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Comments:

comment

Thank you to all the FS staff that attended the meetings in the communities bordering and adjacent to the Chugach NF. I appreciate the efforts to get the word out to as many interested and vested parties in the future of our "backyard."

Although the maps provided at the meeting were good in a general sense, they really needed to be on a larger scale to in order to see exact areas where borders of different uses meet. Also a clear definition of the use areas would also be helpful. Such as what is the difference between primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized, I did not hear that defined at the meeting and have not been able to find definitions on the website either.

In general I agree with the use designations in Plan C. I most strongly support designating the area east of Seward from motorized to primitive. This is mostly in opposition to helicopters landing in that area any time of the year. Seward already has plenty of helicopter traffic between the dog sled operation on Godwin glacier and adventure based tourism in Bear Glacier. There are many homes that border or are adjacent to this eastern portion of the NF that would be greatly affected by increased helicopter traffic. Keeping the area non-motorized all year would be a great step forward for the FS to increase sustainability and protect the natural soundscape.

As far as wilderness designation it is hard to parse out the difference between Plan C and D, but I support whichever plan recommends the most amount of acreage to be designated as wilderness (should congress ever get around to making it so). Protecting as much of Prince William Sound as possible should be a high priority as what is not protected now is rapidly getting over run.

In all honesty, when the FS asked for comments in 2015 I thought they were just asking for comments about wilderness areas. Had I known it was for comments about the plan in general I would have definitely chimed in about winter use areas. I am not happy and have not been happy since the winter plan revisions were decided. I spent a lot of time involved in meetings about that process and do not think the outcome reflected or represented all parties that were involved. I strongly encourage the FS to re-visit the winter access plan especially in light of changing winters. Motorized use in some areas may no longer be appropriate due to low snow and increased resource damage. I would love to see one end (preferably the S end) of the Lost Lake trail closed to snow machines. They would still have access at Primrose and Snug Harbor which now typically have more reliable snow cover than the S end.

Thank you for your time.

Michelle Keagle

Seward resident since 2002