

Introduced by: Merkes, Brown, Popp, Fischer
Date: 11/21/00
Action: Adopted
Vote: 9 Yes, 0 No

**KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH
RESOLUTION 2000-108**

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING LEAVING ALL EXISTING TRAILS IN THE
CHUGACH NATIONAL FOREST OPEN FOR EXISTING RECREATIONAL USES,
SUPPORTING IMPROVEMENTS TO AND MAINTENANCE OF TRAILS AND
PARKING LOTS, AND SUPPORTING BUILDING NEW CROSS-COUNTRY SKI
TRAILS**

- WHEREAS,** the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the Proposed Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the Chugach National Forest are available for public comment until December 14, 2000, and the National Forest Management Act of 1964 regulations require each Forest Plan to be revised every 10 to 15 years; and
- WHEREAS,** the planning area encompasses over 5.45 million acres in the Chugach National Forest, which is the second largest forest in the National Forest System and is subdivided into 3 administrative units, the Glacier, Seward and the Cordova Ranger Districts; and
- WHEREAS,** the Forest interdisciplinary team must consider the environmental conditions, historic use and occupation, and other past and current data while conducting many planning meetings; and
- WHEREAS,** the "Situation Statements" describe conflicting public interests and existing conditions that could be improved by changing the 1984 Forest Plan, and one of these conflicts was identified as a conflict between cross-country skiers and cross-country snowmobilers; and
- WHEREAS,** four public meetings have been held on the Kenai Peninsula to receive comments on the Draft Plan, and comments at the Soldotna meeting, which was attended by over 200 people, overwhelmingly supported keeping all existing trails and trailheads open to both snowmobiles and cross-country skiers, with possible opening of additional trails and parking lots; and
- WHEREAS,** all user groups should be able to work out compromises so they can use the existing trails and trailheads at all times rather than for parts of a season or alternating years, and RS 2477 may have already established easements for traditional uses of both snowmobiles and cross-country skiers; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Service has stated that they have not completed any scientific studies to support closing any of the existing trails or trailheads to snowmobiles because of any major ecological or social conflicts; and

WHEREAS, the Preferred Plan advocates considering adding over 2.5 million acres to restrictive classifications such as Wilderness, Wild Rivers, ANILCA classifications, Backcountry, Scenic Rivers, Brown Bear Core Area, Recreation-Reduced Noise, all of which may have additional restrictions on snowmobiles;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH:

SECTION 1. That the Kenai Peninsula Borough assembly strongly supports the Forest Service's not recommending closing, or restricting to seasonal use, the use by snowmobiles and skiers of any existing trails or trailheads in the Chugach National Forest-Seward District.

SECTION 2. That the existing trails and parking lots be upgraded for use by both snowmobiles and cross-country skiers in partnership with the federal, state, and local governments. Intergovernmental agreements should be made regarding leasing or exchanging land reasonably necessary to accomplish this goal.

SECTION 3. The Kenai Peninsula Borough also supports the federal government's giving grants or allowing private recreational groups to form partnerships with the federal government to improve or build trails or parking lots.

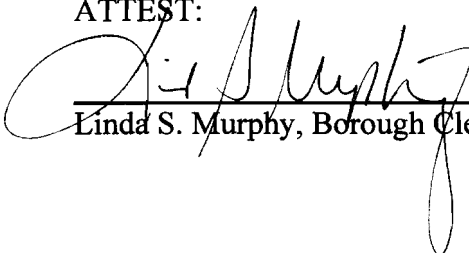
SECTION 4. That the Forest Service Plan consider building new access trails for cross-country skiers in appropriate locations in order to alleviate safety issues and conflicts with snowmobile use.

SECTION 5. That copies of this resolution be sent to the Alaskan Congressional Delegation, the Kenai Peninsula Borough State Delegation, and to the Forest Service Department.

ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH THIS 21ST DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2000.


Timothy Navarre, Assembly President

ATTEST:


Linda S. Murphy, Borough Clerk

