



Action Initiative Information		
Cluster:	Visitor Products	
Initiative:	Increase Guided Access to Land	
Goal:	Agency permitting processes are limiting economic opportunity in the tourism industry in the Tongass National Forest and other public lands. This initiative addresses the lack of permitting flexibility to make quick changes in response to market conditions (more adaptive management and a more micro managed approach). The outcome will be more access to public lands and to existing areas to increase capacity.	
Champion:	John McConnochie, Cycle Alaska, jpm@gci.net	
Team:	Chad Van Ormer, USFS, Ranger Admiralty Island Hans vonRekowski, USFS, Recreation, Lands, Minerals Staff Officer Jeff Miller, USFS, Partnerships & Business Development Kelli Grummett, Alaska Travel Adventures Kirby Day, Princess Cruises Louis Juergens, Alaska Galore Tours Marti Marshall, USFS District Ranger Molly Kiesel, Juneau Jeep Adventures	cvanormer@fs.fed.us hvonrekowski@fs.fed.us jeffmiller@fs.fed.us kdindinger@bestofalaskatravel.com kday@princesscruises.com louis@alaskagalore.com mmarshall01@fs.fed.us info@juneaujeep.com

Meeting Summaries		
Date:	Attendees:	Outcome:
12/17/12	CWG monthly call-in	The goal of the group now is to help the Forest Service update the MGRA Master Plan. This is the best way to formalize and expedite maximum usage days. They would like to seek funding to accelerate the update. No activity since last report.
11/16/12	CWG monthly call-in	The 15,000 additional temporary use days for 2012 worked well. No negative comments were received. The group is looking for the same temporary increase for next summer. The goal of the group now is to help the Forest Service update the MGRA Master Plan, which is 15 years old and an obstacle to increasing use days on a long term basis.

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		<p>The group expressed praise for the flexibility of the Forest Service to look at ways to increase capacity. In other parts of the region, Misty Fjords and POW recently updated their commercial use plan and can now offer additional use permits. Wrangell also has an updated plan and is looking at innovative ways to increase allocation at Anan.</p>
4/27/12	CWG monthly call-in	<p>The 15,400 additional temporary use days will be monitored over the summer and evaluated in the fall as to how well they were used during off peak time. MGRA priority now is to get commercial use capacity done for Master Plan update.</p>
3/8/12	CWG monthly call-in	<p>This fall/winter the group will recap the use of the 15,400 additional temporary use service days awarded last fall at the MGVC. Because it was off peak times, it may not reflect peak time needs. The group will continue to work collaboratively with the USFS to look at ways to add capacity without negative impact. In the fall the group will work to strengthen the TBMP (Tourism Best Management Practices) to address how operators/outfitters/guides conduct themselves on Forest Service lands. Longer term, the group will also continue to follow the development of the new area master plan.</p>
2/2/12	CWG monthly call-in	<p>The group will continue to be involved in the MGRA Master Plan update. The comment period for this plan has passed, but we will keep monitoring it to see when next we can be involved. The group will continue to monitor that the plan allows the District Ranger the flexibility to meet market demands in a timely manner regarding access. The group will continue to make sure increased access does not deter from the guests experience.</p> <p>Marti Marshall reported that the FS is working on the MGRA carrying capacity analysis, has finished the Misty Fjords carrying capacity analysis and is finishing up the POW analysis. Having these plans in place will help with flexibility to make access adjustments more quickly. Next to be started are shoreline access capacity studies for Juneau, Hoonah, Sitka and Admiralty Island. This study will take a couple of years, but again will speed up access and help flexibility when in place. There was also discussion that the MGRA Master Plan is focused on commercial use and capacity, but there is also a need for a master plan that focuses on facilities and infrastructure needs.</p>



Initiative Action Plan Update		
Activity 1:	Be involved in Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area Master Plan update to insure we have predictable and stable long term increases in access to the area. Make sure plan allows the District Ranger the flexibility to meet market demands in a timely manner regarding access.	Activity Date:
	The group is waiting for the results of the Fee Board meeting to see how fees are allocated for 2013. We will then meet with Marti Marshall and discuss the best way forward to ensure that the master plan is on as fast a track as feasible. The completion of the master plan is the key initiative to complete in order to be able to discuss allocation of additional use days on a more permanent basis.	12/31/12
Activity 2:	Improve the responsiveness and efficiency of FS permitting.	Activity Date:
	Kirby Day will contact Marti Marshall early January 2013 to discuss the use of the 2012 temporary use days and confirm with her the process going forward to achieve similar allocation for 2013.	12/31/12
	On September 28, Marti Marshall of the USFS authorized 15,400 additional temporary use service days at the MGVC for 6 current permit holders. Everything that was asked for was awarded; however, extra space is in off-peak time.	9/28/11
	Will need to know the access number by mid-July of 2012 for 2013 contracts. The problem was identified as a conflict of calendars. USFS staff is in the field in the summer and doesn't have time to make allocation decisions until the fall/winter. However, cruise ship negotiations take place in late summer. The problem comes down to a timing discrepancy which needs to be addressed for a long term solution to the problem.	9/23/11
Activity 3:	After the season ends commit to meet and discuss outcome of the adjustments. This would include operators, District Ranger, permitting officers, etc.	Activity Date:
	Impact of the increased usage days were reviewed informally with the FS during other meetings. The 15,000 additional temporary use days for 2012 worked well. No negative comments were received. All felt that it had been a success.	Fall 2012
Activity 4:	Investigate comment card from FS to gauge and monitor guests	Activity Date:

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	experience.	
No Activity.		
Activity 5:	Strengthen the partnership between outfitters/guides and the FS (e.g. through certifications, training, TBMP guidelines for public lands.) Goal is quality experience for all.	Activity Date:
No Activity.		

Other Informational Items	