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First name: Chris

Last name: Kent

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Currently, the National Forest System has over 378,000 miles of roads. These roads were subsidized by the public at a considerable cost. The General Accounting Office estimates that the U.S. Forest Service lost some \$995 million on its timber program between 1992 and 1994. Over \$40 million of that was spent on the Tongass. Nearly two-thirds (232,837 miles) of the current National road system is in need of maintenance. Without maintenance these roads will continue to cause irreparable harm to streams, watersheds and habitats throughout the United States. It is critical that money earmarked for new roads be instead spent on repairing the existing road system and not on additional roads.

The Tongass has not been immune to the damage caused by road failures and sedimentation. A U.S. Forest Service and Alaska Department of Fish and Game report noted that as many as 66% of logging road culverts over anadromous fish streams, and 85% of resident fish stream crossings are not adequate for fish passage. The existing roads in the Tongass have given timber companies access to over 70% of the highest yielding timber (square feet of timber per acre). These areas are now cut over. There are over 10 billion remaining board feet in the Tongass that is accessible using the existing road system (4,650 miles). The Roadless Rule must be applied to the Tongass and Chugach National Forest. Some of the areas that I have submitted comments to the Forest Service to ask for protection from road building activity include: Upper Lynn Canal, Saint James Bay, Point Couverdan, Taku Inlet, Tenakee Inlet, Gravina Island, Canal Hoya, East Kuiu Island, and South Kuprenof Island.