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Organization:

Title:

Comments: In the Chugach National Forest, the Forest Service is entrusted to manage some of Alaska's most treasured wild lands in the Congressional designated two million-acre Nellie Juan-College Fiord WSA. The Forest Service should maintain current protections and recommend to Congress its perpetuation into the future. This world-class wild area deserves permanent protection! The proposed plan released for the Chugach would loosen protections throughout the area and permanently remove protections from some of its most important places. Allowing residential timber harvests, expanded motorized uses, manipulation of habitats, mining, and helicopter-assisted skiing and hiking-would harm this beautiful Wilderness Study Area. It defies common sense and will hurt the wilderness character of this magnificent WSA. The proposed Chugach plan would also allow residential timber harvests, expanded motorized uses, manipulation of habitats, mining, and helicopter-assisted skiing and hiking. Instead I suggest the following:

- * 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.

Thank you for your time.