

State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources



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Partnership yields new information on Tongass young growth forest

(Juneau, AK) — The U.S. Forest Service and Alaska Division of Forestry have released an online data portal to share new information on young-growth forest stands in the Tongass National Forest. This data is a key part of the Tongass Young Growth Inventory project which is helping forest land managers prepare for the transition to young-growth timber harvest in the coming decades.

Information shared in this data portal is preliminary and includes raw data collected in 2016 and 2017 on Prince of Wales Island and in the Ketchikan area. Field crews gathered data from 278 forest stands in 9,363 data plots covering 25,853 acres. More field work is planned this year in the Kake, Hoonah, and Wrangell areas, with raw data released into the portal as it is collected. The data portal can be viewed at: <https://arcg.is/WP8D>.

The Tongass Young Growth Inventory grew out of a formal recommendation from the Tongass Advisory Committee (TAC), which had been tasked to advise the Forest Service on forest management. The Forest Service and State of Alaska signed a Challenge Cost Share Agreement in 2015 to implement the project. Other participants in the project include the Tongass Transition Collaborative, Sealaska Corp. and its subsidiaries, the Alaska Forest Association, non-profit economic development groups, communities, environmental organizations, and rural schools.

The goal of the Tongass Young Growth Inventory is to support sustainably-managed forests and communities with healthy economies. Transitioning to young-growth management will require collecting, analyzing, and using forest resource information to implement sound forest management practices across state and federal forests. In doing so, the inventory is providing training and new job opportunities for Southeast residents in natural resource fields.

“This is part of the USDA's all-lands approach to land management. The Forest Service is working together with the State and adjacent land owners to develop a more robust and sustainable approach to forestry across our region,” said Beth Pendleton, Regional Forester for the U.S. Forest Service-Alaska Region.

“Over the coming years, Tongass timber harvests will increasingly focus on the young-growth forest. The more information we have about this resource and the opportunities it will create, the more Alaskans will be able to develop this renewable asset. It will be a great challenge and responsibility, but through partnerships, trust and creativity, we are collectively up to the task,” said Alaska State Forester and Division of Forestry Director Chris Maisch.

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