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Organization:

Title:

Comments: As an environmentally-conscious member of the public, this proposed Forest Service rule gives me such great pause that I felt it necessary to leave a comment outlining why I believe it is an unethical decision that will surely seem corrupt, whether or not it truly is, to many Americans, and certainly many Alaskans. Members of the press and subject matter experts have documented with great specificity the incredibly negative effect this proposed change will have on the Tongass ecosystem. John Schoen, a retired wildlife ecologist who worked in the Tongass for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, in his 2013 research paper found that roughly half of the forests large old-growth trees had been logged last century, and that remaining big trees provide critical habitat for brown bears, Sitka black-tailed deer, a bird of prey called the Northern Goshawk and other species. Allowing the area to be clear cut will strip these species from their homes. Additionally, this proposed rule will hurt local salmon and the salmon industry. To quote the Washington Post: "About 40 percent of wild salmon that make their way down the West Coast spawn in the Tongass: The Forest Service estimates that the salmon industry generates \$986 million annually. Returning salmon bring nutrients that sustain forest growth, while intact stands of trees keep streams cool and trap sediment. Wood, who worked on the Clinton rule while at the Forest Service, said that in recent years, agency officials have realized the golden goose is the salmon, not the trees. I highly recommend the Service take these environmental factors into account and rescind their proposed rule.

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