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Comments:

Dear Ms. Rasmussen,

Please consider my comments on the Chugach National Forest's proposed revision of its management plan.

First, I would like to see the Forest forward recommendations for full wilderness designation for its current Wilderness Study Area. Rather than continuing to study wilderness designation, you should instead make it happen. It appears from your detailed and beautifully formatted reports that you have both the data and the time to get that done promptly. Drop no areas from the WSA.

Secondly, expand the current WSA to include many of the roadless portions of the Forest. Yes, that may mean curtailing motorized winter recreation. Helicopters and snowmachines have plenty of other nearby sites to occupy. Add parts of Columbia Bay and larger islands in Prince William Sound as wilderness designation candidates, as well as the choicest areas between Nellie Juan and the Seward Highway and then recommend them for designation. Yes, you will have to minimize mining expansion in the Forest. In brief, plan to reduce machine-based uses in the Forest as a means to preserve long-term and increasingly valuable wilderness features. Don't tout Chugach Forest as an "economic engine."

Thirdly, thanks for your effort to decommission at least one unsustainable facility annually. Great step and in the right direction.

Thank you,

Mike Bronson  
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