



NEWS RELEASE

TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE-FOREST SERVICE

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Tongass National Forest - Old-Growth Habitat Conservation Summit

KETCHIKAN, Alaska – Southeast Alaska residents will have an opportunity to learn more about the USDA Tongass National Forest Conservation Strategy at a summit scheduled in June. This is the same strategy approved in the 1997 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) and updated in the 2008 Forest Plan Amendment in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) Volume II, Appendix D. (*The Old-Growth Habitat Conservation Strategy was designed to provide for the viability of species, well-distributed across the Tongass through a series of old-growth reserves and a matrix of conditions within managed stands to meet the needs of wildlife on the Tongass.*)

The goal of the Summit is to introduce the general public, Alaska's industries (timber, fisheries, tourism, mining, etc.), state and federal agencies, non-profit organizations and other interested parties and entities to the current Tongass National Forest Old-Growth Habitat Conservation Strategy and alternative conservation strategies. During each Summit, participants will be able to discuss these strategies and how they affect the participants. The Summits are scheduled:

- June 18 – Ketchikan, Best Western Landing, Sunny Point Ball Room
 - o 8:30 am -5:00 pm
- June 20 – Juneau, Centennial Hall, Hickel Room
 - o 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

Each day long Summit will include:

- a panel discussion and overview of conservation strategies by the Forest Service, SE Conference and the Nature Conservancy,
- the opportunity for small groups to discuss the conservation strategies, and
- an opportunity to share small group discussions with the larger group.

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The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

As part of the Tongass Forest Plan five-year review, everyone is encourage to comment on the strategies presented, group discussions, and how the strategies affect them personally or as part of a group. Non-participants may also comment on the Forest Plan Old-Growth Habitat Conservation Strategy during the five-year review comment period at <http://tnf-5yearreview.com/>.

Learning Outcomes:

- Increase public awareness and involvement in the 2013 Forest Plan five-year review process.
- Create an avenue to discuss the relationship between the Tongass National Forest Old-Growth Habitat Conservation Strategy and the Forest Plan and what it means to SE Alaska.
- Provide equal exposure for the existing Tongass National Forest Old-Growth Habitat Conservation Strategy and potential alternatives to it.
- Promote general discussion about old-growth conservation strategies, and why conservation (in general) is an important part of active management.

The Summit is open to everyone who would like to attend and participate. To register, send a message to: comments-alaska-tongass with “Summit” as the Subject and submit your name, address, phone number, group representing, if any, and the session(s) you plan to attend. By registering ahead of time, we will be able to have enough materials available for the participants.

To learn more about the Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan 5-Year Review and review Appendix D – Old-Growth Conservation Strategy please go to:
<http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/tongass/landmanagement/planning/?cid=stelprdb5402852>.

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