

SAR - FP - Interests - Tourism

Comment # Comment

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Thank you for providing our office with a copy of the draft EIS and proposed revisions to the Chugach Forest Plan for review. I have completed a partial review and would like to request additional information concerning the following:

1. On Page 3-439, Line 704 of the draft EIS it is noted that recreation and tourism employment in the region is projected to increase at the same rate in all alternatives over the next ten years. What is the rate of growth in recreation and tourism employment you are using and what, specifically, are those projections?
2. On Page 3-442, Line 823 of the draft EIS it is noted that recreation and tourism is projected to increase at the same rate in all alternatives over the next ten years and that the demand for dispersed recreation over the next ten years will be met in all alternatives, but that demand for developed recreation will not. Again, what are the specific projections and rate used to calculate changes in the demand for recreation and tourism in general, and specifically for dispersed and developed recreation?
3. As noted in the previous paragraph, the plan will provide a ten-year supply of opportunities for dispersed recreation. However, since this plan has a 10-15 year planning horizon and it has been at least 16 years since the last plan update, will there be an opportunity in 2010 to update the plan to reevaluate and amend the supply of opportunities for dispersed recreation to meet continued demand?
4. According to the draft EIS (Page 3-442, Line 225), there are four industries that use the forest related resources of the Chugach National Forest: commercial fishing and processing, tourism and recreation, wood products, and minerals. Information presented in Figures 3-83, 3-84, and 3-85 show that regional employment in the visitor industry (5.4-13.4%) greatly exceeds that attributable to wood products (0.1% to 1.8%). Even though the importance of the visitor industry to the local economies greatly exceeds that of wood products, a quantitative analysis of the economic impacts will only be conducted for the wood products industry. It is noted on Page 3-439, Line 714, that an impact and efficiency analysis of the visitor industry will not be conducted because geographical data concerning visitation and expenditures is not available (Page 3-439, Line 714).

We realize that there is a deficiency of tourism data in Alaska as a result of the delay in the updating of the Alaska Visitor Statistics program by the Alaska Department of Community and Economic Development. While we are currently in the process of updating that information, it will not be ready until the fall 2001. However, we completed a tourism economic impact analysis in 1998 that coupled with the data collected from commercial tourism operators through their Special Use Permits (SUP) and Actual Use Reports should be sufficient to estimate the quantitative economic impacts of changes in forest management practices to the visitor industry. Have you considered using the information collected through the SUP and the 1998 study to complete an analysis of the economic impacts to the visitor industry in the region? Do you have a copy of the 1998 Alaska Visitor Industry Economic Impact Analysis?

I look forward to your written response to these questions. If our office can provide any assistance or provide you with a copy of the 1998 Alaska Visitor Industry Economic Impact Analysis, please do not hesitate to contact me at 907-465-3961.

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Sincerely,

Aneta Synan, AICP
Tourism Planner

Cc: Ginny Fay, Department of Community and Economic Development
Rex Blazer, Division of Governmental Coordination

0026005-001 Long term wilderness tourism will totally outweigh economics of logging etc. Bears = Big bucks.

0026390-002 We want
to make sure that motorized activities, heli-skiing, and proposed resorts
do not jeopardize the wild character of these lands.

0034768-006 In general, we support increased protection from clear-cutting, mineral extraction, and the potential sprawl of
industrial tourism over that which currently exists in the revised plan.