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Comments: As someone who lives, works, and recreates in the Tongass, I oppose the roadless rule. While it is true that I work as an arborist and cut timber commercially, my opposition to the existing rule isn't based on my job. I see several issues with it.

In my line of work, I assess trees and forest health. Some trees are cared for and pruned, others removed for various reasons. Often times its for hazards to existing human infrastructure, other times it's to open up a view/ allow more sunlight, I also do fire mitigation and forest thinning to promote healthier stands of timber and allow biodiversity in forest understories. Another task I do is cut and log timber for commercial harvest. We practice a variety of techniques in forest management and harvesting on private, state, and federal lands. In my off time, I gather berries, various flowers and eadible plants, pick various mushrooms, hunt, trap, and fish. Sometimes I simply explore.

I believe allowing more access into the Tongass via road systems can be very beneficial in several ways. First, it would cut the cost of potential woodland fire suppression. It is obvious that the more remote the blaze, not only is it more difficult to get under control, but it also drives up the cost significantly. That might be an important factor when budget cuts are impeding several government programs, and since the entire Tongass was dry and hot enough to warrant a full burn ban this past summer, why would we take that risk. It seems that by fighting to keep places more wild, we forget their importance our everyday lives and often allow them to be destroyed by natural causes. It makes more sense to fight for utilization of the natural resource than to let it go to waste.

Second, the tourism industry, however important it is to some people and communities isn't concerned with the health of our forest. Especially when, for an example, one cruise line was caught on its second offense dumping waste into Glacier Bay this past summer. Seems like conservationism would fight against that and not settle for a meager fine as retribution. Many visitors I've meat in my years are more interested in what I do in the few logging camps we have here in the Tongass than most anything else. Perhaps preservation of economic history is another great example. Seems like Ketchikan's lumberjack show is quite a hit with tourists.

Third, old growth forests aren't simply full of big, old trees. Old growth is a state of maturity in the evolution of the forest. By building more road access, foresters can gain access into areas that are in desperate need of management to prevent devestation and also to study, promote, and mimic the ecology of propper old growth. As for the carbon issue, it's been discovered that trees absorb the greatest amount of carbon between 20 and 70 years of age. That isn't going to get us to old healthy forest stands if every tree is of the same age, but the value of that information should be considered. Especially when guys like me go into timber harvest areas and find that 60% of the timber in a unit is cull on the stump. That stand is not only unhealthy and likely to spread pathogens to healthy areas in the forest, but it's difficult to justify logging it other than for land management uses. Until biomass burners are utilized locally to help out with the reduction of timber waste, it's discraceful and wasteful.

It will also allow more access to hunters and fishermen. By putting in more roads, roaded areas that are over hunted will likely see less dense trafic and keep herds moving. The actual amount of effort from hunters venturing off into the middle of some remote islands is far less than the art traffic on existing logging and forest service roads.

Finally, I would like to comment on the economic value as well. If more timber is allowed to be harvested, more jobs for road builders, loggers, tug boats, and shipping barges/ ships, and possibly/ hopefully, mills. If the concern is about exports, as timber becomes available, locals mills will pop up to meet the demand for a value added timber product market. Those jobs would be year round, not seasonal as most tourism jobs are. It seems

that most tourism related jobs gain money within the state for 5 months, and head somewhere else to spend it. Just look at all the shops and restaurants closed down in the winter months in any town visited by cruise ships. Very few people benefit from this, and yet, we call it a booming industry. Let's not forget that it also, "busts," for 7 months every year as well. By having more local industry, there will be more workers as well as their families. That means economic growth.

In summary, the roadless rule as it stands is not good for the Tongass.

[POSITION]