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First name: Fred

Last name: Fischer

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Comments to oppose modification to the Roadless Rule

Dear U.S. Forest Service,

Regarding: Public Comment - Alaska Roadless DEIS

I write this letter as a retired, career US Forest Service employee of 36 years, with significant experience in PNW Timber Contracts and NEPA. I am writing to register support for Alternative #1, the No-Action Alternative for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed Alaska Roadless Rule. I support keeping the current Roadless Rule protections in place and intact for the Tongass National Forest. I am well aware of the history of the Tongass and the Roadless Rule and of the exploitation of the vast forests of the Tongass over decades driven by industry lobbying, rather than careful sustained use planning. My considered reasons for this decision of support are the following:

-The Tongass provides immeasurable value in providing clean water for fish and wildlife habitat that is essential to the economic and ecological health of Southeast Alaska.

-From the decades of logging on the Tongass, over half of the large, old-growth trees have already been harvested from the Tongass; Only about half of what remains is protected by the Roadless Rule.

-The over 9 million acres of undeveloped roadless land in the Tongass protects the Queen Charlotte Goshawk, a subspecies of Northern Goshawk found in southeast Alaska, the Prince of Wales Spruce Grouse, endangered Marbled Murrelets, the largest population of Bald Eagles in the world, numerous other migratory bird species seeing their southern habitats in decline, as well as salmon, moose, and bear all of whom deserve reasonable protection and also play dramatic roles also essential to the economic and ecological health of Southeast Alaska.

-As identified in the analysis, opening roadless areas to more logging and roads are destructive activities that will further fragment the Tongas and eliminate more of the large and more mature trees that these species rely upon, as well as degrade the naturally sustainable wealth of salmon by elimination or degradation of streams and inlets.

-The Tongass is a recognized carbon sink, containing some of the largest areas of intact old-growth temperate rainforest in the world; It is one of the few intact, ancient forests that has been a stronghold of climate resilience.

-Timber sales in the Tongass have historically been deficit operations for the Forest Service and the American Taxpayer, promoted for the sole reason of buoying the Alaskan Timber Industry, providing for clear-cut operations over vast acreages at significant loss to Taxpayers while allowing Federal timber to be exported to Asian markets. This has always amounted to nothing more than using unsustainably harvested resources to bankroll an industry welfare program.

-The No Action Alternative #1 results in saving millions of Federal Tax dollars that would be spent to subsidize deficit timber sales that make absolutely no Economic or Environmental sense.

-Finally, this proposal provides an excellent example of the value and foresight of the Roadless Rule for preventing environmentally damaging and economically wasteful road-building and logging where the access and logging costs vastly exceed the costs for timber sale planning and preparation and any resulting timber revenues, thus requiring unconscionable taxpayer subsidies. Not really a good example of fair-market capitalism at work!

As land and resource managers, we should be looking wisely to the future as well as the present. Harvesting and removing an obviously finite resource in a very unsustainable manner purely for short sighted gain, and at the cost of numerous species and untold possible further damage to the climate, and to the detriment of water resources that sustain all of us, is extremely UNwise. Please let us be considered, wise and professional in our decision.

In addition, I strongly object to your plans to reduce and remove protections from our national forest's roadless areas. The Roadless Rule, developed with consideration of the future and great foresight, is one of the wisest and most popular land management policies the Federal Government has ever adopted. Not only does it preserve some of America's best fish and wildlife habitat, but stands to hold decision makers and managers accountable to take the necessary time to consider well the rationale and need to access lands protected under the Roadless Rule. It was intended to make access difficult so that swift and politically motivated decisions could not skip over proper NEPA analysis.

I urge you to select the "No Action Alternative (Alt # 1) and to keep the Roadless Rule intact, maintaining the current protections for all national forests in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Fred Fischer

Hayden, ID 83835

[POSITION]