

TRANSCRIPT OF ROADLESS RULE  
ANILCA SUBSISTENCE PUBLIC HEARING

SKAGWAY, ALASKA  
11/26/2019

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

2 (Skagway, Alaska - 11/29/2019)

3 (On record)

4 MR. VANORMER: All right, I've got a hot mic up  
5 here, actually I've got two of them so just in case.  
6 So we're going to go ahead and get started with the  
7 subsistence hearing here in Skagway. And what we're  
8 going to do is, I'm going to -- it's a little bit  
9 formal in terms of the beginning because I have to read  
10 a script. Basically it opens this up and gets it all  
11 on the recording. And then what I'll do is I'll start  
12 calling folks up, basically in the order I have them  
13 here, which is kind of random.

14 So I will go ahead and get started and we'll go  
15 from there.

16 So let's see, I want to thank everyone for  
17 attending tonight's public meeting. This is an  
18 opportunity for you to provide input into the proposed  
19 Alaska Roadless Rule and corresponding draft  
20 environmental impact statement.

21 Specifically the Forest Service is seeking your  
22 comment on a proposed rule on how roadless areas in  
23 Alaska and the Tongass National Forest will be managed  
24 in the future. On October 18, 2019 the Notice for  
25 Proposed Rulemaking was published in the Federal

1 Register and indicated a preferred Alternative 6  
2 exemption of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule  
3 applied to the Tongass National Forest.

4 An exemption would remove all regulatory  
5 restrictions currently in place by the 2001 Roadless  
6 Rule on the Tongass National Forest. The Forest  
7 Service will be accepting comments on this proposed  
8 rule until December 17, 2019. Tonight will be an  
9 opportunity for you to provide oral or written  
10 comments.

11 My name is Chad VanOrmer. I am the Director of  
12 Ecosystem Planning and Budget for the USDA Forest  
13 Service. in Alaska. Tonight I'm here to serve as the  
14 meeting facilitator, so my job is to make sure that  
15 everyone here who would like to make oral or written  
16 comments on the proposed rule is able to do so.

17 The meeting has been scheduled to last until  
18 9:00 tonight in order to receive your comments. We'll  
19 be using a digital voice recorder located on the table  
20 near the speaker to record your comments. Your voice  
21 recordings will then be translated by a professional  
22 court reporter and included in the project record for  
23 the Alaska Roadless Rulemaking Project.

24 During this comment portion of the meeting we  
25 will not be answering any questions, allowing us time

1 to listen to and hear your comments. In addition to  
2 tonight's meeting we'll be hosting additional public  
3 information meetings in communities throughout  
4 Southeast Alaska, Anchorage and Washington, D.C.

5 In conjunction with those meetings we will  
6 collect subsistence testimony at communities in  
7 Southeast Alaska to include Ketchikan, Craig, Hydaburg,  
8 Kasaan, Yakutat, Tenakee Springs, Wrangell, Gustavus,  
9 Petersburg, Kake, Sitka, Angoon, Thorne Bay and  
10 Skagway. The current schedule of the meetings can be  
11 found on the Alaska Roadless Rule website.

12 All right, so I'm going to go ahead and open it  
13 up, I've got three, four, five here. And I'm going to  
14 first call up -- it looks like we got plenty of time  
15 so, you know, we'll give it six, eight minutes per  
16 person and we'll go from there. You can always come  
17 back up a second time if you want to and we'll just  
18 hang out here and do this until -- until we feel like  
19 we've got everyone covered.

20 I'm going to call the first speaker up and then  
21 I'll let the speaker know, who's kind of on deck so  
22 they can be prepared to come up at that time.

23 So first I'm going to call up Dustin Stone.  
24 All right, Dustin. You'll be the first one to speak,  
25 when you speak I want you to say your name clearly and

1 then spell it for the record.

2 MR. STONE: Okay.

3 MR. VANORMER: And then you can go ahead and  
4 give your testimony. And then on deck I have Jaime  
5 Bricker. So there you go, it's all yours.

6 MR. STONE: Thank you.

7 MR. VANORMER: Yep.

8 MR. STONE: My name is Dustin Stone, D-U-S-T-I-  
9 N S-T-O-N-E. I realize that the purpose of this public  
10 comment period is to -- to comment on subsistence,  
11 probably -- or not probably, but more specifically,  
12 subsistence gathering and harvesting of, you know,  
13 fish, animals, plants, but I would argue that in Alaska  
14 subsistence has a much broader meaning.

15 In my prior employment at a Wilderness Fishing  
16 Lodge on Prince of Wales Island, I made my living and  
17 essentially subsisted by sharing the Tongass with  
18 visitors and with my guests. They came to us because  
19 we took them to these amazing places, to this amazing  
20 Forest that -- that wasn't like anything that our  
21 visitors from down south were getting at home. We  
22 relied heavily on salmon, and -- and natural resources  
23 that existed only within the Tongass.

24 The environmental impact report that we just  
25 saw sort of distilled down, mentions that there will be

1 minimal impact on the tourism industry, which we all  
2 sort of make our living off of here in Skagway, and I  
3 would argue that maybe that is -- is just too broad of  
4 a look at the subject. Maybe it won't affect the --  
5 the major cruise industry at -- at a huge level, you  
6 know, you can put in greenbelts so that cruise ships  
7 won't be able to see clear-cuts from the Inside Passage  
8 but for small operators, like the one that I worked  
9 for, and like those that operated all around us, clear-  
10 cuts were horrible. We -- we're still able to see  
11 areas that were clear-cut in the '50s and '60s, areas  
12 that were scalped before I was even born, we're just  
13 really starting to bounce back. And our guests would  
14 often ask us, what's that about, it -- that -- that  
15 doesn't look it's something that just happened  
16 naturally and we would explain to them what happened  
17 and they were usually pretty disgusted by it. So I  
18 would argue that if we repeal the Roadless Rule and  
19 allow major logging companies to come in and start  
20 clear-cutting again, it is going to have a very  
21 definite and very visible impact on -- on those  
22 operators. We have to look at and think beyond just  
23 the major multi-national cruise corporations and look  
24 at people that actually live and subsist and work in  
25 these areas.

1           It's a delicate balance. I understand that we  
2 all use wood and paper products, but there are better  
3 ways to go about this than repealing a rule that is  
4 protecting one of our largest temperate rain Forests.

5           I guess that's it, thank you.

6           MR. VANORMER: All right, thank you. Next I'm  
7 going to call up Jaime Bricker, and on deck we have  
8 Katie Riley. So just be sure to state your name and  
9 spell it for the record and we'll go from there.  
10 Thanks.

11           MS. BRICKER: My name is Jaime Bricker, J-A-I-  
12 M-E B-R-I-C-K-E-R. I'm the president of the Skagway  
13 Traditional Council. I participated via teleconference  
14 as part of tribal consultation with USDA UnderSecretary  
15 Jim Hubbard regarding the Roadless Rule on November 2nd  
16 with many other Southeast Alaskan tribal leaders. Each  
17 tribe -- or each leader spoke very passionately about  
18 protecting their Tongass, some were angry, some cried,  
19 some provided facts about the logging industry,  
20 subsistence, tourism, culture, historical land  
21 occupation, watershed health, erosion and more, all in  
22 support of protecting what is theirs. UnderSecretary  
23 Jim Hubbard's answers were very bureaucratic and, to  
24 me, insinuated that he wasn't actually listening at  
25 all. All the tribes -- everybody who participated in

1 this teleconference was in agreement that the USDA  
2 Forest Service agency's officials should be consulting  
3 with Federally-recognized tribes regarding any proposed  
4 action that will affect our tribal lands, in fact, it  
5 is their obligation to do so under Tribal Relations,  
6 Forest Service Manual, under Section 1563.02 paragraph  
7 (4), which reads:

8 Article 19 calls for obtaining indigenous free,  
9 prior and informed consent when making decisions that  
10 may affect them.

11 That means the agency officials should consult  
12 with indigenous people, the duly elected officials of  
13 Federally-recognized tribes and their traditional  
14 holders of Indian religions, knowledges and practices  
15 early in their decisionmaking process. The  
16 relationship should be non-coercive, free and allow for  
17 full information exchange between all involved parties  
18 informed. These discussions should lead to, whenever  
19 possible, outcomes that are beneficial and at least  
20 protective -- at least protective of the Indian tribes  
21 and other indigenous peoples. Consent does not mean  
22 that the indigenous peoples have veto power over Forest  
23 Service decisions, it does mean that they should have a  
24 realistic opportunity to provide input that could  
25 change a discretionary decision.

1           We should have been consulted earlier.

2           Skagway Traditional Council stands united with  
3   our neighboring tribes and fellow Skagway community  
4   members in support of maintaining the Roadless Rule  
5   which protects over 9 million acres on the Tongass. We  
6   depend on our Tongass for subsistence hunting, fishing,  
7   gathering, recreating, maintaining cultural closeness  
8   to nature, maintaining our economic interest in tourism  
9   and mitigating environmental risks. Skagway  
10   Traditional Council supports Alternative 1.

11           MR. VANORMER: Thank you. Next, Katie Riley,  
12   and then after Katie will be Emily Willis, it looks  
13   like. It's all yours.

14           MS. RILEY: Katie Riley, K-A-T-I-E R-I-L-E-Y.  
15   I want to start by thanking the Skagway Traditional  
16   Council for having me as a guest on their lands and the  
17   Chilkoot and Chilkat people who caretook these lands  
18   for time immemorial before that. I, personally, am  
19   from Sitka, so I am a guest on Tlingit Aani land, and  
20   the Kiks.adi Clan that caretook those lands. So I am  
21   here to give subsistence testimony because I missed the  
22   subsistence hearing in Sitka and this is my  
23   opportunity.

24           So I hunt for deer and I also fish for salmon.  
25   Some other subsistence resources that I gather are

1 beach asparagus, berries, deer heart, boletes and a lot  
2 of different types of berries, and mainly fishing for  
3 sockeye salmon, coho and king. The areas that I  
4 subsist in are around Redoubt, Salmon Lake, and Silver  
5 Bay, which is a roadless area, Nakwasina Sound, which  
6 is a roadless area, the middle of Kruzof, which is a  
7 roadless area, the entirety of Kruzof actually, and  
8 some -- some other places down on the south end of the  
9 island near Port Alexander and I've also had the chance  
10 to practice my subsistence harvesting on Prince of  
11 Wales Island, which I'm really grateful for.

12           So I'm really concerned about how the effects  
13 of logging have both degraded habitat for these  
14 subsistence resources, in regards to deer, that is  
15 mainly seen in the form of a lot of stem exclusion now  
16 which is preventing food and understory shrubbery from  
17 growing which starves out the deer. There's also still  
18 a lot of slash left from the logging practices that  
19 Sitka went through in the '70s, '80s and '90s that has  
20 made it really difficult to travel through these woods  
21 and -- that's both difficult for humans to practice,  
22 you know, their subsistence hunting and also for the  
23 deer. It can be really difficult for them to get  
24 through. So when that happens we're seeing a lot of  
25 deer die-off throughout the Tongass but, for me,

1 specifically, in Sitka, and, you know, the effects of  
2 the clear-cut when the deer are coming back in those  
3 first 20 years, those -- those 20 years are now over  
4 and so what we're seeing is a lot of lack of food, lack  
5 of good canopy coverage so that you're not -- you're  
6 basically starving them out because there's nothing  
7 growing in these -- in these dead zones.

8           In regards to fish, some of the effects of past  
9 logging have really degraded watershed integrity and so  
10 we're seeing sort of increased stream flow. It's  
11 unregulated and so, you know, when it rains instead of  
12 dribbling through the canopy and turning into -- you  
13 know, going into the river or draining in and creating  
14 an even stream flow, it's rushing in and it's actually  
15 washing out a lot of the fish eggs and so we're  
16 experiencing really irregular fish returns. As well,  
17 the canopy cover that regulates the temperature of  
18 these streams is gone, especially on Prince of Wales,  
19 and that is rising stream temps, creating sort of  
20 entropy and suffocating a lot of the fish that are  
21 trying to spawn in this habitat.

22           Just in Sitka, we saw, you know, the effects of  
23 climate change and so what really concerns me with this  
24 Roadless Rule proposal and the logging that has the  
25 potential and the probability to result from it is that

1 this is really going to affect our ability in Southeast  
2 Alaska to respond to climate change and adapt to it.  
3 Climate change is causing rising temperatures in our  
4 streams, in our oceans, on land, also increased ocean  
5 acidification, which is having really deleterious  
6 effects on fish populations. Yellow cedar as well.  
7 The habitat that I mentioned for the deer. And so with  
8 these changes in -- in the temperature regimes around  
9 here, we're seeing a lot of pressure put on these  
10 resources that I depend on and much of Southeast Alaska  
11 depends on for our food security. It's all we really  
12 have for food security and we have a real chance here  
13 in Southeast Alaska to be able to adapt to climate  
14 change in ways that, you know, people down South cannot  
15 because they don't really have these subsistence  
16 resources anymore. So as long as we can protect our  
17 local food supply, we might be able to, you know,  
18 create a different lifestyle that -- that we can move  
19 past, you know, dependence on -- on all the food that  
20 we ship up from down South, however, I think that, you  
21 know, this increased logging is going to contribute to  
22 climate change, it's going to keep causing rising  
23 temperatures, which is going to keep causing declines  
24 in fish populations, declines in deer populations and  
25 I'm really concerned about how that is going to affect

1 our ability to adapt and mitigate up here.

2 So that's all I have for you. Thank you.

3 MR. VANORMER: Thank you. All right, next I'm  
4 going to call up Emily Willis and then Tim Burley is --  
5 would be on deck after that. Remember to state your  
6 name and spell it, please.

7 MS. WILLIS: Yep.

8 MR. VANORMER: Thanks.

9 MS. WILLIS: My name is Emily Willis, E-M-I-L-Y  
10 W-I-L-L-I-S. I've lived in Skagway for 12 -- or 17  
11 years now, year-round, and my family and I strongly  
12 support the Roadless Rule as it is for the Tongass  
13 National Forest.

14 As all of you know the Tongass is home to so  
15 many living beings, beings like animals, plants,  
16 lichens and fungi, an incredible diversity.  
17 Personally, I depend on many of these for medicine,  
18 food, as well for spiritual and mental health. I  
19 gather boletes, morels, oyster mushrooms for our  
20 families pantry and chaga, redbelted conks and birch  
21 conks for medicine. I go to Lower Lake, I go to Upper,  
22 I go to Laughton, to Icy Lake, to Sturgis Landing and  
23 all those places in between. I also gather plants like  
24 spruce, devil's club, cotton wood, bunchberry, arnica,  
25 fireweed, horsetail, labrador tea, riverbeauty rose,

1 hi-bush cranberry, juniper, alder, birch, willow,  
2 ossnea and blueberries, not to mention bladderack, sea  
3 asparagus and more from the beach. The food and  
4 medicine I gather -- or, sorry -- the food and medicine  
5 I gather and the medicines I make help support my  
6 family and my community.

7 My partner hunts for bear and mountain goats in  
8 the Upper Lake area as well as Laughton and other  
9 areas. He fishes in Lower and Upper Lakes, he also  
10 subsistence fishes for salmon in the Pacific Ocean.  
11 This helps to sustain our family through the year,  
12 helping to offset our grocery bill, which as we know,  
13 gets high.

14 The Tongass is also a place that we -- where we  
15 seek, where we go to escape the tourists who come to  
16 Alaska, they, themselves, seeking natural beauty, not  
17 logged over areas or clear-cuts. We have stayed in  
18 Skagway in great part because of this Forest. Our  
19 family hikes and camps in the Tongass all year long and  
20 we appreciate the deep beauty of this wilderness.

21 I've been studying, gathering and growing  
22 Native plants in this region for 17 years. And when I  
23 go down South and fly over the Forests of Washington  
24 and Oregon, it breaks my heart. The Earth there is  
25 scarred. Broken into bits.

1           When you clear-cut and when you take the  
2 biggest and the best of the trees in the Forest, you  
3 significantly alter the ceiling networks that support  
4 that area around it, you take away the infrastructure  
5 of that Forest, which took thousands upon thousands of  
6 years to create.

7           Suzanne Simard, a professor of Forest ecology,  
8 who teaches at the University of British Columbia  
9 writes:

10           Neighboring trees keep dying, gaps open up in  
11 the protected Forest canopy, the micro-climate support  
12 system weakens. In summer, more hot sunshine reaches  
13 the delicate Forest floor heating up and drying the  
14 cool, damp, evenly regulated microclimate that such  
15 Forest trees prefer. Damaging winds can penetrate the  
16 Forest more easily and without neighboring tree crowns  
17 to stabilize against, the chance of being uprooted  
18 increases. Logging the Tongass will destroy precious  
19 ecosystems and significantly alter my life and that of  
20 my family and my community, not to mention the Forest  
21 itself.

22           Peter Wohlleben, a German Forester, and author  
23 of the Secret Life of Trees, who has now devoted his  
24 life to the study and care of trees after working 20  
25 years as a clear-cutting, pesticide and herbicide

1 spraying Forester says:

2 We must at least talk about the rights of  
3 trees. We must manage our Forest sustainably and  
4 respectfully by limiting road construction to access  
5 our last remnants of the Tongass Old Growth Forest.  
6 The Roadless Rule protects our future and our way of  
7 life. It helps protect the beings of the Forest,  
8 water-borne or footed, winged ones or rooted.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. VANORMER: Thank you. Next I'll call up  
11 Tim Bourcy, and Andrew Cremata will be on deck there.

12 MR. THOLE: Bourcy.

13 MR. VANORMER: Oh, I'm sorry. Bourcy.

14 MR. THOLE: Yes. I'm reading a letter on behalf  
15 of Tim.

16 MR. VANORMER: Okay, yeah.....

17 MR. THOLE: Is that cool.

18 MR. VANORMER: .....yep, just state that on the  
19 record, please.....

20 MR. THOLE: I will.

21 MR. VANORMER: .....and who you're reading it  
22 on behalf of.

23 MR. THOLE: Hello, my name is Cory Thole, C-O-  
24 R-Y T-H-O-L-E and I am reading a letter to be submitted  
25 to the National Forest Service and testimony by Timothy

1 Bourcy T-I-M-O-T-H-Y B-O-U-R-C-Y.

2 To whom it may concern. As a business owner  
3 and resident of Skagway, Alaska, I would like to  
4 comment on the Draft Roadless Rule determination.

5 I am the owner of Packer Expeditions, LTD., in  
6 Skagway, Alaska. Packer was started in 1992, and my  
7 company makes the majority of its income utilizing the  
8 Tongass National Forest. Over the course of 28 years  
9 we have grown from a two man company to a company that  
10 employs 28 seasonal employees, and four year-round  
11 employees. This company's very existence relies on a  
12 remote wilderness experience for our clients in the  
13 Tongass. In addition to educating thousands of clients  
14 each year about the Tongass, we are a permitted entity  
15 that pays over \$26,000 annually for use of Forest  
16 Service trails. We have a volunteer agreement with the  
17 Forest Service for trail maintenance on the Denver and  
18 Laughton Trails in the Forest that helps the Federal  
19 government to operate more efficiently. Any decision  
20 that relates to the Tongass has direct impact on my  
21 livelihood and the people I employ. Tourism is the  
22 strongest sector in a struggling Alaska economy and  
23 decisions made on the Tongass have significant economic  
24 impacts on both the tour industry and fisheries  
25 industries and these impacts will be felt statewide.

1 Making decision that effect these industries must be  
2 viewed with great care. As a resident of Skagway I can  
3 say that the road issue north of Katzsaheen Flats has  
4 already settled law and this area should be removed  
5 from any consideration.

6 Thank you. Tim Bourcy. President, Packer  
7 Expeditions, LTD.

8 MR. VANORMER: All right, thank you. And  
9 Andrew Cremata, so Andrew is currently our last speaker  
10 so.....

11 MR. THOLE: I have a slip for you.

12 MR. VANORMER: Okay, great.

13 MR. CREMATA: So I have two perspectives, one,  
14 personally as a 2.....

15 MR. VANORMER: State your name please.

16 MR. CREMATA: A-N-D-R-E-W C-R-E-M-A-T-A. As a  
17 nearly 25 year resident of Skagway, we have a unique  
18 perspective here because our portion of the Tongass, is  
19 -- I've traveled and been lucky enough to travel all  
20 over Southeast Alaska covering stories for various  
21 lodges and some of what we heard earlier is very true,  
22 that these lodges, these small business, these small  
23 operators are dependent not only on a healthy ecosystem  
24 that supplies them their livelihood but also guarantees  
25 their visitor -- visitor experience is high quality.

1 I'm going to touch on that later.

2 As a personal user, as a resident of Skagway,  
3 my wife and I do quite a bit of subsistence. We have a  
4 freezer full of fish at the moment. We get a sub  
5 fishing permit every year and we fish in Lutak Inlet,  
6 get sockeye salmon, dependent on healthy ecosystems.  
7 We collect various mushrooms, berries from the Forest,  
8 along the various trails like Laughton and Denver  
9 Glacier, more importantly we seek solace in these  
10 areas, and areas that are as they were a very long time  
11 ago, whether we're hiking up in a glacial area or we're  
12 hiking up above Upper Lake or through the Denver  
13 Glacier Valley, the fact that these places remain  
14 pristine is what makes them appealing and what helps  
15 heal the soul. Without those areas, what's the point  
16 of living here. I came from Florida, and I can tell  
17 you when you watch your places where you've collected  
18 animals to subsist, the food that you need to survive  
19 get built over, torn down and destroyed it is a  
20 heartwrenching experience. And it's one of the reasons  
21 I ended up here.

22 Changing hats. As Mayor we passed a resolution  
23 here in Skagway because we recognize how detrimental  
24 getting rid of the Roadless Rule will be to the tourism  
25 industry. It's frustrating to see that so little work

1 has been done by the Forest Service to ascertain what  
2 the impacts to the visitor industry are going to be as  
3 a whole.

4 On the chart that was presented it says  
5 there'll be minimal -- there's minimal impact between  
6 Alternative 1 and Alternative 6. But if you're a  
7 visitor here, whether you're going to a fishing lodge  
8 or whether you're on an airplane taking a flightseeing  
9 tour, or whether you're taking a helicopter to a  
10 glacier, I can tell you from firsthand experience when  
11 you're on those flights with tourists that are heading  
12 to a fishing lodge on South Baranof or wherever it  
13 might be and they fly over those clear-cut areas,  
14 clear-cut 25 years ago, they ask, wow, what happened  
15 down there, was it a fire, what happened. The visitor  
16 experience is significantly impacted. So when we look  
17 at growth trends of 3.5 to 4 percent per year over the  
18 next 20 years, without any kind of evidence, or any  
19 kind of study to find out how those are going to be  
20 impacted, you're doing a tremendous disservice to  
21 anyone who's in this industry, to everyone who lives in  
22 Skagway who depends on the industry, which is why we  
23 passed a resolution to support Alternative 1.

24 Thank you.

25 MR. VANORMER: Was there one more.

1 MR. THOLE: Right here.

2 MR. VANORMER: Okay. All right.

3 MR. THOLE: Can I have just a couple minutes,  
4 I'm jotting a couple notes.

5 MR. VANORMER: Sure. Yep. So I guess at this  
6 time what I'm going to do is I'm going to pause the  
7 mics unless anyone else wants to come up at this point  
8 in time and then we'll just pause until Cory, or  
9 anybody else is ready to come up and give some  
10 testimony.

11 MS. LAVOIE: I could probably add a little just  
12 quickly.

13 MR. VANORMER: Sure, yeah, come on up. Yeah.  
14 I may ask you to fill one of these out afterwards  
15 though.

16 MS. LAVOIE: Okay, absolutely.

17 MR. VANORMER: Just remember to state your name  
18 and spell it.

19 MS. LAVOIE: Okay. I'm Elizabeth Lavoie, E-L-  
20 I-Z-A-B-E-T-H L-A-V-O-I-E. So I looked up the  
21 definition of subsistence earlier and it is the action  
22 or act of maintaining or supporting one's self at a  
23 minimum level. And then I scrolled through the  
24 headlines today. So I'm just going to read those for  
25 the record. UN report today says we are sleepwalking

1 toward climate catastrophe. That countries are not  
2 doing enough to keep Earth's temperature from rising to  
3 near catastrophic levels. From the New York Times,  
4 bleak UN report on a planet in peril looms over new  
5 climate talks. And then the Washington Post, in bleak  
6 report UN says drastic action is only way to avoid the  
7 worst effects of climate change.

8 So that all said, I just want to say I think  
9 that we need to step back and as global citizens,  
10 understand that the Tongass is responsible for 10 to 12  
11 percent of the carbon lung of this country, for North  
12 America. And for the record I just don't understand  
13 how we can move forward removing protections.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. VANORMER: Thanks. Any other takers in the  
16 interim here.

17 (No comments)

18 MR. VANORMER: All right, I'm going to go ahead  
19 and pause this for a moment and we can just.....

20 (Off record)

21 (On record)

22 MR. VANORMER: All right, we're back on here in  
23 Skagway, time is 7:44 and we've got Cory coming up to  
24 give some testimony so state your name and spell it,  
25 please.

1 MR. THOLE: Sure. My name is Cory Thole, C-O-  
2 R-Y T-H-O-L-E, resident of Skagway, Alaska. I would  
3 first like to start by thanking the National Forest  
4 Service for including Skagway in the public  
5 presentation and comment period for this Draft EIS in  
6 regards to potentially removing the Tongass National  
7 Forest from the Roadless Rule.

8 My wife, Mary Thole, M-A-R-Y T-H-O-L-E, and I  
9 are adamantly opposed to the alternat -- to Alternative  
10 6 to exempt the Tongass National Forest from the  
11 Roadless Rule, as well as Alternative 5 and 4, strongly  
12 and adamantly 100 percent against.

13 My wife and my's preferred alternative is  
14 Alternative 1, no action. I would also be supportive  
15 of Alternative 3 in terms of strategic development  
16 within roadless areas but whereas my comments and the  
17 overwhelming public support of roadless areas in the  
18 Tongass National Forest is not without reason or  
19 justification.

20 There are only three places on the planet that  
21 have substantial tracts of coastal temperate rain  
22 Forests in the world, these are the South Island of New  
23 Zealand, Tasmania, the Coast of Patagonia in Chile, and  
24 the Pacific Northwest, from Northern California all the  
25 way up the Coast of Oregon, Washington, British

1 Columbia, Southeast Alaska, around the Gulf of Alaska  
2 and ending at Kodiak Island.

3 This is where the Tongass steps into the status  
4 of world class. Because not only are coastal temperate  
5 rain Forests very rare and unique, they -- coastal  
6 temperate rain Forests are also one of the most  
7 impacted ecosystems on the planet in terms of human  
8 use.

9 Estimates put that there is less than three  
10 percent of virgin old growth coastal temperate rain  
11 Forests left in the world and the Tongass holds the  
12 largest remaining intact roadless tracts left on the  
13 planet, yea Tongass. This must be realized and  
14 appreciated at a level in which it deserves.

15 The Tongass is my favorite place on the Earth.  
16 And I have been very fortunate to visit quite a few. I  
17 have been to Bacoor National Park in Cambodia, the  
18 Carse (ph) Jungles of Vietnam, Chitwan in Nepal in  
19 Northern India, and the Manu National Park in Peru,  
20 which is said to be the most pristine tropical rain  
21 Forest left in the world, and the old growth Forest of  
22 the Tongass stands supreme in my opinion.

23 The Tongass, it's old growth -- and its old  
24 growth is why this is one of the top cruise and tourist  
25 destinations in the world and it is a growing economy

1 and supports a sustainable economy to an area that  
2 cannot be obtained through other means. It supports a  
3 robust fisheries industry. And most of all supports a  
4 way of life and subsistence living that cannot be met  
5 in other lands. The Tongass and its trees, muskegs,  
6 glaciers and mountains are -- make up the land and  
7 ecosystems that helped me and my wife, Mary, provide  
8 for our family through subsistence fishing, mushroom  
9 and berry gathering, and Sitka black-tail deer hunting.  
10 It provides mental health for us, providing wild areas  
11 that cannot be found in other places on the planet. It  
12 acts as a major place of carbon sequestration and  
13 offsetting the impacts of climate change, which cannot  
14 be ignored. Removing the Tongass from the Roadless  
15 Rule holds impacts to these unique characteristics and  
16 Forests of the Tongass that cannot be quantified  
17 through this regulatory environmental impact statement,  
18 nor does it adequately address the impacts to the  
19 visitor experience in Southeast Alaska. While the  
20 Tongass is over 17 million acres huge, roughly one-  
21 third of it is rock and ice, roughly one-third of it is  
22 swamp, bog and muskeg, and one-third of it is Forest,  
23 much of which has already been logged or detrimentally  
24 impacted by human activity. If the Tongass holds the  
25 largest remaining tracts of old growth Forest, coastal

1 temperate rain Forests in the world and there are only  
2 900,000 acres approximately within the Tongass National  
3 Forest, removing the Roadless Rule and making the  
4 Tongass exempt adds another 165,000 acres of old growth  
5 Forest to the current Forest Management Plan which  
6 results in over 50 percent of the old growth Forest in  
7 the Tongass National Forest essentially unprotected for  
8 future development. This is unacceptable, to me, my  
9 wife, my family and should be to everybody else.

10 Thank you.

11 MR. VANORMER: All right, thanks Cory. All  
12 right, at this time, anybody else.

13 (No comments)

14 MR. VANORMER: All right, well, at this point  
15 in time I'm just going to go ahead and pause this  
16 until, you know, until -- I guess until 9:00 o'clock  
17 but if everyone clears out before then I'll go ahead  
18 and just end it before then, so that'll be the plan.

19 Thanks.

20 (Off record)

21 (END OF RECORDING)

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TRANSCRIBER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Salena A. Hile, hereby certify that the foregoing pages numbered 02 through 27 are a true, accurate, and complete transcript of ANILCA PUBLIC HEARING, SKAGWAY, ALASKA transcribed under my direction from a copy of an electronic sound recording to the best of our knowledge and ability.

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DATE

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SALENA A. HILE, (Transcriber)