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Organization: WECAN
Title:
Comments: 2001 ROADLESS RULE TESTIMONY

USFS,

Please officiate my attached testimony on the ROADLESS RULE DEIS.

Thank you,

Wanda J Culp

Hoonah, AK

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November 14, 2019

USDA Forest Service

Attn: ALASKA ROADLESS RULE

PO Box 21628

Juneau, Alaska 99802

akroadlessrule@usda.gov

To All This Concerns,

My name is Kashudoha, Wanda Culp, Tlingit of the Tongass Forest's Glacier Bay whose cultural existence reaches far beyond recorded time. I am also the Tongass Forest Coordinator for the Women's Earth & Climate Action Network, WECAN International who is in D.C. today also speaking out.

We are here on our land this time to assure that our direct testimony is properly and legally heard, despite the current process of elimination and minimization. It was our grandparent of the Tongass Forest who collectively came together for decades of battle for us to exist legally within our own midst, on our own land. They gave birth

to the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood early last Century to battle for equal rights, the right to vote, and for a just land claims settlement as the logging industry was already active and the USFS had destroyed our trapping and food gathering camps to eliminate signs of Tlingit use and occupancy. We gained the right to vote as American citizens in 1925; an equal rights law was placed in 1945 thanks to the wise reasoning and words of Elizabeth Peratrovich speaking for our children's future. Tlingit lawsuits resulted to the creation of the non-profit Tlingit & Haida Central Council to administer federal programming services to S.E. Alaska tribes, the HIA contracts direct to the BIA so Hoonah is not a part of the T&H Central Council consortium.

Our parents picked up the land claims battle, joining all of Alaska's Indigenous Peoples so that we could have actual ownership rights to our land, something that did not happen in earlier battles simply because out-of-state industrial interests already had their firm grip on Alaska's territorial government. Donations of coins from the Villages were collected to send Indigenous Alaskan representatives to Washington, D.C. so our voices could be justly heard. Those collective voices forced the final Congressional settlement in 1971: Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act - ANCSA, when we were provided title to lands and money to begin for-profit-sharing corporate businesses under State of Alaska laws - a State that does not recognize Tribal Sovereignty. Re-enter racial discrimination in Alaska. Inequity is built into ANCSA, our economy is being stolen through our own claims settlement.

Under these terms, there is not a government around us that we can trust as each are misinterpreting and misfitting laws designed for our benefit placed under the designation of "race" rather than "culture". Today, our "protected" status statistics is lumped as "AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVES" - then Asians, Black/African Americans, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Americans, Whites, Hispanic Americans, multi-racial, Gender Male or Female, those with disabilities, and then Youth. On top of that, the federal government does not use our historic pre-established tribal use boundaries, instead they use the State of Alaska's borough/Census areas where Hoonah on Chichagof Island is lumped in with Angoon on Admiralty Island and neither is under a borough form of government. The State of Alaska holds almost one half (1/2) of the U.S.'s federally recognized tribes and yet the state legislature and government refuses to honor our inherent sovereign right to be who we are connected to where we come from.

As the original users and occupants of this Forest, we created the ANB, the ANS, the Hoonah Indian Association, the 1st Class City of Hoonah, the non-profit Tlingit & Haida Central Council, and the for-profit ANCSA corporations, that spawned the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) Title 8, with the notion of protecting our "rural" way of life under the term "subsistence". These Indigenous-created entities and agencies must begin to be seen as our factions not ever given the authority to speak on our behalf. This legally proper and unused point of view would eliminate all the confusion that has made chaos of our living Cultural existence to the advantage of not us.

The purpose of this public "National Interest" testimony today makes a perfect example of my point.

AK's U.S. (R) Senator Lisa Murkowski's family holds private interest in the logging industry that is not important to this Century's local economy in the Tongass Forest. The State of Alaska is, however, still in the clear cut logging business through the S.E. regional ANC, Sealaska, who joined Alaska's senator and Governor and now the White House in supporting weakening this hard-fought 2001 NATIONAL ROADLESS RULE through an "exemption" of her own creation. Alaskans and Americans cannot afford to provide any further welfare to industry when the People are suffering for lack of simple human services at the national and state levels.

It was the overwhelming voices of America's People that forced the ROADLESS RULE that is vulnerable because it has not been officially "coded" into the Code of Federal Regulations. The word "code" is defined as "the trunk of a tree, documents formed originally on wooden tablets". I find this ironic given today's situation of having to protect such wood from exploitation. Consequently, numerous federal laws were not properly initiated in the creation of the DEIS which itself has become legally vulnerable.

We are not visitors to this land. We have here tonight maps of Hoonah's traditional use areas and the original and historic boundaries of the Tlingit and Haida families in the Tongass Forest. This points out to the USFS areas that need protection for us and must begin as the baseline for any and all land management programming, services and employment planning within the Tongass Forest. Sealaska Corporation and its land managers are in our tool box, we have never relinquished our Inherent Rights to govern and speak on our own. ANCs are not quislings, puppets for everyone's entertainment to be used against the tribes whose lands and values those corporations are responsible for protecting for our benefit, for our economy.

State of AK is blatantly allowed to operate out of legal compliance with all federal laws that directly pertain to environmental protections including ANILCA Title 8 cultural existence and "subsistence use" across Alaska. For the USFS to be holding "hearings" tonight on "subsistence" while not doing so this week in D.C. is a diversion from the ROADLESS RULE that already innately involves traditional use of the Tongass Forest called "subsistence" - they are one in the same to us.

Equally vital to recognizing tribes and voices for all wild life, GLOBAL WARMING is a for real condition in Alaska and within the Tongass Forest that does not need any further study or diversion. The very recent man-made destruction of the Amazon forests has raised the importance of protecting the stands of the last intact Rain Forest in America, the Tongass National Forest. Every land manager with a conscience must be re-thinking their current resource extraction plans with the clear eyes and minds of the GLOBAL WARMING CRISIS that we are in! Ignoring this crisis is not an option any longer.

Through our partnership with WECAN International, a delegation of Indigenous Women's voices from Hoonah has been heard in Washington, D.C. today along with the Organized Village of Kake, and all of the other tribal sovereign voices from the N.W. Tribes and throughout the Tongass, the S.E. Alaska fishermen, the communities of Tenakee Springs and Skagway, and the many other local and national voices too. Marie Cantwell (D-WN) and Ruben Gallego (D-AZ), THANK YOU for standing up to the White House in defense of the ROADLESS RULE, and to the many other law-makers who cares enough to codify "Roadless Area Conservation" into law under S.B. 3333 that is facing Congress today. Deb Haaland, (D-AZ), thank you for calling the USFS out on prioritizing trees over tribes.

There are plenty of mitigation issues at hand that need prioritizing rather than this purely political effort to muddle up the already muddied waters, behaving drunkenly. Laws established and enforced by governing authority must lay down rules of conduct and accepted principles as guides that work consistently under the science of laws and legal interpretations and applications, rather than through the mud of outside interests. Such will be a 1st for Alaskans.

In summary:

1. Option 1 - do not diminish the ROADLESS RULE, rather place it in the CFR for proper strength.
2. Examine the current discriminatory designation for services, programming and employment under "culture" rather than "race" to destroy this free exploitation and convert into real life legalities.
3. Include tribal laws and interests to address the disproportionately adverse effects that industry brings to us by prioritizing Women, Youth and the Future.

To the USFS in Hoonah, who resides on our land as visitors, we thank you for hosting this valuable opportunity to be heard as equally and respectfully as those have been in Washington, D.C. this past week and today. Feel free to call upon us as the cultural experts we are.

Kashudoha, Chookeneidi, Hoonah Tlingit

Wanda J Culp, WECAN Coordinator for the Tongass Forest

Attachment As Stated

[See attachment containing the first part of a map of Hoonah Territory]

[See attachment containing the second part of a map of Hoonah Territory]

[See attachment containing the first part of a map of Southeastern Alaska and land belonging to tribes of the Tlingit and Haida]

[See attachment containing the second part of a map of Southeastern Alaska and land belonging to tribes of the Tlingit and Haida]

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