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Comments:

I am a resident of southeast Alaska, rely on projects on the Tongass National Forest (TNF) for employment and support the State of Alaska's petition to make state-specific changes to the Roadless Rule for roadless areas within the TNF.

With this set of comments, I suggest that the USFS consider including within the state-specific changes to the roadless rule the following:

Exclude all roadless areas less than 5,000 acres in size from the roadless rule.

Drop any "slivers" of roadless that prevent access from one non-roadless area to another.

Use a 3 phase approach to mapping roadless areas and determining when areas are exempt from the roadless rule.

Phase 1 - Eliminate all roadless areas within the 2016 Forest Plan Development LUD Group land-base. The Development LUD land base for all future Forest Plans should not contain any areas subject to the roadless rule. Eliminate all roadless areas within 1 mile on either side of all easements granted the State of Alaska under section 4407 of Public Law 109-59. In addition access corridors for all energy and mining projects that submitted applications for any type of federally regulated permitting prior to the signing of the ROD for the 2016 Forest Plan should be excluded from the roadless rule.

Lands included in Phase 2 and 3 will consist of all lands within the TNF not included in Phase 1 or within a Congressionally designated area. The TNC/Audubon Conservation Strategy will be used to determine which lands are included within Phase 2 or Phase 3; with Phase 2 being made up of lands with moderate values conservation/roadless values. Phase 3 lands will include the remaining land base of the TNF outside of Congressionally designated areas not included in Phase 1 or Phase 2.

Phase 2 lands will become exempt from the roadless rule when the population of southeast Alaska (Yakutat south) exceeds 100,000 or when the unemployment rate for southeast has exceeded 10% for 2 consecutive years as determined by the State of Alaska Department of Labor.

Phase 3 lands will become exempt from the roadless rule when the population of southeast Alaska (Yakutat south) exceeds 125,000 or when the unemployment rate for southeast has exceeded 12.5% for two consecutive years as determined by the State of Alaska Department of Labor.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.