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First name: Skye

Last name: Dangelo

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1: 40 Same old rd

Address2:

City: Gustavus

State: AK

Province/Region: Alaska

Zip/Postal Code: 99826

Country: United States

Email: skyedangelo55@gmail.com

Phone: 3605941379

Comments:

The Tongass Forest is an unparalleled national resource, I say unparalleled because in fact there isn't another forest like it in terms of intact old growth and the associated ecosystems which exist in such forests. These forests take hundreds of years to grow, not including the precursory time in which the land was shifting to ultimately be hospitable for a forest to take root. These forests can be destroyed in a matter of months. When considering the best way to manage something which takes so much time to form and is so easily altered irrevocably I feel that it is important to proceed thoughtfully.

In regards to the proposed drafts to make a state specific, Alaska Roadless Rule, I'd like to submit my comment regarding what I believe to be important for this area.

The Roadless Rule is an effective means of protecting many aspects of what I deem valuable. Not only is it the largest temperate old growth rainforest in the world, it is home to many marine and forest based wildlife that are losing their homes and quality of life elsewhere in the world.

If I were to make any amendments on the Roadless Rule in regards to the Tongass, I would create more restrictions and public transparency around extractive industries such as timber, and mining, which have proved to create environmental backlash that far outweighs its 'potential' economic incentive. And speaking on economic incentive, Timber harvest and sales has never proved to be economically viable in Southeast Alaska. Its been a highly subsidized industry, that will do much more damage to our salmon habitat, which is historically, and presently, way more fruitful to Alaska's economy.

However I support the idea of creating a more Alaska specific Roadless rule. In my opinion projects allowed in the areas protected by the Roadless Rule should take place on already impacted areas, and should be involved in directly creating community resilience and sustainable practices. Projects like hydro power, second growth timber harvesting on already roaded areas designated under the protection of the Roadless Rule, creating geothermal, or tidal power systems. There is already a great deal of area which has been altered by our hands, let us make wise use of these areas before further impacting areas which are beyond our ability to repair to the degree in which they are now.

As capable as we are as a species, we cannot match the ability of millions of years of evolution, of the multiplicity of organisms working in symphony with each other, to create a complex evolving system beyond our understanding let alone ability to recreate. So we must be very careful in how we manage these spaces.

Alaska has a chance to not make the mistakes of previous countries, states, and communities. We can be a leader in creating viable communities that focus on the sustainability of their use of resources, their ingenuity and their respect for the environment that shapes so many of Alaskan's lives.

These lands support intact indigenous communities, salmon habitat, whale migrations, natural biodiversity from old growth stands, fisherfolk, subsistence folk, a booming tourism industry, carbon sequestration that benefits THE WORLD. This place is a treasure that is a benefit to all Americans, and the rest of the world. I want it be kept pristine.

In my opinion, these areas can support low impact activities like hiking, camping, backpacking, and foraging. Projects that I support involve what I stated previously as 'community resilience projects', also building forest service cabins, watershed restoration, habitat restoration (like cleaning up old mines etc), and wisely managed second growth timber harvesting within already roaded areas.

I would like to see the Forest Service invest in education and workshops, for young people in this region (especially in native communities), to learn the skills and knowledge involved in sustainable forestry practices. Maybe even using the Tongass as an example of how to successfully manage an old growth intact forest, because there aren't that many left in America. I want the Forest Service to invest their time in creating a deep legacy, maybe even a school here, encouraging and educating the community, and our country on how to restore damaged areas, and how to tend the wild in a sustainable way, so that the Tongass Forest can continue to thrive well into the future.