



CENTRAL COUNCIL
Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
Office of the President
320 West Willoughby Avenue • Suite 300
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1726

May 15, 2008

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Ms. Abigail Kimbell, Chief
USDA Forest Service
Mail Stop 1104
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-1104

Attention: EMC Appeals

Dear Ms. Kimbell:

The Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA) is a federally-recognized Indian Tribe that services 20 villages and communities and represents over 26,000 members. Our stewardship concerns are for our entire Tribal membership but more specifically for those 13,500 living in the Tongass National Forest. As such, we are compelled to address the issues regarding the forest related to our responsibilities as *stewards of the air, land, and sea* and ensuring a balance is maintained in the use of natural resources.

CCTHITA submitted formal comments on the Tongass Land Management Plan (TLMP) Amendment Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) 2007 in April 2008 (enclosed). This letter is to officially file an appeal to the TLMP Record of Decision's determination to proceed with Alternative 6.

In our comments, we expressed our support for Alternative 5 which maintains the balance between sustainable use and conservation of available resources. Through our work with forest related issues in the Tongass, we have come to the conclusion that prudent use as well as prudent conservation of forest resources are necessary, even in economically challenging times.

It is for this reason that we oppose Alternative 6 which does not address our concerns with the management of forest resources on the Tongass. Specifically, this alternative does not include thorough consideration of the following issues: 1) Protection of Native Sacred Sites within the forest, 2) Protection of intact watersheds of importance to habitat, fisheries, and subsistence, 3) Promotion and funding of a forest and riparian restoration program, 4) Provision of sufficient forest resources to support a sustainable level of economic activity in forest related industries, 5) Slow and controlled transition from old growth to second growth in limited areas.

- Protection of Native Sacred Sites must be paramount in any decision. The preservation of sacred sites is essential and no disruption or destruction should occur without approval of proper Tribal authorities.
- The importance of the whole ecosystem is vital to the very existence of many tribal members who depend upon the quality, quantity, and distribution of wildlife and fishery resources. Subsistence resources are of extreme importance to our culture and well-being.
- The need for a substantive riparian and forest restoration program to mitigate past impacts from resource development.
- Responsible use of Tongass Forest resources, which should be integrated on a local level in Southeast Alaska as to provide the largest positive economic impact for the use of the resources. This includes equitable access to energy resources on the Tongass, i.e. energy corridors as referenced in the appeal document submitted by Kootznoowoo, Incorporated and Kake Tribal Corporation.
- Transition from old growth to new growth should take place in an orderly, undistruptive process with sustainable forestry practices to include consideration of economic feasibility evaluations.

In addition, there was not enough consideration in Alternative 6 about global warming/climate change and the potential impacts which are still to be determined. This issue has huge implications with resources which are vital to the well-being of our Tribal citizens. We feel that there is a potential to harm subsistence species unless more information is researched and presented about this important issue.

Thank you for considering our formal comments and including this appeal in the National Environmental Protection Act record. It is valuable to collaborate with the Southeast Alaska Tribes in government-to-government relationships in decisions on the Tongass National Forest that affect all of us.

If you have any questions, please contact CCTHITA at (907) 463-7197. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William E. Martin', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

William E. Martin
President

Enclosure: April 2008 Comments

cc: Danny Bschor, Alaska Regional Forester,
Governor Sarah Palin
U.S. Senator Ted Stevens
U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Congressman Don Young

Central Council

Tlingit and Haida



Indian Tribes of Alaska

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