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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am opposed to any deviation from the roadless state of the Tongass National Forest as it will cause irreparable damage to numerous wild animal habitats. This forest needs to be preserved as the last wild land in the USA. With the demise of the Brazil rainforest this becomes all the more important to preserve the Tongass from damage, as the last wilderness and essential life preserver.

I oppose the Ambler Road, including all of the alternatives presented, for the following reasons:

Alternatives A and B would cross the Gates of the Arctic Preserve and the Kobuk National Wild and Scenic River, and all alternatives (A, B and C) would cross important caribou migration routes of three different caribou herds, including the Western Arctic Caribou Herd. The road could have significant negative impacts on the health of these animals, leading to a population decline that would disrupt the entire ecosystem.

The alternative A route passes in very close proximity to lands within the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Gates of the Arctic Wilderness. If built, the road would impair the area's wild character due to noise, and visual impacts such as road dust, vehicle lights during darkness, and sights of the road from numerous vantage points in the Wilderness. The close proximity would undoubtedly lead to more use and motorized intrusions into the Gates of the Arctic Wilderness.

This road would facilitate development of huge mining operations with serious risk of acid rock contamination of the Kobuk River, with a highly productive and diverse fishery crucial to humans and wildlife. Many of the mining claims in the Ambler area drain into the Kobuk River. Rivers, streams and entire watersheds in the region will be at high risk for disastrous contamination. The DEIS and the Park Service's Environmental and Economic Analysis (EEA) focus only on the road itself but fail to address the enormous issues of mining impacts.

The road is proposed to be closed to the public; however, similar promises on past projects have been broken, leading to permanent and widespread impacts from ATVs, motorboats, airstrips, and hunting and fishing pressure, all impacting wildlands, wildlife, and local traditional subsistence uses.

Once bisected by an industrial-use road, Wilderness is no longer true wilderness. The Gates of the Arctic and Kobuk River areas were set aside as Wilderness and Wild River status, and should remain so. The country's remaining tracts of Wilderness need to be preserved intact for future generations, not sacrificed for private financial gain.

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