Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/16/2019 9:00:00 AM
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Organization: Alaska Wilderness League
Title:
Comments: USDA Forest Service

Attn: Alaska Region

P.O. Box 21628

Juneau, AK 99802

Dear USDA Forest Service,

I am writing on behalf of Alaska Wilderness League members who seek to submit comments on the Environmental Impact Statement for the state specific roadless rule for the Tongass National Forest and urge selection of the No-Action Alternative.

The Tongass is one of the few old-growth temperate rainforests in the world, and the United States' largest national forest. We must preserve the last remaining old-growth trees that are vital to salmon streams and wildlife habitat and focus on a sustainable future for Southeast Alaska, not attempt to re-start industrial-scale, clear-cut old-growth logging.

Here is the letter that our members signed for your consideration during the comment period:

I write in support of the No-Action Alternative for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed Alaska Roadless Rule. The Tongass contains some of the largest intact old-growth temperate rainforest in the world, and its value in providing clean water for fish and wildlife habitat is essential to the economic and ecological health of Southeast Alaska. I strongly oppose any efforts to weaken protections for Roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest.

Included in the attached files are 8,053 comments and signatures.

Thanks for considering this public input.

Sincerely,

Andy Moderow

Alaska State Director

Alaska Wilderness League

5,232 Petition Signors

2,821 of the attached submissions included Form Plus letters. Unique substantive formal comment (beyond that submitted in the master form (above) is below. Substantive formal comment is defined as "within the scope of the proposal, have a direct relationship to the proposal, and include supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider" (36 CFR 219.62).

A single road causes degradation of the land, which leads to more tree fall as well as illegal logging (not to mention clearcuts from special interest loggers).

With urban sprawl spreading out over the whole country habitats are being decimated and fractured. Wildlife and birds need contiguous habitat to survive! Humans need untouched forests to nourish their souls!

There are many negative impacts on forest health and wildlife as a result of roading and logging, such as easier access leading to greater incidents of poaching; increasing numbers of "problem bears" interfacing with people in suburban neighborhoods; illegal fishing, including wanton killing and wasting examples; increasing landslides compromising streams and destroying salmonid habitat; habitat degradation by invasive plants; and much more damage from inconsiderate and destructive forest users.

Much deceptive nose has been made about touted (but incorrect) economic benefits of resuming higher levels of road building and logging. Firstly, the USFS loses millions of taxpayer dollars subsidizing logging access. "We The People" pay these bills, and We are tired of it! Logging companies must pay economically positive fees for the privilege of taking timber from the public trust. Moreover, many local economies have exhibited positive changes since logging was reduced, converting to less destructive and in many ways more valuable economic modes. We've experienced positive adaptions to the reduction of logging through increased eco-tourism, expanded sport fishing and hunting, more trail building, leading more users into greater access to the wilderness, etc. Nevertheless, we could support SOME expanded logging if these conditions were met: 1. local companies contracting and doing the work 2. logs and lumber products staying in the USA (no more exports of raw logs or chips!) 3. roads built carefully with ensured fish passage and landslide mitigation 4. and ESPECIALLY an end to federal subsidies and monetary losses from road building. If those 4 conditions are not met, there is NO WAY this proposal is OK!

This proposed attack on wildlife and forests has been made under the guise that this will boost Alaska's economy, when only 1% of the state's GDP comes from the logging industry. When this is compared to the value

of fisheries (the greatest economic driver in the state) and the tourism industry, logging the Tongass absolutely isn't worth permanent consequences.

No roads means no fossil fuel pollution.

Also the rare Tongass attracts millions of visitors who do not want to see roads,traffic ,logging or mining in this precious place

Dismantling the Roadless Rule sets a dangerous precedent for all our nation's forests at a time when we need them most.

Tongass NF is a gift for future generations of Americans looking for the wild that was promised with the purchase of the Louisiana Territory. Searching out wild experiences is a part of what makes us Americans. Once we no longer have that option to express our freedom, we lose our link to the past, to what made America America. Tongass NF must remain as is, a roadless swath in which future Americans can also learn what it meant to be American in the 1800s, when the West was newly opened.

The Tongass contains some of the largest intact old-growth temperate rainforest in the world. Its value in providing clean water for fish and wildlife habitat is essential to the economic and ecological health of Southeast Alaska.

Alaskan salmon industry feeds so many people. Jobs will be lost in the fishing industry

These are the prime wild lands left on the Tongass. They help protect the water quality, fisheries & tourism industry. Southeast Alaska does not need to log every square inch of its forest to have a strong economy. These wildlands protect vital, sustainable industries now.

There is a thing that happens whenever a roadless area gets a road built through it. Roads inevitably bring vehicles that can move along it. These vehicles bring industry like logging and mining and oil extraction. The Tongass is a wilderness area and must remain free of roads.

Roads = invasive activities and destruction of wilderness, plain and simple.

Please read Greg Moomaw's work on proforestation in this month's Yale 360 publication.

Dismantling the Roadless Rule sets a dangerous precedent for all our nation's forests at a time when we need them most.

Please keep the Tonga's National Forest intact and ATV-free. We humans and the Forest inhabitants need space for peace of mind and enjoyment of seclusion.

Many of us up here treasure our roadless areas and fear the damage to our salmon spawning areas and wildlife that increasing roads will cause.

We can't put what is left of public lands, which belong to all citizens of our country (and a business is not a citizen) into peril by letting roads exist where there shouldn't be roads. I have watched birds and insects disappear from the fields around my house because of human activity. That is a symptom of the problems happening faster than we can stop or even think about it.

Solid peer-reviewed research shows that any encroachment in forests (or any ecosystem) such as roads destroys their integrity and with roads come many other variety of assaults on the ecosystem.

If the Roadless Rule is breached, this shall open the door to the destruction of the immediate area and adjacent areas surrounding where the road is. This shall then create a domino effect, because all ecosystems are intertwined and interrelated and a great many species of plants and animals shall become extinct. Allowing a road where there is none and a road to allow logging at that, is unconscionable.

There exists no remotely conceivable cost-benefit analysis, by which further bulldozing and logging of the Tongass's roadless forests could yield a net benefit even to Alaska, much less to the cumulative American interest, on whose behalf the Forest Service ostensibly is employed. please withdraw this asinine proposal to resume the invasion of the Tongass roadless forests, and instead fulfill the overdue 2010 transition plan immediately.

Environmental tourism is a sustainable and economical resource. People come from around the world to see the wonder of Alaska's outdoor world, especially the Tongass, the planet's largest remaining intact northern temperate rain forest.

Not only does this proposal threaten habitat for wildlife like grizzly bears, bald eagles, moose, wolves and salmon, but it sets a terrible precedent that could lead to road construction and logging in remote, wild forest areas across the U.S. It's a step backwards for a sustainable economy in Southeast Alaska, and it could negatively impact what visitors from around the world come to Alaska to see: wild, pristine landscapes that can be experienced first-hand.

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