

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/10/2019 9:00:00 AM

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Comments: I believe that repealing the Roadless Rule has the potential to do more harm than good on the Tongass National Forest. The breathtaking beauty of this forest, along with its ongoing role in harboring countless species of wildlife makes it one of the most valuable ecological spectacles that we have in the United States. Along with the wildlife benefits that accompany this vast forest, other ecological benefits are found within the walls of the forest such as water purification, carbon sequestration, and oxygen production. Removing the Roadless Rule, which applies to multiple national forests across the country, would put the integrity of this treasured forest at risk. National forests are meant to be a public resource, where future generations can visit and enjoy nature as it is meant to be seen. Removing protection from this national forest would taint that mission for the mere benefit of money in the pocket of private corporations. Further, Hjerpe and Hussain share that only 1 million acres within this massive forest are even suitable for timber harvest (2016). Is harvesting this slow-returning timber really worth removing these basic protections from this national treasure of a forest? It is my hope that when the dust settles on this issue that the Tongass National Forest will remain with the protections that were bestowed upon it due to the initial Roadless Rule of 2001.

Literature Cited

Hjerpe, E.E. and A. Hussain. 2016. Willingness to pay for ecosystem conservation in Alaska's Tongass National Forest a choice modeling study. *Ecology and Society* 21(2)

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