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Title:

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Comments:

Chugach NF,

My name is Mark Wishall. I have been a resident of Alaska for the last 5 years, and have been utilizing the Chugach NF for the entirety of those 5 years, during all seasons for fishing, hiking, camping, gold mining and snowmachining. I recreate in many areas in the Forest, from Snow River, Lost Lake, Carter Lake, Fuller Lakes, Russian River area, Turnagain Pass, Placer River, Skookum Glacier, Whittier, Anchorage area, and Valdez.

I am strongly opposed to any measure that would further restrict motorized access to the National Forest and therefore would like to see Option A or B implemented. Restricting motorized access would have a wide ranging impact across the state, both on the users of the Forest, the local economy, as well as the Forest Service itself.

While the Forest has a wide range and number of users, the motorized portion of this group has by far the greatest impact on the well-being of the park and the Alaskan economy. Our snowmachine registration dollars go towards snowmachine related projects, directly going into the state budget, and further trickling down to the Park. Motorized users frequently organize cleanups and improvements to our riding areas, such as the Whittier trail improvement and Turnagain Pass cleanup. Economy-wise, we spend thousands of dollars per person at local businesses in town, lodging in towns in the forest, and restaurants in the area. Any reduction in motorized use would have a large impact on many businesses and families that rely on our dollars to keep them thriving.

The Chugach National Forest has been the center of my Alaskan experience. I am fully in support of preserving what we have, while still allowing our population access to the wild areas of the park. I have been a user of this Park for 5 years, and have every intention of using it for the rest of my life. I want my future kids and their kids after that to continue to be able to experience the wide range of activities it has to offer, and that is why I implore the board to select option A or B.