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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Chugach Forest planning team,

I am writing you foremost in strong support of setting aside wilderness areas in the Chugach National Forest. It is to my surprise that the Chugach has not selected any acreage for this designation, even though Alaska and particularly the Chugach still has areas considered wilderness. These areas only remain wilderness if they receive proper protection status. The economic values of the last remaining wilderness areas globally is very very high and agencies need to start accounting for these highly valuable assets in their management plans, none of which I currently see in the presented plan.

Second, I support Alternative D but only with the additional of Lake Nellie Juan and the Exxon Valdez lands within the Wilderness Study Area boundary.

Third, tranquil areas that are free of any human sound are increasingly rare, even in Alaska's wilderness areas. That in part is due to the State of Alaska's lax rules on motorized use and the dismal acreage that is dedicated to non-motorized use. I urge the Forest to prohibit snowmachining and motorized boating in any Wilderness areas to be designated in the future.

Fourth, in an era of increasingly rapid environmental change, continuation of the Forest Monitoring Program is essential for informing management decisions on the ground. That said, it is absolutely critical that the Forest starts managing the Elodea infestations around Cordova. Valuable time has been wasted by trying to duplicate the science we already know and following a piecemeal approach to management. The Forest has been largely following the management advice of just one expert (opinion leader and long-time FS researcher) on this issue while ignoring the scientific evidence and the input from a large group of local, national, and international experts. Highest priority should be given to cleaning up Eyak Lake which serves as the primary long-distance pathway for elodea through floatplane traffic.