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First name: Dee

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: The Congressionally-designated Nellie Juan-College Fiord Wilderness Study Area (WSA) on the Chugach National Forest in Alaska's western Prince William Sound is an ecological and scenic treasure. My spouse and I had the privilege of enjoying it last August on a trip to the area. It is essential that this gorgeous two million acres of ancient rainforest, wild salmon, stunning mountains, glaciers, and meandering fiords which are laced with hundreds of remote islands is saved as a WSA or changed by Congress to be a Wilderness Area. My understanding is that the area is critical to Alaskans, for subsistence, commercial fishing, recreation, and the local tourism industry. I can attest for the fact that it is also a great place to visit by yourself or with your family. I am deeply saddened that the U.S. Forest Service proposed plan for the Chugach includes loosening protections throughout the area and permanently removing protections from some of its most important places. Why change these protections that have been in place for almost forty years and that will hurt the wilderness character of this magnificent WSA? It is unthinkable that the proposed Chugach plan would also allow residential timber harvests, expanded motorized uses, manipulation of habitats, mining, and helicopter-assisted skiing and hiking. I want to communicate to the Chugach National Forest that it is essential to:

- \* Keep your longstanding promise to protect the wild character of the entire Wilderness Study Area until Congress finalizes its protection. This means maintaining and clarifying rules on all land-based motorized uses- including chainsaw use- and preserving the area's current undeveloped and non-motorized character.

- \* Recommend the 1.9 million eligible acres of the WSA and surrounding roadless lands eligible for wilderness designation as Wilderness. Do not abandon protection for the nearly 600,000 acres you propose to eliminate from the WSA.

- \* Reverse the terrible recommendation to split the Wilderness Study Area into two smaller units. This would dramatically shrink the area by permanently stripping long-established protections for Knight Island, Columbia Glacier, Perry Island, Glacier Island, Culross Island, Esther Island, Port Wells, mainland Knight Island Passage, and Lake Nellie Juan.

- \* Prohibit recreational snowmobile use in the WSA. Snowmobile use has exploded in the WSA in recent years. Snow machines for subsistence and traditional uses may be allowed, but recreational snowmobile use is not.

- \* Management of the WSA should follow the Forest Service's Regional Office WSA direction, since ANILCA contains no substantive guidance on WSA protection.

In the Chugach National Forest, the Forest Service is entrusted to manage some of Alaska's most treasured wild lands in the Congressionally-designated 2 million-acre Nellie Juan-College Fiord WSA. Changing that now-by allowing residential timber harvests, expanded motorized uses, manipulation of habitats, mining, and helicopter-assisted skiing and hiking-would harm this beautiful Wilderness Study Area. This defies common sense! Instead, the Forest Service should maintain current protections and recommend to Congress its perpetuation into the future. This world-class wild area deserves permanent protection now and far into the future!

Please do not proceed with your proposed changes! This wild area needs to be protected, not degraded.

Sincerely,  
Dee Tvedt