



Alaska Mountain &  
Wilderness Huts Assoc.

# Alaska Huts

wilderness stewardship through personal experience & education

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Dear 'Huts' Members and Friends:

This is a critical time for Alaska Huts. The USDA Forest Service (USFS) formally halted the hut-to-hut environmental impact statement (EIS) and 'returned the proposal' to us in May. Joe Meade (Forest Supervisor, Chugach National Forest) said in a May 25 letter that he no longer considers the proposal financially viable. Communication with the Forest Service has been difficult and slow for more than a year. We have made several requests to the Forest Service since a meeting May 29 for clarification of the issues, so we could inform members where we stand. Recently, this resulted in a phone call with the Seward District Ranger, with some positive result. We tentatively will meet with her in September. To date, however, we have not been able to completely clarify the issues. We feel we must inform our members that the proposal is in jeopardy. The board of directors has openly acknowledged that it is worn out and discouraged after months of negligible progress.

The board intends at its September meeting to make a clear decision about the status of the organization. Broadly, our choices are (1) to fold the organization and find a suitable recipient for our hut construction savings; (2) to suspend regular operation to allow the Forest Service more time to respond to our recent communications; or (3) assuming new communication, to push forward with steps needed to reanalyze the financial picture and revise the proposal to the Forest Service. Implicit in this decision is the board's feeling that Chugach National Forest is the best possible location for the hut-to-hut proposal. The current board has indicated it is not prepared to start over with another land manager in a different location, but conceivably the association could move that direction as well under a reorganization effort.

Although the board does not agree with the USFS finding that the proposal is no longer financially viable, Alaska Huts acknowledges there are legitimate financial and phasing issues that need to be resolved if multi-party huts are to be built anywhere in Alaska.

We encourage your input before September 17 to help us make a decision. Email me ([mailbox@alaskahuts.org](mailto:mailbox@alaskahuts.org)), or call me at 632-6440, or call our executive director John Wolfe at 279-4663. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Michael Henrich, President

### Our Mission:

*Include Alaska's back country in a worldwide tradition of places in which hikers and skiers can travel hut to hut, and provide warm comfortable huts in inspiring settings to foster camaraderie and promote wilderness education and stewardship.*

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