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Date: JUN 07 2019

Mr. Matthew Robus
President
Territorial Sportsmen, Inc.
Post Office Box 32712
Juneau, Alaska 99803

Dear Mr. Robus:

Thank you for your letter of January 16, 2019, sharing suggestions for roadless area management on Southeast Alaska's Tongass National Forest. I apologize for the delayed response.

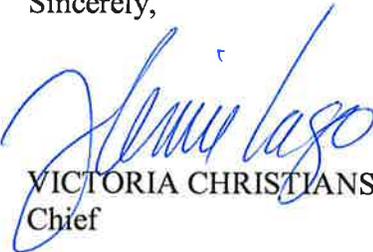
I appreciate the experience and support your organization and your members bring to the current work by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service regarding development of a state-specific roadless rule for Alaska.

I share your interest that this public rulemaking process result in a long-term, durable approach to roadless area management that accommodates the unique biological, social, and economic situation in and around the Tongass National Forest. I am glad to hear the time and effort we have invested to date has provided meaningful opportunities for the people of Southeast Alaska to express their points of view. Constructive comments such as those contained in your letter contribute to a robust range of alternatives to be considered.

Throughout work on the Alaska Roadless Rule, the Forest Service will uphold our mission to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of our nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of future and present generations. I appreciate your interest in management of the Tongass National Forest.

Again, thank you for writing and for your interest in the management of the Tongass National Forest.

Sincerely,


VICTORIA CHRISTIANSEN
Chief





Post Office Box 32712 • Juneau, Alaska 99803

Telephone: (907) 789-2399 • Fax: (907) 586-6020

January 16, 2019

The Territorial Sportsmen, Inc., (TSI) is a longstanding sportspeople's organization that has advocated in the interests of hunters, fishers, trappers, and other users of the outdoors in Southeast Alaska since 1945. We are based in Juneau, Alaska and have approximately 1,500 members annually.

The Territorial Sportsmen are aware of the current effort to reconfigure roadless area management within the Tongass National Forest and appreciate the information provided by staff at the series of public meetings recently held in the region. We are aware of the types of issues that can result from a blanket prohibition, and do not object to some adjustment to the current roadless management rules. However, we are adamant that the conservation measures resulting from multiple Tongass Land Use Plan efforts be retained or enhanced. Former planning efforts have been complex, lengthy, and arduous, and received a significant amount of attention and input from the public. It is extremely important that the results that were so painstakingly hammered out not be forfeited to yet another planning cycle.

The core of TSI's position is that roadless area changes not intrude into important fish and wildlife habitats or obstruct public access and use of those areas. We believe that adjustments can be made to the roadless areas to allow sufficient new timber access to bridge the gap to second-growth management and reasonable access for community and industry needs. TSI supports the suggestions previously submitted by a coalition of hunting, fishing and tourism groups as a way to achieve results that would satisfy our position:

- Allow commercial logging and associated roads within the "roaded roadless" areas in the Tongass NF, excluding "Tongass 77" areas identified during the most recent TLMP update.
- Offset such new roaded area designations with additional protections for "Tongass 77" areas, limiting roads and timber harvest in those areas.

- Incorporate an exception which would allow road construction in roadless areas outside of "Tongass 77" areas where needed for important community infrastructure projects.
- Similarly, incorporate an exception to allow road construction (with the same constraints) associated with renewable energy projects (not including logging for biomass) that would benefit Southeast Alaska communities.
- Allow reasonable access for mining operations under existing law through an exception to roadless rule language.
- Allow transportation projects within Congressionally authorized corridors by modifying the 2001 Roadless Rule as needed.

A plan alternative that takes a Tongass-specific approach to providing for some additional road construction while strengthening protections for important conservation areas and allowing a pathway for important infrastructure and industry projects to be undertaken would meet the region's needs while perpetuating the priceless fish, wildlife, and other natural resource values we enjoy and depend upon.

Thank you for your consideration of our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Robus", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Matthew Robus
President, Territorial Sportsmen, Inc.