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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Last year I visited Alaska for this first time, fulfilling a long-held childhood dream. Growing up in a suburb of a major city, big nature always felt far-off to me. The vibrance and wildness of places like the Tongass nurtured my love of nature and captured my imagination; I saw something of the greatness of this country in the power and liveliness of Alaskan forests. Knowing there was land that held the majestic community of life comprised of bears and salmon and whales and eagles and ancient trees and intact watersheds made me feel proud to be an American. That kind of natural vibrance cannot be purchased at any price and is valuable not merely for its beauty and diversity but for the ways that healthy, connected natural systems function to support human life. Cutting more roads into the last large forests of this country does not serve the people of America, in particular our children, grandchildren, and future generations.

Today I know children who look, as I did when I was young, to these big, wild places as the places that hold their dreams-places of possibility where there are no roads carved out; where feet and the imagination can wander together. That possibility, in and of itself, is worth protecting.

I am frustrated by this roadless rule review process and the way that the voices of the communities in SE Alaska have been seemingly ignored in the choice for preferred plan. This preferred plan does not serve the people living in the roadless areas that will be affected, not to mention the people of this nation, for whom the Tongass is a living treasure. It benefits the dwindling logging industry and reinforces harmful narratives of economic growth as progress.

The protections that the roadless rule affords Alaska's forests are important for ensuring the future health of communities here. Please choose "no exemption" as the preferred plan for an Alaska-specific roadless rule.

When I visited Alaska, I sat in on a scoping meeting and I attach the transcript of that meeting here so that the community comments voiced there will be represented in this process.

Thank you for examining this with care,

Katherine Cummings

[See attachment containing the following technical resource: "Roadless Scoping Meeting 9/19/18]

[Position]

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