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Comments: Written comment

I am asking the Forest Service to adopt the no action option on the Roadless Rule.

Frankly, I am disappointed that the USDA Forest Service would consider any other action. If you take into account testimony that has already been taken, it has overwhelmingly been in favor of retaining roadless areas. The Roadless rule was a collaboration of many different entities. Please do not ignore the wishes the people who live near and love these places.

More roads are too expensive. They cost the taxpayer's money to build. The forest service already has a back log of road maintenance. More roads will cost wildlife their sanctuaries. They cost subsistence sustainability. They cost tourism places to visit. They cost karst lands more damage than they have already sustained. They cost taxpayers in the form of subsidies. There are enough roads.

I do not believe that Prince of Wales Island can withstand the impact of any more roads, or anymore old growth logging. Prince of Wales already has a one hundred thousand acre clear-cut, most of which is on Karst. I have seen regeneration on Karst lands that is very poor or negligible, especially on medium and high vulnerability Karst. I have been places that soil scientists believe will take another ice age before the forest regenerates. The soil substrates are very fragile on Karst. In Carol inlet you can go to a large area of clear-cut and see the contact line between the Low Vulnerability karst and the other soils. On one side regeneration is poor, while on the other, regeneration is what should be expected. To ignore the sustainability of these Karst lands should be a crime.

Karst lands provide streams with a higher productivity. The underground systems moderate the flow of water to lower high waters and mitigate lower flows. The change in PH as the water flows over the limestone also provides very productive salmon streams. As the climate becomes warmer, these underground systems will help to moderate temperatures that adversely affect salmon. These streams are needed for subsistence use and for fisherman.

There are many other islands on the Tongass containing Karst that could also be affected negatively. Islands like Heceta, Kosciuszko, and more, that have already had extensive logging impacts. Many caves on these islands have not been adequately protected in accordance with the National Caves resources protection act. To damage these systems changes the way water flows. This can and has had catastrophic consequences to the ecosystem.

Many native groups are also expressing a no option alternative. They have realized that the lands they use for subsistence will not withstand the onslaught of more development. Their way of life has been impacted for so long, let us help them continue their traditional ways of life.

In a world that is feeling the effects of climate change it becomes vitally important to keep the Tongass intact for use in carbon sequestration. In this changing climate, we need to act conservatively to assure salmon habitat as the streams and the land grows warmer.

The reality of new roads in the Tongass is centered on those places that would appear to be out of sight, out of mind. By this I mean that the Forest Service returns time and again to log areas that are located farther from the view sheds of cities. This does not negate the damage. The land works as a whole, and if we cause much of it to become sick with unsustainable impacts, it can teeter over the edge, with devastating impact to wildlife, causing landslides, unsustainable regeneration and damage to streams that the fish use. The activities that could be

planned for roadless areas can still occur as the rule stands. The area of roads does not need to be increased. Let us have to foresight to look to the future of the planet.

Connie LaPerriere

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