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Comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposed draft alternatives to the 2001 national Roadless Rule as it applies to Alaska, and specifically to the Tongass National Forest.

Given the current drastic changes to global climate patterns, the increasing threats to environmental stability and plant and wildlife habitat, it is extremely important to me that we preserve the health of as much of the unique and mostly pristine wilderness we are so blessed with in Alaska. To this end, I support keeping the 2001 Roadless Rule in effect, protecting all inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass, including roadless areas. The Katlian River watershed, Nakwasina Passage, Northern Kruzof, all of the land on both sides of Peril Strait: These places (to name a few) are "magical Middle Earth" to me. As an eco-tour operator on the waters and islands of Southeast Alaska for over 15 years in the late 80's to early 2000's, I've been privileged to explore so much of this irreplaceable wilderness. Soul sustaining beauty and pristine nature aside, the Tongass is prime habitat for healthy salmon and deer populations, important for our subsistence needs and as one of the last temperate coastal rainforests in the world is top of the list for carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation.

It has been estimated that within 12 or so years, (clean) water will be the most valuable commodity on earth. With this in mind, the Forest Service should focus their resources on active watershed, stream and habitat restoration, rather than old growth timber harvest. Low-impact use such as recreational hiking, camping, and hunting is compatible with this goal, and could include judicious recreation infrastructure development.

I'd really like to see the Forest Service conduct a quantitative assessment of the socio-economic benefits of carbon sequestration, as well as the opportunities and possibilities for the Tongass to participate in state, national and/or international carbon credit programs.

Respectfully,

Barbara Bingham

Sitka, Alaska