

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/24/2019 8:00:00 AM

First name: Robert

Last name: Mertz

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Comments to oppose modification to the Roadless Rule

Dear U.S. Forest Service,

I am a retired science teacher. I spent thirty one years teaching Biology, Environmental Earth Science and Wildlife Management classes in the public school systems of three states. My education was first as a Biologist, teaching came later. I have a Master of Science degree in Biology. As a biologist I am concerned with the effects our large human population is having on the sustainability of our Earth's life support systems. Although there are some impressive natural systems that help to stabilize the living environment on our planet, there are limits to how much abuse these systems can withstand. The fossil records show that in the past there have been several major disruptions of these systems. Today the biggest threat to our space ship Earth comes from the activities of us humans. Our continued population growth combined with the crazy notion that there must always be an expanding economy is a sure-fired prescription for disaster. Misguided economic policies are in direct conflict with the natural limits of Earth. Our finite planet can not provide unlimited resources to allow us to continue on the path we are on.

We must make decisions based on sound ecological principles if we are to bequeath our children and grandchildren with a place to live that is both sustainable and interesting. It will be a tragedy of monstrous proportions if our shortsighted way of making decisions degrades the world that our children inherit. The wonderful diversity of living creatures and wild unspoiled natural places must be preserved for them. It seems that we are unaware that the wild natural places are the ultimate infrastructure of the planet. The natural ecosystems stabilize the atmospheric gasses and maintain our freshwater systems. Our present economic systems of continued growth are nothing more than a Ponzi scheme in which our decedents will be left with nothing of value.

I am writing today to request that you help address one of the issues that will affect future generations, including our two sons and our wonderful ten year old granddaughter and her 2 year old little sister. Our other son and wife have a one year old son. Please try to throw off the short term considerations and take action that will address the long term welfare of humankind. The welfare of all of our children are depending on us.

The Roadless Rule helps protect old-growth habitat for birds like the Prince of Wales Spruce Grouse and Northern Goshawk, as well as for mammals like wolves and deer. Opening roadless areas to more logging and roads will fragment the forest and eliminate more of the big old trees that these animals rely on. Furthermore, intact, ancient forests are strongholds of climate resilience, and the Tongass is one of world's largest.

Yet, all of the action alternatives in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement allow more roadbuilding and logging across the Tongass National Forest. Logging roads and timber operations cost tens of millions of taxpayer dollars every year, with zero return on investment. Meanwhile, these destructive activities degrade the naturally sustainable wealth of salmon, wildlife watching, and tourism opportunities.

It is time to stop opening more and more acres to the timber industry and instead bolster protections to the old-growth forests and wild areas on the Tongass. I urge you to select the "No Action" Alternative (Alternative 1) and allow the Roadless Rule to remain intact on the Tongass National Forest.

Sincerely,

Robert Mertz

Spencer, WV 25276

[Position]