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Comments: I have lived in the Tongass for all of my life. My wife and I have also chosen to raise our three children in the Tongass and they stand to gain or lose a lot depending upon the decisions the USFS makes. We are firmly opposed to exempting the Tongass National Forest from the Roadless Rule and support Alternative 1- No Action for a number of reasons.

#### Animal Habitat & Wilderness

We hunt and fish in the Tongass including areas at risk for development if roadless areas are opened up. The Tongass National Forest has first class Sitka Blacktail habitat. I have attempted to hunt in second growth areas of the Tongass and experienced firsthand what happens when these forests are logged. After about 20 years the land is rendered useless for habitat and becomes impossible to travel through. This should not be the fate of productive forests that can provide our communities with a sustainable local food source.

We utilize wild meat for the majority of our protein food source. As a result we are actually living with molecules of the Tongass in our bodies and we are strongly connected to the land. It would be a grave mistake to destroy the land that is capable of feeding our communities. Currently many of our salmon stocks are in decline and struggling. We need to be doing all we can to support the ecosystems that these fish rely upon.

#### Tourism

The building of roads and other development would not help the strong tourism economy that currently brings income to many Southeast communities. People don't come to Alaska to see another BC or Washington clearcut. People come to Alaska to see wild places and experience them. The Forest Service should support industries that work together for a sustainable economy. Look the historic economics of Tongass timber and it is obvious this is not a sustainable industry in the "build roads and clearcut" model. While most people visit Southeast Alaska via cruise ship, a much smaller number of people visit Alaska for big game hunts which rely exclusively on intact ecosystems that can support moose, deer, goats and bear. Roadbuilding would not support this economy.

#### Small Scale High Value Timber

The Forest Service should encourage very small scale, high value timber sales as opposed to larger scale, clearcut oriented sales. Alaskans are tired of seeing our forests gutted and sent on the cheap over to Asia where they take advantage of adding value to the wood. To encourage small scale high value timber businesses in Southeast Alaska we do not need to build new roads and it would not be economical to do so.

#### Climate Change

Most USFS officials agree that climate change is affecting the world we live in. Alaska in fact is on the bleeding

edge of a changing climate. With the Tongass we have the ability to keep it intact as it acts to sequester carbon out of the atmosphere. Alaska and the USFS could lead by example and keep our forest intact and doing our part to help counter climate change. In fact it would be negligent at this point to ignore this and not protect an ecosystem that is significant in the fight against climate change.

In many ways this feels like a move back to 50 years ago. One cannot help but wonder if this is really just a political move versus really trying to support Southeast Alaska communities. I just do not see Exempting the Tongass from the Roadless Rule helping Southeast but on the contrary hurting the economies that exist. Lets see the USFS support projects that actually will help support Southeast Communities.

[Position]