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First name: Doug

Last name: Moore

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Please see my attachments for my comments:

To whom it may concern and Terry Marceron, Forest Supervisor, Chugach National Forest,

In reference to Chugach Forest Plan Revision #40816:

I would like to state my opposition to adopting Alternative C or D of the Chugach National Forest Land Management Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

I am a 43-year resident of south central Alaska. My parents moved me to Anchorage, AK in 1975 when I was five years old. My first experience with Alaska snow was in the fall of 1975 when my parents took me to Turnagain Pass in the Chugach National Forest (CNF). Since that day, I have been a regular user of the lands and waters of the Chugach National forest. When it was my turn to become a father, my children's first camping experiences were to the campgrounds within the CNF. The beauty of the CNF keeps us coming back, even though we have all moved north to Talkeetna.

My first experience snowmachining in the CNF came in 1992. A group of friends at work loaned me a machine and we went to Turnagain Pass. In the late 90's I became a regular riding in the CNF. For several years I logged more miles in the CNF than I did in my own local riding areas. I have continued to ride Lost Lake, Johnson Pass, the 20 Mile River, Spencer Glacier complex, Trail Glacier and the areas above Whittier. My children are old enough that they have started to accompany me on these trips.

It is spelled out in the Draft Land Management Plan that one of the goals is to provide diverse recreational opportunities. When I hear the words "diverse" I think of providing opportunities to all potential users. Snowmachine use provides this in several ways. It allows those with time constraints to cover more terrain and enjoy more of the wild lands because our workloads don't allow us as much time to recreate. It allows those with less physical abilities and those with handicaps to access areas they never dreamed possible. It allows youth the ability to travel and experience the wilderness with their parents to a level non-motorized access does not allow. And it allows new opportunities for skiers and snowboarders to access terrain and get in more runs than they ever have before. Alternative C and D reduce areas already in use by snowmachiners for many years now in the Whittier and Nellie Juan areas. Reducing these areas reduces the diversity of recreational activities.

Also spelled out in the Draft Land Management Plan are three goals; fostering collaborative relationships, contribute to social and economic sustainability, and provide for ecological sustainability.

Fostering collaborative relationships: The Anchorage Snowmobile Club has been working with the CNF for over two decades to work out the conflicts between motorized and non-motorized use. Over the last two years a Facebook group, AK Snow Shredder 2.0, with the backing of several local snowmachine related businesses, has had a volunteer litter cleanup day in Turnagain. Snowmachine users want to work and collaborate with the CNF to find a solution that does not reduce riding areas.

Contribute to social and economic sustainability: In Alaska, the economic impact of snowmobiling in Anchorage and Mat-Su Borough was found to be over \$35 million annually, according to a study conducted by the

Anchorage Economic Development Corp., and released in May 2000. It is now 2018, and it would not be too far fetched that that number has now doubled in 2018. The economic impact of snowmachine use to the towns surrounding the CNF is substantial. On the social side of things, I have met most of my best friends through snowmachining. It is a group sport in the back country for safety reasons and that fosters relationships and social bonds that few other sports promote.

Provide for Ecological Sustainability: Snowmachiners ride the back country for the same reason every other back country recreationalist does, regardless if they are motorized or non-motorized. We do it for the challenge and we do it to see the beauty of nature. Nobody wants to see ecological damage to our resources. Most of us are hunters and fishermen who fill our freezers with the summer bounty the CNF provides. We don't want it polluted or destroyed. Snowmachines have become quieter and less polluting every year. They have longer tracks to spread out our weight and reduce plant damage under the snow pack. We support the CNF's staff in deciding when there is enough snow to cross the terrain with as little damage as possible. Responsible snowmachine use leaves very little, if any, trace in the summer months.

I would like to bring one final thought to the conversation. I would like to see the USFS seek funding to improve trailhead access to many of the current riding areas. There is no denying that at the lower altitude levels, rideable snow has been coming later and later in the year. Often adequate snow levels for snowmachine travel are a mere 500 ft in altitude above current access points. I think it would be beneficial for the USFS, with the focus on protecting the lower level ecology AND promoting diversity in recreation, to consider building trails that could sustain snowmachine traffic in times of low snow levels to access adequate snow at higher elevations. This could be simply a 4' wide fine gravel trail with tree removal alongside of it to allow more snowfall to reach the trail surface. In the summer months this also could greatly improve handicap access into the forest.

Considering the examples, I have laid out, and many other examples my fellow riders have presented in their letters, I would highly encourage the CNF staff to consider implementing Alternative B going forward.

Respectfully,

Doug Moore

HC 89 Box 8574

Talkeetna AK 99676

907-841-3200

doug@moorehardware.com