

Chugach Children's Forest : : Workshop I Meeting Notes
December 7th – 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. + December 8th - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Glacier Ranger District - Girdwood

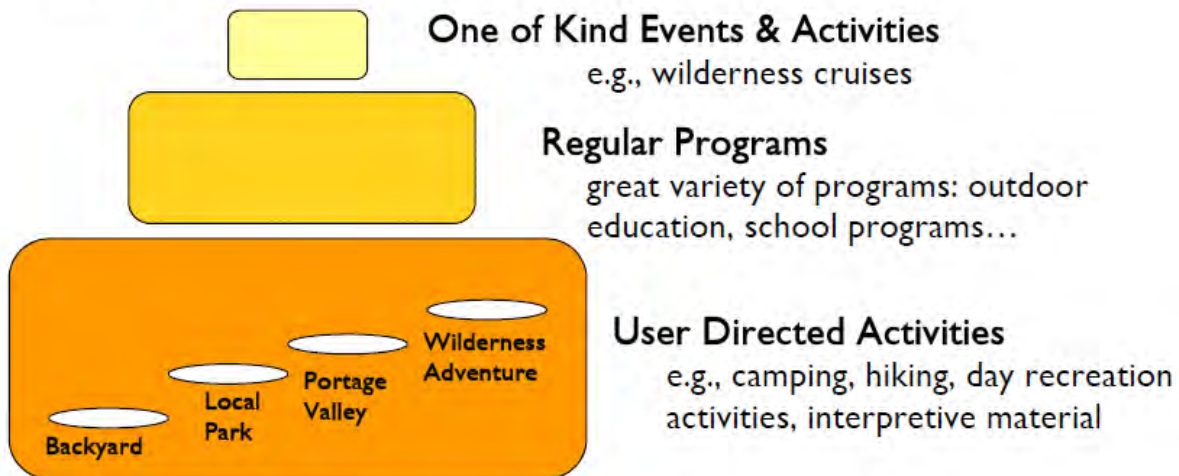
26 people attended the strategic planning meeting held at the Glacier Ranger District office in Girdwood. The workshop was facilitated by Shelly Wade, Chris Beck and Tanya Iden of Agnew::Beck Consulting, LLC, as part of the Chugach Children's Forest Project. This document summarizes the results of this meeting. A full list of meeting participants is attached.

Agenda Topic:

Why Is Children's Forest Important + Why Are We Here + What We've Heard

- I. Why do you think the Children's Forest is an important effort? Why is important to you? Your kids? Your community?
 - Connection to underserved populations
 - Working efficiently across forest landscape
 - Today's kid tied to computers multi-media inputs – connect to those kids – reconnect!
 - Target younger kids “pick ’em up” when young – get hooked young
 - Relevance...meaning to our next generation – care for out-of-doors in general
 - Pool resources – use wisely

Chugach Children's Forest
Types of Connections

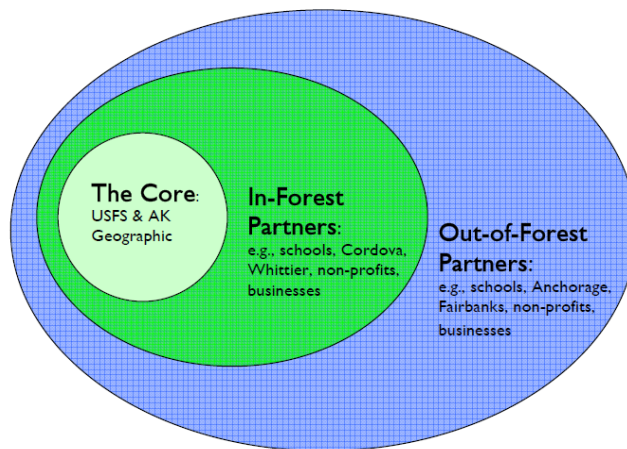


Graphic depicting connection between different levels of Chugach Children's Forest

- II. Why are we here + review of process
- Oct 09: FLT (The core) – preliminary vision and goals
 - Dec 09: Workshop I (the core) – interviews + FG, confirm vision, refine goals, strategies to link goals and programs
 - Feb 10: Workshop II (in-forest partners) – stakeholder feedback to include schools, non-profits, businesses
 - March 10: Workshop III (the core) or Work Session – feedback on draft
 - April 10: Complete plan to “shop” to Out-of-Forest partners

Chugach Children's Forest

Process to Establish & “Spread the Religion”



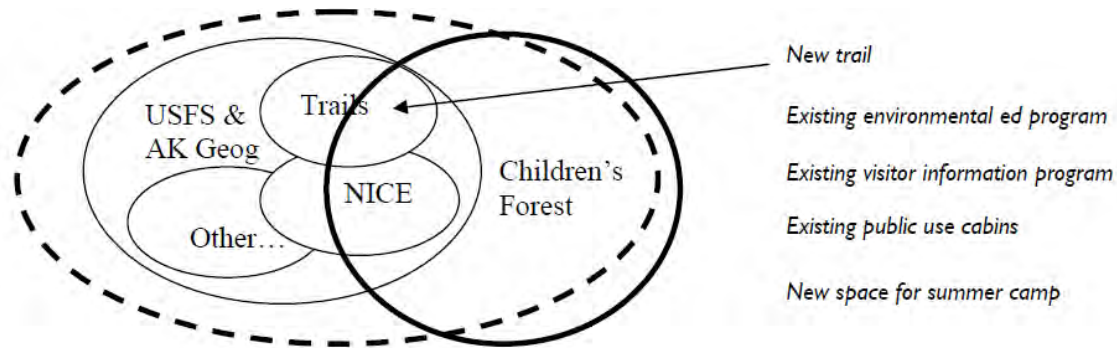
- III. What we've heard - stakeholder interview themes
- There are long-term commitments to existing programs
 - Need to continue to build strong foundation with partners
 - Develop clearer description - better package for marketing
 - Believe in concept - yet, unclear on exactly what “it” is
 - Should focus on both geography and access to Forest
 - Resources, funding and staff time - need to be clear about how this will enhance/expand current USFS efforts

Connection to NICE Strategic Plan (Naturewatch Interpretation, Conservation, Education)

- I. NICE Strategy - Where does it fit and how can we bridge our planning efforts?
- NICE goals woven throughout the CCF project
 - Need to use the same set of definitions and language
 - CCF plan can take advantage of previous NICE.work. For example: definitions of “underserved”, “cove”, etc.
 - Distinction – CCF has job/career focus; NICE FS driven, CCF community driven?
 - 80% overlap? – need to figure how to not duplicate efforts and/or run efforts in parallel
 - CCF as “way of being” vs. “initiative”, CCF is an “approach” to doing work
 - CCF the public face of NICE activities; CCF expands and focuses NICE

- NICE needs to narrow programs
- CCF adds value to range of USFS programs, including NICE, through partnerships and added resources

Consultant team's recommendation: more work needed to synchronize these two projects



Why “Children’s Forest?” – What is the intent of the Name?

- “Need a hook” a way to capture passionate support of philanthropists – results (funds raised) show this label resonates
- Started with a focus on kids, but now hearing a lot about adults too
- Little kids, youth, adults?
- Thought goal was to combat “nature deficit disorder”
- A way of expressing the idea that forests are for the future
- “Markets well” – kids are something precious and inviolate
- Sounds like a playground
- Narrows rather than broadens
- Victims of mission creep, risk of losing sight of primary goals - focus on children, but that leads to connection to adults and communities
- NICE – defined youth as 25 or under, internships
- Cordova – need some focus
- Teenagers don’t mind working on programs under Children’s Forest label (they think they’re doing it for children, for people younger than themselves)
- Have raised money and seeking
- Need to make clear – intent of program is for “Children and their Children too”
- Can deal with labeling issue by using a sub message to match the target audience; may have different sub messages for different audiences
- One option for a tag line? “Forests for the future”
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Consultant team's recommendation: The term “children’s forest” has a number of benefits, as outlined above. However, as a singular message for this effort, the term is frequently confusing. At minimum a powerful and consistent sub-phrase is needed that clarifies this confusion, or perhaps a new primary phrase is needed, with the Children’s Forest used in the subphrase.

Preliminary Vision, Organizing Themes, Goals, Strategies + Outcomes

Participants started work with the products of the October FLT meeting, including a vision statement, a set of four broad themes, and recommended goals under each theme. The four broad themes are listed below; this set of materials was then reviewed and refined by workshop participants.

1. Climate Change Understanding and Local Solutions
2. Healthy Youth, Families, and Communities
3. New Pathways for Education and Careers
4. Shared Stewardship and Civic Participation

Chugach Children's Forest Vision

Starting point: Connected, engaged, healthy youth, communities, schools and public lands.

Revised: Connected, engaged, healthy youth and communities - the future of our public lands.

Consultant team's recommendation: This revised version is an improvement but still not quite right. The phrase needs better capture the idea that connections between youth/communities and forests are good for both, that is, connecting people to the forest and the outdoors helps them lead healthier and more rewarding lives; this connection also helps create a stronger sense of stewardship for forests and the natural world in general. More wordsmithing is still needed.

Goals, Strategies, Outcomes by Organizing Theme

1. CLIMATE CHANGE UNDERSTANDING AND LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Goal 1: Youth, families and communities will apply their understanding of climate change to create and implement hometown actions and solutions

Strategies

- a. Identify climate change related problems affecting CNF and our communities (Who? Include researchers, subs, communities, active climate change process)
- b. Work with students to select a set of problems for students to develop solutions (1 year?)

Goal 2: USFS, Universities, & local schools will partner to monitor climate change effects through citizen science

Strategies

- a. Get involved with Christmas Bird count – Fostering connection between schools and Audubon Society, AK bird observatory, National Phrenology Network
- b. Build cohesive program – partner with ADF+G to build on citizen science model (bats, wood frogs, loon counts)
- c. Explore need to alter permit process to encourage universities to partner with USFS to do Citizen Science
- d. Get involved with project “Bud Burst” (monitoring changes in beginning of spring plant growth)

Goal 3: Alaska schools will be connected through the Children's Forest web of sharing information, knowledge and leading community education on climate change effects

Strategies

- a. Take existing Forest Ranger Academy and expand climate change piece to go to all components – schools that are selected to share with schools that aren't selected – Aqua, Tree and Storm Rangers
- b. Foster a landscape forum (website) for exchange between schools, teachers, scientists where youth inspire youth – build on National Geographic's Field Scope program

Goal 4: Public has an understanding of the Forest Service strategy management, agency and partner research, and monitoring activities dealing with climate change

Strategies

- a. Identify what we (USFS through the CNF) and others do that is “climate change” monitoring
- b. Use I-TREC to connect kids to existing monitoring programs – kids do the monitoring (use alternative energy to power)

Outcomes

- Connection to existing or new monitoring programs for X number of communities
- Youth led solution; youth would be taking initiative on the project
- Youth produced media / stories
- Increased awareness in AK about climate change, number of stories generated
- Science based (leading minds) collaboration, number of established programs and method of collaboration (project bud burst) tracking plants
- Number of in school programs – develop to be Alaska specific, tweak curricula for young people

2. HEALTHY YOUTH, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Strategies

Goal 1: Identify and overcome barriers (perceived and real) to outdoor recreation and play

- a. Identify barriers to groups that aren’t outside today. Partial list of barriers: gear/equipment, cost of transportation, knowledge, fear/comfort (film festival, need to counter media images), weather, **parents** controlling kids time “the lynchpin”, lack of interest/enticements
- b. “Stepping stones to the outdoors” - Develop a strategy set up and/or add to programs & facilities that lead people in a stair step process, from fear and lack of interest into more adventurous and rewarding experiences. Each step needs its own strategies, its own partners. :

“Stepping stones”	backyard	day use/ after school	overnight	wilderness
examples	Small accessible neighborhood parks; school grounds open for play	Exciting road accessible day use parks, with streams, hills, ocean frontage & picnic areas	Different kinds of camping areas, spaces for group cooking, group camping	<i>See facilities below:</i> more cabins, more multi-day camping facilities
examples of partners	Municipal governments, school districts	ARRC – locals special whistle stop tours at reduced rates	Other people’s facilities, e.g., offer programs in partnership with Alyeska Prince hotel in off season	Educational organizations, churches, boy scouts, etc.

- c. Strategies to overcome barriers:
 - Inventory, connect to and coordinate with range of existing programs (e.g. ADF&G has cool program: “become an outdoors woman” , parent teacher programs)

- Focus on day and overnight activities that are nominally for kids but have the effect of getting parents out too
- “People need help” - be creative about activities that lure the reluctant, e.g. fishing, getting a Christmas tree
- To overcome disinterest of kids link activity to technology e.g., I-touch programs linked to sensors in Nike shoes that track activity levels; then give prizes
- Focus on kids group activities, so kids get a chance to play and be social (what they really want to do) but in cool outdoor settings rather than the mall
- Enlist commercial/corporate sponsors – REI, Sportsman’s Warehouse – to provide training, gear

Goal 2: Provide a much expanded set of facilities that invite outdoor activities

Strategies

- a. Broad strategy – provide a creative new generation of facilities that respond to the needs and interests of a very diverse population, and the realities of a youth population seduced by the compelling distractions of computer games and the internet
- b. Strategies for types of facilities
 - Respond to the Chip Dennerlein rule of family camping: a successful trip requires at least two the following three items: other kids, a cabin, great weather
 - “Provide places that are welcoming and cool for kids to hang out in”
 - Provide shelters, cabins and similar “hard facilities” that help mitigate realities of Alaska’s weather and (at least for some) its intimidating wilderness
- c. Provide more camping areas that encourage/allow for group activities, e.g. provide covered, common cooking areas (encourages socializing, helps people who only have tents still have an enjoyable experience)
- d. Provide better day use facilities that offer compelling, unstructured fun things for kids to do, e.g., a stream or beach to play in, rocks to climb on, rugged outdoor play gear (chains to balance on, rocks to jump between); also provide comfortable places for parents to hang around in while the kids play picnic areas and barbeques, shelters for group activity
- e. Provide clusters of public use cabins in remote and not so remote areas (as is done by AK State Parks). Clusters of cabins allow for group use, reduce access costs per user, reduce maintenance costs.
- f. Provide more facilities within an easy day drive from Anchorage – continue to expand facilities in Portage Valley, encourage new waterfront facilities in Passage Canal area, encourage Shot Gun Cove Road
- g. Encourage hut to hut hiking systems, a way to introduce backcountry to people with less gear, less experience and less tolerance for cold, on-the-ground camping
- h. Sponsor fun activities at day use or overnight areas e.g., hike day, stroller day
- i. Engage kids & families in design of family friendly day use and overnight facilities
- j. Provide space for kids camps in wilderness edge locations, e.g. weekend camps, week long camps, day nature education camps (like trail side discovery)

Goal 3: Sponsor a range of family and community events, to entice kids to get outside. Provide outdoor activities for a wide range of ages.

Strategies

- a. Already covered to a large degree by existing USFS programs?
- b. Special wild flower events?
- c. Sponsor active, competitive outdoor activities, e.g., geo-caching
- d. One known gap: events that reach out to the under-served, mixed ability populations

Goal 4: Every school will offer a range of programs to involve students in outdoor activities – recreation, education, stewardship, fire ecology and natural resources, safety and comfort in the out-of-doors

Strategies

- a. Many programs are already offered, but need for better regional coordination between districts, between USFS and communities, schools, agencies
- b. Need strategies to better serve Anchorage, other communities outside the forest boundaries
- c. Girdwood - a great example of USFS partnerships with communities, e.g. school trail: kids worked together with adult and community partners

Goal 5: Provide a range of non-school outdoor activity programs for kids and adults, for same purposes listed in goal number 4

Strategies

- a. Examine mesh of existing programs with needs of all ages; identify gaps and means to fill gaps
- b. Develop a “sponsor a family” camping program, so experienced campers can introduce newbies

Goal 6: Provide better information about outdoor recreation opportunities and outdoor information skills.

Strategies

- a. Recognize importance of access to information: provide a website and other communication tools that provide a range of information – e.g., on current weather conditions, on locations of trails and campgrounds, reservations to use campgrounds, recreation programs available, training in camping & kayaking, first person testimonials (via the PWS stories webpage?) regarding fun outdoor experiences in the forest and elsewhere
- b. Focus on options to use social networking to engage kids (kids talking to kids)
- c. Better use visitor centers, district ranger facilities to introduce users to the out of doors

Goal 7: Provide better education, Internships, and Outreach to non-outdoor users

Strategies

- a. Accept that not everyone is going to get outside; help build interest in outdoor world for those who will never get there
- b. Health education / interpretation and awareness of natural, healthy environments
- c. Gates of Arctic Film for 99% who will never go
- d. Planned public television film regarding Chugach Forest
- e. Animal webcams (and real thing near by)
- f. Healthy Forest equals good lifestyle – complimenting utilitarian focus of rural communities with understanding of ecological health
- g. Set up programs so kids that went share their experiences with kids that didn't

Outcomes - Broad

- Alaska youth will have active lifestyles, with an emphasis on unstructured outdoor activities
- People will have improved physical, emotional and mental health
- More kids having fun in the forest (so “forests mean fun,” “trails and campgrounds are full of fun loving families every weekend” “active healthy generations engaged in living in and loving nature)
- Kids have an active role in guiding use and facilities in their forests
- Stronger sense of caring for the land, community service and land stewardship

Outcomes - Measurable

- Increased visits to CNF (school, family, etc.) (could monitor changes in number of people using trails and campgrounds)
- Reduced obesity / diabetes in Alaska youth (YRBS)
- Percent of youth using forest in a 5 year national survey
- Increase in outdoor / physical activities of youth (like healthy futures project)
- Increase in number of times classrooms use/visit the forest
- Measure changes in youth or community generated forest activities, e.g. increase community school programs
- Increase in number of physical improvements to forest, e.g. camps, trails, youth directed facilities

Consultant team's recommendation: More thinking is needed regarding the geography of Children's Forest recommendations. Many of the actions identified above are already underway in some form outside of the forest, e.g., in Anchorage. Likewise many of the programs discussed are already underway in part by others.

3. NEW PATHWAYS FOR EDUCATION AND CAREERS

Goal 1: Inspire careers!

Strategies

- a) CCF will offer challenging, high quality outdoor activities that inspire interest in further education and careers.
- b) Identify barriers to participation
- c) Formalize existing USFS mentorship programs (currently ad hoc)
- d) Youth serve as mentors to youth (e.g. CCF program veterans share their experience.)
- e) Maintain and enhance existing exciting programs (e.g. YCC and expedition)
- f) Inventory and build relationships with organizations requiring job shadowing and community service (e.g. Chugach School District requires students to engage in community service).
- g) Assess USFS recruitment program and determine methods to recruit better (e.g. kids reaching kids, cool college students recruiting high school students, high school recruiting jr. high, etc.)
- h) Do better job of marketing/getting word out about opportunities (e.g. use media that kids use – in kids words, engage in broad outreach, hit many places)
- i) Use technology to capture kids imagination (e.g. GIS)

Goal 2: Create youth employment opportunities.

Strategies

- a) Inventory and analyze existing opportunities – for partnerships and mentorships both internal and external (e.g. analysis may include determining if people are using existing CIP, SCEP, STEP programs. If not, market better before creating new professional internship program also do not recreate the wheel, use known partners and collaborate with existing programs e.g. DNR)
- b) Identify obstacles and challenges to having youth involved in all aspects and multi-discipline opportunities of the Forest Service's mission
- c) Build a sustainable YCC program
- d) Develop a sequence of “classroom to career” programs
- e) Offer for credit job shadowing, internships and projects opportunities.
- f) Train staff on how to work with kids
- g) Target pre-16 kids to engage in service learning opportunities and volunteer programs which may then lead to job opportunities (ladder of opportunity.)
- h) Fold youth into standard USFS hiring practices and gear recruitment toward youth

Goal 3: Develop pathways to higher education

Strategies

- a) Create competitive opportunities for youth with partners – (e.g. make scholarship/grants available to past program participants to develop follow through and a ladder of opportunity)
- b) Pay for younger employees to go to school (i.e. existing program SCEP)
- c) Build relationships with high schools (e.g. present to guidance counselors about opportunities with CCF partners and help them understand educational requirements)
- d) Engage local institutions of higher learning (e.g. develop a partnership with UAA)

Goal 4: Diversify the workforce

Strategies

- a) Inventory and understand existing local programs that focus on diverse populations and work with them to make linkages and build opportunities (e.g. ANSEP students aware of USFS opportunities?)
- b) Target recruitment efforts to Title 1 schools and diverse communities.
- c) Intentionally integrate diverse staff into youth programs
- d) Offer diversity training for welcoming work environment

Goal 5: Use technology to deliver education for youth

Strategies

- a) Youth will be engaged in education through current technology
- b) Youth will help develop cutting edge technological educational tools

Outcomes

- Percent of seasonal positions filled by local youth
- Tracking students who've participated in CCF programs who go on to higher education / careers in forest
- Employing USFS person to do school and teen recruitment...track number presented to and how many get jobs
- Utilization of technology...tracks improvement to USFS website and number of hits, face book page, etc.
- Number of mentorships – mentoring programs link USFS to kids this way
- Trail to every classroom implemented
- Actually build into budget – not ad hoc
- Number of new internships / volunteer match
- Ala Rutgers University – seasonal fish tech trails crew
- Better grades
- USFS matches – the face of AK

4. SHARED STEWARDSHIP AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Goal 1: Self sustaining volunteer programs

Strategies

- a) Partner with local communities and empower them to be engaged in our programs

Goal 2: Youth involved in decisions, grow into mentors and leaders - youth care for forests

Strategies

- a) Create youth managed sections/projects
- b) YCC type of shadowing program can be designed to provide youth opportunities to be involved

Goal 3: Diversity and diversity of thought

Strategies

- a) Hire youth to help and design marketing strategies

Goal 4: Utilize new technologies to better connect

Strategies

- a) Engage youth in helping to develop the cutting edge technologies

Goal 5: Youth, families, communities will value and be actively engaged in on the ground stewardship and decision making for public lands

Strategies

- a) Extend and focus on family involvement using existing programs such as Kids Trails Day and Hike/Fish type events
- b) Develop new family involvement activities on the Forest

Outcomes

- Number of youth engaged in existing programs, e.g. increased participation in stream watch
- Increase in number of opportunities to come to forest – too many things to volunteer with...
- Harness baby boomer's number of USFS retirees leading volunteer programs
- Needs to be a CCF requirement of school activity
- Measure community satisfaction with USFS management / governance
- Relationship to communities RAC committees PWS and Kenai
- Community quality of life survey – replicate and track (Greg Brown) Pat Reed
- Philanthropic money support for CCF
- Number of self-sustained community volunteer programs

V. Operational Goals, Strategies and Outcomes

- More resources / jobs
- More partners to carry out programs
- Sustainability, follow through

Your Connection to the Forest (or outdoors in general) – What do you hooked?

- My dad took me hunting when I was 6 (rabbit) and 8 (deer)
- Boy Scouts
- From 6 months old and on – tagged along with dad hunting and fishing
- Getting outside – grandma going fishing (OH)
- Growing up on a farm in central NY (taking care of animals with my dad)
- Grew up in AK and most of the time parent threw us out into the wild

- Rural America – 4th generation family farm – mom got me more interested – cleaning 1st pheasant, catching butterflies, seeing hummingbirds
- Catching tadpoles in jars and watch them grow legs
- Location, location, location - beautiful places, mom and sisters backpacking and hiking
- Grew up in Anchorage coastal wildlife refuge – easy access to wilderness
- 16 – kayaked in PWS for 35 days
- Mom (had 4 brothers) kicked us outside, ran around in a pack anywhere we could go – dad loved to camp and ski
- Grew up in North Wyoming – no big towns and we were automatically in the outdoors
- Wandering outside, had a garden, discovering wildflowers
- Watching ants fight each other
- Grew up in steel mill town, watched steam from mills, thought that was source of clouds; move developed parts of nature
- Detroit, fishing with my dad; remember the smell of the dog fur
- Like to ski, started on small ski area, then moved to Vermont
- Burgundy wild life/camp; loving nature
- Suburban Santa Clara Valley, camping with my dad and brothers; ghost towns, cares, smell
- Inter-tubing, biking in SW Washington; early age hiking, backpacking; lifetime passion for mountains
- Grew up in AK, right down the street was Baxter Bog, parents help get the bucket, collecting hermit crabs
- Grew up in National Parks
- Option was, be bored or go outside

Consultant team's recommendation: At the broadest level, the USFS (in Chugach, and nationwide) needs to think about the future role and brand of the Forest Service. A good way to address this issue is to ask: what is the distinction between the USFS and the NPS? This is particularly the case in Alaska, where timber harvesting and grazing is very limited. But all over the US, recreation is an increasingly dominant element of forest use. Is the USFS to be essentially similar to the NPS in its functions, only with a bit more latitude in the extent and intensity of recreation activities? What is the role of the USFS vis a vis global warming and energy issues?

Feedback + Evaluation

I. General Comments

- So much work being done on forest
- Look forward to seeing something on paper
- Would like opportunity to provide input in room (Seward)
- Saw obvious thing we can do – right away
- Critically important to understand that challenging to integrate youth and diverse pops

2. Evaluation

Really liked

- Almond Rocca
- NICE + CCF discussion so we can focus and move forward
- Divers ideas
- Collaboration
- Strong effort
- Inspired new ideas

- Name discussion
- CCF clarity! Whoohooo
- Program list

Maybe Change

- Almond Roca for All
- Space
- Live technology and projection
- Everyone together
- Noon break for lunch

Chugach Children's Forest Strategic Planning Workshop - Dec 7 + 8, 2009 - Girdwood Attendees

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