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Comments:

I urge you to keep your longstanding promise to protect the wild character of the Nellie Juan-College Fiord WSA and not implement the proposed changes that would loosen protection. The entire Wilderness Study Area needs to be protected until Congress finalizes its preservation. This means maintaining and clarifying rules on all land-based motorized uses-including chainsaw use-and preserving the area's current undeveloped and non-motorized character.

The 1.9 million eligible acres of the WSA and surrounding roadless lands that are eligible for wilderness designation should be wilderness. Please do not abandon protection for the nearly 600,000 acres you propose to eliminate from the WSA.

And please reverse the terrible recommendation to split the Wilderness Study Area into two smaller units. This would dramatically shrink the area by permanently stripping long-established protections for Knight Island, Columbia Glacier, Perry Island, Glacier Island, Culross Island, Esther Island, Port Wells, mainland Knight Island Passage, and Lake Nellie Juan.

Additionally, recreational snowmobile use in the WSA should be prohibited. Snowmobile use has exploded in the WSA in recent years. Snow machines for subsistence and traditional uses may be allowed, but recreational snowmobile use is not, as it greatly deteriorates the wilderness quality of the land, and negatively impacts wildlife.

Management of the WSA should follow the Forest Service's Regional Office WSA direction, since ANILCA contains no substantive guidance on WSA protection.

Thank you for your consideration.