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Comments:

When my husband and I arrived at Eshamy Bay in Prince William Sound to run the salmon weir for the summer of 1957, it appeared to us as the most beautiful place on earth. We loved the wilderness and after an amazing summer, vowed to return to Alaska as soon as he had finished graduate school. We did, in 1961 and found our way back to Eshamy in 1962 where we were once again enchanted by the wilderness and beauty of the Sound. Since then, as a 56 year Alaskan resident I have returned to various parts of the Sound numerous times, most recently 2015 when I found Eshamy Bay and Lagoon almost just as we left it in the 60's, blueberries as delicious and the stump of a fallen tree into Eshamy Creek just above the weir still visible from 1957.

It was very gratifying to find the area still wild and beautiful, despite having endured the Exxon Valdez oil spill. I live in Homer now and see how Kachemak Bay and surrounding park has changed in the last 4+ decades. It is obvious that without wilderness protection, the bay and surrounding park shows deterioration brought about by human activities. Thus it is essential that "Wilderness Character" designation be maintained for the Nellie Juan-College Fiord Wilderness Study Area (WSA).area lest it also lose the very special pristine nature it still has.

Various entities have gathered a great deal of data about marine, estuarine and terrestrial features of Kachemak Bay and surrounding areas. It is very important that monitoring of air quality, tourism and recreation impacts, numbers of visitors and other criteria be continued in the Nellie Juan-College Fiord Wilderness Study Area. In Kachemak Bay, pH and water temperatures are monitored, perhaps efforts should be made to add these criteria to monitoring. It was very important after the Exxon Valdez to gather data and that effort should be continued to study long term effects.

I strongly favor the proposed adoption of a Wilderness Study Area stewardship plan as a means of protecting and repairing campsites, chain saw damage and more. I hope that the changes proposed by the Chugach National Forest managers will secure a positive future for the salmon runs, wildlife and informed and careful human use of the area protecting its irreplaceable values.