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First name: Philip

Last name: Johnson

Organization: Department of the Interior

Title: Regional Environmental Officer

Comments: Dear Ms. Marceron:

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) has reviewed the U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) Chugach National Forest Draft Land Management Plan (Draft Forest Plan) and associated Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). We understand that the plan, once finalized, will revise the 2002 Chugach National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. Our comments and recommendations are provided in accordance with the Organic Act of 1916, Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA), and National Environmental Policy Act of 1970.

Kenai Fjords National Park (Kenai Fjords NP) is located adjacent to the Chugach National Forest near Seward, Alaska. The park is managed by the DOI's National Park Service (NPS) under the Organic Act [to] to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations [rdquo] (16 USC 1).

The park was established by ANILCA (16 USC 51, [sect] 3101). The legislative purposes specific to Kenai Fjords NP are [to] to maintain unimpaired the scenic and environmental integrity of the Harding Icefield, its outflowing glaciers, and coastal fjords and islands in their natural state; and to protect seals, sea lions, other marine mammals, and marine and other birds and to maintain their hauling and breeding areas in their natural state, free of human activity which is disruptive to their natural processes [rdquo] (ANILCA [sect] 201(5)).

In this context of park purpose, we offer the following comments:

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* The Draft Forest Plan recognizes the role of the Kenai Mountain-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area in working with local communities to protect cultural resources with the National Historic Area. The NPS looks forward to continuing to partner with the USFS in working with this non-profit organization to accomplish mutual goals.

* The Draft Forest Plan recommends building upon the accomplishments of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustees Council (EVOTC). The EVOTC has achieved similar accomplishments within the Kenai Fjords NP, and building upon these achievements supports our shared objectives.

* We would like to highlight that the Draft Forest Plan addresses our shared objectives in managing the spread of invasive species, particularly Elodea, the management of mountain goats, visitation and access from the Herman-Leirer road near Seward, Alaska, and management of the Resurrection Pass Trail. Visitors to the eastern side of the Kenai Peninsula often seek trails and other facilities while visiting lands managed by either the Chugach National Forest or Kenai Fjords NP.

* We recommend considering a more in-depth analysis of the effects of continuing to authorize the use of Chugach National Forest lands for the Main Bay and Cannery Creek salmon hatcheries. Hatchery reared pink salmon straying into streams inhabited by wild salmon stocks may have an indirect effect on wild salmon stocks, and these effects were not adequately analyzed in the Draft Forest Plan.

Thank you for considering these comments to the Draft Forest Plan and DEIS. If you have any questions, please contact Eric Veach, Superintendent with the Kenai Fjords NP, at (907) 422- 0518 or eric_veach@nps.gov.

Hello Mr. Fitz-Enz,

Attached is a comment letter from the U.S. Department of the Interior regarding the Chugach National Forest Land Management Plan. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

We kindly request that you please confirm receipt of this letter. If you have any issues with opening the attachment, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Grace

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Grace Cochon

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