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First name: Mitch

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Organization: Conservation Northwest

Title:

Comments: Alaska Roadless Rulemaking #54511

Good morning,

The below comment was recorded on November 23, 2019 at the REI Flagship Store in Seattle, WA as part of a community meeting regarding the Alaska Roadless Rule. Washington Wild was given permission by the individual to submit this comment to the United States Forest Service on their behalf. Please add their comment into the record.

Thank you.

Mitch Friedman, Conservation Northwest

Seattle, WA 98119

I am Mitchell Friedman. I direct Conservation Northwest. Been working for about 35 years to protect our wild areas, and I guess what I'll add is memories of the battle because it was a hell of a battle. Rolling back roadless protections in the Tongass or anywhere makes no sense policy-wise. Logging these areas made no sense. Even in the 80s, some of us can remember when we would go to our favorite places and they wouldn't be there anymore and the battles we had to go through and the arguments we had to make to get to this point. Congressman, Norm Dicks was the first to offer a writer appropriations bill, a restriction on logging roadless areas, and as a congressman from timber country. These were the transitions we had to go through to get to the point that we're at now where we take these things for granted that the places we love will still be there and that we'll be moving forward not backwards. I can tell you that things feel different in timber country these days. We don't battle now over logging big trees or wild areas. We instead work together on rational policy and forestry that's often improving the stands. We now have in the Northwest, just a fraction of the timber mills that we had 30 years ago. Yet we process more timber in fewer mills than we did in the vast number of mills in the old days because of automation. Back before the roadless rule, all that was logged out of the Tongass was not just below cost, but it was being shipped off as pulp overseas to foreign markets and these days when you could log the rest of these forests and not generate jobs or economic benefits, there's no reason to do these things other than carrying on old political vendettas. We have to get past this. We have to protect our wild areas. Let's come together.

Hillary Sanders, Member and Engagement Manager

She/Her

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