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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Tongass Roadless Rule

I am writing to oppose the change to the Roadless Rule for the Tongass National Forest and specifically the preferred alternative #6. This "would" exempt the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Rule and is fully responsive to the State of Alaska's petition. The alternative would remove all 9.2 million acres of inventoried roadless acres and would convert 165,000 old-growth acres and 20,000 young-growth acres previously identified as unsuitable timber lands to suitable timber lands. Conservation of roadless values would be achieved through other means, including the Tongass Land Management Plan. This is specific to the Tongass National Forest. The Chugach National Forest would remain under the 2001 Roadless Rule, which would remove the Tongass ";

1. The Tongass is public land which is held in trust for all citizens of the United States and managed by the U.S. Forest Service. While it is located in Alaska, it belongs to ALL citizens of the United States. What may or may not happen on this land should not be dictated by the State of Alaska. This defeats the purpose of Federal management of this public land. The alternative is written in a way that suggests it is a foregone conclusion that it is the alternative that will be chosen no matter what. It "is fully responsive to the State of Alaska's petition." So what? The purpose of the NEPA process is to get public input and THEN craft and/or tweak an alternative that best reflects this input.

Sonny Perdue is either caving in to, or is cahoots with, the demands of Alaskan government officials that would put this drastic change in motion. And the only reason I can come up with is the short term financial gain for corporate logging interests. Don't believe that's legal.

Again, public land is for ALL citizens to enjoy not for the exploitation by corporations.

2. This alternative ignores the science that demonstrates the vital role the Tongass plays in absorbing a significant amount of carbon in the atmosphere. Why does Sonny Perdue continually ignore or dismiss scientific findings on climate change? It appears that this NEPA document has not sufficiently considered current scientific findings regarding the role of the Tongass as is legally required for the environmental analysis.

3. Logging on this scale does not just include cutting trees. It also entails building both system and temporary roads, landings, and hauling equipment and timber loads throughout the sale. Numerous skid trails would be created throughout the Forest during a sale. These activities can lead to erosion which can potentially affect water quality in both stream and rivers which in turn can affect fish populations. Has the runoff during rain or snow events been addressed? Are there provisions in this document to mitigate this damage?

These noisy and destructive parts of a timber sale also affect wildlife populations and habitat. Have the long term consequences of this been addressed?

5. Before a timber sale can take place, it must, by law, be reviewed by the different shops on a District-soils, botany, wildlife, heritage, recreation, etc. What provisions are discussed to address this additional work load? Will there be additional funding for new permanent positions?

4. It is stated that "conservation of roadless values would be achieved through other means, including the Tongass Land Management Plan" What other means? And considering the ever decreasing budget the Forest Service has to work with as well as the continued reduction of Forest Service personnel, I

doubt very seriously if this "conservation" could be adequately accomplished by an already overworked staff.

I oppose the removal of the Roadless Rule for the Tongass National Forest. I truly hope that wiser and smarter heads prevail and Alternative 1 will be the alternative of choice. If this disaster in the making happens, it will everyone's grandchildren, including Sonny Perdue's, who will pay the price for it..

.M.J. Koon

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