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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Michael Ihde and I live in Sitka, AK. I was born and raised in Sitka, Alaska. I can trace my father's lineage in Sitka back at least 5 generations. My mother's ancestors, the Tlingit People, have been here for ten thousand years. We are famous for our ability to sustainably harvest the land and the sea with relatively no negative ecological impact. With the arrival of settlers in the early 1700's came disease, war, alcoholism, famine, rape, and eventually near total destruction of all Alaskan cultures. However, we have remained strong and never fail to come together when it comes to defending our land and our tradition. The forest and rivers, the ocean and the mountains are all an essential part of the diets of tens of thousands of Southeast Alaskans, and all of these are at stake should the Roadless Rule be abolished. 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 subsistence harvesting, foraging for wild foods, the peace and solitude I find in nature, 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, and the conservation of resources for future generations .

Out of the alternatives described in the AKRR DEIS I support alternative 1: no action. It protects important fish and wildlife habitat from clearcutting and roadbuilding. I depend on roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest for healthy fish habitat, deer habitat and subsistence hunting, foraging and gathering wild foods, practicing my culture, recreating and enjoying nature, carbon sequestration and local climate change mitigation, keeping public lands wild for future generations. A full exemption does nothing whatsoever to 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.

The Roadless areas on the Tongass that are especially important to me are those on or around Baranof Island, Chichagof Island, Admiralty Island, as well as the rest of the inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass. 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 strongly reject 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. I have always relied on subsistence food to keep me happy and healthy. A full exemption of the Roadless Rule is absolutely NOT in the best interest of any mindful Alaskan. Anyone who thinks otherwise either does not fully understand the proposition or has only their own best interests in mind, and not those of others. The State of Alaska says that a full exemption is needed for rural economic development opportunities, which is not necessary.

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 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.

I am 21 years old. In the last few years, I have witnessed and experienced extreme climatic change. I have seen decimated salmon population and returns. Alaska has experienced record high temperatures, severely decreased rainfall, and near complete failure to accumulate significant winter snow pack in the mountains, both of which play an absolutely crucial role in the stasis of our pristine, untouched, and beloved rainforest home.

[POSITION]