



**File Code:** 1900/1950-3

**Date:** August 15, 2007

Dear Friend of the Chugach,

On behalf of the Chugach National Forest, I would like to offer heartfelt thanks to all of you who contributed so meaningfully to the conclusion of the Kenai Winter Access project. I am pleased to provide you a copy of the Kenai Winter Access Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision. The decision I have made took into account all the valuable comments you have made throughout this collaborative effort and attempted to strike a balance between desire, interest and opportunity.

I have selected the Modified Preferred Alternative as described in the FEIS. It establishes a carefully thought through mix of winter activities on the Seward Ranger District that responds to the diversity of community and citizen interests. Although the Seward Ranger District offers valuable winter recreation opportunities across a large landscape, mountainous topography often confines the mix of activities into valley bottoms and non-forested areas with abundant snow. This decision is responsive in addressing this mix of motorized and non-motorized activities, addressing user safety, and creating opportunities for a range of interests. In addition, it assures that rural communities retain connections to traditional lifestyle activities on the public land surrounding them.

Some of the key elements of my decision include: increasing non-motorized areas in the Summit, Russian, Snow River, and Tiehack/Mt Alice units; designating the entirety of the Carter/Crescent, Hope, and Ptarmigan/Grant and the majority of the Lost Lake, Johnson Pass, and Tern Lake units for motorized use; and, alternating motorized and non-motorized use in the Resurrection and West Resurrection units annually. That is, one year both the Resurrection and West Resurrection units would be motorized, generally from December 1 through April 30, and the next year both units would provide non-motorized opportunities. A full description of the decision can be found in the enclosed Record of Decision.

My decision has also approved a non-significant amendment to the Forest Plan. Significance under the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) differs from the term significance under the National Environmental Policy Act. In amending a Forest Plan, significance is dependant on an analysis of four factors: 1) timing; 2) location and size; 3) goals, objectives and outputs; and 4) management prescriptions. I have evaluated each of these factors and have determined that the changes that will be made to the Forest Plan as a result of the change in the winter motorized access plan on the Kenai Peninsula are not significant at the Forest Plan scale.

As part of the implementation of this decision, we are planning a series of open house meetings in local communities this fall to discuss the selected alternative and plans for its implementation this winter season. Details on times, dates and locations will be announced soon. We hope you will take the opportunity to join us.



Thank you again for all your hard work in helping us reach a decision which we think will work for everyone. Additional information regarding this action, including a printed copy of the FEIS and ROD, can be obtained from the following address:

Chugach National Forest Supervisor's Office  
3301 C St., Suite 300  
Anchorage, AK 99503-3998  
(907) 743-9500

The FEIS and ROD can also be viewed and downloaded from the Chugach National Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach>.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Joe L. Meade*  
JOE L. MEADE  
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure