

Rick Jandreau
Alaska Division of Forestry
101 Airport Rd
Palmer, AK 99645

October 9, 2006

Dear Mr Jandreau,

At a general meeting of the Willow Area Community Organization (WACO), a motion was passed to notify you of it's opposition to the proposed Copper Timber Sale in the Willow area. The community feels it is not in the best interests of Willow nor in the best interests of the State to precede with the sale.

Willow prides itself in claiming the ``Recreational Capital of Alaska.'' One large component of local recreation is the trails in the timber sale area. WACO's recently adopted Willow Area Trail Plan states that the wisest and best use of the land in the sale area is for recreation and mushing habitat. The Plan also requests that the Kashwitna Management Plan and the Willow Sub Basin Plan be updated with recreation and mushing habitat being the best use in many areas effected by the sale. Please see the enclosed the Willow Area Trail Plan.

The trails in the effected area considered vital for dog mushers training for the Iditarod, the Yukon Quest, the Fur Rondevous and many other classic races. During the logging operations, the trails will be ``limited'' as described in the sale's Land Use Plan, but for the many dog teams that train there this will mean ``closed.'' After operations are done, logging roads to the cutting areas will not have the loops and connections needed for good trail systems.

The sale is not in the best interest of the State for many reasons, one of which is the sale will generate very little or no revenue, especially after considering the costs associated with managing the sale. Indirect costs of removing timber such as rebuilding the Shirley Towne Bridge and wear on the public road system, if borne by the public, will further decrease net revenue.

Our community strongly supports local sawmills, log home builders and firewood cutting areas, but this sale would take away available logs for local uses. For example, the best value added use of mature spruce is not wood chips but house logs that can be utilized by local log builders or sawmills.

Our community would support the Copper Timber Sale if it could be done without adversely effecting other important land uses, when it generates significant revenue or would provide an important ``value added'' product to the local or state economy. The Willow Area Community Organization feels this sale does none of these things and is not in the best interest of our community or the State.

Sincerely,
Linda Oxley Chair