

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/31/2018 9:03:02 PM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Here's mine:

To Whom it May Concern,

Of the four options being presented at this time, I would like to submit my support for the Forest Service Revision Plan Option B. More importantly, I want to declare that I am in no way in support of losing any current or future motorized access in the Chugach National Forest or any other state / federal lands, therefore, Options C & D are absolutely unacceptable. Designating more areas as "wilderness areas" is also unacceptable. We need to keep and increase areas of motorized access for numerous reasons, including but not limited to: increased safety, improved health, reduced environmental impact, increased opportunity for individuals to enjoy the backcountry on both snowmobile and utvs, and improved economy being at the top of the list.

I have been recreating in the Chugach since I was a child. I grew up in Anchorage and have spent many weekends camping, fishing, and snowmachining all over Alaska. We have spent many a weekend making outings to Carter and Crescent Lakes, as well as Lost Lake via the Primrose side, Turnagain Pass, areas in and around Hope, Whitter, Girdwood, and Snug Harbor sides of Lost Lake. The beauty and conditions in this region are like no other.

Keeping and increasing the motorized access areas is imperative for increasing safety in the backcountry. Being able to rescue an injured snowmachiner, hiker or skier via a motorized access corridor is crucial since often times it is not feasible for helicopters to reach an individual that is in need of rescuing, due to poor weather conditions. The more motorized access points we have in the Chugach and throughout Alaska helps to spread out the number of people recreating (motorized and non motorized). Less congestion in a specific region will decrease the potential for accidents amongst all user groups in areas where the trails are not wide enough or there are just too many people.

Keeping and increasing motorized access areas provide better parking for all user groups when planned to accommodate larger vehicles with trailers such as in Turnagain Pass. This being said, I feel very strongly that the lack of snow plow maintenance over the past several years for ALL parking areas in the Chugach has created serious safety issues that need to be addressed. There have been many times when the safety of both motorized and nonmotorized users has been compromised due to the fact that there is not adequate parking or adequate road access at a trailhead that is open for winter use.

Keeping and increasing motorized access areas is imperative for improving the health of Alaska. We have always told newcomers and visitors that it is a MUST to have winter recreation and outdoor activities if you are going to live in Alaska. The long, cold, dark winter can wreak havoc on a lot of peoples emotions and mental health.

Keeping and increasing motorized access areas is imperative for reducing environmental impact. Technology in the snowmachine industry has blessed us with more efficient and less polluting machines in recent years, but even with these major improvements, it is still better for air quality to have less congestion in specific regions. The improved efficiency along with lighter weight and more capable machines allows motorized users to get to more pristine areas without causing any damage to tundra or vegetation.

Keeping and increasing motorized access areas is imperative for maintaining and promoting economic growth in Alaska. There are a vast number of people in Alaska who own snowmachines. If you were to add up the cost for an average family to get into snowmachining and consider the impact on the economy, you would see that it is

very beneficial for Alaska.

Keeping and increasing motorized access areas is also detrimental for the survival and prosperity of local restaurants, lodges, bed and breakfasts, gas stations and gift shops during a time of year when we have less revenues from tourism and exports.

Thank you for taking the time to read my comments and for your efforts toward proper management our national forests in a way that benefits all user groups. I write this as a hiker, cross country skier, mountain biker, fisherman, hunter, nature lover, explorer, utv rider and snowmachiner. I believe that we can all amicably work together to protect and enjoy our Alaska.

Respectfully,  
Karl Spohn