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Organization:

Title:

Comments: HC5359

U.S. Forest Service Alaska Roadless Rule Committee:

Hello, my name is Matt Pesci and I live in Rossford, Ohio. While I am not an Alaska resident, I support keeping the Roadless Rule on the Tongass. As an avid fly fisherman, intact fish and wildlife habitat is very important to me to keep wildlife areas intact and healthy for my an future generations to enjoy. Further, the Roadless Rule has already been through the public process. More than 1.6 million people commented during the rulemaking process in 2001, and 95% of them supported strong protections for roadless areas. Public comments in 2018 and 2019 have also overwhelmingly supported retaining the rule in Alaska. The Tongass is a national treasure. As our largest national forest and part of the largest remaining intact temperate rainforest in the world, the Tongass has a unique assemblage of plants, animals and fish found in vast and sustainable numbers. It is a place like no other. The Tongass produces 80% of the salmon harvested on the National Forest system (about 50 million annually). The Tongass hosts the highest density of nesting bald eagles and brown bear in the world. More than 50 animal species feed on Tongass salmon when they return to spawn.

I am writing in support of the 'no action' alternative to leave the Roadless Rule unchanged in Alaska. I am concerned that changes to the rule would lead to greatly expand clear-cut logging of old growth timber and costly road building in undeveloped, wild areas of both the Tongass and Chugach Forests. These activities increase sedimentation, hurt water quality, often block salmon migration, and add to an already large backlog of needed road maintenance and restoration.

Our fisheries and wild forests are critical to the economy of Alaska. To grow these sectors of our economy, we need intact habitat. Please leave the Alaska Roadless Rule in place.

Sincerely,

Matthew Pesci

Rossford, OH 43460

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