

From: Marian Allen <marianallen@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 30, 2016 11:49 PM
To: FS-objections-alaska-regional-office
Subject: 2016 TLMP Ammendment Commetns

M. Earl Stewart
Forest Supervisor
Tongass National Forest
August 30, 2016

Comments on the FEIS and ROD for the 2016 TLMP Amendment

Dear M. Earl Stewart,

My name is Eric Lee. I am a commercial fisherman and subsistence hunter living in Petersburg. I began hunting on Mitkof Island in my teens in the 1960's, before largescale logging deforested the winter range on Mitkof. Deer and grouse were plentiful then, and our town lived on subsistence game to a large extent. After extensive logging of deer winter range and two hard winters, the deer population collapsed and has never recovered. The deer season, which had been open from August through December for four bucks, was closed entirely for 17 years. When it reopened it was for only two weeks a year, and one buck. Incredibly, all during that time we were told by the timber industry and Forest Service employees that clear cuts were good for deer. I think some of them actually believed it. It is only in recent years, after almost fifty years of evidence to the contrary, that the Forest Service has acknowledged that deforesting deer winter habitat can have a negative effect on deer populations.

The grouse population on Mitkof has been greatly diminished as well. The Forest Service has never showed the least concern about destroying the breeding habitat of grouse. To my knowledge the Forest Service has never even done a study on the effects of deforestation of low elevation old growth forest on grouse populations. Overall, the Forest Service has failed miserably at maintaining viable populations of subsistence game. Your choice of Alternative five promises to continue this tradition.

On Mitkof Island and most other islands in the Tongass as well, the cumulative effects of logging on Forest Service lands, state lands, and native lands has been devastating, Wolf populations have been decimated, deer populations are down, bear populations are down, and salmon streams have been destroyed, just to name a few of the damaging effects. All these populations are vital to the health of the forest. An abundant deer population cultivates the forest and spreads seeds. Deer carcasses fertilize the forest and provide essential nourishment for birds and all the fur bearers. Wolves are essential to keep the deer populations healthy. The nutrients from salmon are the cornerstone of all the ecosystems of the Tongass. Largescale deforestation harms all these species and more, and should be stopped before it is too late. The Forest Service should end all large scale logging on the Tongass and transition immediately to small scale logging of specialty woods only.

The Forest Service said some years ago it would begin incorporating the reality of climate change into forest management. Yet there is little or no consideration of climate change in your timber policy. To read timber planning documents, one would think climate change does not exist. There are few if any considerations of the effects of heavy flooding and late summer dryup of salmon streams due to low snow pack. This is serious mismanagement of the forest. All old growth forest should be preserved as a buffer to the effects of extreme weather on salmon streams and all the delicate web of life in the forest that will be put under extreme stress in the coming decades and centuries. And the old growth needs to be preserved for its ability to absorb CO2 as well.

Ecosystems do not begin and end along surveyed boundaries separating lands owned by

different government and private agencies. Therefore there can be no meaningful management of the ecosystems on land under ownership of one agency without consideration of the management of adjacent lands under different ownership. Throughout the Tongass there are very large tracts of non-Forest Service lands scheduled to be logged. How can the Forest Service hope to maintain the necessary health of all the animal populations on Forest Service lands if you log all the old growth on Forest Service lands and all the old growth on adjacent lands owned by other entities are logged as well? The cumulative effects of all past logging, logging on non-Forest Service lands, and the logging planned for Forest Service lands in the future must all be considered if there is to be any true management of the Tongass. The Forest Service should place the rightful consideration of all the cumulative deforestation from the past and what is planned for the future on all lands within the Tongass and stop all but small scale logging on Forest Service lands. There is no other way to protect the forest and all animal populations from the coming ravages of climate change.

Forest Supervisor M. Earl Stewart, I urge you to reconsider your choice of Alternative five in favor of a new alternative which allows only small scale logging of old growth for specialty woods.

Sincerely,

Eric Lee

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