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Title:

Comments:

HC5052

Skagway Traditional Council

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USDA Forest Service

ATTN: Alaska Roadless Rule

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To Whom it May Concern:

The Tongass National Forest has been home to our Native people since time immemorial. Secretary Perdue's preferred choice of Alternative Six will negatively impact Southeast Tribe's traditional territory. Many of our members rely on subsistence hunting, fishing & gathering to support their livelihood as well as working in the tourism industry.

We are concerned that the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) inaccurately implies that there would be minimal adverse effects on land and water habitats and biological diversity. The number of animals whose habitats could be destroyed by logging and road development is innumerable. Our members, devil's club & birch bark. These delicate ecosystems could be negatively impacted by lifting era of severe climate change, logging and building roads in the Tongass would be detrimental to the entire world. The Tongass is one of the last intact temperate rainforests, an important carbon store, a critical carbon dioxide sink and it would be irresponsible to deplete this resource.

Additionally, the EIS states that there would be minimal adverse effects on the visitor and fishing industries. These industries make up 90% of the Southeast Alaskan economy. We resent that the Forest Service suggests Alternative Six would have a minimal effect based on current plans.

We were informed that there were public meetings held in most Southeastern Alaskan communities in October 2018, however there was no meeting in Skagway. This is unacceptable. It is the burden of the Forest Service to consult with all tribes where there is possible adverse effect well before pursuing an initiative that directly affects our traditional lands and subsistence ways of life.

We understand that removing the Roadless Rule will not immediately authorize development in the Tongass and that the land planning process mandated by the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) is intended to govern land use. However, suggesting the removal of Tongass Forest protection is suspect and once the Roadless Rule is removed, the Forest Management Plans can be altered to consider development in the unprotected Tongass. The uncertainties and risks to our home are too great.

As such, we support Alternative One, no action. Retain the Roadless Rule to protect our Native land for future generations and effectively protect it for customary and traditional uses.

Gunalche-esh,

[Signature]

Jamie Bricker
STC President

[Position]