

File Code: 1920
Date: April 26, 2022

Dear Planning Participant,

Notice is hereby given to an administrative change to the 2016 Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) (see enclosed Administrative Change 2). Administrative changes, defined at 36 CFR 219.13(c), are made to facilitate more rapid adjustment of plans. They do not require National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation (i.e., environmental impact statement, environmental assessment, or categorical exclusion), but do require public notification. Administrative changes are not subject to the objection process (36 CFR 219.50).

Unlike a plan amendment or plan revision, administrative changes are: 1) corrections of clerical errors to any plan content, including plan components, 2) any changes to plan content, including plan components, when necessary to conform the plan to new statutory or regulatory requirements, for which there is not discretion; or 3) any other changes to plan content except for changes to the substance of plan components (219.7(e)) or to the application of plan components to specific areas within the planning area (FSH 1909.12, Ch. 20, Sec 21.5).

I find that the enclosed changes are necessary to conform to the statutory requirements of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Land Exchange Act of 2017 and meet the definition of administrative changes. I am making these changes effective immediately (219.16(c)(6)). The enclosed administrative change will be published on the Tongass National Forest public website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/tongass/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fseprd1015732>.

Sincerely,



M. Earl Stewart
Forest Supervisor, Tongass National Forest

Enclosure: 2016 Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Administrative Change 2



2016 Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Administrative Change 2

Effective April 26, 2022

Background

The Tongass National Forest has completed an administrative change to the 2016 Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan¹ (Forest Plan) to comply with the statutory requirements of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Land Exchange Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–31—Appendix B, the Act). The Act authorized an equal value land exchange between the State of Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the USDA Forest Service with the purpose of securing Federal ownership and protection of non-Federal land in the State of Alaska that has significant natural, scenic, watershed, recreational, wildlife, and other public values; to create jobs and provide economic opportunities for resource use in more remote areas of the State; and to facilitate the goals and objectives of the Alaska Mental Health Trust.

The administrative change will assign land use designations² (LUDs) to non-federal lands that were recently acquired by the USDA Forest Service (i.e., the Secretary of Agriculture) per the Act and will update spatial data associated with LUDs and timber suitability. Information on the Act and the land exchange can be accessed at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r10/home/?cid=FSEPRD570965>.

In October 2021, the State of Alaska Mental Health Trust and the USDA Forest Service completed conveyance of lands under the Act. The USDA Forest Service acquired approximately 18,000 acres of land in parcels at several locations across the Tongass National Forest on the Juneau, Sitka, Petersburg, Wrangell, and Ketchikan Misty Fjords Ranger Districts. The USDA Forest Service conveyed approximately 21,000 acres of land to the State of Alaska Mental Health Trust near Naukati and Hollis on the Craig and Thorne Bay Ranger Districts and near Shelter Cove on the Ketchikan Misty Fjords Ranger District.

The Act includes statutory requirements for the non-federal lands that the USDA Forest Service acquired, including that they become part of the Tongass National Forest; be administered in accordance with the laws applicable to the National Forest System; be managed to preserve the undeveloped natural character of the land and the wildlife, watershed, and scenic values of the land (i.e., Natural Setting LUDs, Forest Plan, p. 3-2); and be managed to provide for recreational opportunities including the development or maintenance of recreational trails for hiking, biking, and skiing (see Section 5(b) of the Act). Through the administrative change process, these lands will be assigned LUDs that meet the statutory requirements of the Act. Forest Service staff considered statutory requirements, the characteristics of the acquired parcels, and LUDs of lands adjacent to these parcels to determine what LUDs to assign to acquired lands. The list of parcels, acreages, LUD assignments, and rationale are provided in Table 1 under “Changes” below. Management direction associated with each LUD is in Chapter 3 of the Forest Plan. Reference spatial data sets for Tongass National Forest LUDs have been updated and are available in the State of Alaska Geoportal at: <https://gis.data.alaska.gov/>. Search for “land use designations.”

¹ The Forest Plan can be accessed at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/tongass/landmanagement/planning/?cid=fseprd1015732>. Administrative changes are also posted to this web site.

² Land use designations (LUDs) are defined areas of land specific to which management direction is applied, or defined areas of the Forest that are allocated for different uses or activities and have the same set of applicable plan components, but do not have to be spatially contiguous (Forest Plan page 7-28). There are 17 LUDs defined in the Forest Plan.

In addition to assigning LUDs, Forest Service staff completed an analysis of impacts to the Identification of Lands Suitable for Timber Harvest (Forest Plan Appendix A) and the Old-Growth Conservation Strategy (Forest Plan Appendix K) associated with conveyance of lands by the Forest Service to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. In total, 10,200 acres of lands suitable for timber production and 1,300 acres of small old-growth reserves designated as Old-Growth Habitat LUD were conveyed (Table 2). No acquired lands will be managed as lands suitable for timber. Approximately 1,950 acres of acquired lands will be managed as old-growth habitat. Reference data sets for timber suitability have been updated and are available in the State of Alaska Geoportal at: <https://gis.data.alaska.gov/>. Search for “suitability.” Requirements of the Old-Growth Conservation Strategy continue to be met in areas where old-growth habitat was conveyed.

The administrative change includes an update to the table on page 3-2 of the 2016 Forest Plan, “Land Use Designation Allocations.”

Changes

Table 1. Land use designations (LUDs) and rationale for parcels acquired by the USDA Forest Service under the Alaska Mental Health Trust Land Exchange Act of 2017. All LUD assignments comply with the Act and expected use of the land.

Parcel Name (LEX ID ¹)	Ranger District (Legislative Map # ¹)	Area (acres)	LUD Assignment	Rationale
Mt Bradley Trail (J-1A)	Juneau (Map 6)	428	Semi-Remote Recreation	Adjacent to Semi-Remote Recreation LUD.
Douglas S (J-1B)	Juneau (Map 6)	2261	Semi-Remote Recreation	Adjacent to Semi-Remote Recreation LUD.
Signal Mtn. (K-1)	Ketchikan Misty Fjords (Map 1)	1878	Special Interest Area-Recreation	Add to adjacent Special Interest Area, Ward Lake Recreation Area
Minerva Mtn. (K-2)	Ketchikan Misty Fjords (Map 1)	707	Semi-Remote Recreation	Adjacent to Municipal Watershed LUD, but not part of municipal watershed.
Deer Mtn. (K-3 and K-3 Conservation Easement)	Ketchikan Misty Fjords (Map 1)	901	Old-Growth Habitat	Adjacent to Old-Growth Habitat LUD.
Gravina Mid (K-4A)	Ketchikan Misty Fjords (Map 1)	3180	Semi-Remote Recreation	Adjacent to Timber Management LUD.
Meyers Chuck (MC-1)	Wrangell (Map 5)	168	Semi-Remote Recreation	Adjacent to Semi-Remote Recreation LUD.
No Name Bay (NB-1)	Petersburg (Map 10)	3373	Semi-Remote Recreation (south end 3,071 acres) and Old-Growth Habitat (north end 302 acres)	Adjacent to Old-Growth Habitat, Semi-Remote Recreation, Modified Landscape, and Timber Management LUDs.
Twin Creek (Administrative Site)	Petersburg (Map 2)	42	Semi-Remote Recreation	Adjacent to P-1A which is adjacent to Municipal Watershed LUD.
Twin Creek (P-1A)	Petersburg (Map 2)	3120	Semi-Remote Recreation	Adjacent to Municipal Watershed and Scenic Viewshed LUDs.

Parcel Name (LEX ID ¹)	Ranger District (Legislative Map # ¹)	Area (acres)	LUD Assignment	Rationale
Twin Creek (P-1B)	Petersburg (Map 2)	143	Semi-Remote Recreation	Adjacent to Modified Landscape LUD.
S Fall Creek (P-2B)	Petersburg (Map 2)	182	Semi-Remote Recreation	Adjacent to Modified Landscape and Scenic Viewshed LUDs.
Blind Pt. E (P-3B)	Petersburg (Map 2)	92	Old-Growth Habitat	Adjacent to Scenic Viewshed, Old-Growth Habitat, and Modified Landscape LUDs.
Kupreanof N (P-4)	Petersburg (Map 2)	280	Semi-Remote Recreation	Adjacent to Modified Landscape and Semi-Remote Recreation LUDs.
Indian Creek E (S-2)	Sitka (Map 4)	284	Semi-Remote Recreation	Adjacent to Semi-Remote Recreation LUD.
Indian Creek W (S-3)	Sitka (Map 4)	109	Semi-Remote Recreation	Adjacent to Semi-Remote Recreation LUD.
Cascade Creek (S-4)	Sitka (Map 4)	26	Semi-Remote Recreation	Adjacent to Semi-Remote Recreation LUD.
W-1 (W-1)	Wrangell (Map 3)	204	Semi-Remote Recreation	Adjacent to Scenic Viewshed LUD.
W-2 (W-2)	Wrangell (Map 3)	104	Semi-Remote Recreation	Adjacent to Scenic Viewshed LUD.
W-3 (W-3)	Wrangell (Map 3)	63	Semi-Remote Recreation	Adjacent to Scenic Viewshed LUD and developed private land.
W-4 (W-4)	Wrangell (Map 3)	658	Old-Growth Habitat	Adjacent to Scenic Viewshed and Old-Growth Habitat LUDs.

¹LEX IDs and Legislative maps available at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r10/home/?cid=FSEPRD570965>

Table 2. Conveyed lands suitable for timber production or designated as old-growth reserve

Parcel Name	Area (acres)	Acres Suitable for Timber Production Conveyed	Acres of Old-Growth Reserve Conveyed
North Naukati	1311	752	0
2016 Naukati Addition	905	742	22
West Naukati	2894	2159	457
Central Naukati	1571	1388	0
Naukati Phase 1	2402	1589	0
East Naukati	157	99	0
Conservation Easement for Karst Concerns	65	4	0
Shelter Cove	8216	2395	253
Hollis	1537	70	0
West Naukati 2A	1287	772	565
Central Naukati 2A	287	243	0

Table 3. Update to the table on page 3-2 of the 2016 Forest Plan, “Land Use Designation Allocations”

Land Use Designation	Total Acres Allocated to Each LUD	Total Acres Allocated to Each LUD without Overlay
Wilderness LUD Group		
Wilderness	2,622,511	2,622,511
Wilderness National Monument	3,126,320	3,126,320
Nonwilderness National Monument	166,914	166,914
Total for Wilderness LUD Group		5,915,745
Natural Setting LUD Group		
LUD II	869,988	796,085
Remote Recreation	2,002,957	2,000,267
Semi-Remote Recreation	2,985,323	2,984,861
Old-Growth Habitat	1,186,437	1,186,437
Municipal Watershed	45,206	45,206
Research Natural Area	66,545	21,517
Special Interest Area	669,454	206,308
Wild River	155,221	2,362
Scenic River	43,324	24,399
Recreational River	23,870	23,574
Total for Natural Setting LUD Group		7,291,015
Development LUD Group		
Experimental Forest	36,264	35,923
Scenic Viewshed	304,065	304,065
Modified Landscape	716,056	716,056
Timber Production	2,274,815	2,274,815
Total for Development LUD Group		3,330,859
Overlay LUD		
Minerals	248,944	0
TOTAL NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LAND		16,537,620

Reference spatial data sets for Tongass National Forest LUDs and timber suitability have been updated and are available in the State of Alaska Geoportal at: <https://gis.data.alaska.gov/>. Search for “land use designations” and “suitability.”