



Dall Island Epikarst (Credit Jim Baichtal)

Tongass National Forest

Land and Resource Management Plan Amendment

New Tongass Leadership

The Tongass recently welcomed Earl Stewart as the new Tongass Forest Supervisor, who will oversee the programs, personnel, and management of the Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska. Stewart replaces Forrest Cole, who retired after serving for 13 years as the Tongass Forest Supervisor.

(l-r) Deputy Forest Supervisor Tawnya Brummett, Forest Supervisor Earl Stewart, and Plan Amendment project manager Susan Howle (Credit: Carol Lagodich)



Stewart moved to Ketchikan from Flagstaff, Arizona where he served as the Forest Supervisor of the Coconino National Forest. His Forest Service career has

provided him opportunities to manage complex national programs, including strategic planning and budget analysis, and as a Legislative Fellow for Energy, Water and Natural Resources (U.S. House of Representatives).

Tawnya Brummett was selected as the new Tongass Deputy Forest Supervisor. She and her family moved to Ketchikan from Superior, Montana where she served as District Ranger on the Lolo National Forest.

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Corrected Notice of Intent Published in the Federal Register

A corrected Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an environmental impact statement was published in the Federal Register on June 23, 2015 (80 FR 35934). Corrections to the May 27, 2014 NOI include:

Dates: The draft environmental impact statement is expected to be published in October

2015, which will begin a 90-day public comment period. The Record of Decision expected to be signed in October 2016.

Scoping Process: Inclusion of the 36 CFR 219, Subpart B “Objection” process that applies to plan amendments.

New Responsible

Official: M. Earl Stewart, Tongass Forest Supervisor.

Read the Corrected NOI in the Tongass Plan Amendment Newsroom, online at

<http://go.usa.gov/37a2S>

Select third bullet link under “Federal Register Notices” heading —

◆ **“NOI; correction June 23, 2015”** (starts bottom of third column.)



Public Open House Meetings Focus on Transition, Explain Planning Process



January 2015 Tongass Forest Plan Amendment public open house meeting resource stations : (clockwise from top-left) 2008 Plan LUD maps by Alternative, Young Growth Timber, Plan Monitoring Program, and Renewable Energy. (USDA Forest Service).

As part of the Forest Plan Amendment public involvement strategy, the Tongass National Forest hosted three evening public open house meetings, January 26th—February 3rd in Juneau, Sitka, and Ketchikan. Each meeting consisted of an introduction by planning team leader Susan Howle, who welcomed meeting participants and provided them with an overview of what was being shared and the organization of the

Plan was being amended under the new National Forest System land management planning rule (2012 Planning Rule). Meeting participants were provided handouts and

meeting stations. She also explained how the 2008 Forest

were encouraged to spend time reviewing draft maps and other draft meeting materials and to ask questions. The meeting stations focused on the four issues that were identified for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis – Young-growth Transition; Renewable Energy; Roadless Areas; and

Wildlife Habitat and the Conservation Strategy. An additional meeting station focused on the Draft Plan Monitoring Program to provide information about how the 2008 Forest Plan monitoring program is being modified to meet the requirements of the 2012 Planning Rule. Planning team members were on hand at the meeting stations to field questions from the public, and to share information about the issues and Draft Plan Monitoring Program.

Meeting materials available online at <http://go.usa.gov/37a2S>



Tongass Forest Plan Amendment - Next Steps

A draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) is being prepared to amend the 2008 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan. A DEIS is expected to be published in October 2015, which will begin a 90-day public comment pe-

riod. Public notices to invite comment on the proposed Forest Plan and DEIS will be published in the Federal Register EIS Notice of Availability (prepared by EPA), newspaper of record (Ketchikan Daily News), and online.

In November, the Forest will conduct DEIS public meetings and subsistence hearings in many Tongass communities. Meeting information (dates, times, locations) will be published in the newspaper of record (Ketchikan Daily News)

and online.

In addition to receiving information via the public notices, the public is also encouraged to sign-up for the electronic mailing list (instructions on page 4).

Tongass Advisory Committee Reaches Consensus on Recommendations for the Forest Plan Amendment



Tongass Advisory Committee meeting. Recommendations will inform forest plan amendment. (USDA Forest Service)

The Tongass Advisory Committee (TAC) unanimously agreed upon recommendations that address elements needed in the Forest Plan Amendment; transitioning the Forest’s timber management program from a focus on old growth to predominantly young growth management in a way that is economically viable for the existing industry, while recognizing and balancing

the other unique and equally important resource values of the Tongass..

The recommendations were formally presented to Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack in May. The Forest Service is in the process of incorporating them into the Tongass Forest Plan Amendment.

TAC concepts have also addressed the diversity of uses supported by Tongass management, to include

recreation, salmon harvests, and traditional subsistence hunting and use of forest products. In the May 11 TAC news release, the committee summarizes their recommendations as “a call for a cultural shift within the agency, urging that a new spirit of partnership, shared stewardship and responsiveness be woven into the way the Forest Service works in Southeast Alaska.”

Tongass Forest Supervisor Earl Stewart described the committee’s process and goals, “During this process, the committee has heard a wide range of public opinion and

incorporated those interests into their deliberations. The TAC has expressed a strong interest in young-growth forest management that benefits the communities and cultures of Southeast Alaska.”

“The path forward for the Tongass will be built on the type of collaboration and compromise that the Committee has exemplified over the last nine months.”

- Robert Bonnie, USDA Under Secretary, NRE

Youth Advisory Council Members Continue Involvement with Amendment Process

The Tongass Youth Advisory Council, often referred to as the “YAC,” consists of six Ketchikan High School juniors and seniors (and two alternates) interested in natural resource management who have met regularly since December 2014. Youth council members attended the public open house meetings earlier this year, and have worked diligently with Forest Service staff to learn about the Forest Service’s 2012 Planning Rule, which promotes the inclusion

of traditionally under-served communities (including youth). They also learned about the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and how to effectively participate in Forest environmental reviews under the NEPA.

In May, the council met with Forest Service staff and the Tongass Advisory Committee during a Ward

Lake social, where they discussed the importance of collaboration and civic involvement.

Members of the Youth Advisory Council, TAC and Forest Service at Ward Lake Recreation Area (USDA Forest Service)



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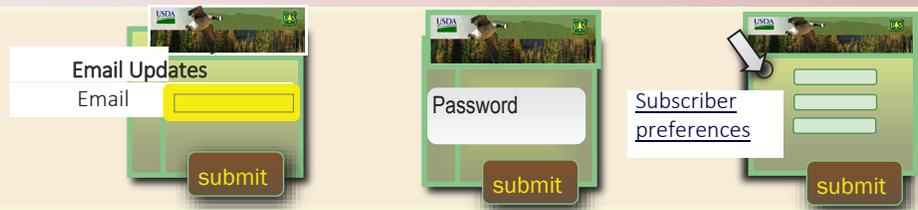
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From your computer, smartphone or tablet, go to:
<http://tinyurl.com/tongassplanamendment>



From GovDelivery's "Email Updates" page you will: **a)** Be prompted to provide the email address where you would like project notifications to be sent. **b)** Be prompted to create a password during setup. **c)** Be able to specify other mailing lists by first selecting the "Subscriber preferences" link."



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Tongass Forest Plan Amendment updates will be emailed to your specified contact address each time an update is posted online.



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