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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern in regards to: Chugach Forest Plan Revision #40816,

I'm writing today to voice my concern about the Chugach Forest Plan Revision #40816. I've been recreating (motorized and non-motorized) in Chugach National Forest since 1998 (approx. 18 years). I was fortunate enough to have parents that made it a point to ensure I had an understanding and appreciation for the great outdoors, this is something I hope to pass onto my kids, whether they choose to use motors or not - they shouldn't be restricted as the back country as it can be shared by everyone.

The rules regarding motorized access in the Chugach have previously been pretty fair. One of the major issues that is unfair is Skookum / Placer River Drainage closing to motorized users in April. Due to the changing climate that area is rarely open as it is. When there is sufficient snow to protect the underlying vegetation it is unfair that the area is closed down to motorized users starting in April. I have been lucky enough to fly the area and drive past it numerous times after it closes and noticed that while the entire motorized community is closed out, very few non-motorized users are out enjoying the area. I'm sure dozens will come forth and say this isn't true, but regardless, it isn't fair. Motorized and non-motorized users need to share the back country when the snow is sufficient to protect the land. This area in question doesn't have a "corridor" that people use a trail. It is a wide open valley with a million different ways in and out - therefore trail conflict is non-existent. Please consider opening this area beyond the current regulation so all Alaskans can access the back country - whether motorized or non-motorized.

Although I wish we could access the non-motorized areas with sleds, I believe using the physical divide of the highway as the boundary of motorized / non-motorized is probably the best practice keeping everyone on their respective side and happy (and very straight forward / non-confusing). Please don't close any areas to any back country recreation or change the usage plan beyond what is absolutely necessary.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Travis Smith