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First name: Katherine

Last name: Stewart

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I was a USFS employee when 'Roadless Rule' Protections began

Dear U.S. Forest Service,

I worked for seven years for the USFS, as a Bio Tech. I worked in Region 6 on research on the recovery rate of vegetation in clear cuts. Shade is needed to cool all streams. Even small streams are important as they feed water into larger rivers that host anadromous fish populations, and without shade, can rise to lethal temperatures. We found that it took decades for the canopies to close and cool the streams, and looking both at small tributaries and streams with anadromous fish runs, the stream temperatures reflected the lack of shade.

Our salmon and steelhead populations are essentially ruined in the lower 40. We must protect the ones in the Tongass. I strongly oppose the Forest Service's plan to eliminate "Roadless Rule" protections for the Tongass National Forest and urge you to select the "no action" alternative instead.

The highest and best use for the Tongass at this moment of time is as a site to sequester carbon. We need all the forests we can keep in this critical task. Secondly its highest and best uses are tourism and fishing - both of which rely on intact forests to thrive.

It's even more important to save these last remaining roadless forests because your agency has fragmented and logged so much of our national forests, harming wildlife and waters along the way.

For the same reasons, I oppose your plan to allow the agency to open any of the 5 million acres of roadless areas on the Chugach National Forest to bulldozing and clearcutting for logging. This is simply a backdoor repeal of the 2001 Roadless Rule, which protects all roadless lands because of the critical role they play in protecting pure water, secure wildlife habitat and remote recreation.

Please - do the right thing. Select the "no action" alternative to maintain "Roadless Rule" protections for the Tongass and Chugach.

Sincerely,

Katherine S Stewart

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[Position]