Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/8/2019 12:00:00 AM
First name: David
Last name: Mick
Organization:
Title:
Comments: We aren't in the business of making any more natural ecosystems with intact plant and animal populations on this planet. We're not in that business because we value our own need for more above all else. We, the people on the earth right now, are the only thing that can save these places and these beings.
I'm not writing because I'm worried about losing a sporting opportunity because of this proposed rulemaking. I'm writing because it is the right thing to do as the moral beings that we are and it is the best for the other beings on this planet who call this area home.
Below are even more further reasons to maintain roadless area protections for the Tongass National Forest, including the wild fisheries habitat in the Tongass 77 and adopt the no action Alternative 1. I hope you will consider them with an open mind.
At nearly 17 million acres, the Tongass is the nation's largest national forest and the world's largest remaining intact coastal temperate rainforest; 9.3 million acres of that wild backcountry is inventoried roadless areas, providing high quality habitat for a unique diversity of sought-after game species, including mountain goats, black-tailed deer and both brown and black bears. The Tongass also encompasses thousands of miles of salmon-rich waterways, legendary among anglers and fundamental to the state's commercial salmon industry. The commercial fishing sector alone relies on the Tongass for more than 80 percent of its salmon and employs more than 4,300 people in the region, accounting for 9 percent of the area's entire employment. By contrast, timber production accounts for only 1 percent of the region's jobs.
Further, this proposal and the preferred alternative set a slippery precedent that threatens to unravel roadless rule protections for fish and wildlife across all of our nation's wild roadless forest lands. None of the identified alternatives take into consideration conservation group's scoping comments to include balanced management policies for the Tongass, utilizing the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule as a foundational benchmark for improvements so that any roadless policies only enhance the most important fish and wildlife habitats. Logging and timber harvest already co-exist with roadless areas in the Tongass after years of prior compromise and consensus-building.
I implore you to maintain the integrity of Alaska's roadless areas and the Tongass 77, critical watersheds for trout and salmon. The Roadless Area Conservation Rule is a collaborative management approach adopted following one of the most extensive public engagement campaigns in the history of federal rulemaking. It may be America's best and most popular land management rule ever. The costs to American taxpayers for road building and unconscionably subsidized resource extraction are too high - not to mention the irreparable impact to wildlife, water, and the diversity of life on this planet.