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Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a motorized user I would like to put forth my opinion that any closing of motorized access is not an option. The Chugach National Forest is where I have grown up, most of that time was spent on a snowmachine. I don't want to see my access to any of these beautiful areas restricted. See my attached document.

To whom it may concern, below are some of my thoughts on the Chugach Forest Plan Revision #40816:

What is a National Forest, and how do they compare to a National Park? The first National Park was created in 1872 by President Ulysses S. Grant, the purpose behind them was to make sure that we as the American people had places that would remain preserved in their natural state forever. National forests by contrast, were created by the 1891 Forest Reserve act. Their main difference is that National Forests have a multiple use mandate. This multiple use mandate is the key aspect that I would like to focus on. National Forests were created at their very core to be used effectively and sustainably by the people of our great country.

Delving further into this topic lets look at why the Forest Service was created. The Forest Service was created to manage these National Forests. What does manage mean in this context? Manage means to direct this use of these lands in an appropriate and sustainable manner. The critical to take from this is the word "use." Our forests were designated as forests so that they could be used, not so that they could be treated as National Parks and basically shut off to all uses that aren't hiking and camping. Your duty as the Forest Service is to make sure that we can effectively use our National Forests. Some of the possible plan changes that I see in this revision do make me question if this is a National Forest which is meant to be used by the people or if this is a National Park.

Here is some of my personal history on the use of the Chugach National Forest. I was born and raised in south Anchorage, one of my earliest snowmachine trips was in Turnagain Pass, while I was still in diapers. Girdwood was only about 30 minutes from my house so, as I grew up basically anything south of there became my playground, I honestly found myself hiking up the mountains and snowboarding down with my friends just as much as I was riding snowmachines. This turned out to be such a huge draw for me that I pushed myself hard in my classes, even going so far as to take college courses in high school so that I could have early dismissal. On the warm spring days, I would be out of school by one o'clock and would hurry down to whichever spot we were going that day.

The Chugach allowed me to have an amazing young adulthood. This split of snowboarding and snowmachining came to a screeching halt in the fall of 2010. I was riding my dirt bike and had a bad wreck, as a result my leg was broken, and my ankle separated from the ankle socket. My medial ligament which is the tendon that runs down the inside of your knee and connects your ankle to your leg was torn beyond repair. Because of this injury, hiking up the mountains and snowboarding down was not an option anymore due to the lateral strain it puts on your ankles. So, what was I to do? The only option I had available to still get out and enjoy the Chugach, was to get a stiff set of motocross boots a couple sizes larger than necessary to fit thick socks, and a good set of knee braces, and ride my snowmachine. The knee braces extend into the motocross boots effectively giving my leg and ankle an exoskeleton. This allows me to ride without worrying about my ankle or leg being injured. Fast forward to today, and I still must wear this same setup, my medial tendon has never recovered, and my main method of enjoying and using the Chugach is via snowmachine.

I am not the only one in my family who has suffered injuries and must now rely on our snowmachines to allow us to enjoy the Chugach National Forrest. My father Rob Lindemann was a very apt mountaineer, even going so far as to summit Denali in 1986. Snowmobiles were not what they were today, so he had a couple (pictured below in Turnagain pass in 1989) so he preferred to hike and ski most of the time because it opened more of the backcountry to him. This all changed in the early 90's when he was working in a scissor lift and the scissor lift's brakes failed. The lift rolled down a hill and sent him crashing to the ground, my father's lower back was broken. He was flown down to the lower 48 and seen by an expert team of doctors, they said that the chances of him walking again were very remote. But he applied his same will and determination which had carried him to the top of North America's tallest peak, to learning how to walk again. Within a few years he was out of his wheel chair but, hiking and mountaineering were out of the question. So, he saved up and bought a Super Cub. This Super Cub we still have today and regularly fly out to lakes, streams, and glaciers in the Chugach National Forest. Actually, one of our favorite stops when we are on floats is the Summit Lake lodge in the pass. We regularly stop in for ice cream on hot summer days. You can see so much from the air, but problem is that you are somewhat detached from the world below you. It was this connection that my father missed, after his accident, much like I did, he tried using snowmobiles to access the backcountry, growing up he would tell me stories about trying to ride 20 mile but the machines of the day were so limited with suspension that he wouldn't be able to walk for days afterward because of what it would do to his back. So, he sold all his snowmachines. In about 2006 this all changed, he rode a Ski-Doo "rev" chassis sled for the first time. He found that the suspension had become so good that he could ride and not have his back get messed up. Now one of his favorite pastimes is to come out riding with me in the Chugach National Forest.

As a lifelong Alaskan I have planted my roots in this great state, and more importantly I have planted my roots in the Chugach. I perhaps more than most know more about conservation and leaving as little impact as possible. I have made my money by gold mining, as part of our mandate at the gold mine, we made sure that we reclaimed all of the areas we mined with the goal being that you couldn't tell we had been there within 4 years of the ground being disturbed. I'm happy to say that we were able to accomplish this. We did not adversely affect any aquatic life according to the Department of Fish and Game, and the moose and bears seemed to enjoy our company. The moose often would walk right up to us to see what we were doing. What I am getting at is that if we as gold miners were able to responsibly use our land, the same should be able to be done in the Chugach National Forest.

Another aspect I would like to look at is the amount of money spent in our state. I personally currently have two snowmobiles bought within the last 4 years, each of these snowmachines retailed for right around 15 thousand dollars new. My father has four snowmachines and my step-father and mother have another two. These machines are what allow us as a family to get out and connect with our great state. Overall, I would say that at least 75% of our riding as a family is done in the Chugach National Forest. We ride there because of the ease of access and the ability to see such a beautiful and varying terrain. I can with a 100% confidence say that we as a family would not buy new snowmachines as often, if areas of the Chugach were closed to motorized use, reducing our ability to ride. This is money that the state would be losing out on. Beyond the purchase of the new snowmobiles, we always

make it a point to purchase our replacement parts and get service at local shops. Shops owned by fellow Alaskans. The amount that my immediate family spends on parts is literally thousands of dollars per year, a very larger percentage of which stays right here. Another revenue source for our state that would be cut by as much as 75% if areas of the Chugach are shut down. This is not even taking into effect all the tertiary costs such as extra fuel for the trucks, licensing for Snowmachine trailers, licensing for our snowmachines, the extra oil changes for our vehicles because of the miles, tires for our trucks or even the fact that we on average must buy new trucks more often because they wear out faster. All of these are costs to us, which keep money in our state.

I would like to compare this to skiers because at the heart of this matter they make up the majority of the groups that would like to see motorized use areas cut down. How much do they spend per year on skis, boots and

bindings? I would be willing to bet a year's wages that on average it is less than we as snowmachiner's spend. What about where they spend their money? How often do you see REI stickers on their cars? Ignoring REI's affiliations with certain clubs, where does REI's money go? Does it stay here in this state? The answer is unequivocally no. REI is a giant company and the money spent there goes directly out of state.

What about bringing money into our state? This past year was a perfect example, a friend of mine who ski's, and I had taken the day off work and headed up to Turnagain Pass. With the goal of giving him rides up the mountain so he could ski down. It was a beautiful warm sunny day, and there were only two other snowmachiners up there. By the time we got to Seattle Ridge my friend was cramped from riding two up on my snowmachine, so we stopped. While enjoying the scenery these two other snowmachiners came up to us and said that they had road tripped all the way from Montana with the Chugach National Forest as their final destination. They asked if they could follow us around as they did not know the area, being that they had their skis strapped to their snowmachines too they were a good fit, so we spent a few hours checking out the various areas of Turnagain Pass motorized use area. As the day went on I took them to my very favorite view at Turnagain Pass, Pyramid Peak. There we all shed our gear and drank in the warm sun. The hotdogger on my snowmachine had cooked our burritos nicely and the view right on the inlet is one in a million. The guys from Montana turned out to be craft brewery owners. They took out a couple cans of beer from their brewery and shared them with us. What I'm driving at here is that this opportunity to meet and befriend two guys from Montana, then sit on the top of a mountain with them, eat burritos, and drink a beer brewed half a world away, never would have happened for me without motorized access in the Chugach National Forest.

One finally thing that I would like the Forest Service to consider is that as time passes, snowmobiles get better and more efficient, a perfect example being that my dad can now get out and explore on them where as their suspension limitations prevented that before. As the snowmachines get more efficient their effect on the environment becomes less and less. Currently the snowmachine market is in a very interesting position, because the used cost for these sleds with direct injection engines are in a free fall. As a result, you are seeing less and less of the old dirty snowmachines. This

means that the carbon footprint of the snowmachine community is getting drastically smaller every year. Which therefor equates to cleaner and cleaner riding areas.

In summary I would just like to say that some of these possible plan options really do scare me, there are 4 generations of my family that have used the Chugach National Forest The thought that I someday won't be able to take my kids and grandkids up those mountains on a snowmachine is a very sobering one. If some of these proposed changes go through instead I will be limited to standing on the side of the road and saying, that used to be one of my favorite riding spots. If anything, I would propose that more areas be opened instead of closed. The areas that are open to motorized use MUST remain open. If areas are shut down, due to my injuries and my father's injuries these areas will be essentially inaccessible to us, which would take a huge toll on our family. One idea I would like to propose is open new/more areas to motorized use but require all users to take a special Forest Service training course on how to treat the land, to use them. The Chugach National Forrest is a public use forest first and foremost, not a national park, let us use it.

Thank you for your time, and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Lindemann

Below are some pictures of my family and I's use of the Chugach National Forest