

# TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

## NEWS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

**Contact:** Tricia O'Connor, Deputy Forest Supervisor  
(907) 228-6200 or [poconnor@fs.fed.us](mailto:poconnor@fs.fed.us)

**Website:** <http://1.usa.gov/15FCWGI>

### **U.S. Forest Service announces intent to modify Tongass National Forest management plan to advance transition, support forest industry**

KETCHIKAN, Alaska, Oct. 1, 2013—The U.S. Forest Service has determined that it will begin a public process with the intent of modifying the Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan), based on conditions on the land and demands of the public. Among other things, the modification is expected to focus on identifying the timber base suitable to support a transition to young-growth management, in a way that supports the continued viability of the forest industry in Southeast Alaska, per the direction of Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

According to Forest Supervisor Forrest Cole, “while the nature of those modifications is determined, the Tongass will continue an annual program of work, which includes the mix of projects and delivery of goods and services that are guided by the Forest Plan, in order to advance the transition and support forest industry.”

The largest reserve in the National Forest System, the 17-million-acre Tongass in Southeast Alaska is currently operating under the 2008 Forest Plan. The current 5-Year Review of the Tongass Forest Plan is mandated under the National Forest Management Act of 1976, which requires periodic assessments of management plans to determine whether modifications are necessary to clarify or adjust the direction of forest management.

The Forest Service solicited comments through public and stakeholder meetings, government-to-government consultation with Southeast Alaska tribes, and written comments. Cole received input on a range of topics, including young-growth management, the Roadless Rule, watershed restoration, mining, renewable energy, and local economies.

As a result of both the 5-Year Review and a July memorandum from the Secretary of Agriculture, Addressing Sustainable Forestry in Southeast Alaska, a Tongass Federal Advisory Committee will be established to provide advice on identifying ways to support the transition and provide for a viable forest industry in Southeast Alaska. Initiation of the Committee is expected in early 2014.

Advice from the Committee may include a recommendation to define the suitable timber base to support the transition and to bolster implementation of a young-growth timber supply.

For more information, contact Tricia O'Connor, Deputy Forest Supervisor, (907) 228-6200 or [poconnor@fs.fed.us](mailto:poconnor@fs.fed.us).

The Tongass Forest Plan and 5-Year Review documents are online at <http://1.usa.gov/15FCWGl>. The USDA Secretary's memo can be found at <http://1.usa.gov/1eUSNKG>; the related news release is at <http://1.usa.gov/12GeIht>.