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## **U.S. Forest Service moves forward with amending Tongass National Forest management plan**

*Rapidly ending old-growth sales should be a priority for the crown jewel of America's national forests*

JUNEAU, Alaska – Today the U.S. Forest Service released its [Draft Environmental Impact Statement to amend the Land Management Plan for the Tongass National Forest](#). This is an important step towards transitioning Forest Service management away from clear-cutting old growth logging and towards supporting the region's sustainable industries that rely on a healthy forest. This release begins a 90-day public comment period to include public meetings and subsistence hearings.

In May of 2010, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Tom Vilsack [issued a letter](#) calling for a "transition framework" for the Tongass National Forest in southeast Alaska which would provide forest-dependent jobs around the region's economic powerhouses – the tourism, recreation and fishing industries – and move the region away from old-growth logging. In 2013, Secretary Vilsack [reiterated that call](#), and in May 2014 the Forest Service released a [notice of intent](#) initiating a scoping process for amending the [current management plan](#) for the Tongass National Forest in southeast Alaska.

### **Statement by Dan Kirkwood, Rainforest Program Manager at Alaska Wilderness League:**

"We have advocated for a faster end to old-growth clear-cuts because of the serious ecological consequences of this logging. The volume of cuts is simply too high and has gone on for far too long. Continued old-growth harvest means continued controversy, and for the good of the Tongass the outcome of this planning process must be a rapid end to old-growth clear-cuts.

The Forest Service has recognized important places like the Tongass 77 salmon watersheds, inventoried roadless areas, and conservation lands identified by the National Audubon Society and The Nature Conservancy where other valuable resources exist and logging should not be allowed to occur. These salmon watersheds, for example, represent some of the best salmon habitat in the Tongass and the Forest Service must prioritize protecting the resources that sustain our communities and jobs.

Any successful transition away from clear-cutting old growth must protect the unique and valuable natural resources of the Tongass including the abundant wild salmon, scenery and wildlife that are the backbone of the region's economy. If the Forest Service wants to support economic opportunity in southeast Alaska it should look to the programs that support the tourism and fishing jobs that drive \$2 billion of economic activity into the region each year."

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