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First name: Garrett

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear the Chugach Plan Revision Team,

My name is Garrett Paul and I am an avid user of the Chugach National Forrest (Chugach). It is a great place to adventure, to spend time, to enjoy the earth's natural beauty, to responsibly harvest seafood and game, to experience life, and most importantly, to share and preserve.

I access the Chugach in many different ways. During warmer months I Hike, Bike, Boat, Paddle, or Drive, while in the winter months I hike, snowshoe, ski, snowmachine, boat, or drive. I recreate in a plethora of places in the Chugach, including: Prince William Sound, Carter Lake, Lost Lake, Turnagain Pass, Johnson Pass, Summit Lake and Whittier.

The four main concerns I have regarding the Plan Revision are 1) Snowmachine Access 2) Boating Access through/to forest lands and waterways 3) Elimination of Current Access Points 4) New Restrictions.

I hear the argument that upgrades in snowmachine and boat technology are making it more difficult for non-motorized users to enjoy the forest. I don't see this a valid argument. While technology upgrades are an obvious aid to motorized recreation, they also provide benefits to the forest and non-motorized groups; Motorized users are able to make it further from the public facilities (harbors, roads, trailheads, etc.), in a more efficient manner, and in general terms, beyond the traversable range of non-motorized users. I believe these benefits should be realized by all of us.

I feel that snowmachiners and boaters are getting a bad wrap in the Chugach, but for what? For accessing a national forest intended for use by all user groups? Responsibly accessing locations that are open to such activity? Having respect for the resource and only using it when conditions permit? Again, why is the motorized group the target for more restrictions?

Little by little it seems that motorized areas are being closed. In my eyes, these are irresponsible closures. I ask the Chugach Revision Team to respect the motorized areas we currently have. If anything, I propose that new access corridors be implemented to get motorized groups away from public facilities and further into the backcountry where there is less potential for a clash of different user groups. Imposing more restrictions on motorized use will have detrimental effects to the local, state and national economies. In that sense, it should be realized that the motorized industry is a huge boost to all of these economies.

Winter recreation areas are undoubtedly being affected by new climate trends. The climate change is affecting how we use this resource and people are traveling further to enjoy the snow. Some places that are open in normal Alaskan winters haven't been open in years. Winter recreation is, in my opinion, the least damaging form of recreation, in that a snow barrier exists between native vegetation and overland travel methods. All methods of Chugach winter use should be promoted and encouraged.

Closing the Nellii Juan-College Fjord to winter use is a mistake; this area is not frequented in the wintertime by any other user. I find it hard to believe that snowmachiners in this area are having an overall detrimental effect to its wilderness characteristics. Is there evidence of winter recreation impacts? Another concern is the summertime effect on boaters navigating through this area. Is a boat going by really that large of an impact to the area's solitude? These are navigable waters; they should be treated as such for all users.

I am an avid user of the Chugach National Forrest. I respect its wilderness quality and am concerned that the

voice of motorized naysayers is being heard loud-and-clear, while the voice of motorized users is being ignored. I understand that it is a balance and I'm not here to bash non-motorized users, as I myself am frequently one of them. I respectfully ask that you consider the points I outline above and accommodate the motorized uses that take place in the Chugach.

Thank you,

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