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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I have lived in the Tongass since 2003. I have called the communities of Yakutat, Sitka, and now Juneau my home.

Over the last 16 years I have been fortunate to participate in a lifestyle centered around hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities. A fundamental characteristic of my lifestyle is the acquisition of food from the natural world, which for me is the Tongass. My primary concern with the proposed rule change, to completely exempt the Tongass from the 2001 Roadless Rule, is that the food I eat and share with family and friends is dependent on intact, continuous forests, and large stands of old growth.

Alternative 6 (the preferred alternative) would remove roadless protections for the Tongass, it would maximize timber harvest opportunity, and fundamentally alter the productivity and diversity of the forest. This forest that supports the abundant salmon returns and healthy populations of black tail deer and other game animals that feed us.

We are facing increasingly unpredictable climatic conditions that are changing the natural environments of Southeast Alaska. Our rivers, once icy cold and rapid are now low and warm, our mountains are largely without snow, our temperate rainforests are dry and plant communities are shifting. There is little we can do to slow global climate change, but we find solace in the diversity and resiliency of the Tongass. We must do everything possible to support that resiliency, we must maintain the protections that have allowed our communities to grow and our people to survive off the abundance of the Tongass.

The Tongass is not a Park or a Wilderness, it is a Forest and it is our home. Please listen to the many voices of Tongass residents urging you to maintain Roadless protections for our home. Alternative 1 of No Action is essential to maintaining the health of our forest, and thus our communities, during this period of unpredictable environmental change.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Matt Catterson

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