

Alaska Region

Tongass National Forest  
Interpretation &  
Conservation Education  
Strategy

2004

Final



Tongass National Forest  
USDA-Forest Service  
Alaska Region

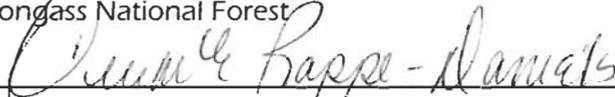
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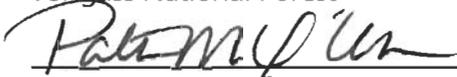
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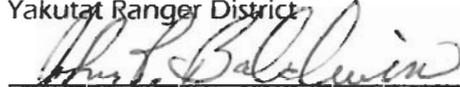
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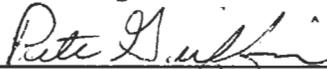
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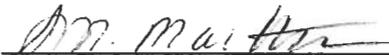
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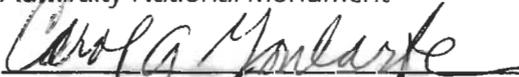
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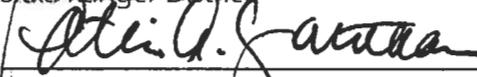
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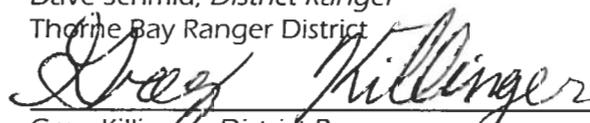
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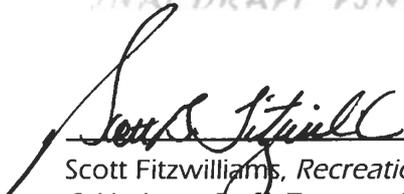
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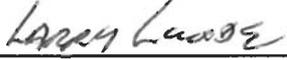
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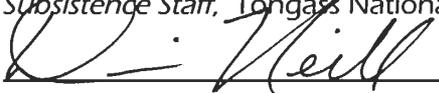
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# Executive Summary

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The Tongass National Forest is a public treasure. It is a land of beauty, of mystery, and of untold natural riches. Since time immemorial, it has nourished and sustained rich and unique human cultures.

The Tongass National Forest (N.F.) belongs to all Americans, and is managed by the USDA Forest Service. One of the goals of the Forest Service is to help people understand, appreciate, and use their national forests. The Tongass National Forest's Interpretive and Conservation Education (I&E) programs are an important part of our efforts to link people to their lands. National, regional and Forest Plan direction currently guides our I&E efforts.

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“The Tongass National Forest is not only the largest National Forest, it is also one of the most important: it is the best example of a temperate coastal rain forest remaining and its well-being is of critical interest not only to the people of Southeast Alaska but to all the people of the United States and, indeed, the world.”

*(Blue-ribbon Team of Scientists)*

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Each year, more than 750,000 visitors travel the Tongass aboard cruiseships, airlines and ferries. Additionally, approximately 75,000 Alaskans call this area home. Understanding the needs of our diverse audiences, and responding to them, is an important goal of our I&E efforts.

The Tongass supports a diverse and strong I&E program that includes world-class visitor centers and wildlife viewing areas, award-winning wilderness education efforts, and engaging community education activities. However, our efforts can be further strengthened and coordinated. The lack of strong leadership, a strategic focus, an understanding of our audiences, well-articulated standards of quality, and sufficient resources hamstringing our continued improvement.

With the support of the Tongass Leadership Team, a group of forest employees developed the *Tongass National Forest Interpretation and Education Strategy*. This strategy documents the programs' current successes while providing concrete and actionable goals, objectives and tactics.

The strategy emphasizes the following goals to help our programs evolve.

- Goal 1:** Promote a coordinated, sustainable I&E program at all levels of the Forest.
- Goal 2:** Provide products and services that are high-quality, reflect Forest priorities and key messages, and meet the needs and expectations of our customers.
- Goal 3:** Increase and enhance interpretive services and conservation education partnerships on the Tongass National Forest.
- Goal 4:** Develop and retain a professional Interpretive Services and Conservation Education staff on the Tongass National Forest.

Implementation of these goals, and their supporting objectives and tactics, will help the Tongass National Forest achieve our vision of a "... *future where the Tongass NF is nationally-recognized in presenting effective, engaging interpretation and education services that meet the needs and expectations of our public and further our land stewardship mission.*"

# Introduction

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## The Tongass

The Tongass National Forest is a public treasure. It is a land of beauty, of mystery, and of untold natural riches. Since time immemorial, it has nourished and sustained rich and unique human cultures.

The Tongass National Forest (N.F.) belongs to all Americans, and is managed by the USDA Forest Service. One of the goals of the Forest Service is to help people understand, appreciate, and use their national forests. The Tongass National Forest's Interpretive and Conservation Education (I&E) programs are an important part of our efforts to link people to their lands.

Nearly 75,000 people live in small, resource-dependent communities and call the Tongass their home. Each year, nearly one million people visit the Tongass. Additionally, people from throughout the United States and the world, know and care about this great land. The opportunities to reach our public are limitless. The development of this interpretive and conservation education strategy will help focus our efforts, maximize our resources, and connect us with our publics.

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## Program Vision

Our vision of the forest interpretive and education programs is to:

*Create a future where the Tongass NF is nationally-recognized in presenting effective, engaging interpretation and education services that meet the needs and expectations of our public and further our land stewardship mission.*

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## Goals of I&E Strategy

The I&E Strategy contains general guidelines and recommendations for the interpretation and conservation education programs on the Tongass National Forest. It addresses recommendations to all resource groups, and to all District and Supervisor's Offices (S.O.) in the many large and small communities in Southeast Alaska. It is intended to provide a broad, conceptual framework for developing an integrated network of interpretive and conservation education opportunities throughout the Forest.

This strategy will articulate Forest-wide goals and objectives for resource interpretation and conservation education services. It will provide a 'game plan' for achieving these goals. It is not the intent of this strategy to develop additional project proposals or provide project-level planning and implementation direction.

The Forest is certainly not lacking in ideas for potential projects, facilities or programs. What we are lacking is a Forest-wide strategy for prioritizing, coordinating, and implementing these projects. This strategy is intended to serve as an internal guiding document to help us reach our potential. It will be used by District Rangers, and all District and S.O. staff involved with providing these services.

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**"It is inconceivable to me that an ethical relationship to the land can exist without love, respect and admiration..."**

*Aldo Leopold*

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The interpretive and conservation education opportunities on the Tongass National Forest are as vast as the land itself! Coordinating our efforts is a challenge, but one that will yield great benefits in the future.

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## Tongass N.F. Organization

Prior to 1999, the Tongass National Forest was organized in three "Management Areas"—the Chatham Area in the north of the archipelago, the Stikine Area in the center, and the Ketchikan Area in the south. Although technically part of one Forest, the Areas operated as separate and independent entities. In 1999, the Forest began the difficult job of unifying its organization into one Forest, with one Forest Supervisor, three offices for staff, and ten Ranger Districts. This unification effort was completed in 2002. For a number of reasons, a unified interpretive and education effort has not yet been addressed.

In addition to organizational changes, economic and societal changes impact our interpretive and education efforts. With the the downturn in timber markets and the end of the 50-year timber contracts, many small Southeast communities are experiencing economic difficulties. At the same time, the visitor industry has grown dramatically in Southeast Alaska. In many communities, this is a time of economic transition. The Forest's interpretive and education services can not only complement and augment the visitor industry, they can also help residents learn and understand more about their unique home.

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## Tongass N.F. Challenges

The Tongass National Forest is fortunate to have a group of highly-skilled and dedicated professionals providing a variety of quality resource interpretation, education, and information services. However, there are some areas in which our efforts can be improved. Specifically:

- ◆ We lack a focused and encompassing strategy for implementing interpretation and education services on the Tongass National Forest. Our messages and efforts are not coordinated among the Districts and across disciplines providing these services (*such as recreation, public affairs, heritage, wilderness and wildlife/fisheries*).
- ◆ There is little strategic program leadership.
- ◆ We are unsure if we are meeting the needs of our visitors, as well as our local communities and region, because we lack a focused evaluation effort.
- ◆ There is no agreed-upon Forest-wide method for prioritizing I&E projects. A 5-year action plan—that would articulate current and out-year funding needs and which would tie into the Forest's integrated work planning process—does not exist.
- ◆ There are no established standards of quality or evaluation methods to show us whether or not we are meeting our goals.
- ◆ We often lack sufficient resources (funding & staff) to meet our objectives.
- ◆ We lose many talented employees due to a lack of career opportunities.

# Program Definitions

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## The "One Program" Concept

On the Tongass National Forest, interpretive and conservation education efforts will be considered discrete, but inter-related parts of **one** program. Recommendations for messages, staffing, and implementation will address both interpretation and education. This "one program" concept is a critical factor in our ability to coordinate our far-reaching programs, and maximize their effectiveness.

However, we understand that this approach is not widely used within the Forest Service. At the Washington Office level, interpretive services and conservation education are led from different branches of the Forest Service. Interpretive Services is managed within the National Forest System, while Conservation Education is managed within State and Private Forestry. Additionally, other I&E programs and initiatives are scattered throughout the agency. We fully support the continued integration of these programs at the national level. These organizational changes are not yet implemented. In this strategy, we will continue to refer to interpretive services and conservation education, although our focus is on one, integrated program.

In the fields of interpretation and conservation education, there is often confusion among program providers, managers and the public over what these programs encompass. Additionally, there are many different initiatives in the agency—scattered across all parts of the Forest Service—that address these functions. The following section discusses these definitions and programs.

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## Interpretation

According to the National Association for Interpretation, interpretation is:

*“A communication process that forges intellectual and emotional connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings in the resource.”*

Additionally, Freeman Tilden (*considered by many to be the "father of interpretation"*) states that interpretation is:

*“An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate by factual information.”*

In general, interpretive services are geared toward a non-captive audience in a recreational setting. Examples of interpretive services include visitor centers, exhibits, publications, facilities, signage, and personal services.

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## Conservation Education

Conservation education ('*environmental education*' in many circles) is a related, yet distinct program. While its educational goals often overlap interpretive services', conservation education delivers these messages to different audiences, using different methods. The Forest Service "Vision-to-Action" strategy states that conservation education is:

*"...a learning process concerned with the interrelationships among components of the natural and human-made world producing growth in the individual and leading to responsible land stewardship."*

Additionally, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines environmental education as:

*"...a learning process that increases people's knowledge and awareness about the environment and associated challenges, develops the necessary skills and expertise to address the challenges, and fosters attitudes, motivations, and commitments to make informed decisions and take responsible action (UNESCO, Tbilisi Declaration, 1978)."*

In general, conservation education efforts are geared to a captive audience in more structured, formal settings. They are often age-specific and provide a structured series of experiences.

Examples of conservation education activities include classroom presentations, natural resource camps, teacher training, and curriculum and media development.

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There are no passengers on  
Spaceship Earth. We are all crew.  
*Marshall McLuhan*

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# Forest Service Initiatives

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Within the Forest Service, there is a wide variety of programs and initiatives that deliver interpretive services and conservation education. Interpretive services are chiefly delivered through the agency's recreation program, while education activities are supported in many different disciplines and programs. This decentralized organization contributes to the challenge of providing a unified and consistent program. It also reflects broad-based support for I&E efforts throughout the agency. In this situation, a comprehensive I&E strategy is a critical necessity.

The following list identifies the major Forest Service I&E initiatives that operate on the Tongass National Forest.

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## State & Private Forestry

**Conservation Education (CE)**—The mission of this program is to connect people to the land by providing them with the tools they need to make informed actions related to sustaining natural and cultural resources. [na.fs.fed.us/spfo/ce/index.cfm](http://na.fs.fed.us/spfo/ce/index.cfm)

**Smokey Bear**—For over 60 years Smokey Bear has delivered an effective wildfire prevention message. He is one of the most memorable public service advertising symbols in U.S. history. His message is extremely timely today and forms the basis for numerous educational efforts. [www.smokeybear.com/](http://www.smokeybear.com/)

**Woodsy Owl**—Woodsy has been America's environmental champion since 1970, and is most recognized for his wise request, "Give a Hoot. Don't Pollute." Today, Woodsy has a new motto, "Lend a Hand—Care for the Land!" This Forest Service symbol befriends another generation of children and motivates them to form healthy, lasting relationships with nature. The Woodsy Owl program is geared toward 3-8 year olds. [www.fs.fed.us/spf/woodsyl/](http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/woodsyl/)

**Project Learning Tree**—Project Learning Tree (PLT) is an award winning, broad-based environmental education program for educators and students in PreK-grade 12. PLT, a program of the [American Forest Foundation](http://www.americanforestfoundation.org/), is one of the most widely-used environmental education programs in the United States and abroad. In Alaska, the Project Learning Tree program is coordinated by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. Through a national agreement, the Forest Service provides annual funding to State Foresters to help support PLT. [www.plt.org/](http://www.plt.org/)

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## Wildlife, Fish & Rare Plants

**NatureWatch**—Nature Watch is a nationally-coordinated program to enhance public opportunities for sustainable, low-impact, recreation. The program addresses wildlife, fish and plants. The program includes facility construction, interpretation, and education, and is supported by the National Forest System Wildlife, Fish, and Rare Plants staff. [www.fs.fed.us/outdoors/naturewatch/default.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/outdoors/naturewatch/default.htm)

**Taking Wing**—Taking Wing is a Forest Service program to enhance waterfowl habitat management. One of its specific goals is to "provide information to users on waterfowl habitat, hunting, and viewing opportunities in

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Wildlife, Fish &  
Rare Plants

the National Forest System." [www.fs.fed.us/biology/wildlife/takingwing/index.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/wildlife/takingwing/index.html)

**Fisheries Education**—This multi-pronged approach includes Rise to the Future, Bring Back the Natives, FishWatch and National Fishing Week programs. Education is a significant component of each of these programs. These initiatives support the development of fisheries programs on National Forest System lands. [www.fs.fed.us/biology/fish/index.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/fish/index.html)

**Partners in Flight**—This partnership program focuses on neo-tropical migratory birds. The Forest Service is also an active participant in the celebration of International Migratory Bird Day through the hosting of festivals, education, tours, and bird counts. [www.fs.fed.us/biology/wildlife/partnersinflight.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/wildlife/partnersinflight.html)

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Recreation,  
Heritage &  
Wilderness  
Resources

**Interpretive Services (IS)**—The Interpretive Services program is chiefly focused on the delivery of services through visitor facilities and dispersed sites such as contact stations and viewing areas. Located within the RHWR program, IS works closely with a number of different disciplines and programs.

**National Scenic Byways**—The Forest Service is an important partner in the Federal Highway Administration's Scenic Byways program. This program identifies spectacular travel routes, and works to provide necessary infrastructure development. Interpretive plans, signage, and facilities are often Scenic Byways components. In 2002, the Alaska Marine Highway was designated as a National Scenic Byway. [www.byways.org/](http://www.byways.org/)

**Leave No Trace, Inc.**—The Leave No Trace (LNT) program was originally initiated by the Forest Service and is now managed as a non-profit organization in cooperation with the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). It focuses on developing responsible use ethics in people using backcountry and wilderness areas. <http://www.lnt.org>

**Tread Lightly, Inc.**—Similar to the LNT program, Tread Lightly also focuses on educating people about ways to reduce their impacts on the land. The difference is that Tread Lightly focuses on motorized activities such as All Terrain Vehicles and snow machine use. [www.treadlightly.org](http://www.treadlightly.org)

**Passport in Time**—Passport in Time (PIT) is a volunteer archaeology and historic preservation program of the Forest Service. Volunteers work with professional archaeologists and historians on projects including archaeological excavation, rock art restoration, survey, archival research, historic structure restoration, gathering oral histories, or writing interpretive brochures. The Tongass National Forest sponsors more PIT projects than any other national forest. [www.passportintime.com/](http://www.passportintime.com/)

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Research &  
Development

**The Natural Inquirer** —The Forest Service Research & Development arm also conducts a wide range of educational activities. One of the most recent, nation-wide efforts is *The Natural Inquirer*. This publication is a research-based "scientific journal" written for children. Activities and teacher guides are included with each edition. [www.naturalinquirer.usda.gov/](http://www.naturalinquirer.usda.gov/)

# Management Direction

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Various Forest Service documents provide national, regional and forest direction for our interpretive services and conservation education efforts. The following section outlines the most current of these documents.

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## Forest Service Manual (FSM) Direction

The FSM 2390 states, "*Interpretive services activities and programs are designed to develop a National Forest visitor's interest, enjoyment and understanding of the natural environment of the National Forest and the mission of the Forest Service in managing those public lands.*"

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"The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations."

*National Strategic Plan-2003*

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The FSM 1623 states that the objectives of the natural resource and conservation education program are:

- "1. To promote public awareness and understanding of the importance of natural resources and call attention to particular issues related to forest productivity, protection, and use.*
- 2. To provide leadership in natural resource and environmental education.*
- 3. To enlist the cooperation of institutions and organizations in developing broad public understanding of and support for the wise management and use of forest and rangeland resources.*
- 4. To assist agency personnel in better understanding natural resource issues.*
- 5. To assist resource managers in meeting resource management goals."*

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## Forest Service Interpretive Services Strategy

In 2003, the Forest Service completed an agency-wide Interpretive Services (IS) Strategy. It is a guide for better delivery of interpretive experiences through our services and facilities, and for providing exceptional service to the public both on and off the national forests and grasslands. The IS Strategy outlines actions planned to ensure high-quality providers, products, and programs; effective facility operations; and strong relationships with partners and communities. The strategy states that the goal of IS in the agency, is to

*"...create intellectual and emotional connections between people and their natural and cultural heritage, thereby instilling respect and appreciation for America's public lands and fostering their protection and stewardship through time."*

The strategy also articulated the following vision for their work with neighbors and visitors.

*"The Forest Service contributes to the physical, emotional, and intellectual desires and expectations of people by providing relevant and authentic experiential opportunities both on and off the forests."*

Conservation  
Education  
Vision To  
Action Strategy

In September 1996, under Chief and Staff direction, the staff directors of Cooperative Forestry; Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness Resources; Wildlife, Fish, and Rare Plants; and the Office of Communication commissioned a task force to develop a national corporate vision for all education programs of the Forest Service. The resulting "Vision-To-Action" strategy has been a useful tool in building and nurturing CE programs across the agency.

The strategy states that the mission of the Forest Service's conservation education program is,

*"By 2002, Forest Service conservation education will be an effective, dynamic means for the Forest Service to connect the American people with their environment. The Forest Service will provide the tools Americans need to participate effectively in the critical task of sustaining our Nation's natural and cultural resources. This undertaking shall be a coordinated, Service-wide effort that will affect all aspects of the agency's operations."*

The strategy identifies core themes that help direct the agency's conservation education work:

**"Core Themes.** Forest Service core conservation education programs will support two key themes:

- *Sustainability of natural and cultural resources in forest, grasslands, and aquatic ecosystems.*
- *Awareness and understanding of interrelationships in natural systems and between people and the land."*

Budget  
Formulation &  
Execution  
System  
Direction (BFES)

The Forest Service has engaged in a budget re-engineering process called the **Budget Formulation and Execution System (BFES)**. This system seeks to provide consistency throughout the budget formulation process, and ensure that project budgets are correlated to agency priorities. In BFES, funding groups defined various activities within their work area. Throughout the agency, I&E services are identified in a number of activities. The following list identifies these activity areas.

<u>BLI</u>	<u>Activity Name</u>	<u>Sub-activities</u>
NFRW	Provide Interpretation & Education	all
NFRW	Manage Wilderness	Educate and inform visitors...
NFRW	Manage Heritage Resources	Promote heritage values through interpretation...
NFWF	Provide Interpretation & Education	all
NFVW	Maintain & Improve Watershed Conditions	Educate public.
NFVW	Treat Noxious Weeds	Educate public.
NFVW	Manage Air Quality	Educate public.
NFVW	Manage Environmental Compliance & Protection/Abandoned Mine Lands	Involve and inform public.

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## Alaska Region Emphasis Areas

In 2000, the Alaska Region articulated a management vision in the "*A View from Here*" document. The Region identified four strategic emphasis areas that will guide their management in the future. These areas focused on communities, recreation and tourism, Alaska Natives, and organizational effectiveness. In 2002, a fifth emphasis item addressing ecological sustainability was added. The Region also developed a range of actions to support these emphasis areas. The following items directly affect the Forest's interpretation and conservation education programs:

- **Communities:** Enhance the health, stability, quality of life, economic vitality, and adaptability of communities in Southcentral and Southeast Alaska.
- **Recreation and Tourism:** Define and promote sustainable levels of high-quality recreation and tourism while maintaining outstanding settings and wildland character.
- **Alaska Natives:** Incorporate the unique cultural heritage, legal status, and traditional knowledge of Alaska Natives into the Region's programs and processes.

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## Tongass Land & Resource Management Plan

The Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) was completed in 1997. While the plan offers forest-specific direction for interpretive services, conservation education is addressed in a more general way. Interpretive services and education direction is provided in a number of disciplines' *Standards and Guidelines*. Although much of this guidance is timely and helpful, it is unfortunately rarely referenced in current Tongass I&E efforts. The following list summarizes Forest Plan direction. The full text of the *Standards and Guidelines* is provided in Appendix A of this strategy.

### **Interpretive Services**

- ❖ Provide an IS program that is designed to accurately develop an interest in the environments of Southeast Alaska, and the mission of the Forest Service.
- ❖ Conduct on-site interpretive activities to a level consistent with the Land Use Designation objectives.
- ❖ Assist visitors and users to understand the role of natural and cultural resources in the development of industry, heritage and culture in SE Alaska.
- ❖ Promote visitor understanding of the National Forest System.
- ❖ Inform visitors of the distribution, differences and roles of Federal, state and private lands found in Southeast Alaska and the range of recreation and cultural interest opportunities and facilities available.
- ❖ Follow a coordinated program of awareness and training for all employees, and partners to ensure a consistent program of public service.

### **Heritage Management**

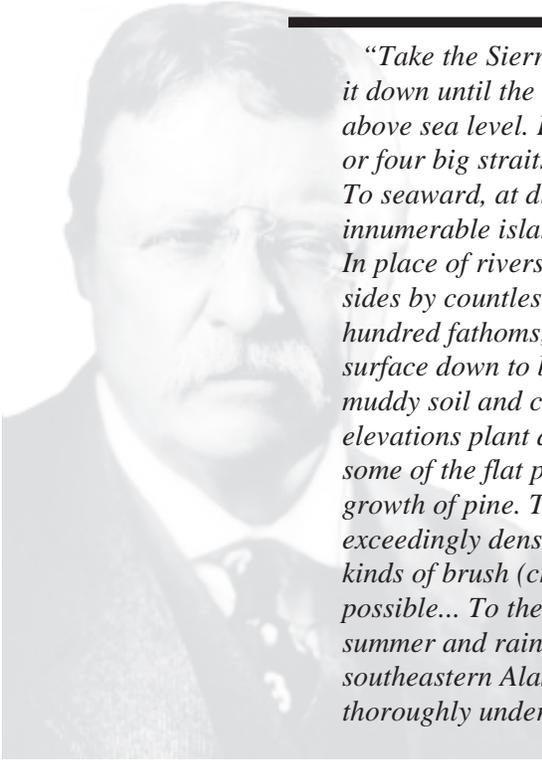
- ❖ Identify opportunities and priorities for interpretation of Heritage Resources for public education and recreation.

### **Karst/Cave Management**

- ❖ Develop public education and interpretive programs to foster an increased appreciation for cave resources.

# The Tongass National Forest

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*“Take the Sierra Reserve and place it directly on the coast, sinking it down until the highest peaks are from three to four thousand feet above sea level. Let the Pacific break through the main divide in three or four big straits making as many islands out of the principal range. To seaward, at distances of from ten to fifty miles, sprinkle in innumerable islands of all sizes and drop a few also to the eastward. In place of rivers, creeks and canyons let the reserve be cut into on all sides by countless deep water ways with soundings of from ten to one hundred fathoms, the shores rising abruptly...Then strip off the whole surface down to bedrock and boulders. In spots put on a thin layer of muddy soil and cover the whole with moss. Over all except the highest elevations plant a dense forest of spruce, hemlock and cedar, leaving some of the flat places as swamp or “muskeag” dotted with a scrubby growth of pine. Throughout this forest, cover the ground with an exceedingly dense and often almost impenetrable undergrowth of all kinds of brush (chiefly devils club) and let the ground be as rough as possible... To the climate of the Sierras add perpetual rain in the summer and rain and snow in the winter and the characteristics of the southeastern Alaska forest may be partly understood. To be thoroughly understood, they must be felt.”*

—F.E. Olmsted Inspection Report, 1906

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*(President Teddy Roosevelt, pictured above, oversaw the creation of the Forest Service in 1905. F.E. Olmsted was the Assistant Chief of the Forest Service in charge of general inspections.)*

Water stored in glaciers creeps out to the sea. Water falls as rain and snow and feeds the temperate rain forest. Water carves the rocks and sheer cliffs. Water defines the Tongass National Forest.

At nearly 17-million acres, the Tongass is the largest national forest in the United States of America. It encompasses nearly 90% of the southeastern panhandle of Alaska. It stretches from the southern tip of Prince of Wales Island, 500 miles north to the Hubbard Glacier just north of Yakutat. After crossing Dixon Entrance, a voyager traveling north on the waters of the Inside Passage is surrounded by the Tongass.

The Tongass National Forest is a tapestry of dynamic ecosystems, shaped by nature and woven by culture. Few places in the world can boast of the geologic and climatic variations that characterize the Tongass. At sea level, rain—and lots of it—may fall throughout the year. Climb just 1,600 feet, and the climate is too harsh for trees. A lush temperate rain forest thrives at sea-level less than a two-mile hike from the frigid, windy alpine zone where hardy plants cling to a tenuous existence.

The maritime environment dominates the weather and nurtures the temperate rain forest. On the Tongass, western hemlocks push their floppy tops up through the mist while Sitka spruce brave the icy, salt-laden winds along the water’s edge. In areas protected from the wind, trees may live to be more than 500 years old. About 83 percent of these old growth forests remain as they were 100 years ago, before commercial logging began.

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## Dynamic Ecosystems

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## World-Class Resources

Though home to the Northern Hemisphere's largest temperate rain forest, almost half of the Tongass is covered by ice, water, muskeg, and rock. The islands and mainland create 11,000 miles of shoreline where regal mountains rise from tidewater to overlook a mostly undeveloped and isolated landscape. "Rivers of ice," or glaciers, grind their way down from the mountaintops. While some glaciers remain perched above sea level, others, called 'tidewater glaciers' deliver their icy cargo to the ocean.

People can discover a unique combination of resources in the Tongass. These world-class resources are important globally, nationally, and locally.

The Tongass is truly 'America's rain forest'—its vast expanses harbor some of the nation's most important public natural legacies. The Tongass is the largest protected temperate rain forest in the world. At nearly 17 million acres, the Forest contains 14% of the world's remaining temperate rain forest and 29% of the world's undeveloped temperate rain forest. There are seventeen designated Wilderness Areas and two Wilderness National Monuments. Together these areas comprise over 35% of the total land area—the highest percentage of designated Wilderness of any national forest.

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"National Forests exist today because the people want them. To make them accomplish the most good, the people themselves must make clear how they want them run."

*Gifford Pinchot*

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The Tongass National Forest also contains the largest concentration of caves in Alaska, and world-class karst landscapes (*calcium-carbonate-dominated geology*). Prince of Wales Island harbors the largest cave in Alaska. Current cave research is revolutionizing scientists' understanding of the paleo-history of Southeast Alaska and the peopling of the Americas.

The Tongass is home to healthy populations of animals that have become uncommon in other areas of the United States. The highest density of coastal brown (*grizzly*) bears occurs on the Tongass NF. The Alexander Archipelago wolf is common throughout much of Southeast Alaska. Mountain goats climb along steep, rocky crags above timberline. In fact, there are no threatened or endangered terrestrial species on the Tongass National Forest. Five species of Pacific salmon—chum, coho, king, pink and sockeye—depend on the streams and waters of the Tongass NF for spawning.



*A black bear feasts on pink salmon at the Anan Creek Wildlife Observatory, Wrangell Ranger District.*

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## People and the Land

Alaska's coastal lands and waterways have met peoples' social, physical, and spiritual needs for thousands of years. Since time immemorial, the Tlingit and Haida peoples have pulled salmon and herring out of these waters and gathered berries and other forest-bounty. Each generation shares its knowledge of the land with the next. In the late 1800s, the Tsimshian moved from their former home in British Columbia to Annette Island to form the only Indian Reservation in Alaska.



*Bear Totem in Kasaan, Prince of Wales Island.*

Gold in this era drew thousands of fortune-seekers up through the Inside Passage to towns like Douglas, Juneau and Skagway. As the gold played out in the 1900s, communities built their economies around fishing, timber and then tourism. Traditional lifestyles still flourish. Today, many rural residents live a subsistence lifestyle, just as Alaska Natives have for centuries.

Water routes continue to be the gateway for Alaska visitors. Each year, over 750,000 visitors travel through the Tongass National Forest aboard cruise ships or the Alaska Marine Highway System ferries. Local residents and tourists enjoy sailing, motor boating, kayaking and getting out on the water to fish.

The Mendenhall Visitor Center in Juneau is among the top three tourist attractions in the state. Visitors also travel to the Juneau Ice Field by helicopter and take organized boat trips into Misty Fjords and Tracy Arm. Ecotourism is one of the faster growing portions of the tourism industry.

Traveling through this watery world is a challenge. Roads between communities are rare. Only Hyder, Haines, and Skagway are connected to the North American road system. Prince of Wales Island roads connect the island communities, and ferries serve many communities like Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg and Sitka. Some small, Southeast communities like Pelican, Angoon and Tenakee are chiefly reached by small boats or float planes.

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"Conservation is the application of common sense to the common problems for the common good."

*Gifford Pinchot*

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The Forest Service's mission is to manage the nation's forests for multiple uses. People from all over the world are passionate about the wet and enigmatic Tongass National Forest. Some say they want a sense that wild places remain where wildlife can roam undisturbed. Others defend the need to be able use the woods and waters to make their living. With demands from all sides, the Forest Service tries to balance the needs of people whose way of life is based on extracting resources, with people who want large stretches of the ecosystem undisturbed for recreation, solitude and inspiration.

# Tongass National Forest



## Tongass Trivia

- \*Size of West Virginia
- \*Largest NF in the world
- \*100 years old in 2002
- \*Contains 11,000 miles of shoreline
- \*Includes 2 National Monuments
- \*19 Wilderness Areas
- \*Home to 5,000 brown bears
- \*Home to 73,000 people
- \*150 cabins & 450 miles of trail

# Interpretive Themes

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"Wisdom is not a knowledge of many things, but the perception of the underlying unity of seemingly unrelated facts."

*John Burnet*

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In the interpretive profession, a theme is the central idea of a program. Sometimes a theme is called a 'key message'. Whatever you call it, a theme is a one-sentence, declarative statement capturing what you are going to tell your audience. Themes help people connect physical, tangible resources to intangible or universal concepts. A theme defines the purpose of your program and answers the "so what?" question. Without a theme, the organization of a program is random, and the effectiveness will be a matter of chance rather than design.

In March 2003, Forest Service staff from throughout the Region met in Juneau for a three-day *Interpretive & Education Gathering*. The Region's employees identified a need for Region-wide interpretive themes—statements that would unify and help coordinate our efforts. Forests and Districts were encouraged to develop sub-themes that are unique to their area, but still support the "big picture".

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Tongass NF  
Interpretive  
Themes

The Tongass National Forest will use the broad, over-arching Alaska Region key messages as the thematic basis for our interpretive and education programs. The themes do not include everything we may wish to communicate, but rather communicate the ideas that are critical to the visitor's understanding of the Tongass National Forest. All interpretive and education efforts should relate to one or more of these themes, and each theme should be addressed in the overall interpretive and education program of the Forest.



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Ecosystems

## **1. The Tongass National Forest is a dynamic ecosystem, shaped by nature, woven by culture.**

Encompassing nearly 17 million acres, the Tongass National Forest is a tapestry of forests and water—it is a "forest of islands." Towering temperate rain forests are woven with streams and muskegs—the high mountain peaks are blanketed by snow and carved by advancing and retreating glaciers. Although seemingly ancient and unchanging, this land is dynamic. From the daily sweep of the tides, to the changing of the seasons, to the slow change of plant communities over time, the face of the Tongass changes constantly. While many of these long-term changes are the result of natural forces, over the ages, humans have also shaped the forest, altering ecosystems and introducing their own fingerprints on the landscape.

**2. People can discover a unique combination of resources in the Tongass National Forest. These world-class resources are important globally, nationally, and locally.**

The Tongass National Forest is a world treasure. It is the largest protected temperate rainforest in the world. It harbors two National Monuments and nineteen designated Wilderness Areas that protect over 5.7 million acres of pristine land. Species of wildlife that are rare in other parts of their range, thrive in the Tongass National Forest. Bald eagles, brown bears, wolves and Pacific salmon are abundant.

The healthy, functioning, temperate rainforest provides unexcelled opportunities for:

- ◇ visitors to experience this rare ecosystem,
- ◇ researchers to study the rain forest, and
- ◇ residents to earn a sustainable living from the surrounding waters and forest.

**3. Alaska’s coastal lands and waterways have met peoples’ social, physical, and spiritual needs for thousands of years. The Tongass National Forest will continue to nurture the region’s natural and cultural diversity for future generations.**

People have lived in southeast Alaska since time immemorial. The Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian peoples developed rich and enduring cultures that revolve around an intimate relationship with the land. Their cultures and relationships to the land and other tribes are as vibrant today as in the past. The region's resources—minerals, timber, and fish—attracted settlers to this region throughout the last century. Today, resource use remains the economic backbone of the region, while the influence of tourism continues to grow. Just as in the past, many people in the Tongass still live a subsistence lifestyle that is intricately tied to the forests and oceans.

The future of Southeast Alaska, and the Tongass National Forest, will hinge on our ability to manage our resources in a sustainable manner.

**4. We, and our partners, care for your Tongass National Forest using the best information to sustain the use and protection of resources for today and tomorrow.**

The Forest Service mission is to “sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.”

People throughout the world know and care about the Tongass National Forest. Views about the future of the Tongass are deeply held, and are often polarized. Decisions about the management of this public treasure are frequently debated on the national stage. In 1997, the Forest completed a comprehensive Tongass Land and Resources Management Plan. This plan was developed during a decade-long process that focused on collaboration between scientists, state and federal agencies, tribal governments, communities, and the Forest Service. It uses the best science available to make sound, sustainable, resource management decisions for the Tongass.

# Experience Goals

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"To be successful stewards of the Tongass, we have to touch the soul of our visitors."

Tom Puchlerz,  
*Tongass Forest Supervisor, 1999-2003*

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Whether visitor or resident, each person's experience with the Tongass National Forest will be unique and greatly shaped by factors outside the influence of our management activities.

However, we believe that our interpretive and education efforts can be an important part of the "Tongass experience."

"Experience goals" describe what physical, intellectual, and emotional experiences should be available through our I&E efforts, for visitors and residents of the Tongass National Forest. These experiences will be available to people of all abilities, including those with visual, auditory, mobility, or cognitive impairments.

In the Tongass National Forest, people will have opportunities to:

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## Know

- ★ Know that they are on the Tongass National Forest.
- ★ Understand the complexity surrounding the management of a National Forest—we serve a diversity of public interests while providing for multiple uses of the land.
- ★ Gain an understanding of the dynamic forces that shape the Tongass NF ecosystems.
- ★ Understand the intimate relationship that Southeast Alaskans have with the land and its resources.
- ★ Learn about the Tongass National Forest, even if they cannot physically visit it.

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## Feel

- ★ Feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for this national treasure.
- ★ Experience the thrill of discovery of both cultural and natural worlds.
- ★ Feel the vastness and wildness of the Tongass NF—we are islands of communities surrounded by wilderness; not 'islands of wilderness' surrounded by development.
- ★ Feel and understand the influence of water in the Tongass—lands, weather, rivers, glaciers, ocean, and tides.
- ★ Appreciate the depth and diversity of human history in Southeast Alaska and the Tongass NF.

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## Do

- ★ Learn how to become involved in Tongass management issues.
- ★ Experience the temperate rainforest and gain an understanding of a productive, healthy, functioning forest.
- ★ View wildlife in their natural, unaltered habitats.
- ★ Have a safe trip and minimize their impact on the public lands.

# Our Audiences

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Who are the audiences for the Tongass NF interpretation and conservation education programs? Clearly, visitors who arrive each summer by water, air and even the limited road access from “outside” are part of our audience. Each year visitors from throughout the United States and the world travel to, and through, the spectacular Tongass National Forest.

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"The visitor is unlikely to respond unless what you have to tell or show, touches his personal experience, thoughts, hopes, way of life, social position or whatever else."

*Freeman Tilden,  
"Interpreting Our Heritage"*

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Conservation education efforts are generally focused on residents—primarily students. Are there segments of the resident population that have not been served by these programs? What about web “visitors?” What about the constantly changing internal audience of the employees and their families? To be successful, the Forest’s interpretive and education programs must identify and target these distinct audiences as described below.

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## Alaska Visitor Statistics Program (AVSP)

The Alaska Visitor Statistics Program (AVSP) provides reliable data on Alaska visitation throughout the State. This program was first conducted in 1989, and has gathered extensive data since that time. While the data is not segregated by region, through extrapolating results, we can gain valid insights into our Southeast Alaska visitors. The majority of this visitation is funneled through our waterway portals—cruise ships and the Alaska Marine Highway System. A smaller number of visitors access this area through air carriers and highways.

In 2001, the AVSP reports that 1,675,800 visitors traveled to all of Alaska from May to September. In Southeast Alaska, cruise ships and ferries represent the major modes of entry. Alaska visitors are likely to do the following, or have the following characteristics:

- ◆ To be making their first trip to Alaska.
- ◆ To be in the "61 and over" age group.
- ◆ To be a traveler on a packaged trip.
- ◆ To be from the U.S. with an emphasis on the western states.
- ◆ To visit in June, July or August.
- ◆ To stay in Alaska seven days or fewer.

The AVSP allows us to track visitation trends to Alaska. Perhaps the most striking trend in the last 15 years has been the exponential growth in the cruise ship industry (chiefly based in Southeast Alaska). During that time, visitation on cruiseships has increased 355%! During this same time period, visitation on AMHS ferries has decreased 32%, while visitation on domestic air carriers has increased 200%.

Additionally, the AVSP reports that, in 2001, 74% of visitors were traveling to Alaska for vacation or pleasure. Of cruise ship and ferry travelers, 98% and 86% respectively, were traveling for vacation and pleasure purpose

Of visitors, 55% reported that ‘sightseeing’ was the primary non-business purpose of their trip. Fishing, touring glaciers, hiking and wildlife viewing were the next most common responses.

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### Foreign Visitors

The AVSP reported that, in 2001, 85.6% of visitors were traveling from the United States, while 10.2% were from Canada, and 3.9% were from other countries. Of the “other international visitors category”, Australia, England and the UK, Mexico, New Zealand, and Switzerland, accounted for the largest number of visitors.

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## Audience Profiles-Visitors

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### Cruise Ship Passengers

Cruise ship passengers make up the majority of Tongass visitors. These visitors choose to sail to Alaska for many reasons, but the region’s natural beauty and cultural wealth are the primary attractions. In general, cruise ship visitors rarely “set foot” on the forest, but rather sail through the Tongass during their voyage. They spend time at several communities along the Inside Passage, with nearly all visitors stopping in Ketchikan and Juneau. In general, cruise ship passengers are older, well-educated, economically successful and well-traveled. However, this visitor profile is slowly changing to younger and more active visitors and families as cruise ship travel becomes more accessible to a larger audience.

Their exposure to the Tongass National Forest is limited to self-exploration and study, on-board cruise ship naturalist programs (*which rarely address Tongass NF messages*), and visits to the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center or other shore excursions. In 2003, the Tongass NF piloted a new cruise ship interpretive program that has made inroads into reaching this vast, and largely unserved, audience.

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### Ferry Travelers

Many people choose the Alaska Marine Highway System to travel in Southeast Alaska. These “independent” travelers often plan their own travel, and itineraries often extend beyond Southeast Alaska to include Anchorage, Fairbanks, and the Interior. The 1990 Shipboard Interpretive Plan estimates that family travelers account for 20% of the summer passengers; retired travelers 30%; package tour groups 10%; adventure travelers 10%; and foreign visitors 5%.

Also, the Alaska Marine Highway System provides a primary transportation link in Southeast, and Alaskans make up a significant part of the ferry ridership. Alaska residents are more numerous during the fall and winter months as they travel within the region for business, school activities and pleasure. During the summer months, this segment is about five percent of the ferry traffic, but during the winter months it rises to about 50 percent.

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## Ferry Travelers

For more than 30 years, the Alaska Region has operated a successful shipboard interpretive program aboard the AMHS ferries. Additionally, there are interpretive displays onboard and at ferry terminals throughout the system. Many of these displays are in need of refurbishment.

In 2001 a private ferry system (Inter-Island Ferry Authority) started providing a transportation link between Ketchikan and the communities on Prince of Wales Island. By 2006, this system will expand to include a link between Prince of Wales Island and Petersburg and Wrangell. At the present time, nothing has been done to serve this audience.

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## Air Travel

A growing number of visitors travel solely by air to and from Southeast Alaska. Many of these visitors stay at lodges and resorts and come to the region to fish, hunt, or participate in adventure recreation. Although some small communities have a Forest Service display in their airports, at the present time, little is done to reach these visitors.

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## Private Visitor Service Providers

This audience includes outfitter and guide permit holders, private lodge owners, shore excursion operators for cruise ships, and others. They are an important delivery systems to provide recreation services to some visitors to the Tongass NF. Interpretation is often a component of their service. Presently little has been done in the Forest Service to meet the needs of this fast-growing audience. However, the University of Alaska-Southeast, Ketchikan Campus and the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) have recently begun to offer courses on tour guide skills and Alaska information.

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## Virtual Visitors

With the advent of the Internet and higher travel costs, more people are “visiting” the Tongass through the web presence provided by the Forest website. Popular "visitor-oriented" content includes a virtual tour of the exhibits at the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center, and a content-rich website for the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center. Use of the Tongass internet site is increasing and it now receives approximately 4000 hits per month, with January 2004 being the highest month at 5406 hits. As this medium becomes more commonly used, this audience could grow exponentially. Although this information must have a consistent design, enhanced interpretive and educational uses could be made of this electronic format.

# Audience Profiles-Alaskans

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## Students

In many Southeast Alaska communities, Tongass NF employees have historically filled some of the educational needs for elementary and high school students. These efforts have largely been the result of personal commitment of employees with a strong desire (often connected to programs involving their own children), teachers with a specific natural resource focus, or programs that have been historically provided to the local school by the Forest Service. There has not been a comprehensive or strategic look at these efforts, particularly with the need to meet state educational standards. Often, if a particular employee moves, the program ends. Also, college students with the University of Alaska–Southeast (*Sitka, Juneau and Ketchikan campuses*) have received little attention.

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## Families, Adults, Seniors

Families, adults and seniors represent a segment of our audience. In many communities, Tongass employees conduct family fishing days in the spring. The Visitors' Centers in Juneau and Ketchikan provide "Friday Night Insight" programs during the winter and other seasonal special events (*eg. Ketchikan Hummingbird Festival, Halloween Haunted Houses*) provide an important link with local audiences. Pre-school programs are also often conducted in response to requests by teachers and parents. However, in general, there has been little attention paid to families, adults and seniors.

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## Alaska Natives

The Forest Service has a legal and binding government-to-government relationship with Alaska tribal governments. They are an extremely important audience. They presently work primarily with the heritage and archaeological staff of the Forest. Alaska Natives often conduct cultural camps, totem raisings, and other cultural activities. They represent a resource to help employees who deliver interpretive and educational programs learn about sensitive cultural issues. Visitors are keenly interested in Alaska's rich Native history. Visiting totem poles, fish traps, and other cultural sites, is one of the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry. More coordination and cooperation between Alaska Natives and the Forest's interpretation and education program would greatly improve the program and reduce the potential for conflict.

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## Internal Audience

Any organization is only as good as the people in it. It has been said that, at any one time, 25% of Tongass employees are either planning to leave or are just arriving. Since the interpretation and education program crosses functional and organizational boundaries, this rate of turnover is a challenge to delivering a consistent, strategic program. Availability of professional training and certification for seasonal staff is costly due to high salary and travel costs. Employees also need to be informed about programs happening on their district so they can participate, communicate to the public, or even help deliver these programs. Our Tongass workforce is a critical audience that needs better information about the I&E program.

# Existing Conditions & Programs

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The following section is an overview of the existing conditions and programs of the Tongass NF's interpretive and education program. It is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to give a flavor and a snapshot of the program and the visitor experience at the time of this planning effort.

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## Summary

The Tongass National Forest invests strongly in its interpretive and education program. Every District throughout the Forest offers some level of I&E services to both the community residents and visitors. In 2003, approximately 1.3 million dollars were spent on the Forest's diverse I&E programs. The Forest operates three major interpretive programs—the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center, the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center and the Alaska Marine Highway Shipboard Interpretive Program. Additionally, a wide variety of innovative smaller programs and services are offered throughout the Forest. These diverse programs include wilderness kayak ranger programs, staffed wildlife viewing sites, radio shows, interpretive cave tours, cruise ship interpretation and high-quality interpretive trails.

Each district offers some level of conservation education services, although these vary widely in scope, quality and availability. Since 2000, there has been a marked trend in the expansion of these programs.

Currently, programs and services across the Forest are not closely coordinated or aligned. Frequently, programs operate independently from each other, and from Forest leadership. Often, program themes, scope, and quality vary greatly across the Forest. Interpreter's and educator's skills and experience also vary greatly. However, forest employees and leadership have emphasized the need to better coordinate our efforts.

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## Existing Interpretive Plans

Over the last decade, a number of interpretive plans have been developed for various Tongass programs. These plans provide sound guidance for individual programs or District efforts. However, each of these plans exists as a separate entity and there is no linkage or common thread between them. It also appears that these plans are rarely used to guide current I&E efforts. Our current planning effort focuses on developing the overarching goals, objectives and messages that unite all Tongass interpretive and education efforts. Currently, the Tongass has the following interpretive plans on hand:

- ◆ Starrigavan Bay (*Sitka RD*)–1992
- ◆ Marine Highway Shipboard Interpreters (*Juneau RD*)–1993
- ◆ Southeast Alaska Discovery Center Exhibit Plan (*Ketchikan-Misty RD*)–1993
- ◆ Petersburg Ranger District–1994
- ◆ Ketchikan Area–1995
- ◆ Craig Ranger District–1995
- ◆ Wrangell Ranger District–1997
- ◆ Mendenhall Visitor Center Exhibit Plan (*Juneau RD*)–1997
- ◆ Mendenhall Visitor Center Interpretive Plan (*Juneau RD*)–1997

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Existing  
Interpretive  
Staffing

Without question, the forest's major asset is the talented and dedicated cadre of professionals that guide and present its programs. Traditionally, interpretive services are presented by staff wholly dedicated to IS. Generally, these programs are administered by the District's Recreation program. In contrast, education programs are often delivered by a wider-range of forest staff, often encompassing wildlife, fisheries, heritage and recreation staff. The following list identifies the Tongass' 2003 permanent staff resources (*positions that spend >25% of their time on interpretation or education*).

1. Marine Highway Program Director (*Juneau RD*)
2. Marine Highway Interpreters (2) (*Juneau RD*)
3. Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center Facilities Director (*Juneau RD*)
4. Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center Education Specialist (*Juneau RD*)
5. Southeast Alaska Discovery Center Director (*Ketchikan-Misty RD*)
6. Discovery Center Information Assistant (*Ketchikan-Misty RD*)
7. Discovery Center/District Education Specialist (*Ketchikan-Misty RD*)
8. Hyder Forestry Technicians (3) (*Ketchikan-Misty RD*)
9. Anan Biological Technician (*Wrangell RD*)
10. Pack Creek Lead Ranger (*Admiralty NM*)
11. Pack Creek Rangers (2) (*Admiralty NM*)
12. Tracy Arm Lead Kayak Ranger (*Admiralty NM*)
13. Tracy Arm Kayak Rangers (2) (*Admiralty NM*)
14. Misty Fjords Kayak Ranger (*Ketchikan-Misty RD*)
15. Wrangell Ranger District Interpreter (*Wrangell RD*)
16. Sitka Ranger District Information & Education Technician (*Sitka RD*)

*In 2003, the Forest employed about 10 FTEs as seasonal interpreters or technicians.*

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Tongass  
Website

The Tongass National Forest website ([www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass](http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass)) is well-designed, accessible, and functional. It provides solid information about the management and organization of the Tongass, natural and cultural history, and recreational opportunities. Efforts are underway to provide more trip-planning information and to continue to develop area-specific information. Approximately 4,000 people visit the website each month.

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Publications &  
Media

The Forest provides a range of interpretive and education publications for its visitors. Many of these items are produced and distributed through our partnership with the Alaska Natural History Association (ANHA). ANHA operates five separate branches on the Tongass National Forest (*MGVC, SEADC, Petersburg/Wrangell, Sitka and Prince of Wales Island*). In 2002, these branches produced over \$525,000 in gross sales. Of these revenues, approximately 8% is used for educational support on the Forest. ANHA produces the *Tongass Visitor Guide* and other site-specific publications. A major publication about the Tongass NF is slated to begin development in 2004.

Outside of our partnership with ANHA, the Forest produces relatively few visitor-oriented publications. Currently, these publications are chiefly maps and information brochures. These publications are functional, but not especially innovative or interpretive. The Forest also sponsors two, popular radio programs that highlight resources and management issues.

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## Interpretive Trails & Exhibits



Nearly every District boasts at least one well-developed interpretive trail or boardwalk. These hikes may lead visitors to fish viewing platforms, through intertidal wetlands, through karst landscapes, over glaciated terrain, through quiet dark woods, or along burbling streams. In many cases, the trails are beautifully-designed and constructed. However, interpretive development along the trails varies widely. Some trails do not have interpretive signage, while other signs are outdated and poorly maintained. Of the existing signs, few are tied to forest-wide themes and their design is inconsistent from one location to the next.

The Forest has a small number of interpretive exhibits in venues outside major visitor centers. Again, these items vary widely in quality, content, design, accuracy, and appropriateness. The exhibits are placed in visitor portals such as airport terminals, ferry terminals and aboard ferries.

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## Major Interpretive Facilities

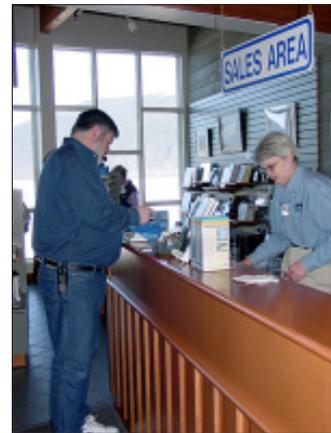
*(above) The Beaver Falls Karst Interpretive trail on Prince of Wales Island leads visitors through a magical rain forest world.*



*(right) The MGVC features a spectacular view of Mendenhall Glacier and newly refurbished interpretive displays.*

*(above) The SEADC is located in downtown Ketchikan and focuses on providing information about the peoples of SE Alaska.*

The Tongass NF operates two major interpretive facilities—the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center (MGVC) in Juneau, and the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center in Ketchikan. These beautiful facilities were constructed or renovated since 1995 and feature high-quality interpretive exhibits, audio-visual programs, and well-developed interpretive personal services. The MGVC focuses on interpreting the impacts of glaciers on life and the landscape.



The Discovery Center is one of four Alaska Public Lands Information Centers (APLIC), mandated by the Alaska National Interests Lands Conservation Act, and operated under the direction of nine federal and state agencies. It is the only one managed by the Forest Service. Employees in the centers wear APLIC uniforms, rather than agency uniforms, and provide information about all of Alaska's public lands. At the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center, further emphasis is on the Tongass National Forest and Southeast Alaska and its people, with special attention to Native Alaska peoples.

Both facilities chiefly serve cruise ship passengers during the visitor season, and local residents during the rest of the year. In 2003 the MGVC received over 300,000 visitors, while the Discovery Center received approximately 55,000 visitors. During peak visitation, the MGVC often exceeds maximum capacity (*up to 1,200 visitors/hour; 3,600 visitors/day*). Some exhibits in both locations, are outdated and in need of refurbishment. The Discovery Center continues to be under-used throughout much of the year.

The Forest also partners with the Petersburg Chamber of Commerce to operate a small visitor center. Each year, approximately 5,000 visitors are reached through this facility.

Two new, large, partnership-based visitor facilities will begin operation in 2004. The Point Sophia development, based in Hoonah, will exclusively serve cruise ship visitors. A for-profit corporation has renovated an old salmon cannery to include visitor attractions and stores. The Tongass NF is investigating partnership opportunities to present interpretive and education services at this new development. Also, the new James and Elsie Nolan Center in Wrangell houses the community visitor center as well as a convention center and museum. The Wrangell Ranger District is developing interpretive and education opportunities based in this new community facility.

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Non-Facility  
Based  
Interpretive  
Programs

The Tongass NF also operates a wide variety of innovative non-facility-based interpretive programs. These programs are designed to meet the unique local situations and have evolved into some of the most noteworthy interpretive programs within the Forest Service. While the shipboard interpretive program provides comprehensive training, other Forest programs rarely include this orientation or oversight.

The largest of these programs is the Alaska Marine Highway Shipboard Interpretive Program that staffs the mainline ferries throughout the visitor season. Interpreters provide over 200,000 visitor contacts each year through interpretive programs, exhibits, and one-on-one contacts. During the spring and fall, the program also participates in the Alaska Elderhostel program. In the near future, the AMHS will transition to 'high-speed' ferries. The interpretive services programs for these new ferries will likely be far different than what is offered in 2004. The program is guided by a 1993 Interpretive Plan and is undertaking a major interpretive planning effort that will include other agencies and coastal communities.



*(above) Anan Creek Wildlife Viewing Area provides tremendous black and brown bear viewing opportunities.*

The Tongass NF staffs wildlife viewing sites at Pack Creek (*Admiralty NM*), Anan Creek (*Wrangell RD*), Margaret Bay (*Ketchikan-Misty RD*) and at Fish Creek (*Ketchikan-Misty RD*). These sites offer world-class opportunities to view brown and black bears, and the salmon that attract them. Uniformed, skilled Forest Service employees provide information about the bears, salmon, and Forest Service management, while watching out for the safety of both the visitors AND the bears. These sites attract approximately 50,000 visitors each year. These wildlife viewing sites are becoming increasingly popular. To balance the visitor demand with resource protection, some sites (*Pack*

*Creek and Anan Creek*) restrict use through a permit system. There is demand by partners to establish more wildlife viewing areas on the Forest.

Visitors to the wild corners of the Tongass NF are welcomed by wilderness rangers in Tracy Arm and in Misty Fiords National Monument. Here, rangers paddle kayaks through the mists to board small cruise ships. The rangers travel with the passengers for several hours, and then paddle off to their home base or new camp location. They answer questions and give presentations about the Tongass NF and wilderness issues. These programs are operated as partnerships with the cruiselines, under appropriate agreements, and are administered at the District level.



*FS Interpreter, Julie Rowe, greets visitors aboard a Princess Cruises ship.*

In 2003, the Ketchikan-Misty Ranger District piloted a new interpretive program serving cruise ship passengers. During the first year of operation, FS interpreters boarded Princess Cruises ships while they were in port in Ketchikan. 2004 will see a similar program. While initial reports have been positive, this program will continue to be evaluated and changes may be made for future efforts. There is interest from other cruise lines to establish similar or expanded programs.

## Conservation Education

The Forest conducts a wide-range of conservation education activities. Each District offers some level of services, although programs vary widely from one location to the next. These programs are generally offered by district staff as a collateral duty. However, Juneau, Ketchikan-Misty, Wrangell, and Sitka RDs have positions dedicated to developing and implementing education programs.



*Students have the opportunity to explore the Tongass NF in a variety of conservation education activities.*

Education programs are developed on a district by district basis, and are not often coordinated across the Forest. Topics covered include watershed education, Leave No Trace wilderness skills, geology and glaciers, cultural history, animal and plant life histories, among many others. In 2003, the Juneau Ranger District created a unique Tongass Junior Ranger Program. Some programs are developed from established curricula (and correlated to State Educational Standards) such as Project Learning Tree or Project WILD. However, many programs are created to address a specific local need. In most cases these local programs are not shared across the Forest, nor are they correlated to State Educational Standards.



Managing Unit	Major Interp. Facilities	Interp. Trails/ Exhibits	Interp. Personal Services	Interpretive Media	Conservation Ed.	Nature Watch
<b>Forest-Wide or SO Level Programs</b>	Southeast Alaska Discovery Center administered by KMRD	None	*Tongass Marine Highway Program- administered on the Juneau RD *Princess Cruises Interpretive Program administered by KMRD	*Tongass Visitor's Guide *Nature Articles in SE Newspapers *CCC Totem Carvers Slide Show *UAS Prehistory Slide Show	*Heritage Interpretive Programs (Autory) *Saxman/Cape Fox Culture Camp *Tongass Jr. Ranger Program - administered by Juneau RD	none
<b>Yakutat Ranger District</b>	None	None	*Fairweather Days Booth	None	*Cabin Construction Class *Cartoons *GIS Mentoring w/ HS *Watershed Class *Willow Planting Day	*Family Fishing Day *Salmon Incubation Proj.
<b>Hoonah Ranger District</b>	Emerging Pt. Sophia Opportunities	*Sunatheen Fish Pass Interp. Site *Pavlof Bird Observation Site *Ferry Terminal Display	None	None	*Nature Studies	*Family Fishing Day/Pathway to Fishing
<b>Juneau Ranger District</b>	*Mendenhall Glacier VC	Trail of Time	*Various hikes, programs at MGVC	*Tongass Trails Public Radio Broadcast *Publications? *ANHA Branch	*SeaWeek *SAGA Cons. Ed. *Juneau HS Science Fair *Backyard Glacier Program	*Family Fishing Day *4H Skulls & Hides Prog. *Fish Dissection *Fish Cam at Steep Creek
<b>Admiralty National Monument</b>	None	None	*Tracy Arm Shipboard Interpretive Program	None	*Bears of Admiralty Teacher Training Camp *Bear Education at Native Youth Practicum *Heritage Education Activities	*Pack Creek Bear Viewing Interp.
<b>Sitka Ranger District</b>	None	*Starrigavan Trail *Airport Display	*Campground Programs *Guided Hikes	*ANHA Branch	*5th Grade Field Day *Emerging CE Program	*Swan Lake Children's Fish Derby

Managing Unit	Major Interp. Facilities	Interp. Trails/ Exhibits	Interp. Personal Services	Interpretive Media	Conservation Ed.	Nature Watch
<b>Petersburg Ranger District</b>	*Petersburg/ Chamber of Commerce Visitors' Center	*"Tide Out" Display *Airport Display *Blind Slough Swan Observatory		*Wildflower Slide Show *Beringia PowerPoint *ANHA Branch *Tongass Journal Radio Programs	*Heritage Education Activities *Kake & Petersburg Culture Camps *Impact Monster Program *Elderhostel Programs *Summer Recreation Program	*Swan Observatory *Kake Kids Fishing Derby
<b>Wrangell Ranger District</b>	*Emerging partnership with Nolan VC	*Airport Display *Ferry Terminal Display *Anan Creek Signs	*Wrangell Garnet Festival	*Weekly Radio Spots *ANHA Branch	*"Tuesday for Tots" Ed. *Wrangell Walks & Talks	*Bald Eagle Conservation & Ed. *Bear Ed. at Anan Creek
<b>Ketchikan-Misty Ranger District</b>		*Ward Lake Trail *Fish Creek Wildlife Observation Site (brdwlk & signs) *Margaret Creek Wildlife Viewing Site	*K/MRD Kayak Ranger Program	*ANHA Branch	*Friday Night Insight Programs *Teacher Training *Tongass Education Kits *Ward Lake EE Week	*Christmas Bird Count *Stream Health Monitoring *All American Kids Fishing Derby *Fish Creek Viewing Interpretive Program
<b>Thorne Bay Ranger District</b>	None	*Beaver Falls Interpretive Trail *Hatchery Creek & Balls Lake Interp Trails *District Office Interpretive Display	*El Capitan Cave Interpretive Program	*ANHA Branch	*SCOPE Program *Summer School Program *Deer Celebration *PIT Projects *Salmon Incubation *Career Days	*Kids Fishing Day
<b>Craig Ranger District</b>	None	*District Office Interpretive Display	None	*ANHA Branch	*Craig Summer Education Program *Hydaburg Outdoor Week *Passport in Time *Heritage Education Programs *Alaska Archeology Month	*Kids Fishing Day

# Recommendations

"If you don't know where you're going, how you gonna' know when you get there?"

Yogi Bera

The recommendations suggested below, are the heart of the Tongass' Interpretive Services and Education Strategy. These recommendations are not specific, project-level objectives, but rather provide over-arching, programmatic direction. They identify steps critical to our future effectiveness. In the future, specific project- or District-level plans will be drafted as needed.

These goals, objectives, and tactics will be accomplished at various organizational levels of the Tongass NF, while some have Regional and national significance. They will form the framework for our programmatic evaluation.

This strategy is a living, dynamic document. Recommendations will be regularly reviewed, modified and updated.

## Goal 1: Program Coordination

### **Promote a *coordinated, sustainable I & E program at all levels of the Forest.***

**Objective 1.a**—Interpretive Services and Conservation Education are treated as **one program** on the Tongass NF.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

*We will...*

- Complete the Tongass NF I&E Strategy—we will plan the work, and work the plan. (SO-June, 2005)
- Consolidate Interpretive Services and Conservation Education responsibilities at the Forest-level. (SO-October, 2004)
- Review existing interpretive plans, and schedule revision to address Tongass I&E priorities and goals. New plans will address both I&E programs. (SO-October, 2004)
- Develop distinct template for the development of I&E plans. (SO-October, 2004)

**Objective 1.b**—I&E positions at the District and Forest level provide a **high-level of coordination** and support for program implementation.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

*We will...*

- Develop a staffing plan that addresses I&E positions and responsibilities to provide greater support and coordination across the Forest, and with the Regional Office. (SO, October 2004)
- Investigate the establishment of zoned CE specialist positions, and a Forest I&E specialist. Currently critical gaps exist on the POW RDs, Yakutat RD, Hoonah RD and Petersburg RD (SO, October 2004)
- Establish regular networking and training opportunities for employees involved in I&E efforts. (SO, ongoing)
- Actively participate in Regional and National I&E planning and coordination efforts. (SO & Districts, ongoing)
- Review and coordinate with the development of Wilderness Education Plans being developed by Wilderness Stewards. (SO-October, 2004)

## Goal 1: Program Coordination

**Objective 1.c—Funding and reporting** for I&E programs is provided by all resource areas, and is reliable and consistent.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

*We will...*

- Work with program managers to draft annual budget advice for all resource areas that provides direction to include support for I&E programs. *(SO; October 2004)*
- Develop out-year programs of work, and budget needs that integrate with existing budgeting systems and timelines. *(Districts/SO; May 2005)*
- Actively engage in *Credibility Through Accountability* planning to develop reasonable and measureable outputs, outcomes, as well as impacts. *(SO-June, 2004)*
- Emphasize accountability in all program areas through the use of the Performance Accountability System (*PAS*), the Conservation Education Reporting System and other reporting systems. *(SO-Districts-October, 2004-ongoing)*
- Regularly share program successes among Forest Leadership, Regional Leadership and national audiences. These "marketing" efforts may take many forms, such as program reports, newsletters and employee awards *(SO/Districts; October 2004-ongoing)*

## Goal 2: Quality Services that Meet Needs

**Provide products and services that are high-quality, reflect Forest priorities and key messages, and meet the needs and expectations of our customers.**

**Objective 2.a**—Programs and services provided by the I&E program are **consistent and are correlated** to State Educational Standards, Tongass Key Messages, and Best Management Practices in I&E.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

*We will...*

- Integrate the use of Tongass NF interpretive key messages in all interpretive and education projects. *(SO-District; May 2004-ongoing).*
- Correlate conservation education materials and programs to State Educational Standards. *(SO/Districts; first efforts by January 2005, ongoing)*
- Develop a series of peer-reviewed, "standard" Tongass NF programs for use across the Forest by program providers and other Forest Service staff. *(SO-Districts; first efforts by June 2004, ongoing)*
- Offer program providers, training and support in the use of educational standards, learner guidelines and thematic interpretation *(SO; October 2004)*
- Provide on the Tongass website easy-to-use, accessible and accurate information that meets the virtual visitors' informational and educational needs. *(SO; October 2004)*

Goal 2:  
Quality  
Services that  
Meet Needs

**Objective 2.b**—Tongass NF I&E leadership will **provide guidelines** for development of educational and interpretive products, programs and services.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

*We will...*

- Work closely with the Regional Office to identify existing guidelines and quality standards for the development of brochures, interpretive signs, and other media. *(SO/RO; October 2004)*
- Develop conservation education materials and programs that adhere to the North American Association of Environmental Education guidelines for EE excellence *(see appendix C)*. *(SO-Districts; first efforts by January 2005, ongoing)*
- Actively participate in the creation of a region-wide intranet site focused on providing relevant and substantive I&E program development resources. *(Districts/SO/RO; October 2004)*

**Objective 2.c**—I&E efforts communicate **accurate information** and are based on the best scientific information available.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

*We will...*

- Use consistent, peer-reviewed briefing materials for seasonal training and program development. In some cases, these materials will be borrowed from other Tongass NF and Regional sources; in other cases, these materials will be developed to meet specific needs. These materials will be universally-available to all Tongass employees *(RO/SO/Districts; May 2005-ongoing)*
- Develop a cadre of Tongass content "experts" to provide review of I&E products, and support to I&E program providers. *(SO/Districts; May 2005)*

**Objective 2.d**—Products and services provided by the Tongass NF I&E program **meet the audience's needs** and expectations.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

*We will...*

- Use existing market research from various sources to identify audiences their expectations, and to shape program development and delivery. *(SO; October 2005)*
- Support and use the Region 10 comment card system as an effective method to gather feedback. *(SO; May 2005)*
- Survey teachers to assess educational needs, and develop educational programs that address both Forest priorities **and** fill an identified educational need. *(SO/Districts; May 2006)*
- Survey outfitter and guides to assess educational needs, and develop educational programs that address both Forest priorities **and** fill an identified educational need. *(SO/Districts; May 2006)*

Goal 2:  
Quality  
Services that  
Meet Needs

**Objective 2.e**—Products and services provided by the Tongass I&E program are **regularly monitored** for conformance to quality and content standards.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

*We will...*

- Evaluate seasonal employees' interpretive and educational presentations. These reviews will be conducted with the focus on coaching employees on content and communication techniques. Program evaluation will become Standard Operating Procedure on the Tongass. (*Districts; October 2005*)
- Conduct a formal programmatic review of the Tongass I&E program every three years. Review results will be documented and shared through a program report. (*SO; October 2005*)
- Monitor and evaluate outfitter and guides communication efforts to assess how effectively they communicate the Forest's messages. (*SO; October 2005*)
- Work closely with the Regional Office to develop a standard evaluation method to assess the impact of our I&E efforts. Although no model exists within the FS, we will pro-actively work to break new ground in designing a reasonable method. (*SO/RO; May 2005*)
- Welcome, and participate in, regularly-scheduled Functional Assistance Trips from the Regional and Washington Offices. (*All; ongoing*)

Goal 3:  
Building  
Partnerships

**Increase and enhance interpretive services and conservation education partnerships on the Tongass National Forest.**

**Objective 3.a**—The Tongass NF will be a leader in efforts to **build coalitions** of program providers and customers in Southeast Alaska.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

*We will...*

- Support the revival of Southeast Conservation & Outdoor Educators (SECOE)—an informal network of program providers from all agencies and interest groups in Southeast Alaska. (*SO/Districts; May 2005*)
- Actively participate in the creation of a region-wide intranet site focused on providing I&E program development resources. (*Districts/SO/RO; October 2004*)
- Strengthen our relationship with the non-profit, education organization "Discovery Southeast", to share information and leverage resources. (*SO; March 2005*)
- Strengthen our relationship with the Outfitter and Guide community to share information and key messages. (*SO/Districts (Special Uses); ongoing*)

## Goal 3: Building Partnerships

**Objective 3.b**—The Tongass NF will **strengthen existing partnerships** with agencies and organizations in Southeast Alaska.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

*We will...*

- Focus on our partnership with the Alaska Marine Highway System to maintain and improve I&E services and products on existing and new ships, and in terminals. This focus will include implementing the revised Shipboard Interpretive Plan. *(SO/JRD; May 2005)*
- Through a formal agreement, strengthen our existing partnership with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game—Wildlife Education program, to document support and facilitate sharing of resources. *(SO; May 2005)*
- Focus on our strategic partnership with the Alaska Natural History Association to improve operations, communication, and support *(RO/SO/Districts; October 2005)*
- Strengthen partnerships with local school districts and the Alaska Department of Education to enhance our effective delivery of education programs for children. *(SO/Districts; May 2006)*

**Objective 3.c**—The Tongass NF will work pro-actively with the **visitor industry** on projects that support Forest priorities, and that fulfill visitors' needs and expectations.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

*We will...*

- Support private/public partnerships that deliver interpretive and education services to forest visitors. Existing examples include the kayak ranger interpretive programs and the Pt. Sophia development. *(SO/Districts; May 2005 and beyond)*
- Continue and expand Princess Cruises Shipboard Interpretive Program. *(SO/KMRD; May 2005 and beyond)*
- Develop a training program for visitor service providers on the Tongass NF. This training would cover both content and delivery techniques, and would reach out to all tourism service sectors in Southeast Alaska. The Tongass NF will investigate possible partnership opportunities with University of Alaska Southeast to design and offer such training. *(SO; May 2006)*
- Develop training materials for the approximately 600 outfitter and guide permit holders on the Tongass. We will investigate possible partnership opportunities with University of Alaska Southeast to design and offer such training. *(SO; May 2006)*
- Actively participate in professional organizations representing the visitor industry, such as Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA), Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association (AWRTA), and Alaska Guides Association, among others. *(SO/RO; May 2006)*

### Goal 3: Building Partnerships

**Objective 3.d**—The Tongass NF will **build new, innovative, and sustainable partnerships** with agencies and organizations at the local, regional and national levels.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

*We will...*

- Support the establishment of a private, non-profit organization focused on supporting stewardship of Tongass resources. *(SO/Districts; May 2005 and beyond)*
- Continue to investigate the development of a broader cruise ship interpretive program. This effort may include personal services, publication and media development, and building new partnerships. *(SO/Districts; May 2005 and beyond)*
- Build a relationship with the University of Alaska-Southeast and Sheldon Jackson College to meet shared goals. *(SO; October 2005)*

**Objective 3.e**—The Tongass NF will **strengthen our internal partnerships** at all levels of the organization.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

*We will...*

- Reach out to FS Research to integrate research results into interpretive services and conservation education activities. *(SO; October 2005)*
- Work pro-actively across all disciplines to integrate accurate resource information into interpretive and conservation efforts. *(SO; October 2005)*
- Participate in various program reporting activities required by different disciplines. *(SO; October 2005)*

### Goal 4: Professional Development

**Develop and retain a professional Interpretive Services and Conservation Education staff on the Tongass NF.**

**Objective 4.a**—The Tongass NF will build **strong networks and support systems** for Forest I&E program providers.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

*We will...*

- Conduct regular conference calls to coordinate efforts and share information, for all I&E program managers on the Tongass. *(SO/District; October 2004)*
- Participate fully in the creation and maintenance of a functional I&E intranet site that provides needed resources for Tongass employees. *(SO; October 2004-ongoing).*
- Foster opportunities for staff exchanges across Districts and disciplines. *(SO/District; May 2005)*
- Participate in Tongass- and Region-wide program meetings. A meeting *(Forest or Region)* will occur at least annually. *(SO/District; May 2005)*
- Fully share national and regional information with program providers on the Tongass. *(SO/District; May 2005)*

Goal 4:  
Professional  
Development

**Objective 4.b**—The Tongass NF will improve professionalism and skills of I&E practitioners and managers.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

*We will...*

- Identify, and provide or support, appropriate training opportunities for program providers across the Tongass. *(SO/Districts; October 2005)*
- Support participation in professional certification systems in interpretive services, such as the National Association for Interpretation certification program. *(SO/Districts; May 2005)*
- Identify and develop individuals with specialized expertise *(eg. signage, publications, interpretive writing, seasonal training)* and make these individuals available across the forest. *(SO/Districts; October 2006)*
- Develop on-going internship programs with Universities and tribal governments to recruit highly-skilled seasonal employees. *(SO; October 2006)*

**Objective 4.c**—The Tongass NF will develop consistent and increasingly responsible **career opportunities** for I&E program providers.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

*We will...*

- Evaluate existing I&E position descriptions within the Tongass NF to insure consistency across the forest, and alignment with national direction. Attention will be paid to providing career ladder opportunities both within the Forest and within the agency. *(SO; October 2005)*
- Develop appropriate position descriptions for the Forest I&E Specialist and Forest Education Specialists that accurately capture responsibilities, are consistent across the forest, and are consistent across the agency. *(SO; October 2006)*

**Objective 4.d**—The Tongass NF will proactively develop and participate in recognition programs that reward and encourage professional excellence.

Tactics to Achieve the Objective

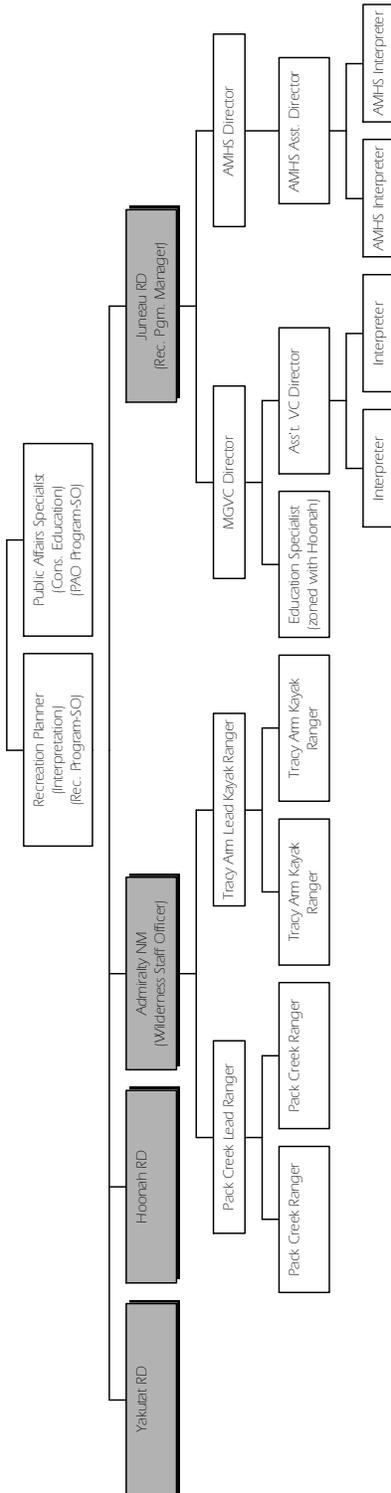
*We will...*

- Actively participate in the Regional Hakala Award for Interpretive Excellence nomination process. *(SO/Districts, ongoing)*
- Actively participate in the Regional Seasonal Interpreter of the Year Award. *(SO/Districts, ongoing)*
- Develop a forest-wide Conservation Education award that recognizes personal or team excellence in education. *(SO; March 2005)*
- Identify and participate in other opportunities to recognize excellence such as professional organizations' award programs. *(SO; October 2005)*

# Existing Tongass I&E Staffing—2004

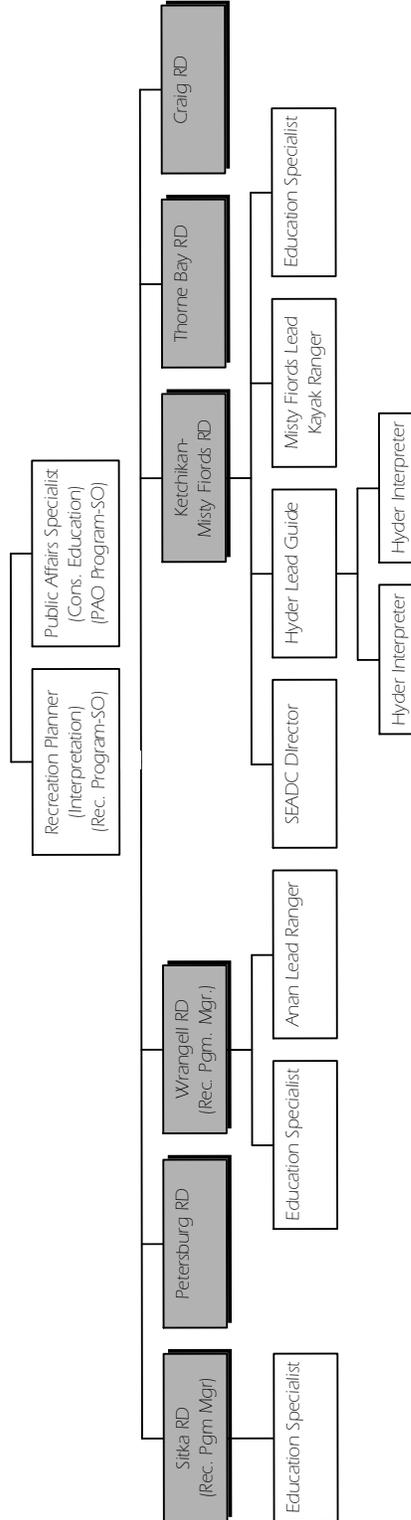
## Existing Tongass I&E Staffing-2004

(permanent employees who spend > 25% on I&E duties)



## (Continued)

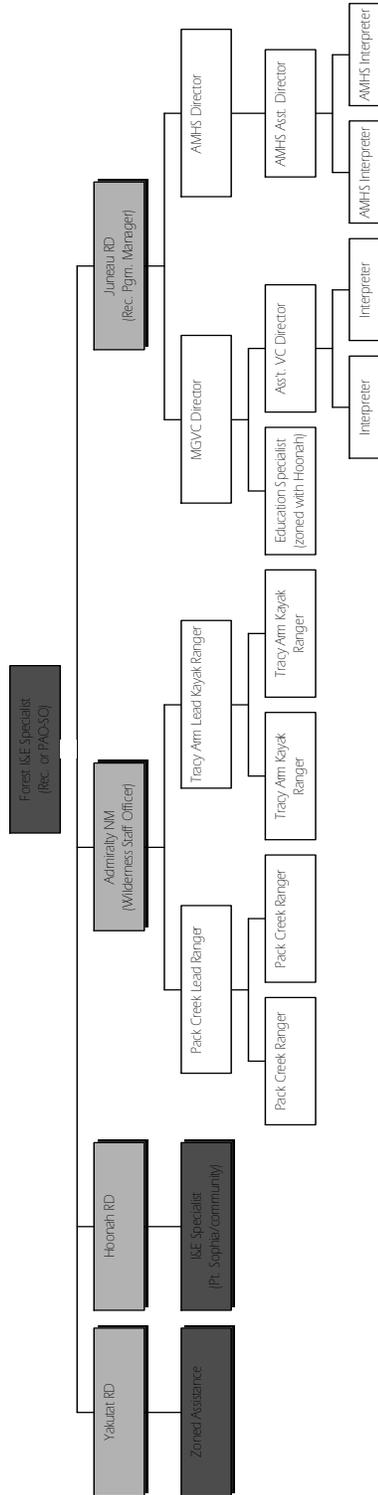
(permanent employees who spend > 25% on I&E duties)



# Proposed Tongass I&E Staffing—2005

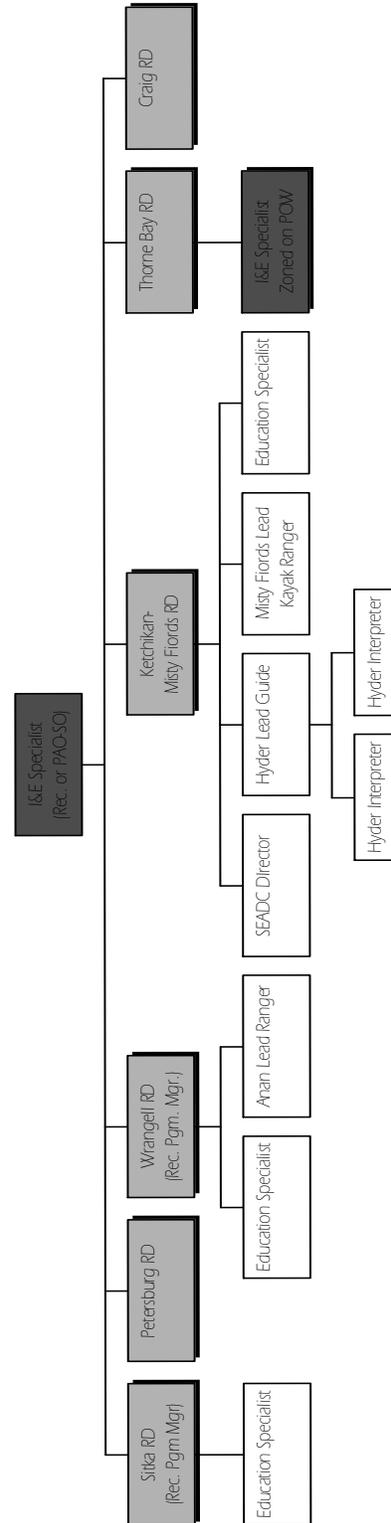
## Existing Tongass I&E Staffing-2004

(permanent employees who spend > 25% on I&E duties)



## (Continued)

(permanent employees who spend > 25% on I&E duties)







# Appendices

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# Appendix A—Tongass Land & Resources Management Plan

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## II. Integrated Resource Planning (Page 4-36)

B. Identify opportunities to enhance existing, and provide additional recreation activities, opportunities and services where desirable to meet local or Forest-wide demands. Consider opportunities including:

- Interpretation of natural or cultural resources
- Interpretation of management activities

## VI. Interpretive Services (Page 4-44)

- A. Provide an Interpretive Services Program that is designed to accurately and adequately develop an interest and understanding of the environments of the Forest and Southeast Alaska, and the mission of the Forest Service in managing the National Forest.
- B. Conduct on-site interpretive activities to a level consistent with the Land Use Designation objectives.
- C. Assist visitors and users to understand the role of natural and cultural resources in the development of industry, heritage and culture in Southeast Alaska.
- D. Promote visitor understanding of the National Forest System.
  1. Emphasize the understanding of stewardship of public lands and their productivity through professional forest management with balanced use of natural resources.
  2. Develop Interpretive Services programs for all principle resource management programs. Information should emphasize the integration of management activities designed to achieve the goals and objectives developed for specific areas.
- E. Inform visitors of the distribution, differences, and roles of the Federal, state and private lands found in Southeast Alaska and the range of recreation and cultural interest opportunities and facilities available.
  1. Continue to pursue and implement cooperative interpretive partnerships with other Federal and state land management agencies consistent with the principal travel routes and activity centers used by forest visitors.
  2. Provide an array of imaginative and dynamic media by which interpretive messages are made available to the visitor. Use a spectrum of media and presentation designs that are appealing, appropriate for the setting, easily understood by the intended audience, and reflect the Forest Service as a professional and caring land management agency.
  3. Continue to provide accurate and timely information about Southeast Alaska and the Tongass National Forest. Continue the Forest Service's leadership role for the Southeast Alaska Visitor Center in Ketchikan. (*Editor's note: the visitor center is now named the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center*)
  4. Continue to provide or improve interpretive services programs and facilities such as those at Mendenhall Glacier and aboard the Alaska Marine Highway ferries.
  5. Expand the use of the Alaska Natural History Association (ANHA) as an interpretive partner to provide forest visitors with a broad range of interpretive media.

6. In partnership with communities, organizations and individuals, develop additional ANHA outlets at locations that will best serve Forest customers.
  7. Continue to support the Elderhostel Education Program in local communities and aboard the Alaska Marine Highway as budgets allow.
- F. Provide a coordinated program of awareness and training for all employees, and partners (including outfitter/guides and other public service permit holders) to ensure a consistent program of public service.
1. Encourage other agency participation in Forest Interpretive Services training programs.
  2. Ensure that the Forest Service mission and image remain predominately visible at all Forest Service facilities through the use of uniformed Forest service personnel, the Forest Service shield and other media.
  3. To the extent feasible, provide training about national forest resources, points of interest and management to all interested outfitter/guides, industry representatives and other partners.

### **Heritage Resources** (*Page 4-16*)

#### *V. Enhancement.*

- A. Identify opportunities and priorities for interpretation of Heritage Resources for public education and recreation.
1. Manage significant and suitable heritage resource sites to realize their recreational and educational values to the public. Enhancement programs should include in-service funding as well as opportunity for establishing partnerships with the private sector. The measure of suitability should be based upon accessibility, feasibility for protection, condition of the property, compatibility with other management activities and values to the public.
  2. Enhance suitable heritage values through interpretation, restoration, and the publication of reports, brochures or films, videos, and slide programs. Interpretive services and facilities should be compatible with the nature, quality, and integrity of the resource selected for enhancement.
  3. Cooperate with museums, universities, and other recognized institutions, agencies, and knowledgeable persons in planning and constructing heritage resource exhibits and providing opportunities for scholarly/scientific use.
  4. Manage Heritage Resources to ensure that properties and their records are protected to prevent degradation or unauthorized use under authority of the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 and the regulations in 36 CFR 296.

### **Karst/Cave Management** (*Page 4-20*)

#### *I. Management.*

- D. Develop public education and interpretative (sic) programs to foster an increased appreciation of the function and biological significance of the cave resources, caving ethics and safety, and safe and responsible uses of these resources for research and recreation purposes.

# Appendix B—Alaska Region I&E Strategic Direction & Action Plan

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## Interpretation and Conservation Education in the Alaska Region 2003-2006

**Mission:** Sparking imaginations, fostering stewardship of Alaska’s National Forests

**Vision:** Through our efforts, people value National Forests and resources, and work together to assure wise management of them.

### Strategic Direction

#### Program

The Interpretation and Conservation Education programs of the Alaska Region, emphasize the following key messages:

- **Ecosystems**

Alaska’s National Forests are dynamic ecosystems, shaped by nature, woven by culture.

- **World Class Resources**

People can discover a unique combination of resources in the National Forests of Alaska.

These world-class resources are important globally, nationally, and locally.

- **Management and Stewardship**

We, and our partners, care for your National Forests in Alaska using the best information to sustain the use and protection of resources for today and tomorrow.

- **People and the Land**

Alaska’s coastal lands and waterways have met people’s social, physical, and spiritual needs for thousands of years. Alaska’s National Forests will continue to nurture the region’s natural and cultural diversity for future generations.

Programs are designed to reach these target audiences:

- **Youth**, directly and through teachers.
- **Visitors** to the National Forests.

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*The Alaska Region Interpretive and Conservation Education programs fit under the broad umbrella of Forest Service national Recreation, Interpretive and Conservation Education programs. Among the direction for those programs, are the following guidelines:*

*“Improve educational opportunities for the public about the values of conservation, land stewardship, and responsible recreation.” The National Recreation Agenda*

*“Through education, we connect people to the land so they take informed actions to sustain natural and cultural resources.” National Conservation Education Draft Strategic Plan FY 2003-2007, Mission Statement*

*“Sparking Imaginations. We create intellectual and emotional connections between people and their natural and cultural heritage, thereby instilling respect and appreciation for America’s public lands and fostering their protection and stewardship through time.” National Interpretive Services Strategy, 2002, Mission Statement*

## **Action Plan**

### **Media Standards**

- Identify existing guidelines for developing high quality interpretive signs and brochures, and assure the process is followed in the Region. Identify a Regional or Forest approval process for interpretive signs. (6/04)
- Inventory interpretive signs in the Region. (6/05, and then ongoing)

### **Professional Development**

- Promote membership in and active participation in professional organizations, including the National Association for Interpretation, the North America Association for Environmental Education, the Alaska Natural Resources Outdoor Education Association. (Ongoing)
- Conduct a Regional FS employee meeting/training session for Interp and CE once every three years. (next session FY 06)
- If a special training need exists, and we have a Regional expert, have that person travel to the site and train employees there. Use Regional or Forest funding when available. (Ongoing)
- When available, use Regional funds to pay tuition for people in the field to attend appropriate interpretive and educational training. (ongoing)
- Develop online or CD training for seasonal interpreters working in remote programs, who cannot attend live sessions. (Kayak rangers, those working in bear viewing areas, etc) 6/05

### **Partnerships**

- Develop a partnership with the Department of Education to make Forest Service resources available to school districts. (6/04 and then ongoing)
- Develop and offer a teacher training program. (6/05)
- Nurture and sustain a mutually beneficial partnership with the Alaska Natural History Association. (ongoing)
- Support the partnership with the Marine Highway System. (ongoing)
- Investigate and foster partnerships with the tourism industry, including cruise lines. (ongoing)
- Build better working relationships with other State and Federal agencies and explore partnership opportunities. (ongoing)
- Develop internal partnership opportunities with the State and Private Forestry and the Research branches of the Forest Service to further educational efforts. (6/05)
- Build stronger relationships within the Forest Service with those units already doing interpretive and educational programs, such as Fish and Wildlife and Heritage. (ongoing)

## **Monitoring**

- Develop a standardized method for counting visitors and expenditures, and for gathering other pertinent program data. (6/05)
- Develop a Regional accomplishment reporting system for interpretation and conservation education. (6/04)
- Regularly schedule formal Regional Office visits to the field. (ongoing)

## **Evaluation**

- Develop a method for on-going evaluation of interpretive and educational programs in the Region. (*Investigate using a grad student.*) (Begin 1/04, complete research by 6/06)
- Schedule a Washington Office review of Interpretation and Education programs in the Region, in the summer of 2004. (9/03)

## **Infrastructure**

- Work toward having a full time Interpretive Services/Conservation Education position on each Forest. (FY 06)
- Develop a Regional Interpretation/Conservation Education electronic library to improve communication among employees and better access to resource materials. (5/04)
- Identify and meet standards of corporate database and budget systems, such as BFES, INFRA, and IPOW. (ongoing)
- Work toward adequate funding of interpretation and conservation education programs. (ongoing)
- Market the Alaska Region Interpretation and Education programs internally and externally. (ongoing)
- Look for employees throughout the Region who are doing a good job with Interpretation and Conservation Education, and acknowledge their efforts with awards at the appropriate levels of the organization. (ongoing)

# Appendix C—Alaska Region Emphasis Areas

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**Mission:** The mission of the Alaska Region of the Forest Service is to manage the Chugach and Tongass National Forests to meet society’s needs for a variety of goods, services, and amenities while enhancing the Forests’ health and productivity, and to foster similar outcomes for State and private forestland across Alaska.

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## Goal 1

**Ecological Sustainability:** Enhance the health, productivity, and diversity of the forests in Alaska.

- Objective 1a.** Assess the condition of all watersheds on National Forest System lands in the Alaska Region. Implement restorative measures as required to achieve healthy watershed function and condition, stable yields of high-quality water, and unimpaired passage of fish and other aquatic organisms.
- Objective 1b.** Provide ecological conditions needed to sustain sufficient population levels of wildlife and fish resources to meet the needs of subsistence, recreational, and commercial users. Enhance opportunities to use and enjoy these resources, and avoid or mitigate conflicts by working constructively with all interests.
- Objective 1c.** Ensure that forest planning decisions are consistent with the best available scientific information.
- Objective 1d.** Reduce and avoid impacts of native forest pests, exotic pests, and invasive plants.

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## Goal 2

**Communities:** Enhance the health, stability, quality of life, economic vitality, and adaptability of communities in Southcentral and Southeast Alaska and natural resource dependent communities throughout the State.

- Objective 2a.** Promote full communication with communities and strong community involvement in Forest Service decisions.
- Objective 2b.** Help communities obtain and administer Federal grants, agreements and loans.
- Objective 2c.** Help communities design and implement projects that benefit residents.
- Objective 2d.** Provide opportunities for the maintenance and development of high-paying, year-round jobs.
- Objective 2e.** Provide technical and economic expertise, grant funding, manufacturing infrastructure and marketing assistance to local forest products manufacturers through Forest Service Community Forestry Programs.
- Objective 2f.** Promote wildland fire prevention and education, and local fire preparedness support to communities across Alaska.

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Goal 2

•**Objective 2g.** Help rural communities, Tribal governments, and private landowners increase their ability to adapt to economic, environmental, and social change related to natural resource management.

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Goal 3

**Recreation and Tourism:** Define and promote sustainable levels of high-quality recreation and tourism while maintaining outstanding settings and wildland character.

•**Objective 3a.** Ensure that recreation capacity is determined for high-use areas to retain the quality of the experiences and setting and that appropriate management direction is in place before an area's capacity is exceeded.

•**Objective 3b.** Increase resources (funding, personnel, training, equipment and supplies) for the management and delivery of quality recreation and tourism programs.

•**Objective 3c.** Provide infrastructure, including developed and dispersed recreation facilities, wildlife and fish viewing sites, trails, and associated transportation systems appropriate to the recreation settings, to meet the demand for a diverse array of quality recreational opportunities.

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Goal 4

**Alaska Natives:** Incorporate the unique cultural heritage, legal status, and traditional knowledge of Alaska Natives into the Region's programs and processes.

•**Objective 4a.** Foster and build positive working relationships with Alaska Natives and their involvement in Forest Service programs and decision-making.

•**Objective 4b.** Promote respect for, and knowledge and understanding of, Native cultural values and traditional ecological knowledge and incorporate these values and knowledge in consultation, communications, decision-making, and everyday program management.

•**Objective 4c.** Provide technical assistance to Alaska Native Corporations for maintenance and improvement of forestlands owned by such Corporations.

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Goal 5

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Enhance our ability to perform as an efficient, effective, proactive and multicultural organization.

•**Objective 5a.** Improve the effectiveness of R-10 programs by establishing and implementing mechanisms for evaluating program and individual accountability.

•**Objective 5b.** Develop and implement workforce and workload planning strategies.

•**Objective 5c.** Improve timeliness, integration, accuracy, and quality of information.

•**Objective 5d.** Improve coordination between State and Private Forestry and the Alaska Division of Forestry to maximize Forest Health, Fire and Cooperative Forestry program delivery and service to the public.

*\*Emphasis areas as of March 2004.*

# Appendix D—Guidelines for EE Excellence\*

## Summary of the Environmental Education Materials: Guidelines for Excellence

**#1 Fairness and accuracy:** EE materials should be fair and accurate in describing environmental problems, issues, and conditions, and in reflecting the diversity of perspectives on them.

- 1.1 Factual accuracy
- 1.2 Balanced presentation of differing viewpoints and theories
- 1.3 Openness to inquiry
- 1.4 Reflection of diversity

**#2 Depth:** EE materials should foster an awareness of the natural and built environment, an understanding of environmental concepts, conditions, and issues, and an awareness of the feelings, values, attitudes, and perceptions at the heart of environmental issues, as appropriate for different developmental levels.

- 2.1 Awareness
- 2.2 Focus on concepts
- 2.3 Concepts in context
- 2.4 Attention to different scales

**#3 Emphasis on skills building:** EE materials should build lifelong skills that enable learners to address environmental issues.

- 3.1 Critical and creative thinking
- 3.2 Applying skills to issues
- 3.3 Action skills

**#4 Action orientation:** EE materials should promote civic responsibility, encouraging learners to use their knowledge, personal skills, and assessments of environmental issues as a basis for environmental problem solving and action.

- 4.1 Sense of personal stake and responsibility
- 4.2 Self-efficacy

**#5 Instructional soundness:** EE materials should rely on instructional techniques that create an effective learning environment.

- 5.1 Learner-centered instruction
- 5.2 Different ways of learning
- 5.3 Connection to learners' everyday lives
- 5.4 Expanded learning environment
- 5.5 Interdisciplinary
- 5.6 Goals and objectives
- 5.7 Appropriateness for specific learning settings
- 5.8 Assessment

**#6 Usability:** EE materials should be well designed and easy to use.

- 6.1 Clarity and logic
- 6.2 Easy to use
- 6.3 Long lived
- 6.4 Adaptable
- 6.5 Accompanied by instruction and support
- 6.6 Make substantiated claims
- 6.7 Fit with national, state, or local requirements

*\*North American Association for Environmental Education, 2003*

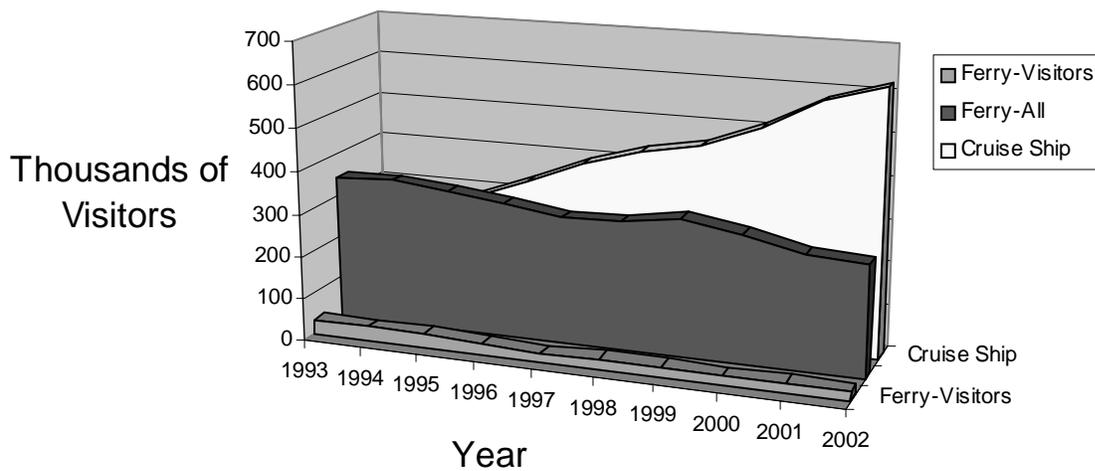
# Appendix E—Southeast Alaska Visitation Statistics—2002

**Table ES-1. Trends in Total Arrivals (Residents and Visitors)  
by Mode of Entry,  
Summer 1993-2003**

Mode	AVSP III	Secondary Arrival Reports						AVSP IV	Secondary Arrival Reports	
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2001 <sup>2</sup>	2002	2003
Cruise Ship	247,000	285,100	283,500	336,500	392,100	431,200	457,100	510,000 <sup>3</sup>	581,000 <sup>4</sup>	620,900 <sup>5</sup>
Domestic Air	697,500	763,600	788,100	837,000	845,500	824,500	850,100	968,000 <sup>9</sup>	980,800	965,600
Ferry <sup>7</sup>	35,900	35,100	33,000	30,100	23,500	26,400	25,800	24,100	23,700 <sup>6</sup>	22,400
Highway Personal Vehicle	171,100	178,300	188,100	183,100	178,500	199,000	195,900	130,400 <sup>8</sup>	128,000	123,700
Highway Motorcoach	4,100	3,900	3,900	4,200	3,700	4,100	3,700	10,900 <sup>8</sup>	8,200	8,200
International Air	19,500	20,600	19,300	28,600	26,500	25,100	27,500	24,700	25,200	37,400
Other	31,500	31,900	42,200	47,100	43,800	37,700	38,000	7,700 <sup>9</sup>	7,100	7,000
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>1,206,500</b>	<b>1,318,500</b>	<b>1,357,900</b>	<b>1,466,500</b>	<b>1,513,500</b>	<b>1,548,000</b>	<b>1,598,200</b>	<b>1,675,800</b>	<b>1,754,000</b>	<b>1,785,200</b>

Source: Alaska Visitor Arrivals, Summer 1993-1999 (McDowell Group); Alaska Visitor Arrivals, Summer 2001-2003 (Northern Economics, Inc.).

## Marine-based Visitation to Southeast Alaska



# Appendix F—Interpretive & Education Team Members

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(left to right) front; Linn Shipley, Kristen Romanoff  
second; Terry Fifield, Lynn Kolund  
third; Mark McCallum, Nelli Atkinson  
top; Chuck Parsley, Nita Nettleton  
not pictured; Patricia O'Connor, Sandy Frost

## Team Leaders

- ◇ Lynn Kolund—*Wilderness & Tourism Recreation Planner, Tongass NF*—(907) 228-6262
- ◇ Sandy Frost—*Partnership & RCA Coordinator, Tongass NF*—(907) 828-3202

## Team Members

- ◇ Patricia O'Connor—*District Ranger, Yakutat Ranger District*—(907) 784-3457
- ◇ Nita Nettleton—*Director, Tongass Marine Highway, Juneau RD*—(907) 790-7419
- ◇ Chuck Parsley—*Fisheries Biologist, Hoonah RD*—(907) 945-1201
- ◇ Linn Shipley—*Forest Wildlife Program Manager*—(907) 747-4249
- ◇ Mark McCallum—*Forest Archeologist, Tongass NF*—(907) 772-5876
- ◇ Terry Fifield—*Prince of Wales Zoned Archeologist, Thorne Bay & Craig RD*—(907) 826-1642
- ◇ Kristen Romanoff—*Wildlife Education Specialist, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Juneau*—(907) 465-4265
- ◇ Nelli Atkinson—*University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point*—715-346-4992

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I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do.

*Edward Everett Hale*

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