

Date submitted (Alaskan Standard Time): 12/16/2019 12:00:00 AM

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Comments:

The proposed abandonment of the Roadless Rule in the Tongass National Forest makes no sense and is supported by no practical rationale. Reasonable Americans, employing just a modicum of due diligence, will quickly understand that there is no credible justification for removing the Roadless Rule. We-Americans and our government-need to be honest about this: The proposed removal of the Roadless Rule is based almost solely on greed-the desire to harvest America's natural resources for the benefit of very few. There is no actual economic or other need for lumber in America, nor will logging provide more than a barely and briefly visible blip to the economy of Alaska or the U.S. Not only does it destroy nationally owned resources to benefit exceedingly few persons, it is astonishingly unenlightened from an environmental standpoint. Quite simply, it should not be permitted.

NEPA is our basic national charter for protection of the environment. It was enacted to declare a national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment; to promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man; to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the Nation; and to establish a Council on Environmental Quality. 42 U.S. Code [sect] 4321. The Roadless Rule was and is absolutely consistent with the goals and purposes of NEPA.

It is the theory among many conservatives now running our government that we should exploit every national resource, squeeze every ounce of blood from each and every national turnip. That thinking is in the nature of Ayn Rand as well as climate change deniers; it also ignores the (declining) condition of America's natural resources and is in derogation of basic principles of wild lands protection and preservation. Perhaps conservatives have forgotten that it was one of their own, President Nixon, who signed into law the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA), and also established the Environmental Protections Agency, back in 1970.

The Tongass is one of the few remaining areas in the United States-indeed, the world-which remains essentially unchanged by humans. To those who say we should build roads and log the place, I say before you do that go there. See it for yourself. Walk and sleep among the old growth trees that are centuries old. Look for grizzlies, wolves, eagles, streams teeming with anadromous fishes. Feel the calm, the quiet. Spend days or weeks there. If you do, you will understand. And you will leave it be.

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