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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern,

I am writing about the draft Tongass Land Management Plan because I care about the future of the Tongass National Forest and my community of Sitka that I have called home my whole life - for three decades - and I look forward to sharing the areas I recreate in, fish in, berry pick in, and hunt in with my future children and family.

I do not see that the draft plan reflects the community priorities that were gathered during previous comment periods and community workshops. Language like "consider" are being used instead of "prioritize" on issues communities previously urged prioritizing, such as subsistence. This is a massive plan that will cause changes on the Tongass for the next several decades - this is not a process to be rushed. I urge the slowing down of this process to allow for community members to fully review the draft plan and form their comments and for the Forest Service to carefully assess proposed changes and that they are reflecting these community priorities.

My main concerns specific to places are the proposed changes for Kruzof Island near Sitka. I urge removal of shoals point from high commercial use and also keep Mount Edgecumbe as a special interest area. These places are so unique in their geologic features and are places I rely on for subsistence deer that I do not want to see highly developed. They are also important subsistence areas in the spring when pacific herring spawn along the shorelines, and both people and dozens of gray whales rely on the herring eggs for food.

Freds Creek and Iris Meadows/Shelikof area are also places that have been significant to me throughout my entire life and I don't want to see increased tourism in those areas. There is no clear explanation of what high commercial use and low commercial use mean/would allow which makes this vague and confusing and also concerning. What would that mean for these areas on Kruzof Island and why is that not outlined in the draft plan?

I also urge prioritizing of subsistence areas and wildlife habitat including key fisheries areas and the places communities have spoke up about, maintaining roadless areas, and limiting old growth harvests and transitioning to second growth timber harvest. Visitors come here to see pristine beauty not clearcuts and the tourism industry is much greater than that of timber.

Please do this process right and prioritize public comments and concerns in this Plan. We all depend on the Tongass - The futures and livelihoods of the Southeast Alaskans that live and work here, the experiences of visitors, and the other parts of the country and globe that the Tongass impacts (through things like salmon production and carbon sequestration) will all be impacted by the direction of this Plan.

Sincerely,
Lione Clare