

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/2/2024 2:34:29 AM

First name: John

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Chief Moore, Ms. Walker, & Ms. Crocker:

I am a retired wildlife ecologist with over 35 years of professional experience in Alaska, much of it involved with research and conservation work associated with the Tongass National Forest. I am submitting my comments on the Forest Service's notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement to amend land management plans to provide direction for old-growth forest management across the National Forest System. I strongly recommend that the FS remove the Tongass Forest old-growth logging exemption from consideration and analysis in the EIS. There should be NO consideration for further old-growth harvest on the Tongass. The scientific community has repeatedly urged the Forest Service to end old-growth logging on the Tongass and all national forests lands in the US. Old Growth ecosystems are non-renewable and provide important habitats for many fish and wildlife species as well as clean water, recreation, commercial fisheries, and subsistence uses by indigenous Alaskans as well as significant carbon stores that can help ameliorate climate change. It would be a serious mistake to allow exemptions for harvest old growth on the Tongass. No other forest on Earth has still has the opportunity to maintain intact ecosystems with all their ecological parts including Pacific salmon, brown bears, wolves, marbled murrelets, northern goshawks, and many other fish and wildlife species some of which are endemic to the rich ecosystem.

I strongly urge your to remove the Tongass old growth exemption from further analysis and consideration. To exempt the Tongass from this important policy would be scientifically irresponsible and economically short-sighted.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

John W. Schoen, Ph.D.

Wildlife Ecologist, retired

Author of Tongass Odyssey

Co-editor and author of North Pacific Temperate Rainforests: Ecology & Conservation