

10/30/2018

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter in response to your request for comments on the revised management plan for the Chugach National Forest. I am a third generation born and raised Alaskan, here is quick back ground on my history with the Chugach National Forest. My Great-grandfather came into the Valdez to look for gold in during the 1898 gold rush, and ended up settling in Cordova, where my grandmother was born in the early 1920s. My Grandparents stayed in Cordova in the early years and eventually lived in Whittier for a period of time as well. In fact, my Grandma was the was first registered woman to vote in Whittier. My family has been living, working, fishing, hunting and recreating in the Chugach National Forest for more than 100 years, so to say that Forrest is my blood is an understatement.

Fast forward 70 years or so and you will my family enjoying the awesomeness of the Chugach Forrest through out all seasons of the year. Some of my earliest memories are hiking and mountain biking up Resurrection Trail with Dad and friends to cabins in Cooper Landing. Some of my earliest adventures on skis are from sitting in the toboggan being pulled by Dad in Turnagain Pass before there was even a pull out, just a few cars pulled off to the side of the road enjoying early season snow. There are countless memories of hunting and fishing in the 20 Mile delta, floating the Kenai, and summers spent sailing and boating in Prince William Sound are the things that most people can only dream of. The last fifteen years or so has seen my recreating interests change as technology has changed. Although I have been riding snowmachines my entire life, I first started riding in the Turnagain, Lost Lake, Placer regions starting around 2000. The use of snowmachines has greatly expanded the areas that I have been able to explore from previous years in the winter months. The same can be said for the use of Fat Tire bikes. This access to the Forrest has helped me grow into the person I am today.

So, as you can tell, I have had the benefit of accessing the Forrest for many years, but I DO NOT support the new preferred Alternative C or Alternative D. I believe it is way to restive to motorized use and limits access to the Forrest in general. I don't like limiting access to any one user to public lands in general. I, understand the need to protect critical habit in special areas, but locking out millions of acres especially to one user group is not why Forrest was created. I have first-hand witnessed the effects of this exact mind set in other areas in Alaska where motorized use has been banned for almost all uses. This ostracized the government agencies from the locals which caused a hostile relationship which today some thirty plus years later is still very sensitive.

As a pilot, I also have major concerns about designating larges areas as Wilderness. Limiting access to Juneau, Trout, Johnson, Crescent lake cabins to name a few as fly in destination would be very unfortunate. I have flown supplies to friends that were hiking or biking Resurrection Trail multiple times. Not being able to help others have these experiences would be tragic. Once an area gets designation, it usually gets a limit of 1,500 AGL. This means that as pilot you are must fly 1,500 above ground level. If the areas proposed receive this designation, the Forrest Service will have severely limited the ability of aircraft access to the Prince William Sound area. There are over 15 different routes though the mountains to Prince William Sound. Most of the passes range from 3,000 feet to 6,000 feet plus. Most of the year as you know we do not have clear and sunny skies. In fact, many of the days here in South Central we have cloud layers that are 4-6000 feet level, but are still flyable. But with the 1,500' AGL

requirements these passes will not be legal to fly. This will not only affect General Aviation Pilots but will limit the Air Services that provided access to Chugach Forrest area and beyond.

I personally support Alternative B. This limits the restrictions on all users and promotes the most access to the Forrest in general. I would like to see the idea of motorized corridors to allow access to other areas that are not readily accessible by non-motorized users.

I have personally seen that both motorized users and non-motorized users can co-exist. Prime example is Placer River area, all types of users enjoy this area at the same time. I have personal given rides on my sled to exhausted skiers from crust snow becoming too soft ski back to the parking lot. I have used the trails established from snowmachines on my fat fire bike to areas that I would not have been able to get to with out those set trails.

In my personal opinion, the Forrest Service has been doing good job under the 2002 plan in managing the motorized and non-motorized users to date. The promotion of the Avalanche Information Center has been an invaluable tool in accessing the backcountry safely. I appreciate their outreach and inclusion to the motorized users, as I know it has helped safe many from having to experience a tragic event.

I would like to thank you for making the public response period available and allowing all users the opportunity to show and explain our believes on the use of the Chugach National Forrest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Swalling". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" being more prominent.

Paul Swalling
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