

TRANSCRIPT OF ROADLESS RULE
ANILCA SUBSISTENCE PUBLIC HEARING

POINT BAKER, ALASKA
11/19/2019

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

2 (Point Baker, Alaska - 11/19/2019)

3 (On record)

4 MR. VANORMER: All right. I want to thank
5 everyone for attending tonight's public meeting. This
6 is an opportunity for you to provide input to the
7 proposed 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 in 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
15 exemption of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule
16 applied to the Tongass National Forest.

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

23 My name is Chad VanOrmer and I am the Director
24 of Ecosystem Planning and Budget here in the Alaska
25 Region for the USDA Forest Service. Today I'm here to

1 serve as the meeting facilitator, so my job is to make
2 sure that everyone here would like to make oral or
3 written comments on the proposed rule is able to do so.

4 The meeting has been scheduled to last until
5 2:00 p.m. today in order to receive your comments.
6 We'll be using digital voice recorders located on the
7 table near the speaker to record your comments. Your
8 voice recordings will then be transcribed by a
9 professional court reporter and included in the project
10 record for the Alaska Roadless Rulemaking Project.

11 During this comment portion of the meeting we
12 will not be answering any questions, allowing us time
13 to listen to and hear your comments. In addition to
14 today's meeting we'll be hosting additional public
15 information meetings in communities around Southeast
16 Alaska, Anchorage and Washington, D.C.

17 In conjunction with those meetings we will
18 collect subsistence testimony at communities in
19 Southeast Alaska to include Ketchikan, Craig, Hydaburg,
20 Kasaan, Yakutat, Tenakee Springs, Wrangell, Gustavus,
21 Petersburg, Kake, Sitka, Angoon, Thorne Bay and
22 Skagway. The current schedule of the meetings can be
23 found on the Alaska Roadless Rule website.

24 I've got the recorder rolling here and if
25 someone is ready to give some testimony we'll go ahead

1 and do that. What I'm going to ask you to do is state
2 your name spell it and then you're free to speak as you
3 like into the recorder here.

4 MS. BOTELLO: This is Litzi Botello, L-I-T-Z-I
5 B-O-T-E-L-L-O. I am a 39-year resident of Port
6 Protection. I live here with my husband John Bean and
7 I am in complete opposition to any alternative other
8 than Alternative 1. I speak for my husband who cannot
9 be here today. John W. Bean. J-O-H-N B-E-A-N. He is
10 in complete opposition also to anything other than
11 Alternative 1. He is a 41-year resident of Port
12 Protection.

13 That is the long and short of it.

14 MR. VANORMER: Thank you. For the record I'm
15 going to go ahead and pause it unless you're ready to
16 go.

17 MS. MAGNUSON: I'm ready.

18 MR. VANORMER: All right. Excellent.

19 MS. MAGNUSON: My name is Judy Magnuson,
20 J-U-D-Y M-A-G-N-U-S-O-N. I've lived in Port Protection
21 36 years and I am for Alternative 1. I'm opposed to
22 taking any of the roadless alternative off. I want the
23 Roadless Rule to remain in place.

24 I think we've already spent too much
25 subsidizing the timber industry and think that our area

1 needs to heal and that's it.

2 MR. VANORMER: Thank you.

3 MR. SQUIBB: My name is David Squibb, D-A-V-I-D
4 S-Q-U-I-B-B. I'm a 20-year resident of Point Baker.
5 I'm vehemently opposed to any alternative other than
6 Alternative 1. Once again we have big industry driving
7 for the benefit of very few to the detriment of all.

8 We've lived out here -- I've lived out here
9 better than 20 years. I've seen a lot of the aftermath
10 of heavy logging. I've seen a lot of signs over the
11 last decade that we need to keep what we have intact if
12 we want to sustain our livelihoods out here. We draw
13 more than just financial gain from the forest. It
14 provides what we need for longevity, living out here
15 prosperously away from a monetary system that is
16 driving the destruction of our natural habitats.

17 We can't afford to lose this forest. The world
18 can't afford to lose this forest and it's disheartening
19 to see that after all the public commentary that me and
20 my fellow residents have put forward it is still being
21 pushed towards the extreme of Alternative 6.

22 I'm for leaving the Roadless Rule Act in place
23 and can advocate no other alternative than Alternative
24 1.

25 MR. VANORMER: Thank you. One more.

1 MR. CARLSON: Hello. I'm Sam Carlson,
2 C-A-R-L-S-O-N. I'm a lifelong resident. I've been
3 here 58 years I guess. I'm definitely preferable to
4 Alternative 1. Vehemently opposed to Alternative 6.
5 That defies critical thought process just to take all
6 the rules and regulations about road building off the
7 map.

8 The other alternatives in between. Alternative
9 2 would be acceptable, but I would prefer Alternative
10 1. Having seen in my life the effect that roads and
11 logging have on the local ecosystem, it's pretty much
12 apparent to me that the least amount of disturbance in
13 the forest would be the best alternative.

14 I realize people have to make a living but
15 there's no valid reason to have a timber industry, a
16 big one, right now because this forest will be here
17 forever if we take care of it and we can use it
18 forever.

19 Thank you very much.

20 MR. VANORMER: All right. Thank you.

21 (Pause)

22 MR. VANORMER: Do you want to give some
23 testimony right now?

24 MS. LARSON: Sure.

25 MR. VANORMER: Okay. Here we go. So start off

1 by stating your name and spelling it.

2 MS. LARSON: I'm Darlene Larson, Larson with an
3 O. I've lived here all my life. I've lived on Prince
4 of Wales, Kuiu all my life. I love wild lands. I
5 think we as human sapiens are all connected to them.
6 If we forget that connection, we forget a lot about
7 ourselves and its overall effects are planetary.

8 Anyway, I'm against everything but keeping
9 everything roadless, Alternative 1. All I can say is
10 that we can't underestimate the value of wild and wild
11 lands. We have more and more areas being utilized,
12 exploited.

13 I feel sometimes if you just leave land
14 completely alone, the cathedral of the trees and the
15 natural ecosystems, we have to have some of that. Some
16 of this land on this island has already been used
17 extensively one way or another. What we've got left I
18 think we should maintain. It's sequestering carbon.
19 It has a lot of information and it has beauty and will
20 give a lot of people spiritual sustenance in the
21 future.

22 Thank you very much for listening to me.

23 MR. VANORMER: Thank you.

24 (Pause)

25 MR. VANORMER: All right. We're recording now.

1 MS. HERNANDEZ: Okay. My name is Andrea
2 Hernandez and I will be reading a prepared testimony
3 today of my husband, Don Hernandez. That would be D-O-N
4 H-E-R-N-A-N-D-E-Z. He was unable to attend today's
5 meeting since this is the first day in two weeks that
6 it's skiffable weather and he's gone to one of his
7 favorite roadless areas to hunt along with my son Carl
8 because he has not been successful hunting the roaded
9 areas that are nearer to us.

10 So to start his testimony he begins: First of
11 all I want to thank you for coming to our village. I
12 think it is very important. The agency who will be
13 making decisions that affect subsistence hear firsthand
14 the stories of the people who will be affected by your
15 decisions.

16 In rural communities, especially the smaller,
17 more remote ones, stories spoken not written is how we
18 express our feelings. Everything about living in Point
19 Baker revolves around harvesting from the forest and
20 sea which surrounds us. Whether it is fish to provide
21 our income and feed ourselves or wood to build and heat
22 our homes or deer to feed our families. Point Baker
23 exists because all of these resources were plentiful
24 and close at hand. But things have changed. In fact
25 the entire landscape has changed.

1 Prior to the arrival of the pulp mills in
2 Southeast Alaska north Prince of Wales and south
3 Kupreanof Island, our home territory, was for the most
4 part pristine, old-growth forest, rich in wildlife and
5 salmon streams.

6 The first impacts to this forest was the
7 stripping of much of the biologically critical habitat
8 of the beach fringe on Kupreanof Island from the south
9 end of Rocky Pass to Duncan Canal as well as the north
10 end of Prince of Wales from Point Baker to Coffman Cove
11 by A-frame and Cat skid-logging.

12 Next came the logging camp at Lavisher Bay,
13 punching roads into and clearcutting every watershed on
14 North Prince of Wales. Eventually these roads were
15 connected to the road systems on the rest of Prince of
16 Wales, which are connected by daily ferry service to
17 Southeast Alaska's second largest city Ketchikan.
18 Anyone luck enough to have lived here for more than 50
19 years can barely recognize the place.

20 As subsistence resources have slowly diminished
21 due to lost habitat and increased competition brought
22 by all of the road access, local harvesters have grown
23 more dependent on the roadless areas near our community
24 to meet our needs. My friends and neighbors and myself
25 have fought hard over many years to protect and

1 preserve what roadless areas we have. We have won some
2 and lost a lot.

3 Now we face this latest attempt to eliminate
4 what we believe to be the most important protection to
5 our way of life. We are heartened by the opposition to
6 doing away with roadless protection by an overwhelming
7 number of fellow rural residents. We agree with them
8 that this is an existential threat with profound
9 consequences to the future of the subsistence way of
10 life in the Tongass Forest.

11 Therefore, the no action alternative is the
12 only one I can support. Thank you.

13 MR. VANORMER: Thank you very much. Appreciate
14 it.

15 MS. HERNANDEZ: Then I have my own. Do you
16 want me to just keep it going?

17 MR. VANORMER: Yes.

18 MS. HERNANDEZ: My name is Andrea Hernandez.
19 I'm a 46-year resident of Southeast Alaska and have
20 lived in Point Baker 33 of those years. My husband and
21 I built a home here, raised our son here and continue
22 to depend on subsistence resources and support
23 ourselves primarily by commercial fishing.

24 Thank you for your presence here today,
25 acknowledging that the Roadless Rule will negatively

1 impact subsistence opportunity on the Tongass.

2 I've heard testimony and commentary from others
3 in Southeast Alaska who have passionately and
4 eloquently expressed their opposition to overturning
5 the Roadless Rule and I'm inspired and thankful for the
6 overwhelming defense of the protections to the
7 remaining roadless areas on the Tongass.

8 This proposed rule change will negatively
9 impact my life and the lives of those who depend on
10 healthy forests for their sustenance and livelihood.
11 In addition, the cumulative effects of continued
12 habitat degradation globally is affecting climate the
13 world over.

14 Although it may seem that it's not possible for
15 us to solve all the world's problems, it is within our
16 power to do one right thing. That is to uphold the
17 Roadless Rule. I'm here to do my part and publicly
18 supporting the no action alternative.

19 Subsistence is about more than going out and
20 harvesting deer and other resources for personal
21 consumption. Subsistence is a way of living close to
22 the land that results in a feeling of connection, of
23 intimacy with particular places and other forms of
24 life. It leads to feelings of gratitude and wonder and
25 a desire to protect what we found to be so valuable.

1 The Roadless Rule was celebrated nationwide in
2 2001 in the recognition that national forests in the
3 Lower 48 had been overdeveloped. Including Southeast
4 Alaska in the Rule provided a chance to keep that from
5 happening on the Tongass. It slowed down development.

6 Your proposal now to exempt the Tongass from
7 the Roadless Rule would mean going backwards in a world
8 that desperately needs unroaded wild places not only
9 for subsistence opportunity but for their value in
10 mitigating climate change. Opening up Tongass's
11 remaining unroaded lands will mean more old-growth
12 forest degradation and loss of habitat for mammals,
13 birds, deer and fish. More roads will mean easier
14 access for hunters and fishermen leading to increased
15 pressure on limited resources as well as the
16 introduction of invasive species along the road
17 corridors.

18 We've already seen all of this and felt the
19 negative impacts on Prince of Wales. Many have worked
20 hard over the years to protect the last of the unroaded
21 areas on this island as well as on our neighboring
22 islands.

23 No one who values the subsistence way of life,
24 who values sustainable wild salmon as a way to make a
25 living, who values the ability to harvest and consume

1 deer and other resources and who values wildness itself
2 can support overturning the Roadless Rule.

3 Again, I support the no action alternative.

4 Thank you for hearing my testimony.

5 MR. VANORMER: Thank you.

6 (Pause)

7 MR. VANORMER: Continuation of Point Baker.

8 MR. GILL: I think we should keep the roadless
9 rule in place. Joe Gill, Port Protection. Thank you
10 very much.

11 MR. VANORMER: All right. Thank you.

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 14 are a true, accurate, and complete transcript of ANILCA PUBLIC HEARING, POINT BAKER, 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)