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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

I'm writing in regards to the Chugach Forest Plan Revision.

I moved to Alaska in 2009 from Atlanta, Georgia. Growing up I enjoyed the outdoors as much as possible, but was limited due to the lack of public land access. When I first moved to Alaska one of the first places my husband Lyn took me is the Chugach Mountains. The mountains and the beautiful scenery are what made me fall in love with this state and want to stay forever. The CNF has become a second home to my husband and me. For the last decade we have spent countless time meeting up with our friends and making memories in the CNF. The past two years my husband and I have spent more time hunting, fishing, snowmachining, snowboarding, hiking, taking pictures and exploring in the Chugach than we have in our house in Anchorage, Alaska. To say that I have been spoiled by the amount of time and adventures I have been able to experience in the past 10 years in the Chugach National Forest is an understatement. It's the first place I have ever snowmachined. It's the first place I ever went backcountry snowboarding. It's the place I harvested my first big game animal. It's the place where I got engaged. And best of all it's the place I got married and we got there using motorized access. The Chugach National Forest is my happy place and my way to "unplug" from the world.

Therefore, I strongly oppose taking away anymore acres of the CNF to motorized access or any other restrictions on access for any user group period. I also DO NOT support adding more "Wilderness" areas. This will not only limit access to motorized users but to ALL USERS! Options C and D are NOT acceptable!

Winters are long in Alaska and everyone needs something to do to get them outside. To keep them sane from the dark and cold. My husband and I take every opportunity we have to meet up with our friends to ride in the Chugach. Luckily I have been able to ride almost everywhere throughout the Chugach and make memories that will last a lifetime. There is no better place to be than on top of a mountain on a bluebird day in the Chugach National Forest. Some of my favorite memories are from riding Blackstone Bay via access from Whittier. Another one of my favorite places to practice riding is a access to Skookum Glacier, Spencer Glacier, Grandview and Squirrel flats via Placer Valley. The valley with flat terrain allows for an easier ride which also benefits less skilled riders as well as anyone with a disability. Other places I have enjoyed riding are Turnagain Pass, Johnson Pass, 20 mile using the motorized corridor, Lost Lake via Primrose, Firehouse, and Snug Harbour access.

With the increase of backcountry recreation and users we need as much access as we can. The new technology, quieter, more fuel efficient machines make it possible for people to access places deeper and farther away from the non motorized users who are closer to trailheads and access points. Most of them are less than 3 miles from the road. Motorized access corridors could be used by multiple groups, such as fat tire bikers or cross country skiers. Fat tire bikers already benefit from some of the motorized access trails already. Other motorized corridors that could be utilized are 20 mile, Snow River and Mills Creek.

With that being said, a lot of money goes back into the economy by snowmachine riders. Riding isn't cheap. Snowmachine and gear purchases. Money spent on avalanche trainings, wilderness first aid classes and registration. Repairs on snowmachines during the season. Small towns in Alaska, such as Whittier and Seward, that are less populated in the winter benefit a ton from riders. They have seen a bump in the amount of money put back into the economy with the increase in riders. People need gas to ride, food to eat and even lodging. Businesses that wouldn't normally be opened in these small towns during the winter are able to make money due to people wanting to get out and play in the mountains.

Motorized access trails are important when it comes to safety. They serve as emergency access routes for first responders to any motorized or non-motorized incident.

Warmer winters in Alaska are affecting user access. The EIS/Forest plan do not bring solutions forward to address this issue. For example, Lost Lake often is closed to motorized use when there is more than adequate snow cover 500' up the trail. Widening the trail would allow for us to ride longer in this area. It would also make the trail safer for snowmachines and other people using the trail to pass each other.

The Chugach National Forest is really my home away from home. It holds a special place in my heart. I hope to that one day my husband and I will be able to share the same experiences with our kids that we have had while exploring the Chugach.

Thanks again for your time,

Lacey Hoffman

Alaskan Resident

10 year user of the Chugach National Forest

hunting, fishing, hiking, snowmachining, backcountry snowboarding, mountain biking, and photography