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Comments: Please don't take the Tongass National Forest from the Roadless Rule. And please, please don't remove a full 9.2 million acres from its protection.

As the largest temperate rainforest in the world and the largest national forest in the US, the Tongass plays a vital role in combating climate change and protecting species large and small, trees and fungi and animals and everything. Perhaps most of interest and vital is the huge numbers of salmon it homes, a resource suffering in the lower 48 (especially recently, with rollbacks on environmental protections for salmon and other fish in California, as well as the declining populations in Washington and Oregon. I am sure you are no stranger to the conversations happening around those issues.) The Tongass supports more salmon than the other national parks combined, and everything depends on it.

Nor would it make more economical sense to open so much of it up to logging (though I firmly argue that money should never be the highest goal we strive for. Endless exponential growth is impossible and will cause a global crash that we will pay for in the end). Fishing, hunting and tourism account for many local jobs, and fishing in particular is a huge industry in the Tongass. Plus, the Forest Service lost about \$600 million through its management of the Tongass National Forest, according to a new report from the Taxpayers for Common Sense, who calculated the Forest Service's losses through road-building and timber sales and found that the average net loss was about \$30 million annually over the past 20 years.

And not all the trees are even valuable. Many are low-quality softwoods that would have to be cut for no good reason to reach the high-value timber, destroying habitat for delicate species along the way.

There are so few truly wild, untouched areas left in the world, and they're more important now than they have ever been. The National Forest Service has a proud history of protecting such places; please continue that with the Tongass. Now is not the time to be opening old growth forests for development. Now is the time to shield them and nurture them.

Teddy Roosevelt designated the Tongass after urging from his friend John Muir. I can only imagine they would urge you now to continue to protect it (after all, it has already been clear-cut for decades in sections). The thought of our tax dollars going to cut and destroy some of the last great forestland is unconscionable.

The mission of the National Forest Service is supposed to be "Caring for the Land and Serving the People."

We have a treasure in the Tongass. But we won't for much longer if this is allowed to go through.

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