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First name: Madi

Last name: Foutz

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

See attached file(s)

The following text was copy/pasted from an attached letter. The system cannot display the formatting, graphics, or tables from the attached original.

USDA,

It is with great concern that I compose this letter. It seems that the opening up of Tongass National Park is now up for question. The use of the national park for logging purposes would simply destroy a crucial part of untouched land. The world's amount of untouched, preserved habitat is dwindling, and it necessary for human survival to preserve what little is left. We rely on the nutrients, and food, and wildlife, and so much more that these untouched parts of nature provide. However, if they are opened up and exploited for a single resource with minimal value and high cost, the benefits that we receive naturally from these areas are drastically decreased. When the trees are cut down, we immediately lose a major source of oxygen, which is needed now more than ever when the atmosphere is being filled with more and more carbon dioxide. Not only that, but the surrounding ecosystem suffers greatly. The animals that once relied on the trees being logged no longer have a habitat to live in. This means that they are exposed to predators who can overeat a species and lead to an off balance of predator versus prey. The logging of trees might also lead to the extinction of certain species if they rely heavily on the trees or have some connection to the trees. Scientists have found that we are currently in the middle of another mass extinction and there is no need to accelerate the process of extinction for some wood. The life of millions of animals and species is much more valuable than the resources that could come from a few trees.

The Tongass National Park ecosystem relies on the trees it is covered in because it is a temperate rain forest, and the trees are the foundation of the majority of habitats. The deforestation of the national park could be a potential genocide on the life it supports. It also supports much more than life. For example, Tongass National Park generates over a billion dollars in fishing and hunting. That is more that the logging industry will ever bring in, especially in the preliminary stages where millions of dollars will be needed to fund the opening up of the forest. It also supports the migration and growth of mass amounts of salmon, which are a major source of food for humans, and vital to the ecosystem. So clear cutting the forest would affect all terrestrial ecosystems, aquatic ecosystems, food chains, the predator and prey balance, and much more. It might even affect the climate of the area if there are no trees to provide shade and more of the sun's rays are hitting the surface of the earth in the area.

Some may argue that trees are a renewable resource and new ones and it will be just as good. That is not the case. Although trees are technically considered renewable, the rate at which trees can be cut down greatly surpasses the rate that trees can fully regenerate to be useful. Trees take decades to fully grow so that government would be opening up the forest to use the resource once and then let it sit dormant and regrow only to recut it later. The secondary succession would be on a continuous destructive cycle and the ecosystem would never be able to reach it carrying capacity.

If the Tongass National Forrest loses millions of acres to logging, we are setting the world up for failure. We will only be catalyzing the death of the planet. The rate of global warming will increase, the rate of extinctions will increase, and the destruction of a precious ecosystem will be sacrificed for human need. It simply is not worth it.

Sincerely,

Madi Foutz

[Position]

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