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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

My name is Brian Meigs and I have lived in Alaska for 20 Years.

I Support option B (no change) to the current CNF access plan.

I have always enjoyed winter in part because I grew up on skis and later learned how to snowboard, however after being limited to one resort after living in Alaska for many years I grew tired of its limitations, so I stopped going and I began to dread the winters. I needed something new so I learned how to Ice climb in the CNF. For a few years I climbed in the Portage area, along the highway, in the Thunderbird falls area, and north to Caribou canyon area when I was in college, however winters were still long and not to be looked forward to.

I had contemplated moving out of the state for a few years due to the long winters. It was not until I bought my first snow machine that I truly began to enjoy the winters again and not want to leave the state. It is amazing the places you can go and the parts of the state that you can get out and enjoy when on a snowmachine. I have flown over many places in the state in small planes and helicopters, but you really appreciate it when you get there under your own power, riding in for hours to get to where you want to be and to enjoy the views.

My first trip out on a snowmobile ever was with my neighbor in 2011 to Portage valley. It was a record snow year in the valley that year and the snow in March was Amazing. The blue bird days, amazing views, glaciers, lakes, and deep snow that day changed my life! The next year my wife and I both had sleds! It changed her opinion on winters as well, and now we look forward to winters and being able to get out and explore the amazing scenery that this state has to offer.

It really makes me appreciate this state when I get out and can ride just about anywhere in the state and not have to worry about being on private land, fenced in land, or restrictions like the rest of the US. I think back to Idaho where so much is fenced off, owned, or restricted, it makes me grateful to be an Alaskan and live the freedoms that the states have lost.

I ride all over the CNF having had great trips from the Cooper landing road all the way over to Seward, Turnagain, Countless days in the Portage valley, skookum glacier. We also ride north in Hatchers, willow, big lake, Talkeeta's, Petersville and north of there.

I hope as my riding skills grow that I have the opportunity to see different parts of the CNF. I hope to have the opportunity as well as future generations, to ride in twenty mile, ride over to Nilleiwan, Whittier, Johnson's, and other areas on the Kenai when the snow years cooperate. (I also fish in Bird creek and the Twenty mile drainage and rock climb along the highway in the CNF)

The CNF is undoubtedly a great place, offering all kinds of opportunities to enjoy different activities and sports. It seems inconceivable to me that anyone would want or has the power to limit or remove anyone from using any of the areas in the CNF. After all, this is a national forest, and the people are the nation, the whole reason the national forest was created and set aside for recreation for the people in the first place. We the people who pay our taxes so that the Forest Service even has a job and a forest to manage. If we can't all use and enjoy the land then what the hell is the point? We might as well log it all and then pave it.

I certainly hope that no one user group is removed from being able to recreate and enjoy the forest. I don't want snow machine restrictions, ATV restrictions, hiking or helicopter restrictions. I support the access Plan B (no changes) to any access of the CNF.

I would also like to point out a couple of the economic and other environmental impact ramifications of limiting or removing motorized use in the CNF.

1. Motorized users, whether heli-ski, Hunting-ATV, boating, or snow machining all contribute to the state's economy through buying vehicles, sporting goods, extra fuel, food, lodging, camping, and even tunnel fees when going over to Whittier. If access is removed it may not affect the overall economy too much but it will certainly cause reductions in those areas whether it be in Cooper landing, Whittier, Moose Pass, Seward, or other similar affected communities where people go to recreate.

2. There is so much land to use that it spreads out the users all over the state giving lots of options to go ride and for different uses. If these riding access areas are reduced, then it will concentrate more riders in fewer areas, causing potential over use or more possible strain on those areas.

Please do NOT change any access to the CNF.

Sincerely,  
Brian Meigs