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Comments: I'd like to comment on the Forest Service's Draft Land and Resource Management Plan for the Chugach National Forest (NF) in Alaska.

I am a professional mineral exploration geologist and an independent energy producer. I have worked and vacationed in Alaska. I have also explored the Chugach National Forest and collaborated with the Forest Service in the preparation of other Land and Resource Management Plans.

The Chugach Plan should protect the "wilderness character" of the WSA, not the Forest Service's proposal to protect just its "existing character." The Plan should also protect the wilderness character of the lands in the WSA by classifying all of them with the Forest Service's "Primitive" standard.

The Plan should restore strong protection to the lands within the WSA that the federal government purchased following the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill. These lands were acquired for the restoration of wilderness values and should be managed "in perpetuity for conservation and wilderness purposes," as promised when they were purchased.

The Chugach NF must address ongoing illegal recreational use of chainsaws in the WSA, which has resulted in damaging tree removal along dozens of wilderness beaches in sensitive areas.

Alternative D recommends the maximum amount of land for Wilderness of any of the Alternatives (97 percent of the WSA, or 1.884 million acres). I support a modified Alternative D wilderness recommendation that also includes Lake Nellie Juan and the lands within the WSA boundary that were purchased for restoration of wilderness resources following the oil spill.

Thank you,

John Lizak