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Comments:

Chugach National Forest's Supervisor's Office

Attn: Draft Land Management Plan

161 East 1st Street, Door 8

Anchorage, AK 99501

November 1, 2018

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am a landowner, kayaker, sailor, hiker, skier and frequent visitor to a great part of Prince William Sound and, by extension, to the Chugach National Forest. I have lived and recreated in the area extensively since my first trip to the Sound in 1991. My personal and extensive experience with the area's outstanding scenic, wildlife, wilderness, and recreational values makes me especially appreciative of the opportunity to comment on the current management plan revision.

The adventures, solitude, peace and wildlife encounters I have enjoyed through spending so much time in the area makes me consider seriously the stewardship responsibility we all have to protect the outstanding natural qualities of Prince William Sound. As wilderness becomes increasingly rare on our planet, land managers like yourselves become the first line of defense against deterioration, degradation and destruction of such precious and untouched lands, I hope that you see how important your own, personal actions become in the larger scheme of things as you seek to protect the qualities and values inherent in wilderness for future generations.

I myself have been lucky enough to observe the Sound closely over the past three decades and I have seen clear increases in use by commercial, Native and individual interests. I have seen the impacts of these, as well as climate change-related events, from a front-row seat: the reductions in bear sightings and slowed salmon returns on the creeks of Jack Bay, the melting of the Columbia Glacier, the increase in vacation homes with related trash and traffic near Tatitlek, the logging of Port Fidalgo, the exploration for granite in Port Gravina, greater numbers of commercial tour and sight-seeing boats, more heli-skiing, far more snow machine use, fewer marine mammals and birds, and a massive die-off of murre. These, among other signs, tell me that, if not closely watched and jealously guarded, the Sound may be in for much more trouble in the near future.

To this end, I strongly urge that CNF staff use the current planning process to articulate a strong conservation-priority that will contravene increasing pressures from commercial interests in, especially, logging and mining. In view of the acknowledged importance of vast stretches of forest to slowing the impacts of climate change, (not to mention the accelerated impacts of climate change already occurring in Alaska!) CNF should take all available opportunities to protect the forest from logging.

In my view, mining (such as the granite mine underway in Port Gravina) is far too costly a practice in view of the long term harm to scenic values and salmon versus the short term benefit to be gained by a few individuals. These relative benefits to large versus small numbers of individuals (not to mention animals, birds and fish!) must be carefully weighed if the outstanding natural values of PWS are to be protected not for just the upcoming decade or two but in perpetuity.

As regards motorized use in particular, I request that the entire Jack Bay watershed including Solomon Gulch from Valdez be placed off limited to motorized use in favor of non-motorized use by skiers, snowshoers and climbers. Such an action would also benefit sensitive wildlife species such as mountain goats. Signage in the area would also help make non-motorized designation clearer to users.

In my view, it would be well to hold current consumptive and commercial uses at current or reduced levels in situations where deterioration is apparent (examples include hunting guides, kayak touring and camping, mineral exploration, heli skiing, etc.). That said, traditional, customary, non-motorized, low-impact uses should, likewise, be encouraged.

In short, CNF should conceive "multiple use" as "multiple sustainable use," because otherwise, deterioration of the forest's natural qualities and wilderness character will be the inevitable outcome.

Thank you for considering my thoughts on this important planning process.

Sincerely,  
Linda Brown  
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Fairbanks, AK 99709