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Comments:

Howdy.

I wish to submit my approval for the rule-making process. Access through improved road networks to these forests, from a forest health monitoring and protection perspective would exponentially improve the resolution of the data collected by S&PF and allow FHP crews to access remote sites which would normally require extensive preparation and field time which could be better used on tasks such as aerial survey. Yes, there is some risk that invasives such as the green spruce aphid could be transported, but with the shifting temperature and precipitation regimes currently underway, it will become necessary to undertake more active response measures, such as transplanting Yellow Cedar and other vulnerable plant species to refugia to the north, such as in the north side of Prince William sound. The costs of accessing a viable genetic population to establish a colony at this time, even working with the Alaska Native Corporations, are still prohibitive. A road network in selected segments of the Tongass would facilitate such activities. Additionally, while some may complain loudly about the negative effects of a road network, improved access would facilitate more than just logging operations--Wildlife viewing, for example, could potentially expand in isolated communities, which would encourage more tourist activities. Food gathering by subsistence users could be significantly improved, emergency services more readily provided, and most importantly, should the changing temp and precip regimes make the region vulnerable to fire in the next few decades, these roads would be critical to the deployment of crews. Yes, any course of action carries risk, but the regulations that USDA FS has in place are up to the challenge. Even a modest perusal of the Sale Administrator's handbook, watershed protection regulations, and the forest management plan make the Forest Service's level of care plain to the layman. While I may not be there right now, Alaska is my home. The loggers and other industries within Tongass were, and hopefully again will be my neighbors. They deserve the opportunity to use the land to the maximum benefit, while preserving it for future generations to enjoy. I have faith that you will choose a path forward in which we rely upon the existing thorough regulations regarding salmon stream and watershed protection to execute this task.

See you out in the forest,

-Bryan