



*Your Land.
Your Voice.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 28, 2020

Contact: Corey Himrod

Tel: 202-266-0426 or Email: corey@alaskawild.org

Trump administration to officially roll back roadless protections in Tongass National Forest

Rolling back Roadless Rule protections places more than 9 million acres at risk in America's Amazon

Washington — Today, the U.S. Forest Service announced plans to issue a final Alaska-specific Roadless Rule, eliminating roadless protections for the Tongass National Forest and opening millions of acres of irreplaceable old-growth temperate rainforest to clearcut logging. Today's pre-publication notice indicates that the rule takes effect immediately and directs the Forest Service to immediately amend the current Tongass management plan to add certain roadless lands to the suitable timber base.

Opening up Tongass roadless areas to road building and logging will [threaten](#) the abundant wildlife and beautiful scenery essential to tourism in Southeast Alaska, an industry that contributes more than \$1 billion to the region each year. It will also endanger the region's commercial fishing industry, another billion-dollar industry that relies on streams and rivers of the Tongass to produce 80% of its salmon harvest.

Feedback submitted to the Forest Service on this proposal — from both inside and outside of Alaska — [overwhelmingly supported keeping the Roadless Rule in place](#) in the Tongass:

- 96% of public comments received by the Forest Service opposed lifting roadless protections.
- Testimony given at 18 different subsistence hearings in Southeast Alaska saw a 'vast majority' of local residents support keeping the Roadless Rule in place.
- Six Southeast Alaska tribes and six Southeast Alaska city councils passed resolutions opposing the rollback, and nine Alaska Native tribes petitioned the USDA directly to keep the rule in place.

Statement by Adam Kolton, Executive Director, Alaska Wilderness League:

"In yet another sweeping attack on an iconic American landscape, the Trump administration today removed two-decade old protections for old-growth trees and habitat in the Tongass National Forest. This presidentially directed move, to gut roadless protections for our nation's largest and most biologically rich national forest, is a calamity for our climate, for wildlife and for the outdoor recreation economy of Southeast Alaska.

"This new Trump plan sets in motion the potential clearcutting and export of centuries old Sitka spruce, cedar and western hemlock trees, unleashing the equivalent of [two million cars worth of carbon pollution](#) while costing American taxpayers hundreds of [millions of dollars in new subsidies](#) for logging road construction.



www.AlaskaWild.org

122 C St NW, Ste 240, Washington, DC 20001 * Tel: 202-544-5205 * Fax: 202-544-5197

“Stewarded by the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian peoples for millennia, and set aside as a national forest by President Roosevelt in 1907, the Tongass is America’s Amazon. Its lush islands, towering trees, glacial fjords and estuaries support some of the highest concentrations of bald eagles, brown bears and wild salmon anywhere in the world.

“Taking an axe to old-growth protections for the Tongass is among the most reckless and irresponsible of the Trump administration’s environmental rollbacks. It’s bad news for hunters and anglers, for the tourism and fishing industries in Alaska, and for anyone who cares about protecting our planet’s biodiversity and climate.”

###

Alaska Wilderness League stands with, serves and supports the many people and organizations that believe in a sustainable future for Alaska. We honor and respect the cultures of Alaska Natives whose way of life remains deeply connected to the state’s land, waters, and wildlife. We believe that Alaska’s long-term economic future and subsistence traditions are inexorably tied to the health and sound stewardship of its natural resources, which support hunting, fishing, tourism and unrivaled outdoor experiences that are central to Alaskans’ quality of life.



www.AlaskaWild.org

122 C St NW, Ste 240, Washington, DC 20001 * Tel: 202-544-5205 * Fax: 202-544-5197