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First name: Hugh

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To the Forest Service:

My name is Hugh Rose, I am an Alaskan living in Fairbanks and I have worked extensively in the College Fjord-Nellie Juan Wilderness Study Area (CFNJWSA) for the past 18 years acting as a naturalist, kayak guide, birding guide and photo guide while working for Discovery Voyages. The permitted business I work for (Discovery Voyages) is responsible for bringing millions of dollars into the ALASKAN economy by providing a high quality wilderness experience for its guests in the CFNJWSA. I spend on average 45-70 days per year working in the CFNJWSA between the months of March and September. In my years working in Prince William Sound and specifically in the CFNJWSA, I have seen the number of visitors and users increase exponentially, in particular after the tunnel to Whittier opened in 2001. Unfortunately, this increase in visitation has not benefited the wilderness character of the CFNJWSA, and in many cases I have watched the slow degradation of the wilderness as users abuse the area in pursuit of their own personal entertainment, rather than respecting the Wilderness Values of the CFNJWSA as a "Wilderness Study Area". When Congress designated the CFNJWSA in 1980 as article 704 of ANILCA, the intent was for the Forest Service to manage this area as a Wilderness until a future congress could decide the ultimate fate of this piece of the Chugach National Forest. Unfortunately the Forest Service has been taxed beyond it's capabilities to patrol this area and many acts of flagrant abuse by users in the CFNJWSA have gone unnoticed by USFS.

In the present review of the the "Wilderness Study Area", (CFNJWSA), I would encourage the Forest Service to continue managing this area to maintain its "Wilderness Character" until Congress can decide its ultimate fate. The continued encroachment by motorized users into the Wilderness Study area has degraded the Wilderness feeling of this area and is noticed by myself and my clients who are on trips with me in this area. Why are helicopters allowed to fly at low elevations (less than 100') and land above the intertidal zone in the CFNJWSA? Why are snowmobiles allowed to enter the Wilderness Study and impact the landscape and soundscape? There are millions of acres of land accessible for consumptive and motorized users, around Prince William Sound, why can't the 2.2 million acres of the CFNJWSA be left with a wilderness designation for people who value silence and wilderness values? The CFNJWSA is a national treasure that needs to be preserved for future generations to enjoy as a quiet "Wilderness" not as a place for every motorized user to drive their snowmobile and helicopter.

In summary I would encourage the Forest Service to maintain the Wilderness character of the CFNJWSA until Congress and the People of the United States can decide the ultimate fate of this truly unique and amazing piece of Alaskan PUBLIC land.

Thank you

Sincerely

Hugh Rose

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