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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Greetings from Petersburg, my name is Jeff Meucci and I have lived in Petersburg since March of 1983. I moved to Petersburg after meeting my wife whose family moved to southeast Alaska in 1959 to work in the logging industry as the pulp mills in Ketchikan and Sitka were getting cranked up for timber harvesting.

My family consists of my wife and I, my two daughters and their families. We live in the Tongass National Forest, we subsist in the Tongass National Forest and we recreate extensively in the Tongass National Forest.

One of my early employment opportunity in Petersburg was working for the State of Alaska as a technician walking salmon streams all over the Tongass National Forest. I have seen good examples of land stewardship and I have seen some very poor examples of land stewardship.

In the late 1990s I helped co-chaired the Tongass Timber Task Force Committee, for then Governor Tony Knowles, where we as mayors of small communities in Southeast Alaska we looked at how we were going to transition from the boom days of timber harvesting to a much more scaled back timber industry. To me these comments are a continuation of the ever evolving Tongass National Forest that we care so much about.

These comments are directed at slope stability and management in the Tongass National Forest.

I am concerned and commenting about slope stability and management in the Tongass National Forest especially in area of residential, commercial and recreational areas. Over the last 10 years there appears to be a changing climate in the Tongass that appears to be having a periods of heavy rains and high winds that are having adverse consequences to areas within the Tongass. Just a couple of years ago there was loss of life and property due to a landslide in the community of Wrangell. It was devastating for the small community.

I would like to see efforts to have on the ground assessments of hillsides scheduled for development when the hillsides that have an 72 percent gradient or about 35 degree slope elevation. The current Forest Plan requires field review prior to timber harvest on slopes over 72 percent. It appears to me that lately when the "atmospheric rivers" from various directions, high winds and saturated soils combine the likelihood of mass soil movements and landslides is heightened and increases the likelihood of loss of life and destruction of property.

I think it is important that personnel should look hillsides over and at the very least make recommendations regarding hillsides slated for development and to also consider putting together a comprehensive database that assesses the steep hillsides above a to be determined slope incline especially above 35 degrees. O

In addition to a comprehensive database I would advocate for development and use of landslide susceptibility mapping. The Forest Service has contributed to susceptibility mapping of Prince of Wales Island and soon Wrangell and Mitkof Islands.

I would also like to see an additional effort to take a careful look at slopes as low as 55 percent (29 degrees) that are planned for any timber harvest or road building. This could be done either using digital data (LiDAR, soil maps) or in person.

I would think that having some standards for harvest and road building on lower slope angles (like 29-30 degrees) could help prevent impacts to roads, fish streams and communities.

When a road is closed off or washed out because of landslides or large earth movements it can separate communities from public safety services, eliminate transportation corridors, disrupt vital communication infrastructure and jeopardize power generation lines. All vital things that small communities like Petersburg

depend on.

I would also like to see the Forest Service respond to community or borough developments. I would also like to advocate for requirement that timber sales and road building do not occur "above communities " which is something in line with mission that the Forest Service has direct control over.

Many communities and individuals, like myself, within the region are actively participating in data collection and prevention programs to be better prepared for the challenges facing us as the world climate models are changing in front of us. It is my hope that we can work to prepare ourselves with good science and technology to be better prepared. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need clarification.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to comment.