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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello and thanks for being open to Public comment.

I want to start off by saying I'm a life long Alaskan for 35 years, born and raised and have no plans of ever leaving this state, its my home. As a local to this state I have had the opportunity to travel this state via boat, motorcycle, plane, snowmachine, fourwheeler, side by side, bicycle, snowboard etc etc. Not only do I travel this state to enjoy its beauty but also to hunt, fish, recreate and and bring family up from all over the U.S. to see it. With that said, im now raising my own family with two boys that I am beginning to show them the great state that I know and love and how I grew up using its land and resources.

As proposed by the Forest Service, out of the 4 options up for comment I would like to see "B" get put into play but with modification. I feel this option offers the best amount of useable space and land access for vehicles such as snowmachine and winter access activities. Also, access to NellieJuan trail, mills creek and more need to stay in place as this is a fantastic place to recreate in the winter that offers a gateway to mass expanses only accessible by snowmachine use anyway and to close those off would make it impossible for just a skier or hiker to access this land anyway.

As I have stated before, I am raising two young men now. I want their childhood to be similar to mine where I was raised outdoors, whether it be on a boat, plane snowmachine or what have you I think all helped me become the person I am today and why I still chose to be in Alaska. And with that leads me to economic impact of people like me that use transportation such as snowmachines to access these lands. We bring and economic boom to towns, business and people as we travel the state and use these vehicles. I easily spend 2-300 dollars a day when I take out my boys with fuel, food, lodging and whatnot in Girdwood, Moose Pass, Seward and more. That's the weekend bill atop the initial purchase of a 12k dollar sled, truck, trailer, gear and more that all dumps into the economy when we use our snowmachines 90% of the time south of Anchorage and in the Chugach. Im certain that when we ride we are spending more money than your average fat tire, cross country skier etc per outing. This is what I consider my traditional use of the land from when I was raised until now and how I look forward to raising my family.

I do own a company locally that sells and services these types of machines so not only do I use them every weekend, this is also how I pay my bills, taxes and more so one could say im a little more invested than the average user. I get to see how much money, time and effort people put into their vehicles in order to go out and have a good time. It becomes a way of life, a passion or almost a persona for most. For me, the economic impact is huge and without land access or less of it would highly affect my income and in a already staggering economy, the last thing we need to do is choke off more land, money, or potential revenue. Its been hard enough with lackluster snowfalls the last few years, we have seen a massive decline in sales, to double that with less land access would be a disservice to the economy and industry as a whole.

I want to touch briefly on the fact that these new vehicles and with technology getting better and better machines can now access these places quieter, cleaner and more efficiently than they ever have before. We can now go further and do it safer with machines today, gaining us access to unthinkable places just years ago. Places that are unobtainable by foot, ski, or bike. Not only do they do that reliably, they can also do it with less impact on the grounds as the vehicles are light and more capable and require less fuel, oil and weight to get where they need to go. I would hate to lose any access to the places we love riding such as Skookum, Placer river, Squirrel Flats, SPencer Glacier and Grandview areas, all of which these new sleds can reach easily and reliably.

Co-existing is something that I feel is important as well with other user groups. We have seen a monumental increase in skiers, snowboarders, and gliders on the motorized side of Turnagain Pass and I think I can speak freely when I say we as the motorized user have accepted and don't think anything of it when we see them. They are out there to use it just the same as we are so they are accepted with open arms and encouraged to get out and enjoy it. Also, skiers, snowbikes, fat tire, hikers and snowshoers all gain access and use the trails that snowmachines put in place making it more accessible for them to get further back into the forest. I can safely say that they enjoy the trails we as a user group put in place, speeding up their travel time and decreasing the

amount of effort they need to expend getting to the places they want to go. It can be a shared community, I don't see how shutting down more access to one group could possibly bring any good to this. We as a user group need to come together and work together and co-exist while recreating just as we do when living in the city. By shutting down access to one user or the other isn't providing cohesive recreation, it is creating a level of content with one another.

In closing, I want to make it clear I am asking for "B" with no land closures to anywhere south of anchorage from how it stands now. I have seen it before where it starts small and only gets worse as you see more and more lands, rights, and access get taken away. There is no reason that has been presented to me or the general public that I can find giving reason to close any land that is currently open for any reason. What I do feel needs to happen is user training, education and community involvement to make these places better. For example, Lost Lake trail system not only for the hikers in the winter time but also the snowmachine users could be widened, a trail put in place for motorized and for hikers, keeping travel safe and minimize any damage done to the vegetation if at all. If the forest service could put together public comment for improving trail management, improvements and more I can guarantee they would see a huge outreach from the community if it were done to meet a specific user group. I don't think we lack the effort to volunteer and help improve these things, we lack the organization and outreach from the Forest service to accept help and money's to get these things done.

On another note, I sit back and watch the pouring in of comments from people from California, and the rest of the lower forty eight with comments to shut the area down to motorized use. It sickens me to think these hold any weight in a subject such as this where people like myself and others who have lived their whole life here, raise their family, spend time and money, pay taxes, and help better the communities we live in only to see hundreds of comments from people that have either never stepped foot in our state or only visit once in a great while submitting comments to shut down what I have built my entire life around. I hope that my comments and ours that live here hold value and substantial weight in the verdict or outcome of this proposal.

Sincerely,

Andrew Smith

Life Long Alaskan