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Comments:

I am writing in support of retaining the current Roadless Rule within the Tongass National Forest. As a resident of Wrangell, Alaska, the Tongass is my backyard. Our remarkable, large tracts of old growth rainforest are truly a national and local treasure, unlike any forest anywhere else in the world. Our local community values these wild lands and the myriad resources that our still-standing old growth forest provides. Our community currently sustains an ever-growing tourism industry centered on the ecological wonders of our local environment - thanks to our in-tact forest. My own family makes our living off of wild salmon runs that utilize the healthy watersheds found throughout the Tongass to reproduce and sustain our community's local fishing economy with a renewable resource year after year. I have worked years in the field of natural resource management and have seen first hand the degradation to watersheds that occurs from large scale timber harvest. To repeal the roadless rule in an attempt to reinstate a large scale boom and bust timber industry does not take into account our community's long-term socioeconomic sustainability. We need an in-tact National forest that can support sustainable, small scale timber harvest at a local level, as well as healthy and thriving fisheries, recreation, tourism, and the subsistence lifestyle that southeast Alaskans have depended upon for thousands of years. Repeal of the roadless rule does not bring us closer to the goal of managing and maintaining a sustainable and ecologically thriving Tongass national forest.