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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Statement from Laurie Cooper  
Rainforest Program Director, Alaska Wilderness League,  
on the U.S. Forest Service's Implementation of a  
New Program of Work for the Tongass National Forest**

“Alaska Wilderness League commends the U.S. Forest Service for taking a strong, first step to advance a new vision of forest management in the Tongass National Forest. With the release of the 5-year project schedule, the Forest Service has made a substantive shift away from an unsustainable reliance on old-growth logging to a more comprehensive and balanced program of work. The updated program of work emphasizes managing the forest to conserve important fish and wildlife habitat, promotes job opportunities, and enhances the sustainability of our southeast Alaska communities.

The Tongass contains some of the best fish, wildlife, water, and forest resources in the country. By conserving fish and wildlife habitat in undeveloped areas and restoring habitat in areas previously impacted by clearcut logging, the Forest Service is prudently managing resources for key regional assets such as commercial fishing, recreation, tourism, and traditional and customary uses.

Additionally, the Forest Service is strategically restructuring the timber program to over the long-term provide a stable supply wood to local operators. The program of work focuses projects near existing roads and infrastructure, maximizes the economic potential of stewardship contracting, and recognizes the additional investments required for a successful transition of the timber industry away from the traditional reliance on old-growth trees.

We are encouraged by the start the Forest Service's has made to put the Transition Framework into action. The League looks forward to partnering with them to help advance their vision for the Tongass National Forest. We believe it's a vision which recognizes we can make smart decisions today to conserve and manage the forest for the future, while continuing to use and enjoy the Tongass' abundant resources today.”

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