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Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Revision of the Land Management Plan for the Chugach National Forest. I was born and raised in interior Alaska. My family relocated to Alaska in the '60s. We couldn't imagine living anywhere else with what this great state has to offer. I grew up in Alaska pursuing hunting, fishing, and recreational activities including hiking and boating. The revision of this plan is important to Alaskans. Of the options proposed by the Forest Service, I support Option B but with modifications. Option B best addresses diverse land use interests by Alaskan residents including access for motorized vehicles such as snowmachines, in addition to other winter activities requiring access. Access to NellieJuan Trail and Mills Creek should be continued as these are primary long-term use areas by Alaska residents. The terrain is only accessible by snowmachine use. Limiting access and recreation opportunities via wilderness designations would make it difficult to access by foot, skis, or winter biking.

Wilderness designations greatly impact opportunities for land use by all user groups. Winter recreation does not cause additional damages to lands. In fact, advanced technology in the last several years has resulted in snowmachines that are lighter, quieter, and are fuel efficient. Snowmachines are some of the least impactful on the Chugach as the snow cover protects the surface of use areas, and snowmachiners are held to a certain snow depth coverage requirement before pursuing motorized use.

Limiting motorized uses, especially snowmachines, does not provide additional benefits to the Chugach. It effectively reduces necessary access to other areas and damages long-term traditions of use for Alaskans. Access to areas such as Skookum, Placer River, Squirrel Flats, Spencer Glacier and Grandview should be continued. Additional trail management would mitigate concerns of motorized use impacts such as improving the Lost Lake Trail - this would provide additional safety and increased participation, education, and support of the Chugach National Forest. Limiting motorized uses would also impact emergency rescue services negatively impacting public safety.

Sixty percent of Alaska, or 222 million acres, are designated as public lands. There are millions of acres designated as wilderness. With more than half of the state designated as public lands, many are very inaccessible to most Alaskans - it is very important that equal opportunities for public use are maintained in a place like the Chugach that has a dedicated and diverse user group.

Recreational, motorized users are some of the biggest supporters and advocates of the Chugach Forest. Options C and D would negatively impact public safety, access, and diverse current public use - I do not support Options C and D.

Josh Bollaert