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First name: Mary

Last name: Lord-Wild

Organization:

Title:

Official Representative/Member Indicator:

Address1:

Address2:

City:

State:

Province/Region:

Zip/Postal Code:

Country:

Email: mary.jo.lord-wild@elfincove.net

Phone:

Comments:

Roadless Rule

I have lived in Elfin Cove surrounded by the Tongass National Forest for almost 47 years. The forest is my homeland. My and my family's livelihood, lifestyle, and sense of place in this world depend on an intact forest.

Beginning in the late 1980s small cruise ships made it out our way and stopped in our small community. At that time the clear-cuts on NE Chichagof were fresh and raw. Cruise guests visiting our Museum used to ask me what had happened to make that land like that. While I understood that the LUD designation of our area protects us from clear-cutting, I am concerned about how ours and other communities which depend on an intact forest would be affected should the 2001 Roadless Rule restrictions be lifted.

These small ships continue visiting and spending money in our community to this day. They are an important part of our economic activity. As are the 1500 or so sport fishers who pay big bucks to come to our six sport fishing lodges every summer. And, as a town founded as a commercial fishing service center, an intact forest supports a healthy salmon population. This was a tough enough year for both sport and commercial fishermen with the disappeared King salmon we depend on without putting aside a roadless practice that protects salmon habitat throughout the Tongass. The reason we have still had sustainable populations of salmon is our intact habitat. Should we choose to go the way of other western coastal states and put not as sustainable resource extraction above salmon? I say no, no, no.

I have children and grandchildren who work, live, and depend on the Tongass as currently managed. We all make a living on the intact forest, spend our time outdoors on the land and waters, and think of ourselves as residents of the forest. Our subsistence cultural practices and access to wild places for spiritual renewal sustain us.

There was a lot of thinking, work, and compromise on the 2016 Tongass Land Management Plan with a wide variety of input. Stick to the priorities this group outlined. If people are to continue to live in the Tongass, we do need to be able to have access to the forest to recreate in small cabins with mooring buoys. We will need utility access corridors. Elfin Cove has been in the process of securing USFS permits to develop a hydroelectric site near us to reduce the expense of living in our community. But I fail to see how these couple of generations need

to exploit a practically non-renewable resource like old growth trees to enrich a few at great Government the expense when roads are carved into areas that should be kept intact for future generations to enjoy. Please, at the very worst scenario in my opinion, protect the 77 top producing salmon watersheds which contribute to our tourism and fishing economy and our ability to remain living in Elfin Cove.

I suggest that any further logging activities be restricted to already roaded and logged areas. That way the Government does not spend more than it takes in of our hard earned tax money and there will be a reasonable sized logging industry. We are limited by government on our salmon harvests to sustain the resource. Let the logging industry be sized to the ability of the already logged land to produce a sustainable harvest.

It is difficult enough for small communities in the Tongass to survive economically long-term without the added insult of cutting old growth trees. While four long-time communities survive on Chichagof, the several logging camps that prospered in the 70s, 80s and 90s are deserted and the people who worked there scattered to the next place to cut forests while we who remain struggle to continue to make a living, enjoy our high quality of life, and call this place home.

Sincerely,

Mary Jo Lord-Wild

P.O. Box 109

Elfin Cove, Alaska 99825