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First name: Peg

Last name: Tileston

Organization:

Title:

Comments: My husband and I have boated in Prince William Sound for over 35 years in a variety of craft from inflatable, sailboat to our current Nordic Tug. Over this period, we have witnessed numerous events that have caused damage to this incredible area. Of course, the grounding and subsequent oil spill of the Exxon Valdez has had a profound affect on both land and waters. In addition, the opening of the Whittier Tunnel to vehicle traffic has added to increased fishing and hunting pressure as well as novice boat handlers unfamiliar with their craft and water hazards. Western Prince William Sound safety is only provided by volunteer Coast Guard Auxiliary personnel primarily using their own craft. The closest Coast Guard vessel is stationed at Valdez and the nearest Coast Guard helicopter is located at Kodiak.

The Sound receives many insults from ocean dumping, careless boaters, continued affects from

the Exxon Valdez spill, and the potential impacts of climate change on birds, fish and wildlife. Each year thousands of pounds of marine debris are collected and disposed of by dedicated volunteers from the beaches. Although, cruise ships have reduced stack discharges, one can still see a pall of pollution from some ships as they traverse up and down Port Wells. As more and more people flood into Prince William Sound to enjoy wonderful experiences, it is of vital importance to carefully monitor and manage land and sea areas, both wilderness and non-wilderness.

The information in the Chugach National Forest Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement is very comprehensive and helpful. I particularly appreciate the recognition of the importance of the maintaining the Chugach National Forest and the proposal to expand the Nellie Juan Wilderness Area. It is vital that this amazing recreational and fishery resource receive the highest level of protection.

I support Alternative D, but it is important that the emphasis not just be on [ldquo]maintaining existing character[rdquo] but to work to enhance it so the future generation will have the opportunity to experience this beautiful area.

Comments for the Chugach National Forest Management Plan & EIS

Attached are my comments.

Peg Tileston

4780 Cambridge Way

Anchorage AK 99503

907-561-0540