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Comments: The Congressionally-designated Nellie Juan-College Fiord Wilderness Study Area (WSA) on the Church National Forest in Alaska's western Prince William Sound is an ecological and scenic treasure. It is critical to Alaskans, for subsistence, commercial fishing, recreation, and the local tourism industry.

Unfortunately, the proposed plan will mean that the protections throughout the area will be loosened and protections from some of the most important places will be permanently removed. This changes protections that have been in place for almost forty years and will hurt the wilderness character of this magnificent WSA. The proposed Church plan would also allow residential timber harvests, expanded motorized uses, manipulation of habitats, mining, and helicopter-assisted skiing and hiking.

Here are suggestions for the Forest Service to proceed so that this magnificent area will remain as it was originally foreseen:

- * 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.

Thank you for your consideration.