

Make Management and Protection of Wild Alaska Salmon a Priority in the Tongass National Forest!

Background: 5 species of Pacific Salmon spawn in the Tongass National Forest. For thousands of years, those salmon have played a key role for the peoples and cultures that make their home on the Tongass. Today, the connections and traditions between communities and salmon is still one of the most important associations that we have with the natural environment of the Tongass.

Call to Action: Management of the Tongass National Forest is currently at a critical crossroads. As we begin to move beyond the ill-fated, industrial logging phase of Tongass Management, the region and the Forest Service is striving to define a new paradigm for Tongass Land Management. The decision makers who govern the Tongass need to hear from you now that management for Wild Alaska Salmon is the most important use of the Tongass National Forest.

You Can Help Now by writing letters to Alaska State Senators, the Undersecretary of the Department of Agriculture, and the Alaska Regional Forester telling why Salmon are important for SE Alaska and how our dependence on the lands and the waters of the Tongass revolves around Salmon. Here are some of the important points that you can highlight:

- Salmon are the backbone of the economy of SE Alaska
- The economic value and the jobs created by commercial harvest of Salmon is much greater than the economic value of the Timber industry—even though more money and resources are spent on the timber program (\$25million) than salmon management and restoration (\$6 Million).
- Salmon are important for both the local seafood industry, the SE Alaskan visitor industry, and rural communities who depend on subsistence fishing
- Subsistence harvest of salmon on the Tongass is one of the most important protein sources for SE Alaskans--- outline how subsistence caught salmon are important for you
- Forest Service management of subsistence fisheries (such as Redoubt Lake) have enormous benefits for Sitka and other SE Alaskan Communities-- expanding this program is critical
- Salmon Habitat Restoration Projects—such as the work being done in the Starrigavan Valley and Sitkoh River in Sitka—are the most important efforts currently being conducted by the Forest Service on the Tongass. This work should be continued and expanded.
- The success of Tongass Management should no longer be tied to “million-board feet of timber produced” but rather should be measured on the successful rehabilitation, enhancement, and continuance of Wild Salmon Runs on the Tongass
- Continued and expanded research and investigation on Alaskan Salmon is a huge priority to assess how we will manage salmon in the face of climate change.

What to do: write a letter, send it out to decision makers, pass it along to SCS so we can help make all our voices heard, and continue to get involved.

Send Letters to (email is fine):

Senator Lisa Murkowski
709 Hart Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510
Email to staff: Karen_Billups@energy.senate.gov

Senator Mark Begich
144 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Email to staff: Bob_Weinstein@begich.senate.gov

Undersecretary Robert Bonnie
Department of Natural Resources and the Environment
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250
Email: robert.bonnie@osec.usda.gov

Tom Tidwell Chief of USDA Forest Service
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1400 Independence Ave., SW
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Please send a copy to us at the Sitka Conservation Society offices at andrew@sitkawild.org. We will keep track of the letters that are received by decision makers and work on getting them delivered in person by a fisherman to decision makers in Washington, DC.