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Comments: Alaska is a beautiful and wild state. I liked it when in 1980, Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) to preserve and protect nationally significant public land in Alaska for present and future generations. By that time, unauthorized cabins had been constructed on federal lands, inside and outside areas ANILCA subsequently designated as Wilderness.

Directed by ANILCA, in 1987 the U.S Forest Service created a program that issued special-use permits for these unauthorized cabins. These permits were renewable every five years and nontransferable, terminating upon the death of the last immediate family member of the original claimant. The intent was to phase out these cabins, nowhere more important than in Wilderness, which is managed for its wildness.

Just yesterday, I learned through Wilderness Watch that the Forest Service has an open public comment period, closing today-Friday, March 8-where it has proposed removing restrictions from these permits, including the number of times a permit for an ANILCA cabin may be reissued or who may be listed on that permit. For Wilderness, these changes could mean generations upon generations of a persisting structure.

Cabins don't belong in designated Wilderness. I ask and strongly hope that the U.S. Forest Service must leave its policy unchanged and phase out ANILCA cabins, as was the original intent. These cabins were never meant to persist in Wilderness, and to change this policy would undermine ANILCA and the Wilderness Act.