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Organization: Shee Atiká, Incorporated

Title:

Comments: HC307

*Shee Atik[acute], Incorporated Roadless Rule comments presented by Clare Doig -

November 12, 2019:* [text bolded for emphasis]

I am providing comments in support of Alternative 6 in the Forest Service Draft EIS prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act, which would fully exempt the 17 million acre Tongass National Forest, which has six million acres set aside in wilderness which will not be developed, from the Roadless Rule. These comments are presented at the request of Shee Atik[acute], Incorporated the Alaska Native Urban Corporation for Sitka which represents approximately 3,500 shareholders, many of whom live and work in southeast Alaska.

I am a professional forester and have worked the majority of my professional career in Southeast Alaska managing Native corporation timber harvest, silviculture treatments and land management issues.

This alternative will make 165,000 acres of old growth timber and 20,000 acres of young growth timber available to be included in Forest Service plans for timber sales. Key benefits of this action include:

* It will facilitate the transition of the southeast Alaska timber industry from old growth harvest to young growth. By adding flexibility for the Forest Service timber sale program to provide suitable timber to ensure the continuing viability of the existing industry, it will increase the potential for investment in production facilities suitable for the manufacture of products from young growth timber.

* This alternative will improve the opportunities for developing access to valuable minerals located within the Forest and improve the potential for developing needed transportation connections and access to hydro-electric projects.

* Contrary to the claims of those opposed to this action, current regulations, policies, and guidelines followed by the Forest Service in their process of preparing timber sales provide adequate protection for fish and wildlife habitat. Exempting the Tongass from the Roadless Rule does not change or reduce the protections afforded to fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, karsts, threatened or endangered species, or cultural resources.

* There are no listed threatened or endangered species within the Tongass National Forest.

* Increased access in current "roadless" areas will improve the opportunities for subsistence hunting and fishing by locals, as well as non-commercial and commercial recreation.

* Wood products are the only renewable, sustainable carbon-neutral building material in existence. According to the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), use of wood products is strongly encouraged. The IPCC concluded that, "[i]n the long term, a sustainable forest management strategy aimed at maintaining or increasing forest carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, fibre, or energy from the forest, will generate the largest sustained mitigation benefit."

Shee Atika, Incorporated, Sitka, Alaska 99835

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