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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

I have been enjoying as many of the 5,417,172 acres of the Chugach National Forest as I can for the past 20 years or so of my life. I enjoy boating in as many of Prince William Sounds 2.6 million acres as I can, using boats for fishing, sightseeing, hunting, or access to visit historic sites for a good photo opportunity and history lesson.

The winters in the Chugach are second to none in the world, and the winter recreation opportunities are endless here for all user types. With 96 percent of the Chugach National Forest classified as "backcountry or wilderness study area" it is time to expand what area is accessible to all user types. In the past several years the increase in user groups utilizing clean burning, EPA compliant motorized vehicles is undeniable. Snowmobile manufactures following strict federal regulations to produce quiet, clean and efficient machines has attracted even the ski and snowboard communities to adopt the snowmobile as a safe and fun way to access the best lines on earth. Snowmobiling in Alaska is not just a fun activity, it is a way of life for tens of thousands of rural residents. Not only providing access but also creating sustainable jobs, and economic growth in many communities where snowmobiling is part of our culture.

I think that saying the snowmobile community should simply be satisfied with maintaining what access we currently have is a failure to recognize the increasing interest in the snowmobile as a tool for so many to access this beautiful and vast forest. The small fact that snowmobiles are used to generate avalanche forecasts for all user groups on a daily basis is a great example of how our society has become more accepting of motorized vehicles that meet and in most cases exceed federal regulations and requirements for clean burning technology.

I look forward to a forest plan that outlines fair and equitable use for all user types and recognizes also the economic impacts of each user group in the local and state economy.

Thank you,

Nick Olzenak