

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/13/2016 6:37:13 PM

First name: Robert

Last name: Cherry

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I've read that the Forest Service is considering how it manages the Chugach National Forest through revision in the Forest's Management Plan. I am very concerned that these changes will weaken the protection of this magnificent area and open it to inappropriate uses.

Specifically I'm concerned about the Forest's designation as a Wilderness Study Area which provides protection for its biological and recreational values. Allowing motorized use, including chainsaws and recreational snowmobile use, into the WSA threatens to remove the wilderness values that are important. Until Congress can decide whether or not to designate the WSA as an official Wilderness Area the WSA should be managed as if it was a Wilderness Area and not to a lesser level of protection.

Rather than weaken the WSA it would be great if you could also include the 1.9 million acres of roadless areas that are eligible for wilderness designation, and that adjoin the forest, in the proposed Wilderness Area. Shrinking the size or dividing it into smaller tracts is moving in the wrong direction.

Wilderness Areas are valuable to all Americans and need to be protected. They provide incomparable recreational opportunities, protect watersheds, provide habitat for our nation's wildlife and protect America's frontier values. The few remaining lands that are set aside as WSAs need to be more strongly protected rather than weakened and nibbled away until nothing of value remains.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.