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Comments:

I am writing about the Forest Service's Draft Land and Resource Management Plan for the Chugach National Forest (NF) in Alaska.

The Plan must protect the "wilderness character" of the WSA; it is not enough simply to state that a plan would protect its "existing character" as the Forest Service's proposal says.

I want the wilderness character of the lands in the WSA protected 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.

The federal government purchased lands within the WSA 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. Strong protections of these lands must be restored in the Plan.

There are ongoing issues concerning illegal recreational use of chainsaws in the WSA, which has resulted in damaging tree removal along dozens of wilderness beaches, including in sensitive areas. The Chugach NF must address this properly.

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