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Comments:

October 31, 2018

Chugach National Forest Management Plan Revision Team:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Chugach National Forest Plan. In my 42 years of residence in Cordova, I believe I've participated and/or commented on prior plans for management of this rich and relatively diverse National Forest. As my "backyard," this Forest is extremely important, both for its recreational and wilderness qualities, and also for the lucrative fishery resources it provides to me and my neighbors.

I support a management plan that recognizes the critical importance of maintaining fish and wildlife resources which are so dependent on keeping it as wild as possible.

I urge these revisions of the Plan:

1. Put the word "wilderness" back in the Plan language as it was in the 1984 and 2002 forest plans. This proposed Plan changes "maintain presently existing wilderness character" to "maintain presently existing character." Omitting the word "wilderness" creates confusion and undermines management of the Wilderness Study Area (WSA). Restore the 1984 and 2002 forest plan language to maintain the "wilderness character" of the WSA.
2. Restore to the Forest Monitoring Program the monitoring of conditions in the WSA. Monitoring specific to the WSA is necessary to inform the USFS of how best to manage this area for wilderness characteristics, ensuring that these wilderness characteristics are adequately maintained. I have witnessed a dramatic increase in use of Forest lands and visitors to the Sound. The WSA should be managed as wilderness and monitoring is crucial to doing that.
3. Add a Forest Order to clearly limit use of chainsaws except for subsistence purposes. Chainsaw vandalism is destroying scenic beaches and camping areas. It's unnecessary and a travesty to a place so many of us wish to enjoy.
4. Include within the WSA the Chenega EVOS-acquired lands around Jackpot Bay, Paddy Bay, Hogan Bay, and Junction Island. Restore these lands to the MA1 designation. These lands were acquired to help restore the Sound after the 1989 oil spill disaster, and wilderness is still listed as an injured resource. Protecting these lands also is required by the 1997 purchase agreements of these lands.
5. Choose Alternative D Wilderness Recommendation, with the addition of the Nellie Juan Lake area-one of the most wild and remote places in the Chugach Forest-and USFS land on Elrington Island, and the EVOS-acquired lands around Jackpot Bay, Paddy Bay, Hogan Bay, and Junction Island. This alternative, with these additions, will uphold the EVOS purchase agreements and best supports a healthy, vibrant ecosystem and the human interests of this area.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

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