Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/18/2019 6:19:42 AM
First name: Cheryl
Last name: Stromme
Organization:
Title:
Comments: My name is Cheryl Stromme and I live in Sitka, AK. I have lived in SEAlaska for 41 years. I value the Tongass for its beauty, the food it provides, recreation and most importantly, carbon sequestration. I am writing a comment on the Alaska Roadless Rule DEIS because I am concerned with how the Rule and the proposed full exemption will impact my subsistence harvesting, foraging for wild foods, the peace and solitude I find in nature, the status of the Tongass as a national and global treasure, the conservation of resources for future generations the forest's ability to sequester carbon and mitigate climate change impacts, recreating.

Out of the alternatives described in the AKRR DEIS I support alternative 1: no action. The rule is working fine as it is by balancing the conservation of our fish and wildlife habitat with important development projects.. I depend on roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest for foraging and gathering wild foods, recreating and enjoying nature, carbon sequestration and local climate change mitigation, viewing wildlife, keeping public lands wild for future generations, fiscal responsibility and saving taxpayer dollars healthy fish habitat. A full exemption does not protect these values, nor does it effectively balance economic development and conservation of roadless area characteristics. A full exemption from the Roadless Rule and increased logging and roadbuilding will negatively impact the Tongass and what I and many others use and depend on the forest to provide for us.

The Roadless areas on the Tongass that are especially important to me are those on or around all of the inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass Baranof Island, Chichagof Island, Yakutat forelands. I want the roadless areas in these locations to stay in roadless status in any alternative selected by the Forest Service, and be managed to provide for the uses and activities I listed above. It is important to me that the T77 and the TNC conservation priority areas retain their roadless protections.

I do not support the Forest Services preferred alternative of a full exemption. A full exemption is not in the interests of Southeast Alaskans who live in and use the Tongass National Forest, because SE Alaskans have spoken out in support of protecting the Tongass and our way of life. It is vital to maintain and protect huge areas of carbon sequestration that will hopefully help us save our planet. The State of Alaska says that a full exemption is needed for rural economic development opportunities. However, a full exemption would not help create more rural economic development opportunities, it would instead harm our existing rural economies that are based on the visitor industry and commercial fishing industry.

It would further harm rural economic opportunities because pursuing the same outdated economic model of old growth clearcut harvesting for export stifles innovation and possibility in other sectors, such as mariculture, sustainable young growth harvest, and rural agriculture. If the Forest Service wants to support rural economic development, they should improve and streamline existing permitting processes for important community projects rather than rehashing old conflicts devote resources to support our fishing and visitor industries transition to second growth logging invest in creating and maintaining recreation infrastructure.

Just that it would be a huge loss to go back to the old ways of managing the forest

I urge the Forest Service to prioritize the voices of Southeast Alaskans over those of our political representation and corporate interests. Choosing a full exemption will not create a long lasting, durable solution for roadless areas on the Tongass. It will only increase the legal challenges, uncertainty for businesses, and conflict on the Tongass going forward.