



Topic: Alaska Roadless Rule –Civil Rights Impact Analysis for the final rule

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Issue Summary: The final Alaska Roadless rule (corresponding to Alternative 6) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) has been reviewed and analyzed to ensure compliance Departmental Regulation (DR) 4300-4 and 5600-002. This Civil Rights Impact Analysis (CRIA) has been undertaken to evaluate how the American public could be affected by the rule, particularly whether populations including (but not limited to) ethnic and racial minorities, people with disabilities, and women could receive potential adverse or disproportionate impacts from the rule.

Background: In January 2018, the State of Alaska submitted a petition requesting that the Secretary of Agriculture consider exempting the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Rule, pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) and the USDA’s petition procedures in 7 CFR 1.28. In June 2018, the Secretary of Agriculture directed the Forest Service to begin working to develop an Alaska state-specific roadless rule. In August 2018, the Forest Service granted cooperating agency status to the State of Alaska.

Alternative 6 is the final rule and provides maximum additional timber harvest opportunity and is the full exemption alternative, which was requested by the State of Alaska’s petition. Under the rule, roadless protection would be removed from all roadless areas on the Tongass, resulting in a reduction of 9.4 million acres of roadless areas. Impacts to by race, gender, national origin, and disability (RSNOD) do not vary from the previous considered rule. Former roadless areas would be managed in accordance with the 2016 Tongass Forest Plan. None of the regulatory alternatives propose changes to the allowable sale quantity or timber demand projections set out in the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan. The Tongass National Forest, in compliance with the Tongass Timber Reform Act (1990), seeks to provide an annual supply of timber to meet market demand to the extent consistent with providing for multiple use and sustained use of all renewable forest resources, and other requirements. While projected harvest levels are not expected to be materially different under any of the alternatives under consideration, the roadless rule can influence the potential location or likelihood of future timber harvesting between the various alternatives. In other words, the alternatives examine different mixes of land areas and timber restrictions that would incrementally increase management flexibility for how the forest plan’s timber harvest goals can be better achieved, but does not alter the plan’s underlying goals or projected outcomes.

The civil rights implications of the rule, and previously considered rules, are, generally, expected to maintain the status quo. No adverse effects are expected through implementation of the rule and outreach/mitigation action strategies; through implementation and for the development of the rule. As such, (identification of which is required by USDA DR 4300-004(9)(a) - Monitoring of the associated action alternative outreach and mitigation strategies will occur. The Forest Service will continue to implement environmental justice analyses in NEPA analyses when appropriate and as required by EO 12,898.