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Tongass National Forest Draft Land Management Plan Amendment Available for Public Comment Advisory Committee Provides Consensus Recommendations

Release Date: Nov 20, 2015 Ketchikan, AK

Contact(s): [Susan Howle](#)

KETCHIKAN, Alaska, Nov. 20, 2015 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service today released the Proposed Amended Land and Resource Management Plan (Draft Amendment) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Tongass National Forest for public review and comment. Written and electronic comments will be accepted for 90 days ending Feb. 22, 2016.

The Tongass Land Management Plan is being amended to support a transition from old growth harvest to a young growth-based timber program for the Tongass, recognizing the importance of preserving Southeast Alaska's exceptional natural resources while also preserving a viable timber industry that provides jobs and opportunities for Southeast Alaska residents. The amendment is also needed to support the development of renewable energy resources in Southeast Alaska.

The Forest Service's Preferred Alternative—Alternative 5—is based on the unanimous recommendation of the Tongass Advisory Committee that was established to provide input and advice on the transition to a young growth timber program to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Chief of the Forest Service. Members of the committee represent a broad range of viewpoints, expertise and geographically diverse communities in and outside of Alaska including representatives of local and state government, Alaska Native Corporations, the timber industry, the environmental community, and the public.

The amendment process has a narrow focus and does not include changes to the Tongass conservation strategy, Wilderness or Wild and Scenic River designations, or changes to most land use designations.

Today's publication of a Notice of Availability of the draft documents in the Federal Register begins the 90-day public comment period on both the Proposed Forest Plan and DEIS. Public meetings and subsistence hearings will be scheduled in many communities during the 90-day comment period. The location and schedule of these public meetings and hearings will be publicized in local newspapers and can be found on the Tongass National Forest website.

The Forest Service will carefully review feedback and public comment on the Draft Amendment and DEIS. There will also be an objection process for any unresolved concerns prior to the final decision.

The draft documents are available for review and comment online. These documents are also available for viewing at all Tongass Ranger District Offices and the Supervisor's Office.

Written or electronic comments will be accepted for 90 days and should be submitted to: Forest Supervisor, Tongass National Forest, Attn: Forest Plan Amendment, 648 Mission Street Ketchikan, AK 99901.

Comments may also be sent via email to: comments-alaska-tongass@fs.fed.us or via facsimile to (907) 228-6292.

For additional information, please contact Susan Howle, Project Manager, at 907-228-6340, or showle@fs.fed.us.

Media Availability: Friday, Nov. 20, 2 to 4 p.m. EST (10 a.m. to Noon AST)
 Earl Stewart, Tongass Forest Supervisor (907) 617-5545 (cell)

Alerts & Warnings

 **ATTENTION WARD LAKE RECREATION AREA**
USERS: Burning wood pallets is a violation

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