Tongass Advisory Committee Draft Recommendations

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Acknowledgements

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Draft Executive Summary

The Tongass Advisory Committee (TAC) was federally chartered in the winter of 2014 to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on developing an ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable forest management strategy for the Tongass National Forest. They were specifically tasked with developing recommendations about how to transition within 10 to 15 years from old growth to predominantly young growth timber management in a way that is economically viable for the existing industry, while recognizing and balancing the other unique and equally important resource values of the Tongass.

The TAC was comprised of fifteen members from the timber industry, conservation community, Native interests, government, and "other" interests. The TAC members were selected because of their deep knowledge and their willingness to work collaboratively on new approaches, practices, and responses to historically contentious management challenges. They did so with diligence, respect and honesty during eight meetings between August 2014 and May 2015. (All meeting materials, summaries, and background documents are available on the Committee website: www.merid.org/tongassadvisorycommittee.) Early in the process, they all agreed on a common vision:

"Southeast Alaska is comprised of prosperous, resilient communities that have the opportunity to predictably use and benefit from the diversity of forest resources to achieve the cultural, social, economic, and ecological health of the region for current and future generations."

With that vision in mind, and through extensive modeling of young growth availability, literature review, and consideration of public comments, the TAC achieved consensus on a comprehensive package of recommendations for analysis purposes. They will reconvene after the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Forest Plan Amendment is released to review the analysis and consider possible changes to and/or additional recommendations. Their work offers the possibility of a regionally focused, collaborative path toward an innovative opportunity for a viable young growth timber industry while honoring the suite of economic, ecological, social, and cultural values inherent in the Forest.

Forest Plan Amendment Recommendations

The TAC's analysis revealed that the current Forest Plan would most likely not achieve the transition to young growth within the 10-15 year timeframe set out in their Charter. Recognizing that a different approach is required, the TAC recommended employing a "co-intent" mandate in the Forest Plan Amendment to improve habitat conditions and long–term ecological function in young growth stands while producing timber volume from those areas. This will enable the Forest to move out of old growth as quickly as possible and accelerate the transition while sustaining an economically viable timber industry.

To implement the co-intent approach, the TAC recommends that the Forest Service:

a) **Maximize the use of flexibilities designed to replace old growth harvest with young growth harvest on a one-to-one volumetric basis**. For the purposes of the recommended flexibilities in young growth management, the overall transition period is defined by the TAC as a period not to exceed 15 years from the date of the Amendment's Record of Decision (ROD). The TAC is making these recommendations to apply to young growth timber only and would not apply them to old growth timber.
b) **Provide more flexibility and opportunities in the existing timber management areas for young growth.**
c) **Use specific treatments for young growth harvest in areas that are not currently designated as "suitable" for harvest during the transition period, provided the original objective of the particular Land Use Designation (LUD) and/or standards and guidelines (S&Gs) is respected**. The TAC recognized the high ecological value of the non-suitable lands. However, many of those stands of young growth forest do not provide the full ecological function that they would have in the un-harvested state. Habitat treatments that improve ecological conditions will benefit wildlife and game populations while also improving the ecological functioning of the larger landscape, and will increase the understanding of effective habitat restoration treatments and allow operators to become more effective at habitat restoration activities.
d) **Aggressively monitor the outcomes of management activities resulting from the transition and apply adaptive management to improve outcomes**. Review the recommended flexibilities made by the TAC for all LUDs and S&Gs at least every five years. At the conclusion of the transition, a full review process should be conducted to evaluate continuity in whole, part, or expanded form.
e) **Fully utilize currently allowed prescriptions in beach buffer, Old Growth Reserves, and Riparian Management Areas (outside of Tongass Timber Reform Act buffers) that improve fish and wildlife habitat and create a commercial byproduct.** Further, the TAC believes that young growth volume produced from these treatments should be counted towards Potential Timber Sale Quantity.
f) **Identify where young growth timber projects, during the period of the transition, intersect with certain high-value fish watersheds.** In these areas of intersection, conduct a timely scientific review to determine likely impacts to fish and wildlife habitat from timber harvest. If harvest is proposed in one of these watersheds, the Forest Service may apply additional standards or guidelines to mitigate risk to fish habitat.
g) **Maintain the existing suitable land base for young growth timber (i.e., no net loss of young growth acres).** If suitable young growth acres are removed from the timber base as a result of review, an equal number of acres should be added to the young growth timber base.

h) **Engage stakeholders, such as conservation interests, timber operations, permitted user groups, and other interested parties in multi-party planning using an integrated resource management planning framework** to: best design and implement projects to meet ecological, social, and economic goals; provide best practices for producing timber volume from treatments; and develop management prescriptions and identify areas where co-intent prescriptions are best applied. Monitor the response of the timber industry and assist in their transition by investing in infrastructure and market development.

i) **Overhaul administrative practices for timber sales to improve timeliness, lower costs, and strengthen supply consistency** required in an industry dependent on predominantly young growth.

Old Growth Bridge Strategy

By bringing more young growth forward sooner in the transition period, the Forest can reduce old growth harvest earlier. For every unit of young growth volume brought forward into the transition solution, there should be an equal unit less of old growth. Ultimately this will result in transitioning from old growth to young growth in less than 15 years by making more young growth available for harvest and substituting young growth for old growth on a one-to-one volumetric basis, using the annual timber demand, which will be held constant during the transition period.

To provide a more accurate prediction of available young growth during the transition, the TAC recommends a thorough analysis of young growth inventory at the stand level in the first three years of the transition. Based on this information, the Forest should plan and produce sufficient young growth volume to ensure the required volume through the transition that meets the determined demand. Because the young growth volume is not sufficient to meet demand during the transition period, the Forest should develop a unit pool[1] for bridge timber volume within a specified time frame to meet the volume demand that cannot be met by young growth during the transition.

Following the transition period, the TAC recommends that the Forest maintain a post-transition annual old growth timber harvest that will meet the long-term demand of small- and micro-sale programs.

Implementing the Transition

The TAC concluded that cultural and operational changes in how the Forest conducts its business are mandatory for the success of the transition. The Forest Service must play a pivotal role in leading, fostering, and supporting the societal and institutional learning the transition will require. Openness, transparency, and collaboration both within the Forest and with

[1] A unit pool refers to a stand or polygon within a project area, within which landscape objectives could be considered.

external parties will be essential. The TAC's detailed implementation recommendations provide guidance on crucial elements for success and identify critical opportunities by which the TAC, Agency, and greater community will share ownership of the transition strategy and embrace its successful implementation.

The recommendations include the following transformative steps:

- Pursue partnerships and collaboration;
- Improve internal Forest Service coordination;
- Support and encourage leadership at the District Ranger level;
- Revamp the sale planning and assessment process;
- Maximize the use of stewardship contracts and agreements; and
- Address incentives and feasibility for operators, and domestic processing and consumption.

In addition, the transition to young growth must provide economically and financially viable opportunities for industry, and meaningful economic and employment benefits to local communities. The TAC provided detailed recommendations for targeted investment, financial assistance and financing mechanisms for stand inventory, research, infrastructure and retooling. These investments are intended to help communities and businesses successfully transition to, and thrive within, a new young growth economy.

Monitoring and Research

The TAC's commitment to creating conditions for Tongass communities to thrive is reflected in recommendations for robust and active monitoring and adaptive management:

a) **Convene a Forest-wide Implementation and Monitoring Council** as the mechanism by which stakeholders support and help hold themselves and the Forest accountable to the goals of the transition.
b) **Contract an appropriate organization to conduct a baseline socioeconomic benefits analysis** as soon as possible. Key "dashboard" metrics to be included in the analysis are listed in the recommendations report.
c) **Conduct ongoing benefits analyses** at regular intervals for the life of the current plan to demonstrate changes over time in the relationship between planning and implementation of timber and stewardship work and community well-being.

In summary, the TAC's recommended actions represent a new paradigm for the Tongass National Forest, and situate the Forest at the leading edge of forest management in the United States. We look forward to the Agency and stakeholders taking on the challenge together of adopting and implementing this paradigm.

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Introduction

Background

The Tongass National Forest (Tongass or Forest) is the largest National Forest in the Nation. The Tongass is comprised of 16.7 million acres and covers the great majority of Southeast Alaska, with the Forest Service (USFS) by far the largest land owner in this part of Alaska. There are 3.4 million acres of Development Land Use Designations (LUDs) allowing commercial timber harvesting, with the remaining 13.3 million acres designated as Wilderness (5.9 million acres) and Natural Setting (7.4 million acres).[2] Only a little over 400,000 acres of timber has actually been harvested to date. This proposal focuses on the 360,000 acres of young growth available to meet the goals of the transition.

There are dozens of communities, including many long-standing Native villages, that exist within the region covered by the Tongass. These communities use and depend on the resources of the Tongass. As a consequence, management decisions and actions of the Tongass National Forest have a great deal of influence on these communities. A multitude of resources and activities produced from the Forest fuel the economies, livelihoods, and way-of-life for the people who live there. The Tongass is also one of the largest temperate rainforests in the world, containing large tracts of intact ecosystems critical to preserving biodiversity and capturing carbon to help mitigate the effects of climate change.

The Tongass is a Native place, home of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian people, whose cultural identities and traditional way of life are rooted in and tied to the land and waters of Southeast Alaska. Alaska Natives have continuously inhabited the Forest for more than 10,000 years and today are dependent on subsistence hunting and fishing, and utilization of all Tongass resources to sustain their bodies, as well as their traditions, cultures, and livelihoods.

The Forest is a productive landscape that sustains robust fish stocks for subsistence, personal use, and commercial and sport fisheries. Maintaining the habitat diversity and connections among watersheds is essential to the continued productivity of the Forest's salmon fisheries. Land managers are increasingly aware of the economic and social contributions of activities that sustain all these important fisheries.

The Tongass is also home to a vibrant and growing tourism industry. Tourism from large cruise ships to small and independent tours, plays an important role in the economies of communities throughout Southeast Alaska. Additionally, the Tongass provides many communities with lake-

[2] A chart of acreages is located within the Tongass National Forest 2008 Land and Resource Management Plan, available at: https://fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5367422.pdf.

tap hydropower and presents many opportunities for renewable energy. Then, of course, the Tongass is home to a variety of wildlife and birds; all of which enrich the lives of those who live in and/or visit the Tongass.

The Tongass has a renewable timber resource that is managed on a sustainable basis. During the second half of the 20th century, two fifty year contracts spurred investments and year round jobs in Southeast Alaska. The region experienced a timber boom with Tongass timber supplying two large regional pulp mills, several large sawmills, and numerous small mills and manufacturing businesses. During that time, several hundred thousand acres were harvested. Many of those stands have continued to be managed for various purposes including future timber production. These stands are now known as young growth and constitute the primary focus of this report for purposes of future harvest.

Contentious debate over Tongass management has overshadowed the opportunities for local solutions. The establishment of the Tongass Advisory Committee (TAC) represents a turning point in Tongass management seeking new approaches, practices, and responses. The TAC offers a regionally focused, collaborative path toward an innovative opportunity for a viable young growth timber industry, while honoring the suite of values – economic, ecological, social and cultural – inherent in the Forest. (See Appendix A, pg. 29, for list of TAC members.)

This Plan Amendment is being drafted in a time marked by transition. It is the transition away from predominantly old growth timber harvest to young growth harvest. The Secretary of Agriculture has specifically spelled out the terms of this transition when he set up the Charter for the TAC (see Appendix B, pg. 30). This Charter is narrow in scope and does *not* charge the TAC with making overall recommendations in regard to fisheries, recreation, wildlife management, or tourism. This does not mean these values are overlooked. It does mean that the recommendations of the TAC will be timber-centric in accordance to the Charter issued by Secretary Vilsack. It is important to note that these timber-centric recommendations do not comprise the sole direction of the Tongass National Forest and the TAC encourages the USFS to continue and expand their management and investment in other important sectors of Tongass, such as fisheries, the visitor industry, and renewable energy.

In regards to the management of young growth forest-land, the principles of vegetation management for wildlife, patch cuts and ecological restoration will be relied upon. In regards to the harvest of old growth trees, the principle employed is to replace old growth harvest with young growth harvest within 10-15 years, except for small operators dependent on low-volume, niche markets. The 2016 Plan Amendment should provide the flexibility for USFS staff, partners, and collaborators to succeed in transitioning the Southeast Alaska timber industry from predominantly old growth to young growth. Additionally, the TAC aims to encourage local processing and other economic benefits for local communities and villages.

A critical component for this Plan Amendment to succeed is USFS management embracing the concept of co-intent as outlined in the recommendations of the TAC on page 6.[3] The TAC believes that co-intent creates the space for the USFS to be flexible, adaptive, creative, transparent, and innovative. These traits will be necessary to implement balanced recommendations that foster community well-being, and recognize the priorities of the larger American public.

Purpose

The purpose and need for this Forest Plan Amendment is to respond to the Secretary of Agriculture's July 2nd, 2013 memorandum that directs the USFS to transition timber harvest on the Tongass away from a predominately old growth timber harvest to the utilization of young growth timber resources. This Plan is being amended specifically to accommodate a strategy for the transition that creates opportunities in young growth management and the utilization of forest products in a manner that enhances the economic vitality of the region and the resilience of local communities. The Amendment will evaluate the lands available for young growth timber harvest and provide the guidance for young growth land management activities on the Tongass. This Amendment also considers maximizing the opportunities for social and economic returns from other economic sectors that depend on the Forest.

Vision

Early in the process, the members of the TAC all agreed on a common vision to serve as a touchstone for their deliberations and to help guide the development of the recommendations that follow.

"Southeast Alaska is comprised of prosperous, resilient communities that have the opportunity to predictably use and benefit from the diversity of forest resources to achieve the cultural, social, economic, and ecological health of the region for current and future generations."

Recommendations and Action Plan

Rationale

The TAC learned that the current Tongass Land Management Plan (Forest Plan) would most likely not achieve the transition to young growth within the 10-15 year time frame set out in the Charter as defined by the Secretary of Agriculture. In order to reach the ultimate goal to move

[3] The TAC defines co-intent as: A mandate to maintain the primary intent and objectives of each LUD and S&G while developing and applying forest management activities that will accelerate the transition to young growth management in the Tongass National Forest.

out of old growth as quickly as possible and accelerate the transition while sustaining an economically viable timber industry, the TAC recognized that changes in the Forest Plan will be necessary. The TAC discovered that there were opportunities to accelerate the transition to young growth, reduce the commensurate harvest of old growth, and maintain a more reliable timber supply in Southeast Alaska through the transition period. The most effective way to meet these goals is to bring forward and provide advanced age young growth through some time-limited relaxations in S&Gs.

The TAC recognizes the high ecological value of the non-suitable lands. However, many of those stands of young growth forest do not provide the full ecological function that they would have in the un-harvested state. Habitat treatments that improve ecological conditions will benefit wildlife and game populations while also improving the ecological functioning of the larger landscape. This work will increase our understanding of effective habitat restoration treatments and will allow operators to become more effective at habitat restoration activities.

Overarching Principles

Throughout the discussion, the TAC returned to several overarching principles that permeated throughout all the recommendations that follow:

1. During the transition, young growth in the suitable land base is not sufficient for a viable timber industry. Therefore, the TAC included recommendations for approaches in non-suitable lands, and suggested changes to S&Gs, for young growth during the transition period.
2. By bringing more young growth forward sooner in the transition period, the USFS can reduce old growth earlier. For every unit of young growth volume brought forward into the transition solution, there should be an equal unit less of old growth.
3. Due to uncertainties in young growth inventory data and often significant differences in on the ground operational outcomes, independent monitoring is essential to achieve the dual objective of reducing old growth sooner and providing for a viable timber industry.
4. Co-intent occurs on all suitable and non-suitable acres, and with proper S&Gs can work to meet multiple uses associated with the Forest.
5. Bringing multi-disciplinary input and stakeholder involvement forward into the project planning process. This is essential to the success of co-intent.
6. Change in the culture of the USFS is mandatory.
7. The establishment of an Implementation and Monitoring Council (IMC) is critical to the success of the recommendations. (See Monitoring and Research , pg. 26). Reviews will be conducted at the end of five and ten years to measure the effectiveness of the flexibilities in meeting co-intent goals.
8. In order to maintain a viable young growth timber industry in the future, the existing suitable land base for young growth timber should be maintained (i.e., no net loss of young growth acres). If suitable young growth acres are removed from the timber base as a result of the review process, an equal number of acres should be added to the young growth timber base. Operational and geographic considerations (i.e., close proximity to other young growth acres) should be given priority. The process for this acreage

replacement will be determined at the ten year review by the IMC through consultation at gate 1 and beyond, with a focus on comparable achievement[4].

9. At five and ten year reviews, the USFS with the IMC and other stakeholders shall study, identify, and adopt methodology for supply that is tied to future sustained yield from the young growth land base. This new orientation will provide opportunities for the growth and development of an integrated industry focused on community and ecosystem health.

Approach

The TAC approached its work in the following order:

1. Prioritized LUDs and S&Gs where it believed the opportunity to capture more young growth volume in the near-term is the greatest and the risk to the environment would be least.
2. Quantified opportunities and social acceptability of adding additional young growth volume into the transition period, within each LUD and S&G by running several modeling scenarios through Tetra-Tech and Mason, Bruce & Girard (contractors for the Forest Plan amendment options analysis work).
3. Reviewed and incorporated literature and science related to young growth timber and all public comments provided to the Committee.
4. Indexed the social and ecological sensitivity of each LUD and S&G identified in activity 2 above.
5. Defined the concept of co-intent for both suitable and non-suitable lands. Developed goals and potential operating actions within specific and identified LUDs and S&Gs to achieve the co-intent, which emphasizes recognizing and balancing the other unique and important resource values on the Forest.
6. Conducted thorough discussions on social acceptance pertaining to the modification of LUDs and S&Gs to fine-tune its Amendment option alternative and prepare a recommendation to include with USFS alternatives for review in draft in later meetings.
7. Emphasized and identified key implementation, investment, monitoring, and research elements required of the USFS in parallel with developing recommended treatment options.

[4] The current Forest Plan uses the approach of comparable achievement to adjust Old Growth Reserves, provided that alternative reserves provide comparable achievement of the old growth habitat goals and objectives. The Tongass National Forest 2008 Land and Resource Management Plan is available at: https://fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5367422.pdf. See Appendix K of the Forest Plan for additional information.

Recommendations for Land Use Designations and Standards and Guidelines

The primary objective of the TAC was to reduce the amount of old growth timber harvest on the Tongass National Forest and accelerate the transition to a young growth based timber program. After evaluating the sensitivity of various LUDs, the TAC recommends the USFS does *not* seek young growth volume or change S&Gs in the following areas:

- Roadless Areas;
- Tongass Timber Reform Act Buffers;
- High vulnerability karst;
- Steep slopes;
- Municipal Watersheds;
- Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers;
- Semi-Remote Recreation;
- Remote Recreation;
- Special Interest Areas;
- Wilderness Areas and National Monuments;
- LUD II; and
- Special Interest Areas.

Further, the TAC recommends the USFS identify where young growth timber projects, during the period of the transition, intersect with certain "high-value fish watersheds" (identified in Appendix C pg. 35). In these areas of intersection, conduct a timely (during the first five years after the Record of Decision (ROD)) internal scientific review in collaboration with the IMC and other stakeholders to determine likely impacts to fish and wildlife habitat from timber harvest. If harvest is proposed in one of these watersheds, the USFS may apply additional standards or guidelines to mitigate risk to fish habitat, or apply the "no net loss" concept outlined in the TAC's overarching principals.

The following Plan adjustments are considered with the co-intent of shifting harvest activities away from old growth harvest, providing alternative young growth volume, and improving habitat conditions for wildlife and fish and stand function in places that would benefit from restoration work. The TAC defines the broad concept of co-intent as follows:

> *A mandate to maintain the primary intent and objectives of each LUD and S&G while developing and applying forest management activities that will accelerate the transition to young growth management in the Tongass National Forest.*

For the purposes of the recommended flexibilities in young growth management, the overall transition period is defined by the TAC as a period not to exceed 15 years from the date of this amendment's ROD.

Recommendations

The TAC recommends that in order to achieve these objectives, the USFS:

a) Strive to maximize the volume of young growth timber in planning and ultimately offered for sale.
b) Maximize the use of flexibilities designed to replace old growth harvest with young growth harvest on a one-to-one volumetric basis.
c) Provide more flexibility and opportunities in the existing timber management areas for young growth.
d) Use specific treatments, designed for a one-time entry, for young growth harvest in specified areas that are not currently designated as suitable for harvest during the transition period, provided the original objectives of the particular LUD and/or S&Gs are respected.
e) Aggressively monitor the outcomes of management activities resulting from the transition and apply adaptive management to improve outcomes. Follow the aforementioned review process for the recommended flexibilities made by the TAC for all LUDs and S&Gs. At the culmination of the transition, a full review process should be conducted to evaluate continuity in whole, part, or expanded form to perpetuate and refine prescriptions that improve habitat while providing timber volume where they successfully meet the co-intent objectives. (See Monitoring and Research pg. 26.)
f) Fully utilize currently allowed prescriptions in beach buffer, Old Growth Reserves, and Riparian Management Areas (RMAs)(outside of TTRA) that improve fish and wildlife habitat and create a commercial by-product. Further, young growth volume produced from these treatments should be counted toward Potential Timber Sale Quantity.
g) Engage stakeholders such as conservation interests, timber operations, permitted user groups, and other interested parties in multi-party planning using an integrated resource management planning framework to best design and implement projects to meet ecological, social, and economic goals; to provide best practices for producing timber volume from treatments; and to develop management prescriptions and identify areas where co-intent prescriptions are best applied.
h) Monitor the response of the timber industry and assist in their transition by investing in infrastructure and market development (See Transition Economics and Investment pg. 22.)
i) Overhaul administrative practices for timber sales to improve timeliness, lower costs and strengthen supply consistency required in an industry dependent on predominantly young growth (See Implementation Strategy pg. 13).

The TAC is making these recommendations to apply to young growth timber only and would not apply them to old growth timber. (See Old Growth Bridge Strategy pg. 12.) The TAC recommends that the USFS exercise flexibility within the following areas LUDs and the

following S&Gs to increase young growth volumes for the period of the transition as defined above. These areas are listed in order of priority of most return and least environmental risk:

1. Timber management;
2. Modified landscape;
3. Scenic viewshed;
4. Beach buffer;
5. Old Growth Reserves (OGRs); and
6. RMAs outside of TTRA buffers.

Currently Suitable Land Base

The suitable land base refers to the LUDs in the current Plan specifically zoned for timber production: the Timber Management LUD (TM), the Modified Landscape LUD (ML), and Scenic Viewshed LUD (SV). These LUDs form the core areas of land management where the bulk of timber harvest will occur during and following the transition on the Tongass. The suitable land base contains 273,000 acres out of the total 435,000 acres on which a second generation of timber is growing within the Tongass National Forest. During the transition period, the TAC's recommendations will bring forward young growth timber volume and support an enhanced timber sale program.

Under the suitable land base and associated S&Gs identified below, the objective of co-intent is to maintain emphasis on the production of young growth timber, while actively managing for concurrent values through treatments that enhance timber establishment and growth within viewsheds and habitat corridors. This definition includes active and progressive treatments that will address stem excluded, growth and undergrowth stagnant stands that inhibit forest habitat, as well as negate any timber values. The goal is to bring those lands back into productive forest and fish and wildlife habitat conditions.

Timber Management (TM)

The Timber Management LUD currently contains approximately 186,000 acres of young growth.

Recommendations

a) Maximize young growth harvest and management on the Timber Management LUD with particular emphasis on stands where culmination of mean annual increment (CMAI) relief, from accelerated establishment and growth and restart prescriptions can make both short and long term contributions to the stability of long term young growth supply.
b) Utilize the full authorities provided under the Sealaska Lands Entitlement Act CMAI language in this LUD for even age management of young growth stands.
c) The TAC defined the rotation age under CMAI relaxation for the purposes of modeling as when 50% of a stand volume consists of trees that contain two 34-foot

logs. This does not preclude market or site opportunities that occur where CMAI relaxation can be defined in a different manner.

d) Consider using flexibility under the Stewardship Contracting Authority to allow longer sale terms (five to ten years) to provide more certainty, reduce risk and encourage investment in infrastructure for all timber sales (young growth and old growth).
e) Continue emphasis on additional opportunities for the small and micro-sale programs and show continuity in small old growth sales for these programs beyond the transition period.
f) Integrate methods to maximize timber establishment and growth (e.g., planting, thinning, fertilizing) to increase volume, species mix, and/or product value with priority on high productivity sites with favorable logistical access options in the region.
g) Consider a measured pace, scale, and variety of projects to match workforce and capacity (See Implementation Recommendations pg. 14).
h) Prioritize pre-commercial thinning (PCT) projects and regimes on stands in this LUD where highest productivity and highest feasibility of operation.
i) Consider projects that could improve wildlife habitat by rehabilitating young growth stands that are in stem exclusion and will have limited contribution to young growth management. Priority stands will be high and/or medium sites with favorable logistical access.
j) Areas that have been previously harvested should be subject to larger landscape Environmental Assessments (EAs) rather than Environmental Impact Statements (EISs), where appropriate.

Modified Landscape & Scenic Viewshed

The Modified Landscape (ML) LUD currently contains approximately 60,000 acres of young growth. The Scenic Viewshed (SV) LUD currently contains approximately 12,000 acres of young growth.

Recommendations

The TAC recommends that young growth on the ML and the SV LUD, be managed in the same way during the transition period under the S&Gs of the ML LUD:

a) Manage using the Very Low Scenery Integrity Objective, as described by the Scenery Management System. (Landscape Aesthetics: A handbook for Scenery Management)
b) Re-evaluate some of the existing visual priority routes in a multiparty, community-based review process.
c) Consult early and throughout the project planning process with other users to mitigate impacts in higher value scenic watersheds and/or routes and encourage transparency throughout the process.

d) Areas of harvest may be replanted favoring spruce and cedar to enhance establishment, green-up, and scenic values.
e) The green-up period will be 10 years and then residual stands of mature timber will be allowed to be included in harvest activity.
f) Encourage leaving lower value timber to improve scenic and wildlife values.
g) Design cutting units with irregular boundaries (i.e., feathering).
h) Emphasize additional opportunities for the small and micro-sale programs (young growth and old growth).
i) Prioritize pre-commercial thinning projects and regimes on stands in this LUD where highest productivity and highest feasibility of operation.

Currently Non-suitable Lands

The non-suitable land base comprises over 120,000 acres of the total 435,000 acres on which young growth timber is growing within the Tongass National Forest. These lands represent areas of high ecological value; however, many of these stands are in stem exclusion, and do not provide their full potential of ecological values. These lands also tend to have a high level of use for subsistence, tourism, recreation, and guided hunting, and are among the most likely areas to have culturally significant historic sites.

The transition to young growth timber and away from old growth can be accelerated by applying co-intent management. With co-intent as a guide, young growth volume from these areas will count towards the Potential Timber Sale Quantity while fully meeting the existing intent and objectives of the LUDs and S&Gs. Under the non-suitable land base associated S&Gs identified below, the objective of co-intent is to maintain/improve habitat conditions and long-term ecological function in young growth stands, while producing timber volume that will count towards the Potential Timber Sale Quantity, and fully meeting the intent and objectives of the existing LUDs and S&Gs.

The TAC believes the greatest positive impact to both improving fish and wildlife habitat and to increasing the short-term young growth timber supply in the non-suitable lands will be realized by using a one-time only entry into each of the young growth stands that warrant management actions. Additional entries are supported where best available science and active review by the IMC agree that two or more entries are (a) warranted; and (b) meet the LUD objectives. Significant habitat improvement and the total allowed young growth removal would be accomplished in one pass while keeping within the full intent of the LUD or S&G. As a general principle, the TAC recommends providing discretion and flexibility to land managers in order to meet the goal of speeding the shift to young growth and using the co-intent mandate in these areas during the transition period.

It is important to note that the TAC is *not* recommending harvest of any old growth in non-suitable lands and it fully recognizes the importance of these lands for the overall Tongass conservation strategy. Further, the non-suitable lands will not become part of the long-term timber base and are being accessed for a limited period of time to ensure a successful transition.

OGRs, RMAs Outside of TTRA, and Beach Buffers

Recommendations

The TAC recommends the following activities during the transition period for young growth management in OGRs, RMAs outside of TTRA buffers, and beach buffers:

a) Examine young growth within those OGRs, RMAs, and beach buffers that are now in young growth (early seral stage) and are of sufficient maturity to advance the transition to determine the opportunities for habitat improvement. If active adaptive management would likely facilitate a more rapid recovery of late successional forest characteristics than would leaving it alone, the TAC recommends co-intent management activities that advance the seral stages toward Tongass old growth conditions, while creating commercial timber by-products.
b) Treatments in any of the non-suitable lands would include a maximum opening size of 10 acres and maximum removal of up to 35% of acres. Treatments should be designed on a project-by-project basis with the co-intent objectives listed in (a).
c) The USFS should prioritize utilizing OGR modification processes [5] to capture additional young growth acres within OGRs, putting particular emphasis on adjacent landscapes, where a net gain of productive old growth habitat is possible, while maintaining and enhancing landscape connectivity.
d) Where OGR boundaries cannot be modified, the USFS should use the co-intent mandate on young growth stands in OGRs and implement treatments where non-timber values are not compromised, and particularly where adjacent stands of young growth exist and can be integrated into the project scope.
e) The USFS and involved stakeholders are encouraged to be creative and innovative in developing projects that advance old growth characteristics in young growth stands within non-suitable lands. Emphasis should be on emulating the natural scale and distribution of disturbance patterns on the Tongass (e.g., wind-thrown timber that creates gaps and patches, landslides that create corridors and gaps, mortality that naturally thins stand, etc.) that correspond with silvicultural treatments such as gaps, corridors, variable retention harvest, and variable density thinning.
f) Treatments within beach buffers must maintain a minimum 200 foot buffer starting at the high tide line. USFS staff may consider expanding the buffer in sensitive

[5] The current Forest Plan uses the approach of comparable achievement to adjust Old Growth Reserves, provided that alternative reserves provide comparable achievement of the old growth habitat goals and objectives. The Tongass National Forest 2008 Land and Resource Management Plan is available at: https://fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5367422.pdf. See Appendix K of the Forest Plan for additional information.

areas, (e.g., such as in proximity to estuaries). Wildlife treatment enhancements and openings for access purposes may be allowed within those 200 foot buffers.

g) The USFS should prioritize projects that improve habitat and forest function, increase accessibility for recreation and tourism, and provide young growth volume in support of transition goals.

h) The USFS should consider prescriptively planting within two seasons of harvest to accelerate both establishment and growth of successive forest cover to meet the habitat and/or scenic objectives.

i) The USFS should review permits and current usages within proposed project areas in the non-suitable lands (including operators who hold tourism and guiding permits) to avoid conflict (analyze impacts) and seek mutually beneficial opportunities. Permit holders, local users, and user groups should be consulted and integrated in planning in the development of any management activity.

j) To the extent possible, these projects should also provide outputs such as recreational infrastructure and improved access.

Old Growth Bridge Strategy

The TAC agrees that the USFS should:

- Complete a thorough analysis of young growth inventory at the stand level in the first three years of the transition to more accurately predict the young growth timing and supply to complete the transition;
- Develop the unit pool for bridge timber volume to meet the timeline goals set below (1 and 2);
- Plan and produce sufficient young growth volume to ensure the required volume through the transition meets the determined demand;
- Transition from old growth to young growth in less than 15 years by making more young growth available for harvest and substituting young growth for old growth on a one to one volumetric basis, using the annual timber demand;
- During the transition period, hold the timber demand number constant. (Subject to review of the DEIS, the TAC will recommend a number to hold consistent through transition period.);
- Maintain a post transition annual old growth timber harvest that will meet the long term demand of the small and micro-sale programs; and
- Limit the old growth timber base to the current definition of Phase 1 lands outside of The Nature Conservancy (TNC)/Audubon conservation priority areas, T77 watersheds and Inventoried Roadless Areas. (See Appendix D pg. 36).

Goals for planning the unit pool for the old growth bridge timber volume from the defined land base development:

1. All timber pool volume is through Gate 1 by year two through extensive collaboration with other landowners and stakeholders.
2. All timber pool volume is through Gate 2 (NEPA cleared) by end of year five.

At the end of five years from the ROD of this Plan Amendment, there will be more experience and knowledge because:

- The Implementation and Monitoring Council will have completed a review of USFS performance on planning timber sales;
- There will be five years of experience in planning young growth timber sales aligned with the TAC recommendations that will improve the understanding of actual project net-downs and allow for more accurate predictions of young growth harvest timing and flow; and
- The improved inventory information will be available and integrated into the forecast of both the timing and volume of young growth during the remaining period of the transition and set a target timeline for old growth harvest to complete the transition.

Implementation Strategy

Purpose

The Forest Plan Amendment is but one piece of the transition to a young growth forest management program. The other major piece is for the USFS to transition to a more flexible, responsive timber program tooled for young growth. The recommendations above should increase the certainty of young growth supply. The implementation steps below will ensure that projects are available and delivered in a manner that leads to a viable industry while not diminishing other values of the forest.

These implementation recommendations provide guidance on crucial elements for success. They also identify critical opportunities by which the Committee, Agency, and greater community will share ownership of the transition strategy and embrace its successful implementation. While much of the economic success of the transition will depend upon the willingness and ability of communities, businesses, other landowners, and the forest products industry to learn, adapt, and innovate, the TAC believes that the USFS must play a pivotal role in leading, fostering, and supporting the societal and institutional learning a successful transition will require. The USFS will, of necessity, be in transition itself.

In the absence of Agency transformation the TAC remains extremely concerned that the collaborative efforts of the TAC will be in vain.

Essentials of the Transformation: Leadership and a Culture of Collaboration and Transparency

Agency Leadership

Any and all transitions come with risk and uncertainty. Agency leadership will be challenged to provide clarity of purpose and consistency of direction to all staff of the Tongass National Forest. Likewise, all stakeholders, users, and user groups will look to Agency leadership for clear commitments in terms of budgets, staffing, planning, and implementation in order to

make their own adjustments to changing conditions. The next 15 years will be a learning process, but action must take place immediately. Leadership must foster a culture of flexibility, transparency, creativity, and innovation, as well as new institutional practices to successfully meet the Secretary's young growth direction, institutionalize learning, and manage risk throughout the transition period while still meeting the high demands of accountability and compliance with existing laws and regulations.

Recommendation

a) Leadership is invited to assist and support the co-creation of the IMC to help maintain the vision of the Amendment, provide resources to the Agency for the implementation steps described herein, and assist in the monitoring efforts necessary for accountability and learning. (See Monitoring and Research pg. 26)

It is the intent of the TAC that the IMC seek to increase efficiency and effectiveness during and beyond the transition period. We acknowledge the tension caused by the need for collaboration and the pressing desire for action. We consider this a mutual challenge.

Collaboration and Transparency

The TAC has succeeded because its members agreed at the outset to collaborate (i.e., to work together towards a common goal) and to do so with respect, honesty, and transparency. The TAC has taken great pains to access the knowledge base and values of many stakeholders, explain the process used to reach decisions, and detail the rationale for those decisions. We likewise went to lengths to explain the innovative concepts of co-intent and co-products expected from young growth management. This agreement to manage for multiple purposes, including fish and wildlife enhancement, while developing timber supply is challenging. It brings opportunity for new styles of conservation and silviculture to the Tongass which will require the utmost collaboration and transparency. The Forest needs to commit to these values in implementing the transition if the hard won agreements we have achieved are to endure.

Collaboration and transparency mean frequent engagement with *and* taking action with partners, sometimes with risks where all parties learn. Risk management, as opposed to risk aversion, by Agency leadership will create the space for flexibility, creativity, and innovation among the Forest staff and stakeholders. Collaboration and transparency are the best risk mitigation tools the Agency has at its disposal to navigate what will be a difficult period and to take advantage of new opportunities. Risk sharing by all stakeholders, and most importantly the Agency, will speed the transition and make sure the private sector is not assuming a disproportionate degree of risk.

Implementation Recommendations

The USFS has already expressed its commitment and made important investments in the shift to a young growth-based forest management program and an integrated resource management approach.

Building on that commitment and those investments, the TAC recommends the following transformative steps for successful future young growth forest management:

1. Pursue partnerships and collaboration;
2. Support internal USFS Coordination;
3. Encourage leadership at the District Ranger level commensurate with their authority;
4. Revamp the sale planning and assessment process;
5. Maximize the use of stewardship contracts and agreements; and
6. Address incentives and feasibility for operators and domestic processing/consumption.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Community-based partners and stakeholders can lead and support creative work by building mutually beneficial agreements and working relationships, facilitating collaborative processes, and ensuring projects achieve local benefits.

Recommendation

a) Line officer performance evaluation must include metrics for partnerships, collaboration, and transparency (self-reported and stakeholder-reported).

Partnerships will be needed to achieve the social and economic outcomes envisioned by the TAC and enabled by the 2016 Amendment. These include:

Planning for Young Growth Projects
The TAC expects the Agency to move to true collaborative planning for young growth projects. Collaborative planning has the advantage of using the knowledge of industry to design projects that will work economically, and the knowledge of the scientific and conservation communities to design projects that will achieve the desired habitat objectives, and of local communities and/or user groups to identify areas critical to community development. It provides the opportunity for mutual learning through the assessment and analysis stages of planning. It produces the commitment of willing partners in the implementation of the Amendment ROD.

Recommendation

a) Give clear direction to staff that collaborating early and often in the Gate 1 process and in other ways, with stakeholders, including industry is expected for all projects in the five Year Plan.

Workforce Training and Development
There is an opportunity to work with local governments, tribes, non-profits, businesses, and the State to create a local, multi-skilled, cross-trained workforce to perform all facets of young growth forest management and habitat restoration and local utilization.

Recommendations

a) Utilize the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) or similar hiring authorities, and agreements or memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with partners, adjacent landowners, and business owners, to provide training opportunities and continuity of work for a local workforce.
b) Implement vocational-technical training programs in coordination with local high schools, and regional universities. Integrate training with current vocational-technical training in Marine services and fisheries. With local partners, consider a program to develop USFS internships for local students, to complement the youth conservation corps (YCC) and other existing programs.
c) In response to a directive in the recent Farm Bill addressing disease and infestation, the USFS is seeking new methods of utilizing yellow cedar. Explore the opportunity to work with local Native carvers who use the wood for their products.

Coordination with Other Landowners

There are unrealized opportunities for cost savings through coordination among adjacent or nearby landowners. These include: sharing the costs of road building crews, long transfer facilities, ships or shipping companies, helicopter logging companies, survey contractors, thinning crews, marketing experts and/or other strategies. In addition, project-level cumulative effects analysis conducted for watershed and island-to-island linkages should be improved through coordination with adjacent landowners.

It will require an intentional effort by the USFS to initiate dialogue with other landowners when creating future silviculture and harvest plans to encourage coordination across ownership boundaries. This will incentivize mobilization, create economies of scale, and help ensure continuity of supply for existing and emerging businesses.

Recommendations

a) Increase participation in the All Lands Council and/or establish a new group with similar objectives
b) Collaborate and/or consult with area landowners on the five Year Plan.
c) Execute agreements for shared infrastructure among landowners.
d) Provide shared data-base access to young growth models for other landowners.
e) Work with researchers to take an all-lands approach to research projects in the region.
f) Begin working together on the Kosciusko landscape.

Improved Public Outreach and Messaging

In addition to planning, the IMC and other stakeholders can help with public outreach, messaging, transparency, monitoring, and shared learning.

Recommendations

a) Utilize the networks established by the IMC, Tongass Collaborative Stewardship Group (TCSG), and other local and regional collaboratives. Communicate with the greater public through national and local media and via regular community briefings, open houses, and non-NEPA required meetings. Use existing public forums to engage in dialogue regarding the progress of the transition.
b) Working with project collaboratives, prepare pre and post project reports to the public about what was planned and what happened with the project or activity. Highlight positive results, such as collaborative planning, restoration, workforce development, jobs, and injection of capital into the economy and identify areas not meeting expected outcomes in order to address options through future efforts.

Inclusion, Transparency, and Shared Learning

As mentioned, the TAC expects the Agency to move to true collaborative planning for all timber projects.

Recommendations

a) Give clear direction to staff that collaborating early and often with stakeholders, including industry, is expected for all projects in the five Year Plan.
b) Design and implement a simple after-action review with project collaborators for the purpose of identifying opportunities to make the projects achieve better outcomes in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. Document and share. (See Monitoring and Research, pg. 26.)

Internal USFS Coordination

Collaboration across the Forest is an essential ingredient for a successful transition, starting with clear direction from leadership that internal collaboration and cross district communication is the expected norm. At times in the past, some attempts at internal coordination have lost their impact because of the inability of staff to escape the traditional programmatic areas, budgets, and targets. The current primary purpose approach to resource allocation, which constrains already limited resources to achieving a single objective, is one of the barriers. The co-intent concept the TAC recommends necessitates resource allocation across internal boundaries and requires very different internal budget and target systems. Interdisciplinary teams on co-intent projects will be collectively resourced and held to clear processes and timelines on deliverables by the Tongass Leadership Team (TLT) and IMC. These conditions make each team member equally responsible, balances power, and leads to integrated resource management as envisioned.

Recommendations

a) Explore the use of Integrated Resource Restoration (IRR)-like budgeting.

b) Create an internal environment that invites collaboration among USFS staff and team members – including office space, co-location, etc.

Support and Encouragement for District-Level Leadership

The TAC has taken risks in suggesting more proactive adaptive treatments to accommodate a quicker transition, including reduction of old growth harvest. If the TAC's recommendations are to have any value or impact, District Rangers must be empowered to use all their existing authorities to expedite projects and collaboration in order to generate additional young growth timber sales. This runs counter to the current culture in which District Rangers, in order to be safe and not take any risk, simply layer on interdisciplinary team suggestions for protection, without paying attention to redundancies. This pattern too often leads to a collision of restrictions that result in low volume and non-economic projects without any real additional resource protection, or extinguishes projects altogether.

Recommendations

a) Give District Rangers strong direction and support from above to fully exercise their authority to implement projects that are balanced, timely, effective, and efficient.
b) Give District Rangers strong direction and support to take into account collaborative partner input in designing and implementing projects. Partner work should be considered a value to the process, rather than an imposition.
c) Give District Rangers clear performance measures that include not only accomplishments but also multiparty evaluations of the skill sets associated with successful internal and external collaboration.
d) Define entry points for collaborative input and engagement pre-and post-season and pre-NEPA.

Sale Planning and Assessment Process

The Five Year Timber Plan

The Five Year Plan should become a reliable strategic document which allows stakeholders to understand the projected ramp-down of old growth and the ramp-up of young growth sales, including the small- and micro-sales of both old growth and young growth. These projections must become credible and reliable through a deliberate process by the Agency. Credibility is established through 1) strict adherence to schedules; and 2) continuity of supply insured by a "pipeline" or inventory of shovel-ready projects to allow for unexpected interruptions.

Recommendations

a) To help with transparency and clarity, the Five Year Plan must differentiate between old growth, young growth, small-, and micro-sales.

b) Provide a clear definition of small and micro sales, and if there is a difference in implementation of old growth versus young growth small and micro sales, this needs to be clearly outlined and communicated.
c) Provide inventory analysis and reliable volume and harvest data for each project to provide industry with some certainty.
d) Involve industry in consultation, up-front and early, without precluding ability to bid.

Supply/Demand Planning Methodologies

At present, demand and target numbers (MBF) are calculated through a few different political, regulatory, and legal processes. This layered authority creates uncertainty for stakeholders.

Recommendation

a) At five and ten year reviews, the USFS with the IMC and other stakeholders shall study, identify, and adopt methodology for supply that is tied to future sustained yield from the young growth land base. This new orientation will provide opportunities for the growth and development of an integrated industry focused on community and ecosystem health.

Cross-District Coordination and Strategic Planning

Young growth timber that will be available in the near-term is scattered across the Forest; yet a scattershot approach to planning sales is not cost effective. Stronger coordination across districts, and between districts and programs, will be critical to meeting young growth benchmarks.

Recommendation

a) Implement a strategic process for the scale, size and scheduling of projects—for both young growth and old growth–to assist businesses struggling with small profit margins so they have time and incentive to invest in new markets and products.

Small Sale Program

The purpose of small sales is to provide opportunity for small operators to access timber for local product manufacturing. Often, small operations represent the best opportunity to encourage more value-added production and local consumption of wood products. However, following the initial NEPA review and pooling, small sales often get lost or delayed, leaving businesses that depend on those sales with limited or no supply. There is a need for more dedicated staff involvement in the timber sale preparation process for small-sales from existing NEPA pools.

Recommendation

a) Establish one or more dedicated small-sale teams, specifically tasked with small-sales, micro-sales, salvage sales, personal use, and other non-traditional timber sale opportunities, where this is its only function. This will sustain small businesses, and foster and encourage innovation. The team must be provided with the requisite resources and support, able and encouraged to do NEPA and/or pre-sale work as needed, and be subject to accountability mechanisms and incentives.

Programmatic Environmental Assessments

Recommendation

a) Sales of young growth in areas that have been previously harvested should be subject to larger landscape Environmental Assessments (EAs) rather than Environmental Impact Statements (EISs), which are appropriate for the size and scope of these projects.

Maximize Stewardship Contracts and Agreements including Tribal Stewardship Authority

In many cases, especially in the projects designed with co-intent, stewardship contracts and agreements will be the best tool available to ensure the co-intent is met. The requirements and opportunities of stewardship contracts and agreements are particularly useful, and include:

- The requirement for collaboratively planned projects, allowing the Agency to continue to avail themselves of the knowledge of the conservation and scientific communities, the industry, local communities, the traditional community, and other stakeholders at the project level.
- The authority to use "designation by description" and "designation by prescription" allows the Agency to lower costs and encourages the development of a highly skilled private sector workforce to meet the intent of the Amendment.
- The authority to award a stewardship contract up to 10 years in length can give industry the continuity of work it needs to justify investment in retooling.
- The opportunity for pooled "retained receipts" (as piloted by the Tongass Collaborative Stewardship Group) allows the Agency to provide dedicated funds for off- project stewardship and restoration work.
- The emphasis on "Best Value" criteria for awarding contracts (as opposed to low-bid) allows the Agency and stewardship collaborative to define best value and set scoring–in terms of the goals of the Amendment: meeting co-intent, maximizing local benefit, providing job training, etc.
- The authority to allow a stewardship collaborative representative to be on interdisciplinary teams and on review teams for contract award deepens collaborative relationships.

- The monitoring requirement will help the Agency and collaborators institutionalize learning.

Recommendations

a) Take full advantage of stewardship contracting authority for all the preceding reasons.
b) The TAC requests that a special dedicated Fish and Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Fund be established within the retained receipts pool, to be used for projects sponsored by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), identified and prioritized through a collaborative process. We further recommend that the 20 percent match required by current USFS agreements be waived, or significantly reduced, for this body of work.

Incentives and Feasibility for Timber Operators

Risks, Costs, and Process

This section provides recommendations for reducing risk, reducing costs, and simplifying process as in order to incentivize the participation of timber operators and increase the economic feasibility of the young growth program.

In order to effectively utilize various tools (whether grants, agreements, or contract provisions), a shared vision and clarity of purpose across the Agency, and with partners, will be key. It is essential that Agency leadership and staff communicate and understand the range of authorities available, and interpret and implement with consistency across the Forest.

Recommendations

a) In year one of the transition, meet with the IMC and other stakeholders to develop effective collaborative practices and procedures for the Gate 1 process and old growth timber pool volume.
b) Consider changes to reduce cost in scaling and harvesting of young growth stands.
c) Revise the residual-value appraisal system through a Forest-wide, multi-stakeholder evaluation process to establish stumpage rates that accurately reflect the profit and risk margins in young growth sales.
d) Remove bid bonds for predominantly young growth small and medium-sized sales, and consider reducing bid bonds for small old growth sales.
e) Consider reducing performance bonds for small and medium sized sales that are predominantly young growth.
f) Coordinate with road engineers, planners, and transport planners on open roads to avoid closures before all sales are complete, as well as with other landowners.

g) Use the knowledge of potential contractors in initial sale design for projects with restoration intent in order to maximize economic feasibility and communicate desired restoration outcomes.
h) Meet at least annually with collaborative members and contractors to identify additional strategies to reduce costs.

Incentives and Feasibility for Increased Domestic Processing and Consumption

Recommendations

a) Increase the use of local processing credits in young growth sales, regardless of size or location, to capture as much economic opportunity as possible and reduce economic leakage.
b) Award some long-term stewardship contracts to provide continuity of supply to reduce retooling investment risk.
c) Offer sales with volumes appropriate to the scale of existing and emerging local processors.
d) Encourage the USFS to look first at locally produced Tongass forest products for all USFS projects in the region.[6] Work with USFS engineering and design personnel, as well as procurement, to set up the process. Engage the USFS Forest Products Lab in any questions regarding grade and quality.

Transition Economics and Investment

Introduction

The transition to young growth must provide economically and financially viable opportunities for industry, and meaningful economic and employment benefits to local communities. Targeted investment, financial assistance, and financing mechanisms are needed to help the communities and businesses successfully transition to and thrive within a new young growth economy.

The TAC categorized the investment recommendations into the following five categories:

1. Inventory
2. Research

[6] In Ketchikan, local bus shelters were constructed using locally sourced wood. Similarly, in Sitka, the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) used local wood products to build a visitors' kiosk for the Convention and Visitors' Bureau. Young growth wood has also been sourced for a bike shelter, high school vocational training projects, and local home construction projects. While these examples are not specific to USFS projects, they offer example of local consumption of Tongass timber.

3. Infrastructure
4. Retooling
5. Financing Mechanisms

Investment Recommendations

Inventory Investment

Young growth resource data evaluated by the TAC carries a very high margin of uncertainty in regard to the reliability and accuracy of information. The TAC recommends investment in stand-level field work to: 1) ground-proof and refine inventory and growth data; 2) improve inventory accuracy; and 3) increase reliability of forecast projections for future resource management and investment activities.

Recommendations:
Improve Stand Level Young Growth Forest Inventory:

a) Update and expand stand exams and inventory.
b) Update and expand growth and yield studies.
c) Provide additional focus on information for cedar and alder.
d) Include integrated resource inventory.

USFS, State, and private sector forestry experts believe a budget of $5,000,000 would be necessary to improve accuracy of data and GIS layers to levels needed to support responsible resource management decision-making.

Research Investments

There is limited information available on growing, managing, harvesting, processing, manufacturing, and marketing of young growth timber within Southeast Alaska. Additional research regarding young growth silviculture and operability is necessary to support a viable transition. Research activities should include significant and meaningful private sector engagement, guidance, and leadership to assure that deliverables are beneficial to industry.

Recommendations:
Invest strategically in the following research areas:

a) New harvest techniques
b) Small log manufacturing processes
c) Site specific use of wood biomass
d) Silviculture
    - Consider tree planting for species manipulation and speeding harvest rotations.
    - Evaluate effectiveness of different stand thinning treatments.
    - For stem excluded, stagnant stands consider, conversion to a new stand.
    - Evaluate site preparation (e.g., slash treatments, mounding, etc.)

- Review current forest research on fertilization and genetics and determine applicability to Southeast Alaska.

e) Product and market development

- Transitioning to a young growth resource requires existing businesses to adapt their business model and develop new products and markets. As part of the USFS commitment to the transition and commitment to provide assistance to communities and businesses, world market analysis and products demand analysis may help encourage business transition, enhance local livelihoods, and maintain economically viable communities.

Recommendation

a) The USFS should fully utilize local wood products in their own projects thereby providing a showcase for local businesses and Tongass wood.

Infrastructure Development Investments

Affordable planning, harvesting, transportation and manufacturing will be critical to establishing an economically viable and globally competitive young growth timber industry in Southeast Alaska. At present, the region is significantly disadvantaged due to lack of critical infrastructure, including roads, affordable energy sources, and marine infrastructure.

Recommendations:

a) Connect critical road systems (e.g., Ketchikan Saddle Lakes), and designate utility corridors for future renewable energy and hydropower infrastructure.
b) Establish adequate docks and log transfer facilities within five logistic "working circle" areas: Hoonah, Kake, Wrangell, Klawock, and Ketchikan.
c) Establish adequate land- and water-based log storage facilities within these five "working circles."
d) Assure adequate marine logistical service infrastructure (e.g., ship and barge moorage systems), within these five "working circles".
e) Assure affordable energy in "working circle" communities.

- Ensure that access to renewable energy, including hydropower, is assured via the Forest Plan.
- Provide loan or grant funding mechanisms.
- Provide energy subsidies, tax credits, and/or other cost-offsets for young growth manufacturers.

Retooling Investments

Businesses have expressed interest in opportunities created through increased availability of young growth. However, retooling costs associated with transitioning to a young growth-based timber economy are significant, and beyond the means of most of the limited, remaining

industry. Strategic investments that enable businesses to retool could make the difference between prosperity and business closure.

Recommendations:

a) Manufacturing facilities for small logs.
b) New harvesting equipment:
   - Small log cable yarding systems; and
   - Low ground pressure logging machines.
c) Biomass facilities utilizing young growth.

Financing Mechanisms

Uncertainty associated with supply of older-age young growth and old growth timber supplied by the USFS is a tremendous impediment to raising capital for timber sector business activities. There will likely be lower profit margins associated with young growth, as industry transitions through trial and error, and as market demand for young growth projects is gradually created. The following financing mechanisms and incentives will help mitigate those factors, and make it possible for businesses to survive through the transition and beyond.

Recommendations:

a) **Federal loan guarantees,** which will ensure repayment of lenders in the event the USFS is unable to provide suitable volumes of timber. This will ensure that private sector businesses and lenders are protected and can recover their investment in the event that a business fails due to reasons associated with the USFS.
b) **Federally-purchased risk insurance**, which will assure repayment of lenders in the event the USFS is unable to provide suitable volumes of timber. This will ensure that private sector businesses and lenders are protected and can recover their investment in the event that a business fails due to reasons associated with the USFS.
c) **Increased profitability:** Increase the allowable profit percentage in the young growth appraisal process. This will help encourage, incentivize, and reward new investment in the young growth industry, while providing addition room for trial and error, which will surely occur throughout the transition process.
d) **Cost Recovery Relief ("Buy-out")**: It is anticipated that the changes created through new federal policy within the Tongass may prevent some harvesting and manufacturing operations from maintaining economically viable operations, and from recovering their existing investment. The federal government should offer an option to buy-out these businesses existing assets at fair market value, as a means of compensating these businesses for the new economic hardship and obsolescence imposed upon them. This manner of economic relief has precedence under ANILCA. The TAC recognizes this type of relief as a last resort; however, it will likely be

necessary to offset the economic harm associated with new federal policy within the Tongass.

- **Economic Hardship Relief:** Loss of businesses and associated employment will cause economic harm to Southeast Alaska's communities. Communities should be compensated for direct and indirect economic harm which they may be subject to due to the federal government's new young growth strategy within the Tongass. (e.g., lost employment, tax revenue, population out-migration, etc.). This could be achieved through a formula-based funding mechanism.
- **Hardship Relief and Increased Competitiveness through Access to Renewables.** Relief to communities can also be provided by ensuring that the Forest Plan guarantees increased access to new renewable energy and hydropower resources within the Tongass. This will allow communities to enjoy more affordable energy for current purposes and future growth, while also supporting the growth and prosperity of a new young growth manufacturing industry through more affordable renewable energy.

Monitoring and Research

Monitoring Principals (*Why*)

- The TAC's commitment to creating conditions for Tongass communities to thrive is reflected in its recommendations toward robust and active monitoring and adaptive management.
- The following monitoring recommendations are designed to build on and dovetail with existing monitoring efforts. These efforts include, but are not limited to, the forest-wide monitoring plan, project-level after action reviews, and existing and developing performance metrics.
- Measuring and telling the story of socioeconomic impacts of Forest policy and practice can build support for sustained investments on the Tongass.
- The recommended actions represent a new paradigm for monitoring on the Tongass, and situate the forest at the leading edge of active and adaptive management in the United States. The TAC expects the Agency and stakeholders to take on the challenge of adopting this paradigm.

Monitoring Recommendations (*How*)

Recommendations

a) **Forest-wide Implementation and Monitoring Council:** The TAC recommends that the Agency and stakeholders convene a forest-wide implementation and monitoring IMC. The purpose of the IMC is to serve as the mechanism by which stakeholders support and help hold themselves and the Tongass National Forest accountable to the goals of the transition. The IMC should:

- Support Agency staff and stakeholders in project-level and forest-wide implementation and effectiveness monitoring, working directly with Forest monitoring staff to facilitate efficient information gathering and reporting;
- Support Agency staff and stakeholders in active adaptive management;
- Be convened for the life of the current Forest Plan, the duration of the transition, and/or beyond;
- Be representative of project areas and economic, social, and ecological expertise;[7]
- Have the resources to support social science and applied research activities necessary to conduct benefits analyses and facilitate collaboration in low-capacity communities;
- Contract baseline and ongoing benefits analyses (recommendations 2 and 3, below);
- Receive and communicate the results of contracted benefits analyses, with focus on dashboard metrics;
- Develop a structure and schedule for formal interface with the TLT, Regional Leadership Team (RLT), and Washington Office (WO);
- Support planning, implementation, and review of *all* co-intent projects in non-suitable LUDs; and
- Steward the values associated with action items of the transition, including but not limited to, co-intent projects on non-suitable lands, support of a viable forest products industry, and Agency transformation and leadership. These values may be structured by the IMC into a set of action-oriented "triggers" in the future.[8]

b) **Baseline benefits analysis:** The TAC recommends the IMC contract an appropriate organization to conduct a baseline socioeconomic benefits analysis as soon as possible.[9] Key metrics to be included in the analysis are identified as dashboard metrics and listed below. An outline for the full analysis, to be substantiated by the contractor as needed, is in Appendix E. Dashboard metrics should be reported by the contractor to the IMC, separately from the full analysis *and* integrated with it.

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[7] Groups with experience guiding and leading multiparty monitoring efforts include the Southwest Crown Collaborative, the Deschutes Forest Collaborative Project, the Upper Joseph Creek Watershed Assessment and project (Wallowa Resources), Blue Mountain Forest Partners, Lakeview Stewardship Group, and the Staney Forest Collaborative, among others.

[8] These action items (triggers) are linked to data reported quarterly to the IMC, TLT, RLT, and WO. Triggers are designed to increase accountability and responsiveness to transition values, and to be stewarded by the IMC and TLT. IMC will identify and articulate triggers in fall 2015 or spring 2016.

[9] The Ecosystem Workforce Program (EWP) at the University of Oregon is one example; EWP is already working on the Tongass to pilot performance measures. University of Alaska (University of Alaska-Fairbanks, Extension) and the Pacific Northwest (PNW) Research Station also have capacity to support research and monitoring. Contracts should be in-state or transferred in-state after training.

c) **Ongoing benefits analysis:** The TAC recommends that benefits analyses be conducted at regular intervals for the life of the current plan (intervals TBD by the IMC in consultation with the contractor). At the next Plan Revision, the analyses should be considered for continuation by the IMC and the TLT together. Ongoing benefits analyses should demonstrate changes over time in the relationship between (x) planning and implementation of timber and stewardship work on the Tongass, and (y) community well-being.

Dashboard Metrics (*What*)

Arrows reflect the direction of change the TAC expects to see during the transition; some metrics do not have expected trends. Metrics are reported quarterly to the IMC, TLT, RLT, and WO.

- Number and volume of timber sales planned, offered, and sold; split out to show the following at each project stage or gate:
  - Number and volume of young growth ↑;
  - Number and volume of old growth ↓; and
  - Number and volume of small and micro-sales ↑.
- Number and outputs of co-intent projects planned, offered, and under contract; split out to show quantity and quality of projects on suitable versus non-suitable lands, and including:
  - Type, scale, and quality/effectiveness of habitat improvement, including understory vegetation response, deer populations, connectivity effects for key species, and additional biophysical metrics as needed, to be decided by multi-party planning at the project level ↑;
  - Volume of commercial wood products;
  - Use of commercial wood products;
  - Cost of habitat improvement planning and implementation; and
  - Number and names of parties monitoring project(s) for socioeconomic and ecological effectiveness.
- Number and value of private sector jobs (direct, indirect, and induced) associated with the transition—publicly or privately employed or contracted—and percentage of those jobs hired or held by local (census area or borough) residents; split out to show,
  - Number and value associated with timber sale preparation;
  - Number and value associated with harvest;
  - Number and value associated with wood products processing; and
  - Number and value associated with co-intent projects.
- Number of public construction and maintenance projects using Tongass wood products and estimated value contribution of the wood. Includes USFS, local governments, and special districts (e.g., school districts, soil and water conservation district etc.).↑

- Number and value contribution (cash and in-kind) of stakeholders involved in transition and habitat improvement planning, implementation, and monitoring; split out to show:
    - Collaborative planning processes, including but not limited to, stewardship contract design and award 🡅;
    - Grants and agreements;
    - Project implementation;
    - After-action reviews 🡅;
    - Multi-party monitoring 🡅; and
    - Pooled receipts application and awards process, and project implementation 🡅.

Appendix A: Tongass Advisory Committee Members

Federally Recognized Tribes, Alaska Native Organizations, and/or Alaska Native Corporation representatives

Jaeleen Araujo – Juneau, AK

Richard Peterson – Kasaan, AK

Woody Widmark – Sitka, AK

Alternate: Robert Mills – Kake, AK

National or regional environmental and/or conservation organization representatives

Brian McNitt – Sitka, AK

Keith Rush – Juneau, AK

Andrew Thoms – Sitka, AK

Alternate: Chris Rose – Sutton, AK

Timber industry representatives

Les Cronk – Ketchikan, AK

Eric Nichols – Ketchikan, AK

Wade Zammit – East Sound, WA

Resigned: Philip Hyatt – Thorne Bay, AK

Federal, State, and local government representatives

Chris Maisch – Fairbanks, AK

Carol Rushmore – Wrangell, AK

Kate Troll – Juneau, AK

Resigned: Wayne Benner – Thorne Bay, AK

Other commercial users, those holding land use permits, or the public at large

Lynn Jungwirth – Hayfork, CA

Kirk Hardcastle – Juneau, AK

Erin Steinkruger – Portland, OR and Coffman Cove, AK

Alternate: Jason Custer – Ketchikan, AK

Appendix B: TAC Charter

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

USFS, Tongass National Forest

Alaska Region

CHARTER

1. Committee's Official Designation

Tongass Advisory Committee

2. Authority

The Charter for the Tongass Advisory Committee (Committee) is hereby established under the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) as amended, 5 U.S.C. App. 2.

3. Objectives and Scope of Activities

The Committee will advise the Secretary of Agriculture, through the Chief of the USFS, by providing advice and recommendations for developing an ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable forest management strategy on the Tongass National Forest. Recommendations and advice may inform the modification of the 2008 Tongass Land Management Plan.

This forest management strategy will emphasize a shift to young growth management. The rationale for shifting to a predominantly young growth-based forest management program is explained in the January, 2013 Leader's Intent Paper, providing overall direction for the Committee. The 5-Year Tongass Integrated Plan (TIP), released in May 2013, identified old growth timber sales that can provide a bridge to support a transition within 10 to 15 years in a way that is economically viable for the existing industry. The Secretary's July 2, 2013 Memorandum Addressing Sustainable Forestry in Southeast Alaska also directed the identification of young growth and restoration projects that could be completed over the next five years, as well as shifts in staff and financial resources towards young growth management. Planning, integration and funding of that program of work will be driven and guided by work on key projects with collaborative partners.

4. Description of Duties

The Committee will be solely advisory in nature. All activities of the Committee will be conducted in an open, transparent, and accessible manner. The Committee will be asked to perform the following duties or other requests made by the Secretary or Chief:

a) As necessary and appropriate, identify the key elements to be considered for a potential Forest Plan modification assuming young growth is the focus of vegetation management in the future, while recognizing and balancing the other unique and equally important resource values of the Tongass, such as tourism, recreation, fishing, subsistence, and renewable energy.
b) Offer recommendations on the suitable and available land base for developing an ecologically, socially and economically sustainable forest management program on the Tongass National Forest with emphasis on young growth management. Considerations include standards and guides and land use designations for a future modification of the Tongass Land Management Plan.
c) Provide advice on how to speed the shift from predominately old growth management to predominately young growth management, in a way that is economically viable for the existing industry. This may include consideration of options for managing stands.
d) Offer advice on opportunities to work cooperatively with other landowners on an all lands young growth forest management strategy.

5. Agency or Official to Whom the Committee Reports

The Committee will report to the Secretary of Agriculture, through the Chief of the USFS.

6. Support

Clerical and administrative support will be provided by the USFS. The Tongass National Forest and Alaska Region will also provide significant technical support to the committee to ensure members have access to appropriate and relevant data as needed.

7. Estimated Annual Operating Costs and Staff Years

Members of the Committee will serve without compensation. In performance of their duties away from the homes or regular places of business, Committee members may be allowed reimbursement for travel expenses in accordance with Federal per diem rates for attendance at meetings as authorized by 5 U.S.C. 5703. All expenses will be subject to approval of the Designated Federal Officer (DFO).

Estimated annual operating costs for the committee is $980,000 including; travel, lodging and per diem, committee facilitation, administrative support expenses, and Federal staff support (estimated as four full time equivalents staff per year). Committee expenses will be covered through the annual budget of the USDA USFS.

8. Designated Federal Officer

A permanent Federal employee will be appointed in accordance with agency procedures and will serve as the Designated Federal Officer (DFO). The DFO will

approve or call the advisory committee and subcommittees' meetings, prepare and approve all meeting agendas, attend all committee and subcommittee meetings, adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest, and chair meetings when directed to do so by the official to whom the advisory committee reports.

The Forest Supervisor for the Tongass National Forest will serve as the DFO. The Deputy Forest Supervisor for the Tongass National Forest will serve as the Acting DFO.

9. Number and Frequency of Meetings

The Committee will meet as often as necessary to complete its work, perhaps as frequently as every month. A quorum of 10 members of the 15 member committee must be present to constitute an official meeting. The committee shall not hold any meetings except at the call of, or with the advance approval of, the DFO. Attendance may be in-person, by telephone, or by other electronic means.

10. Duration

Continuing.

The Committee will be up to 2 years in duration, but the majority of the work is expected to be accomplished between March 1, 2014 and December 30, 2014.

11. Termination

The Committee will expire 2 years after the date of filing unless prior to that date, it is renewed accordance with FACA, Section 14. The Committee will not meet or take any action without a valid current charter.

12. Membership and Designation

12a. The Committee will be fairly balanced in its membership in terms of the points of view represented and the functions to be performed. The Committee will be comprised of not more than 15 members. The members appointed to the Committee will be knowledgeable of ecological, social, and economic issues impacting Southeast Alaska, while providing a balanced and broad representation within the following interests:

i. Federally Recognized Tribes, Alaska Native Organizations and/or Alaska Native Corporation representatives;
ii. National or regional environmental and/or conservation organizations;
iii. Timber industry representatives
iv. Federal, State and local government representatives; and
v. Other commercial users, those holding land use permits or the public at large.

Committee members must have a demonstrated commitment to working collaboratively and finding solutions that meet multiple stakeholder values.

Committee advice and recommendations must be approved by consensus of the groups represented (2 out of 3 within each interest group) but not consensus of all participants.

One substitute (alternate) will be selected for each interest group.

Nominees will be sought through an open and public process that includes, but is not limited to, nominees submitted by Alaska Native Organizations, local and State governments, community based/non-governmental organizations, environmental and conservation groups, and individuals who represent the interests of the public served by National Forest System programs and land resources.

12b. Equal opportunity practices in accordance with USDA policies will be followed in all appointments to the Committee. To ensure that the recommendations of the Committee have taken into account the needs of the diverse groups served by USDA, membership will include to the extent possible, individuals with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women and persons with disabilities.

12c. The USDA prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

12d. Of these members, one person who is recognized for his or her ability to lead a group in a fair and focused manner, and who has been briefed on the mission of this Committee will be designated by the Secretary to be the Chairperson. A co-Chairperson may be assigned, especially to facilitate his or her transition to become the Chairperson in the future.

12e. Ethics Statement

To maintain the highest levels of honesty, integrity and ethical conduct, no Committee or subcommittee member shall participate in any “specific party matters” (i.e., matters are narrowly focused and typically involve specific transactions between identified parties) such as a lease, license, permit, contract, claim, grant, agreement, or related litigation with the Department in which the member has a direct or indirect financial interest. This includes the requirement for Committee or Subcommittee members to immediately disclose to the DFO (for discussion with USDA’s Office of Ethics) any specific party matter in which the member’s immediate family, relatives, business partners or employer would be directly seeking to financially benefit from the Committee’s recommendations. Members of the Committee shall be required to disclose their direct or indirect interest in leases, licenses, permits, contracts, claims, grants, or agreements that involve lands or resources administered by the USFS, or in any litigation related thereto. For

purposes of this paragraph, indirect interest includes holdings of a spouse or a dependent child.

All members will receive ethics training to identify and avoid any actions that would cause the public to question the integrity of the Committee's advice and recommendations. Members who are appointed as "Representatives" are not subject to Federal ethics laws because such appointment allows them to represent the point(s) of view of a particular group, business sector, or segment of the public.

Members appointed as "Special Government Employees" (SGEs) are considered intermittent Federal employees and are subject to Federal ethics laws. SGE's are appointed due to their personal knowledge, academic scholarship, background or expertise. No SGE may participate in any activity in which the member has a prohibited financial interest. Appointees who are SGEs are required to complete and submit a Confidential Financial Disclosure Report (OGE-450 form) and, upon request, USDA will assist SGEs in preparing these financial reports. To ensure the highest level of compliance with applicable ethical standards USDA will provide ethics training to SGEs on an annual basis. The provisions of these paragraphs are not meant to exhaustively cover all Federal ethics laws and do not affect any other statutory or regulatory obligations to which advisory committee members are subject.

13. Subcommittees

The USFS has the authority to create subcommittees. Subcommittees must report back to the parent committee, and must not provide advice or work products directly to the Agency.

14. Recordkeeping

The records of this Committee, formally and informally established subcommittees, or other subgroups of the committee, shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 26, Item 2 or other approved agency records disposition schedule. These records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.

15. Filing Date

FEB 10 2014

Appendix C: High-Value Fish Watersheds

Watershed Name	VCU #
Appleton Cove	2930
Fish Bay	2870
Irish Lakes	4290
Kadake Cr	4210
Mosman Inlet	4670
Bradfield River	5140
Nakwasina River	2990
Neka Bay	2010
Port Camden	4200
Rodman Bay	2920
Security Bay	4000
Sitkoh Bay	2430
Sitkoh Lake	2440
Situk River	3660
Sweetwater Lake	5730
Thoms Lake	4790

Appendix D: Map of Phase 1 Lands, T77 Watersheds, and TNC/Audubon Core Conservation Areas

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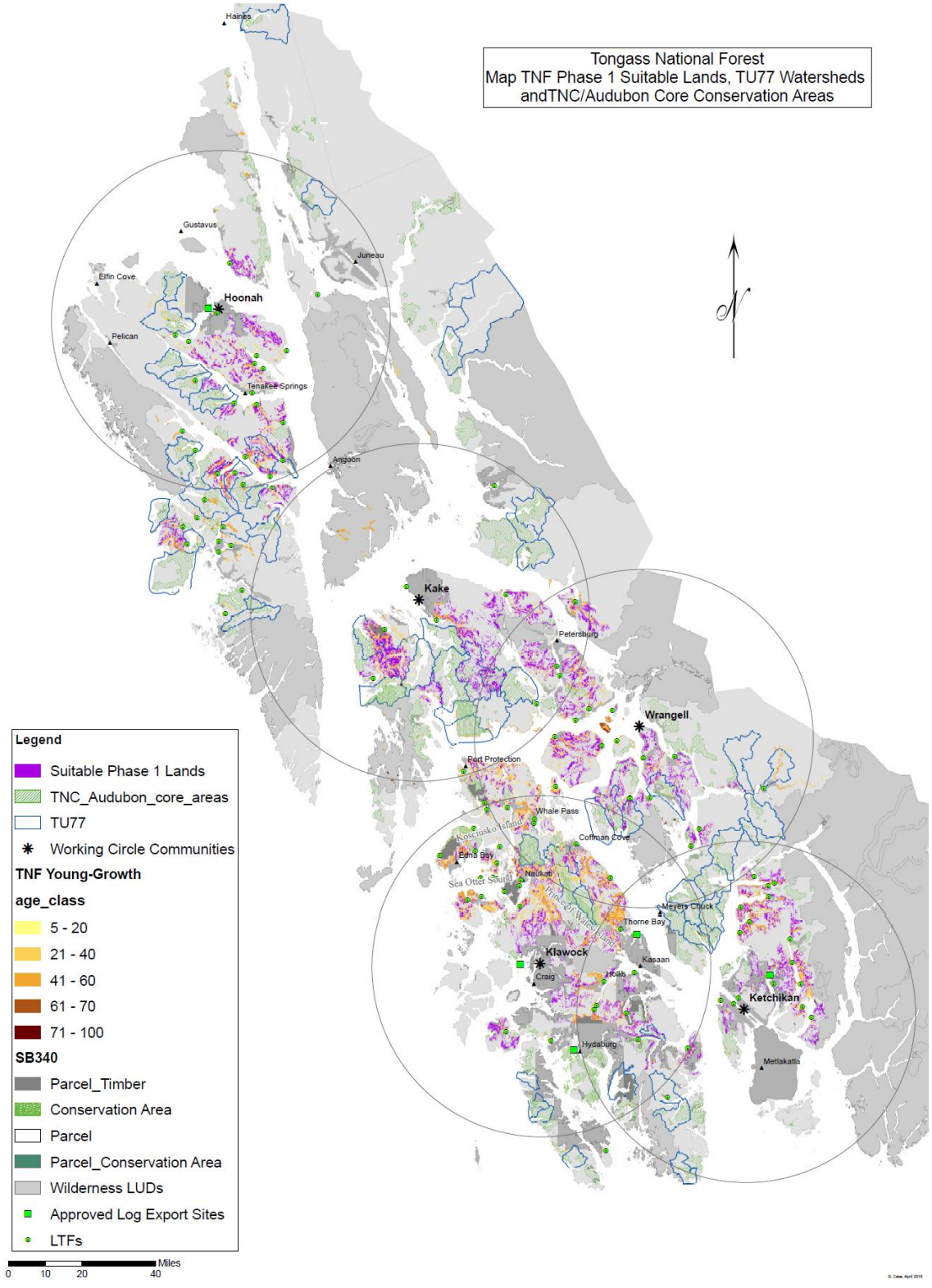

Appendix E: Outline for Socioeconomic Analyses

The recommended analyses address the Forest Plan Amendment and transition strategy, including old and young growth timber sales, co-intent projects, restoration and stewardship projects, workforce and business capacity development efforts, and other key transition components. The recommended plan is nested geographically, with measures by borough/census area[10] (correlated with ranger districts and working circles as possible) and Forest-wide.

A range of types, scales, and levels of participation in monitoring are possible (see Figure1). Most notably, the Agency's 2016 monitoring plan,[11] developed pursuant to the 2012 planning rule,[12] presents a robust approach to implementation monitoring (i.e., did we do what we said we were going to do?). The TAC's recommendations supplement ongoing implementation monitoring with verification/validation and effectiveness monitoring, which ask if (1) completed actions led to expected outcomes; and (2) if completed actions are contributing to objectives. In order to help our communities thrive, monitoring must measure outcomes as well as outputs.

Figure 1: Types, Scales, and Levels of Participation in Monitoring[13]

		Focus
Types	Biophysical; economic; social/cultural; legal/administrative	Input; output; outcome
Scales	Project; program; community, island, or ranger district; region; state/country	Implementation; verification/validation; effectiveness
Participation	Single-party; third-party; multiparty	

The recommended analyses should have four (or more) thematic emphases and eight (or more) questions; Figure 2 outlines the monitoring questions and measures.

[10]For census area/borough boundaries, visit the Alaska Department of Labor and workforce Development Research and Analysis, available at: http://labor.alaska.gov/research/census/maps.htm

[11] Tongass National Forest Draft Plan Monitoring Program, available at: http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprd3827408.pdf.

[12] Monitoring Requirements under the 2012 Planning Rule are listed on the Tongass National Forest Monitoring Reports page, available at: http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/tongass/landmanagement/planning/. The full text of the 2012 Planning Rule is available at: http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5362536.pdf.

[13] Adapted from Multiparty Monitoring for Sustainable Natural Resource Management, available through the University of Oregon Ecosystem Workforce Program at: http://ewp.uoregon.edu/resources/community-guidebook/.

Figure 2: Monitoring questions and measures[14]

Theme	*Question addressed*	*Measures/metrics*	*Scale reported*
A. Context and trends	a. What are the socioeconomic conditions and context in the borough/census area in which the transition is being implemented?	Employment by sector	Census area or borough
		Unemployment	Census area or borough
		Poverty	Census area or borough
		Number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch	Census area or borough and school
		School enrollment	Census area or borough
		Median age	Census area or borough
B. Employment and economic impacts	a. What are the employment effects in the communities around National Forests from co-intent projects, restoration projects, and timber sales?	Private sector jobs (direct, indirect, induced) associated with: • Restoration service contracts and stewardship • Timber sale harvesting and processing and transport of wood products	Ranger District or zone and Forest-wide
	b. What are the personal income effects in the communities around National Forests from co-intent projects, restoration projects, and timber sales?	Private sector labor income (direct, indirect, induced) associated with: • Restoration service contracts and stewardship • Timber sale harvesting and processing and transport of wood products	Ranger District or zone and Forest-wide
	c. What is the economic activity resulting, in the communities around	Business output (direct, indirect, and induced) associated with:	Ranger District or zone and Forest-wide

[14] Adapted from Ecosystem Workforce Program Working Paper Number 52: Socioeconomic Monitoring Plan for the U.S. Forest Service's Eastside Restoration Efforts, available at: http://ewp.uoregon.edu/sites/ewp.uoregon.edu/files/WP_52.pdf

	National Forests from co-intent projects, restoration projects, and timber sales?	• Restoration service contracts and stewardship • Timber sale harvesting and processing and transport of wood products	
C. Business health and impacts	a. What are the effects of transition implementation on the health of wood products *businesses*?	Businesses reporting good health as indicated by: • Workforce maintained or hired	Ranger District or zone and Forest-wide
	b. What are the effects of transition implementation on the health of the regional wood products *industry*?	Proportion of business type and workforce maintained or hired	Ranger District or zone and region-wide
	c. How much co-intent work/sales, restoration work, and timber sales are local and regional businesses capturing?	• Percent of service contracts and timber sales captured by businesses local to a Forest annually • Total value of contracts and timber sales captured locally annually • Primary types of work captured locally/not captured locally	Ranger District or zone and region-wide
D. Collaborative capacity	a. What is the capacity of collaborative groups to undertake an accelerated transition via co-intent projects in both suitable and non-suitable LUDs?	Guided self-evaluation rankings for: • Spatial scales at which they are working • Timelines at which they are working • Levels of ecological/social complexity of projects • Level of trust	Ranger District or zone, across Districts/zones (by group), and region-wide
		Number of matching funds and in-kind contributions from non-Agency partners for project planning, implementation, and monitoring	Ranger District or zone, across Districts/zones (by project), and region-wide

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Agency	United States Forest Service
CMAI	Culmination of Mean Annual Increment
Committee	Tongass Advisory Committee
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Department	United States Department of Agriculture
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
Forest	Tongass National Forest
Forest Plan	Tongass Land Management Plan
IDT	Interdisciplinary Team
IMC	Implementation and Monitoring Council
LUD	Land Use Designation
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
RLT	Regional Leadership Team
RMA	Riparian Management Area
S&G	Standards and Guidelines
TAC	Tongass Advisory Committee
TLT	Tongass Leadership Team
Tongass	Tongass National Forest
TTRA	Tongass Timber Reform Act
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
WO	Washington Office

About Meridian Institute

Meridian Institute is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to help people solve problems, make informed decisions, and find solutions to some of society's most complex and controversial issues. Meridian's mission is accomplished through applying collaborative problem-solving approaches including facilitation, mediation, and other strategic consultation services. Meridian works at the local, national and international levels and focuses on a wide range of issues related to natural resources and environment, science and technology, agriculture and food security, sustainability, global stability and health. For more information, please visit **www.merid.org**.

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