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Comments: - . - , . .

My reasons include the following:

1. The other alternatives are a threat to the livelihoods of local communities, many of whom rely on subsistence hunting, particularly of Sitka Black-tailed deer. Road-building and logging will reduce deer populations.
2. As reported in the Seattle Times (Dec. 6, 2019): "The Organized Village of Kake, the Ketchikan Indian Community, the Organized Village of Saxman, the Craig Tribal Association and the Organized Village of Kasaan have all passed resolutions expressing a desire to keep the Roadless Rule in effect on the Tongass." The wishes of Native People who rely upon the Tongass and whose cultural heritage there goes back many hundreds of years should be honored and prioritized.
3. In the face of climate change, with dire effects already occurring, it is imperative that we preserve and increase our forests, rather than reducing them. Replanting of trees after logging is NOT a sufficient mitigation, as it will take decades (and in the case of lost old-growth, centuries) for saplings to grow to the age of logged trees. The Tongass Forest is the largest carbon-sink in our National Forest System, and should be preserved (and further restored).
4. These trees are not needed for use within the United States. The logging companies proposing to harvest within the Tongass ship round-log timber to Asia. Furthermore, timber jobs are outnumbered by jobs related to tourism by 20 to 1 in Alaska. The argument that logging is crucial to the economy of Alasaa is specious: Logging now accounts for a mere 1% of the Alaska economy.
5. AS also noted in the Dec 6 Seattle Times: "the Forest Service should strive for balance and respect as it moves toward its final decision. We grew up on land now marred by shortsighted timber policies of the past: Much of Prince of Wales is heavily degraded by old clear-cuts that wont offer valuable wildlife habitat for hundreds of years. Though our island is only 135 miles long, it already has 2,500 miles of logging roads. The last remaining stands of ancient forest are essential for holding Prince of Wales in ecological balance."
6. As a resident of the Puget Sound region, I am a direct stakeholder in this decision: (a) Our region's ecological health and fisheries economies rely on preserving healthy watersheds and thriving salmon population; (b) as a biologist, biology instructor, and long-time wilderness hiker and kayaker, I hope to have the privilege one day of visiting the Tongass; (c) climate change knows no boundaries, and the Tongass Forest's carbon-sequestration services are a treasure not to be squandered;

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