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First name: Alisha

Last name: Decker

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Roadless Rule

Please add my letter to the comments for the Roadless Rule.

Alisha "Mutts" Rosenbruch-Decker

Glacier Guides, Inc.

The following text was copy/pasted from an attached letter. The system cannot display the formatting, graphics, or tables from the attached original.

December 15, 2019The Honorable Sonny Perdue

U.S. Department of Agriculture

1400 Independence Ave., S.W.

Washington, D.C. 20250Ms. Vicki ChristiansenU.S. Forest Service1400 Independence Ave., S.W.Washington,  
D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue and Ms. Christiansen;

When my father, a young National Guardsman, came north to Alaska in the 1960s on the deck of an Alaska State ferry to work for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, he had no idea what Alaska's wilderness would offer him. Taking a leap from Government office life to start a Guide Outfitter operation on the Tongass was a stressful time for a young family. Our fam[shy]ily operation, Glacier Guides Inc., was the first permitted Guide Outfitter on the Tongass National Forest. Now, in our second-generation of operations, Glacier Guides is coming up on 50 years. We have seen the work of loggers in the past. We watched the loss of habitat happen right before our eyes. Then, the subsequent loss of wildlife years after the loggers and logging companies have moved on. We have felt the effects not only in our business but also in our home. As I am now the mother of two young boys, an Alaskan Master Guide, and owner of the family business, I fear that we are repeating the dark steps of the past. I ask that my voice be heard in asking you to select the "no action" alternative.

There are 77 key watersheds on the Tongass that under the Tongass Land Man[shy]agement Plan are off limits to logging. Facts are, however, that roads are being built. Three years ago on Kuiu Island the Forest Service built around 12-15 miles of road for a "poten[shy]tial" sale. That work the Forest Service completed equated to about 4 Million dollars of tax payer money spent. The sale was offered 3 different times with an opening bid set at a mere few hundred thousand dollars, and no one even bid! That sale allowed for 100% ex[shy]port of our timber in the round. Thats NO MILLING in the U.S. No jobs for Southeast Alas[shy]ka. The Forest Service further restricted public access to these new roads built with tax payer funds notifying us these roads are off-limits. The Forest Service has always placed the needs/wants of the logging company over the public or other permittees on the Forest.

This last week, a Forest-Level staff member shared new stats on the Tongass and Region. He indicated that in the next 7 years in Southeast Alaska, tourism is projected to increase to over 2.4 million visitors by sea alone to the area. The local Forest Service is not ready for this kind of visitor-ship. We have monthly meetings with Forest Staff already trying to manage conflicting industries already permitted on the landscape. Large group sites and trails are underdeveloped and no plan is in place to prepare for this projected increase in tourism on the Tongass.

Our business will be greatly effected by this proposed full repeal. As an Alaskan Master Guide, my guests rely on me for access to wild places with visions of abundant fish and wildlife. Hunting Guides in the state of Alaska are restricted to 3 Guide Use Areas. These lines on a map restrict our activities to fairly small geographical locations. We simply cannot just change areas without involvement of Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Alaska's Big Game Commercial Services Board, the Department of Natural Resources and the Forest Service. We share many of these areas with other Guide Outfitters. The idea of offering a trip only to find the soundscape flooded with chain saws and heavy equipment will certainly tarnish our guests' experience. All Forest Service Guide Outfitter permitted operations will seek wilderness areas to escape the crowding only to find more people stacked on top of each other.

It is common knowledge that the Tourism Industry in our region far surpasses the Logging Industry (even in its hey-day of the 90s). Large-scale old growth logging should be a thing of the past and NOT be revived. Have we learned nothing from our neighbors to the south? Have we learned nothing from the lessons of the Big Thorne Cut?? A cut that was supposed to yield 10 full years of harvesting was completed in just 3 years with the use of sophisticated equipment that, by the way, eliminates jobs which may be the only arguable positive to opening the forest to logging.

I ask that you listen to the voices of Southeast Alaska. We are the ones left with the slash, the garbage, the discarded cable, beaches choked with saw logs of the past with the roads that lead no where....the list of grievances goes on. Not even mentioning the de[shy]stroyed habitat that no longer provides growth to the abundant Fish and Wildlife of our great state. We have proven these sad lessons before; why are we considering repeating the destructive cycle for the benefit of padding a few pockets with quick cash??? Let the 2016 Forest Plan that we all worked on work!!

Please select the "no action" alternative!  
Sincerely,

Alisha "Mutts" Rosenbruch-Decker

Glacier Guides Inc.

Glacier Bay, Alaska

Gunner Decker  
Gustavus, Alaska

Reilly Decker  
Gustavus, Alaska

[Position]