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Organization:

Title:

Comments:

CHOOSE THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE. NONE OF THE PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES ARE JUSTIFIED ECONOMICALLY, ECOLOGICALLY, SOCIALLY OR CULTURALLY.

The Tongass is the largest remaining rain forest in North America and one of the largest and least impacted in the world. The ecological value of this area is even more important because it is remote and relatively undeveloped. Many of the species that live there in healthy numbers are listed or otherwise imperiled in other places. For example, marbled murrelets.

Roadless areas are important because of their wildlife and fish habitat, recreation values, importance to multiple economic sectors, traditional properties and sacred sites for local indigenous people, inherent passive use values, and ecosystem services values they provide. Passive use values represent the value that individuals assign to a resource independent of their use of that resource and typically include existence, option, and bequest values. These values represent the value that individuals obtain from knowing that expansive roadless areas exist, knowing that they are available to visit in the future should they choose to do so, and knowing that they are available for future generations to inherit. Ecosystem services represent the services provided to society by healthy ecosystems. These services and benefits include what some consider to be long-term life support benefits to society as a whole. Examples of ecosystem services include watershed services, soil stabilization and erosion control, improved air quality, climate regulation, carbon sequestration, and biological diversity. (DEIS executive summary 2019) Tourists visit the Tongass to see the eagles, the whales, the fish, the murrelets and other species they can't see elsewhere and to experience one of the few the "untrammled" places remaining .

The Tongass has a history regarding deficit sales at taxpayer's expense. The 16.7 million acres also supports a diverse wildlife community, some species found nowhere else. Logging is tremendously expensive in Alaska. Trees grow slowly, geography is steep, access poor, road building is dangerous and prohibitively expensive, markets are distant, tree value isn't that great, precipitation high, erosion significant, earthquakes common. Financially and ecologically building roads in roadless areas of the Tongass is not prudent, wise or consistent with the reason that much of the Tongass was designated roadless in the first place.

I am sympathetic to workers in small mill towns in Alaska, but do not destroy our national (and international) irreplaceable ecological gem in order to use US tax dollars to support these mills and communities--only to produce products for foreign markets. However, the Tongass also provides important fisheries, hunting and cultural values to the native people of Alaska. Many of their rights have already been destroyed or compromised by white development and exploitation. Building roads for little to no profit and at extremely high cost is inconsistent with the cultural values of those living there that do not "mine" the resource.

The export of unprocessed timber is also restricted from lands managed by the States of Alaska, Oregon, California, and Idaho. As a result of a suit against the State of Alaska and subsequent appeals, however, the attorneys general of the States of Alaska, Oregon, and Idaho have rendered opinions that language restricting exports should be removed from State timber sale contracts, contending that no enforcement is defensible until the litigation is resolved. (Hines, Judith A. 1987. Log export restrictions of the Western States and British Columbia. Gen. Tech. Rep. PNW-GTR-208. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station; 13 p.)

I worked in Alaska for several years trying to restore habitats and mistakes from development and exploitation based on "economic" reasons. Few of those restoration projects were able to completely ameliorate the damage and were astronomically expensive. Those that profited were seldom local people, the income was fleeting and often insufficient and was usually gone well before the area recovered.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tongass_National_Forest

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-environment-alaska/u-s-judge-issues-11th-hour-halt-to-tongass-national-forest-timber-sale-idUSKBN1W903D>

<https://www.kfsk.org/2018/04/25/advocacy-group-says-forest-service-documents-dont-show-fix-for-tongass-timber-sale>

<https://www.taxpayer.net/energy-natural-resources/upcoming-tongass-timber-sales-will-cost-taxpayers/>

<http://www.atntribes.org/resolutions/support-no-action-alternative-preferred-alternative-tongass-national-forest-alaska>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fsNGRHcMGThyowQdaL-S28ZDmQIZAu7o/view>

<https://www.hia-env.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Tribal-CA-Press-Release-2019.pdf>

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