

**Kenai Winter Access Collaborative Learning Workshop**  
**Chugach National Forest**  
**Moose Pass School, Moose Pass**  
**2/23/05**

NOTE: The comments below are displayed almost verbatim from the documents received from the public at the above-mentioned workshop. We did leave out words or sentences that were illegible and tried to correct any misspelled words. The numbers identified at the beginning of some statements below refer to the numbered items in the document handed out at the workshop entitled: "Kenai Winter Access Constraints, Assumptions, and Reference Points - - - 22 February 2005". This document is available on the project website: [www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/news\\_releases/kenai\\_workshop/kenaiworkshop1.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/news_releases/kenai_workshop/kenaiworkshop1.html)

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Snowmachine area is also open to skiing & snow machine and should stay open to both.

Skiers & snowshoes have use of the Carter Lake Area early season & Late Season without snowmachines Oct., Nov., and May. So the area is already split.

Carter Lake Trail was built by miners using dozers – this was not built by the Forest Service. It is currently wide enough for both skiers & snowmachiners to use at the same time.

As a local small business owner, my B&B needs snowmachiners. Closing the area to snow machiners takes money out of my pocket & the KPB taxes.

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# 5 – There are NO CFR Reg. to close an area due to noise. IE, the Forest Service can't regulate quite areas. There is NO wilderness on the Chugach N.F. Only Congress can create wilderness not local managers or Forest Supervisors. Congress has decided not to do this for a reason. No area on the Chugach N.F. is closed to skiing or snowshoeing. Areas that are open to

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#### Planning Assumptions

#4. The Seward R.D. has the largest trail system in the State of Alaska!

#7. Comparing this Forest issue with other agencies and their solutions is like comparing apples and oranges. Different agencies have different missions and manage lands for very different end results. Bad comparison.

#12. 80% is a very misleading percentage. How much of this land is actually navigable?

#18. \_ This is simply stupid \_ separation of tracks is a bit intense.

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Using the Law Enforcement Incident Reporting System request and inquire on the number of reports of snowmachine verses skiers problems. You can get this information from the Chugach National Forest Patrol Captain Barry Maijala at 907-743-9578. The number might surprise you.

Check your facts on number of trails-motorized 639 & nonmotorized 230, for 869 miles of Forest Trails – I don't think so. How many are of Federal lands? Are you counting state land & private land trail?

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- I do not believe that a time-share will be accepted by the local residents.
  - Why is the only accessible cabin on the SRD closed to motorized access?
  - With all the closures in other areas, refuge, Chugach State Park to motorized use; it doesn't make sense to us to limit access that has been available forever.
  - Why can't we limit Horse Power of snowmachines to reduce noise and limit high marking? I don't appreciate the extra noise either (as a snowmachiners)
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I thought that part of the FS mission was to save communities and utilize local knowledge in the management of the Forest. Apparently serving communities means developing the areas surrounding communities so that others use is enhanced, and then limiting the historical traditional uses of the Forest for community residents. Community support seems to mean development when as I thought it meant or should mean providing for supporting community values and setting.

Traditional access is snowmachine should remain the same as it has been since this became a state.

If we need more "quiet areas" these should be new areas. You want to develop (increase) access to areas.

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#6. Not True a motorized/nonmotorized decision made already

#7. (PA) Our management should reflect adjacent land (of NPS says not snowmobile, and we say yes, we are setting up a situation.

#20. Late winter months will critical access as low elevation get melted but high to good snow – is problem – a solution is better parking high elevation

#21. More cabins could be used to draw users into an area.

#22. (PA) Not True

#24. Moose Pass is going to be studied this year for subsistence

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- Time-share of the Carter-Crescent Area is amazingly distasteful to me.

- The Forest is 100% open to non-motorized use – still some complain their experience isn't "good enough" and they need more – maybe those people need to ski on a weekday. I'm expected to share with others – they should be as well.
  - Perhaps limit the horsepower of machines in certain areas
  - As a person with a small child, the only way I can get to certain areas with her is by snowmachine
  - Access to Barber Cabin (the only accessible on SRD) is nonmotorized – this should be adjusted so it has motorized access at least part of the time.
  - No helicopter anywhere on SRD
  - Just because people can pay they shouldn't be able to buy special access to the Forest or have areas closed, i.e. Heli-skiing, Skate-skiing
  - These meetings + their outcome are pivotal to future FS + Moose Pass community relations – if the community feels listened to + as though they were legitimately, honestly heard + validated in the final decision, projects hanging in the wing(s) may not have to pass "the test of fire from the no noise crowd."
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On your planning assumption #6, you stated that "As motorized uses have. Expand there has been a certain amount of displacement of nonmotorized user's from areas traditionally used (from FEIS, page 3-358) but you fail to mention that what Forest Service did on Forest Plan, really displaced motorized user from their traditional area and made it non motorized. Who's getting displaced from what?"

Comment on planning assumption # 12,13 Forest Plan never addresses the Natural Condition's that occurs on the Chugach N.F. Past 4 years; Twenty mile Valley was open only 1 month for motorized use and Placer River only 2 season's. I have personally cross-country skied, skated, snow-shoed, and snowmachined on these areas. I am sure I have used these areas as more than most people and yet I hardly run across any other person in recreation except snowmachining.

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- 1) Americans with Disabilities rights of handicapped to enjoy the Forest?
  - 2) There is no shortage of "quiet" areas now – why does this group need Carter - Crescent?  
It is one of very few close family accessible day trip areas
  - 3) Consider horsepower restrictions on snowmachines?
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## II. Planning Assumptions

#6 – What about impacts to animals? As issues raise by non-motorized users to motorized users

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- Please provide sitters next time
  - Put the whole Forest on a timeout for winter use until we can come to a civilized agreement
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- ❖ Cut through a lot of BS & limit # of meetings & time. It's difficult to keep attending numerous meetings & voicing the same concerns, ideas many many times.

- ❖ Hope you guys really think you can help with this issue. Are you familiar with the Heli-ski issue? Read the letter of opinion in the Friday issue of Anchorage Daily News Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> (2005) by Rick Smerligio. The letter states the facts of what M.P. has been through recently.
  - ❖ Correspondence via email would be helpful. You need answers for various aspects of Kenai Winter Motorized plan send out your questions & I can send answers, ideas much easier than attending meetings.
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In theory – talking to the local kids is great. But at previous meetings when kids spoke up FS team personnel mentioned they were prepared for kids to try tugging at heartstrings.

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- Next meeting/Child care
  - Next meeting/one-hour meeting
  - Next meeting/not at dinner time, make it 7:00 - 8:00
  - Next meeting/Easy outlines to read
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### Assumptions

#2. Conflict – also includes backcountry touring, a different experience from cross-country skiing.

#3. In the winter, backcountry ski touring (not cross-country skiing) draws large amounts of visitors as well.

#6. As motorized use increases (given more range in newer motorized technologies) the possibility of human power endeavors being unable to escape the realm of motorized users exists.

#7. Limiting motorized use could be done by utilizing a permit based use system.

#9. Carter-Crescent is of minor concern to dedicated backcountry big mountain skiers, given it to the community.

#10. Closing the east side of the highway from Johnson Pass T.H. (south) would give backcountry ski tourers a high quality experience, currently interrupted by snowmachiners

#13. Sections

- 1) Summit
- 2) Lake area (most desirable on-motorized area for backcountry skiers, 20-mile is a motorized area)
- 3) South + North Fork of Snow River
- 4) Lost Lake
- 5) Trail Glacier
- 6) Any thing
- 7) East of Seward Highway

#14. The reach of snowmachines is unlimited, because they have engines, does not mean they need unlimited reign to “pillage” the backcountry, why does the Forest see the need to cater to a loud and obnoxious industry. (?)

#17. Seems awfully hard to enforce. Snow machiners put enormous amounts of stress on the snow pack, making mountainous terrain & skiers + snowmachiners => dangerous

#18. I do not see enough use to bring about conflict in this area.

#19. Time frame sum does seem to monopolize winter (with sun) use for the snow machiners. (sum & sun may = Sunday?)

#22. How about March 15<sup>th</sup>

#23. Doesn't seem very “wild” or “natural.”

#25. Motorized is motorized; Heli's have motors – don't they? Seems unfair to allow helicopters and not let snow machines! Since they are both motorized.

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Non-motorized access to Crescent Saddle Cabin could be gained by putting a trail in from Trail River Campground along Kenai Lake and up through the saddle.

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#2. Back Country Skiers

#13. Summit Lake Area on to Manitoba

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It is important to reach conclusion by 2005-2006 winter season.

Decision should be enforceable

Separation of access trails to common use areas could avoid many problems (see back of card)

Time-share for Carter/Crescent is not viable due to year to year weather changes

Develop new areas for nonmotorized use rather than displace traditional users

Carter/Crescent is surrounded by communities changing access to these areas has affected the greatest number of people

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- We would like the Old Sterling Highway to be open to snowmachine use as well as Summit Lake to use this as a family & to reach other towns
- Moose Pass residents haven't had time or energy to address the substance classification. We are full of FS letters & appeals. It would take more time than all of us have at this moment. (Ref. to #24). Moose Pass should be “rural”

- Solution: Carter/Crescent let (non-machines) up from Nov-Jan. Snow machines from Feb-March so we can ice fish & enjoy family time. A family can't ski up Carter Lake unless you're Nina Kempell.
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## Constraints

#5 I believe enforcement to be permanent – but I'm not convinced that it is entirely possible. Especially with *regrets* (?) helicopters

#6 Heli-ski operations + Iditarod + possible hut to hut operations need to be considered as well, esp. with residents areas that are road accessible e.g. Ascension Peak, N. Fork of Snow River

Anchorage user's *regrets* (?) be brought into the discussion because they probably outnumber Peninsula users on weekends, esp. with regards to high use areas.

#6. The first sentence needs to be more strongly worded to the point that motorized users displace non-motorized users, but not vice versa. But also although if snow machines are limited in numbers in certain areas (large areas) both groups could use an area.

#7. Although Kenai Fjords NP has somewhat limited motorized winter use, and adjustment should be made that snowmachiners still allowed in the Park, especially the limitations.

#13. 1. Lost Lake, 2. Res. Pass, 3. S. Fork

#7. Not limited motorized recreation will continue to displace non-motorized users

#14. Because snowmachiners can travel farther, prime spots near the highway should be available for more non-motorized activities

#12. I think this 80% number was totally made up. I would like to see a breakdown of which trailheads, stream valleys, e.g. travel corridors are open to which users for a better breakdown of accessible areas

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- Why do Cooper Landing & Hope get a rural designation for subsistence and Moose Pass doesn't?
- With sharing the trails, motorized and nonmotorized users need to be more knowledgeable of trail etiquette and common sense safety issues - a better plan for informing both groups of these issues would help both groups use the same areas simultaneously.

## Assumptions:

- #1 projects an increase in recreation and tourism to South-Central Alaska – this generates dollars to the local economy which is much needed during winter months. Any motorized closures deeply affect this.
- Consider additional trails for access to more remote areas of the Forest to aid in spreading out the different users groups.

- #13 States that Johnson Pass is one of the five most desirable areas for nonmotorized use – in several “motorized” trips to the area this winter, I have never seen a single skier.
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#### Planning assumptions:

- #2 & 4 talk of conflict + major conflicts between skiers + snowmachiners. In the 15+ years using the trail system I was unaware of any major conflict. Where is the data or complaints?
- #12 where does the 80% come from? What is the actual area that can be accessed from the road corridor? What is the real ratio of useable land between motorized + non-motorized?
- #21 cabins are available to non-motorized all year. How many are available to motorized usage after Feb. 15?

#### Thoughts + Ideas:

- Would like to see the Res. Pass open all winter to everyone, or, alternate the motorized closure every other year. Dec-Feb, one year, Feb-Apr next year
  - More equitable time + land use for motorized and non-motorized users. Multiple use should not discriminate.
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Many of the non-motorized users I’ve talked to don’t mind most snowmachiners – it is the obnoxious – “fast” snowmachiners that are not considerate + make non-motorize fear for their safety

Resurrection Pass is closed later \_ of winter – open Carter/Crescent for last \_ winter

Carter/Crescent – open to skiers the 1<sup>st</sup> \_ of winter when Res. Pass is closed to skiers.

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#### I. Planning Constraints

#4 You have stated “Major Conflicts” over Access! Where is the documentation for this? Is a verbal complaint valid? We have asked but seems like the answer is hear say!

#5 Determines weather the access plan can be “effective complete and enforcement are not feasible.” – I would like the input for this to be discussed with public because these could be ways to better enforce the accesses.

#6 The deferred “exploratory area in the Heli-Ski Permit. Snow River will apparently be involved with the Carter/Crescent issue – am I not right in thinking this?

#9 I don’t believe that Carter/Crescent is a “high quality recreation area for nonmotorized users. The trail access off the Seward Highway is not ski friendly going up and down. A large amount of the valley floor is “avalanche area.” This is not skiing friendly. I feel other areas would be deemed “high quality.”

#11 This is an unfortunate decision for Moose Pass residents suffer – those who have traditionally use Carter/Crescent area. Many a small child has learned to ice fish, hunt Ptarmigan in this area – sadly no more – It is a wonderful short ride up for a family outing

#13 This verifies my number 9 comment.

#19 I hate timeshare/split seasons, although every other weekend I could digest but if its months I couldn't!

#25 Something to consider: Think about: Helicopter based recreation is for the financially “well off” which is a small segment of local + visitor population use.

By allowing/opening areas to snowmachine use – more people (larger segment of population –has access to “their” natural forestlands.

Time-share would work OK – not on a yearly basis. User could not get any use because of bad weather ex. No motor Nov-Jan, motor users Jan – March. Bad weather could wipe out one or the other

#20 Also has good merit!

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In reference to Planning Assumptions

#6 These areas are not traditionally non-motorized but in fact have along history of motorized use. This assumption gives the impression that this area is not a very well established snowmachine user area, which it most definitely is!

#8 It is not true that “limits on motorized access would provide areas for non-motorized recreation activities because the existence of motorized access does not preclude the existence of non-motorized use.”

#12 It is important to remember that **100%** of the Kenai Peninsula is available for available for non-motorized use. (Barber Cabin) In the same vein, the FS Cabin @ Crescent Saddle will not be available for a family with young children if it is not accessible to motorized winter access. There is an oil stove that would require 5 gallons of fuel to heat (over 35 pounds) that would need to be hauled up, along with other gear. This is impossible for a family without a snowmachine.

I want my son to be able to go up to Carter/Crescent and ice fish with his dad as he grows up. This will only happen if this area remains open to snowmachine use, as it always has been (before FS Plan).

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Conduct a survey among groups + individuals who oppose motorized use in these areas to find out if these folks have ever used these areas or are they opposed to all motorized uses in all areas.

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Regarding #11:

- If you are going to close an area to snowmachines, pick an area further away from such a high – locally used area, Snow River, or areas North of Summit?

- Time-sharing might be ok if it was 2/3 motorized and 1/3 non-motorized. (less than 1/3 of the users are Non-motorized)
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#5 Are you talking about strict enforcement?

How is it possible and is it necessary in this situation.

I believe that the majority of Forest users have a common courtesy and decency to abide by the rules and be considerate of other Forest users of the Forest.

Example: Carter/Crescent is divided into a 2-sided user-friendly area with our enforcement officials available – do I think strict enforcement can be accomplished? No! But, I believe the greater percentage of users can be amicable? Yes!

Give us some credit and don't penalize us for the few who can't.

II.

#2. What conflicts – could you be specific? Are they physical endangerment, noise, visual beauty? Can they be resolved by varied time usage, separated areas, etc? Just how serious are they? Life will never be a perfect model for any of us, but if the conflicts are minimal, we should be able to get along, especially if it benefits both parties in the user of their particular part of the Forest.

#4. Again, major conflicts? How many? Who? I have never had a conflict, I have been a resident here for 20 + years and have used the Forest year round and have never had a conflict, let alone a major one.

#5. An area for cross-country skiing only – Cooper Landing – across from Sunrise and next to the New Russian Cap Subdivision

#6. There are millions of untouched areas for those that are looking for complete solitude and quiet, do they need a trailhead to put on their skis.

#8. Again, find new areas – reference number 5.

#11. The Lost Lake area Trail is used by a different group of people looking for a different experience, fast, furious! The trail is almost inaccessible to tundra after the first couple of weeks. On top of that, it means transporting machiners etc vs. going out our back door.

#12. 80 percent available! Not possible – does include all of the unsafe, inaccessible areas.

Additional Comment: Possible area to develop for skiing only – in Seward area – out past the Old Mill Subdivision there is an old trail that would not work for snowmachines.

Warren Hass in Seward has more information

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This is a small turnout for Moose Pass people are burned out! Everything done tonight I could have done via email, hard copy. Whatever! Have some one call all residents and get email addresses. Send stuff out – I can sit and write better at home. Thanks guys!

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Only a handful of Moose Pass residents attended tonight's meeting. On the other hand, thousands of people sent comments during forest planning process with many ideas concerns, knowledge on areas, information that was relevant to Forest Plan process but was mostly ignored by then District Ranger Mike Kania.

You are planning meetings that few folks will attend. Look over what you already have please.

#6. I don't think this is so if anything there is more area available for non-motorized use. However, these non-motorized areas are not utilized much because of too deep of snow. The Forest Service needs to look at grooming areas such as Grayling Lakes area, Devil's Creek area. These areas are untouched in winter yet they are designated as non-motorized. Prefect area for some to ski in addition to Manitoba (doesn't need grooming but could use a cabin) and Res. Pass Trail after Feb. 15.

This is quite irritating, one again I want to emphasize pulling out the comments and ideas generated during the Forest Planning process. You will get a lot of ideas and feelings for this project.

#20 If areas were on a time-share would be fair to alternate years rather than months. Res. Pass Trail after Feb 15 can be horrible with many bumps from snow-gos. It can ruin an experience even with out motors.

#22 Lost Lake – close Lost Lake Trail Head to snow-go. Access too good alpine skiing is within 2 miles. There's a cabin 1.5 miles up. Close this trail in March when quite often the trail should not be ridden down low because of bare ground.

#18 People don't very often read signs especially in winter, they don't register often and don't stop at bulletin boards.

#6 Sorry, but what happened to learning to get a long. I don't sympathize with someone who can't learn to share. Send them back to pre-school.

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#4 The area around Trail River has been used for recreation involving motorized use without negative impact. A multi use trailhead for a new trail (see#1) is possible. See the Iditarod National Historic Trail at north- Johnson Pass.

#5 Item #11 was only a "trade" in a few people's minds. This was not a publicly debated idea.

#6 Process should be weighted towards local needs.

#7 What, who, when, are the conflicts.

#8 The 1984 Plan for this area should be re-instituted.

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Planning assumptions:

#5 Stand out as the root of solution. Mills Creek while closed to motorized recreation has no use or access trail, yet offers greater area, variety of slopes and would not Displace Generations of Multiple use advocates from the Carter/Crescent area.

Carter/Crescent has fish and birds for hunting and fishing and is easy to bring children to on day trips.

#12 80% open to motorized use? Topographic limits all uses to a very small part of the whole area with the exception of Extreme users from motorized and nonmotorized. We are all trying to use the same areas.

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#12 “80% is available” doesn’t imply 80% usable or accessible.

#13 Who defined this area? Johnson Pass is a long trail with no cabins, making a very tough nonmotorized trek. Again, 20 Mile is not on Kenai.

#17 Doesn’t work

#19 It’s not the area, it’s the access to the area that’s the issue.

#23 What’s the point? We’re not “supposed” to talk about helicopters.

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#1 Sharing the resource is best accomplished by education i.e. #23, 16, 18, etc.

#2 The Carter Crescent area is large enough to accept all users at the same time. The problem is the formal access via Carter Lake Trail that forces users to confront each other. Provide a separate trail for each user group.

#3 The Carter-Crescent area is surrounded by private and state land. The closing of this area to any single user group will result in obvious relocation of local users.

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