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First name: Josh

Last name: Payne

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: 15920 Sunset Bend Cir

Address2:

City: Anchorage

State:

Province/Region: United States

Zip/Postal Code: 99516

Country: United States

Email: joshpayne907@gmail.com

Phone: 8056371574

Comments:

RE: Chugach Forest Plan Revision #40816

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you today as a lifelong Alaskan who grew up with the Chugach National Forest in my backyard. Motorized recreation in the Chugach has been a major part of my life for the last 15 years. In fact, Turnagain Pass was the first place I have ever ridden snowmobile. From that day forward it opened a lifelong appreciation for not only the sport, but for the natural beauty that can be accessed and enjoyed through use of a snowmobile especially in the Chugach.

The Chugach has been successfully managed as a shared use area for many years. I understand that shared access and usage must be addressed in Forest Plan revisions. My desire is that the discussion be civil and respectful of individual user access requirements. The discussion should address opening up more areas of the Chugach to the large representation of motorized users rather than trying to eliminate this user group from the area. Most importantly, the Alaskan user community's regard for management and use of the area should weigh heavily in the final decisions as we use this area for year round recreation.

I am a firm believer in preserving our natural resources for generations to come, especially in light of the dramatic events of climate change that we have seen in the Chugach over the last few years. The way to go about preserving this resource is to provide and expand access for ALL user groups. You can only appreciate and gain respect for the world around you by experiencing it through your own eyes. Allow people to experience the natural beauty of the Chugach by whatever mode they choose and, in turn you will grow a community of people who care for the Chugach as much as the rest of us. Snowmobile use has shown no adverse effects on the environment of the Chugach and thus access should be at the very least maintained, if not expanded. Neglect and disrespect is not associated with any single user group. Both sides have a few bad apples; this is just a fact of life.

I urge you to listen to the voice of the Alaskan motorized community and continue to support and grow motorized use in all areas of the Chugach. This is a group of people with a deep love for the beauty of our state and the exceptional life enrichment that riding a snowmobile in the Chugach provides. I have spent some of my most memorable days riding in approved areas of the forest, and wish to share the love of this activity and the beauty the Chugach has to offer with my wife and future kids.

Sincerely,

Josh Payne