



File Code: 1570
Date: October 4, 2016

Dear Objector and/or Interested Person:

Enclosed is the agenda for the Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Tongass Plan) Amendment Objection Resolution Meeting, which will be held over the course of six days, with Days 1-3 occurring October 12-14, 2016 in Ketchikan, Alaska and Days 4-6 occurring October 17-19, 2016 in Juneau, Alaska. The agenda provides specific information about the meeting site in each location, as well as the start and end times each day. The agenda also includes dialing instructions for those objectors and/or interested persons who want to participate, and for those members of the public who want to observe, but cannot be present in person in Ketchikan and/or Juneau.

I have carefully reviewed all of the issues identified in the 27 eligible objections received on the Tongass Plan Amendment, and have considered how these issues relate to the significant issues identified during the Five-Year Review of the Forest Plan and during scoping for the Plan Amendment (Young Growth Transition, Renewable Energy, Inventoried Roadless Areas, and Wildlife Habitat and the Conservation Strategy). While the objections are voluminous, there is considerable overlap in the issues identified in the objections, and, as expected, there are objectors on both sides of nearly every issue.

Based on my review, I have included on the agenda those issues suitable for discussion based on 1) my need for clarification of the issue(s), and/or 2) my consideration of potential resolution options that I would like your feedback on to determine if the issue(s) can be resolved. The issues relate to the following topic areas:

- Renewable Energy;
- Young-Growth Inventory;
- Young-Growth Transition Time Frame;
- Inventoried Roadless Areas; and
- Harvest in Components of the Tongass Conservation Strategy and Other Areas.

The agenda indicates where and when each issue will be discussed and provides more specific information about the objectors and interested parties who are eligible to participate in the discussion about these issue(s). See Attachment 1 to the agenda for a summary statement of the aspect(s) of the issues I would like to discuss and those eligible to participate.

Participants in each issue discussed are limited to myself as the Reviewing Officer, Earl Stewart as the Responsible Official, eligible objectors who raised the issue, and those who requested interested person status for the issue.



Due to the number of objectors and interested persons who have expressed an interest in participating in the meeting, there will be a time limit for each objector's/interested person's presentation on each issue. These time limits are indicated on the agenda. If time allows, I will allow objectors and interested persons additional time, if needed, after all eligible objectors and interested persons have been afforded the opportunity to present their perspectives.

Due to the number of objectors and interested persons I anticipate will attend the meeting, objectors and interested persons will be asked to focus their discussion on the aspect(s) of the issues identified in Attachment 1. Be assured, however, that I have reviewed all of the objections and will respond to each in writing by the end of the objection review process.

As indicated on the agenda and in Attachment 2, Days 3 and 6 of the meeting are set aside to discuss additional issues identified by the objectors. If you have an issue you would like to discuss that was 1) raised in your objection; and 2) is not already on the agenda for the meeting, please email Robin Dale, Review Coordinator, at objections-alaska-regional-office@fs.fed.us, no later than close of business (5:00 pm) on Day 1 of the meeting (October 12, 2016) with a brief statement of the issue you would like to discuss. There will also be a hardcopy form available on Day 1 in Ketchikan that objectors may use to submit issues for discussion. These additional issues must have been raised in the objection you submitted, as no new issues may be raised at the meeting.

I will carefully review the issues submitted for discussion, and the agenda for Day 3 and Day 6 will be developed and posted online prior to the start of Day 2 of the meeting. The agenda for Day 3 and Day 6 will identify the objectors and interested persons who are eligible to participate in the discussions on each issue. As with the issue(s) discussed on Days 1-2 and 4-5, any time limits for objector and/or interested party presentations on any given issue will be dependent on the number of objectors and/or interested persons who would like to participate in the discussion of that issue.

No decisions will be made at this meeting, but discussions will inform and contribute to my final response to all of the objections. My written response will be sent to all objectors and interested persons, and will be the final decision of the U.S. Department of Agriculture on the objections.

Sincerely,



BETH G. PENDLETON
Regional Forester

cc: Earl Stewart, Susan Howle, Katie Benning

Enclosure