

4/18/2023

To: Ben Case, Project Lead Thomas Bay Young-Growth Timber Sale Project

Dear Ben,

I would like to comment on the above mentioned project. I support any forest management project in the Thomas Bay Area. That being said I suggest that Alternative #2 be selected for implementation.

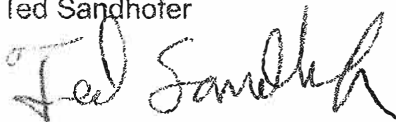
The preferred alternative treats less acres and has a greater chance of failure based on the long timeline between treatments and the economics of mobilizing to a remote road system for small amounts of timber volume. I realize that you would like to grow a small value added milling operation on Mitkof Island but growing that business by making an untested company spend the resources to mobilize to Thomas Bay is setting them up for hardship and failure. Your efforts would be better spent on continuing to offer volume on Mitkof Island until the company can become established both operationally and financially.

Alternative #2 would produce more volume which could be sold in one large and several small offerings. This would give a large proven company the economy of scale to successfully harvest a large volume of timber and leave a smaller amount of acres untreated for later harvest to smaller local companies. The best of both worlds.

I have hunted over in the Thomas Bay area for decades and own a cabin in the Point Agassiz area. In that time I have seen the moose habitat vanish as the young growth has matured. It went from being the premier moose hunting destination in central southeast to an area that produces very few moose. This has happened very quickly. Treating large acres of young growth in a short timeframe is the only way to produce forage to grow the moose population quickly. Dabbling with small cuts, in a long timeframe, that have little chance of success, will not improve the habitat. The monogamous landscape from the past harvest needs to be treated to produce a mosaic of stand structure that the moose and deer populations thrive in. The 841 acres of planned treatments outlined in Alt. #2 are just a small fraction of the young-growth acres in Thomas Bay and the more acres treated the better for good habitat.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and in advance for producing a project that will help the ecosystem in Thomas Bay while offering volume to an industry that is struggling to survive on the Tongass. The only way to ensure the continued success of the communities in Southeast Alaska is to produce jobs in all resource areas. We must never forget that National Forests are multiple use lands that can only stay healthy if we actively manage them.

Sincerely,
Ted Sandhofer



APR 21 2023