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First name: Nicholas

Last name: Whicker

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Responsible project official,

I write to you in support of ALTERNATIVE 1 for the proposed Alaska Roadless Rule. I write as a lifelong Southeast Alaskan, commercial fisherman/deckhand, subsistence user of Sitka blacktail, salmon, groundfish, berries, etc., and a graduate of the University of Alaska Southeast - Juneau Campus with a B.S. in Marine Biology. As someone who truly tries to draw on all aspects of an issue to form my opinion, and though not entirely opposed to sustainable, well-managed logging, I can't imagine a scenario where I fully support any other alternative other than Alternative 1. The beauty of the lush, relatively untouched Tongass National Rainforest, where old growth stands can be clearly seen from a maritime (on-the-water) perspective, is unmatched. I find myself gazing for hours at the sheer abundance and denseness of Southeast Alaska's (SEAK) forest ecosystems; I catch myself pondering the complex, interconnected blends of terrestrial and marine ecologies within SEAK, how marine-derived nutrients and isotopes from salmon can be found within surrounding old-growth trees, mammals, and insects; and more recently, I ask myself why the State of Alaska would ever want to jeopardize these numerous, potentially infinite, natural resources. Sure, trees can grow back and perhaps reach old-growth status again, but the ecological repercussions of removing old-growth stands will never return to normal. Where will juvenile salmon rear when there are no fallen old-growth trees to create eddies and pools? How will black and brown bears survive the winter with less and less fat-rich salmon to gorge themselves? Where will Sitka blacktail deer take refuge in the winter when their historical denning area has been clear-cut? How many other Alaskans contemplate these ecological perspectives? Does the State contemplate these perspectives? Does the State recognize the concept of OneHealth, or is it asinine to believe individual 'resources' can be managed independently of one another? If old-growth forests are removed from the Tongass so too will the ethical barriers put in place with the original 2001 Roadless Rule, not to mention numerous other species' habitats and resources (i.e. services provided to species as a direct result of old-growth stands being present). It is expressed through the personal perspectives given within this letter for support of Alternative 1 of the new Alaska Roadless Rule proposed by the State. To conclude with the effectively prevalent phrase used by thousands of Alaskans: "NO ACTION IS THE BEST ACTION".

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