

Tongass National Forest  
Forest Plan 5-Year Review

HAINES PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

### 1.0 Introduction

The Tongass National Forest (TNF) is operating under the 2008 Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Forest Plan (Forest Plan). As promised when the plan was completed, a 5-year review is now occurring to determine whether any actions are needed to clarify or adjust the plan.

Juneau District Ranger Marti Marshall and Tongass Forest Planner Sue Jennings hosted a Haines public meeting at the Haines Borough Public Library on March 25, 2013, from 6:00-8:00 pm. The public meeting objectives are to help the public understand the Forest Plan 5-Year review process; provide information to help the public prepare effective comments; and provide an opportunity to ask questions or provide comments. Marti Marshall provided an overview of the five-year review process, and Sue Jennings presented a PowerPoint reviewing the Forest Plan and what will occur during, and following, the comment period.

In addition to the TNF team, there were two meeting attendees, both of whom provided public comments.

### 2.0 Clarifying Questions and Answers *(grouped by topic)*

This section summarizes the clarifying questions and responses discussed at the meeting.

#### Outfitter/Guides

Is a guide required to get a permit to operate on a shoreline within the Tongass National Forest and is there a fee?

- Answer: Yes, a permit is required for commercial use. There is a fee as well as other requirements such as liability insurance.

#### Forest Supervisor

Who is the current Forest Supervisor?

- Answer: Forrest Cole. He will be the person who decides what actions to take at the end of the 5-year review.

### Effective Life of the Forest Plan

Is there a limit on how long the Forest Plan lasts, e.g. is it a 5 year plan or a 20 year plan?

- Answer: No, there is not a predetermined life of the Forest Plan. The Plan uses adaptive management, which allows for it to be reviewed and updated over time. In the 2008 Forest Plan, it was stated that the Plan would be reviewed in five years, which is the process happening now. The next review will be held when the Forest Supervisor determines it is the appropriate time.

### Monitoring Process

For the TNF monitoring reports, what is monitored and who does the monitoring?

- Answer: Chapter 6 of the Forest Plan is about the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. A range of questions are asked in this section, such as whether air quality is meeting standards, whether the market demand for timber is being met, and more. The monitoring process answers these questions. The monitoring is done by the Forest Service. There is a monitoring coordinator and there are specialists on the ground. There is also a group that monitors the specialists work.

### Wildlife Conservation Strategy

What is the purpose of the Wildlife Conservation Strategy?

- Answer: The Forest Plan Wildlife Conservation Strategy uses a matrix of connected large, medium and small old growth habitat reserves. The matrix also includes 1,000 foot buffers from the ocean and 100 foot buffers on both sides of salmon streams. The Conservation Strategy reserves habitat for wildlife and plant species, and provides travel corridors for migration from one location to another.

### Wilderness Areas

Are there wilderness areas within Haines Borough?

- Answer: Yes, the area surrounding Endicott River is wilderness.

### Research Natural Areas Land Use Designations (LUD)

What are the Research Natural Areas LUDs?

- Answer: They are areas in which research is conducted. The research could be harvesting a small area and comparing it to a control area, but it could also include other types of research such as on plant communities and air quality.

### Modified Landscape LUD

What are the Modified Landscape LUDs?

- Answer: The Modified Landscape LUD falls in between the Scenic Viewshed LUD, which is managed for scenic quality so only a certain percentage of timber can be harvested and the visibility of timber harvest is minimized, and the Timber Production LUD, which allows full timber production. The Modified Landscape LUD is to provide a mix of resource activities, for example there could be harvesting of 50% of the trees so a person looking at it might notice it but it isn't clearcut harvested. It also depends on the aspect of the woods and whether it is visible from popular locations.

### Mariculture

Why are there so many concerns about mariculture, such as oyster farming?

- Answer: Oyster farmers want sites for upland support adjacent to their farms and feel that there isn't sufficient text in the Forest Plan to allow this. They want more support for the mariculture industry in the Forest Plan.

### Timber Production

Was the Tongass specifically set aside for timber production?

- Answer: Timber was one reason for the establishment of the Tongass. However, the Tongass is a multiple use agency. It includes congressionally designated wilderness that is specified by law to be maintained in a primitive natural condition. We are trying to balance everyone's needs and the only way to do this is through public involvement and planning. The Forest Plan guides everyone in a consistent manner.

### Cruise Ship Pollution

Is the Forest Service looking at the effect of cruise ship pollution on the forest outside of Skagway?

- Answer: Not outside of Skagway, but it is tracked in Tracy Arm. TNF Wilderness Rangers there are trained by the state to do emission readings. They can report readings of interest to the state. The Forest Service has limited personnel and funding, and isn't able to conduct all of the studies of interest. Research in Skagway would be a good opportunity for a partnership with a university.

### Climate Change

The Tongass is part of the largest temperate rainforest on earth. Doesn't this have intrinsic value in this era of climate change?

- There are people, including some scientists, who believe that the Tongass plays an important role in carbon sequestration, but there are opposing views. These differing viewpoints are one of the reasons for the mosaic of LUDs.

### Tongass Management

A lot of money is being spent to monitor, use, maintain, and control the Tongass. What is the purpose of regulating this land that belongs to everyone?

- Answer: People have very different ideas of the best uses for the Tongass. The Forest Service is trying to manage competing concerns on the land for the benefit of all.

### Juneau Access Road

The Katzechin River is a Wild, Scenic or Recreational River LUD. How is the state allowed to consider building a road through this area?

- Answer: There is a Transportation Utility System (TUS) overlay LUD here, which allows precedence for these uses over the underlying LUD.

### **3.0 Comment Summary** *(grouped by topic)*

This section summarized the formal comments offered by individuals at the meeting.

#### Cruise Ship Pollution (one commenter)

It is local knowledge that there is an impact from cruise ship pollution on the forest in Skagway. The Municipality of Skagway is considering a new hydro project in part to allow shoreline connection of cruise ships to power to reduce air quality impacts. Skagway's air quality impacts Haines, so we are interested in this. The Tongass isn't being managed the way it should be, if these air quality threats are arising.

#### Value of Public Land/Wilderness (one commenter)

Why do we have public lands? I hope people can see wilderness as a benefit and something that we need to protect and preserve because if we don't it will get used for other purposes and disappear. Public lands belong to everybody; they are an object lesson in illustrating the "our" in public community. There are competing needs, such as timber harvest and mineral extraction, but wilderness also needs a place in the mix.

### Quantify Favorable Water Flows (one commenter)

Securing favorable water flow conditions was one reason for establishing the National Forests, according to the Organic Act. With the increasing demand for water elsewhere, water will become an export from the Tongass. The Forest Service needs to quantify the amount of water flow that is needed to maintain favorable water flow for the resources it manages the Tongass and include this in the Forest Plan. Ecosystems require a certain level of stream flow to function properly, and taking too much water will have negative ecological effects.

### Meeting Attendees

1. Stephanie Scott
2. Ann Puffer

### TNF Team

Juneau District Ranger Marti Marshall  
Sue Jennings, Forest Planner  
Myra Gilliam, Zone Archeologist  
John Autry, Tribal Relations Specialist  
Donovan Bell, Sheinberg Associates

## **4.0 Comments offered for the record at Haines Public Meeting**

### **Ann Puffer**

The Organic Act established the purposes for which National Forests were established. One of the main purposes was to secure favorable water flows. Due to diminishing water supplies elsewhere, water will likely be the next big resource that is exported from the Tongass. The Forest Service needs to quantify the water flow it believes is needed to maintain favorable conditions and include this in the Forest Plan. Ecosystems require a certain level of stream flow to function properly, and taking too much water will have negative ecological effects.