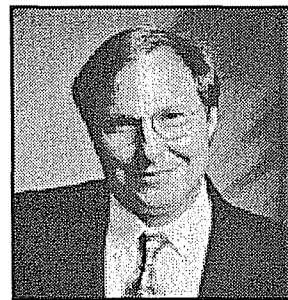


Two Decades of Responsible Growth

Koncor Forest Products Company was established as a joint venture company between two Alaska Native village corporations more than twenty years ago.

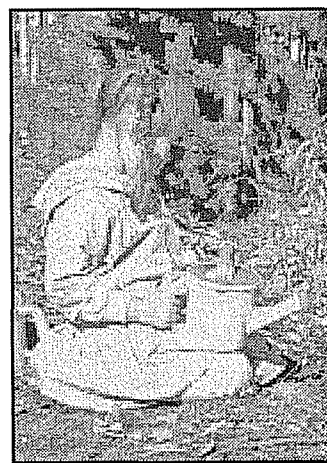
Over the years, Koncor has grown through additional joint ventures and timber purchases to become one of Alaska's largest private timber owners and forest managers.

The Koncor Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from its owner



villages and guides Koncor's overall direction. Says Board Chairman and Natives of

Kodiak President Tony Drabek (pictured below, left), "It's our job to provide benefits for our current shareholders and for future generations as well. By taking a long term view that balances forest management activities with the total well being of all forest resources, we are actively accomplishing both of these goals."



As we begin this New Millennium, we reflect on two decades of environmental excellence and a continuing commitment to responsible growth.



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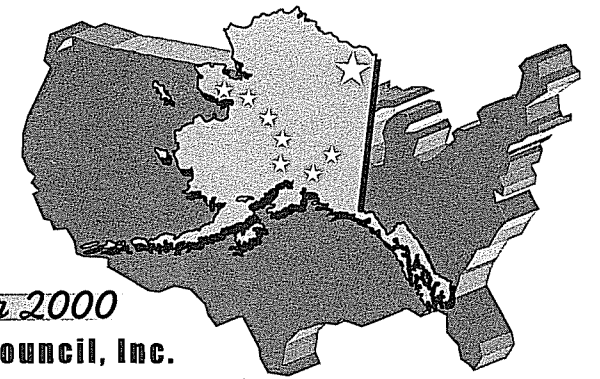
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Resource Review

November 2000

A periodic publication of the Resource Development Council, Inc.



RDC, local communities intervene in beluga lawsuit

Intervention aimed at heading off potential Endangered Species Act listing

The Resource Development Council, in conjunction with the Alaska Oil and Gas Association, is intervening on behalf of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to oppose a lawsuit by environmental organizations seeking to overturn NMFS's decision not to list Cook Inlet beluga whales as an endangered species.

And in an alignment of common interests, the Municipality of Anchorage, the Kenai Peninsula Borough and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough filed for intervention in the same lawsuit to protect the economic interest of Southcentral Alaska residents.

"We all want to see the beluga whale population recover," said Anchorage Mayor George Wuerch, in a statement released from his office October 30. "We believe NMFS made the right decision, supported by science -- not politics."

Wuerch said he believes that an endangered species listing could reduce the municipality's revenues markedly.

The economy of the municipality is diverse, he said, but highly dependent upon the waters and coastal area of Cook Inlet. Any disruption of activities, which occur in or along Cook Inlet, will not only adversely impact Anchorage and its residents, it will affect literally all of Alaska, Wuerch said. Ninety percent

of the goods and supplies that citizens depend upon across the state enter Alaska through the Port of Anchorage. NMFS earlier this year determined

Steller Sea Lion economic impacts on fishing fleet released
For update, see page 6

the Cook Inlet beluga whale should be listed as "depleted" under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). The

designation provides the agency with the regulatory measures needed to prevent the extinction of the beluga in Cook Inlet and to provide for its recovery.

NMFS spent considerable time reviewing the cause of the decline in the beluga's Cook Inlet population and concluded the best approach to protecting the whale would be through the MMPA as opposed to the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Environmental groups are challenging that decision through the courts.

(Continued to page 2)

Chugach land plan looks more like a national park prescription

The Chugach National Forest's newly proposed 10-year management plan has hit the street for final public review. A 90-day comment period is underway through December 14.

If the new plan is implemented in its current form, there will be much less opportunity for resource development activities in the forest. The plan will also limit motorized access to designated routes and close a number of areas to snowmachines. The plan emphasizes natural processes across most of the forest with active management only in selected locations. It calls for undeveloped recreation settings across most of the forest.

"Under this new management plan, my small five-man sawmill operation in the second largest national forest in America will have no stable, reliable source

(Continued to page 4)

RDC, local communities intervene in lawsuit

Local leaders fear "unprecedented scrutiny" of Cook Inlet activities

(Continued from page 1)

"RDC is intervening on behalf of NMFS to protect the interests of our members who live, work and play in and around Cook Inlet," said Ken Freeman, executive director of the Resource Development Council (RDC). "We must not undermine our economy through an ESA listing with zero benefits to the beluga whale."

Freeman noted that measures taken by the Alaska Congressional delegation, Native hunters and NMFS have stopped the overall dramatic decline of the beluga whale population.

An endangered species listing would unnecessarily require NMFS to monitor and more strictly regulate virtually all human activity in the Inlet. An ESA listing carries with it significant additional consequences which offer no additional protection beyond that

afforded by the MMPA from the identified cause of the decline in belugas — overharvest by Native subsistence hunters.

Numerous local, state and federal studies have concluded there is no link between the decline of the beluga and development activities. NMFS research confirms these findings.

The MMPA gives federal regulators the tools they need to strictly control subsistence hunting and gives NMFS authority to enter into comanagement agreements with Alaska Native organizations.

In the petition requesting an ESA designation, environmentalists identified a wide range of entities which they believe may impact belugas and whose activities should be regulated or curtailed under the ESA: Commercial and sport fishing, tourism, ports and shipping, military bases, the oil and gas industry and community wastewater treatment facilities.

"Restricting shipping to and from Cook Inlet ports, thwarting efforts to explore for oil and natural gas and curtailing fishing is not the answer to the belugas recovery," said Freeman. "These types of activities are staples of the Cook Inlet economy and have nothing to do with the decline nor do they impede the recovery of the beluga whale. Furthermore, these activities do not occur in a regulatory vacuum, as they are strictly regulated under numerous state and federal environmental laws."

Under a draft conservation plan recently released by NMFS, the subsistence hunt would be limited to two whales each season during the next 25 years. The plan also relies on other restrictions to achieve a sustainable population of animals by 2025.

With a conservation plan in place, as well as other measures to protect the belugas, NMFS is confident the beluga population will recover.

"The population should be recovering right now," said NMFS official

Barbara Mahoney. Because of the measures now in place, an endangered listing "is not warranted," Mahoney said.

In its draft conservation plan, NMFS considered potential impacts to the beluga whales from a wide range of factors, including strandings, commercial fishing, community and industry discharges of all kinds, oil development, shipping, and tourism. The agency's research has shown that these activities, which have been ongoing in the Inlet for decades, have caused "no direct or apparent consequences" to the beluga whale population.

Along with severely restricting the subsistence hunt, the agency's proposed regulations under the Marine Mammal Protection Act would require a management agreement between NMFS and local Native hunters. Sale of beluga products would be banned and hunts could not occur before July 15 to protect newborn whales. The regulations would also prohibit the hunting of calves or adults with calves.

Given NMFS's findings, Kenai Peninsula Borough Mayor Dale Bagley believes an ESA listing would unnecessarily force many regional projects to go through additional time-consuming and expensive review by federal regulators.

"Most activities in the Inlet are already subject to extensive regulatory oversight through a myriad of federal and state environmental laws," said Bagley. "NMFS has the tools in place to make sure the recovery continues."

"An ESA listing would be an overreaction which could force unprecedented scrutiny of activities that have nothing to do with the decline," warned Mayor Tim Anderson of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. "The beluga's recovery will be helped by what the agency is proposing through the Marine Mammal Protection Act. And an ESA listing could do serious harm to existing Inlet activities and prospects for new commerce in the future."

It's not oil versus beauty in the Arctic

By Senator Frank Murkowski

WASHINGTON - Clinging to a position that would prevent America from developing some of the most promising of its domestic energy resources, Al Gore and Joseph Lieberman have repeatedly stated their opposition to oil exploration in a tiny sliver of the Arctic Coastal Plain. They say it would yield only a six-month supply of oil, and only at the cost of the destruction of a pristine wilderness. In suggesting that we must choose between Arctic oil and environmental protection, they are presenting a false choice.

What is at stake here, according to the latest estimates of the United States Geological Survey, is 16 billion barrels of oil - an amount sufficient to replace all of our imports from Saudi Arabia for the next 30 years. And it can be extracted and moved to consumers in the "lower 48" states without harming the wildlife that inhabits the coastal plain at various times of the year. More than 25 years of experience at nearby Prudhoe Bay, a region that has supplied America with roughly 25 percent of its domestic oil production since the late 1970's, have shown that energy production and environmental protection can coexist.

At the time Prudhoe Bay was discovered, some claimed that oil development would devastate the central Arctic caribou herd. Today that herd is more than triple the size it was then. Nesting populations of migratory birds in the area are also on the rise. It is clear that we now have the technology that can both develop the oil and protect the environment.

The 19 million-acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is roughly the size of South Carolina. In 1980, Congress declared 8 million acres of the refuge as strictly protected wilderness and an additional 9.5 million as refuge lands off limits to energy exploration. Mindful of the fact that the remaining 1.5 million



ANWR's Coastal Plain is covered with ice and snow more than nine months out of the year.

acres of coastal plain was North America's best and last hope of a giant oil discovery, Congress designated the coastal plain as a special study area that could be opened to oil and gas leasing.

In the intervening years, a federal environmental impact study has shown that exploration of the coastal plain could occur during the winter, when animals are not present and no habitat would be disturbed, to determine if any recoverable oil is even present. If a large oil field were found, the oil could be developed using directional drilling technology, which requires very little use of land at the surface. It would disturb only 2,000 acres or less of the flat, treeless tundra that makes up the coastal plain.

In other words, we can determine if the oil is there with no environmental impact at all, and if a very large field were found, we could develop it with minimal environmental impact. The sad fact is, at present, we aren't even allowed to look.

America will remain dependent on oil for the foreseeable future, and increasingly, our dependency is on foreign oil. During the Clinton-Gore years, our oil imports have soared 17 percent while domestic production has decreased 14 percent. We now rely on foreign suppliers for 58 percent of our crude oil, and that reliance carries several risks.

As we import more oil on foreign

tankers, which lack the safety features required of American ships, the risk of oil spills increases. Pushing production out of America to nations without our environmental standards increases global environmental risks. Moreover, our growing dependence on foreign oil, including oil from Iraq, is inconsistent with our foreign policy objectives. And we endanger our economy as we rely increasingly on a cartel for an essential resource.

Mr. Gore and Mr. Lieberman heralded the recent release of oil from our existing Strategic Petroleum Reserve as instrumental in easing prices and building inventories of heating oil. But they oppose looking for the oil field that many geologists think may be under Alaska's coastal plain - a huge field that could have a meaningful and sustained effect on consumer prices. We are flirting with danger by refusing even to see what may lie under the coastal plain.

Sea lion impacts ...

(Continued from page 6)

Those species pump \$44 million into the Kodiak economy in a given year.

Kodiak braced for a big downsizing in pollock harvests this summer because nearly all of the fish are typically caught within the 20-mile area that is now off-limits. Pollock comprises nearly half of all the fish landed each year in Kodiak and helps keep processing workers on the payroll all year long.

Processors are running only one shift a day, instead of two shifts around the clock. Kodiak has some 1,000 resident processing workers and many of those that have been laid off are looking for other work or leaving town.

Kodiak fishermen are worried that cod fishing will be restricted next year because cod has also been identified as a food source for sea lions. Last year, more than 85 million pounds of cod worth \$22.5 million were processed off Kodiak docks.

The ban on bottom fishing could reduce the tax base for local communities by as much as 70 percent. The fishing industry statewide stands to lose well in excess of \$100 million annually from prohibitions on trawling in sea lion critical habitat areas.

Resource Review is the official periodic publication of the Resource Development Council (RDC), Alaska's largest privately funded nonprofit economic development organization working to develop Alaska's natural resources in an orderly manner and to create a broad-based, diversified economy while protecting and enhancing the environment.

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Carl Portman

Juneau rejects flightseeing limits

In an October election, Juneau voters strongly rejected a ballot proposition which would have set limits on flightseeing. More than 7,000 residents voted against Proposition 5 while some 3,000 residents favored restrictions on aircraft.

Proposition 5 would have restricted helicopter and floatplane activities by prohibiting flights between 5 p.m. and 9 a.m., Sunday through Friday, and all day Saturday. Those restrictions were to apply during the busy summer tourist season between May 1 and September 30.

In addition, the measure would have created ordinances not only against flights, but would have prevented the City and Borough of Juneau from conducting studies for new heliports. The proposition would have also asked the Forest Service to limit the number of permits issued to operators conducting overflights and landings on icefields in the Tongass National Forest.

The Juneau vote isn't surprising in a state where most of the land mass is roadless, especially in Southeast Alaska where aircraft are most often the most feasible way to view the land and reach



An Era Helicopter transports tourists to a glacier near Juneau. Flightseeing is the most popular activity among tourists visiting Alaska. (Photo courtesy Era Helicopters)

remote villages and towns.

"This sends an overwhelming message to those proponents of the initiative," said Bob Jacobsen, president of Wings of Alaska. "But this is not the end of the issue. We will be dealing with this again."

"The voters made the right decision

both for local business impact and for that of the tourists," said John Hansen, President of the Northwest CruiseShip Association. "For most people, the flightseeing trip over the glaciers and the backcountry is the highlight of their vacation"

In fact, flightseeing is rated as the most popular activity among tourists.

Over the past several years, Era Helicopters has been working with local groups to mitigate concerns over noise. The company has selected routes to minimize impacts on local residents and has also been using modern aircraft with new technology that reduces noise levels.

"We were stymied every time we tried to cooperate," said Chuck Johnson, President of Era Aviation, the parent company of Era Helicopters. "We worked with a number of community groups, but no matter how much we compromised, it didn't seem good enough."

While Juneau residents delivered a strong mandate for flightseeing and general aircraft operations, Johnson predicted the Juneau ballot measure is just the beginning of a long series of battles on motorized versus non-motorized uses across Alaska.

Sea lion protection under ESA takes toll

Kodiak businesses and the local fishing fleet are feeling the pinch from Steller sea lion protection measures coming out of the Endangered Species Act.

Data from federal fish managers show that fishermen were forced to leave more than two-thirds of the late summer pollock catch in the water for a loss of \$2.2 million.

The total Gulf of Alaska pollock catch, taken by boats primarily from Kodiak and Sand Point, totaled 21.8 million pounds out of a quota of 67.3 million pounds. Significantly fewer boats worked during the August 20 through September 30 opening: just 48 compared to 112 last year.

The low numbers stem from a court order designed to protect the

Steller sea lions. Since August, all trawlers have been banned from fishing within 20 miles of 122 sea lion rookeries and haul-outs, plus three large at-sea foraging areas in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. The closed areas cover a wide swath from Prince William Sound, down the Alaska Peninsula and west through the Aleutian chain. The ban will remain in place until the National Marine Fisheries Service comes up with a better plan to protect sea lions under the Endangered Species Act.

The restricted areas completely circle Kodiak Island and forces the fishing fleet out of 95 percent of its known pollock grounds and most of the major cod and rockfish areas.

(Continued to page 6)



Thoughts from the President by Bob Stiles

Conference focuses on gas, economic trends

The stars may finally be aligning for the long-sought commercialization of the North Slope's immense natural gas reserves. Domestic demand for natural gas in the Lower 48 is increasing steadily and there has been significant fundamental shifts in the power market that point to expanding opportunities for Alaska in supplying North American consumers with natural gas.

RDC's 21st Annual Conference, "Alaska Resources: Expanding Opportunities," will feature a comprehensive look at the options, technologies and opportunities for commercializing North Slope gas reserves, as well as future prospects and challenges confronting Alaska basic industries, including mining, timber, fishing and tourism.

Set to open Thursday, November 16 at the Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage, the conference will feature a full-day segment on North Slope natural gas issues, ranging from regulatory, permitting and legislative considerations to political and economic realities. It's the first time in recent memory that such a broad array of gas issues, technologies and options will be highlighted in a single Alaska forum. The timing couldn't be better and the conference will serve as an excellent opportunity for our members and policy makers to get the latest on this rapidly evolving issue.

Two Canadian premiers will deliver the Yukon and Northwest Territories perspectives while the director of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's Office of Energy Projects will address the U.S. government's direction on North Slope gas commercialization. Governor Tony Knowles will provide

a key update on the state's position.

Alaska's three major producers and owners of the gas, Exxon, Phillips, and BP, will address their gas commercialization efforts. The sponsors for the two major routes of a Lower 48 gas pipeline will speak to their respective projects. In addition, panels will focus on the GTL and LNG options, as well as in-state use of North Slope gas. Some 23 speakers will focus directly on the natural gas issue.

Early registration for the conference is strong as momentum is building across Alaska and Canada for a gas pipeline to the Lower 48. Several Canadian delegations are expected to attend.

Although gas may be stealing the spotlight at this year's conference, there are other significant issues and economic trends that will be highlighted at the two-day meeting. On the second day of the conference, Alaska's latest economic trends will be featured and a special panel of timber, mining, fishing and tourism executives will focus on prospects for their sectors in 2001.

This year's conference promises to deliver a cutting-edge agenda, spirited discussions and a taste of what the future holds with respect to expanding opportunities. Given the high interest in this year's program from our Canadian friends and business associates in the Lower 48, the 2000 RDC gathering offers an excellent opportunity for Alaskans to meet with senior executives and other decision makers. We'll discuss trends, plans and strategies that will benefit your company and Alaska.

Alaska, Alberta, Northwest Territories conclude meetings

Last month Alaska Legislators and business leaders, including several RDC board members, concluded a week of meetings with Alberta and the Northwest Territories aimed at strengthening socio-economic relationships. The Alaska delegation to Canada was led by Representative Gail Phillips, Chair of the House Committee on Economic Development and Tourism.

"Sixteen years ago Alaska entered into trade relations with the people of the Yukon that has proven mutually beneficial to our state and our Canadian neighbors," said Representative Phillips. "I am pleased to announce that Alaska stands on the verge of recreating these successes ten-fold with our neighbors in Alberta and the Northwest Territories."

Alaskan legislators and their Canadian counterparts in these two regions have spent over a year exploring the terms

of, and priorities for formal agreements. Each agreement will focus on areas of mutual interest such as indigenous Native groups, oil and gas exploration and development, construction, arctic housing, transportation, wildlife co-management, culture, tourism and education.

The latest series of meetings between representatives from Alaska and Canada drew wide bi-partisan support from Alaska legislators.

"The cornerstone for any formal relationship with our Canadian counterparts must be shared commitment to mature the well-being of the indigenous people of Alaska and Canada," said Representative Reggie Joule, a member of the delegation.

Alberta, Alaska and the Northwest Territories rely heavily on exports in oil, natural gas, mining and forestry resources. In 1998, Alaska's Gross Domestic Product totaled over \$25 billion, which was primarily derived from these resources.

New Chugach forest plan emphasizes wild character, no annual timber sales

"Under this new management plan, my small five-man sawmill operation in the second largest national forest in America will have no stable, reliable source of logs to meet my customer's needs."

- Greg Bell, Owner, Valley Sawmill

(Continued from page 1)

of logs to meet my customer's needs," said Greg Bell, the owner of Valley Sawmill in Anchorage. "It is beyond me why the Forest Service would release a plan for a national forest of this size without an annual allowable timber harvest, especially when much of the forest has been ravaged by spruce bark beetles," Bell continued.

Bell insisted that "there is something seriously broken here" when small operators such as him cannot get timber from a multi-million acre national forest.

"The only reason I am not out of business is because we are getting timber off of an inholding in the Chugach," Bell noted. "The timber sales under the current plan are so poor that even firewood operators are refusing to bid on them. It's not that the forest doesn't have good timber."

Under the new plan, there won't be any commercial timber sales, period.

The preferred alternative is a self-fulfilling prophecy of "no demand" for forest products, according to Rick Rogers of Chugach Alaska Corporation.

Rogers noted that there is currently little capacity for processing timber from the Chugach since the Forest Service lacks a meaningful timber sale program under the current forest plan. "The Forest Service relies on this to conclude there is no demand," Rogers said. "The irony is even small mills such as the Valley Sawmill in Anchorage cannot depend on Chugach National Forest timber."



This timber harvesting occurred several years ago on private land inside the Chugach National Forest. The area is now returning to its natural state.

The newly proposed and more restrictive plan describes what activities would be allowed in each zone of the 5.5 million acre forest from the Copper River Delta east of Cordova to Prince William Sound and the inner Kenai Peninsula. It designates most national forest land on the peninsula as "backcountry," where some new trails, campgrounds and public-use cabins would be allowed, but commercial logging would be banned. In the forest as a whole, no areas would be managed for commercial logging and road construction would be prohibited in inventoried roadless areas, which

comprise all but 2 percent of the forest. Roads would be allowed as they are needed for public health and safety, as well as for reserved or outstanding rights.

The plan also proposes Wilderness designations for 1.8 million acres, most of it in western Prince William Sound, but with several hundred thousand acres in the Copper River Delta area. These lands, as well as large blocks of backcountry lands across the forest, would be managed to maintain the primitive character of the land. Many recreational amenities, such as trails, cabins, campgrounds, lodges and

"While the Forest Service claims the plan protects the rights of in-holders to access their lands, the devil is always in the details... This all adds up to more red tape, opposition, cost and delays for those wishing to access their private lands within the forest."

- Rick Rogers, Chugach Alaska Corporation

permanent boat landings, would not be allowed, nor would any roads be permitted.

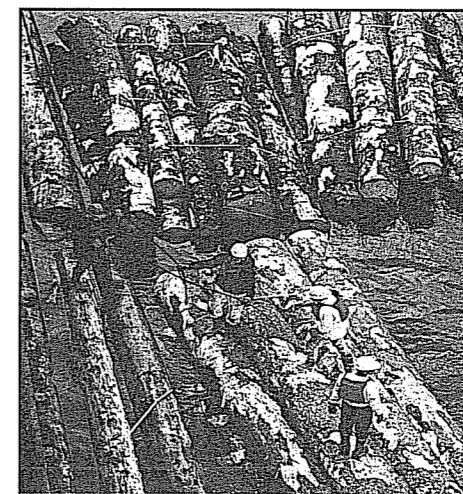
In addition, the plan also proposes to designate eleven Wild and Scenic Rivers in the forest, raising concerns that such designations could block access to lands with a management prescription which permits some resource development activity. The proposed designations also raise concerns over access to private inholdings and adjacent lands.

"The recently-released plan is extremely biased toward preservation, which is what one would expect to see in a management plan for a national park," said Ken Freeman, RDC's executive director. "The range of alternatives across the forest lacks balance between preservation and multiple uses."

Of the plan's 23 management prescriptions, all but two have a strong preservation bias. The prescriptions include specific direction on how to manage different land areas and are similar to city or borough zoning. Just as areas in a community are zoned as commercial, industrial or residential, the forest prescriptions outline what is allowed or not allowed in various areas.

The preferred alternative places more than 99 percent of the forest's land mass in highly-restrictive categories and leaves less than a quarter of one percent of the forest under prescriptions which allows for mineral development and transportation/utility systems.

RDC, the Alaska Miners Association and the Alaska Forest Association, as well as Chugach Alaska Corporation, have taken exception to the lack of a reasonable range of alternatives in the plan and a number of provisions within the plan's preferred alternative.



The new plan eliminates commercial logging from the Chugach National Forest.

One major concern is that the preferred alternative ignores congressional language in section 501(b) of ANILCA by assigning prescriptions in the Copper River area that are far more restrictive than Congress intended. Highly restrictive prescriptions in the preferred alternative, including Wilderness, will restrict multiple use activities in the delta that are allowed by Congress.

In expanding the boundaries of the Chugach National Forest, Section 501(b) of ANILCA mandated by statute how both the Copper/Rude River addition to the Forest and the Copper/Bering River portion of the forest would be managed. The statute specifically stated that multiple use activities would be permitted in those areas added to the forest as long as those activities would be consistent with the conservation of fish and wildlife.

Another concern is that the preferred alternative may violate 1326(b) of ANILCA, the so called "no more" provision that prohibits further studies of Wilderness designations without the authorization of Congress. The preferred alternative recommends 1.8 million acres of wilderness and 11 Wild and Scenic

Rivers, which may be in direct violation of Congressional limitation on the agency's authority. In spite of this statutory guidance, the Forest Service has proceeded to study additional Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River designations without Congressional authorization.

Another issue is that the implications of the Clinton administration's roadless initiative on the Forest Plan are unclear. After the forest planning process had been underway for almost two years, top administration officials in Washington D.C. launched their "Roadless Conservation Initiative" which would preclude new roads on the 98.8% of the Chugach Forest that is deemed "roadless."

In a speech before the Resource Development Council in September, the Forest Supervisor Dave Gibbons stated the plan might have to be amended if the roadless rule takes affect. The roadless rule could essentially "trump" the already restrictive preferred alternative, converting the few areas that allow for possible new roads to roadless status.

"While the Forest Service claims the plan protects the rights of in-holders to access their lands, the devil is always in the details," warned Chugach Alaska Corporation's Rick Rogers. "For example, highly-restrictive designations, such as Wild and Scenic Rivers, are proposed within known access corridors," Rogers pointed out. "Wilderness designations will make in-holder access more controversial and difficult." In addition, forest-wide standards and guidelines include large coastal and streamside buffers with ill-defined applicability, Rogers noted.

"This all adds up to more red tape, opposition, cost and delays for those wishing to access their private lands within the forest," Rogers said.