Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/26/2018 5:40:46 PM

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Title:

Comments: Alaska is usually number one for suicide per capita in our nation. CBS states 21.8/100,000 people. In my town Valdez, it's 5 to 6 times that rate. My wife works as a public mental health coordinator and the many frequent visitors are those that stay locked away during our dark winters. Growing up I'd ride the bus to school in the dark and I'd ride home in the dark. I was a kid I couldn't simply go to Hawaii for a month or go tanning. I didn't even understand what depression was. But my one outlet was watching professional snowmachiners filming themselves riding often in the Chugach National Forest. My point being our outdoor life is all we have and many of us Alaskans don't have the body or joints to simply access the backcountry by ski or snowshoe. I can deadlift over 400lbs and squat over 300lbs I try to be fit at 5' 10" 180lbs. But when I hike or climb for extended periods my knees swell up like grapefruits, I've always been this way. One of my best friends is a disable combat veteran. He moved to Alaska after coming home to get the full experience of the Alaska backcountry. There's no way he'd cover any country on foot but on snowmacjine he can easily cover over 100miles in a day. Much farther and away from skiers and snowshoers. Another serious matter is all the snowmachiners (snow mobile) riders will have to travel hundreds of miles to find good riding. Much of that commute will be on the Seward Highway. This highway kills many Alaskans each year; it's extremely dangerous. I used to commute that highway and I would hardly ever see skiers out unless the weather was clear blue skies. If there's fresh snow on the ground. The motorized side is absolutely packed usually there isn't a single place to park. We need more parking on the motorized side or simply if the non motorized side parking lots were kept open for all. Also Jack's Bay riding are in Prince William Sound should be opened up as ZERO skiers are sighted back there no access can be made without a helicopter or motorized snow mobile.