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Comments:

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my concern regarding the management of inventoried road-less areas on the Tongass National Forest.

The Tongass National Forest is the nation's largest national forest. A true wilderness that has retained its primeval character and mystery, in part, because the best among us have mutually agreed to preserve and protect it. And now, all of that could be undone.

Roads mean access, and it is this access that destroys wilderness. Businesses and people will inevitably exploit this access for their own enrichment. Before the asphalt has had a chance to cool, logging, mining, and petrochemical companies will use their influence to convince elected officials to grant them access to nearby resources. Add these resources will be taken with little regard for the long term health of the environment or native peoples. Ignorant suburbanites will move in and demand the area be pacified and made more convenient. Pollution, crime, congestion, and the like will take hold and eventually kill the Tongass National Forest.

Some may call this fearmongering, a false claim that a wilderness cannot be managed in a responsible manner. They are wrong. Look at Yellowstone National Park, Grand Teton National Park, Yosemite National Park, or Grand Canyon National Park. These once wild areas have been turned into theme parks, overrun and commercialized. Our Federal Government does not provide enough funding for these areas so local management offices are forced to do more with less.

Please do not allow this to happen to the Tongass National Forest. Keep our last remaining wildernesses wild.