December 8, 2003

The following is my written testimony pertaining to the I.N.H.T. Project public meeting & ANILCA 1110 hearings.

Firstly I urge and expect the USFS to remain consistent with the current Forest Management Plan in keeping those areas closed to winter motorized use fully off-limits to recreational snow machine use.

Use of snow machines for subsistence is detrimental to the resource values in those areas closed to motorized use. These areas were set aside exclusively for non-motorized recreation (backcountry & telemark skiing at Turnagain Pass East and future groomed x-c ski trails at Grayling-Primrose). Allowing motorized use of any kind in these areas would create inconsistencies in management planning and lead to user conflicts. The sound, smell and sight of snow machines in a non-motorized ski area destroys the values of quietness, clean air and sights of nature that one expects to find in such an area.

Alternatives 2 & 4 both remain consistent with the Forest Plan. I prefer Alt. 4 which includes alternate routes for snow machines around the closed areas. I am most interested in seeing Lost Lake and Primrose Trails included in the Iditarod Plan as these trails could really use the funding for reconstruction. But I do not support Alt. 4 if it includes the construction of any new cabins.

I suggest that the USFS construct each section of trail for the most appropriate uses based on terrain and management area guidelines. Not all sections need to be built to accommodate snow machines.

Finally I urge the USFS not to include the construction of any new cabins in the INHT Plan, especially on Johnson Pass Trail as this is the only long-distance trail left on the Seward RD without a public cabin. Maintaining and promoting a variety of recreational experiences is what this District should continue to strive for.

In that regard having only 7.8 miles of INHT on the Seward RD for non-motorized winter use only is unfairly divided. Why not add that network of groomed ski trails to the Grayling-Primrose area as part of the INHT Project? Another area that I would like to see managed exclusively for non-motorized winter use is the new section of trail on either side of Ptarmigan Creek. This is the only part of the proposed project that would greatly alter the current nature of use. Bringing snow machines into this currently quiet area will adversely affect the neighborhood in which I live and recreate.

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