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First name: Joe

Last name: Engel

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: 2530 Cleo Ave

Address2:

City: Anchorage

State: AK

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code: 99516

Country: United States

Email: jpengel01@gmail.com

Phone: 8052356265

Comments:

Hello, My name is Joseph Engel and I am a lifelong Alaskan, living in Anchorage, and I frequent the Chugach National Forest (CNF) year round for a variety of activities. Thank you for taking the time to read my comment on the forest plan revision.

I am in favor of Plan/Option/Alternative B. I am also in favor of increased land with recreational opportunity spectrum class of Semi-primitive Non Motorized (with winter motorized allowed) and increased motorized access corridors. I oppose the expansion or addition of wilderness/wildlife and primitive classified lands.

As I mentioned earlier, I recreate in the CNF year round. In the summer, I mountain bike on the Johnson Pass, Devils Pass, Rabbit Lake and Lost Lake Trails. In the winter I backcountry ski in Turnagain Pass and Summit Lake areas, I ride my snowmachine in Turnagain Pass, Johnson Pass, Skookum Glacier, Placer River, Lost Lake, Nellie Juan Lake (Snow River Corridor), Whittier, and more and more frequently, I combine my both activities and use my snowmobile to access further into the CNF to backcountry ski. The sheer amount of terrain and the recreational opportunities available in the CNF make it one of the best places to recreate in the world, and I have countless memories.

In the summer, I eagerly await the Lost lake trail to dry from the prior winters snowfall and be ready for bicycles, it is one of my favorites trails. Climbing from the firehouse, traversing in between the lakes, where I am always blown away by the views and the color spectrum of the scenery, followed by the technical descent of the primrose side, all to turn around and do it again the opposite direction is incredible. A speechless experience. In the winter, the terrain and views at Lost Lake are equally impressive on a snowmachine. One of my favorite winter memories recently was skiing underneath and around Carpathian and the mountains above the Skookum Glacier, accessed via snowmachine. Each year, I look forward to recreating in and experiencing the CNF, both old areas and exploring new ones.

To have access to this terrain of the CNF so close to home is one the most amazing opportunities, and by definition is Alaskan. It truly is the best backyard possible. It is this opportunity that should be preserved and shared with anyone who may visit and for generations of Alaskans to come.

Modern snowmachines are more efficient, quieter, have cleaner burning engines, and can travel farther while also leaving less of an impact. Motorized corridors, like that for Nellie Juan lake, allow the vastness of the CNF can be appreciated and explored while also minimizing the footprint on the forest.

With the increase in numbers of both snowmachiners and backcountry skiers and snowboarders, it becomes a safety risk with more people recreating in the same terrain, specifically regarding avalanches and terrain management. These risks can be offset by increasing the acreage that motorized users can recreate in, and will also spread out motor-assisted skiers and snowboarders. Spreading out a user group will also help retain the natural experience we all crave with recreating in the CNF (this also applies to hiking and biking in the summer, and I am in favor of more trails in the CNF, which can be combined with winter motorized corridors).

Responsible regulated access to our national forest, that promotes recreation and the creation of memories, is the best way for the owners of the land, the American People, to appreciate the beauty and vastness that is the Chugach National Forest and continue to fight for its protection.

Thank you again.

Joe Engel