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First name: Mike

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Organization: Alaska Snow-X Lions

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

My name is Michael L. Wirz and I am a life long Alaskan who has had the incredible opportunity to enjoy our states recreational land. To hear that some of the allowed motorized recreational areas could possibly be shut down greatly disturbs me. For the entirety of my life, the Turnagain Pass along with all the other south central zones have been pivotal in my life. As a youngster going on road trips with the family from Kenai to go ride was a great opportunity to be involved in an amazing sport. Not all of Alaska's youth participate in conventional sports such as basketball, hockey, etc. For some, motorized athletics are just as quintessential in learning and growing as a person. I whole heartedly believe the chance to ride these areas gives a certain demographic of youth a chance to focus their energy into something positive rather than hanging out in the streets. Especially for the Anchorage region where one can't simply open the garage and go ride.

As an adult now, I along with many many others enjoy and appreciate the use of these riding areas, and look forward to bringing future generations there.

I can't think of the word "Alaska" and not instinctively think of snow machines. To so many of us, the two are synonymous. Just looking at the history of Alaska, before major infrastructure was feasible, so many villages and towns literally relied (and still do today) on snow machines for transport/livelihood. The Arctic Man contest is one of the most famous and influential races in our state!

According to snowmobile.org (<http://www.snowmobile.org/docs/snowmobiling-fact-book-2013-2014.pdf>)

in 2013 there were 52,400 registered snowmobiles in the state of Alaska. These riders make a huge economical impact in supporting the state. Whether it be contributing to fees, road maintenance for their cabins, etc. Also with record low snow these past few years, I believe the ski/snowboard community need to unite with motorized enthusiasts more than ever to form a coalition to do everything possible to keep our areas open for everyone.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

-Mike Wirz