

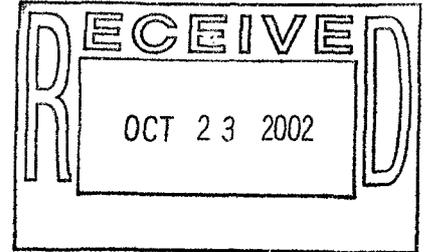


# Trail Lake Lodge

*Centrally located on the beautiful Kenai Peninsula*

October 18, 2002

Regional Forester  
USDA Forest Service, Alaska Region  
P.O. Box 21628  
Juneau, AK 99801-1628



To Whom it May Concern:

This letter is a Notice of Appeal filed pursuant to 36 CFR part 217, page 46 in the Record of Decision.

My name is Paul Wiest. My wife Cheryl and I are not only residents of Moose Pass, Alaska, but also are the Managing-members/owner-operators of Northern Adventures, LLC which owns and operates Trail Lake Lodge and the Kenai Peninsula Learning Center located at Mile 29.5, Seward Hwy, Moose Pass, Alaska, 99631-0005. Our telephone number is (907) 288-3101. We purchased this business on March 1, 2002 with a primary business objective of remaining open to the public on a year-round basis.

The decision we are appealing is the Preferred Alternative as described in the FEIS and the resulting Revised Forest Plan, specifically areas available for motorized and non-motorized winter activities, with modifications as further described in the ROD, as stated on page 3 of the ROD. The document in which the decision is contained is the Revised Land and Resource Management Plan of the Chugach National Forest Record of Decision, R10 MB-480b. The date of the decision was May 31, 2002 and the Deciding Officer is Regional Forester Dennis E. Bschor.

The specific portion of the document to which we object is the closing of the Crescent Lake/ Carter Lake area to all winter motorized use, the closing of areas along the Sterling Highway and Seward Highway from Cooper Landing to Summit Lake and Moose Pass to all winter motorized use, the closing of Trail River Campground south of Moose Pass to all winter motorized use, the closing of the area north of Summit Lake to all winter motorized use, and the closing of Russian Lakes Trail to Aspen Flats Cabin to all winter motorized use.

The closing of the above public lands to winter motorized vehicle usage will have a dramatic negative impact on our principal business in a number of ways. Operators of these vehicles have been a primary source of Winter revenue historically for the lodging and restaurant businesses at Trail Lake Lodge in past years. Indeed, knowledge of this fact was crucial in our decision for me to give up my corporate career of 29 years and risk everything we owned in order to purchase this property.

We currently employ up to 20 people during the summer months at Trail Lake Lodge and a minimum of 8 people during the Winter months due in large measure to the anticipated customer traffic flow brought in by snow machiners. Our sincere objective for this coming Winter has been to increase customer traffic flow into our facility through a state-wide advertising campaign, thereby creating even more off-season revenue

**Trail Lake Lodge**

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and job opportunities for local residents. Our primary concern is that the loss of this Winter revenue will certainly lead to our inability to remain open and operational during the Winter months at a minimum, while continuing to service our fixed cost debt. Additionally, this revenue loss will create a financial hardship that will eventually lead to the complete year-round closing of our facility due to our inability to at least break even financially during cool weather seasons.

Far too many area businesses close completely during the Winter months currently. Small businesses such as ours and others in the Moose Pass/Summit Lake and Cooper Landing communities want and need other businesses to survive and continue to provide year-round wages, goods and services to the resident population. The State of Alaska thrives when it's local communities thrive through this synergy. The load on the state's Unemployment Insurance is reduced while Borough and Municipal Sales Tax revenues are increased along with State Income taxes.

To the best of my knowledge, the communities most affected by the areas closed to motorized vehicles proposed in March of 2001 were not contacted or involved in the final stages of the Revision process. Referring to the final EIS Chapter 6, page 2, top paragraph: "Follow-up Meetings: As a follow-up the interdisciplinary team (ID Team) held a meeting in each of the communities on the Kenai Peninsula. Meetings were conducted in Anchorage, Girdwood, Seward, Soldotna, and Hope in March 2001." I know of no meetings held in the most highly effected communities of Moose Pass and Cooper Landing in March 2001. The meeting in Seward (30 miles from Moose Pass) was not well advertised, and therefore not well attended. The public had no other way to find out that major changes were being proposed nor were there any further drafts released for formal comment.

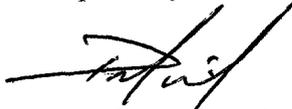
References:

**EIS 3-508 (This means the Environmental Impact Statement, chapter 3 page 508):** "The opinions of potentially affected residents are an important consideration in the planning decision"

**36 CFR (Code of Federal Regulation) 219.12 Collaboration and cooperatively developed landscape goals.** This regulation states: "The responsible official must provide early and frequent opportunities for people to participate openly and meaningfully in planning taking into account the diverse roles, jurisdictions, and responsibilities of interested and affected organizations, groups, and individuals."

For the reasons listed above at a minimum, we believe that the current decision to close areas surrounding Moose Pass, Cooper Landing and Summit Lake is Arbitrary and Capricious and we are seeking relief from any and all government regulatory agencies having jurisdiction over this matter in the form of a decision reversal and/or compromise decision that does not adversely effect our local communities. One such compromise worth consideration would be to keep open the more popular snow machine areas including the Crescent/Carter Lake trail, Trail River Campground, all areas along the Seward & Sterling Highways between Cooper Landing-Summit Lake & Moose Pass and Russian Lakes Trail while closing less popular snow machining destinations such as the less popular Mt. Alice area near Seward.

Respectfully Submitted,



Paul Wiest, Managing Member  
Trail Lake Lodge  
Moose Pass, Alaska

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