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Comments: The new forest management plan as presented for public comment for the Chugach National Forest is unacceptable. To diminish protections to the Chugach National Forest, especially the Nellie Juan/College Fiord Wilderness Study Area would be irresponsible.

Real and potential threats from human activities will continue and will only get worse: tree harvesting, over hunting, mining, hardened camps, off road vehicle use, bear baiting, helicopters, unauthorized trails and roads, industrial tourism, lodges, unrestricted trapping, trash and air/water pollution.

There is still crude oil from the 1989 Exxon oil spill within some shoreline sediments adjacent to the Chugach National Forest in Prince William Sound. After 27 years some species and habitats have not fully recovered. This plan must acknowledge this and follow recovery and protection goals and include support for securing subsurface rights from already protected surface lands that were acquired for conservation purposes in Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council agreements.

Climate change is likely to bring further impacts to the Forest with changes to migratory timing and patterns, hatch timing, plant and animal diseases, increased fire threat, run timing, insect infestations, population crashes and toxic algae blooms. The Chugach National Forest is the northern and western most National Forest within the US National Forest system and will in turn be on the front line of these changes.

The wilderness quality of Prince William Sound, the Chugach National Forest and Alaska as a whole is what brings people here to live, to visit, to recreate and to thrive. Intact and pristine upland habitats are essential for our sport and commercial fisheries to survive. The current protections have allowed and protected traditional activities within the Chugach National Forest. With growing threats these protections need to be strengthened not weakened.

The Nellie Juan/College Fiord Wilderness Study Area as well as any wilderness proposals to Congress need to stay intact, with their original boundaries, including the islands as well as the entire Columbia Glacier watershed.

I would even suggest adding Green Is. and Montague Is. to the Wilderness Study Area. Green Is. would make a world class Research Area. And Montague Is., being the largest uninhabited island in the US, would be a unique and valuable addition.

Protections are essential to the sustainability of the Chugach National Forest as well as the economic well being of the communities located within and around the Chugach. The economies of a community benefit when a community is located adjacent to wilderness quality National Forests, Parks and Preserves. These benefits are long lasting and do not follow the boom and bust cycle of destructive resource extractive activities.

Native Corporation lands, general state lands, private inholdings and municipal lands dot the landscape within and around the Chugach. These would be more than sufficient to meet any infrastructure needs.

I know that you prefer comments that address very exact parts of the plan. I am sorry but I can not focus on that sort of detail. The bigger picture is too hard to leave behind. Personally I have found the Forest Service's planning process to be a very frustrating and tiresome. The Forest Service has worn people down with all the plans, meetings and public comments, often run by new and poorly experienced Forest Service personnel as well as your ever changing formats and processes.

I want my grandchildren and their children to experience the same Forest that I have loved, lived in and worked within these past 40 years.

If that is to come to pass protections need to be strengthened not diminished in all regions of the Chugach National Forest; the Eastern as well as the Western Chugach, the Copper River Delta and the Kenai Peninsula.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

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