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Organization:

Title:

Comments: HC5123

U.S. Forest Service Alaska Roadless Rule Committee:

Why?

Why must we endanger one of the last remaining places on the planet where an intact ecosystem flourishes the way it was meant to? Is another few years of logging or mining income really worth it to imperil the health of southeast Alaska?

I have recreated in the Tongass for the better part of 15 years and never really appreciated what it was until I moved to the lower 48. After being accustomed to large swaths of untrammelled wilderness in SEAK what passes for national forests down here is an afterthought. These lower 48 forests have suffered the death by 1000 cuts that we are trying to prevent in the Tongass. Eroded stream beds, mining, clear cuts, excessive roads. No one thing has been causative but in summation they have stripped the wildness that is so rarely found today.

I would like to see the Tongass preserved in its current state as one last monument to the spectacle that Americas public lands used to be. By allowing the reversal of the roadless rule you are creating not just a physical entry into the forest but also a precedent for more development and degradation in the future.

The flora and fauna of this area have no voice. They rely on you to be stewards of their habitat even if that decision is difficult. In 200 years do you want your descendants to look at the logging and mining scars of this reversal or do you want them to know that you were a champion of a cause greater than yourself?

Development of these scarce places is always shortsighted, once they have been exploited they are never the same. Please consider the effect of your decision as there are few places left like the one you have the chance to protect.

The Roadless Rule has been instrumental in conserving the Tongass National Forest and in supporting its fish and wildlife-based industries for almost 20 years. Please uphold the Rule's protections for important fish and wildlife areas, including the Tongass 77. Roadless areas are an important source of food, jobs, and income through commercial, subsistence, and recreational fishing. Salmon are part of Alaska's culture and we must protect them and their spawning streams. Please do not roll back roadless area protections for habitat that our irreplaceable fish and wildlife populations need to survive.

Sincerely,

Matt Armington

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