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Comments:

RE: USFS Draft Land and Resource Management Plan for the Church National Forest, in Alaska:

Thank you for allowing me to comment on the Draft Plan. I strongly urge you to make the following changes to the proposed Forest Plan:

1) The Plan must protect and restore the "wilderness character" of the WSA, not the Forest Service's weak proposal to protect just its "existing character." The Plan also must protect the wilderness character of the lands in the WSA 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.

2) The Plan must restore strong protection to the lands within the WSA 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.

3) The Church National Forest must address ongoing illegal recreational use of chainsaws in the WSA, which has resulted in damaging tree removal along dozens of wilderness beaches, including in sensitive areas.

4) The Plan's 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 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Thank you.

William Young
Bellingham, WA