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Organization:

Title:

Comments: The following text was copy/pasted from an attached letter. The system cannot display the formatting, graphics, or tables from the attached original.

Alaska Roadless Rulemaking Letter November 18, 2019

Dear USFS,

My name is Jon Andrew Martin and I live in Sitka Alaska. As a subsistence harvester, hunting guide, fishing guide, trapper, tourism based business owner, and biologist[mdash]I am strongly opposed to a full exemption from the Roadless Rule. The Roadless Rule was smart, historic, and likely provided the most significant protection to ecosystems that were at risk. Maintaining intact old growth on the Tongass is the most prudent and logical direction to move considering the relationship between tourism, the fishing industry, and overall health of ecosystems. Our future in southeast Alaska communities is tourism and fishing; clear cut logging threatens this delicate balance and will have long-term negative impacts on both of these industries for the foreseeable future. My livelihood depends on intact ecosystems that promote tourism and protects fish and wildlife habitat. Building more roads in areas that we have traditionally used for subsistence harvest will have significant health and economic consequences for future generations of my family.

Contrary to what the DEIS says, clear cut logging will have negative and irreparable impacts on fish & wildlife resources. Using the phrase "site specific effects" is a copout and misleads the public. Mountains of scientific research has demonstrated that clear cut logging has detrimental impacts on fish and wildlife habitat. Current federal stream buffer regulations do not protect fish streams as was stated in the DEIS. I challenge you to spend time in large watersheds where clear cut logging has occurred and you will see the impact that erosion and stream wandering has had on the anadromous fish habitat in these systems. For deer, young clear cuts may support deer while stands are in an early seral stage of succession in areas where snow doesn't have a strong influence on deer populations. But in regions of southeast Alaska where winter conditions drive deer populations, the removal of old growth winter refuge is detrimental for these animals. Further, as young clear cuts transition into the stem-excluded stage, the habitat is virtually unusable for deer for many decades. To ameliorate the long[shy]term consequences of clear cut logging on deer, the USFS will have to spend untold amounts of money in the future on pre-commercial thinning, pruning, and gap placement in young growth. A recent economic study by the McDowell group demonstrated that tourism has become the most economically viable industry in southeast Alaska, outpacing even commercial fishing. Policy that fosters clear cut logging and road building moves our region in a direction that is counter to what we know[mdash]that is, tourism and fishing are the economic drivers of the future NOT logging, and the Tongass is a vast carbon sink which is of great significance with a changing climate.

The USFS has lost the faith and support of many as a consequence of ignoring overwhelming public testimony that objects to the full exemption. You say this process is fair and that public comment will help guide the decision making process[mdash]this is a lie perpetuated by the Forest Service as evident by your recommendation for a full exemption. I ask the Forest Service to resist political pressure and do the right thing for the land and people who live in southeast Alaska[mdash]chose to leave the Roadless Rule intact.

Sincerely,

Jon Andrew Martin

[Position]