

# Collaborative Stewardship: Stories from the Tongass National Forest



**To achieve our shared vision of ecological and community sustainability in Southeast Alaska, local communities, the Forest Service, nonprofit groups, and businesses are partnering on a range of forest stewardship projects across the Tongass National Forest.**

Collaborative relationships among these diverse groups have enabled the creation of shared priorities and the development of “forest stewardship projects” that benefit both communities and environmental health. The global importance of the temperate rainforest and a history of conflict over management of the Tongass make such an approach more important than ever. Working together, the Forest Service, communities, and partners are coming to agreement on forest stewardship projects on the Tongass National Forest that create jobs while improving relationships and achieving results, a key strategy of the Transition Framework for Southeast Alaska.

by sharing information and promoting informed, creative action around local economic development. The SCSG works to ensure that local interests and concerns are addressed in forest management projects by organizing public meetings and group field trips. To date, the collaborative has helped develop and implement the Ocean Boulevard experimental wildlife habitat improvement project, a large-scale stream restoration project on the Sitkoh River, and a landscape-scale integrated resources management project along Peril Strait. The group is also developing a district-wide “Asset and Opportunities Map” to help small businesses and resource planners identify long-term economic development opportunities.

→ [www.collaboratesitka.com](http://www.collaboratesitka.com)



## Staney Community Forest

The Staney Creek area on Prince of Wales Island is a rich producer of fish, wildlife, and forest products. Featuring easy access to large populations of deer and salmon, the watershed is heavily used by locals. Today, there is great interest in the future of the Staney area and how it will be restored and managed. When the Forest Service began considering projects and



## Sitka Collaborative Stewardship Group

The Sitka Collaborative Stewardship Group (SCSG) promotes collaboratively-developed management opportunities that benefit the community, the economy, and the environment. Participants include the city, local tribes, USDA Rural Development, and non-profit partners, as well as individual stakeholders. Together, the SCSG focuses on sustainable economic development, habitat restoration, integrated resource enhancement, and building local capacity to implement forest management planning and on-the-ground work.

The SCSG functions as a bridge between the Tongass National Forest and local stakeholders

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restoration work, stakeholders participated in a collaborative approach to develop possible future management actions before formal agency planning even began, an unprecedented effort that set the stage for future Forest Service planning and projects. A more formal public process of scoping is now underway, but the collaborative work frames every aspect of the projects that will emerge for Staney. Lessons learned from this effort have been instrumental in other collaborative endeavors across the forest. → [www.staneycreek.org](http://www.staneycreek.org)



## Kake Community Forest\*

Surrounded by public and private lands that have been heavily harvested, the small community of Kake is turning its sights on forest stewardship activities that create local jobs. In 2009, a diverse collaborative including the Alaska Native community, environmental organizations, local businesses, industry, and the Forest Service came together to address these opportunities. The group aims to develop community-based projects that are accessible to local contractors, reflect social and cultural values, build community capacity for stewardship, and result in a healthy ecosystem. In order to implement these projects, the Tongass National Forest has begun offering stewardship contracts, which focus on best value to the government and local community benefit. The first stewardship contracts were offered for the Kake area in the summer of 2011, with Phase 2 planned for 2012.

*\*From: Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition. (2011). Stewardship Contracting: Successes from the Field. Portland, OR: Sustainable Northwest.*



## Hoonah Community Forest/ Kennel Creek

In 2012, the community of Hoonah, local partners, and businesses plan to begin restoring parts of the Kennel Creek watershed southeast of town. The project builds on values identified in the Hoonah Community Forest project, a collaborative approach that focuses on community health, ecological integrity, and natural resource-based economic sustainability. Residents of Hoonah value salmon and wildlife habitat for cultural as well as economic reasons, especially as the community is faced with high energy costs and significant unemployment. The intent of the Kennel Creek project is to provide local jobs and improve wildlife habitat through restoration of salmon streams and forest thinning. The Forest Service and partners will also develop workforce capacity and technical skills through on-the-job training and an information sharing workshop.

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As collaboration, partnerships, and forest stewardship become the standard in Southeast Alaska, additional collaborative projects are cropping up across the region in towns such as Wrangell and Yakutat. Working closely with communities and partners, the Forest Service will continue to pursue these projects on the Tongass National Forest in its commitment to healthy communities and a healthy forest.