

Attention: Central Tongass Project
Petersburg Ranger District
c/o Carey Case, Project Leader
Box 1328
Petersburg, AK 99833 1328

CENTRAL TONGASS PROJECT COMMENTS

I would like to comment on the new Central Tongass Project. Over the past few years all I've heard is the Forest Service is transitioning away from logging old growth. This new plan does not seem to be doing that at all. The Forest Service has been very careful not to reveal where they intend to log. So I will have to choose the NO ACTION alternative.

When I first moved back to Petersburg in the nineties I thought the Forest Service had a pretty conservative plan for the forest. And as was explained to me then by Forest Service officials about leave strips for game corridors, tree thinning, protection of fish streams by set backs and preserves for old growth habitat. It kind of made sense and with your education and knowledge you would be ideal to manage the forest and protect the fish and game and our sustainable lifestyle that depends on the Tongass.

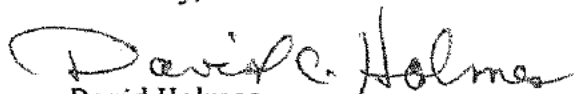
Since then the leave strips have been logged, the clear cuts have gotten larger and there seems to be more and more old growth cut down. I, like most people who live in Petersburg, have the Tongass forest all around me. I walk on Forest Service roads, trails and woods everyday and can clearly see the rate most of the trees are growing back in the clear cuts. It won't be in my lifetime and probably not in my grandkids lifetime that there will be marketable timber in most of the clear cuts.

I was able, through Forest Service personal use permits, to cut big spruce trees and build a beautiful home in Petersburg. I can see why there is such a demand for the trees. It is to bad that only about 20% of the trees in the forest are spruce. These trees can live and grow for many years so why cut them down and give them to the Chinese? The trees left standing are like money in the bank. Eventually we will have the technology for cutting single trees and when they become profitable we can cut them for our own use or sell at a profit.

How about sustainable yield? What will you log after the new 15 year plan is over? I've seen some pretty impressive figures on the size of the Tongass land mass. Millions of acres of land and only a small percentage have been logged to date. But if you deduct the acres of muskegs, swamps, unmarketable timber, alpiners and mountaintops, the 13,500 acres in this new plan and acres set aside for wildlife wilderness reserve and the area of the previous clear cuts from the total land mass you might be surprised how many acres of marketable timber is left available.

Please don't cut these old growth forests, leave some for future generations and for deer and game habitat. The game cannot live in the clearcuts in the winter. I am sure you know better than I how unmarketable the second growth trees are.

Sincerely,


David Holmes



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