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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Tim Billo. I am a biologist (University of Washington) and former National Park Service intern (southeast AK). I am writing in support of the No-Action Alternative for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed Alaska Roadless Rule. Having worked with southeast Alaska tribes, and studied the ecosystems of southeast Alaska with my students, I strongly object to removing protections from roadless areas on the Tongass National Forest. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to log southeast's rainforests sustainably, and the previous track record of the USFS, suggests that opening the Tongass for road building and subsequent logging will only result in the unsustainable removal of ancient forests. Previous clear cuts on the Tongass 30 or more years ago, still have yet to recover. Trees simply grow too slowly in that part of the world to make logging sustainable. Furthermore, the removal of forests has had devastating impacts on fisheries in the region. Alaska Native communities, as well as other demographics, have been saddled with poverty due to unsustainable exploitation of the resources of this region. The sustainable solution would involve sustainable management of already harvested timberland, coupled with preservation of the remaining non-timber forests with a view towards protecting watersheds for a sustainable fishing industry, as well as a burgeoning tourist industry. Research shows that there is more money, and longer-term sustainable money in tourism, and that tourists are not interested in coming to Alaska to witness vast clear cuts that linger on the landscape long after logging has ceased. And I should add the tourism in Alaska includes hunting and fishing. Responsibly managed and well-preserved ecosystems are essential to maintaining hunting and fishing, both for subsistence and tourism. Finally, Alaska's Tongass is a critical carbon sink to combat climate change. Please keep the federal Roadless Rule intact and current protections in place for national forests in Alaska.

Sincerely,

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