Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/13/2019 9:00:00 AM
First name: Tom
Last name: O'Keefe
Organization: American Whitewater
Title:
Comments: Alaska Roadless Rulemaking #54511

Good afternoon,

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.

Tom O'Keefe, American Whitewater

Seattle, WA 98115

Good afternoon. My name is Tom O'Keefe. I'm that Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director for American whitewater. I also serve on the joint policy shop for Outdoor Alliance. Our mission is to conserve and restore America's whitewater rivers and to

enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely. I'm also an aquatic ecologist and I did work at the University of Washington for several years and I managed a research program that had sites up in the Tongass National Forest, so it's a place I've personally spent a lot of time in as a research science scientist and also for outdoor recreation. American Whitewater supports alternative one, the no action alternative. We are strongly opposed to the preferred alternative that would upend the protections of the roadless rule for this place for the paddle sports community. Sea kayaking among the islands and coastline of the Tongass National Forest is truly a world-class way to experience the Pacific coastal temperate rainforest. While our members are whitewater paddlers, when flows drop in summer, many of us become sea kayakers and some of us even paddle all the way to Juneau from Seattle through the spectacular landscape. For recreational users, the view shed in water quality, the camping experience and the wildlife are all spectacular values of this place. All are protected by the roadless rule, and the impacts are not adequately addressed in the draft environmental impact statement. American Whitewater supports the no action alternative and upholding the roadless rule for this place. Thank you.

Hillary Sanders, Member and Engagement Manager

She/Her

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