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Comments: 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 Wilderness Study Area. Changing that now-by allowing residential timber harvests, expanded motorized uses, manipulation of habitats, mining, and helicopter-assisted skiing and hiking-would bring irreversible and irreparable harm to this beautiful Wilderness Study Area. Instead, the Forest Service should maintain current protections and recommend to Congress its perpetuation into the future. Management of the WSA should follow the Forest Service's Regional Office WSA direction, since ANILCA contains no substantive guidance on WSA protection. Forest Service must 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. Forest Service must 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. Forest Service should also 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.

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. This world-class wild area deserves permanent protection now and far into the future!