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First name: Ashley

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Ashley Chaffin

I currently live in Valdez and was born in Anchorage. I have lived here my entire life and grew up riding snowmachines, 4 wheelers, dirt bikes and side by sides with my family. Every weekend since I can remember was spent at cabins and camping getaways riding. Activities like these are a great way to bring the family together. The outdoors has been a huge part of my life and I couldn't imagine having any less area to ride than we already do. Technology has already limited kids to spending time outdoors and as a motorized user; I'm opposed to losing any more areas. I believe we should be expanding areas for future generations. Make parking lots bigger and more accessible. Plow the areas in the winter and make it easier for younger and less experienced people to access the area. As a group of enthusiasts we can respectfully recreate areas specifically designated for our activities.

Riding and being in the outdoors is my whole world. I ride everywhere in Alaska, but mostly Valdez, Cordova, Anchorage, Seward & Whittier. I also own a coffee shop Sacred Grounds Espresso in Valdez & several people travel to ride our area. Sled shops, hotels, gas stations, restaurants and several other businesses rely on snowfall and the people who travel and spend money to ride. Limiting access to these areas are going to have a huge impact on business owners as well.

In 2002 when the National Forest Service initiated the Forest Land Management Plan our rights were already diminished. Some people can't afford to drive the extra distance to ride and families close by didn't have the access they were used to. Parking lots have gotten more crowded with people wanting to enjoy the outdoors and it's only going to get worse limiting more areas.

Alternatives C & D are simply not acceptable and I am strongly asking you to not even consider them. Our winters are dark which already limits the time we get to spend with outdoor activities. This would significantly limit winter recreation opportunities' at a time where it is most vital for people to be getting out. We also have to remember how important it is for rescuers and responders to have easy access in case of an emergency in the backcountry. Skiers, snowboarders, hikers and snowshoers would benefit, especially on a day where the clouds are low and it's impossible to get a helicopter to them.

Snowmachines have changed drastically over the years. The machines have much larger and longer tracks, which means less impact to terrain. They are much quieter and more efficient allowing us to travel farther and out of the way of non-motorized users. Alaska is such a beautiful State. We should be encouraging people to get out and enjoy it.

For reasons stated above Plan "B" would be the only possible option with additional acreage in the Cordova district, with modifications to open more areas. The outdoors isn't just something I love it's my entire life. I am asking that you consider and do everything possible to help support what many others and me love to do.

Thank you for your time and opportunity to be a part of this public process.

Ashley