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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I live in SE Alaska and I lived here in the 1980's when timber was still "booming." I support Alternative 1, NO CHANGE, but not for the typical reasons.

My reasons venture into the areas of wildlife habitat. Mainly deer and fish. The USFS says that "optimum" deer habitat is 18 deer per square mile. Realistic studies show that very good, old growth habitat sustains 10-12 deer per square mile. In a new growth, stem exclusion type forest the habitat available drops to 5-6 deer per square mile. That is HALF of what the land could sustain.

Everywhere I go on Prince of Wales Island I hear people complaining about how difficult it has become to harvest deer; POWCAC meetings, POWLAT meetings, Fish & Game Advisory Committee meetings and social media. Most people claim that the wolf population is at fault. They are only partially correct, as predation by wolves & bear is a factor, as is high harvest numbers as well as habitat management techniques.

Quality habitat plays a big roll in deer populations providing food and shelter.

I've been in forests within 5 miles of my home that have such heavy stem exclusion that virtually no sunlight reaches the forest floor. It is obvious why these areas can only support 5-6 deer per square mile. Also, changing the forest canopy affects fish streams and could potentially change the personal use, as well has sport and recreational opportunities of SE Alaska.

I don't see how adopting an Alternative that "may" provide a few jobs is worth the risk of further jeopardizing future deer harvests. It is time for SE Alaska to figure out an industry for our young growth forests. In 15 years there is going to be a glut of young growth timber, ripe for harvest. Currently, there is enough old growth timber available for harvest to sustain the current industry until the new growth is ready.

Prudent decisions now will enable SE Alaska to be enjoyed for generations to come. Lets not keep extending this dead end road.

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