Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/22/2019 9:00:00 AM
First name: Jeff
Last name: Arndt
Organization:
Title:
Comments: My name is Jeff Arndt and I live in Sitka, Alaska. I have lived in Alaska 43 years, and Southeast Alaska 8 years.I am a woodturner who makes and sell bowls using locally sourced woods. I also lead tours and hikes for Sitka Trailworks and Sitka Specialized Tours during summer months. Aside for how the ecosystem benefits me, I value it for what it is. I am writing a comment on the Alaska Roadless Rule DEIS because I am concerned with how the Rule and the proposed full exemption will impact my fishing, hunting, subsistence harvesting, foraging for wild foods, the peace and solitude I find in nature, recreating, practicing my culture, the status of the Tongass as a national and global treasure, the forest's ability to sequester carbon and mitigate climate change impacts, the conservation of resources for future generations .

Out of the alternatives described in the AKRR DEIS I support alternative 1: no action. It is a workable compromise that allows for economic development and the protection of roadless characteristics. I depend on roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest for economic livelihood, healthy fish habitat, foraging and gathering wild foods, recreating and enjoying nature, carbon sequestration and local climate change mitigation, viewing wildlife, keeping public lands wild for future generations, fiscal responsibility and saving taxpayer dollars . A full exemption does not protect these values, nor does it effectively balance economic development and conservation of roadless area characteristics. A full exemption from the Roadless Rule and increased logging and roadbuilding will negatively impact the Tongass and what I and many others use and depend on the forest to provide for us.

The Roadless areas on the Tongass that are especially important to me are those on or around Baranof Island, Chichagof Island, all of the inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass Yakutat forelands, Revillagigedo Island (near Ketchikan), Prince of Wales Island, Wrangell and Etolin Islands, Kuiu Island, Kupreanof Island, the southern mainland from Bradfield Canal to Dixon Entrance the central mainland from Hobart Bay to Stikine River, the northern mainland above Port Snettisham (around Juneau), Admiralty Island. I want the roadless areas in these locations to stay in roadless status in any alternative selected by the Forest Service, and be managed to provide for the uses and activities I listed above. It is important to me that the T77 and the TNC conservation priority areas retain their roadless protections.

I do not support the Forest Services preferred alternative of a full exemption. A full exemption is not in the interests of Southeast Alaskans who live in and use the Tongass National Forest, because The people and economy of Southeast Alaska has moved on from subsidized industrialized old growth logging. 94% of people living here don't want it and view it as a detriment to the environment, to their livelihood, and to their way of life. If is profoundly anti democratic that the Governor of Alaska and our national legislators are pushing for Alternative 6 in spite of almost unanimous opposition to it.. The State of Alaska says that a full exemption is needed for rural economic development opportunities. However, a full exemption would not help create more rural economic development opportunities, it would instead harm our existing rural economies that are based on the visitor industry and commercial fishing industry.

It would further harm rural economic opportunities because pursuing the same outdated economic model of old growth clearcut harvesting for export stifles innovation and possibility in other sectors, such as mariculture, sustainable young growth harvest, and rural agriculture. If the Forest Service wants to support rural economic development, they should transition to second growth logging devote resources to support our fishing and visitor industries invest in creating and maintaining recreation infrastructure improve and streamline existing permitting processes for important community projects rather than rehashing old conflicts.

I urge the Forest Service to prioritize the voices of Southeast Alaskans over those of our political representation and corporate interests. Choosing a full exemption will not create a long lasting, durable solution for roadless areas on the Tongass. It will only increase the legal challenges, uncertainty for businesses, and conflict on the Tongass going forward.

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