

**File Code:** 1900**Date:** August 26, 2020**Route To:****Subject:** Prince of Wales Landscape Level Analysis (POW LLA) Implementation Direction**To:** Prince of Wales District Ranger

The purpose of this letter is to provide implementation direction for the Prince of Wales Landscape Level Analysis (POW LLA) Project following the June 24, 2020, United States District Court for the District of Alaska final judgment in Case No. 1:19-cv-00006-SLG (*Southeast Alaska Conservation Council, et al. v. United States Forest Service, et al.*).

The POW LLA Project proposed a wide array of integrated resource management activities across 1.8 million acres on Prince of Wales and outer islands on the Tongass National Forest to be implemented over the next 15 years. It was designed to meet the following objectives: improve forest ecosystem health, support community resiliency, and support economic development on the Thorne Bay and Craig Ranger Districts.

While the final judgment vacates vegetation management and roadbuilding portions of the POW LLA Record of Decision (ROD) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), the judgment permits the POW LLA FEIS analysis of activities other than vegetation management and road construction to remain in place, and the portions of the March 2019 POW LLA Project ROD authorizing the following watershed improvement and restoration, sustainable recreation management, and associated activities remain in effect and may be implemented as approved on March 16, 2019.

- Watershed Improvement and Restoration Activities described on page 4 of the POW LLA ROD (Activity Cards 25-29 and 32-35):
 - Instream restoration activities may occur on up to 200 miles of stream within the project area in any watershed identified as having a need to restore proper functioning condition. The Forest Service will consider opportunities for interpretive signs within restored watersheds for public education.
 - Fish habitat improvements - such as lake fertilization, egg incubation boxes, fry stocking, and barrier modifications - may occur for freshwater systems that have shown a decrease in fish population or have potential for increased habitat.
 - All newly installed fish-stream crossing structures must meet aquatic passage requirements.
 - Existing stream crossings within the project area that do not allow for fish and aquatic organism passage at all flows (referred to as "Red crossings") will be replaced with appropriate structures meeting passage requirements, removed, or intentionally permitted to remain in place by regulatory agencies as funding allows.



- The Forest Service may use root wad or cut trees and salvage cull logs and stumps to provide a source of large wood for stream and floodplain restoration.
- Historical surface water flow paths may be restored in areas where past management activities impeded natural water flows or created unnatural water flows to karst features. Activities may be implemented to restore soil productivity where detrimental soil conditions approach or exceed 15 percent of an activity area.
- Manual, mechanical, and herbicide treatments will be used to treat invasive plant infestations as part of an integrated weed management approach to eradicate or control infestations of non-native, invasive plants across all management area types. New populations would fall into an adaptive management strategy of EDRR (early detection/rapid response). Herbicide use will be outlined in site-specific Weed Management Plans.
- Sustainable Recreation Management Activities described on pages 4-5 of the POW LLA ROD (Activity Cards 36-40 and 43-46):
 - Up to three new cabins and up to twelve new shelters that are boat or road accessible may be developed. Existing cabins may be decommissioned but may be replaced in a more accessible location that has a higher potential of use. The POW LLA Project goal is to have no net loss of cabins. The Tongass National Forest is currently developing a Forest Sustainable Cabin Strategy. The goal of the strategy is to have no net gain of cabin deferred maintenance. The POW LLA Project will consider the Final Strategy, once completed, when implementing any cabin activity.
 - Up to 50 miles of new trails may be developed. Trail uses may include walking, hiking, bicycling, mountain biking, and off-highway vehicles. Maintenance on existing trails will continue, but improvements may only occur on trails that have regular use and a need for improvements. Spur trails to recreation structures may be developed. Interpretive information along new or existing trails will also be considered. Road-to-trail conversions will be considered.
 - Up to three new campgrounds may be developed. Decommissioning of the Harris River Campground may occur in exchange for developing a campground at El Capitan.
 - Interpretive and informational signs may be developed at existing or new recreation infrastructure and along existing or new roads and trails.
 - Up to eight winter sport access points and areas for over-the-snow vehicle use may be developed. This may include pullouts, 60-foot wide vegetation clearings providing access to subalpine/alpine locations, and warming huts.
 - A picnic day-use area near Neck Lake may be developed. In addition, to support input received from local youth, the Forest Service may permit a day use area on the island for uses such as frisbee golf, archery, and other youth activities.
 - To enhance recreation experiences, activities may occur at recreation sites, trails, or along roads to provide or improve vistas, including timber stand thinning,

pruning, or vegetation clearing.

- Opportunities for fresh- and saltwater canoe and kayak access points may be implemented, which could include spur trails, roadside pullouts, and shoreline improvements to mitigate bank degradation.
- Associated Actions not associated with road construction or vegetation management described on page 5 of the POW LLA ROD (Activity Cards 41-42)
 - Site preparation, hazard tree removal, wildlife-proof garbage can installation and maintenance, and brushing and brush disposal may be implemented when applicable.
 - Activity Card 41 – Marine Access Facilities for uses not associated with vegetation management
 - Activity Card 42 – View improvements

I maintain great pride in the staff who worked on this project and effectively engaged communities across Prince of Wales Island during development and analysis of this project. The integration of an effective collaborative process is exemplary, helping the Forest Service deliver USDA programs efficiently, effectively, and with integrity while focusing on customer service and fostering productive and sustainable use of our National Forest System Lands. The interdisciplinary team and local collaborative group were well-deserving of the 2019 Chief's Award (Sustain Our Nation's Forest's and Grasslands category) they received for work accomplished on this project.



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