



*Your Land.
Your Voice.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CITIZENS CELEBRATE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICA'S
LARGEST NATIONAL FOREST**

*100 Years Since Proclamation by President Theodore Roosevelt
Sets Aside Lands as the Tongass National Forest*

Washington, DC – On September 10, 1907 President Theodore Roosevelt signed a proclamation setting aside land in the Alaskan rainforest as the Tongass National Forest. Those lands and other tracts set aside previously and since, make up the nearly 17-million-acre Tongass National Forest.

To mark the 100 year anniversary of this country's largest National Forest, events are taking place around the country. In collaboration with local partners, the Alaska Wilderness League is planting or distributing 100 trees to celebrate the 100 years since President Roosevelt first proclaimed lands in southeast Alaska to be the Tongass National Forest.

“We expect to exceed our goal of 100 trees for 100 years,” said Alaska Wilderness League's Upper Midwest Region Field Staff Lois Norrgard, who is coordinating the events. “The overwhelming support for the Tongass confirms that whether they are in Alaska or closer to our own backyards, Americans value public lands heritage and want to see responsible stewardship of these natural and national treasures.”

Stretched along the inside passage of southeast Alaska, the Tongass is the crown jewel of the National Forest System and a remote coastal temperate rainforest of towering old growth hemlock, spruce and cedar trees, fog draped mountains, rocky islands, magnificent glaciers, salmon-choked rivers, and grizzly-filled wildlands. The vast expanse of public land is by far our largest National Forest representing nearly 10 percent of the entire National Forest System. The Tongass also represents the largest remaining expanse of old growth, coastal temperate rainforest in the world. But the natural beauty and abundant wildlife of the Tongass have long been threatened by clearcut logging.

“A legacy of taxpayer subsidized logging has destroyed more than half of the big-tree, old-growth forest in the Tongass,” said Laurie Cooper, Alaska Wilderness League's Rainforest Program Director. “The time is now to conserve what remains wild for current and future generations. We have an opportunity to bring about lasting change for another 100 years by enacting more permanent protection.”

Later this month, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) is expected to reintroduce the Alaska Rainforest Conservation Act which would designate Wilderness and otherwise protect much of what remains wild in the Tongass. The legislation is only the most recent congressional action on the Tongass. Earlier this year, the U.S. House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly to prohibit further taxpayer subsidies for logging roads in the Tongass. The subsidy measure has yet to be taken up in the Senate.



www.AlaskaWild.org

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About Alaska Wilderness League – Your Land. Your Voice.

Alaska Wilderness League's mission is to lead the effort to preserve Alaska's wilderness by engaging citizens, sharing resources, collaborating with other organizations, educating the public, and providing a courageous, constant and victorious voice for Alaska in the nation's capitol. It is the only organization dedicated solely to the preservation of Alaska's wilderness in the nation's capitol.

Additional Contact:

For additional information about the Tongass National Forest or to arrange an interview with Southeast Alaska residents and small business owners, please contact Laurie Cooper, Alaska Wilderness League, 202-544-5205 or Beth Peluso, Southeast Alaska Conservation Council, 907-586-6942.

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