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Title:

Comments: I attended a meeting of concerned people regarding the Chugach Forest Plan Revision #40816 on February 10, 2016. Although I already submitted a comment, I'd like to add to that, after listening to a crowd of equally passionate lovers of Prince William Sound.

Here are some of the paraphrased comments I heard and agreed with:

"Access to Prince William Sound is essential for my quality of life in Alaska."

"We make a living in the Sound. There has been more pressure on it since the tunnel opened: black bears are gone, beaches and humanized. If a wilderness plan is in place, we have tools, and rules, and can require them to be obeyed. Why would you recommend to remove Knight Island, Columbia Glacier, Port Wells -- why jeopardize this?! Our story to the world is this: you can't create more wilderness. We need to preserve this!"

"Make sure the plan is as strong as possible to protect the Chugach. Tourism is important. Make a formal recommendation from the Forest Service to Congress. Manage the WSA as if it is wilderness until the designation is made by Congress. Keep the language unambiguous, clear, specific."

"Ecotours offer businesses that are dependent on wilderness, showing that wilderness is economically profitable. We bring 10,000 visitors to the state each year through tours and have the opportunity to educate users, teach them how to share and not exploit the resource. Do not remove protections!"

"In studies of the Sound, it shows that recreational impacts are limited to relatively small areas which are now designated as 'primitive.' The Whole WSA should be classified as 'primitive.' Don't reclassify using a recreational activity spectrum as anything lower. Keep it 'wilderness' until Congress acts."

"It's our passion. We live out there and earn our living there. We feel our voice has not been heard. I'm often the lone voice in meetings speaking against mining, trapping, creating more roads. We need an educational aspect so users protect the area. Visitors from Europe have nothing like this and are thrilled when they come to visit."

A Native speaker from Cordova: "It's emotional to have to show up and defend our home every time PWS and Chugach is threatened. We have the 2nd largest forest in the world and we have a chance to get it right. We haven't recovered from the Exxon Valdez spill. I remember when I saw the first sailboat, the first kayak. I thought, 'We've been found!' We could easily love it to death. The Chugach doesn't get as much attention or press as the Tongass and other wild places."

"Wild and Scenic Rivers designation is needed for rivers feeding into PWS."

"How is 'personal timber harvest' compatible for wilderness area? How can chainsaws be allowed? Extracting minerals is not compatible for a wilderness area."

"Trees in PWS are growing on rock. It's easy to damage them, e.g., by 4-wheelers in just an hour or so tearing up 2-3" of soil. It will take 20 years or more to recover. We need a vocabulary: rainforest is fragile. What we have is a national treasure. It's like we're selling a race horse for glue!"

I personally do not make a living on PWS, nor do I often visit it. But I visit as often as I can afford to, have many friends who recreate there regularly, mostly by kayak, and just knowing it is there brings me great joy.

I could not live with myself if I didn't do all I can to protect this national treasure for generations to come. Please recommend the management area of WSA as wilderness in perpetuity.

Thank you.