

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/23/2025 9:00:00 AM

First name: Barbara

Last name: Patterson

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to you today regarding a the Tongass Draft Assessment findings

Dear Tongass Plan Revision,

I write to express my strong support for maintaining a healthy Tongass National Forest through the upcoming Revision Plan. A well-preserved Tongass is essential to local communities and those of us who regularly come to the area to paddle and fish. We must sustain local communities, fish, wildlife, and biodiversity. We need a long-term ecosystem that is healthy and resilient as well as thriving cultural resources, economies, and communities in the region.

The draft assessment highlights several priority areas for me personally that are also areas which require robust protection, including:

- Homelands, sacred places, and traditional harvesting grounds of Alaska Native people
- Subsistence - both customary and traditional uses
- The temperate rainforest archipelago and ecosystems
- Salmon runs and other wildlife habitat
- Recreation and scenic beauty

I encourage the Forest Service to retain sections of the plan that supports local thriving environments and I urge the Forest Service to integrate Indigenous Knowledge and subsistence rights into the plan. Tribal Governments should be present at conversations about land and water use.

The inclusion of protections for small timber mill operators is also extremely important to include in the Forest Plan Revision. Small timber mills have helped create and sustain communities across Southeast Alaska but are often outbid, forced out of timber sales that they depend on by larger mills.

Many Southeast Alaskans support further conversations about transitioning away from archaic clear cutting to truly sustainable logging practices.

The new Tongass Forest Plan must prioritize protections that uphold the integrity of the Tongass's vast ecosystems and align with the draft assessment's findings as well as local knowledge and support for a balanced approach.

Thank you for considering my input. I urge you to prioritize Tongass protections in this forest plan revision.

Sincerely,

Dr. Barbara Patterson