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Organization: Chugach Adventures

Title: Owner/Operator/Guide

Comments: Thank you for taking my comments. These comments are specific to an Outfitter Guide Service Company Owner/Operator. I believe the indirect benefits that OGS companies provide to the broader Chugach National Forest are many, as our shared adventures and our marketing efforts to the larger world get people out into the Chugach and increase recreation on a bigger scale.

Amendments to Permits:

As a outfitter guide service companies (OGS), we are dependent on management practices that allow amendments to existing permits that are in good standing. Additionally, as tourism in Alaska grows constraining existing permits will prevent many people the opportunity to recreate & experience their national forests; as OGS companies are the gateway for many visitors & locals to get into the Chugach National Forest. The amendment process should be done in a timely manner; although management decisions specific to amendments that are outside the normal operating realm should be addressed with any & all effected OGS companies, in the specific operating area where such amendments are requested.

Outfitter Guide Service Companies as Collaborative Partners:

This management plan should specifically identify OGS companies as collaborators in the vision and strive to collaborate as much as possible with OGS companies. Guide Service companies have a clear understanding of the specific areas that they operate in, more so than most all other users & even USFS rangers, so any opportunities for the forest service to collaborate with OGS companies should occur. More collaboration with OGS companies will provide insights for best management decisions & practices that will enable responsible development & enable more users (both guided and unguided public) the opportunity to explore and recreate in the Chugach National Forest.

Specifically, in regards to the AK Railroad Whistle Stop Committee with the Chugach National Forest, there are No Outfitter service companies that are on this committee. I believe a OGS representative should be allowed to sit on this committee and the expertise from this perspective will benefit this committee & the overall development of the Whistle Stop plan. The development of the Spencer Glacier area was indirectly launched by Chugach Adventure Guides and their partnership with the AK Railroad. OGS companies have a unique perspective on the areas that they operate in and development and viability of options into the Chugach National Forest are often spearheaded by OGS companies. Offering tours and the indirect marketing efforts of OGS companies & subsequent effects with awareness, has led many local Alaskans to visit Spencer Glacier and increased the exposure of the area. More collaboration with OGS companies will only increase the exposure of the Chugach National Forest, which will have many benefits.

Fostering Collaborative Relationships is the first Goal of the Vision of the new plan, and nowhere are OGS Companies listed. I have heard of a new program with National Forests around the country for guide service companies to have user fees offset in exchange for trail maintenance and trail project support. We have pursued this with the Glacier Ranger district and hope to develop this more specific collaborative relationship with the Chugach National Forest. It will benefit the local economy, by providing seasonal work on the shoulder seasons, to guides that would otherwise have only seasonal work when tourists are here.

Additionally, OGS companies are also the gateway for local youth groups (boyscouts, school groups, church

groups, etc.) to more easily recreate in the Chugach. We often offer discounts to local Alaskan groups and out-of-state groups so that they can afford to get out into the Chugach and as a company we are open to any ideas to get more youth groups and organized groups out into the Chugach. We have traded out trail & brush clearing work improving the specific DRC (Developed Recreation Area at Spencer Glacier) for SCA crews in years past enabling them to get further out into the Chugach.

I urge this management plan to add - OGS companies to the list of Collaborative Partners.

Specific Area: Spencer Glacier (Summer Season Specific) - Non-Motorized Lake.

I urge this Management Plan to specifically address the Spencer Glacier area and to designate Spencer Lake as non-motorized. The AK Railroad provides access to Spencer Lake and there are many visitors to Spencer Lake each year, approaching 10,000+. Motorized watercraft can and do make it to the lake on many occasions and the disturbance is significant. I urge the Chugach National Forest to put up similar signs as are at Portage Lake at each of the put ins along the Seward Highway, that specifically state Spencer Lake as non-motorized to watercraft.

Tourism Business & Climate Change:

All tourism businesses should have contingencies in place and an understanding of climate change effects and retreating glaciers. Alaska is very dynamic & the effects of retreating glaciers, climate change, and extreme weather events all play a factor in how outfitter guide service companies operate successfully. Management decisions with regards to all of these environmental challenges are much appreciated & needed by OGS companies to maintain viability & success.

Thank you for taking my comments and all of your time on this plan.

Sincerely,

Ari Stiasny
Owner/Operator/Guide
Chugach Adventures