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Organization:

Title:

Comments: HC3057

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To Whom it May Concern;

I am writing to comment on the proposed Roadless Rule in the Tongass National Forest. I have lived in southeast Alaska for 16 years and on Prince of Wales Island for the last 12 of those years. I attended the public meeting last night in Thorne Bay and appreciate the fact that the USFS has made an effort to inform communities and give citizens a chance to ask questions.

My choice is for option #1, No Action. I understand the Tongass is a precious resource as a temperate rainforest and is the home to many species of birds, mammals and fish. On Prince of Wales, as the forest becomes more and more fragmented due to logging, habitat is significantly reduced. My husband hunts and has more and more trouble each year finding bucks during hunting season. My hunch is that one of the reasons is the logging activity and the resulting fragmentation of good deer habitat. Another example is the lower frequency of flying squirrels. I reference an article from the Journal of Mammalogy, "Den use and selection by northern flying squirrels in fragmented landscapes," by Sanjay Pyare, Winston P. Smith, and Colin S. Shanley: *"That northern flying squirrels in a heavily fragmented landscape were apparently all able to use cavities for denning is encouraging* **but underscores the importance of old-growth remnants in contributing essential habitat to populations in managed landscapes.** [text underlined for emphasis] Portions of the surrounding landscape that were clear-cut logged will require 200-300 years beyond canopy removal to develop old-forest structure, unless actively managed. Restoring old-growth forest structure, especially large trees or snags, is fundamental to sustaining female productivity and overall population density because of the reliance upon cavities as natal dens." [Text italicized for emphasis]

These are just two examples of habitat reduction. I am also in full agreement with a statement from the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council that 'the value of the Roadless Rule in preventing environmentally damaging and economically wasteful road-building and logging is particularly relevant in the Tongass, where logging costs vastly exceed timber revenues and require unsustainable taxpayer subsidies.'

Though I have heard and read comments about the different alternatives as well as the proposed action, I urge the no-action alternative for the Alaska Roadless Rule.

Thank you for this opportunity to give my input.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Priscilla Goulding

Retired Educator

[Position]