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First name: Alisha

Last name: Decker

Organization: Glacier Guides, Inc.

Title: President

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: PO Box 66

Address2:

City: Gustavus

State: AK

Province/Region: AK

Zip/Postal Code: 99826

Country: United States

Email: decker@glacierguidesinc.com

Phone: 9073212180

Comments:

USFS Roadless Rule

Dear USFS;

My passion for the Tongass runs deep, and our family operation was the first permitted Outfitter/Guide Operation on the Tongass. I am the second generation owner of Glacier Guides, Inc. My name is Alisha "Mutts" Rosenbruch-Decker, and I am a Conservationist. I am one of two Active Female Master Guides in the State of Alaska. I firmly believe in "Sustainable Use Management" - sound management of not only fish and wildlife resources, but also the habitat that fish and wildlife rely on to survive, thrive, and produce! We run a Yacht-based Hunting and Fishing Adventure company. With our tenure of operation in Alaska of over 47 years I can speak of the past and present and offer an outlook to the future.

Operating in the 70s, 80s, and 90s on Kuiu and other Islands of Alaska was at times a little bit like a wild west show. The impacts of logging operations and activity on wildlife was profound during the peak of the logging. We would find Bears with shotgun pellets in their face, Bears with a blown out eye or Bears with a broken jaw from a shotgun blast. A .22 round under the skin where someone took a shot at it for fun. Bears were found dead in the woods after being ran down and hit by the logging truck. Logging camps on Baranof and Chichagof Island would compete to see how many Brown Bear each camp could kill in a season! This nearly shut Brown Bear hunting down in Southeast Alaska. Kuiu Island was in it's hay day, the Island hosted lots of Black Bears, Sitka Black Tail Deer and lots of fish. Fast forward to 2001 when a graduate student out of the University of Reno did a population study because of population concerns over Black Bears on Kuiu following the heavy logging. It was determined at that time to have a population of roughly 7 black bears per square mile. Alaska Department of Fish and Game establish a harvest goal of 120 bears a year for Kuiu Island. Today, Alaska Department of Fish and Game have reduced the harvest goal to 80 Black Bears on the Island. Kuiu Island harvest levels are continuing to decline. As an Outfitter on National Forest lands for Black Bears, we have self-reduced our operation levels out of concern over sustainable bear harvest. Other Outfitters operating on the Island also have population concerns and have also reduced their operation levels as well. Kuiu Island is 640 sq miles with only a few homes on it. One might ask, "What has happened?" Loss of denning sites, loss of habitat, older clearcuts that have grown up and have choked out understory and berry brush, river and stream degradation from the logging have reduced the salmon runs, and road construction has allowed for an expanded wolf population to name a few issues that have greatly effected productivity on the Island. Wolves prey on adult bears, bear cubs, and sitka black tail deer. The network of logging roads allow wolf to travel the island quicker looking for prey as they cross the road creating an unbalance. Deer populations are severely depressed and sightings are few.. Therefore, to begin again to log remaining Old Growth stands and create again the chaos of human activity associated with that large-scale logging is a death nell for a place that is simply not replaceable.

Today we have a growing visitor industry on the Tongass. Our Capital City of Juneau is looking to have 1.3 million visitors by cruise ship alone by 2020! Small businesses are growing in the region. Owners of different types of operations on the Tongass are all trying to use the Forest at the same time and in many different ways. Putting the Logging industry ahead of these multitude of diverse operations is not the thing we should be doing! The USFS won't build public trails or develop Large Group Areas for the visitors, but on the other hand will use tax payer funds to build a road for a logging company! Something is wrong with this

thinking. We hear the cry from the timber industry for more trees to cut. In the last few years the USFS performed all preparations to lay out a sale on North Kuiu. USFS spent over 1.4 MILLION DOLLARS laying out the timber sale, fixing roads, and replacing bridges. Then the sale was approved for 100% export not even requiring it to be processed in Alaska; just to potentially entice a willing bidder. Opening bid was set at a little over One Hundred Thousand Dollars. NOT ONE timber company even bid on this timber! How is this fair to the American people? How is this fair to Alaskans? How is this fair to other businesses in the area?

What do we, as Alaskans, get from opening up the Roadless Rule for logging our forest?

-Reduced wildlife to support and feed our families.

-Reduced Salmon runs, sediment in streams and rivers, intense flooding, increased stream temperatures, and resultant reduced productivity of salmon runs. (Over 25% of the world's salmon come from the Tongass.)

-Logging Roads built only for timber companies (with Taxpayer Funds) are closed and not maintained for public use.

-After logging an area, USFS issues thinning contracts to thin cut stands, costing the tax payer up to \$4,000 per acre at 25 and 50 year intervals. To properly manage clear cuts would cost BILLIONS to the US taxpayer.

- It can take up to 80 years to regrow a 24 inch tree in Southeast Alaska. 300+ years for it to return to conditions similar to Old Growth.

-Timber company operations on Kuiu and Kupreanof Islands alone will disrupt an \$800,000 annual Black Bear Hunting industry alone! Many small outfitter operations would be put out of business, consequently hurting small communities like Petersburg, Kake, and Wrangell.

Why is it important to leave the Roadless Rule intact?

It is estimated to cost taxpayers roughly \$1 million a mile to build the roads for the timber industry. Small businesses across Southeast Alaska are growing and building roads and the resulting activities put companies on top of each other trying to share the Forest with the visiting public. The future of tourism and Sustainable Use Management rely on the productivity and diversity supported by intact and healthy forest ecosystems. The US Forest Service could have a wider and more favorable influence on the productivity and livelihoods of residents of the myriad of small towns and villages of Southeast Alaska by enhancing recreational opportunities for locals and the visiting public, such as trails, development of Large Group Sites, and maintenance of existing infrastructure.

If logging is to occur, the amount of Old Growth Forest cut should be severely limited, to shift focus of cutting onto Second-Growth areas already cut. Furthermore, lumber harvested in Southeast should be finished in Southeast, not simply cut then shipped out of the region and overseas. Timber and mining companies MUST build their own road and facilities and open those to the public and maintain them not burdening the American taxpayer.

We ask as a long-tenured USFS permitted operation to please keep the Roadless Area and shift the focus to second-generation cuts on the Tongass National Forest.

Sincerely,

Alisha "Mutts" Rosenbruch-Decker
President, Glacier Guides, Inc.
Glacier Bay, Alaska