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TO: USDA Forest Service, Ms. Denise Downie, and Mr. David Fitz-Enz

RE: Chugach Forest Plan Revision #40816

The health of our planet depends on the health of its wilderness areas, on land and sea. Human use has resulted in the loss of wilderness areas on a vast scale, which means that protecting existing wilderness is increasingly critical. I urge you to take special care in ensuring that the protection of the WSA in question remains strong and meaningful.

1. The Plan must protect the "wilderness character" of the WSA, not the weak "existing character", in order to truly maintain the area as a wilderness. The Forest Service's most protective standard in its recreational classification system ("Primitive") is required to adequately protect it.
2. Strong protection must be restored to the lands within the WSA that the federal government purchased following the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill. These lands were purchased explicitly for the restoration and maintenance of wilderness values "in perpetuity". This protection must not be weakened.
3. The Chugach National Forest must address the ongoing illegal and destructive recreational use of chainsaws in the WSA, which has resulted in damage to dozens of wilderness beaches, including in sensitive areas.
4. Modification of Alternative D is needed, to include Lake Nellie Juan and the lands within the WSA boundary that were purchased for restoration of wilderness resources following the oil spill.