

Interactive comment on “Improving estimation of glacier volume change: a GLIMS case study of Bering Glacier System, Alaska” by M. J. Beedle et al.

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Referee: Richard S. Williams, Jr. (USGS/WHSC) Editor: Dorothy K. Hall (NASA/GSFC)

General Comments:

I have done a standard technical review of the ms. and forwarded the annotated ms. pages to the editor. Upon receipt of my technical review, Dr. Hall asked that I prepare a narrative of my review of the "published" ms.

This is an interesting remote sensing/GIS study, using GLIMSView software, of areal

(and volumetric) changes of the Bering Glacier System, a complex glacier system of an ice field, tributary glaciers, outlet glaciers, including piedmont glacier lobes, and surge-type glaciers. The "already-published paper" was written by 8 authors; as a result, the manuscript reads like one written by a committee. It is very difficult to keep track of all of the acronyms and abbreviations pertaining to the various studies of the Bering Glacier System (BGS), the Surging Bering Glacier System (SBGS), different approaches to hypsometry, and what components actually comprise the BGS and SBGS, not to mention the accumulation area, ablation area, and ELA under each analysis. Because of my technical editing of the Glaciers of Alaska volume (1386-K) of USGS Professional Paper series (1386-A-K)(Satellite Image Atlas of Glaciers of the World), which contains an extensive section on the Bering Glacier, the various nomenclature uses was familiar to me. For the non-specialist on the glaciers of Alaska, including glaciologists, this is a difficult paper to read and to "digest."

In addition to the hard-to-read text, it is obvious that the paper was written rather hurriedly and was not technically reviewed before submission to The Cryosphere Discussions. For example, some citation dates in the text are different from those in the References. I could not find citations to two papers listed in the References. Before "republishing" in The Cryosphere journal, the authors need to make corrections to their ms. I leave it up to the editor to determine if the authors should endeavor to make the text more readable and lucid. However, the problems identified in my technical review need to be corrected before publication in The Cryosphere.

I would also like to comment on a major flaw in The Cryosphere Discussions versus The Cryosphere journal process. It "puts the cart before the horse!" I have no problem posting a paper on the Web AFTER technical reviews, corrections by the authors, and acceptance by the journal editor — before appearing in a printed scientific journal (sometimes a lapse of 6 months to a year between acceptance by the editor for publication and actual publication. Such a system "speeds up" the process, but still insures maintenance of high scientific quality and credibility of the research. The two-tiered

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system used by The Cryosphere Discussions/The Cryosphere journal, does not meet minimum standards of quality assurance.

The Cryosphere Discussions system is a flawed process and should be discontinued! The system used by the Journal of Glaciology should be emulated by The Cryosphere. If The Cryosphere Discussions is retained, it should follow publication in The Cryosphere.

signed:

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