Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/11/2019 9:00:00 AM
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: My name is Nellie Lipscomb and I live in Sitka, Alaska. I have only lived in Southeast Alaska for a year but interact with the forest every day. From harvesting berries, foraging for mushrooms, taking deep breaths of clean air, hiking, camping, or simply relaxing in nature - I rely on the untouched wilderness as an asset for maintaining my physical and mental well-being. 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 the peace and solitude I find in nature, foraging for wild foods, subsistence harvesting, the status of the Tongass as a national and global treasure, the forest's ability to sequester carbon and mitigate climate change impacts, the conservation of resources for future generations recreating.

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, foraging and gathering wild foods, recreating and enjoying nature, carbon sequestration and local climate change mitigation, viewing wildlife, keeping public lands wild for future generations, fiscal responsibility and saving taxpayer dollars . A full exemption does not 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 and what I and many others use and depend on the forest to provide for us.

The Roadless areas on the Tongass that are especially important to me are those on or around Baranof Island, Admiralty Island, Chichagof Island, the northern mainland above Port Snettisham (around Juneau), all of the inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass Yakutat forelands, Prince of Wales Island, Wrangell and Etolin Islands, Revillagigedo Island (near Ketchikan), Kuiu Island, Kupreanof Island, the central mainland from Hobart Bay to Stikine River, the southern mainland from Bradfield Canal to Dixon Entrance . 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 passive or active watershed restoration of salmon streams and wildlife habitat, low-impact recreation such as camping, hiking, hunting, and fishing . It is important to me that the T77 and the TNC conservation priority areas retain their roadless protections.

I do not support 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, because Eliminating the Roadless Rule is neither economically viable nor ethically sound. SE Alaska relies on tourism (which in turn demands the pristine wilderness protected by the Roadless Rule) to function, whereas the timber/logging industry directly threatens our local culture, economy, and environment - while portending the same deleterious impact on the world as a whole.. The State of Alaska says that a full exemption is needed for rural economic development opportunities. However, a full exemption would not help create more rural economic development opportunities, it would instead harm our existing rural economies that are based on the visitor industry and commercial fishing industry.

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 transition to second growth logging devote resources to support our fishing and visitor industries 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.

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