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It is a pleasure to recommend that the U.S. Forest Service commit to supporting Alternative D for formal designation as Wilderness 97 percent of the Nellie Juan-College Fjord Wilderness Study Area.

My commendation emphasizes the incalculable educational and research value of the area including this proposed Wilderness area. My own experiences span 4 ½ decades of research and teaching based on the ecosystems of greater Prince William Sound. Having retired from an academic career, I can look back with profound gratitude and satisfaction that this remarkable part of the world has existed, thrived and recovered its biological productivity following several forms of disruption. In hopes that it proves useful to the U.S. Forest Service, I have attached the list of a number of my relevant publications, and courses that I have taught for various Alaska institutions. Each of these publications and courses were developed wholly or with major reliance on living and non-living components of Prince William Sound's ecosystem(s). The range of topics covered, and the span of years represented, by these publications and courses speak for themselves.

There must be dozens of my students and colleagues whose careers were at least as greatly enhanced by this region as mine was. If I had more time, I might be able to marshal a representative list of such beneficiaries, but I can hope that they speak for themselves on this recommended action.

Allow me to share one favorite anecdote to illustrate the educational value of the proposed Wilderness area: In May of 1992, while living and teaching in Barrow (Utqiavik) Alaska, I brought a class of undergraduate Natural Sciences students to Cordova, where we were scheduled to fly out by floatplane to embark on Dean Rand's boat for a several-day exposure to eastern Prince William Sound. One of my Iñupiaq students was soon darting around bushes along the shore of Eyak Lake where we waited. I could see that he was mesmerized by the activities of several Rufous Hummingbirds, the likes of which he had never seen on Alaska's North Slope, of course. He saw me smiling at his fascination, and commented, "Wow, they're like bumblebees with a stick shift!" That particular student later made both a hobby and career of being a natural history interpreter for visitors who spent time on the North Slope.

Sincerely,

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