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To whom it may concern:

Thank you for opening this topic up for public comment. The use of the lands in the Chugach is something that Alaskans hold near and dear to their heart.

To me personally, recreation in the Chugach is one of the biggest benefits to living in Alaska. This forest is truly one of our nations greatest gems. As such, it is imperative that this resource be available to a variety of user groups. Respectful and sustainable recreation should be a priority to the administrators.

I have read comments from proponents of limiting the access to these resources to snowmachine use. Many of these groups and individuals are not even located in Alaska. The arguments for the decrease in access for snowmachine use are contradictory, and highly subjective. These are ideals, that are being pushed by groups with interest in their own personal agendas.

For me the issue is simple. As long as the snowmachine user group has an equal or less significant impact on the resource than any other user group, then the snowmachine user group needs to have the same access opportunities as any other user group. The fact is that there is no sustainable, reliable data to show the impact of snowmachines being more significant than other recreational users. Special Interest groups, such as the Winter Wildlands Alliance (from their office in Bozeman, MT) would say that because there is no significant data yet to solidify their position, then the administrators have a duty to error on the side of caution. I would whole-heartedly disagree with that sentiment. To the contrary, the fact that users with snowmachines have been accessing the CNF for 30+ years now, and we DO NOT have significant data to show the damage to the resource being any more significant than any other group validates the argument that these machines deserve to have the same access opportunities as all other groups.

In closing, I would like to say that snowmachines have made it possible for me personally to enjoy some of the best days of my life in the CNF. I am not alone in these experiences. At the end of the day, the snowmachine user group wants the same thing as all other user groups. To enjoy the amazing resource that we are blessed to have in our back yard. We want to protect the resource just as much as any other user group, and are committed to minimizing our impact. Please consider a plan that continues to provide and improve access for a large demographic of forest users. The support showed for this group of users by your department will be reciprocated for generations to come.