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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Comments to oppose modification to the Roadless Rule

Dear U.S. Forest Service,

We live primarily in Central Oregon, but work primarily in SE Alaska. We've thus experienced many issues with roading and logging in the Tongass National Forest over a 50 year time span. These impacts range from increasing landslides to stream destruction and salmonid habitat destruction, from habitat degradation by invasive plants to damage from inconsiderate and destructive forest users. There are many negative impacts on wildlife from roading and logging, such as easier access and greater incidents of poaching; increasing numbers of "problem bears" entering Sitka neighborhoods; illegal fishing, including wanton killing and wasting examples from Juneau and Sitka; etc.

Much deceptive noise has been made about touted (but incorrect) economic benefits of resuming higher levels of road building and logging. Firstly, the USFS loses millions of taxpayer dollars subsidizing logging access. "We The People" pay these bills, and We are tired of it! Logging companies must pay economically positive fees for the privilege of taking timber from the public trust. Moreover, many local economies have exhibited positive changes since logging was reduced, converting to less destructive and in many ways more valuable economic modes. We've experienced positive adaptations to the reduction of logging through increased eco-tourism, expanded sport fishing and hunting, more trail building, leading more users into greater access to the wilderness, etc.

Nevertheless, we could support SOME expanded logging if these conditions were met:

1. local companies contracting and doing the work
2. logs and lumber products staying in the USA (no more exports of raw logs or chips!)
3. roads built carefully with ensured fish passage and landslide mitigation
4. and ESPECIALLY an end to federal subsidies and monetary losses from road building.

If those 4 conditions are not met, there is NO WAY this proposal is OK!

The Tongass National Forest is of global importance, and it belongs to ALL of the people in the USA. It should not be used solely for the benefit of a few Alaskans and multi-national corporations. Thus, opening it to logging, mining, or oil and gas has permanent, detrimental consequences for local economies and ecosystems, as well as global significance. This proposed attack on wildlife and forests has been made under the guise that this will boost Alaska's economy, when only 1% of the state's GDP comes from the logging industry. When this is compared to the value of fisheries (the greatest economic driver in the state) and the tourism industry, logging the Tongass absolutely isn't worth permanent consequences. Increased loss of old-growth forest will intensify the effects of climate change, even while many of Alaska's other development actions increase the production of CO₂.

Trump's directive violates the law and process of the NaThe 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,

Scott R Bowler

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