

REVISION

chugach national forest land



DISCUSS

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NEWSLETTER

Anchorage, Alaska
Volume 9, October 2000

EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA!

PLAN AVAILABLE

Proposed Revised Forest Plan & Draft Environmental Impact Statement released

Where to get it and what to do with it...

- 1) visit any Forest Service office in Anchorage, Seward, Cordova, or Girdwood
- 2) call (907) 271-2500
- 3) visit the Revision website at:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugachrevision/index.htm>
- 4) visit our interactive website at:
<http://agdc.usgs.gov/cmf>
(note the above website is currently under construction and should be on-line late October 2000.)

Written comments must be postmarked by December 14, 2000 and can be mailed or delivered to:
Forest Plan Revision-ATTN Gary Lehnhausen, Chugach National Forest, 3301 'C' Street, Suite 300, Anchorage, AK 99503

email to r10_chugach_revision@fs.fed.us
fax to : (907) 271-3992

Note: The closing date published in the Federal Register of October 30, 2000 was an error that has been corrected.

Thanks

Anchorage phones in...

Dave Gibbons, Forest Supervisor

This summer I went to Washington DC and gave a variety of briefings on the Chugach Forest Plan Revision. The word has certainly spread on the openness of the process and the significant involvement by the public. I would



like to thank all of you for your hard work and effort!

A key message I took from my trip was the desire of a number of Washington office employees, to take "our" process and duplicate it on other Forests across the country. When you think about it, "our" process was developed by individuals, organizations and agency personnel in public meetings. The process did not come easy, I remember working through some pretty tough issues when diverse ideas were expressed and solutions were not obvious. I believe the open process has resulted in a great draft plan.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Revised Forest Plan hit the streets recently. We mailed copies of the draft plan to everyone who returned the postcard included in the February issue of the Revision newsletter. If you have not received a copy of the draft plan and wish to, please contact us.

In this newsletter I have asked each District Ranger to provide their thoughts on the Preferred Alternative for the Draft. I hope this will stimulate some discussion on possible changes to the preferred draft. Feel free to work with each District Ranger on ideas for specific areas or contact the planning team with your suggestions.

Our future challenge is to maintain our open process in completing the Forest Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). I am anxious to get your comments and make changes to improve the proposed revised Plan.

A 90-day comment period is set. I believe this will give adequate time for a complete review. A public meeting schedule has been developed and is included in this newsletter. I have asked the District Rangers to attend all the meetings in their communities.

Thanks



Wassup in Cordova...

Cal Baker, Cordova District Ranger

The following are my comments on the current draft preferred alternative, as it pertains to the Cordova Ranger District. My intent is to summarize some of the themes, vision and ideas that have been incorporated into the alternative, while recognizing that the public still has the opportunity to provide changes to the proposed revised Land Management Plan.

There are five overall themes that are evident in the preferred alternative for Cordova Ranger District. Taken together, these themes represent a recognition of increasing activities and uses on the District, and at the same time a desire to limit uses in some areas, and to consider long term protection for other areas. Each of these themes is discussed briefly below:

Theme 1: Manage the lower Copper River Delta much as it has been over the past years. What I overwhelmingly heard from virtually all segments of the public was a desire to "continue the course" and not markedly change the level of management activities that have been occurring on the Delta. People wanted it, for the most part, to stay the way it is for the future. On this, there is high agreement. There was significant disagreement as to how that was best accomplished, with some people favoring a wilderness recommendation, and others favoring a "501-b (2)" management prescription. The 501-b(2) prescription identified in the draft preferred alternative provides for a conservative level of future activities within the existing law, a continuation of current means of access on the Delta, and a conservative approach to future resource development options on the National Forest. It does not affect private lands located within the National Forest.

It is important to recognize that there are a number of existing private (and potentially State of Alaska) access rights, and subsurface development rights within the National Forest portion of the Copper River Delta. These valid existing rights, are not diminished by the preferred alternative, or other plan alternatives.

Theme 2: Accommodate increasing recreation uses occurring on the District and in Prince William Sound. This is reflected in a vision of the District that identifies areas that would be suitable for potential heli-ski and heli-hiking opportunities (upper west side of Copper River, some areas near Valdez, some access areas near Cordova), increasing motorized uses adjacent to communities (especially Cordova, Valdez), and increasing users in Prince William Sound (Simpson Bay, Sheep Bay, Jack Bay, and some of Port Fidalgo). Subsequent to the final Forest Plan, site specific analysis will further define areas of possible helicopter opera-

tions and permitted and prohibited motorized uses. These site specific plans are needed to define areas that may be open to motorized access, and to identify restrictions needed to protect sensitive resources in areas open to motorized use.

Theme 3: Within this environment of increasing recreation activity, identify areas that are managed with lower development, and lower amounts of recreation uses. This includes backcountry prescription areas between Valdez and Cordova, upper Port Fidalgo, and Port Gravina, most of Hawkins and Hinchinbrook Islands in Prince William Sound, and the Power Creek primitive area.

Theme 4: Emphasize fish and wildlife in a number of management areas. This includes the entire 501(b) portion of the Cordova Ranger District, regardless of management prescription, and Montague Island. In these areas, the conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitat was identified as a priority by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act and/or the importance of fish and wildlife resources of the area.

In summary, the preferred alternative represents a relatively conservative approach, which does not dramatically change management direction for most areas on the District.

Theme 5: Identify limited numbers of special designations on the District. These include recommending Olsen Bay and Copper Sands as new Research Natural Areas, Scenic River Status for the Martin

River, and 501(b) Recommended Wilderness on the east side of the Copper River. The Childs Glacier 40 acre block of National Forest is recommended for a developed recreation prescription. In addition, land on the District that became National Forest through Exxon Valdez Oil Spill (EVOS) acquisition is managed according to specific covenants and rules that were part of the acquisition requirements.

In summary, the preferred alternative represents a relatively conservative approach, which does not dramatically change management direction for most areas on the District. It is one of status quo in some areas, recognizing and accommodating limited change in other areas, and starting to consider long-term protection for additional areas. It does recognize that change is occurring, and public uses of the land and water are increasing. It attempts to accommodate, and direct those uses to certain areas, while maintaining the wild character of the District.

I encourage everyone to provide input to the Forest Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Regardless of whether you favor, or oppose items in these documents, we need to hear from you. We can use your feedback to further refine the preferred alternative, or to change it, and display the effects of the final preferred alternative. Many of you have already provided comments. I encourage you to look at your issues and concerns and stay involved in the process. My email address is cobaker@fs.fed.us and my phone number is 907 424-7661. It is YOUR National Forest.

Gabbin' with Glacier...

Thanks

Deidre St. Louis, Glacier District Ranger

The Glacier Ranger District encompasses approximately 2.5 million acres of the Chugach National Forest. Most of the District lies in western Prince William Sound with the remainder surrounding the east end of Turnagain Arm and up to Turnagain Pass.



The recent opening of the Whittier Access Road will result in increased numbers of people accessing Prince William Sound, new developments, and new types of uses. The prescriptions for this area is to allow for limited development on National Forest System lands near Whittier to allow greater numbers of people to enjoy the area, while affording protection to the resources. This was done by using the "backcountry" prescription within about 30 miles of Whittier. Developments within the 30 mile area would be rustic and blend in with the rugged landscape. Facilities would include rustic campgrounds, public use cabins, day use facilities, and viewing sites. This allows for "hardening" sites with some type of rustic development, and concentrating use where it can be withstood. Other areas, typically those less accessible, would provide more opportunities for solitude, and would have fewer developments. Embedded in all the prescriptions are capacity guidelines that will help establish use limits for outfitter-guides and the public.

Currently, most of this area is managed as Wilderness Study area. It will remain as such until Congress designates some, none, or all of it as Wilderness.

Beyond the 30 mile distance from Whittier, most of the area is recommended as Wilderness in the Preferred Alternative, to protect the existing primitive character of the area. Future management would be very similar to current management. Exceptions to recommended Wilderness include: 1) Knight Island, where mineral development potential is favorable, 2) Main Bay area, where a fish hatchery is located, along with almost 20 set net camps, 3) Areas south of Chenega Bay, to accommodate some development by the Village of Chenega Bay, and 4) Glacier Island, where people from Tatitlek acquire house logs.

The northeast portion of the district, near Valdez, was designated "backcountry motorized" to allow for helicopter skiing, glacier landings, and other helicopter assisted outfitter-guide activities.

The remainder for the Glacier Ranger District encompasses the valley above Girdwood, Twentymile, Portage and Placer Rivers, and the Turnagain Pass area. The main change from current management is to establish some locations and/or times that people could find quiet in the winter. To do this the following changes were made 1) the Skookum Glacier and Winner Creek areas would be closed to snowmachines, but open to helicopters, 2) Seattle Creek, Kern and Peterson Creeks, Bear Valley, and National Forest System lands along Crow Creek Road to Crow Pass would be non-motorized, 3) the Twentymile River Drainage

would be closed to snowmachines every other year, and 4) snowmachine use along the Seward Highway from Ingram Creek to the Sterling Highway would be open from December 1-March 31 annually.

Areas remaining open to snowmachines include Twentymile River every other year, Placer River drainage (with the exception of Skookum Glacier), the west side of Turnagain Pass, and the Johnson Pass Trail.

To respond to the concern that summer helicopter tours could exceed acceptable levels, helicopter tours would be allowed to land only in the Placer River and Eagle Glacier areas.

I expect that these proposed changes to winter use restrictions will be controversial. In particular I am looking for suggestions from people on more palatable ways to provide locations and/or times that provide for quiet recreation in winter. I would like to hear any suggestions you have to improve the Preferred Alternative. My email address is dstlouis@fs.fed.us and my phone number is 907 754-2317.

Interactive Compact Disc Available



Three years ago, a small group of people working on the Chugach plan revision had an idea to provide environmental documents with interactive resource maps on compact discs. The idea was fairly simple—yet the task took a lot more time than any of us imagined. We believe the wait was worth it, the product is wonderful! It will help people easily access much more information about the Forest than ever before. This product is a prototype being developed by a partnership between the Chugach National Forest, Environmental Systems Research Inc., and United States Geological Survey. It is being reviewed by the USDA Forest Service for application across the country; however, it is a "draft," a first time on the street application. We have spent numerous hours testing the application, but no doubt you will find errors and glitches; therefore, we would like to hear from you about everything you find, what works and what doesn't. A feedback form has been developed and is available on the Revision website (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/revision>). Your input will be used to complete the final product. It will be available with the final Forest Plan, this winter. We want to take the time and space here to thank the employees from Environmental Systems Research Inc. for their efforts in making this application possible, especially Gary Sherman and John Stroud. Their programming work on this project has been phenomenal.

If you need any instructions on running the CD please contact Alan Vandiver at 271-2474 or Gary Lehnhausen at 271-2560.

Sent from Seward...

Thanks

Michael Kania, Seward District Ranger

I have been asked to summarize how the Draft Forest Plan Preferred Alternative for the Chugach National Forest would affect the Seward Ranger District, and what changes one might expect to see over the next ten years. There will be changes on the Seward Ranger District, and I hope that these changes meet your expectations on how you feel that the forest should be managed.



Perhaps the primary change on the Seward Ranger District will be a focus toward recreation, wildlife and fisheries. While there will still be significant opportunities for other forest uses, such as house logs and personal use firewood and timber, much of our investment in time and money will be spent in improving the habitat conditions for fish and wildlife and in rebuilding our recreation infrastructure. The Seward Ranger District has a key role in making the Chugach a premier National Forest in recreation, fish, and wildlife.

We are prepared to make a significant investment in improving our recreation facilities on the Seward Ranger District. Most of our developed recreation sites are of the mid 60s era and badly in need of a face-lift. Few campgrounds are accessible to motor homes and the larger travel trailers that are now commonplace. In addition, few of our facilities are accessible to those with disabilities. My proposal is to rebuild all of our older facilities within a ten-year period. This reconstruction would include expansions of Primrose, Cooper Creek, Ptarmigan, and Trail River Campgrounds, as well as several trailheads. New construction could include a whistle-stop campground located near Trail Glacier as well a new trail on Exit Glacier Road. Our backcountry cabin system is in need of repair and reconstruction. New cabins are proposed and many others are proposed for heavy maintenance. Our trail system is perhaps the best in the state, and we are proposing to add a number of new trails on the Seward Ranger District.

We have similar opportunities in managing fish and wildlife habitat. Much of our spruce forest on the District has been heavily damaged by bark beetles. We plan to treat 400 acres/year of infested stands, mostly adjacent to existing roads. Some of our salmon streams have been impacted by channelization and fish habitat has been compromised. We hope to embark on an ambitious program to create the best conditions for fish and wildlife as we possibly can. This effort will require intensive management and investments on portions of the district, particularly along anadromous streams and riparian habitats. We have allocated large areas of the district for fish and wildlife conservation and for the enhancement of habitat for brown bears. We need to be particularly careful in making future management decisions in these areas. Our world-class wildlife and fisheries habitat, places like the Kenai and Russian Rivers, need to be protected and allowed to thrive.

I would particularly like to emphasize the watchable wildlife program. We have so many opportunities to invite the public to see our fish and wildlife on the Seward Ranger District, and I hope we can provide a Dall Sheep viewing site, a mountain goat observation site and a salmon viewing platform in the near future.

Currently the Seward Ranger District is predominately motorized in the winter. The Preferred Alternative would maintain a primary emphasis of summer non-motorized and winter motorized although additional areas are identified for non-motorized winter use. You may have noticed that we have tried to create opportunities for non-motorized use (cross-country skiing, snowshoeing etc.) by limiting motorized use in several areas. It is hoped that the Forest could provide skiing opportunities for the local school programs, as well as for individuals. By using our existing trailheads and by building winter trails, we could provide skiing opportunities for the local communities on the Kenai Peninsula. I believe that we have good locations near Seward and near the Sterling Highway cutoff for a system of cross-country ski trails, as well as for access to higher touring terrain. The additional non-motorized areas would result in the Kenai Peninsula portion of the Forest having ninety percent motorized access and ten percent non-motorized access.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is on the street. No doubt there will be changes between the Draft and the Final Plan. The Draft Preferred Alternative does not include the following ideas although I would personally like to hear what you think about incorporating these into the Final Plan:

- Additional lands designated either fish and wildlife conservation or brown bear core, particularly on the north shore of Kenai Lake.
- A time-share system for the Carter Lake/Crescent Lake area that allocates snowmachine use and skiing on alternate years.
- Restricting snowmachine use on the Russian River trail and providing a winter trailhead for skiers.
- Creating a telemark ski area across the Seward Highway from Manitoba Mountain on Fresno Ridge.

Please let us know if you think we are headed in the right direction on the Forest Plan on Seward Ranger District resources and social needs. My phone number is (907) 224-3374 and my email address is mkania@fs.fed.us

A HISTORY OF THE CHUGACH NATIONAL FOREST

At the request of the Commission of Fish and Fisheries, Benjamin Harrison created, by executive proclamation on December 24, 1892, the Afognak Forest and Fish Culture Reserve. The major significance of this proclamation is that it was the first Forest Reserve to be created in Alaska and the only one to be created primarily for fisheries purposes.

A PROCLAMATION

Whereas, it is provided by section twenty-four, of the act of Congress, approved March third, eighteen hundred and ninety-one, entitled, 'An Act to repeal timber-culture laws, and for other purposes'; that "The President of the United States may from time to time set apart and reserve in any State or Territory having public lands bearing forest, in any part of the public lands wholly, or in part covered with timber or undergrowth, whether of commercial value or not, as public reservations; and the President shall, by public proclamation, declare the establishment of such reservation, and the limits thereof."

And whereas, it is provided by section fourteen, of said above mentioned act, that the public lands in the Territory of Alaska, reserved for public purposes, shall not be subject to occupation and sale.

And whereas, the public lands in the Territory of Alaska, known as Afognak Island, are in part covered with timber, and are required for public purposes, in order that salmon fisheries in the waters of the island, and salmon and other fish and sea animals, and other animals and birds, and the timber, undergrowth, grass, moss, and other growth in, on, and about said island may be protected and preserved unimpaired, and it appears that the public good would be promoted by setting apart and reserving said lands as a public reservation.

And whereas, the United States Commissioner of Fish and Fisheries has selected Afognak Bay, River and Lake, with their tributary streams, and the sources thereof, and the lands including the same on said Afognak Island, and within one mile from the shores thereof, as a reserve for the purpose of establishing fish culture stations, and the use of the United States Commission of Fish and Fisheries, the boundary lines of which include the head springs of the tributaries above mentioned, and the lands, the drainage of which is into the same.

Now, therefore, I, Benjamin Harrison, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested by sections twenty-four and fourteen, of the aforesaid act of Congress, and by other laws of the United States, do reserve and do hereby make known and proclaim that there is hereby reserved from occupation and sale, and set apart as a public reservation, including use for fish culture stations, said Afognak Islands, Alaska, and its adjacent bays and rocks and territorial waters, including among others the Sea Lion Rocks and Sea Otter Island: Provided, That this proclamation shall not be so construed as to deprive any bona fide inhabitant of said island of any valid right he may possess under the treaty for the cession of the Russian possessions in North America to the United States, concluded at Washington, on the thirtieth day of March, eighteen hundred and sixty-seven.

Warning is hereby expressly given to all persons not to enter upon, or to occupy, the tract or tracts of land or waters reserved by this proclamation, or to fish in, or use any of the waters herein described or mentioned, and that all persons or corporations now occupying said island, or any of said premises, except under said treaty, shall depart therefrom.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington this twenty-fourth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ninety two, and of the independence of the United States the one hundred and sixteenth.

The Chugach National Forest was proclaimed on July 23, 1907. President Roosevelt added the Afognak Fish Culture and Forest Reserve to the Chugach National Forest by executive order on July 2, 1908. Afognak Island was eliminated from the Chugach National Forest with the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Calendar of Public Meetings

Chugach National Forest is hosting a series of Open House meetings to discuss the Forest's proposed revised plan and accompanying Draft Environmental Impact Statement(DEIS).

The meetings will help the public learn more about the proposed revised plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement(DEIS). The meetings will highlight the documents, maps, and other tools such as the compact disc and interactive web site the public may use to help them formulate comments.

Listed below are the meetings currently scheduled. Please check out our website at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugachrevision/index.htm> for updates/changes to the schedule, or call us at (907) 271-2500.

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
O c t o b e r	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	15	16	17 Moose Pass & Whittier 6-8 PM 5-8 PM	18	19	20	21
	22	23	24	25 Girdwood 6-9 PM	26 Cordova 5-9 PM	27	28
	29	30 Anchorage 6-9 PM	31				
N o v e m b e r				1	2 Valdez 5-8 PM	3	4
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
	12	13 Seward 6-8 PM	14 Cooper Landing 6-8 PM	15 Hope 6-8 PM	16	17 Soldotna 6-8 PM	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	26	27	28	29	30		
D e c e m b e r						1	2
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	10	11	12	13	14 last day for comments		

MEETING DATES

Whittier
Tuesday, October 17
Begich Towers-Column Rm.
5:00-8:00 PM

Moose Pass
Tuesday, October 17
Community Hall
6:00-8:00 PM

Girdwood
Wednesday, October 25
Alyeska Prince Hotel
Columbia Ball Room
6:00-9:00 PM

Cordova
Thursday, October 26
Mt. Eccles Elem School
5:00-9:00 PM

Anchorage
Monday, October 30
Loussac Library
6:00-9:00 PM

Valdez
Thursday, November 2
Council Chambers
5:00-8:00 PM

Seward
Monday, November 13
AVTEC Building
Auditorium
6:00-8:00 PM

Cooper Landing
Tuesday, November 14
Community Hall
6:00-8:00 PM

Hope
Wednesday, November 15
School Gymnasium
6:00-8:00 PM

Soldotna
Friday, November 17
Borough Bldg.
Council Chambers
6:00-8:00 PM

For updates/changes to public meetings, please visit our website at:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugachrevision/index.htm>

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