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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Ms. Maceron,

Thank you for the chance to comment on the Proposed Chugach National Forest Plan.

WILDERNESS. It's appalling that with over 5 million acres, there's not a single acre of designated Wilderness on the Chugach. The entire WSA should be recommended for Wilderness designation; I've enjoyed kayaking at many of the beautiful, wild locations in the WSA that the Forest is proposing NOT to recommend. Additionally, a substantial number of accessible lands on the Kenai Peninsula should also be designated. There's no reason why a person shouldn't be able in Alaska to do what can be done in so many locations in the lower 48: drive to a Wilderness trailhead and enjoy a Wilderness experience without a huge expenditure of time and money.

And Wilderness in Alaska should be wilder than in the lower 48 rather than a tamer, noisier, busier, more mechanized version. Recreational snowmachining has no place in Wilderness. The Forest Service has badly misinterpreted Section 1110(a). It provides a special, limited exception for snowmachine use: for TRANSPORTATION for consumptive activities for those who are not qualified subsistence users (see the Denali National Park definition of "traditional activities"). Congress never intended that Alaska Wilderness would be filled with snowmachine noise and tracked up as far as the eye can see. And the issue is not just highmarkers, or irresponsible snowmachiners. Snowmachine use is just not compatible with Wilderness, even if every rider is totally responsible.

NATURAL SOUNDS AND NATURAL QUIET. I am very disappointed that the Proposed Plan seems to ignore-- did I miss something?--a resource that is becoming more and more valuable with every passing year: the natural soundscape. People in both urban and natural environments are becoming increasingly conscious of increased noise levels, and of the adverse effects on human mental and physical health, and on wildlife. The Forest Plan needs to, even if belatedly, identify existing natural sounds, natural quiet, and artificial intrusions in the Forest, and how various activities in each of the alternatives affect the natural soundscape. It should also require the development of a Natural Soundscape Plan, regular monitoring of the soundscape, and the protection and restoration of a natural soundscape that will benefit both humans and wildlife.

Sincerely,

Cliff Eames

Kenny Lake, AK