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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Alternative 1 (no action) on Roadless Rule in Alaska

Dear USFS,

I am a scientist with a PhD and Masters in Geophysics from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, specializing in alpine ecosystem interconnections. I am opposed to changes to the Roadless Rule for the sake of resource extraction in Alaska (i.e. I favor 'Alternative 1,' which takes no action on existing regulations). The Tongass is the largest remaining undeveloped area of old growth forest in North America, and should remain that way for the sake of environmental reasons. Forestry of old-growth has long been shown to be devastating to local biodiversity and to wildlife habitat for keystone species (keystone from an environmental perspective, as well as for maintaining the charismatic wildlife that drives Alaskan tourism). Timber logging has also been shown to be extremely destructive to natural watersheds, and threatens increased erosion, and changes in streamflow quantity and quality as a result of changing watershed conditions.

The proposed changes to the Roadless Rule in Alaska will be devastating to Southeast Alaska, in terms of threats to wildlife populations, and watershed quality. The latter threatens salmon spawning habitat. whereby salmon represent among the greatest economic engines in Southeast Alaska in terms of subsistence and commercial food value. Additionally, the millions of cruise and independent visitors who annually make the journey to Alaska to witness some of the last remaining wilderness in North America won't have reason to make the trip.

We have other options in Alaska for driving economic growth (e.g. we are on of the nation's leaders in renewable energy development, given the prevalence of off-grid communities in the state). We do not need to destroy this environment in an irresponsible bid for short-term profit.

I urge you to choose Alternative 1 (i.e. no change) and to preserve this crucial ecosystem.

Thank you for your consideration,

-Joanna Young

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