

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/31/2018 9:16:45 PM

First name: Richard

Last name: Nelson

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To the Chugach National Forest Plan Revision Team:

First, let me thank you for all the work, thought, and public input that has gone into preparing this Revision.

I am also very grateful for this public comment process, which is vital to the informed and responsible management of the Chugach National Forest.

I have lived in Alaska for most of my 76 years, and I have made numerous boating and kayaking trips to many parts of Prince William Sound, including College Fjord, Harriman Fjord, Columbia Glacier, and the areas around Cordova, Seward, and Valdez.

I feel strongly that Prince William Sound and the Wilderness Study Area are among the most spectacular wild places in Alaska, which ranks them among the greatest parts of America's entire natural heritage. This also places the Chugach National Forest and Nellie Juan-College Fjord Wilderness Study Area among the most outstanding wild areas on earth.

The Chugach National Forest embodies all the reasons why the designation of National Public Lands is among the highest, most valuable achievements of American democracy.

I have a few specific comments on the Chugach National Forest Plan Revision:

1) WILDERNESS: Most importantly, I support Alternative D for the Nellie Juan-College Fjord Wilderness Study Area. This portion of the Chugach is eminently qualified for permanent Wilderness status, and let me say that after nearly 40 years of study, a formal Wilderness designation is long overdue.

2) SNOW MACHINES: The Plan Revision allows continued use of snow machines in most of the Chugach. Unfortunately, large numbers of responders to the Plan mistakenly assert that the Plan would close areas where snow machine access has been--and will remain--open. The Forest Service is not responsible for this incorrect assumption, but it is extremely important that the Forest Service immediately notify the public that major areas of the Chugach will be open for snow machines under the revised Plan.

3) PROTECTING WILD CHARACTER: The Chugach National Forest and its Wilderness Study Area are wonderfully situated for access by people from Alaska's largest population center, and they are readily accessible to visitors from all over the world. While this is fortunate indeed, it also raises the possibility that the wild character of the Chugach could be compromised by crowding and damaged by over-use. This is especially true in popular areas such as Blackstone Bay. It is also true where black bear hunters create semi-permanent camps and attract bears with bait. Not only do they leave messy debris in some of these places, they also create serious danger for people who camp nearby without realizing that bears are being attracted by bait stations. For these reasons, it is extremely important to have ongoing, systematic monitoring of human activities and impacts. This is particularly vital in the Nellie Juan-College Fjord Wilderness Study Area, where monitoring is mandated by policy.

Thank you so much for your attention to this submission. Again, I am profoundly grateful to the Forest Service for developing this plan and providing the opportunity for public input.

Sincerely

Richard K. Nelson