

**SJR**

**24**

# SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT

## First Committee of Referral

DATE: 3/18/97

FURTHER:

Date of 5-Day Notice: 3/20/97  
(in accordance with Uniform Rule 23)

DATE TURNED  
IN TO OFFICE: 3/27/97

Resources Committee considered SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 24

Relating to the Tongass Land Management Plan and to continued Congressional oversight of that plan.

and recommends:

- be replaced with \_\_\_\_\_ CS SJR 24 ( RES )
- adopt previous \_\_\_\_\_ CS \_\_\_\_\_ ( \_\_\_\_\_ )
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt Letter of Intent by \_\_\_\_\_ Committee
- further referral to the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

- Senate Bill:**  
 same title  
 new title  
**House Bill:**  
 same title  
 technical title  
 new: SCR# \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNING DO PASS	DP	OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS	NR	DNP	AM
<i>[Signature]</i>	✓	<i>[Signature]</i>			✓
<i>[Signature]</i>	✓				
<i>[Signature]</i>	✓				
<i>[Signature]</i>	✓				
<b>CHAIR:</b> <i>[Signature]</i>	✓	<b>CHAIR:</b>			

**NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):**

Department	Date	Zero	Fiscal
S. RESOURCES COMMITTEE	3/27	X	

**PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):\***

Department	Date	Zero	Fiscal

APPROPRIATION -- no fiscal note

\*include fiscal notes accompanying Governor's bill

# SENATOR JERRY MACKIE

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## SPONSOR STATEMENT

### SJR 24, Tongass Land Use Plan

The purpose of SJR 24 is two-fold. First, it encourages the U.S. Forest Service to bring the decade-long development of the Tongass Land Use Management Plan (TLUMP) to a conclusion so the people and communities of Southeast Alaska can move forward with their economic and personal lives with some degree of certainty. The resolution supports a level of timber harvest from the Tongass National Forest sufficient to sustain a forest product industry and prevent further job loss and economic disruption in Southeast Alaska.

Secondly, the resolution endorses continued oversight by Congress and the Alaska Congressional delegation of Forest Service management activities relating to the Tongass. This endorsement urges review of the analyses and procedures employed by the Forest Service to ensure that decisions affecting the social and economic well-being of Southeast communities are appropriate and scientifically credible.

After a decade of false starts, intervening federal legislation, court decisions and several public review drafts, the Forest Service appears poised to adopt a final version of the land use management plan for the Tongass. During this time period the Southeast economy has lost \$60 million in forest products payroll and half of its timber jobs. The continuing decline in available timber supply has closed

two pulp mills and one sawmill. Without a plan that ensures some level of harvesting, the existence of any forest product industry in Southeast Alaska is threatened.

On December 20, 1996 the Southeast Regional Timber Task Force passed a resolution urging the Federal government to finalize a plan for timber harvest in the Tongass. The Task Force determined that a minimum annual harvest level of 300 million board feet (MMBF) was necessary to reestablish a viable, integrated timber industry. This volume has been selected by several Forest Supervisors of the Tongass as the preferred alternative in previous drafts of TLUMP.

Any delay in the finalization of the Tongass Land Use Management Plan is detrimental to the social and economic stability of Southeast Alaska. A plan that adopts a minimum 300 MMBF timber supply will stem the current decline and the associated economic depression of Southeast communities dependent on the forest product industry. SJR 24 requests the completion of the long delayed plan and that it include a 300 MMBF timber harvest level.

# FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA  
1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. SJR 24

Revision Date 3/27/97 Dept. Affected \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title Tongass Land Management Plan BRU \_\_\_\_\_  
 Component \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sponsor Mackie \_\_\_\_\_  
 Requester \_\_\_\_\_ Component Serial No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 98	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES [ ]</b>						
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**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
1091 Designated Program Receipts						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

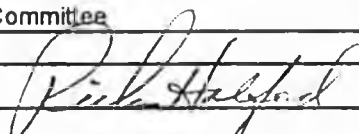
Estimate of any current year (FY97) cost: 0.0

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This resolution will have no fiscal impact on state departments.

Prepared by Senate Resources Committee  
 Division \_\_\_\_\_  
 Approved by Senator Rick Halford   
 Agency \_\_\_\_\_

Phone 465-4907  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date 3/27/97

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# SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE

An Alaska Regional Development Organization and USDA Resource Conservation and Development Council

**STATEMENT OF  
BERNE C. MILLER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE  
BEFORE THE  
SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
March 26, 1997**

My name is Berne Miller. I am Executive Director of Southeast Conference. Southeast Conference is the regional economic development organization for Southeast Alaska. Our Mission is to help build strong economies, healthy communities, and a quality environment in the region.

For the past year and a half, Southeast Conference has been an active participant in the Tongass Land Management Plan revision process. In the interest of sustaining a strong regional economy, the Conference has repeatedly urged that the Regional Forester select a TLMP alternative that does no economic or social harm to Southeast Alaska's people and communities.

In the past, we have been critical of the Forest Service's TLMP work. In particular, we have said the Forest Service's examination of the socio-economic impacts of changing timber harvest levels on our region's people and communities is inadequate and have shown that their timber analysis overstates harvest levels by about 32 percent. For these reasons and others, last August we advocated the Forest Service delay completion of TLMP until defects in their analysis have been corrected.

But that was last August, before Ketchikan Pulp Company announced their mill would be closed. Now, the timber industry is on the brink of drastic downsizing and restructuring and the region's people and communities face economic dislocations and hardship. But, until the Forest Service establishes a predictable harvest level through TLMP, it will be impossible for anyone to project what kind of timber industry might exist in the region in the future, let alone lay out a business plan for the extensive restructuring now so obviously needed. It is not hard for anyone with any sensitivity to visualize the anxiety and distress this situation has caused, is causing, and will continue to cause for our region's families and businesses.

For that reason, Southeast Conference has changed its position. We recently urged the Regional Forester to come to a decision based on what his Forest Supervisors have already placed before him and asked that he publish a TLMP revision now.

The economy of Southeast Alaska is changing; restructuring in the timber component is only the most visible manifestation of what's taking place throughout the region's economy. For the economic and social welfare of our people, we must rebuild a strong, diversified economy. We need a final Tongass Land Management Plan before we can get started. Southeast Conference thinks the Forest Service should publish TLMP now.



# Southeast Alaska Conservation Council

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## STATEMENT OF BUCK LINDEKUGEL, CONSERVATION DIRECTOR SOUTHEAST ALASKA CONSERVATION COUNCIL

HEARING ON SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 24,

BEFORE THE  
ALASKA SENATE RESOURCE COMMITTEE  
MARCH 26, 1997

Mr. Chairman:

My name is Buck Lindekugel, Conservation Director for the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council. Founded in 1970, SEACC is a coalition of 15 volunteer conservation groups in 12 Southeast Alaska communities, from Yakutat to Ketchikan.

SEACC's individual members include commercial fishermen, Native Alaskans, small timber operators and value-added wood manufacturers, tourism and recreation business owners, hunters and guides, and Alaskans from all walks of life. SEACC is dedicated to preserving the integrity of Southeast Alaska's unsurpassed natural environment while providing for balanced, sustainable use of our region's resources.

SEACC is opposed to this measure. Instead of lobbying for a certain logging level, the Alaska Legislature needs to support communities' efforts to make the transition to a high-value added timber industry that produces the most jobs for Southeast Alaskan out of every tree cut.

All of us want the Tongass Plan completed. But for this plan to provide the stability and assurance that everyone hopes for, it must ensure that logging occurs only at sustainable levels that are consistent with maintaining current and future demand for fish, wildlife, and other renewable resources over the long term. The minimum 300 million board foot logging level called for by this resolution is an unsustainable and environmentally destructive cutting level.

This resolution would, in effect, call for the adoption of the Preferred Alternative identified in the latest draft of the Tongass plan. The Preferred Alternative:

LYNN CANAL CONSERVATION, Haines • FRIENDS OF GLACIER BAY, Gustavus • FRIENDS OF BERNERS BAY, Juneau  
WRANGELL RESOURCE COUNCIL • ALASKA SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FOREST DWELLERS, Point Baker • PELICAN FORESTRY COUNCIL  
ALASKANS FOR JUNEAU • NARROWS CONSERVATION COALITION, Petersburg • TONGASS CONSERVATION SOCIETY, Ketchikan  
CHICAGO CONSERVATION COUNCIL, Tenakee • JUNEAU GROUP SIERRA CLUB • SITKA CONSERVATION SOCIETY  
TAKU CONSERVATION SOCIETY, Juneau • PRINCE OF WALES CONSERVATION LEAGUE, Craig • YAKUTAT RESOURCE CONSERVATION COUNCIL



- places areas important to Southeast communities at risk including Cleveland Peninsula, Poison Cove and Ushk Bay, Upper Tenakee Inlet, Port Houghton, Honker Divide, and East Kuiu Island.
- fails to provide short and long-term protection for fish habitat and for healthy and huntable wildlife populations.

Of the nearly 5,000 comments received on the draft Tongass Plan this summer from Alaskans, 57 percent concluded that the Preferred Alternative was too biased towards logging. These Alaskans called for substantially more protection of fish and wildlife habitat and special areas.

We will also likely hear how this resolution supports the resolution passed late last year by the Southeast Regional Timber Taskforce calling for a minimum annual harvest level of 300 mmbf. We respectfully urge the Committee to examine the Taskforce's 10-4 vote. Out of the 11 communities represented on the Governor's Taskforce, 8 voted against the resolution. The Tongass Community Alliance, which represents six Southeast communities (Gustavus, Pelican, Elfin Cove, Tenakee Springs, Port Alexander and the City of Kupreanof), and so did the mayors of Petersburg and Sitka.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 32  
&  
SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 24

STRIKING A BALANCE ON THE  
TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

MARCH 1997

WALT SHERIDAN & ASSOC.  
JUNEAU, ALASKA

## INTRODUCTION

The purposes of HJR 32 and SJR 24 are two-fold. First, they encourage the US Forest Service to bring the decade-long Tongass Land Management Plan to a conclusion so the people and communities of Southeast Alaska can move forward with their economic and personal lives with some degree of certainty. And second, they put the Alaska Legislature on record as supporting a level of timber harvest from the Tongass National Forest sufficient to prevent further loss of jobs in this important segment of the Southeast Alaska economy.

## WHY NOW

After over a decade of false starts, intervening Federal legislation, court decisions and several public review drafts, the US Forest Service appears to be poised to make their decision on how the Tongass National Forest will be managed for the next ten to fifteen years. That decision will have profound effects on the people and communities of Southeast Alaska and, by extension, the State's economy as a whole.

The US Forest Service decision, which is expected by May, could cause the loss of many of the remaining timber and timber support jobs in the region. More significantly, in the long term the decision may preclude the restructuring of a timber industry employment base around new technologies and value added processing opportunities.

## HOW DID WE GET HERE?

In 1979 the US Forest Service in partnership with the State of Alaska and Southeast Alaska communities adopted a plan for managing the Tongass National Forest for the next 10 to 15 years. Called the Tongass Land Management Plan, or T-LUMP, the plan allowed for a timber harvest level of up to an average annual amount of approximately 520 million board feet including low-value utility logs. The plan also instituted stringent fisheries protection measures and recommended Congressional designation of nearly a third of the forest as Wilderness.

The 1979 TLMP was intended to strike a balance between preservationist interests and the needs of the Southeast Alaska people and communities for timber related jobs. The essential compromise embodied in the 1979 TLMP was 5.4 million acres of Wilderness for timber sufficient to support a little over 3100 direct timber jobs.

The compromise didn't last very long however. Throughout the decade of the 80's, environmental lawsuits, bureaucratic inefficiencies and poor market conditions conspired to suppress actual harvest volumes to only about two-thirds of what was envisioned in the plan. Further, by the mid to late 80's environmental interests were petitioning Congress for Tongass "reform" which by their agenda meant Congressional designation of additional millions of acres of Wilderness, mandatory stream buffers and cancellation of the two long-term contracts which supplied the raw materials for the Sitka and Ketchikan pulp and sawmills.

Congress took action in 1980 with passage of the Tongass Timber Reform Act (TTRA). Among other things, TTRA carved additional Wilderness and other non-timber harvest allocations from the Tongass. The Congress, however, declined to cancel the two long-term contracts. Instead, Congress choose to unilaterally change the deal. Regrettably, the die had been cast for the loss of this segment of the industry and the jobs which it had provided to the economy of Southeast Alaska for nearly a half century.

In 1993, the Alaska Pulp Company announced the temporary closure of it's facility in Sitka citing the unavailability of an economic timber supply. The company sought Government approval to explore conversion of their Sitka facility to some other manufacturing process such as medium density fiberboard. The Government responded by canceling the contract. Over 400 high-paying, year-round jobs were lost to the Sitka community.

In 1994 a similar fate befell the community of Wrangell with the announcement of the closure of the Wrangell Sawmill due to lack of a consistent, and economic supply of timber. Over 200 jobs were lost to this community.

Finally, in 1996 the Ketchikan Pulp Company announced the planned closure of it's operations as of March 22 of this year. Thankfully, subsequent negotiations between the Government and Ketchikan Pulp Company appear to have provided a three-year reprieve for the Company's sawmilling employees in Ketchikan and Metlakatla. However, the immediate job loss to Ketchikan is still an astounding 500+ jobs.

In summary, under the 1979 TLMP direct jobs in the timber industry have declined from a high of over 3100 in 1979 to the present low of less than half the 1979 level with closure of the KPC pulp mill. Yet additional job loss can be expected if the current direction of Federal timber policy is not reversed.

Ironically, and based on a bizarre twisting of classical economic theory, the Forest Service has consistently interpreted the declines in the timber industry as a reduction in demand for Tongass timber. This, in spite of pacific rim demand projections indicating strong and increasing demand for competitively priced wood products. The Forest Service demand projections acknowledge no agency culpability for the job losses from agency actions affecting the supply of timber, costs of production, or otherwise.

### GOSHAWKS, WOLVES AND TONGASS TIMBER

In 1993 and 94, environmental interests filed petitions with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to list the so called Queen Charlotte goshawk and Alexander Archipelago Wolf as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The basis for the petitions was the perceived long-term threat to the two species from continued harvesting of timber from the Tongass.

After months of study, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in 1995 concluded neither species to be endangered. Their findings, however, were qualified. The qualification was the forthcoming Tongass Land Management Plan would include changes in Federal timber policy acceptable to the Fish and Wildlife Service as adequately protecting the long-term viability of the two species. Obviously, this gave the Fish and Wildlife Service a substantial lever on the Forest Service's ultimate decision in that without FWS concurrence, listing of the goshawk and wolf became much more probable. This already substantial lever was about to become even stronger however.

In October of 1996, law suits filed by the environmental petitioners seeking to overturn the FWS's earlier "not warranted" finding proved successful. The court essentially ruled FWS could not base it's findings on the assumption that future decisions of the Forest Service would change Federal timber policy sufficiently to satisfy FWS as to the long-term viability of the two species. FWS has until May of this year to issue a new finding.

Not coincidentally, the Forest Service plans to make it's TLMP decision by early May. Clearly, the Forest Service decision will be heavily influenced by what will be

acceptable to FWS. The listing of either or both species as endangered under the Endangered Species Act will simply not be considered an acceptable outcome by either agency or, probably more importantly, the Federal Administration.

Unfortunately, the agency with the legal responsibility for making the listing decision has no legal mandate to consider the effects of its decision on the lives of the people and communities of Southeast Alaska. As a result, there is considerable pressure on the Forest Service to significantly reduce harvest levels from historic levels. Some estimates are FWS is pressing for an annual harvest level of less than 100 million board feet - a level so low as to virtually eliminate the timber industry in Southeast Alaska as a significant part of Southeast Alaska's economy.

### VALUE ADDED: SAVIOR OR MYTH

Much has been heard recently about restructuring the Southeast Alaska timber industry toward heavier reliance on "value added" processing. Value added processing is not a term with a precise meaning. Arguably, any processing which adds value to a log would meet the criterion for being a value added process. Certainly, converting low-value cull material into a product from which rayon dresses can be made, as was the case with the two now extinct pulp mills, would qualify as value added. However, as used in the current debate, value added processing has come to mean processing which produces more, and often substantially more, jobs per harvested tree than in the past. Examples used include door and window frames, moldings and musical instruments.

Value added processing has become the apple pie of the Tongass debate. Everyone is for it. Carrying the apple pie analogy a bit further, some forget apple pie is but the end product of a highly complex process. Apples must be grown, harvested, processed and transported. The same with the flour, sugar, spices, etc. Remove any one of these elements and you no longer have an apple pie. Cause any one or more of these elements to become inefficient and the price of apple pie may become uncompetitive. The same rules apply to establishing a value added timber industry in Southeast Alaska.

### **THE NEED FOR AN INTEGRATED FOREST INDUSTRY IN SUPPORT OF VALUE ADDED PROCESSING**

Expansion of significant value added timber processing opportunities in Southeast Alaska will occur only as a part of an integrated forest industry. An integrated forest industry must consist of all of the direct and indirect components necessary for a

sustainable forest industry that is economically, environmentally and socially sound. Elements of such an industry must include support industries such as tug and barge lines, financial services and communications, to name just a few.

The industry must also be of sufficient size so that its individual components are self sustaining. For example, the annual timber sale program must be sufficiently large to support at least several road building and logging contractors on a sustainable basis. The number of such contractors which will have a reasonable probability of staying in business is primarily a function of the overall size and reliability of the annual timber sale program. Below a certain level of sale activity, these skills are lost at the local level and, along with them, the competitive cost advantage of the local contractor.

The size and composition of individual sale offerings are also important factors in determining whether or not a viable integrated industry can exist. The geography, weather and relative undeveloped nature of Southeast Alaska create cost inefficiencies which, if not mitigated, place Southeast Alaska operators at a severe competitive disadvantage. For example, a particular sale offering must be of sufficient size to justify the high cost of establishing a remote camp. It must also provide enough work for at least one road building and one logging crew for at least a sufficient length of time to amortize the cost of moving in and out. Anything less and the associated cost inefficiencies will drive a company out of business.

Another important element of an integrated forest industry is its ability to utilize the full range of raw materials found in the typical Tongass forest stand. Forest stands on the Tongass are not uniform. Such stands have the potential for a wide range of products from medium density fiberboard (MDF) to piano sounding boards. Utilization of these stands requires reasonable outlets be available to process the high value material as well as the lower value logs and residual material. With the closure of the pulp mills, a serious gap has been created in the ability of industry to effectively utilize the diverse range of materials - in particular, pulp logs and residual chips from sawmilling operations.

A key component of any plan to reestablish a timber industry in Southeast Alaska must include a strategy for the utilization of these pulp logs and residual chips - responsible conservation and stewardship principles demand nothing less. Currently, with the closure of the KPC pulp facility, there is no local market for this material. Furthermore, at least in the near term, there may be no economic export market for this material in either round log form or as chips due to the high cost of transporting the

material and the availability of much lower cost alternative raw material sources. Many industry analysts predict that this trend will be long-term, adding yet another impetus to the need for the processing of this material in Southeast Alaska. Any option which fails to include realistic opportunities for the utilization of pulp logs and residual chips may not be viable from either a conservation, economic or social perspective.

Higher valued products, be they finished lumber, molding or guitar faces, typically can be made only from the higher grades of wood - grades which represent only a small fraction of the average forest stand. In other words, a fairly substantial amount of volume must be harvested and processed into other than these so called value added products if the value added products are to make a significant contribution to the creation of jobs - this even if the value added products produce several times the number of jobs per tree harvested than their more mundane cousins.

The high value added product is the pinnacle of the integrated forest industry hierarchy but it probably cannot exist in any substantial form independent of the infrastructure and support provided by the industry as a whole - at least not in Southeast Alaska. High value specialty product manufacturers do not require large volumes of wood but these manufacturers also have little ability to acquire even these relatively small amounts other than as one of many outputs from an integrated forest industry. It would be totally unreasonable to expect the high value specialty product manufacturer to go into the road building, logging and sawmilling business in order to acquire the relatively small volume of high quality raw materials needed. Conversely, the integrated industry needed to supply the raw material needs of the high value added manufacturer must process enough quantity of material to realize some measure of economy of scale in order to stay in business.

#### HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

In December of 1996, the Governor's Timber Task Force addressed the issue of the minimum timber supply needed to reestablish a viable, integrated timber industry. Based on a paper prepared by the industry members of the Task Force titled "Four Visions of the Timber Industry on the Tongass National Forest", the Task Force passed a resolution calling for a minimum annual harvest level of 300 million board feet (MMBF).

300 MMBF is the volume selected by the Forest Supervisor's as the preferred alternative in the draft TLMP. Prior to the announcement of the closure of the Ketchikan

Pulp facility, it was also the volume supported in public statements by the Governor (i.e., sufficient volume for KPC plus 100 MMBF for small businesses).

At the 300 MMBF harvest level, there would be sufficient volume to justify the establishment of a minimum facility to process low grade logs and residual chips. Approximately 307 jobs would be provided through road construction, 578 jobs through timber harvesting and 25 jobs through exporting cedar. There would be 505 sawmilling jobs to provide primary manufacture. The sawmills would be operating at 70-75% capacity. There would be 125 jobs connected with the pulp logs and residual chip facility and 209 jobs connected with value added manufacturing facilities such as remanufacturing, planing, finger joints, molding and shakes. Opportunities for additional value added facilities would be limited only by the imagination of the entrepreneurial community to define viable business opportunities. The raw and semi-processed materials needed for such value added products would be available.

### BALANCING JOBS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

According to the Forest Service, 300 MMBF of timber can be harvested from the Tongass on an annual basis in perpetuity without significant adverse environmental effects to fish, wildlife or other important resources. This was the conclusion of the three Tongass Forest Supervisors in announcing their recommended alternative on April 5 of last year. The Forest Supervisor's alternative, with an economic allowable sale of 297 MMBF, was characterized by the Supervisors as reflecting "---a balanced judgment in how best to resolve the issues facing the Tongass because it is based on the analysis conducted by the interdisciplinary team and the scientists, with the input of these other agencies".

Again according to the Forest Service the draft Tongass plan with its recommended harvest level of 297 MMBF "---was developed with much greater involvement by Forest Service Research scientists and representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency and Fish and Wildlife Service than any previous forest planing proposal".

With respect to the effects of the Forest Supervisor's recommended alternative on wildlife, the Supervisors stated "We believe, after a through review of the panel assessments and related work in the Revised Supplement, that our preferred alternative, if implemented for 10-15 years, will maintain the viability and distribution of wildlife

species across the Tongass." There has been no "new" science since the Forest Supervisors reached this conclusion. Clearly, a 300 MMBF harvest level from the Tongass is attainable while meeting environmental constraints and our stewardship and sustainability responsibilities.

### CONCLUSION

The long awaited conclusion of the Tongass Land Management Plan appears to be near. The decision by the Forest Service will have profound effects on the people and communities of Southeast Alaska. That decision is being heavily influenced by single issue concerns of the US Fish and Wildlife Service for long-term protection of goshawks and wolves - concerns with inadequate scientific basis but with potentially dire consequences for reestablishing a viable timber industry in Southeast Alaska.

The Governor's Timber Task Force has recommended the Forest Service select a plan which allows for a harvest level from the Tongass of at least 300 MMBF annually in order to reestablish an industry capable of utilizing the full range of timber from the Tongass and of providing the raw and semi-processed material needed for new value added industries to become established. An annual harvest level of 300 MMBF is attainable while protecting fish, wildlife and the other important resources of the Tongass and Southeast Alaska.

TESTIMONY OF WALT SHERIDAN BEFORE THE ALASKA STATE SENATE  
ON SJR24: A RESOLUTION RELATING TO THE TONGASS LAND  
MANAGEMENT PLAN AND TO CONTINUED CONGRESSIONAL  
OVERSIGHT OF THAT PLAN.

MARCH 26, 1997

MR. CHAIRMAN, I CONGRATULATE SENATOR MACKIE FOR INTRODUCING SJR24 AND YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN, FOR HOLDING THIS HEARING. THE RESOLUTION AND HEARING COULDN'T BE MORE TIMELY.

SJR24 DOES A COUPLE OF THINGS. FIRST, IT ENCOURAGES THE US FOREST SERVICE TO BRING THE DECADE-LONG TONGASS LAND MANAGEMENT PROCESS TO A CLOSE. AND SECONDLY, IT PUTS THE ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE ON RECORD SUPPORTING AN ANNUAL TIMBER HARVEST LEVEL OF AT LEAST 300 MMBF.

WHY THE RUSH AND WHY 300? I WOULD LIKE TO BRIEFLY TALK ABOUT EACH OF THESE QUESTIONS.

FIRST OF ALL, BRINGING THE TONGASS PLAN TO CONCLUSION - NOW - IS BY NO STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION A RUSH. THE FOREST SERVICE HAS BEEN WORKING ON THE PLAN FOR OVER A DECADE - A DECADE DURING WHICH WE'VE SEEN THE LOSS OF OVER HALF OF THE DIRECT TIMBER INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA.

FURTHERMORE, THE FAILURE OF THE FOREST SERVICE TO PRODUCE A REVISED TONGASS PLAN HAS PUT THE ECONOMIC LIVES OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES OF SOUTHEAST ALASKA ON HOLD.

THE REVISED PLAN WILL LET THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES OF SOUTHEAST ALASKA KNOW WHAT RESOURCES FROM THE TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THE NEXT TEN TO FIFTEEN YEARS - RESOURCES AROUND WHICH THEY CAN RE-BUILD THEIR ECONOMIC FUTURES. THE REVISED PLAN WILL PROVIDE A DEGREE OF CERTAINTY AND PREDICTABILITY - ALL NECESSARY ELEMENTS FOR ATTRACTING INVESTMENT IN NEW PLANTS AND EQUIPMENT. WITHOUT A DEGREE OF CERTAINTY, INVESTMENT DOLLARS ARE SIMPLY NOT AVAILABLE. THIS IS THE SITUATION WE HAVE BEEN IN FOR SEVERAL YEARS.

THERE ARE ALSO INDICATIONS THE FOREST SERVICE IS UNDER INTENSE PRESSURE FROM THE US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TO DRASTICALLY REDUCE HARVEST ON THE TONGASS IN RESPONSE TO CONCERNS ABOUT GOSHAWKS AND WOLVES. THESE CONCERNS DO NOT JUSTIFY A FURTHER DELAY. THERE IS NO NEW SCIENCE ON WHICH TO BASE THESE CONCERNS OVER WHAT WAS AVAILABLE LAST YEAR WHEN THE FOREST SERVICE ISSUED THE DRAFT TONGASS PLAN ALLOWING A HARVEST LEVEL OF 297 MMBF AND FWS ISSUED ITS FINDING THAT

GOSHAWKS AND WOLVES WOULD NOT BE ENDANGERED AT THAT LEVEL OF HARVEST.

A SECOND IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF SJR24 WOULD PUT THE ALASKA LEGISLATURE ON RECORD AS SUPPORTING A MINIMUM ANNUAL HARVEST LEVEL FROM THE TONGASS OF 300 MMBF - THE SAME AMOUNT OF HARVEST RECENTLY ENDORSED BY THE GOVERNOR'S TIMBER TASK FORCE.

THE QUESTION IS, WHY 300?

NOW THAT THE MILLS WITH THEIR LONG-TERM SUPPLY CONTRACTS ARE GONE, WHY CAN'T WE RESTRUCTURE A TIMBER INDUSTRY BASED ON VALUE ADDED PROCESSING AND PRODUCE THE SAME OR MORE JOBS ON A MUCH SMALLER AMOUNT OF TIMBER?

THE ANSWER TO THESE QUESTIONS IS WE CAN AND SHOULD RESTRUCTURE A TIMBER INDUSTRY AROUND VALUE ADDED PROCESSING BUT THIS WILL BE POSSIBLE ONLY IF WE CAN FIND A WAY TO DEAL WITH LOW QUALITY PULP LOGS. IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH A VALUE ADDED INDUSTRY WE MUST ALSO SUSTAIN SUFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND PRIMARY MANUFACTURING CAPABILITY TO EFFICIENTLY LOG, TRANSPORT AND PROCESS THE RAW MATERIALS NEEDED BY THE VALUE ADDED SEGMENT OF THE INDUSTRY. ACCORDING TO INDUSTRY EXPERTS

AND THE GOVERNOR'S TIMBER TASK FORCE, AN ANNUAL HARVEST LEVEL OF 300 MMBF IS THE MINIMUM NECESSARY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS.

VALUE ADDED PROCESSING IS NOT A TERM WITH A PRECISE MEANING. ARGUABLY, ANY PROCESSING WHICH ADDS VALUE TO A LOG WOULD MEET THE CRITERION FOR BEING A VALUE ADDED PROCESS. CERTAINLY, CONVERTING LOW-VALUE CULL MATERIAL INTO A PRODUCT FROM WHICH RAYON DRESSES CAN BE MADE, AS WAS THE CASE WITH THE TWO NOW EXTINCT PULP MILLS, WOULD QUALIFY AS VALUE ADDED. HOWEVER, AS USED IN THE CURRENT DEBATE, VALUE ADDED PROCESSING HAS COME TO SIMPLY MEAN PROCESSING WHICH PRODUCES MORE JOBS PER HARVESTED TREE THAN IN THE PAST. EXAMPLES USED INCLUDE DOOR AND WINDOW FRAMES, MOLDINGS AND MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

VALUE ADDED PROCESSING HAS BECOME THE APPLE PIE OF THE TONGASS DEBATE. EVERYONE IS FOR IT. CARRYING THE APPLE PIE ANALOGY A BIT FURTHER, SOME FORGET APPLE PIE IS BUT THE END PRODUCT OF A HIGHLY COMPLEX PROCESS. APPLES MUST BE GROWN, HARVESTED, PROCESSED AND TRANSPORTED. THE SAME WITH THE FLOUR, SUGAR, SPICES, ETC. REMOVE ANY ONE OF THESE ELEMENTS AND YOU NO LONGER HAVE AN APPLE PIE. CAUSE ANY ONE OR MORE OF THESE ELEMENTS TO BECOME INEFFICIENT AND THE PRICE OF APPLE PIE MAY BECOME UNCOMPETITIVE. THE SAME RULES APPLY TO

ESTABLISHING A VALUE ADDED TIMBER INDUSTRY IN SOUTHEAST  
ALASKA.

VALUE ADDED PRODUCTS, BE THEY FINISHED LUMBER, MOLDING OR GUITAR FACES, TYPICALLY CAN BE MADE ONLY FROM THE HIGHER GRADES OF WOOD - GRADES WHICH REPRESENT ONLY A SMALL FRACTION OF THE AVERAGE FOREST STAND. IN OTHER WORDS, A FAIRLY SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF VOLUME MUST BE HARVESTED AND PROCESSED INTO OTHER THAN THESE SO CALLED VALUE ADDED PRODUCTS IF THE VALUE ADDED PRODUCTS ARE TO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE CREATION OF JOBS.

VALUE ADDED MANUFACTURERS DO NOT REQUIRE LARGE VOLUMES OF WOOD BUT THESE MANUFACTURERS ALSO HAVE LITTLE ABILITY TO ACQUIRE EVEN THESE RELATIVELY SMALL AMOUNTS OTHER THAN AS ONE OF MANY OUTPUTS FROM AN INTEGRATED FOREST INDUSTRY. IT WOULD BE TOTALLY UNREASONABLE TO EXPECT VALUE ADDED MANUFACTURER TO GO INTO THE ROAD BUILDING, LOGGING AND SAWMILLING BUSINESS. CONVERSELY, THE INTEGRATED INDUSTRY REQUIRED TO SUPPLY THE RAW MATERIAL NEEDS OF THE HIGH VALUE ADDED MANUFACTURER MUST PROCESS ENOUGH QUANTITY OF MATERIAL TO REALIZE SOME MEASURE OF ECONOMY OF SCALE IN ORDER TO STAY IN BUSINESS.

EQUALLY IMPORTANT, WE MUST HAVE SOME WAY OF DEALING WITH THE LOW QUALITY LOGS WHICH CAN ACCOUNT FOR AS MUCH AS HALF OF THE TYPICAL TONGASS FOREST STAND. WE CAN'T SIMPLY LOG AROUND THE LOW QUALITY MATERIAL, TAKING ONLY THE BEST, AS TO DO SO WOULD LEAVE A LEGACY FOR OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN OF DEGRADED FOREST STANDS MADE UP PRIMARILY OF LOW GRADE DEFECTIVE MATERIAL. NOT AN ACCEPTABLE OUTCOME.

UTILIZATION OF THESE FOREST STANDS, WHICH ARE A MIX OF HIGH AND LOW VALUE MATERIAL REQUIRES REASONABLE OUTLETS FOR BOTH THE HIGH VALUE MATERIAL AS WELL AS THE LOWER VALUE LOGS AND RESIDUAL MATERIAL. WITH THE CLOSE OF THE PULP MILLS, A SERIOUS GAP HAS BEEN CREATED IN THE ABILITY OF INDUSTRY TO EFFECTIVELY UTILIZE THE DIVERSE RANGE OF MATERIALS - IN PARTICULAR, PULP LOGS AND RESIDUAL CHIPS FROM SAWMILLING OPERATIONS.

A KEY COMPONENT OF ANY PLAN TO REESTABLISH A TIMBER INDUSTRY IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA MUST INCLUDE A STRATEGY FOR THE UTILIZING THESE PULP LOGS AND RESIDUAL CHIPS - RESPONSIBLE CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP PRINCIPLES DEMAND NOTHING LESS. WITH YESTERDAY'S CLOSING OF THE KPC PULP FACILITY, THERE IS NO LOCAL MARKET FOR THIS MATERIAL. FURTHERMORE, AT LEAST IN THE NEAR TERM, THERE MAY BE NO ECONOMIC EXPORT MARKET EITHER. MANY INDUSTRY ANALYSTS PREDICT THAT THIS TREND WILL BE LONG-

TERM, ADDING YET FURTHER IMPETUS TO THE NEED FOR THE PROCESSING OF THIS MATERIAL IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA. ANY OPTION WHICH FAILS TO INCLUDE REALISTIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE UTILIZATION OF PULP LOGS AND RESIDUAL CHIPS MAY NOT BE VIABLE FROM EITHER A CONSERVATION, ECONOMIC OR SOCIAL PERSPECTIVE.

AT THE 300 MMBF HARVEST LEVEL, THERE WOULD BE SUFFICIENT VOLUME TO JUSTIFY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MINIMUM FACILITY TO PROCESS THE LOW GRADE LOGS AND RESIDUAL CHIPS. A HARVEST LEVEL OF 300 MMBF ALSO PROVIDES SUFFICIENT VOLUME TO SUPPORT AT LEAST MINIMALLY EFFICIENT HARVESTING OPERATIONS, SAWMILLING, PLANING AND AT LEAST ONE DRY KILN OPERATION IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA - ALL NECESSARY IF THE RAW MATERIALS FOR FURTHER VALUE ADDED PROCESSING ARE TO BE AVAILABLE. WITH THIS INFRASTRUCTURE IN PLACE, OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADDITIONAL VALUE ADDED FACILITIES WOULD BE LIMITED ONLY BY THE IMAGINATION OF THE ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITY TO DEFINE VIABLE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES. THE RAW AND SIMI-PROCESSED MATERIALS NEEDED FOR SUCH VALUE ADDED PRODUCTS WOULD BE AVAILABLE.

THE NEXT OBVIOUS QUESTION IS CAN 300 MMBF OF TIMBER BE HARVESTED ANNUALLY FROM THE TONGASS WITHOUT INCURRING UNACCEPTABLE ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS. IN OTHER WORDS CAN WE CONTINUE TO PRODUCE RECORD NUMBERS OF FISH, MAINTAIN VIABLE

POPULATIONS OF WILDLIFE, INCLUDING GOSHAWKS AND WOLVES, AND STILL CUT 300 MMBF OF TIMBER EACH YEAR.

I BELIEVE THE ANSWER IS A RESOUNDING YES AND SO DID THE FOREST SERVICE AT LEAST THROUGH APRIL 5 OF LAST YEAR WHEN THEY ISSUED THEIR DRAFT TONGASS PLAN.

ACCORDING TO THE FOREST SERVICE, 300 MMBF OF TIMBER CAN BE HARVESTED FROM THE TONGASS ON AN ANNUAL BASIS IN PERPETUITY WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS TO FISH, WILDLIFE OR OTHER IMPORTANT RESOURCES. THIS WAS THE CONCLUSION OF THE THREE TONGASS FOREST SUPERVISORS IN ANNOUNCING THEIR RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE ON APRIL 5 OF LAST YEAR. THE FOREST SUPERVISOR'S ALTERNATIVE, WITH AN ECONOMIC ALLOWABLE SALE QUANTITY OF 297 MMBF, WAS CHARACTERIZED BY THE SUPERVISORS AS REFLECTING "---A BALANCED JUDGMENT IN HOW BEST TO RESOLVE THE ISSUES FACING THE TONGASS BECAUSE IT IS BASED ON THE ANALYSIS CONDUCTED BY THE INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM AND THE SCIENTISTS, WITH THE INPUT OF (THESE) OTHER AGENCIES".

AGAIN ACCORDING TO THE FOREST SERVICE THE DRAFT TONGASS PLAN WITH ITS RECOMMENDED HARVEST LEVEL OF 297 MMBF "---WAS DEVELOPED WITH MUCH GREATER INVOLVEMENT BY FOREST SERVICE RESEARCH SCIENTISTS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL

PROTECTION AGENCY AND FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE THAN ANY PREVIOUS FOREST PLANING PROPOSAL”.

WITH RESPECT TO THE EFFECTS OF THE FOREST SUPERVISOR'S RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE ON WILDLIFE, THE SUPERVISORS STATED “WE BELIEVE, AFTER A THROUGH REVIEW OF THE PANEL ASSESSMENTS AND RELATED WORK IN THE REVISED SUPPLEMENT, THAT OUR PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE, IF IMPLEMENTED FOR 10-15 YEARS, WILL MAINTAIN THE VIABILITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF WILDLIFE SPECIES ACROSS THE TONGASS.”

THERE HAS BEEN NO “NEW” SCIENCE SINCE THE FOREST SUPERVISORS REACHED THIS CONCLUSION. CLEARLY, A 300 MMBF HARVEST LEVEL FROM THE TONGASS IS ATTAINABLE WHILE MEETING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS AND OUR STEWARDSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY RESPONSIBILITIES.

### CONCLUSION

THE GOVERNOR'S TIMBER TASK FORCE HAS RECOMMENDED THE FOREST SERVICE SELECT A PLAN WHICH ALLOWS FOR A HARVEST LEVEL FROM THE TONGASS OF AT LEAST 300 MMBF ANNUALLY IN ORDER TO REESTABLISH AN INDUSTRY CAPABLE OF UTILIZING THE FULL RANGE OF TIMBER FROM THE TONGASS AND OF PROVIDING THE RAW AND SIMI-PROCESSED MATERIAL NEEDED FOR NEW VALUE ADDED INDUSTRIES TO

BECOME ESTABLISHED. THE TASK FORCE'S RECOMMENDATION IS SUPPORTED BY THE TONGASS FOREST SUPERVISOR'S RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE. AN ANNUAL HARVEST LEVEL OF 300 MMBF IS ATTAINABLE WHILE PROTECTING FISH, WILDLIFE AND THE OTHER IMPORTANT RESOURCES OF THE TONGASS AND SOUTHEAST ALASKA.

PASSAGE OF SJR24 WILL SEND AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO THE FOREST SERVICE AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE ADMINISTRATION, THAT ALASKANS WANT TO GET ON WITH THEIR PERSONAL AND ECONOMIC LIVES INCLUDING THE OPPORTUNITY TO ESTABLISH A VALUE ADDED TIMBER INDUSTRY THAT IS ECONOMICALLY VIABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY.



Official Business

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801

Chairman: Senator Rick Halford  
Vice Chair: Senator Lyda Green  
Senator Loren Leman  
Senator Bert Sharp  
Senator Robin Taylor  
Senator John Torgerson  
Senator Georgianna Lincoln

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Senate Resource Committee Members

FROM: Senator Rick Halford, Chairman  
Senate Resources

DATE: 3 April 1997

SUBJECT: SJR 24 Follow-up Materials

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Attached are two packets of follow-up materials delivered to me by Buck Lindekugel on behalf of the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council. He requested that I distribute copies to all Senate Resource Committee members.

SJR 24 was heard and passed out of committee on March 26, 1997.



# Southeast Alaska Conservation Council

SEACC 419 6th Street, Suite 328, Juneau, AK 99801  
(907) 586-6942 phone (907) 463-3312 fax  
email: seacc@alaska.net

March 27, 1997

Senator Richard Halford  
Chairman, Senate Resource Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capital Building, Room 121  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Chairman Halford:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your committee yesterday on SJR 24. At the hearing, Senator Taylor asked me to identify what scientific expertise SEACC had relied upon for concluding that the minimum logging level of 300 million board feet called for by SJR 24 was "an unsustainable and environmentally destructive cutting level." Enclosed with this letter we are providing the committee with information in response to Senator Taylor's request. We respectfully request this information be added to the committee record on this matter.

The enclosed summarizes the key expert opinion of various scientists and panels consulted by the Forest Service about wildlife and fish habitat needs in the process of preparing the current draft Tongass Plan. This summary is meant to provide rapid access to the most important scientific evidence about problems with the draft Tongass Plan. Following an introduction, it is organized into six (numbered) statements, under which the relevant science is quoted or summarized, with citations.

We believe the review by experts of all the alternatives in the draft Tongass Plan, including the Forest Supervisors' preferred alternative, definitely supports our conclusion that none of the draft planning alternatives respond to the conclusions reached by experts consulted by the Forest Service in a meaningful way. We believe the Forest Service lacks a reasonable basis for adopting the Forest Supervisors' Preferred Alternative because of its inability to articulate a rational connection between the facts found by the experts it consulted and the choices made.

We reiterate our desire for the Forest Service to complete the Tongass planning process. Nevertheless, a decision that runs counter to the advice this agency has received from the expert scientists will not provide long-term stability for Southeast Alaska communities.

Best Regards,

  
Buck Lindekugel  
Conservation Director

enclosure: Summary of expert opinion on current draft of the Tongass Plan

LYNN CANAL CONSERVATION, Haines • FRIENDS OF GLACIER BAY, Gustavus • FRIENDS OF BERNERS BAY, Juneau  
WRANGELL RESOURCE COUNCIL • ALASKA SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FOREST DWELLERS, Point Baker • PELICAN FORESTRY COUNCIL,  
ALASKANS FOR JUNEAU • NARROWS CONSERVATION COALITION, Petersburg • TONGASS CONSERVATION SOCIETY, Ketchikan  
CHILLAGOF CONSERVATION COUNCIL, Tenakee • JUNEAU GROUP SIERRA CLUB • SITKA CONSERVATION SOCIETY  
TAKU CONSERVATION SOCIETY, Juneau • PRINCE OF WALES CONSERVATION LEAGUE, Craig • YAKUTAT RESOURCE CONSERVATION COUNCIL

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## Introduction and Summary

Management alternatives in the Tongass Land Management Plan (TLMP) Revised Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (RSDEIS) are inconsistent with scientific opinion about the needs of fish and wildlife species found on the Forest. This failing characterizes not just the Preferred Alternative, but all other action alternatives as well. As a result, the Tongass has no scientifically credible strategy under consideration for meeting its multiple legal obligations with regard to these species.<sup>1</sup>

Most centrally, a number of expert reviews have concluded that habitat management of the Tongass must include larger (and/or more numerous) reserve areas than those the Forest Service is considering, and needs to shift to less intensive silviculture between reserves. The best reserve system considered in any alternative is a version of the 1993 "V-POP" strategy, designed by an interagency team of government scientists lead by Lowell Suring. No subsequent analysis of that original strategy has found it adequate, and the Suring/V-POP committee itself substantially modified and strengthened its reserve plan in 1994, in response to outside peer review. In addition, numerous analyses have concluded that continued reliance on short-rotation, large-scale clearcutting is inconsistent with wildlife needs (in most cases even if stronger reserves are adopted). The only alternative approach considered in the TLMP RSDEIS -- 200 year

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<sup>1</sup> These requirements most notably include the duty to ensure that sufficient habitat is maintained for viable populations of native vertebrate wildlife species. See 36 C.F.R. §§ 219 & 227. The Tongass is also at grave risk of triggering listings under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), because no alternative responds to conservation assessments conducted by government scientists for two candidate species or to the comments of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USF&WS). In addition, the Forest Service, like other federal agencies, has a mandate under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) to "cause the least adverse impact possible on rural residents who depend upon subsistence uses of the resources" of federal lands in Alaska. See 16 U.S.C. § 3112(1); see also *id.* at subsection 2 ("nonwasteful subsistence uses of fish and wildlife and other renewable resources shall be the priority uses" if any restrictions are needed to assure the continued viability of fish and wildlife or continued subsistence practices), and § 3120(a) (Federal agencies may significantly restrict subsistence uses only when "necessary, consistent with sound management principles for the utilization of public lands"). To meet subsistence demand, populations of subsistence species must generally be huntable or fishable, and hence significantly larger and healthier than might be required just for minimum viability.

rotations<sup>2</sup> -- has been specifically identified as inadequate to provide needed habitat values.

Other major failings of the RSDEIS include: failure to include high quality riparian buffer standards on any streams, except in one alternative (not the preferred); lack of protections against continued "high-grade" logging of the best wildlife habitat; and inadequate provision for movement between habitat reserves, via wildlife corridors or other measures.

#### Key Findings from Expert<sup>3</sup> Panels and Documents

1. Larger reserve areas (significantly more than identified in the original V-POP strategy), off limits to logging and/or road-building, are needed to safeguard important habitat for fish and wildlife.

- At least pending development of a much stronger scientific analysis of Tongass ecology, "further logging in the remaining relatively undisturbed watersheds of the Tongass should be regarded as inconsistent with ensuring the continued viability of resident wildlife populations." Joint Statement of Peer Review Committee Members, p. 6.
- The original 1993 V-POP reserve strategy is not adequate to ensure viability of all species. Review of Wildlife Management and Conservation Biology on the Tongass National Forest ("Peer Review"), p. 1.
- "All of the [RSDEIS] alternatives fail to address the need, identified in the peer review and other assessments, for protection of larger and additional blocks of old growth habitat than proposed by the Suring Committee." Joint Statement of Peer Review Committee Members, p. 4.
- "Panelists generally recommended that first priority would be to retain currently unroaded watersheds in a roadless condition" [within range of brown bear]. Brown Bear Panel Summary, p. 3.

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<sup>2</sup> The RSDEIS only considers 200 year rotations in connection with a no-habitat-reserves alternative and with a highly truncated version of the original, concededly inadequate V-POP proposal.

<sup>3</sup> Included in this category are the results of a FEMAT style panel assessment of subsistence issues conducted by the Forest Service as part of its TLMP process. "Expert" and "scientific" are used here, interchangeably, to encompass the subsistence panel's work as well as that of the fisheries, wildlife, and other biologists who participated in other panels and assessments.

- Past logging impacts led a panel of mammologists to rate the likelihood of viability problems for at least some of a group of endemic species as two out of three, and for widely-distributed mammals as one in three, even without any additional logging; "likelihoods increased with higher levels of harvest proposed." Other Terrestrial Mammals Panel Summary, p. 4 and attached graph showing rating of alternatives.
- In order to keep landscape options open, "[d]o not further fragment existing large blocks of high volume old-growth." Peer Review, p. 2.
- Suring Committee agrees with Peer Review's recommendations for immediate changes in Tongass management: "it is important that the largest remaining patches not be fragmented." Response to the Peer Review of: A Proposed Strategy for Maintaining Well-Distributed, Viable Populations of Wildlife Associated with Old-growth Forests in Southeast Alaska ("Response to the Peer Review"), p. 8.
- Logging "should not result in further fragmentation of contiguous blocks of old-growth habitat." USF&WS Comments on RSDEIS, p. 3.
- All alternatives need to have a forest-wide reserve system, with "peer-review suggested modifications." USF&WS Comments on RSDEIS, p. 14.
- "Size of [the largest proposed reserves in the RSDEIS] is a concern." Goshawk Panel Notes, p. 8.
- Lower risk to viability is achieved only when V-POP based habitat conservation areas (HCAs) are combined with additional old growth reserve approaches. Viability Synthesis Panel, p. 11.
- In areas with extensive clearcutting within the range of the wolf, the Forest Service should preserve several large unfragmented, unroaded habitat blocks per ecological province [larger than those designed proposed in the 1993 V-POP strategy]. Wolf Assessment, p. 42

2. The short-rotation, large scale clearcutting that dominated Tongass management under the 50-year pulp company contracts must be replaced by much less intensive silviculture that better approximates prevailing small scale natural disturbance patterns and/or allows for re-establishment of old growth characteristics; 200-year rotations do not meet this need.

- Management of the Tongass should be based on natural disturbance regimes. Peer Review, p. 31.
- The Suring (V-POP) Committee "strongly endorses" the concept of using natural disturbance patterns to guide management, "especially in the development of management standards for the habitat matrix [outside HCA reserves]. Patterning management after natural disturbance regimes is a tenet of ecosystem management, and is gaining widespread support in the scientific community." Response to the Peer Review, p. 10.
- No action alternative in the RSDEIS would "mimic in any way the dominant natural, low intensity disturbance patterns characteristic of the Tongass." Joint Statement of Peer Review Committee Members, p. 4.
- USF&WS "believes that the 'matrix management' scheme of small area uneven-age tree management that mimics the natural disturbance regime, is the best silvicultural strategy for retaining suitable old-growth forest components." USF&WS Comments on RSDEIS, p. 3; see also id., p. 13 (need to "develop and implement a forest management strategy that is based on natural disturbance regimes").
- Throughout the goshawk panel's deliberations, the need for an alternative "that managed commensurate with the size, scale, and intensity of prevailing disturbance regimes" was emphasized. Goshawk Panel Notes, p. 8; see also id., p. 6 (entire alternative needs to be based on unevenaged management).
- 200 year rotation "will not allow substantial development of old growth characteristics in the forest." Joint Statement of Peer Review Committee Members, p. 4.
- A 200 year rotation "is unlikely to regenerate old growth stand structure selected by goshawks." Goshawk Assessment, p. 107.
- The scientific literature indicates that "old-growth characteristics do not begin to develop until approximately 250 years." USF&WS Comments on RSDEIS, p. 4.
- Unevenaged management "generally favors subsistence use." Subsistence Panel Summary, p. 6.

3. Several analyses of wildlife habitat issues on the Tongass over the past two years have stressed the need for both a forestwide reserve system (generally one enhanced over that proposed in the basic 1993 V-POP plan) and much less intensive logging in the matrix between reserves.

- "Criticisms common among panels included the failure of the Forest Service to include any alternative with a combination of forest-wide reserves and effective measures to enhance old growth habitat in the matrix." Joint Statement of Peer Review Committee Members, p. 3.
- In order to provide for wildlife populations, the Forest Service must consider alternatives that "combine an expanded reserve system throughout the Forest with a matrix management strategy that will protect important old growth habitat and provide for connectivity." Joint Statement of Peer Review Committee Members, p. 7.
- Management approaches with lower risk to viability generally combine expanded reserves with either unevenaged natural disturbance-based logging or longer rotation ages. Viability Synthesis Panel, p. 11.
- "Management of the matrix between reserves can be successful only if it emphasizes a shift toward logging methods that mimic natural disturbance regimes." Joint Statement of Peer Review Committee Members, p. 7.
- Reserves and longer rotations together is "a very good mix for subsistence." Subsistence Panel Summary, p. 5.
- Forestwide reserve system and 200 year rotation recommended for marten viability. Marten Panel Summary, p. 3.

4. Special riparian standards, much more restrictive than those proposed in the Anadromous Fish Habitat Assessment (AFHA) and TLMP Option 2, are indicated for many Tongass streams.

- Watersheds of special significance to fisheries should receive Option 1 protections. USF&NS Comments on RSDRIS, p. 8.
- All management alternatives considered by the Forest Service should get Option 1 riparian protections for the "highest valued watersheds." Riparian Panel Summary, p. 14; see also id., p. 13 (even with Option 1, the risk of detrimental impacts on fish would be "relatively high").

- "Several panelists would have preferred application of riparian option 1." Marten Panel Summary, p. 2.
- Forested leave strips for headwater areas (not required by AFHA) were considered "important." Riparian Panel Summary, p. 13.
- "Even the largest buffers of over 250 feet provided in option 1 on Moderate Gradient/Mixed Control channel types was considered insufficient to meet riparian cover objectives for brown bears. After extensive discussion, panelists strongly recommended that a minimum 500' no harvest riparian buffer be maintained along streams considered important for brown bear foraging." Brown bear Panel Summary, p. 2.
- Option 1 riparian protection was favored for subsistence purposes. Subsistence Panel Summary, p. 6.

5. Special protection is needed to preserve the remaining highest volume old growth, especially at lower elevations, because of its scarcity, critical habitat value, and past disproportionate logging.

- Specific measures are needed to conserve "rare Volume Class 7 type stands." USF&WS Comments on RSDEIS, p. 4.
- Past targeting of high volume old growth requires "compensatory lowgrading," starting immediately. Peer Review, p. 25.
- The Forest Service should "defer logging and road building in volume class 6 and 7 old-growth forest ... below 800 feet elevation" until a biological survey is completed. Care should also be taken not to highgrade existing stands of volume class 5 old-growth." Response to the Peer Review, p. 9.

6. Additional habitat protections, designed to promote connectivity among habitat reserves, need to be mandatory features of a wildlife habitat strategy.

- No-logging corridors on the order of 1600 feet wide are needed between large habitat conservation areas (HCAs), and of 1000 feet wide between medium ECAs. Response to the Peer Review, p. 8.
- The Forest Service should protect existing travel corridors and strive to maintain as much connectivity between old growth blocks as possible. USF&WS Comments on RSDEIS, p. 6.

- "Connectivity of important wildlife habitat is not at all adequately addressed by the RSDEIS alternatives." Joint Statement of Peer Review Committee Members, p. 5.
- "Even the widest proposed riparian buffers ... would not assure interaction among habitat blocks." Joint Statement of Peer Review Committee Members, p. 5.
- "20 miles may be too far to ensure demographic interchange among bears between reserves." Brown Bear Panel Summary, p. 4.



# Southeast Alaska Conservation Council

SEACC 419 6th Street, Suite 328, Juneau, AK 99801  
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April 2, 1997

Senator Richard Halford  
Chairman, Senate Resource Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capital Building, Room 121  
Juneau, AK 99801

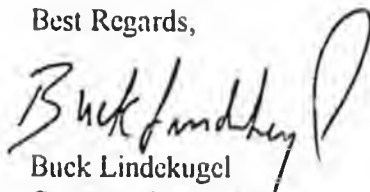
Dear Chairman Halford:

Enclosed are some follow-up materials to my letter dated March 27, 1997. Attached to that letter was a summary of key expert opinions reached by various scientists and panels whom the Forest Service consulted with during preparation of the current draft Tongass Plan regarding measures necessary to safeguard important fish and wildlife habitat for the short and long term. In order to more fully respond to Senator Taylor's question about which "experts" SEACC relied upon in concluding that the minimum 300-foot logging level called for in SJR 24 is "an unsustainable and environmentally destructive cutting level," I have enclosed several lists naming those scientists.

The first enclosure is a list of the government scientists with the relevant expertise and detailed knowledge of local conditions who made up the Interagency Committee. This Committee was formed in 1990 after the Forest Service concluded that it lacked a supportable strategy for maintaining viable wildlife populations well-distributed across the Tongass. The second enclosure lists those scientists who participated in the Congressionally mandated peer-review (1994) of the Interagency Committee's work. Eighteen highly qualified experts from the Forest Service, academia, and other governmental and non-governmental organizations participated in the review. Finally, I've included a list of the state and federal scientists who participated in the study and report to Congress on the effectiveness of Forest Service salmon and steelhead habitat protection on the Tongass National Forest, the Anadromous Fish Habitat Assessment (1995). Each of these groups of scientific experts concluded that more needed to be done to adequately assure the short and long-term protection of fish and wildlife populations on the Tongass. Unfortunately, the Forest Supervisors' ignored the recommendations of their own experts when they fabricated their preferred alternative last April.

We respectfully request this information be added to the committee record on this matter.

Best Regards,

  
Buck Lindekugel  
Conservation Director

3 enclosures

LYNN CANAL CONSERVATION, Haines • FRIENDS OF GLACIER BAY, Gustavus • FRIENDS OF BERNERS BAY, Juneau  
WRANGELL RESOURCE COUNCIL • ALASKA SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FOREST DWELLERS, Point Baker • PELICAN FORESTRY COUNCIL  
ALASKANS FOR JUNEAU • NARROWS CONSERVATION COALITION, Petersburg • TONGASS CONSERVATION SOCIETY, Ketchikan  
CHICHIAGO OF CONSERVATION COUNCIL, Tenakee • JUNEAU GROUP SIERRA CLUB • SITKA CONSERVATION SOCIETY  
TAKU CONSERVATION SOCIETY, Juneau • PRINCE OF WALES CONSERVATION LEAGUE, Craig • YAKUTAT RESOURCE CONSERVATION COUNCIL



SEACC

A PROPOSED STRATEGY FOR MAINTAINING WELL-DISTRIBUTED, VIABLE POPULATIONS  
OF WILDLIFE ASSOCIATED WITH OLD-GROWTH FORESTS  
IN SOUTHEAST ALASKA

Report of an  
Interagency Committee

Lowell H. Suring, Chairman  
D. Coleman Crocker-Bedford  
Rodney W. Flynn  
Carol S. Hale  
G. Chris Iverson  
Matthew D. Kirchhoff  
Theron E. Schenck, II  
Lana C. Shea  
Kimberly Titus

Review Draft

Juneau, Alaska  
May 1993

APPENDIX E: THE COMMITTEE

D. COLEMAN CROCKER-BEDFORD

Current Position: Wildlife Biologist  
USDA Forest Service, Tongass National Forest  
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

Wildlife, Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species  
Program Manager; 1989 - present

Academic Training: B.S. University of Washington, 1973, Forest Science  
M.S. Utah State University, 1976, Wildlife Ecology

RODNEY W. FLYNN

Current Position: Wildlife Research Biologist  
Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Douglas, Alaska 99824

Marten research project leader, 1990 - present

Academic Training: B.S. University of Montana, 1974, Wildlife Biology  
M.S. University of Montana, 1983, Wildlife Biology

CAROL S. HALE

Current Position: Fish and Wildlife Biologist  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Juneau, Alaska 99802

Interagency Liasion, 1991- present

Academic Training: B.S. Texas A & M University, 1977, Wildlife Management

G. CHRIS IVERSON

Current Position: Wildlife Biologist  
Alaska Region, USDA Forest Service  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Regional Ecology and Threatened, Endangered, and  
Sensitive Species Programs Leader, 1992 - present

Forest Wildlife Biologist, 1989 - 1992  
USDA Forest Service, Tongass National Forest  
Petersburg, Alaska 99933

Academic Training: B.S. Central Michigan University, 1977, Biology  
M.S. Oklahoma State university, 1981, Wildlife Ecology

5 May 1993 - Final Review Draft

**MATTHEW D. KIRCHHOFF**

Current Position: Wildlife Research Biologist  
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**Review of  
Wildlife Management and Conservation Biology  
on the  
Tongass National Forest:  
A Synthesis with Recommendations**

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**March, 1994**

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# **Report to Congress**

## **Anadromous Fish Habitat Assessment**

**January 1995**

**United States Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service  
Pacific Northwest Research Station  
Alaska Region**

**R10-MB-279**



## PREFACE

The Conference Committee Report on the Fiscal Year 1994 Congressional Appropriations Act for Interior and Related Agencies directed the USDA Forest Service to study and report to Congress on the effectiveness of Forest Service salmon and steelhead habitat protection on the Tongass National Forest and determine if any additional protection is needed. This document, the Anadromous Fish Habitat Assessment, constitutes the report to Congress. The assessment was completed jointly by the Alaska Region and the Pacific Northwest Research Station of the Forest Service.

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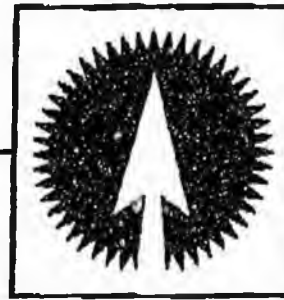
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Many others contributed to the assessment by serving as consultants, sources of information, peer reviewers, expert field reviewers or by providing literature review, editing, or support services. Please see appendices C.1, C.2, and C.3. These people represented the Forest Service's Washington Office, Pacific Southwest Research Station, Pacific Northwest Research Station, Intermountain Research Station, Southeastern Research Station, Pacific Southwest Region, and Pacific Northwest Region, as well as \*Oregon State University, \*University of Washington, \*Weyerhaeuser Company, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

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\*Non-federal participants were excluded from all Team decision making and formulation of recommendations due to provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

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**Testimony of Jack E. Phelps, Executive Director  
In support of SJR 24  
Offered to the Senate Resources Committee  
March 26, 1997**

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee:

Thank you for hearing Senate Joint Resolution 24, *A Resolution Relating to the Tongass Land Management Plan and to Continued Congressional Oversight of that Plan*. The Alaska Forest Association (AFA) wishes to be on record in support of SJR 24, and urges the committee to act on it quickly so that it may be heard on the Senate floor soon.

As you know, the Tongass Land Management Plan has been a matter of great controversy throughout Southeast Alaska over the past several years. The plan under which the Forest Service and the industry are currently operating has been in effect since 1979. The Revised Plan has been in the works for more than 10 years. A Record of Decision was produced in 1993 which specified new environmental protections but demonstrated the ability of the Forest Service to continue an Allowable Sales Quantity (ASQ) of 450 million board feet (mmbf). That decision was never signed, and since that time the Forest Service has completely reworked the Revised Plan. Last spring, the Forest Supervisors unveiled their new draft preferred alternative, which reduced the ASQ to 357 mmbf, of which the Forest Service says only 297 mmbf will be economic to harvest under current conditions.

While the AFA believes this ASQ was unnecessarily low, members of the industry are now more greatly alarmed by persistent rumors that the lengthy delay in releasing the plan is related to efforts by the White House's Council on Environmental Quality and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to push the Allowable Sales Quantity much lower, perhaps into a range below 100 mmbf. If this turns out to be the case, it will utterly destroy any hopes Alaskans may harbor for maintaining and restoring that segment of its timber industry operating on Federal land.

Among the key factors that are likely to influence the contents of the plan are the persistent efforts to obtain Endangered Species Act listings for the so-called Alexander Archipelago wolf and the Queen Charlotte (or Northern) goshawk. Actual data collected so far on both these creatures would lead a reasonable person away from the conclusion that the listings are warranted, but it

appears that political factors are limiting the information that is being considered as part of the decision-making process. In any event, the failure by the Forest Service to release the plan as scheduled seems to be a factor in the attempts by radical elements within the FWS to obtain the listings.

For all these reasons, the AFA considers the present resolution to be an important part of an overall effort to continue Congressional oversight of the proposed Tongass Land Management Plan revision. If ever there were a situation in which it is appropriate for elected leaders to monitor carefully the activities of the unelected bureaucracies, this is one. The entire Clinton/Gore alliance with the radical national environmental community is at work on this one, and the honest, working people of the Tongass are those who stand to lose if they prevail. The timber workers of Southeast Alaska, together with their families and the timber dependent communities need the full attention of Congress directed to this issue. Your assistance in this through actions like SJR 24 are very useful in helping maintain that focus.

In closing, I do believe there is a change you should consider to the resolution as written. On page 3, lines 2 - 11, the resolution refers twice to a "harvest level of 300 mmbf," and urges the Forest Service to maintain that harvest level. While it is appropriate for the industry and the legislature to talk about the need for a specified minimum harvest level, the Forest Service cannot actually control a "harvest level." What they can control is *consistent offerings* of economic timber sales spread throughout each fiscal year. So, I would urge the committee to rewrite those two resolved clauses so that they assert the need for the Forest Service to "make an annual amount of at least 300 mmbf of economic timber available with offerings uniformly released throughout each fiscal year." This will more correctly address the problem of annual harvest levels needed to keep the industry healthy, while using language that reflects what the Forest Service can actually control.

Thank you for considering my comments. And thank you again for weighing in on this crucial problem facing the timber industry in Alaska. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance.