

TRANSCRIPT OF ROADLESS RULE
ANILCA SUBSISTENCE PUBLIC HEARING

KASAAN, ALASKA
11/12/2019

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (Kasaan, Alaska - 11/12/2019)

3 (On record)

4 MR. STEWART: I want to thank everybody for
5 attending tonight's public meeting. It's an
6 opportunity for you to provide input on the proposed
7 Alaska Roadless Rule and corresponding draft
8 environmental impact statement.

9 Specifically the Forest Service is seeking your
10 comment on a proposed rule on how roadless areas in
11 Alaska and the Tongass National Forest will be managed
12 into the future. On October 18, 2019 the Notice for
13 Proposed Rulemaking was published in the Federal
14 Register and indicated a preferred Alternative 6, the
15 exemption of the 2001 National Roadless Area
16 Conservation Rule as applied to the Tongass National
17 Forest.

18 An execution would remove all regulatory
19 restrictions currently in place by the 2001 Roadless
20 Rule on the Tongass National Forest. The Forest
21 Service will be accepting comments on this proposed
22 rule until December 17, 2019. Tonight will be your
23 opportunity to provide oral and written comments.

24 My name is Earl Stewart. I'm the Forest
25 Supervisor in the Tongass National Forest and I work

1 for the USDA Forest Service here in Alaska. Tonight
2 I'm here to serve as your meeting facilitator, so my
3 job is to make sure that everyone here who would like
4 to make oral or written comments on the proposed rule
5 is able to do so.

6 The meeting has been scheduled to last until
7 9:00 p.m. tonight and we're starting around 7:00 p.m.
8 in order to receive your comments. We will be using
9 digital voice recorders located on the table and a
10 speaker will bring those to you when you offer your
11 comments. Your voice recordings will then be
12 transcribed by a professional court reporter and
13 included in the project record for the Alaska Roadless
14 Rulemaking Project.

15 During the comment portion of the meeting we
16 will not be answering any questions, allowing us time
17 to listen and hear your comments. In addition to
18 tonight's meeting, we'll be hosting additional public
19 informational meetings in communities throughout
20 Southeast Alaska, Anchorage and Washington, D.C.

21 In conjunction with those meetings we will also
22 collect subsistence testimony at communities in
23 Southeast Alaska including Ketchikan, Craig, Hydaburg,
24 Kasaan, Yakutat, Tenakee Springs, Wrangell, Gustavus,
25 Petersburg, Kake, Sitka, Angoon, Thorne Bay and

1 Skagway. The current schedule of the meetings can be
2 found on the Alaska Roadless Rule website.

3 Because of the importance of your comments it
4 is necessary that we follow certain procedures during
5 the meeting. As you entered the room you were asked to
6 sign in. It is important that every person present
7 sign in so that we have a complete record of all
8 persons who attended and participated in this meeting.

9 If you plan on making oral comments tonight,
10 please indicate it on the sign-in sheet. Also if
11 you're attending this meeting or submitting comments on
12 behalf of a group or organization, please indicate the
13 name of the group or entity that you represent.

14 Let me emphasize that the principal purpose of
15 the public comment part of this meeting is to receive
16 information and comments from you on the record.
17 Please limit your comments to about 15 minutes if you
18 would and then we'll come back around if we need to
19 based on the number of attendees.

20 If we run out of time, don't hesitate to
21 provide your comments also in writing by December 17,
22 2019. Handouts are available to you. They're on the
23 table over here if you need additional.

24 When I call your name, please let us know if
25 you want to offer comments and we'll pass the voice

1 recording device to you. Please begin your
2 presentation by stating your full name and please
3 assist the recorder by spelling your full name. If
4 you're affiliated with any organization or group,
5 please say so.

6 So that your comments can be accurately
7 captured, please speak clearly and into the microphone.
8 If you're called to speak and choose not to speak or
9 provide any short remarks, you may not cede your time
10 to another speaker. The time is now 7:04 p.m. and I
11 would like to open the formal public hearing section of
12 this meeting.

13 The first speaker is Ms. Della Coburn if she's
14 present.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She's not back yet.

16 MR. STEWART: Mr. Ron Leighton.

17 MR. LEIGHTON: My name is Ron Leighton,
18 L-E-I-G-H-T-O-N. My residence address of 185 Thorne
19 Bay Road, Thorne Bay, Alaska. I am here talking on my
20 own behalf. I'm also the president of the Organized
21 Village of Kasaan, but we are doing another comment or
22 deal on that. I'm here personally for myself. I want
23 to make that clear.

24 I'm for the -- I don't want to say article, but
25 number 1.

1 MR. STEWART: Alternative?

2 MR. LEIGHTON: Alternative 1. That's it. I
3 support that for several reasons. I don't feel -- and
4 it was demonstrated through three timber sales recently
5 that received zero bids from the timber industry. One
6 of the State sales finally received one after they put
7 it out the second time. I don't know where the other
8 Federal ones are, but they haven't received the bids.

9 So I think that tells me right there that
10 Southeast Alaska went to a different -- another
11 economic base and that there is tourism. Just recently
12 in Ketchikan Deer Mountain was on the subject of being
13 logged by Mental Health Trust. After they made several
14 objections to it, Mental Health was allowed to reselect
15 other areas.

16 I'm thinking now that that demonstrates that,
17 number one, logging would have an effect on the
18 communities for tourism and I think that's probably why
19 Ketchikan didn't allow that. I'm pretty sure that even
20 when the pulp mill was there and the timber industry
21 was up that they wouldn't think twice of logging that
22 Deer Mountain because their tourism wasn't up. But now
23 things have changed and they want to protect that. So
24 do I. I want to protect what we have left.

25 Old growth. Very important to cultural

1 activities in several ways. It's important that we
2 have the cultural significant trees and it takes
3 certain types. You're going to have a red cedar tree
4 that has a little different characteristic to it that
5 is required for building canoes versus totem poles, but
6 they all have the same quality or the same conditions
7 for cultural and that is the quality of old growth.

8 The rings have to be very close together. The
9 tree has to grow slowly and even after that you have to
10 look at that tree -- back in the day our ancestors used
11 to sound the tree by cutting in a wedge shape all the
12 way into the heart of it to see if it was rotten before
13 they even attempted to cut it down. That's how
14 important those trees were to us and still are.

15 In fact, I think they're even more important to
16 us now because we're trying to revive and bring back
17 our culture. Stormy has done a very good job in doing
18 this through our carving shed and his carving of --
19 helped with one pole and carved three, four other
20 poles. Then the long house reconstruction.

21 So I think it's important that if any of these
22 rules -- in fact, if number 1 was to stay, then I think
23 there's got to be maybe some areas set aside for
24 cultural now, now that I see it. I think it's going to
25 be necessary that we have this set aside so it's

1 protected for our future. It's going to be scattered
2 throughout Southeast. I mean we here -- I don't know
3 how far we'd have to go right now to find these red
4 cedar trees, but I suspect it's going to be a long
5 ways.

6 That's going to take a lot to get those trees
7 out of the forest to saltwater and that's probably the
8 only way we could do it. We don't need roads to do
9 this. We'd prefer to have areas stay roadless. That's
10 why we -- I am going Alternative 1 and our council has
11 chosen that also, but you'll get some stuff from them
12 later.

13 That's about it. That's what I have.

14 MR. STEWART: Thank you. I have Brad Clark.

15 (No comments)

16 MR. STEWART: I apologize if I'm mispronouncing
17 any of the names. Dorothy Smith.

18 (No comments)

19 MR. STEWART: Michael Jones.

20 MR. JONES: I'm here. I don't have anything.

21 MR. STEWART: Okay. I'll come back to you, Mr.
22 Jones, if you decide you do want to offer something
23 later. I'll come back to you. Bonnie Hammer, Harmer.

24 MS. HAMAR: Hamar.

25 MR. STEWART: Hamar.

1 MS. HAMAR: No comment for me. Thank you.

2 MR. STEWART: Stormy Hamar.

3 MR. HAMAR: Sure.

4 MR. STEWART: Thank you, sir.

5 MR. HAMAR: Mine's going to be 20 minutes. No,
6 I'm joking.

7 (Laughter)

8 MR. STEWART: Please state your name and spell
9 your name for the record, sir.

10 MR. HAMAR: My legal name is Glenn Hamar,
11 G-L-E-N-N H-A-M-A-R. I've been called Stormy since
12 birth, S-T-O-R-M-Y. I live in Kasaan. What else did
13 you need?

14 MR. STEWART: That's good.

15 MR. HAMAR: Okay. I don't think I'll go on too
16 long. I agree with everything Ron said. He had a lot
17 of great points around the cultural wood use. I think
18 about how quickly we can change our environment.

19 I should say that I'm 52 years old. I've got a
20 lot of experience in this Tongass National Forest.
21 I've been around it my entire life. I've spent most of
22 my adult life logging, road building and all the things
23 associated with those activities. So I've kind of seen
24 the forest from that angle and I'm also an Alaska
25 Native person.

1 I'm Haida. I grew up on the east coast of
2 Prince of Wales Island beginning my life in the
3 Ketchikan Hospital only because my mother wanted me to
4 be born in a hospital. Otherwise we lived on a
5 floathouse out here in Kasaan Bay near Kasaan Island.
6 I grew up with my Haida mother and my father who was --
7 he didn't have any Native blood but he fit the
8 lifestyle perfectly.

9 To give a little illustration of how quickly
10 things can change. When I was a little kid living on
11 the float, my great-grandmother lived with us and she
12 couldn't even speak fluent English. Her language was
13 Haida and she never learned to speak English fluently
14 although she did get by. It's just kind of an
15 illustration of how quickly we can totally destroy a
16 part of our environment or allow it to disappear if you
17 want to look at it another way.

18 I've certainly seen a lot of changes on the
19 land, changes with the water. Even with the air in my
20 lifetime in this area. I expect I'll see a lot more.
21 We can't stop everything. We can't go back in time,
22 but we should proceed with caution. I'm not in favor
23 of large-scale operations sending timber outside of our
24 area. I am in favor of local use, you know. Any
25 communities controlling their own areas and supplying

1 their needs from their surroundings.

2 My home is -- just for anybody that's not from
3 here I'd kind of like to explain that my home is really
4 all of Southeast Alaska. It's not just a box with four
5 walls and a couple windows and a door. I think a lot
6 of people in this area live that same way.

7 I'd like for us to be able to -- I'd like for
8 my grandkids and their grandkids and so on and so forth
9 until the planet is no longer habitable I'd like these
10 folks to have a chance at living life a little bit like
11 I've lived it, utilizing their surroundings and
12 existing with it and hopefully learning as they go
13 along and taking care of it better and better.

14 Maybe I am getting long-winded, but I think
15 this is something that happens. A lot of times you
16 hear people kind of joking about the noble savage and
17 how all throughout recorded history you hear folks
18 talking about some different chief that was saying
19 something about saving the land or the fish or the sky
20 or whatever it is.

21 I think that those people -- their culture had
22 been around a long time. Not that their DNA was
23 significantly different than anyone else's, but their
24 people had been around a certain area for a long time
25 and they learned over time what you can do and what you

1 can't. I think they probably -- you know, it's not all
2 recorded, but I'm sure they had some real hard lessons.

3 I'd just like for us not to -- you know, this
4 country is real young. It's only a couple hundred
5 years old. We're brand new. If we think we got it all
6 figured out, then that's probably a great big, giant
7 red flag indicating that maybe we're getting a little
8 ahead of ourselves.

9 I'd just recommend trying to keep the control
10 more local and moving slowly. Thank you.

11 MR. STEWART: Thank you, Mr. Hamar. Mr. Jones,
12 would you like to talk a minute, sir?

13 MR. JONES: No, thank you.

14 MR. STEWART: Then with that I'll open it up to
15 anybody that wants to offer additional comments.

16 (No comments)

17 MR. STEWART: Would you like another turn at
18 the mic, President Leighton?

19 MR. LEIGHTON: How about you? I'd like to hear
20 your.....

21 MR. STEWART: I'm here to listen, sir, although
22 I appreciate the invite. If there's no additional
23 comments for the record, we'll just pause where we're
24 at for now.

25 (Pause)

1 (Beginning cut off)

2 MR. LEIGHTON:for fish and I feel that
3 that is probably why some of the areas that haven't
4 been fished for a long time haven't come back. Kasaan
5 Bay here was wiped out I think of herring in the '70s,
6 early to mid '70s. We haven't had any returns back.
7 But yet that fishery on the outside continues on.

8 The herring come from different areas in Prince
9 of Wales Island or Ketchikan or points south and goes
10 out and they go in one big, huge school. This is where
11 this bate fishery occurs. They go out there and get as
12 much as they can, as fast as they can and as much as
13 their ship can hold. So I don't know how much. I was
14 even told that the Sitka harvest is geared towards what
15 has been already harvested in this here offshore bait
16 fishery. So that demonstrates to the State how much
17 they could fish in Sitka.

18 Last year they hadn't even had a fishery in
19 Sitka. I don't know about fisheries to come, but I
20 would say just leave it alone. We're entertaining
21 maybe trying to bring back the herring in Kasaan Bay
22 and do it a couple different ways.

23 I know that USDA, when I talked to them about
24 it, they said they'd give me administrative grants and
25 they'd help me go through Congress to get a

1 congressional grant if I need it. That's how important
2 they feel. I think that affects everything. I mean
3 our subsistence.

4 You see the sea otters out there and they're
5 becoming a problem. I got to thinking back before
6 contact there had to be lots of sea otters out there
7 and there was, but there was also untouched herring. A
8 massive amount of herring for them to eat. All marine
9 mammals will eat herring before anything else because
10 it has so much energy for them.

11 I don't know how, but I think even the whales
12 and everybody has a sense that this here fishery is at
13 risk, so I don't think they eat as much. I think they
14 deliberately -- because they happen to make it through.

15 Like Della was saying earlier, just a sprinkle
16 of -- I call it a one or two egg spawn. Back in the
17 day when I witnessed it, you could see up to about an
18 inch and a half, two-inch thick herring roe on kelp or
19 the beach, rocks, whatever they want to grow on.

20 Also I'd like to point out is in my day on July
21 4th, 1962 I was on a seiner and we pulled into Hoonah
22 to fuel up. I was shocked, but as we were fueling up I
23 was eating herring eggs off the piling in July.

24 Another thing happened south of Ketchikan in
25 Thorne Arm. I got in there late, anchored and was

1 going to go hunting in the morning. All night
2 activity. Sea lions, whales, seagulls, the herring
3 flipping. So I get up to go to the beach and there's
4 spawn on the beach. So they had different spawning
5 cycles.

6 Those other last two I mentioned nobody
7 mentions. The State doesn't. I think it's important
8 that if we wipe those out, then we're on the final one
9 of wiping it out and I think that's going to be
10 important that we continue on and do that because it's
11 making it difficult for us to get what we want.

12 So the State had designed a terminal fishery.
13 It's chum salmon. They'll raise this chum salmon in
14 pens so that they don't return to streams. They never
15 will return to a stream because they don't have a
16 stream to return to the way they design it.

17 So when they come back they just die. They're
18 caught. But during that process, and it occurs June --
19 I think around June 15th and they go down and seine
20 them. But during that process they intercept an awful
21 lot of our sockeye and an awful lot of kings. I'm not
22 talking a small quantity. It's making it difficult for
23 us to get what we need.

24 The State says that subsistence has priority
25 over all other consumers. So if a fishery shut down,

1 the first one to go is personal use. The second is
2 commercial. The third is sport. The last is
3 subsistence. I think really the last should be
4 cultural, but there's nothing there for that.

5 I don't know -- I know that the Federal
6 government turned over the fishery to the State of
7 Alaska to manage. If they're not doing right in the
8 management that you could petition for extraterritorial
9 jurisdiction and maybe the government can come back and
10 address that issue directly with the State to say, no,
11 no, you will shut this down or you will do this.

12 I think that herring -- it's time for that
13 extraterritorial jurisdiction. I think there's an
14 effort right now by the Sitka community to put that on
15 that extraterritorial jurisdiction list. So I'm hoping
16 that that's going to answer it, but still it's not
17 going to answer the one out -- the real culprit and
18 that there is the bait fishery.

19 So I just wanted to bring that up so that
20 people are aware of what's going on so that it could be
21 addressed. If you don't know what's going on, you
22 can't address it. I can't quote how many tons of
23 herring are taken out of that system because I don't
24 have the documentation, but I will get it.

25 I know that all fish in this bay here has

1 dropped in quantity and it's continuing to drop, but
2 they'll continue to have their fisheries. So I think
3 it's time that the Federal government takes another
4 look at the management the State is doing in general
5 for the fishery.

6 If they're not doing right, maybe you should
7 hand it over to the tribes. We'll do a good job, you
8 know. They can come to Kasaan and debate whether or
9 not they want to convince us to open the fishery here.
10 That will probably never happen, but good thoughts.

11 Thank you.

12 MR. STEWART: Thank you, President Leighton.

13 MS. COBURN: I had a further thought too.

14 MR. STEWART: Okay.

15 MS. COBURN: Yeah, pinto abalone are a part of
16 our traditional diet and my sister worked for an
17 airline in Ketchikan back in the '80s and she saw
18 literally plane loads of abalone leaving Ketchikan from
19 this area and all this surrounding area. So that tells
20 me they were overharvesting because you can't find too
21 many abalone any longer. You're lucky to find one.

22 I guess it's a high-ticket item in New York or
23 wherever it's shipped to. They aren't thinking about
24 the locals, that they'd like to have it too. I don't
25 know what the regs are saying about pinto abalone. I

1 haven't looked at the rules lately. And I don't know
2 who's keeping track of the population of abalone
3 either, but they should be watching it closely.
4 Someone needs to keep track.

5 That's all I had on abalone.

6 MR. STEWART: Thank you, Ms. Coburn. Anyone
7 else want to offer any testimony.

8 MR. HAMAR: Let's see. We've still got 20
9 minutes. Yeah, I can use 20.

10 (Laughter)

11 MR. HAMAR: I'll throw out a couple more
12 sentences. Thank you. This is Stormy Hamar again. I
13 just wanted to say on the record here that as far as
14 the Roadless Rule goes, I'm in favor of the no action.
15 In any case, I hope that we will have a cultural
16 use/subsistence priority.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. STEWART: Thank you, Stormy.

19 MS. COBURN: I agree on that.

20 MR. STEWART: Do you want to formally offer
21 that on the record?

22 MS. COBURN: Yes, I do. Yeah, I keep asking
23 the Forest Service how many cedars are left on this
24 island. They don't know. Nobody is counting them. We
25 were told that whenever we want cedars we have to get

1 in ahead of a timber sale and pick out the ones we
2 want, but that's quite a job, you know, and you have to
3 be able to get to these places. They're not always on
4 roads.

5 So we need some kind of special system in place
6 where we're brought in and can pick out trees to make
7 canoes and totems and so forth. I mean all the four
8 tribal villages need that system set up. Because when
9 they just make a sale everything goes to whoever is
10 buying it and they don't think about other people.

11 We're able to get a few from Sealaska, but, you
12 know, I don't know how many they're going to let us
13 have. Have you ever talked to them about that?

14 MR. HAMAR: I have, yeah. Well, they see this
15 as a problem too because, you know, their shareholders
16 would like to be able to access wood and they've just
17 about logged it all up. They're going to run out here
18 shortly. So, yeah, they're looking for ways to solve
19 it too, solve that problem.

20 MS. COBURN: Is there some kind of a system
21 they can do to keep track of such things as cedars?
22 How do they track all these?

23 MR. STEWART: So in the subsistence hearing
24 it's really not set up for question and answer. I
25 would certainly be glad to talk to you after the

1 session if that will work.....

2 MS. COBURN: Yes.

3 MR. STEWART:and try to help offer some
4 advice.

5 MS. COBURN: Yes.

6 MR. STEWART: It's probably better that I not
7 insert myself into this session.

8 MS. COBURN: Okay.

9 MR. STEWART: Was there something else that you
10 wanted to offer?

11 MS. COBURN: No.

12 MR. STEWART: Thank you, Ms. Coburn. I've now
13 called on all the persons who indicated on the sign-in
14 sheet that they desired to provide oral comments. Is
15 there anyone I have inadvertently missed or omitted?
16 Please raise your hand.

17 (No comments)

18 MR. STEWART: I'm not seeing any hands. Is
19 there anyone who didn't indicate a desire to provide
20 an oral comment but wishes to do so now?

21 (No comments)

22 MR. STEWART: No hands visible. There being no
23 further comments I will close this meeting. You may
24 provide written comments after this meeting until
25 December 17th, 2019. All the addresses and

1 instructions for submitting comments were included in
2 the handouts given to you when you arrived.

3 Thank you very much for participating in this
4 process tonight. The Forest Service is looking forward
5 to comments on the issues from tribes, ANCSA
6 corporations and general public. After all comments
7 are received and evaluated a final rule in the Alaska
8 Roadless Rulemaking process will be decided by the
9 Secretary of Agriculture by the summer of 2020.

10 Thank you for coming tonight. I will close the
11 meeting effective 7:47 p.m. Thank you very much.

12 (Off record)

13 (END OF RECORDING)

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TRANSCRIBER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Salena A. Hile, hereby certify that the foregoing pages numbered 02 through 22 are a true, accurate, and complete transcript of ANILCA PUBLIC HEARING, KASAAN, ALASKA transcribed under my direction from a copy of an electronic sound recording to the best of our knowledge and ability.

DATE

SALENA A. HILE, (Transcriber)