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Comments: The Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska is the largest national forest in the United States at 16.7 million acres. The Tongass also supports abundant fish and wildlife, including all five species of Pacific salmon, brown (grizzly) bears, wolves, Sitka black-tailed deer, Bald Eagles, Northern Goshawks, and Marbled Murrelets.

Logging over the last century, however, has changed the Tongass, particularly by targeting the rare, old-growth forest stands with the biggest trees. While only nine percent of the productive old growth in the Tongass has been clearcut to date, perhaps half of the big-tree old growth has been cut. Yet these same, productive stands are also the most important for fish, wildlife, and ecosystem integrity. While the Tongass still boasts healthy populations of fish and wildlife, many of its most important places are still at risk. Today, conservation of the Tongass is at a critical juncture.

If this project were to continue, we are putting the ecosystem at great risk. We must protect and conserve our wild habitats, not destroy them. Please stop this project.

[Position]

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