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First name: Mike

Last name: Martin

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello review board.

I am grateful for the opportunity to express my opinion with regards to the Tongass National Forest Land Management Plan.

It is a very comprehensive and lengthy plan so I took the time to read 4 different topics and hoped they would be in similar context to the topics I did not read thoroughly yet.

To begin with, I would like to say I found the 4 topics I chose to read to be extremely unbiased and thorough. It was an absolute pleasure to recognize that the plan was based on scientific studies and incorporated all parties of interest. I have never seen anything close to professional as this is in Canada.

My overall sense is that there is a true and professional desire to continue the legacy of the Tongass Forests to be a treasure for future generations of all species and to be leading the way in the true meanings of conservation and economic sustainability.

The days of raping the land for the sole focus of economic gain need to be stopped and we need to work towards a truly sustainable economic model.

Currently here in Canada and the US, we rely on a perpetual growth economic model. It is in no way sustainable and never will be. If we do not strive for a truly sustainable model, we will eventually do ourselves in. With limited resources and increasing populations, there is no other other result over time.

It appears to me that SE Alaska has managed things better than we have in BC and the Yukon. We have a lot to learn from your modelling here.

One of the topics I chose to scrutinize was the topic of timber. I have a sailboat in SE and find SE Alaska one of the most beautiful places in this world. It is a true gem and needs to be protected. I was really happy to see that the level of timber harvesting had gone down and that there is intrinsic and secondary values put on the Old Growth Forests and that the harvesting is transitioning from Old Growth to young growth. To me it is a thoughtful and sustainable approach and one of great importance for species diversity, ecosystem health, and First Nations and Non-first Nations concerns to a healthy existence within the Tongass.

I have travelled for decades in SE Alaska and one common feeling I hear from almost everyone that I talk to is the importance of conservation to sustain the healthy lifestyle that brought them to SE Alaska in the first place. As well as those born and raised there.

Although I am thrilled to see the transition from Old Growth to Young Growth harvesting, I was still a little concerned that the values of harvesting based on the next two decades of young growth harvesting. I don't see why there is a need to increase two fold the amount harvested from the first decade to the second. The idea of Young Growth transitional harvesting is great but there still needs to be the concept of sustainability.

There is no doubt in any of our minds that logging has huge detrimental effects to the environment as well as detrimental effects to other economic and social values such as tourism, Salmon and the fishing industry and certainly species conservation through fragmentation and access via logging roads. I think the plan has addressed this to a large degree but there must also be a contingent to reduce or retract harvesting and destruction as needed for conservation of wilderness, species diversity, whole ecosystems, healthy species populations, and a healthy way of lifestyle for First Nations and non First Nations alike.

One other concern that I have is with regards to the cruise ship industry. It has grown too large and there must be a cap on the number allowed to roar through SE Alaska waters each year. There are HUGE environmental degradations associated with the industry on many levels and it is currently going through the perpetual growth stage and will continue to do so. It is not sustainable and there are many values suffering because of it. It is an industry based on affluence, greed, waste and profit with little regard for the well being of the true SE Alaskans in my mind. I am horrified to witness the harassment the Whales, Sea Lions and other wildlife have to endure from excess whale watching boats. Whales have been displaced because of it in certain areas and this should not be. There must be a cap.... whatever that number is determined by science and traditional knowledge.

As a closure, I would like to reiterate that from the four topics I chose to read in depth, I found the Plan to be

VERY well studied and am grateful that it was unbiased form what I can tell and there was a sincere concern for conservation of one of the greatest treasures on Earth.

Please, never lose focus on the importance of conservation.