studies conducted on filtration of contaminants from snow melt and is being pursued in coordination with local regulatory agencies. The Forest Service will require CBJ to develop an operations plan for the site that details the specific BMPs to be used to prevent spills and reduce the contaminants leaving the site. Water quality monitoring will be required as part of the operations plan.

Several individuals and the Juneau Audubon Society expressed their belief that the CBJ had access to alternative locations that would be better suited to development of a snow storage site. The CBJ conducted a study to identify potential snow storage sites for the Mendenhall Valley. Developable land is in short supply in Juneau; existing flat, developable lands in the Mendenhall Valley are more valuable as residential lands than for snow storage. The cost of hauling snow is high, and there is a cost benefit to the CBJ and the community from having a relatively short haul length. Snow removal areas in the Mendenhall Valley are concentrated near the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area, so a snow storage site in this location provides a relatively short haul distance. A short haul distance also reduces fuel use and emissions associated with snow hauling. Additionally, CBJ has determined that the other available snow storage sites in the Mendenhall Valley also have wetlands, anadromous streams and are closer to residential areas than the bus parking area.

The Forest Service also received comments questioning the compatibility of the site with adjacent land uses. The bus parking area is located in the Visitor Center Management Unit of the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area. The unit is designated as Urban in the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classification, managed for high concentrations of people and frequent interactions between large numbers of users. Motorized access and travel facilities are standard;

the function of the parking area itself is to provide a parking and storage area for large tour buses and vans waiting to pick up tourists. Tour buses use the parking area during summer tour season (May-September). The Visitor Center Unit is intensively managed and accommodates heavy use. Use of the parking area for storing snow, and the associated operation of heavy equipment to move the snow, is compatible with the transportation-related use of the site.

Regulatory agencies had no resource concerns; National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) representatives reviewed the EA and stated the agency has no Essential Fish Habitat concerns with the project as proposed. Likewise, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service representatives reviewed the EA and stated they have no comments on the subject EA for snow storage. A representative from ADEC, Division of Water Non-Point Source Program expressed support for development of an environmentally sound snow storage area. ADEC also recommended several BMPs and referenced the agency's Snow Disposal Area Siting Guidance; the site selection, site design, and BMPs for site operations are in accordance with the ADEC guidance.

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

2008 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan)
This decision is consistent with the Forest Plan and its direction for management of a Special Interest Area Land Use Designation (LUDs). The objective of this LUD is to preserve areas with unique archaeological, historical, scenic, geological, botanical, or zoological values. The Selected Alternative does not alter these objectives.

ANILCA Section 810, Subsistence Evaluation and Finding
The effects of this project have been evaluated to determine potential effects on subsistence opportunities and resources. There is no documented or reported subsistence use that would be restricted as a result of this decision. For this reason, the Selected Alternative would not result in a significant possibility of a significant restriction of subsistence use of wildlife, fish, or other foods.

ANILCA Section 811, Access Evaluation and Finding
This action has been evaluated to determine potential effects on reasonable access to subsistence resources on National Forest System Lands. There is no documented or reported access that would be restricted as a result of this decision. For this reason, this action would not result in a significant possibility of a significant restriction of subsistence users having reasonable access to subsistence resources on National Forest System Lands.

Endangered Species Act of 1973
A determination of "No Effect" has been made for all threatened, endangered, or ESA candidate species. All project activities would be conducted in a manner consistent with the ESA and regulations. A complete Biological Evaluation (BE) is included in the planning record.

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
The Forest Service program for compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) includes locating, inventorying and evaluating the National Register of Historic Places

eligibility of historic and archeological sites that may be directly or indirectly affected by scheduled activities. Regulations (36 CFR 800) implementing Section 106 of the NHPA require Federal agencies to consider the effects of their actions on sites that are determined eligible for inclusion in or are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (termed "historic properties") The Forest Service identified a National Register-eligible site, the Trail of Time, near the bus parking area. The Forest Service also determined there are No Historic Properties Affected by the proposed project and the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office concurred in February 2012.

Clean Water Act
The ADEC is the lead State agency for promulgating and enforcing water quality regulations under the Clean Water Act. The Clean Water Act recognized the need to control nonpoint source pollution. Section 313 of the Clean Water Act requires the Forest Service to comply with all State requirements for control and abatement of water pollution to the same extent as any nongovernmental entity. The Forest Service is the agency responsible for monitoring and protecting water quality on National Forest System lands in Alaska. The Forest Service and CBJ will jointly develop a water quality monitoring plan. CBJ will be responsible for implementing the monitoring, drafting annual reports, and submitting to the Forest Service and ADEC for review.

Floodplain Management (E.O. 11988), Protection of Wetlands (E.O. 11990)
This activity will not impact the functional value of any floodplain as defined by Executive Order 11988. The bus parking area is located outside of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mapped floodplains; a site specific field study identified a small floodplain near the southeast boundary of the parking area. Development of the site at the parking area would not impact mapped floodplains. Additional storage would be provided by the detention pond, resulting in higher capacities for high flow events.

Recreational Fisheries (E.O. 12962)
Federal agencies are required, to the extent permitted by law and where practicable, and in cooperation with States and Tribes, to improve the quantity, function, sustainable productivity, and distribution of U.S. aquatic resources for increased recreational fishing opportunities. As required by this Order, I have evaluated the effects of this action on aquatic systems and recreational fisheries and documented those effects relative to the purpose of this order. Since there are no effects to fisheries resources within the project area there will be no direct, indirect or cumulative impacts related to this Order.

Invasive Species (E.O. 13112)
Executive Order 13112 directs Federal agencies whose actions may affect the status of invasive species to insure coordinated, cost-efficient agency actions addressing the prevention, detection, control and monitoring of alien species. "Invasive species" refers to those species that are likely to cause economic or environmental harm, or harm to human health. Actions to be taken include planning at the local, tribal, state, regional, and ecosystem levels, in cooperation with stake holders and organizations addressing invasive species. Agencies are not to fund or authorize actions that the agency believes are likely to cause or promote the introduction or spread of

invasive species, unless the benefits of the action outweigh the potential harm caused by the species.

An invasive plant risk assessment will be completed for this project prior to the start of construction; the findings and recommended mitigation measures addressing the management of invasive plants will be incorporated into the conditions of the Special Use Permit.

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1996 (hereafter referred to as "the Act") requires consultation with the NMFS on activities that may adversely affect Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). EFH is defined as "those waters and substrates necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity." EFH for Pacific salmon includes marine waters, intertidal habitats, and freshwater streams accessible to anadromous fish. Marine EFH for the salmon fisheries in Alaska includes all estuarine and marine areas utilized by Pacific salmon of Alaska origin, extending from the influence of tidewater and tidally submerged habitats to the limits of the U.S. exclusive economic zone. The Act promotes the protection of these habitats through review, assessment, and mitigation of activities that may adversely affect these habitats. NMFS has reviewed this project and confirmed that they have no Essential Fish Habitat concerns with the project as proposed.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The significance of environmental impacts must be considered in terms of context and intensity. This means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human and national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. In the case of a site-specific action, significance usually depends upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Intensity refers to the severity or degree of impact. (40 CFR 1508.27)

Context
The proposed snow storage site is in the tour bus parking lot near the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center, located in the Mendenhall River watershed approximately 8 miles northwest of Juneau, Alaska. The Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area is a Special Interest Area as identified in the 2008 Forest Plan. As such, it is managed principally for recreation use while retaining the area substantially in its natural condition. Facilities that are compatible with public uses are allowed. Within the Recreation Area, the Visitor Center Unit (as identified in the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area Management Plan) which encompasses the tour bus parking area and the proposed snow storage site, is managed for high concentrations of people and frequent interactions between large numbers of users. The immediate area surrounding the proposed snow storage site is used to park and manage tour buses at the Visitor Center, as well as to provide parking for recreational activities including radio-controlled airplane flying, hiking, dog walking, biking, and bird watching. There are no residential, commercial, or industrial areas nearby.

Intensity

The intensity of effects was considered in terms of the following:

1. **Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that, on balance, the effect will be beneficial.** Effects are anticipated to be negligible due to implementation of the proposed mitigation measures. Activities associated with this action will be monitored as outlined to ensure that effects are minimized.
2. **The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety**. There will be no significant effects on public health and safety. All activities on the site will comply with all federal, state and local health and safety laws and regulations.
3. **Unique characteristics of the geographic area, such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.** There will be no significant effects on unique characteristics (aquatic habitat of anadromous fish) of the area. The proposed design features a V-swale melt pad and a detention pond. The Forest Service and CBJ will jointly develop a water quality monitoring program, and CBJ will implement the plan, to monitor effectiveness of melt water filtration and protection of downstream water quality. (See EA pages 16, 33-34).
4. **The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial with the utilization of BMPs and project design (See EA pages 11-15). There is no known credible scientific controversy over the impacts of the Selected Alternative. Snow storage sites are common in Alaska. Monitoring will be conducted on a regularly scheduled basis.
5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** The analysis shows the effects are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk. (See EA pages 11-15, 23-28).
6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** The action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, because it authorizes use in an area already developed for parking buses. (See EA pages 36-38).
7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.** The cumulative impacts are not significant. The effects of the Selected Alternative considered with the effects of the cumulative projects are expected to be negligible to minor for air quality, noise, floodplains, surface and ground water, terrestrial and aquatic wildlife habitat, vegetation, and outdoor recreation. Wetland effects are minimized and mitigated, if necessary, through local and federal permitting processes and compliance with Executive Order 11990 on National Forest System Lands. Cumulative impacts for wetlands in the Mendenhall Valley are anticipated to be minor. (See EA page 31)

8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed , or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.** The action will have no significant adverse effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, because the only known site in close proximity to the project area (Trail of Time) is separated from the bus parking lot by a vegetated area and a two-lane highway (See EA page 41). The action will also not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources because the Trail of Time is not expected to be affected by development and operation of the proposed snow storage site. The State Historic Preservation Office concurred with a finding of No Historic Properties Affected on February 14, 2012 (See EA page 41).
9. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.** The action will not adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species act of 1973, because there are no terrestrial species listed as endangered or threatened in the Tongass National Forest (See EA page 32, 35).
10. **Whether the action threatens to violate Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment**. The action will not violate Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA and built into required mitigation (see EA pages 16, 21-41). Since the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area identified the Visitor Center Unit with an Urban Recreation Opportunity Spectrum classification, it is considered an urban area and is managed to accommodate a high volume of people and mechanized transportation, construction and operation of the snow storage site at the bus parking area would be consistent with the management plan (See EA page 38).

After considering the effects of the actions analyzed, in terms of context and intensity, I have determined that these actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW (APPEAL) OPPORTUNITIES

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215.

Individuals or non-federal organizations that submit written comments or otherwise expressed interest in this particular action during the comment period specified at 215.6 have standing to appeal this decision. The notice of appeal must be in writing, meet the appeal content requirements at 215.14 and be filed with the Appeal Deciding Officer:

Forrest Cole, Forest Supervisor
Phone: 907-225-3101 FAX: 907-228-6215
Mailing Address: Tongass National Forest,
Federal Building, Ketchikan, AK. 99901-6591
Street Address: 648 Mission Street, Ketchikan, AK.
Email: appeals-alaska-tongass@fs.fed.us

The Notice of Appeal, including attachments, must be filed (regular mail, fax, e-mail, express delivery or messenger service) with the Appeal Deciding Officer at the correct location within 45 calendar days of publication of notice of this decision in the *Juneau Empire*, the newspaper of record for the Juneau Ranger District. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Appeals submitted electronically, including attachments, must be in an electronic format compatible with Microsoft Word; please include Mendenhall Valley Snow Storage in the subject line.

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact:

Jim Case, Lands Special Uses, Tongass National Forest, 8510 Mendenhall Loop Road, Juneau, Alaska 99801, 907-789-6283.

/s/ Marti Marshall — August 22, 2012

Marti Marshall — Date

Juneau District Ranger

ATTACHMENTS

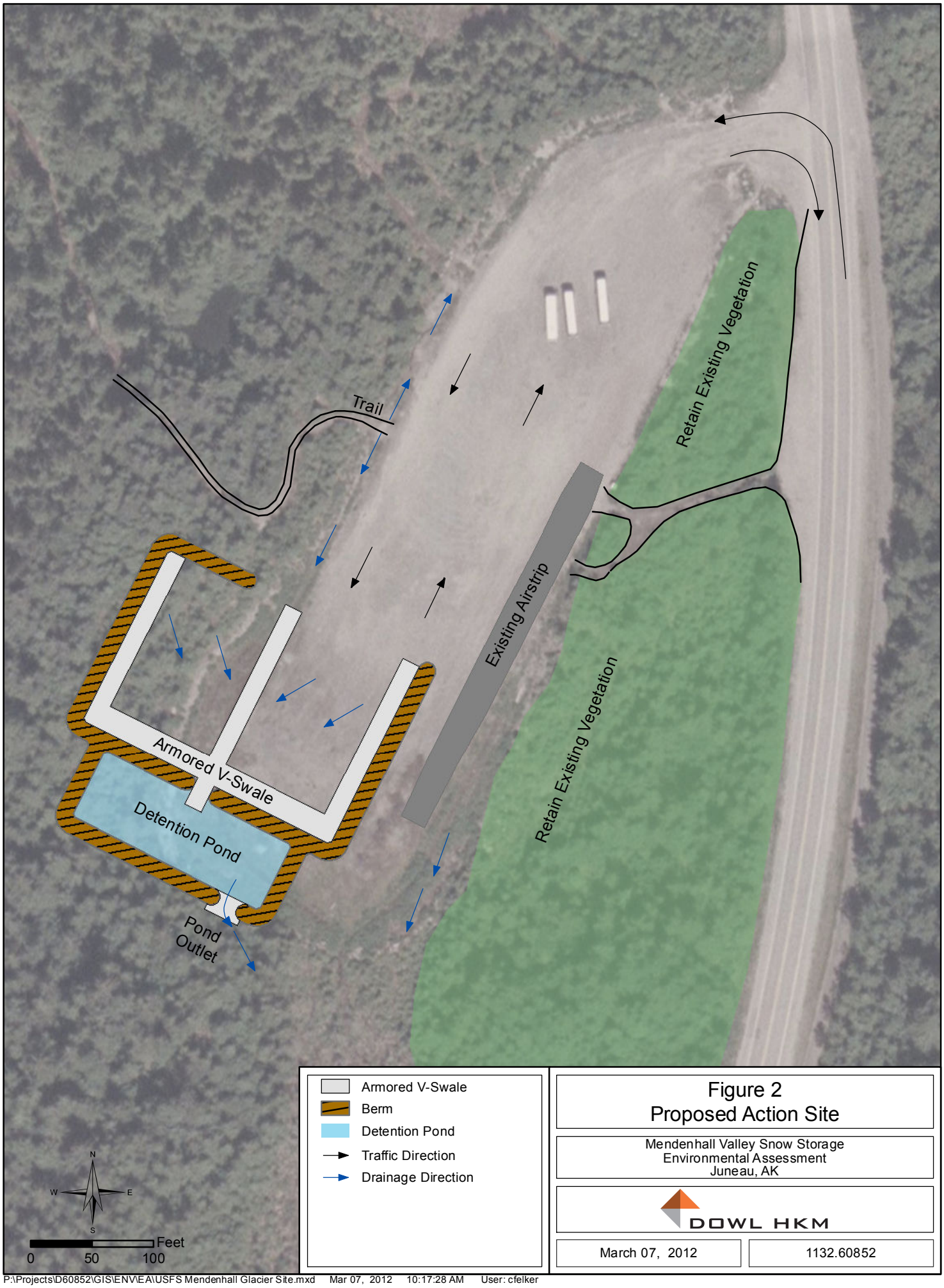


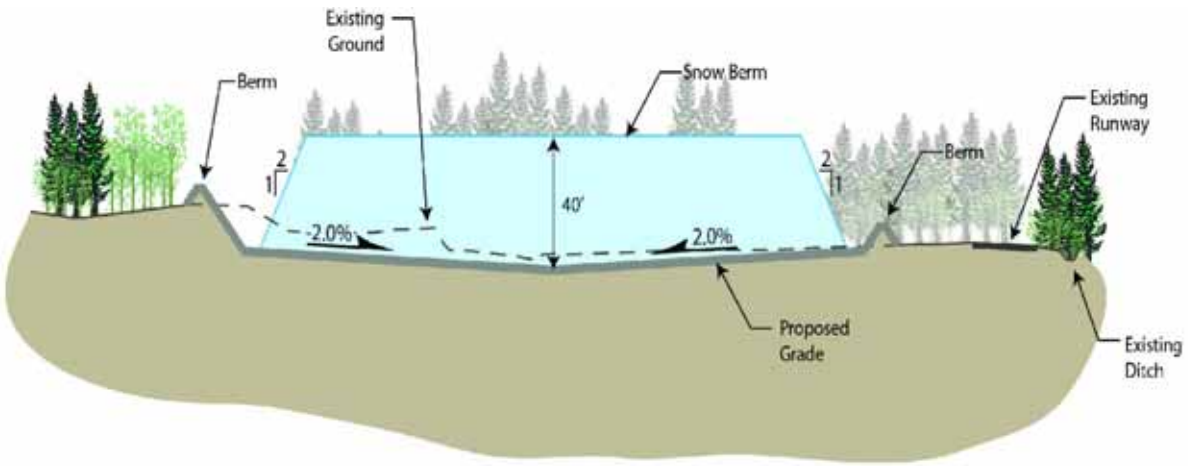
Figure 2
Proposed Action Site

Mendenhall Valley Snow Storage
Environmental Assessment
Juneau, AK

DOWL HKM

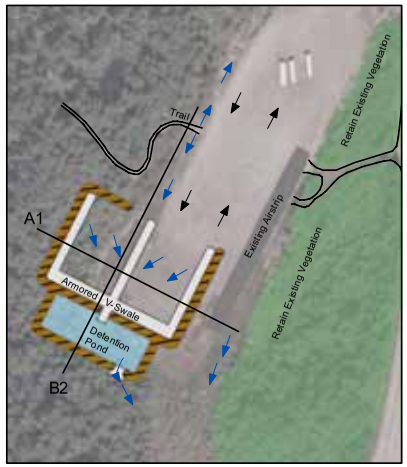
March 07, 2012 | 1132.60852

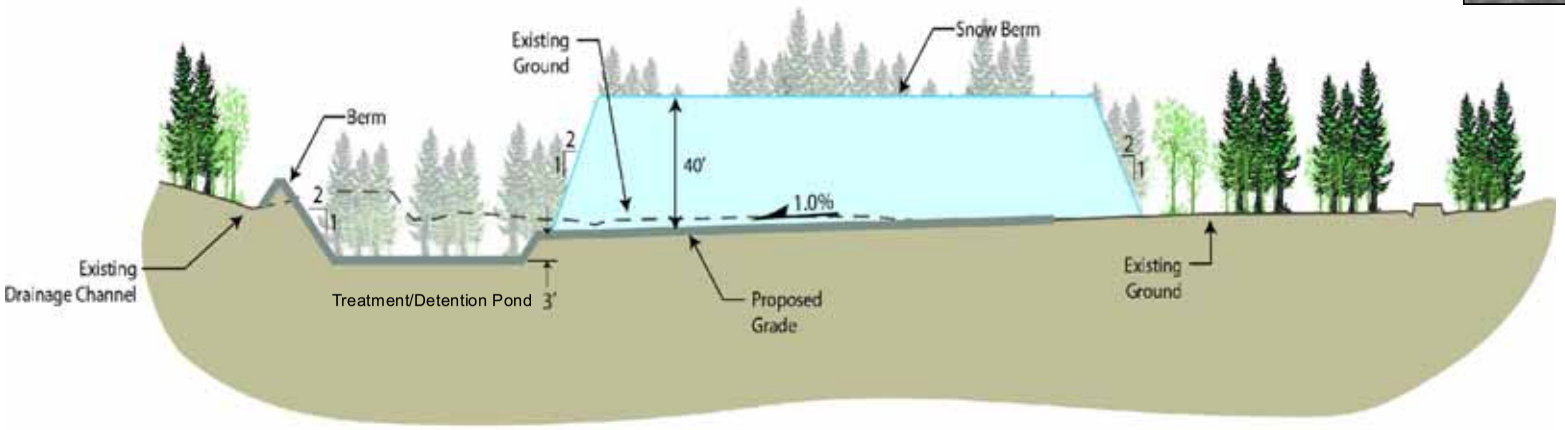
P:\Projects\D60852\GIS\ENV\EA\USFS Mendenhall Glacier Site.mxd Mar 07, 2012 10:17:28 AM User: cfelker



SECTION A1

No Scale





SECTION B2

No Scale

Figure 4
Snow Disposal Site Sections

Mendenhall Valley Snow Storage
Environmental Assessment
Juneau, AK

DOWL HKM

March 07, 2012 | 1132.60852

P:\Projects\D60852\GIS\ENV\EA\Snow Disposal Site Sections.mxd Mar 07, 2012 10:26:01 AM User: cfelker

V-SWALE SECTION

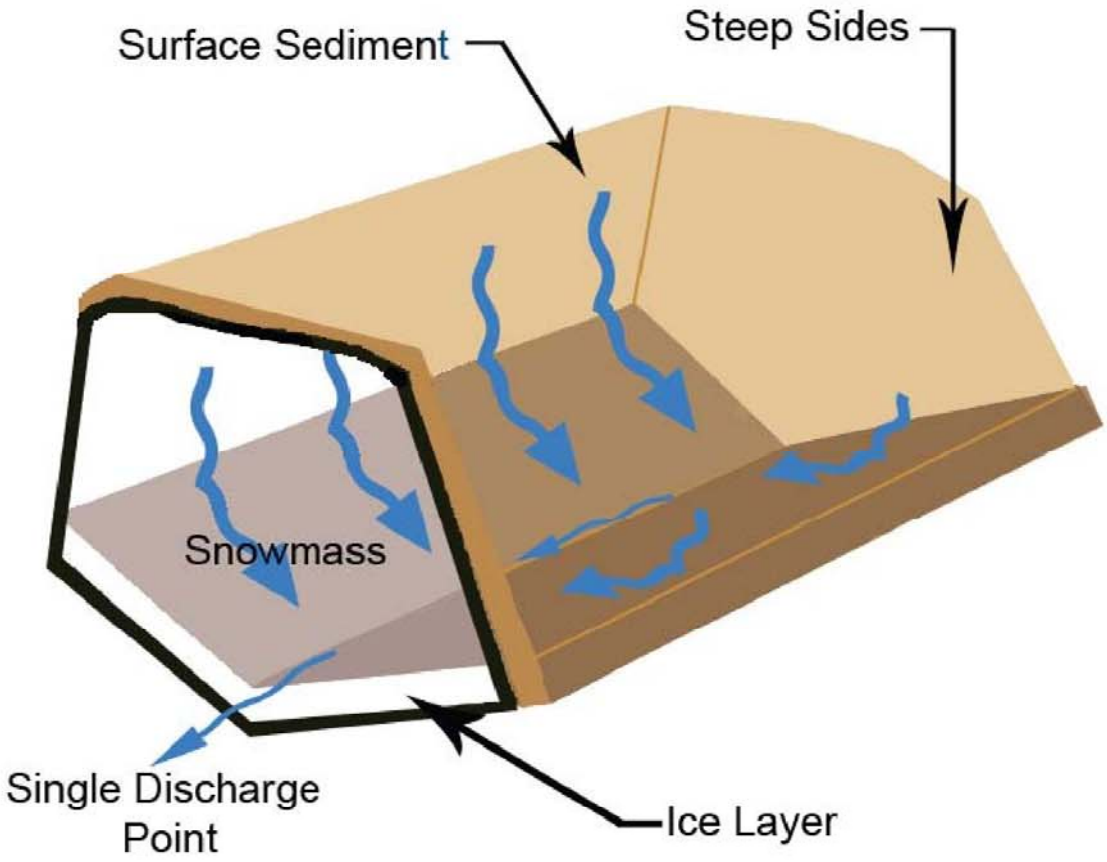


Image courtesy of Scott Wheaton

Figure 5 V-Swale Section
Mendenhall Valley Snow Storage Environmental Assessment Juneau, AK
DOWL HKM
March 07, 2012 | 1132.60852

Table 2. Summary of Environmental Consequences Associated with Each Alternative

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Physical Environment		
Air Quality	Negligible to minor beneficial effect from reduced air emissions during winter months.	Short-term increase in emissions during construction. No change from current levels during operations; minor increase in emission compared to No Action.
Noise	Minor beneficial effect from reduced noise emissions during winter months.	Short-term increase in noise levels during construction. No change from current levels during operations; minor increase in noise compared to No Action.
Floodplains	Negligible to minor impact to unmapped floodplain.	No impact to unmapped floodplain during construction and operations.
Surface Water	Minor beneficial impact to water quality. Negligible to minor adverse impact to water flow/levels due to reduced melt water contribution.	Negligible to minor adverse impact on water quality during construction. Negligible beneficial impact to water quality during operations compared to current conditions; minor adverse impact to water quality compared to No Action . Negligible impact to water flows/levels.
Ground Water	Negligible beneficial impact to water quality.	Negligible adverse impact on shallow ground water quality during construction. Negligible beneficial impact to water quality during operations compared to current conditions; negligible to minor adverse impact to water quality during operations compared to No Action.
Wetlands	Negligible indirect beneficial impact from increase in water quality. Negligible to minor adverse impact resulting from reduced melt water contribution to water levels.	Minor adverse impact on wetlands from fill of 0.18 acre during construction. Negligible beneficial impact from potential water quality effects during operations compared to current conditions; negligible adverse impact from potential water quality effects compared to No Action.

Table 2. Summary of Environmental Consequences Associated with Each Alternative (Continued)

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Biological Environment		
Terrestrial Wildlife Habitat or Species	No impact to migratory birds, threatened, endangered, or sensitive species. .	Minor direct adverse impact to individual goshawks from disturbance during construction and minor reduction in prey species from clearing 1.0 acre of disturbed vegetation. No impact to threatened or endangered species.
Aquatic/Riparian Wildlife Habitat or Species	Negligible beneficial impact to habitat and species due to improvements in water quality.	Minor direct adverse impact from fill of 0.18 acre disturbed wetland and potential from hydrocarbon spills during construction. Negligible beneficial impact during operations compared to current conditions; minor indirect impact from site operations compared to No Action.
Vegetation	No impact to vegetation.	Minor direct adverse impact from loss of 1.0 acre of disturbed upland vegetation and 0.18 acre of disturbed wetland vegetation.
Human Environment		
Compatible Land Use	No impact to land use compatibility.	No adverse impact to land use compatibility.
Outdoor Recreation	Negligible to minor beneficial impact on recreation.	Minor direct and indirect adverse impacts on recreation.
Environmental Justice	No impact to minority or low-income population.	No adverse impact on minority or low-income population.
Economic and Fiscal	Impact to economics and CBJ fiscal resources possible, depending on location on non-National Forest System lands developed for snow disposal.	Negligible to minor adverse fiscal impact to CBJ from development costs. Minor beneficial economic impact from construction employment and earnings.