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First name: Richard

Last name: Carriere

Organization: New Orleans Chapter of the Sierra Club, Conservation Committee

Title:

Comments: 1. The Tongass National Forest of Alaska constitutes a massive carbon sink as well as a climate change stabilizer in a northern area where the effects of climate change are already severe and expected to become more so into the future. As such it provides significant buffer and refuge to biological life in a zone of rapid temperature change especially warmer temperatures and for longer durations. As such the Tongass National Forest is most beneficial to life and to climate change buffering if left intact, best achieved by being left road less.

2. The climate change buffering benefit of the Tongass is a global benefit not restricted to any current geopolitical region. Thus it is similar in a representative perspective to the great forests of the Amazon as a carbon sink, as well as a major store of invaluable genetic diversity the values of which are only partially understood. Thus as with the Amazon forest so should pre-colonial period non-exploited Tongass National Forest be preserved for its wealth of natural services. These services become more critical with each passing year as climate change has deeper impacts across the region and earth.

3. As it is the Tongass National Forest provides livelihood for numerous Alaskans due to it sustaining the complex interaction between sea, bays, estuaries and inland fresh waters and lands. This interaction and exchange of minerals and nutrients results in a wellspring of beneficial fisheries as well as numerous food chains. Those naturally ecological systems flourish without interference from humans so long as human fisheries harvest are managed in a sustainable manner. Indeed protecting the Tongass Forest from damage such as roads and forest cutting helps to assure the continuation of these benefits.

4. The natural functions of an undisturbed Tongass National Forest is supportive of indigenous people, especially regarding the fisheries and the tourism industries as well as their longstanding customs.

5. An undisturbed Tongass National Forest provides a place of biological diversity and beauty that supports the long term welfare of humankind as a place of study, inspiration, adventure, exploration, healing and respite from the bustle of cities.

6. The concept of cutting roads, cutting and removing multi-centuries old trees and allowing regrowth in order to sequester more carbon or at best break even is at best dubious. Even more so in the human caused climate crises that we are now falling deep into. What assurance do we have that new forest would grow under the harsh likely erosive conditions of intensifying climate change?

7. It is time to preserve the carbon sinks of the earth not increase their exploitation and in the case of the Tongass National Forest what would amount to further destabilization of the region along with land erosion, mass wasting during periods of increased snow melt and more extreme flux between dry and wet periods.

8. Our age of digital information transfer as well as cloud storage is decreasing the need for pulp for paper and other uses.

9. New construction techniques are replacing lumber with other materials resilient to decay, fire, flood and insect damage.

10. There is a strong likelihood that removing the locally and globally beneficial trees of the Tongass National Forest would be not only financially, ethically and environmentally unsound but also an unsound example as well as deleterious for humanity.

In summary,taking the current through the long view of the Tongass Forest; it the forest will best freely serve life on earth including humanity if left in its present undisturbed pristine state. And that is best accomplished by leaving it without roads!

[Position]