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First name: Michael

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: In reference to Chugach Forest Plan Revision #40816:

My Name is Michael Bartell. I've been a resident in the State of Alaska for 12 years and I spend time in the Chugach National Forest during all seasons with family & friends. In the spring, summer, and fall I spend many weekends in the Forest camping, hiking, boating, and biking. Specifically in hiking/biking in Girdwood, boating on 20 Mile River, hiking/biking/fishing at Carter/Crescent Lake, fishing Ptarmigan Creek, biking in Johnson Pass, & hiking to Lost Lake via Primrose trail. One observation of the campgrounds is they are very popular and at full capacity most weekends in the summer. Please consider adding more sites in the areas of high traffic in the summer. In the winter I am a user as both a motorized and non-motorized at every trail head along the Seward highway corridor (where permitted for motorized). I spend as many weekends as possible riding snowmachines in Johnson Pass, Turnagain Pass, Spencer and Skookum drainages, Snow River corridor, or Lost Lake for their snowboarding access via snowmachine. I split board Turnagain Pass along the non-motorized corridor. I am in favor of Alternative B and oppose Alternatives C or D. I am also against any further restrictions against winter motorized use or expansions of wilderness designations. I understand the need for wilderness study areas and wilderness land designations and don't oppose them. However a very large portion of Alaska is extremely difficult to access which results in large areas that are primitive whether they have a designation or not. This is unique to the State and there's no way to compare it to the lower 48 States. While I feel the current motorized areas are adequate I hope to one day see them expanded in certain areas such as Center Creek in the Johnson Pass area and extending motorized access in the Skookum drainage past the April 1st closure.

Access to areas that are open has become more difficult due to inconsistent snow coverage and the vegetation choking out areas that were accessible a couple of years ago. The mild winters have allowed alder vegetation to grow taller and thicker. Where the snow pack typically knocked the alders down in the past this has not been the case in the past couple of years. The result is the area of access has become restricted which shrinks acreage that is accessible. Most notable in the drainages along Johnson Pass. It makes it difficult for the motorized user group to spread out for those that choose to ride off the trail where it's permitted.

I think motorized access corridors are a great thing. Examples where this has been implemented and creates a good balance between user groups are the 20 mile access corridor and the Snow River corridor.

In regards to the environmental impact, the snowmachine manufacturers have made developments in recent years to improve their efficiency and have worked to reduce noise levels. They burn cleaner and are much quieter. The manufacturers continue these improvements to address environmental and noise concerns. The physical impact on the land is negligible. There is generally no noticeable impact on the terrain. Far less than what I notice hiking and biking trails do. While I enjoy the use of trails in the summer for hiking, biking, and fishing there are noticeable impacts on the land that these trails have, specifically erosion during/after having rain fall.

The motorized users provide an economic boost to the region in the winter when it businesses may otherwise be dormant for the season. Spending on lodging, food, gas, and equipment are all ways the user group brings money into the areas of Moose Pass, Seward, and Cooper Landing during the winter.

I have great appreciation for the federal public lands and the recreational opportunities it provides. I grew up in upstate New York where public land is not as prevalent and private land dominates. This is why I feel so

fortunate to have the CNF so accessible and would like it to maintain the opportunities it provides for my family and I.

Thanks,

Mike Bartell