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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**December 9, 2016**

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**U.S. Forest Service finalizes Tongass National Forest management plan**

*The final plan sets the stage to end old-growth logging; support tourism, fishing and recreation*

Today the U.S. Forest Service released its final Record of Decision (ROD) for the Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Amendment (TLMP). The plan is an important step towards transitioning Forest Service management away from industrial clear-cutting of old-growth and towards supporting the region's sustainable industries that rely on a healthy forest.

In June 2016, the Forest Service released its Draft ROD and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to amend TLMP. More than 165,000 people commented on the plan, many of whom urged the Forest Service to facilitate a faster end to large-scale old-growth logging. The Final EIS recognized the importance of conservation in the Tongass by specifying places like high-value salmon watersheds, inventoried roadless areas, and other conservation lands where logging should not occur.

**Statement by Kristen Miller, Conservation Director at Alaska Wilderness League:**

"While today's release formally begins the transition away from old-growth logging on the Tongass, the truth is that Southeast Alaska has already transitioned. Today's economy is built on sustainable fisheries and wild places that draw visitors from around the world. We thank the agency for taking this first step, and now is the time for Forest Service management to look beyond logging and focus on the jobs that matter to Southeast families and communities.

The plan amendment protects key places that support economic activity in fishing and tourism, and ensures that these places and the region's abundant wild salmon will continue to support Southeast Alaska's economy. However, the timeframe outlined in the final plan drags the process on for too long. Moving forward, we will push to speed up the transition, end the export of Tongass old-growth trees, invest in upgrading the crumbling recreation and tourism infrastructure, and protect essential old-growth deer habitat that is important to local hunters.

This plan is an opportunity to move beyond past controversies and ensure that the Forest Service stops clearcutting old-growth forest. Today, the Tongass is the only national forest in America where we still clear-cut irreplaceable old-growth forest. Instead of continuing to throw away millions of tax dollars per year into large old-growth timber sales intended for export, the Forest Service should shift its priorities to meet the needs of all Southeast Alaskans, not just the timber industry."

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