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Comments:

Please consider my comments. Thank you.

As an Oregonian, I do not visit the Chugach National Forest often. However, as one of the "National" forests, it belongs to all Americans, is there for all of our present and future citizens' use and enjoyment, and represents a national treasure. It should not--and must not--be there for the primary benefit to a small number of select businesses and/or individuals. As such, these are some of my comments and concerns for the Forest Service's Draft Land and Resource Management Plan for the Chugach National Forest:

(1) Any Management Plan must protect the "wilderness character" of any and all Wilderness Study Areas within the Chugach National Forest area. From my (limited) knowledge of the Forest Service, it does not appear that the Forest Service's proposal to protect its "existing character" is anywhere strong enough to prevent major degradation over time. I therefore think the Plan must protect the "wilderness character" of within the Wilderness Study Area by classifying them using the higher "Primitive" standard of the recreational classification system. "Wilderness" areas exist primarily for (non-extractive) recreational use by all our present and future citizens; this would seem to be the correct designation.

(2) Regarding the first point, the Forest Service's Plan for the Chugach National Forest needs to address past and often continuing illegal activity, such as "recreational" motorized equipment and chainsaw use and its subsequent tree removal and other very negative effects throughout the Wilderness Study Area, beaches, and other sensitive areas. Likewise for "off road" roads and trails.

(3) As to the "Alternatives" I have reviewed, which may not be all of them, "Alternative D" appears to recommend the most land for "Wilderness" designation. Whether or not nearly 1.9 million acres of the Wilderness Study Area is the right amount or not, I would need to study it further. However, I certainly support expanding "Alternative D" to include both Lake Nellie Juan and the lands purchased for restoration of wilderness resources after the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Those purchased areas need to be restored and allowed to recuperate for generations without any negative human interference; that is, those lands should be managed "in perpetuity for conservation and wilderness purposes," as promised when they were purchased.

Thank you again,

James H Fenner, PhD, PE

Colonel, USAF (Ret)

"Avid user of our nation's recreational lands."