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First name: Jack

Last name: Anderson

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

In response to the proposed changes to the forest management plan I am writing to inform of my personal use of the forest area and its deep importance to me. I often winter recreate in multiple areas of the forest including but not limited to the Nelly Juan area access via Snow River; Lost Lake area accessed by any of the three trail systems of Primrose, Lost Lake trail and the Snug Harbor entry; Johnsons Pass area via that trail; Turnagian Pass via the appropriate parking/access and Placer River valley/Squirrel Flats area. I would like to see more opened to motorized use like Center Creek, Mills creek. In addition to winter motorized use I visit many of the same areas during the summer months as well.

I am strongly opposed to losing any more acres of snowmachine terrain on the Kenai Peninsula. Therefore Alternatives C and D are unacceptable. An increase in backcountry recreation, quieter, more fuel efficient snowmobiles and inconsistent snow at lower elevations are all reasons we need to maintain what riding areas we have today and for future generations. I am saving for another new snowmachine this year to keep up with the improvements in clean burning, quieter machines available on today's market. With the additional equipment I am hoping to bring my wife to the same areas and show her the beauty of the forest using motorized transportation. She has survived cancer and has a significant zest for the outdoors.

When it comes to safety and rescue, our trails serve as emergency access routes for first responders to any motorized or non-motorized incident. I have been a professional first responder and participated in rescues and training with both motorized and non-motorized user groups and the importance of the established trails is vital.

Warmer winters in Alaska are affecting user access. The EIS/Forest plan do not bring solutions forward to address this issue. For example, Lost Lake often is closed to motorized use when there is more than adequate snow cover 500' up the trail. Access can be made without damaging resources.

I don't think it appropriate to recommend additional acres (beyond the 1.4M acres recommended in 2002) suitable for Wilderness designation in this Forest plan. Any further acres designated as "Wilderness" will limit winter recreation opportunities and displace motorized users. This user group continues to grow and the equipment used continues to improve in its ability to have less impact. Why would we close down a burgeoning group that is motivated to be concerned about the environment they wish to access.