

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/27/2018 6:59:26 PM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a third generation Alaskan and a father of four, I appreciate the opportunity to contribute input into the future of the Chugach National Forest.

My family and I enjoy getting out and exploring the incredible beauty of this amazing state. We hike, we pick berries, we hunt, and we enjoy exploring and photographing new areas. My grandparents moved to Alaska in the 40's and they purchased their first snowmachine in 1968 while they were proving up on their homestead near Talkeetna. When I was 14 I inherited that machine and it sparked in me a passion for exploring the mountains and trails around Alaska.

Over the last 30 years I have ridden thousands of miles of trails and backcountry on the back of a snowmachine. As I had kids, they picked up my passion for winter exploration. We currently own several snowmachines and our favorite winter family activity is to go on rides together. Sometimes those rides are around our house north of Wasilla. Other times we load up the trailer and ride areas that are new to us. My kids are growing up fast, and if you ask anyone who knows them they will quickly tell you that they are solid reliable hard working kids. While many other kids their age were out drinking, doing drugs, or sleeping around, my kids were either riding or working with me in the garage on their machines keeping them maintained and fixing problems. Through working on snowmachines with their dad, my kids have learned electrical skills, welding, engine repair and maintenance, and general mechanical skills. Snowmachines have given them something to do that they thoroughly enjoy while also teaching them many valuable skills and life lessons.

My oldest son is currently enrolled at UAF in the Civil Engineering program. His passion is actually mechanical engineering, but he knows there are very few mechanical engineering jobs in Alaska. He specifically chose to become a civil engineer so that he could stay in Alaska with good job opportunities when he graduates in three years. Why does he want to stay in Alaska? Because he loves to ride snowmachines in our forests and mountains. That is his passion. He looked seriously at Idaho, Montana and Colorado and decided to stay in Alaska due to the large variety of areas we have to ride. In a sense you could say that the riding areas of Alaska will soon be giving Alaska another engineer who will be working hard to keep her airports, roads, and bridges safe and in good condition for years to come.

I have another son who is working on becoming a commercial pilot. Friends tried to talk him into flying for Delta, but he wants to fly for Alaska Airlines so that he can stay in state and use snowmachines with his favorite winter activity - snowboarding backcountry mountains. His desire is to live in SouthCentral Alaska and fly 737's for Alaska airlines. He also looked at areas to live out of state; Wyoming, Colorado, and Montana but has decided to stay in Alaska due to the thousands of acres that are open for us to ride and explore. Rideable areas will be giving Alaska another professional pilot who will be helping people fly back and forth to the Lower48 to visit friends and family for the holidays, go on family vacations or meet that important client face-to-face to seal a business deal.

All four of my children desire to remain in Alaska and make it their home. As you can tell from this letter, we spend a lot of time and money during the winters riding the backcountry. Due to the fact that we live north of Anchorage, most of our riding does not currently take place in the Chugach National Forest. However, my youngest is now 12, and we are traveling further from home and looking for new areas to explore. Many of our friends enjoy riding in the Chugach National Forest and we are looking forward to joining them in that area in the very near future. Please do not reduce the amount of rideable land in the Chugach National Forest. Keep the forest open for families to build memories and explore together. Motorized access is the only practical way for many of us to get back into the forest and explore that beautiful country. Also, winter access has an extremely

minimal impact on the environment, and also helps provide access corridors that make it easier for emergency services and rescues of other users to take place when they are needed. I urge you to please enact plan B for the Chugach National Forest, and thanks again for the opportunity to contribute my input.

David Horning
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