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Comments:

In the interest of protecting public lands for the ecological services they provide as well as for their intrinsic value as part of our national natural heritage, please accept my comments regarding the management plan for the Chugach Forest.

The Forest Service's has put forth a weak proposal to protect just the "existing character." This designation will not stand up to scrutiny. The Plan must protect the "wilderness character" of the WSA. The Plan must also protect the wilderness character of the lands in the WSA by classifying all of them with the Forest Service's standard of "Primitive". The most protective standard in the agency's recreational classification system is required for the management plan for the Chugach National Forest.

It is imperative to restore strong protection to the lands within the WSA that the federal government purchased following the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill. As promised when they were purchased, these lands were acquired for the restoration of wilderness values and they must be managed "in perpetuity for conservation and wilderness purposes."

The Chugach NF management plan must address the illegal "recreational" use of chainsaws in the WSA, which has resulted in tree removal that negatively impacts resource stability and aesthetics along dozens of wilderness beaches and other sensitive areas.

Alternative D recommends the maximum amount of land for Wilderness of any of the Alternatives (1.884 million acres). I support a modified Alternative D wilderness recommendation that includes Lake Nellie Juan and the lands within the WSA boundary that were purchased for restoration of wilderness resources following the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Thank you for considering my wishes for this irreplaceable natural resource.