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Comments:

The Forest Plan must protect the "wilderness character" of the Wilderness Study Area, not the Forest Service's weak proposal to protect just its "existing character." Furthermore, the Plan must protect the wilderness character of the lands in the Wilderness Study Area by classifying all of them with the Forest Service's "Primitive" standard, which is the most protective standard in the agency's recreational classification system.

Please restore strong protection to the lands within the Wilderness Study Area that the federal government purchased following the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill. These lands were acquired for the restoration of wilderness values and must be managed "in perpetuity for conservation and wilderness purposes," as promised when they were purchased.

The Chugach National Forest must address ongoing illegal recreational use of chainsaws in the Wilderness Study Area, which has resulted in damaging tree removal along dozens of wilderness beaches, including in sensitive areas.

Alternative D recommends the maximum amount of land for Wilderness of any of the Alternatives (97 percent of the Wilderness Study Area, or 1.884 million acres). I support a modified Alternative D wilderness recommendation that also includes Lake Nellie Juan and the lands within the Wilderness Study Area boundary that were purchased for restoration of wilderness resources following the oil spill.

Thank you.