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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To: Forest Supervisor Terry Marceron

Re: Forest Plan Revision, 161 East 1st Street, Door 8

Anchorage, AK 99501

To Supervisor Marceron and the Forest Plan Revision team,

As someone who grew up boating, hunting, fishing, hike, skiing, climbing learning to become a photographer, and later in life working in Prince William Sound and most of the Chugach National Forest, I must say that the proposed Chugach National Forest revised plan is outrageous. It only makes sense to increase and not decrease protection in these areas, not only from an ecological standpoint, but from an economical one as well. We all know that with the exception of well managed fisheries, resource extraction in these areas could and will have negative impacts on this unique ecosystem. While there may be some very temporary financial gains from mining, logging, etc., that small short-term gain will be drastically offset by the lost potential revenue from ecotourism and an intact fishery.

As children, my family would boat to remote areas within Prince William Sound and witness brown and black bears feeding on salmon in pristine creeks. We would pass through huge pods of Orcas caring for fresh calves. We would catch fish on rod and reel for subsistence, while we watch and admire skilled commercial fishermen fill their nets. We also witnessed the destruction the Exxon Valdez oil spill caused, and over the last 30 years, the Orca populations have gone way down, deep water fishing has become much tougher, demanding us to boat further and further out to catch fish, and many of the streams where we watched bears feed are now devoid of bears. Increased population and global warming are undeniable threats to these wild ecosystems, and though maybe the new forest plan can't prevent those threats, it should do everything it can to protect from other more immediate human threats. That is why I concur with these comments from the Eyak Preservation Council:

The current proposed US Forest Service Revision Plan is a step in the wrong direction and undermines existing protections. The 2.3 million acre Chugach National Forest should be protected as much as possible for current and future generations. To summarize:

- 1) The eastern Chugach - including the Copper River/Bering River/Martin Lake & River/Katalla Rivers and watersheds - area should be protected as critical salmon and wildlife habitat and continue to allow existing use for fishers and subsistence harvesters;
- 2) The original 1.9 million acre Wilderness Study Area (WSA) of western Prince William Sound should be recommended to Congress for designation as Wilderness; the WSA should continue to be managed as Wilderness and remain the same size until it is congressionally designated;
- 3) The Forest should be withdrawn from mineral and forestry activity; and additional protective conservation acquisition areas should be identified;
- 4) And the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill (EVOS) Restoration mandate for the region must be upheld.

The Proposed Forest Plan Revision, as written, is unacceptable and must be re-written to preserve the region more completely and managed primarily for the protection and conservation of fish and wildlife habitat

as ANILCA intended.

I also believe this should be taken a step further, and all the above mentioned areas should be designated Wilderness. Also, the entire Prince William Sound, including Montague Island, should be designated Wilderness.

I have worked for and been a part of the nonprofit Gulf of Alaska Keepers from the time of its inception. I have spent many summers physically removing marine debris washed up from around the world off beaches, choking salmon streams, and covering the forest floor. Many of these beaches are so remote that they see almost no human traffic, yet they are absolutely covered in marine debris and much of this debris is plastic and much of it toxic for wildlife and vegetation. I deem this essential work to keep Prince William Sound a wild and intact ecosystem and to partially undo the damage us humans are causing around the world. Now, I think it is the Forest Service's time and obligation to do their part to maintain one of the most important and unique places in the world for the future generations.

Sincerely,

Erik Pallister
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