



Tongass Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

December 1-3, 2015

Best Western Plus Landing Hotel, Ketchikan, Alaska

The Tongass Advisory Committee (TAC) held its ninth meeting in Ketchikan at the Best Western Plus Landing Hotel on December 1-3, 2015. During the three-day meeting, TAC members reviewed the Proposed Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan (Proposed Plan) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). After reviewing those documents the group revisited and then finalized their Draft Recommendations from May 2015, with very minor substantive changes¹. They unanimously supported the preferred alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and recommended it be the foundation of the final amended Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan. In addition to their recommendations regarding the Proposed Plan, they also finalized recommendations for implementation and monitoring of the transition.

The meeting agenda is available online, [here](#). The following summary provides a description of each topic discussed and the resolution (where applicable). Recordings of the TAC deliberations are available by contacting Liz Duxbury at lduxbury@merid.org. See Appendix A for a meeting participant list (including TAC members, staff, and members of the public who attended, both in-person and virtually).

Welcoming Remarks and Committee Updates

At the beginning of the meeting, Committee Designated Federal Official (DFO), Jason Anderson, and TAC members provided the following updates regarding Forest timber sales and the Challenge Cost Share Agreement (CCS) between the Forest Service and State of Alaska:

- The CCS has been formalized and signed, but was delayed due to a busy fire season. The Tongass National Forest (Forest) and the State of Alaska (State) have been working on clarifying the implementation of their objectives for inventory, workforce development, infrastructure, and “All Lands, All Hands” to ensure that they fulfill the TAC recommendations and State interests, while adhering to federal and state sideboards.
- Efforts are underway by the Forest to undertake large landscape-scale assessments that will align with TAC recommendations as well as Forest objectives.

¹ See the finalized TAC recommendations document [here](#).

- The last three state timber sales under the Best Interest Finding Process in Hanes, Downer, and Edna Bay are all facing administrative appeal by outside groups. No sales from the State are anticipated until the appeals are resolved.
- A new log transfer facility (LTF) is being constructed at Edna Bay where large volumes of young growth sales are anticipated. The LTF will serve State, Federal and possibly Sealaska activities.
- The Forest has a mainline road project through Edna bay. Longstanding land title challenges have been resolved so that bridge construction in the community is able to benefit from private investments. It will be at least three years before any significant young growth timber offerings come from the area, though it is anticipated to be an important young growth area.
- Litigation for the Big Thorne sale continues.
- Some small sales are being appraised, but under poor market conditions, it is difficult for sales to appraise positive.
- Sealaska is operating and accessing available timber.
- The Heceta commercial thinning sale was more time intensive and expensive than anticipated. The Forest is reviewing project outcomes and scientists are analyzing soil impacts from thinning harvests to adapt prescriptions for the next phase of implementation.

Proposed Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Susan Howle, Proposed Plan project manager, and members of the Tongass Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) provided an overview of how the TAC's recommendations were incorporated into the Proposed Plan, and offered the opportunity for an in-depth question and answer session to further the TAC's understanding of how its recommendations are reflected in the Proposed Plan. Their discussions are summarized below:

Management Approaches and the 2012 Planning Rule

Susan Howle explained that many of the TAC's recommendations were included in Chapter 5 of the Proposed Plan, as "management approaches" Management Approaches must be written within the fiscal capacity of the Forest, and are considered plan content, not plan

components², which allows for more flexible, adaptable response to changing conditions . They can be modified with an administrative change that includes public notice, a 30 day comment period, but no objection process³.

Some TAC members expressed concern about the ease with which management approaches could be changed. However, IDT members clarified that management approaches were created to complement standards and guidelines, and are to be based on the best available science. According to the 2012 Planning Rule, management approaches can only be changed because of significant, justifiable reasons. In addition, the standards cannot be changed without a Plan Amendment.

Old Growth LUD

The IDT provided the following clarifying definitions regarding old growth habitat designations:

- Old Growth Land Use Designations (old growth LUDs) refer to small size reserves. They tend to be adjacent to timber roads and encompass some young growth stands.
- Old Growth Reserves (OGR) are medium to large size reserves that do not have much young growth in them except for very small patches. Therefore, all old growth LUDs are old growth reserves, but not all old growth reserves are old growth LUDs.

TAC members noted that while the TAC's draft recommendations used the term OGR in a broad sense for their modeling analysis and were not originally aware of the distinction, the DEIS and Proposed plan specified the term "old growth LUD". Nevertheless, the TAC decided not to modify their draft recommendation because using the old growth LUD would not significantly detract from the TAC's intent to optimize the amount of harvestable young growth. The large and medium size OGRs in question are included in other LUDs that the TAC has designated unsuitable for harvest. Therefore the available quantity of timber would not be significantly different if modeled under the old growth LUD definition. In addition, small patches within large swaths of mostly old growth will not be very economically viable.

Transition Timber Supply

The TAC clarified that there were two different definitions being used in the Proposed Plan in reference to potential timber sale quantity (PTSQ). The PTSQ number is defined as 460

² Page 5-1 of the Proposed Plan defines: "A management approach is content in the plan (36 CFR 219.7(f)) and differs from plan components in that an amendment or revision would not be required for changes to be made to reflect new information or changed conditions..."

³ However, additions to the management approaches may potentially require a supplementary EIS.

MMBF in the first decade (with 46 MMBF offered annually) in the Proposed Plan.⁴ In one definition, PTSQ numbers are derived from ecological capacity (e.g. the sustained sale level after ecological management constraints are accounted for). The Proposed Plan actually derives its PTSQ for the duration of the transition, from the decadal potential sales quantity. The TAC requested that the Forest include an additional, separate objective to distinguish the definitions (refer to Appendix C for language suggested by the TAC and their other comments about the Proposed Plan).

The TAC also reiterated that they had never reached consensus on a single recommended volume target for the transition period, and that the range of annual volumes supported by individual TAC members for analysis was, and still is, between 46 MMBF-70MMBF.

Scenery Standards

The TAC clarified their reasons for recommending a green-up period of 10 years in regards to the scenery standards. To facilitate the transition, the TAC intended to shorten the time requirements for harvest in adjacent stands, where such harvest is limited by scenery standards. However, they did not fully understand that the Scenery Integrity Objective (SIO) levels do not stand alone (i.e. two harvests that may have an SIO of very low when separate could result in an SIO of unacceptably low when placed together), and that simply waiting 10 years may not be sufficient to meet SIO standards. They decided to modify the language in their recommendations (P12, E) to stipulate that though the intent is to expedite a second entry harvest, judgements should be made on a project-by-project basis to determine compliance with scenery standards. (See Appendix C for the suggested modifications.)

Residual Old Growth

The Beach and Estuary Fringe Plan Component⁵ stipulated that harvest of old growth timber within the beach and estuary fringe is not allowed. One TAC member expressed concern that the presence of residual old growth in a young growth stand would make the stand unsuitable for harvest, while some members thought that this would be an unlikely hindrance that could be addressed at the project-level.

High-Value Watersheds

The TAC recommended clarification of language in the Proposed Plan to explain the intent to:

⁴ P 5-16, O-TIM-01, O-TIM-02

⁵ P5-17 in the Proposed Plan

- Exclude *all* old growth stands in high-value watersheds⁶ from timber harvest with no exceptions; and
- Require performance of pre-project assessments in high value watersheds.

The TAC's suggested language to replace existing language in Chapter 5, and Appendix A of the Proposed Plan is specified in the TAC Comments document in Appendix C.

Co-intent

TAC members expressed a few reservations about how the IDT had incorporated the TAC's concept of "co-intent" in the Proposed Plan. Some members felt that the IDT's decision to replace the co-intent term⁷ with "integrated resource management" (IRM) was a very adequate solution because IRM is familiar to the Forest and has essentially the same meaning. Others suggested that co-intent and IRM are not exactly analogous.

Some members emphasized the importance of applying co-intent at the project-level: as each stand is being assessed for commercial timber, co-intent to maintain other resources should also apply as prescriptions per stand are being determined. Others underscored the value of co-intent at the Forest Plan level.

There was general agreement that co-intent should serve as a "license" to give Forest leadership flexibility to be creative, take risks, and experiment. They expressed concern that there has been a historical unwillingness by Forest leadership to take risks, and that using the familiar term IRM could muffle the importance of co-intent. They emphasized that co-intent should be distinguished from IRM as a way to incentivize the Forest to approach new strategies in a new learning system.

The TAC agreed that a balance is needed between usage of a brand new term, which could spark litigation, and giving the Forest something new to promote change in leadership behavior. Instead of continuing to recommend the co-intent term, they suggested that the intent behind co-intent be further clarified and integrated into the management approaches section.

Other Clarifications

The IDT provided the following miscellaneous clarifications:

⁶ The high-value areas are defined as The Nature Conservancy/Audubon high-value conservation areas and Tongass 77 watersheds.

⁷ "Co-intent" is a term that was created by the TAC and not defined in previously existing documents within the FS.

- Several old growth reserves (OGRs) were reduced in size as a result of the 2014 Southeast Alaska Native Lands Conveyance Act. Nearby areas are being reviewed for lands that could potentially be selected to replace the conveyed OGR parcels. The TAC recommendation to obtain additional young growth from within OGRs is not part of this process since it pertains to work at the project level, not the Forest planning level. Chapter 6 of the Proposed Plan contains more detail.
- In Chapter 5 of the Proposed Plan, young growth was put into a separate land use designation (LUD). Language in Chapter 5 allows for one time entry into certain LUDs to facilitate the transition, additional entry can be determined in the future if criteria are met. Suitability of lands is now a plan component under the new 2012 planning rule, so a plan amendment is required to change suitability. Otherwise, young growth designations will be re-assessed within 15 years when the Forest Plan is revised.
- A Plan Amendment would be required to change a young growth stand within a non-timber LUD into suitable young growth in the aftermath of a mass disturbance to a stand.
- Even though Alternatives 2 and 3 are not implementable under the current Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA) rule, they were written into the Proposed Plan so that another EIS would not have to be conducted if the IRA rule were changed. Regardless of the IRA rule's outcome, Alternative 2 will remain the highest volume alternative.
- In Chapter 5 (page 5-8), the 3,500 acreage numbers determined for Beach and Estuary Fringe and Riparian Management Area (RMAs) are not caps or targets, they are metrics based on average data from Forest Plan modeling runs, which showed that in 15 years, about 3,500 acres would be treated⁸.
- There were no changes on language dealing with deer and wolves because they were already in the existing Forest Plan.
- Co-intent and Integrated Resource Management concepts are discussed in Chapter 5 (page 5-11). If a stand is in a conservation area, there is a stipulation to accelerate old growth conditions.
- Model Implementation Reduction Factors (MIRF)⁹ are used to provide an estimate of fall-down. MIRF numbers for old growth are based on historical harvest data while MIRF numbers for young growth are estimated to be higher for older young growth, and lower for younger young growth.

⁸ In the TAC recommendations, RMAs were prioritized last, so that is the last area the modeling looked for suitable acres.

⁹ Defined in Proposed Plan Appendix A (page A-5).

Tongass National Forest Plan Monitoring Program

A modified Tongass National Forest Monitoring Program is currently in development to reflect the new Forest Plan. The IDT aims to complete the Monitoring Program by May 2016 for public comment.¹⁰ The TAC acknowledged that some language already exists in the 2012 Forest Planning Rule to incorporate stakeholder collaboration into monitoring programs, and to consider categories such as socioeconomic effects that are consistent with the TAC's intent.

However, the TAC suggested that monitoring should go beyond what the Forest has traditionally included in its monitoring programs. Specifically they would like to see additional emphasis on lessons learned in addition to objectives completed. TAC members recommend that during the transition, young growth projects be subjected to collaborative experimentation and innovation. Stakeholders should be involved in project implementation and management activities *as* they are being implemented ("early, often, and after" on a project by project basis). The members recommended that mechanisms be developed to help the Forest address past gaps in project monitoring engagement and institutional memory. They suggested the inclusion of specific language (detailed in Appendix C) to be added to the management approach sections. However, in general, TAC members believed that the language under management approaches in Chapter 5 of the Proposed Plan was very effective in reflecting their recommendations, especially on pre-project collaboration and planning. However, they noted that the "after project review" aspect that they intended was omitted from the plan. They included suggested language in their comments document to address this omission. (See Appendix C.)

While some TAC members suggested that in order to effect change in the Forest's culture, the TAC's concept of monitoring should be defined and distinguished from the Forest's traditional approach to monitoring, others emphasized the value of integrating new approaches to monitoring into existing Forest initiatives in order to avoid compounding the "layers of initiatives" that may overly encumber the Forest from taking action. Long-term effectiveness monitoring with baseline information on the socioeconomic beneficiaries of projects is an item missing from the Forest Monitoring Program. That type of monitoring will be crucial to ensuring that the transition is beneficial to the region.

Though the Forest will have its own Monitoring Program, and welcomes additional monitoring from an independent party to supplement its efforts, it remains important for the Forest to work together, instead of separately, with interested stakeholders (e.g., with a multi-stakeholder collaborative) to develop a broadly applicable framework for monitoring,

¹⁰ The most current version of the [Forest Plan Monitoring Program](#) and a [summary document](#) to explain its requirements under the 2012 Planning Rule are available online.

and incorporate short-term project effectiveness monitoring into their own work. Monitoring and learning mechanisms can be further integrated into the Forest Plan via the new 2012 Planning Rule, which covers the need for new information developed and created at the project-level.

Some TAC members expressed concern that since Plan monitoring is not part of the Forest Plan, it may not receive adequate attention from the Forest. The members offered to meet with Forest staff to explain their monitoring concepts and to show their committed support to the Forest on implementation. Their on-going support for implementation will be conveyed in a [letter](#) to the Secretary of Agriculture. It emphasizes the fact that the TAC recommendations are intended as a package – inclusive of both Plan Amendment and implementation components. Neither should be considered without the other.

Challenge Cost-Share Agreement

The TAC provided clarifications on the following two tasks that were included in the Challenge Cost-Share Agreement (CCS) to ensure TAC recommendations were reflected in the Agreement. To see the tasks and associated TAC recommendations specified, please refer to Appendix B.

Item C under the Inventory section of the CCS proposed the collection of information on 20,000 acres of suitable and available old growth bridge timber. In light of the Forest Supervisor's action to also identify and approve old growth bridge timber through the NEPA process, members of the TAC discussed whether this item is now a redundant component of the CCS. Given these new overlapping goals for the Forest, the group considered whether another task could better meet their goals for old growth bridge inventory. Jason Anderson explained that originally this item was added to the inventory to reinforce cohesion between the State and Forest by putting the work on the same timeline for both agencies. TAC members agreed that item C remains relevant and can be complementary to the Forest's efforts. Given the Forest Supervisor's interest in including other resources in the inventory, such as fisheries and recreation, integration of CCS and Forest goals could allow space for the collection of other resource information in tandem with the timber inventory.

State Forester and TAC member Chris Maisch explained that the intention from the beginning was to incorporate local workforce development and employment into the old growth inventory. However, the State and Forest are struggling with how to balance the desire to employ potentially inexperienced new hires with the need for data quality, which could potentially be compromised by the lack of technical expertise required by the sampling methodology. An internship program is in development with the University of Alaska, but it may not produce a qualified workforce in time to meet near-term needs. The TAC provided the following comments on this issue, but did not suggest changes to the CCS

Agreement at this time since the Agreement can be modified in the future pending concurrence of both the Forest and the State:

- Surprise was expressed about the lack of people in Southeast Alaska capable of conducting survey work.
- Some TAC members said it was indeed difficult to find experienced field workers, and identified a future need for younger workers to replace older workers as they retire.
- A workforce development program, operated competitively like a business, with good team leaders and program developers can be very effective for developing a good workforce. However some entity needs to organize such an effort as it can be too risky for private industry. Public and private landowner groups can work together to articulate the needed skillsets to create a curriculum.

The CCS Workforce Development task, Item C, also includes programs for private landowners and opportunities for local employment with the inventory of roads and infrastructure that will be needed for the transition to young growth. The TAC affirmed that this task was a good way to create jobs in the community since it would be easy to train workers to do the infrastructure inventory (whereas the technical skillsets for the old growth inventory would take more time to develop).

Concerns were expressed however, that there may be few landowners interested in the infrastructure inventory and forest stewardship activities proposed in the CCS. Some landowners have already made investments in inventory and others have not, and may not be interested. On the basis of this concern, there was a suggestion that this piece of work not be a priority item, especially if it detracts from the main intent of collecting information on young growth. However, it was clarified that it would not compete with the timber inventory as there is a separate 1.5 million dollars allocated to workforce development. This task can be an important way for interested landowners to gain funding for work they have not previously been able to afford. It also aligns with the TAC's desire for better coordination among landowners.

Timber Planning Process & Old Growth Bridge Timber

The TAC reiterated the importance of their recommendations to both timber and conservation interests for certainty regarding the supply of old growth bridge timber for the transition.¹¹ It was noted that the TAC recommendation for having the old growth timber sales cleared through gate 2 by the end of year 5 of the transition was not included in the Proposed Plan. The IDT explained that this interest cannot technically be considered a plan

¹¹ Refer to page 7 of the [May 2015 meeting summary](#) for the reasons detailed.

component, and therefore had to be articulated elsewhere. The TAC therefore has included their recommendation on old growth bridge timber in their [letter](#) to Secretary Vilsack.

Members further discussed how the need to achieve the Secretary's goal of sustaining a viable timber industry during the transition could be integrated into the project-level timber planning process. Pending the CCS work to gain clarity on the availability of both old growth and young growth timber volumes, the exact point at which the transition away from old growth will be completed cannot be determined. From an industry perspective, it can be inefficient for a mill to process old growth and young growth at the same time. Instead, to remain viable, mills may need to complete processing of the allotted old growth, and then retool mill infrastructure for young growth processing—thereby underlining the importance for sufficient timber to be available early in the transition process. In acknowledgement of the difficulties that the Forest is having in providing sales cleared through NEPA to meet timber demand projections, Jason Anderson explained that Forest is undertaking a landscape-scale planning effort of significant size to engage stakeholders and meet both timber and non-timber interests. Accompanying the move towards landscape-scale planning, district zoning in the Forest will be changing and neighboring districts will share resources and personnel. One concept is to have a dedicated transition IDT. The TAC expressed preliminary support for the this new effort in Prince of Wales and Revillagigedo/Gravina Islands, with the understanding it would be improved and expanded to other areas once deemed successful. They offered the following additional considerations:

- Broadening engagement will be critical to including those who can help make the transition a success, even though opposition to the planning effort is to be expected.
- The example of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) in other states offers a roadmap for achieving the TAC's co-intent goals by including landscape assessments of Forest resources, with a stewardship mechanism.
- Communicating project work in a strategic way is essential to social acceptability. In framing projects, non-timber resource benefits should be communicated at the front end.
- Sometimes, the messenger is more important than the message: a collaborative group will help the Forest engage the public and deliver messages that are trusted, perhaps more than they would be coming from the Forest.

Tongass Transition Collaborative (*Formerly the Implementation and Monitoring Council*)

The TAC maintains that it is very important for the Forest to work with an open collaborative of stakeholders in order for the timber transition succeed. The TAC's

Implementation and Monitoring Subcommittee has been discussing a vision for such a group (now referred to as the Tongass Transition Collaborative (TTC) for some time¹². The TAC reviewed and edited a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be included as part of their recommendations for the Forest to establish a relationship with such a collaborative group.¹³

During the course of discussion, a member shared information about a potential funding opportunity for a young growth symposium that could bring multiple stakeholders together for field visits and strategic discussions around the Tongass timber transition. The TAC recognized that this was a good opportunity for modeling their vision for project monitoring and learning, and an additional opportunity for a diverse collaborative group to be involved in the planning process. Industry and State representatives offered the possibility of in-kind support, and TAC members agreed that this project would relate very well with the *All Hands, All Lands* goal outlined in the CCS.

Public Comment

The Committee encourages members of the public to provide input through oral and/or written comment. Every TAC meeting includes a public comment period. The following comments were offered in-person during the meeting:

Christopher Donar, a professor representing the University of Alaska Southeast, with a background in aquatic sciences, expressed the University's interest in this educational extension and outreach opportunity for students as part of the timber transition. He also noted how helpful it has been for the university to work with Sustainable Southeast in education projects for extension and outreach activities that allow students to meet with Agency and other representatives. He informed the group that the university is putting an emphasis on fisheries and is now offering a joint fisheries degree with University of Alaska Fairbanks. He welcomes the possibility for interaction and collaboration to develop programs to give students opportunities for internships or independent study.

Norman Cohen, representing The Nature Conservancy (TNC) from Juneau, expressed that TNC is very pleased with the compromises that the TAC has made and the recommendations it has created. They are looking forward to seeing the preferred alternative adopted by the FS and think that it will be good for the triple-bottom-line of the economy, the people, and the forest. He acknowledges that as the FS implements its decision, the process will be difficult and contentious, and he hopes for good decisions via

¹² Concept discussions are detailed in the [summary](#) for the October 2015 IMC sub-committee meeting.

¹³ The Draft MOU can be found in Appendix E, page 39 of the [TAC Final Recommendations document](#).

collaboration along the way. He expressed that TNC will be ready to participate in any processes and plans that come forward and will be reviewing and offering comments on the DEIS during the comment period. Finally, he commended the Hoonah Native Forest Partnership for having a good model for forest management for mixed land ownership watersheds, and hopes that there will be further adaptation and participation in that kind of management model.

Mike Sallee, Ketchikan resident and small sawmill owner/operator for the last 35 years, explained that his operation depends on salvage logging from people who are clearing their land in the local area for his timber source. He explained that he is one of over 300 similar small mills and 19 in Ketchikan alone, and that every year he is unable to meet demands for yellow cedar. He recommends that, firstly, round log export programs in the Tongass need to cease, particularly for yellow cedar. Mike sells cedar for decks, boats, paddles, masks, and bentwood boxes to the Totem Heritage Center, but was only able to provide 100 board feet this year. He expressed that it is too valuable to export to the Far East where it is eventually sold back to the West at a high price. Secondly, he expressed that in context of manmade climate change and its effects on the planet, any clearcutting in the Tongass needs to cease. The Forest is one of the last places that is contributing as a significant carbon sink. Lastly, he hopes to see small logging programs for small logging operations, modeled like the FS 10,000 board feet program for personal use. He expressed the need for such a program to legitimize the usage of dead and down trees from landslides and blowdowns for small loggers and possibilities for helicopter-logging select valuable trees.

Austin Williams spoke on behalf of Trout Unlimited to acknowledge the TAC's work on challenging issues to produce a coherent set of recommendations. He expressed thanks for the inclusion of high-value fish habitat recommendations, particularly including the YG pre-project assessment aspects. He also stated that Trout Unlimited is interested in learning more about and possibly participating in the emerging forest collaborative group.

Next Steps

- Chris Maisch will introduce the TAC's intentions for development of a forest collaborative at a leadership meeting in mid-December.
- TAC members will attend a Regional Leadership Team or Forest Leadership Team meeting to discuss their intentions for involvement with Plan monitoring.
- The TAC will finalize and send their letter to Secretary Vilsack.
- The TAC will finalize and send their comments regarding the DEIS and Proposed Plan to the Forest Service.
- Meridian will develop a press release and talking points for communication based on key messages from the meeting.

Key Messages and Reflections on the Meeting

Key Messages

The TAC identified the following key messages that will serve as talking points for media, as well as the basis of a press release to be finalized by the co-chairs in cooperation with staff:

1. TAC held its 9th and final meeting in Ketchikan, AK at the Best Western Plus Landing Hotel on Dec. 1-3, 2015.
2. The TAC finalized its recommendations as agreed to in May 2015, with very minor substantive changes. They also provided comments for the FS to consider in finalizing the EIS and the Proposed Plan.
3. Members of the Tongass Interdisciplinary Team provided an overview of how the TAC's recommendations were incorporated into the Proposed Land & Resource Management Plan, and offered the opportunity for an in-depth Q&A session to further the TAC's understanding of how its recommendations are reflected in the Proposed Plan.
4. The TAC recognized the amount of work that the FS IDT put into incorporating its recommendations into the Proposed Plan and DEIS, and believe that, for the most part, its recommendations were accurately reflected in the preferred alternative in the DEIS and the Proposed Plan. They unanimously support the preferred alternative and recommend it be the foundation of the Final amended Plan.
5. The Committee stressed the value of place-based monitoring and social learning at the project-level throughout implementation of the new Plan, once finalized, to affect change through adaptation and clearly demonstrate local benefits of projects.
6. There are a variety of recommendations from the TAC that are not reflected in the Plan Amendment. They drafted a letter to Secretary Vilsack emphasizing the importance of accepting the TAC's recommendations as a package, rather than a menu of options. They also intend to follow-up with the Regional Forest Service leadership in the near-term.
7. The Committee discussed how the FS should use its implementation and monitoring recommendations.
8. The Committee appreciates the input received through public comments, given at this meeting and throughout the entire process. Many comments at this meeting were in support of implementing the TAC recommendations, and offered suggestions for a successful transition.

9. The TAC members are committed to continuing to work together through a collaborative process with the Forest and other interested stakeholders to ensure a successful transition.

The finalized press release is available online, [here](#).

Member Reflections

At the close of the meeting, TAC members and alternates shared individual reflections about the meeting and the process overall. Their comments reflected the following themes:

- A very positive experience working with fellow members of the TAC and a willingness to interact with each other in the future, despite an initial reluctance (among some members) to join the group.
- Personal and professional satisfaction with the learning, personal growth, and mutual trust that members gained through the process of learning to work together with diverse perspectives.
- Acknowledgement of group members for committing their time and efforts and appreciation for other members' passion for Southeast Alaska.
- Pride in the solutions that the group has achieved and optimism for the outcomes.
- Acknowledgement that the work towards a successful transition is not yet complete.
- Hope that more youthful influences will be included as collaborative efforts continue in the future.
- Thanks to the facilitators and DFO for assisting the process and bringing their insights.

Appendix A – Participant List

Committee Members in Attendance

Jaeleen Araujo (*Partial attendance*)
 Les Cronk
 Lynn Jungwirth
 Chris Maisch
 Brian McNitt
 Eric Nichols
 Keith Rush
 Carol Rushmore
 Erin Steinkruger
 Andrew Thoms
 Wade Zammit

Committee Members in Virtual Attendance (Phone)

Jaeleen Araujo (*Partial attendance*)
 Kirk Hardcastle (*Partial attendance*)
 Richard Peterson (*Partial attendance*)
 Woody Widmark (*Partial attendance*)

Absent Members

Kate Troll

Alternates in Attendance

Jason Custer (*Partial attendance*)

Absent Alternates

Bob Mills
 Chris Rose

Committee Staff (USFS/Facilitators)

Jason Anderson
 Faye Duan
 Connie Lewis
 Diana Portner

USDA/USFS Employees

Susan Howle
 Sheila Jacobson
 Patti Krosse
 Dennis Landwehr
 Dani Snyder
 Sheila Spores
 Julianne Thompson
 Cathy Tighe
 Carol Warmuth

Members of the Public in Attendance¹⁴

Matt Armstrong
 Sarah Campen
 Peter Chaille
 Norman Cohen
 Christopher Donar
 Maria Dudzak
 Tony Gallegos
 Michael Kamprich
 Daniel Kirkwood
 Conor Reynolds
 Mike Salle
 Paul Slenkamp
 Susan Walsh
 Austin Williams

¹⁴ This list is based on members of the public that signed in at the beginning of each meeting day.

Appendix B – Request for TAC Clarification and Verification on Challenge Cost Share Agreement Actions

1. Task 1 Inventory, Item C: Old Growth.

TAC Recommendations: Develop the unit pool for bridge timber volume to meet the timeline goals of: 1) all timber pool volume through Gate 1 by year 2 (two) and 2) all timber pool volume through Gate 2 (NEPA) by the end of year 5 (five) of transition. Transition begins after the Forest Plan Amendment is signed.

Limit the old growth time base to the current definition of Phase 1 lands outside of the Nature conservancy/Audubon conservation priority areas, TU77 watersheds and Inventoried Roadless Areas.

Proposed Action:

Collect information on 20,000 areas of suitable and available old growth “bridge timber” stands within the Phase 1 land base, consistent with TAC recommendations

TAC Request: In light of the Forest Supervisors action to identify the acreage of OG to be included in a bridge/substitution program through the transition and move it through NEPA in line with the TAC recommendations, what role would this task take and what other task opportunities would exist to meet this objective as it relates to inventory?

2. Task 2 Workforce Development, Item C: Assessment & Assistance Across Land Ownerships:

Overview: There are unrealized opportunities for cost saving through coordination among adjacent or nearby landowners in the context of the economic challenges that company YG values/costs to optimize efficiencies.

TAC Recommendations:

Execute agreements for shared infrastructure among landowners. Work with researchers to take an all-land approach to research project in the region.

Proposed Action:

Conduct an outreach program of all non-federal landowners in the region.

Develop Forest Stewardship Plans (FSP) as needed for qualifying landowners

Conduct an inventory of infrastructure and road conditions in the region to determine forest management needs

Implement projects using local workforce

TAC Request: Are these proposed actions aligned with the TAC’s intents and are there additional ideas for projects that would advance the interests of the TAC?

Appendix C—TAC Comments on the Proposed Plan and DEIS

Tongass Advisory Committee Comments on the Tongass Proposed Land & Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Drafted and agreed to by Tongass Advisory Committee members, December 2, 2015

The Tongass Advisory Committee is very pleased that many of the Committee's recommendations were accurately interpreted by the Forest Service, were the foundation of Chapter 5 of the Proposed Land and Resource Management Plan and represented in Alternative 5 of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

The Tongass Advisory Committee provides unanimous support for Alternative 5, the preferred alternative. In addition to their finalized recommendations, the TAC also offers the following comments, and suggested additions and changes to the proposed Plan.

Language Related to Management Approaches

Proposed Plan, Chapter 5, Management Approaches

Comments:

First, we need to comment that the management approaches language in chapter 5 is very well done and we can see where the plan includes TAC recommendations. We insist that these management approaches carry-through to the final plan.

In chapter 5, there is a need for an addition of some specific language in the recommendations that should be included in management approaches for young growth, as well as included in each section in chapter 5 where management approaches are outlined.

The language that should be included is the language that deals with doing post-project/after-action reviews. There is good language in this section on pre-project collaboration and planning and the TAC recognizes the way the Forest Service has integrated our comments on these concepts. However, the "after project review" was missed which specifically speaks to our intent that young growth projects (especially in the unsuitable lands) will need to go through a period of experimentation and innovation. In order for each project to increase the knowledge of how to do these projects better and learn from what was successful and unsuccessful, after-action reviews will all stakeholders need to be conducted.

Additions:

The following language from the TAC recommendations should be included:

- a) Working with project collaboratives, prepare pre and post project reports to the public about what was planned, 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
- 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.

High-Value Watersheds

Proposed Plan, Chapter 5, Plan Content Developed Under the 2012 Planning Rule, page 5-7

Current language:

“It is expected that at the end of five years following the signing of the Record of Decision (ROD) for this proposed plan amendment, the Forest Service would conduct a trend analysis on the annual best management practices (BMPs) monitoring of young-growth timber projects that intersect with the following watersheds...”

Replace with the following:

“It is expected that by the end of the five year period after the signing of the ROD, the Forest Service will conduct an internal scientific review together with the Tongass Transition Collaborative and other stakeholders to determine likely impact to fish and wildlife habitat from proposed young growth timber projects that intersect with the following high-value fish producing watersheds. If harvest is proposed in one of these watersheds, the USFS may apply additional standards or guidelines to mitigate risk to fish habitat, or may apply a “no net-loss” exchange for other areas for young growth harvest.”

Proposed Plan Appendix A – Timber Production Land Suitability, Step 2 – Lands Suited and Not Suited for Timber Production Based on Compatibility with Desired Conditions and Objectives (FSH 1909.12, Section 61.2), Page A – 4, Item 3. B.

Current language:

“Within Development LUDs, old-growth stands in Phases 2 and 3 of the 2008 Forest Plan Timber Sale Program Adaptive Management Strategy, in the Trout Unlimited TU77 watersheds, and in The Nature Conservancy/Audubon Priority Conservation Areas (as shown on maps in the planning record) are identified as NOT suitable for timber production, except for small sales after the transition is complete. Young-growth stands in all of these areas are identified as suitable for timber production.”

Replace with the following:

“Within Development LUDs, old-growth stands (as shown on maps in the planning record) in (1) Phases 2 and 3 of the 2008 Forest Plan Timber Sale Program Adaptive Management Strategy, (2) the Trout Unlimited TU77 watersheds, and (3) The Nature Conservancy/Audubon Priority Conservation Areas are identified as NOT suitable for timber production. Young-growth stands in all of these areas are identified as suitable for timber production.”

Forest-wide Plan ComponentsForest-wide Multiple-use Goals and Objectives, O-TIM-01, page 5-16**Current language:**

Seeking to accelerate a transition to primarily young-growth harvest, offer an average of 46 MMBF annually in a combination of old growth and young growth. When young-growth offered is less than 41 MMBF, provide old growth to make up the difference and achieve the annual market demand of 46 MMBF. Offer an average of 5 MMBF of old growth annually to support local mills and investments in re-tooling, depending on markets and demand.

Comment:

The draft TAC recommendations stated: “During the transition period, the annual timber volume target should be held constant. Subject to review of the DEIS, the TAC will recommend a volume target to hold consistent through the transition period.” The TAC expected to see an analysis by the Forest Service of the effects of two different annual volume targets. After reviewing the DEIS, which did not include an analysis of two volume targets, the TAC was unable to reach consensus on an annual volume target. The range of annual volumes supported by individual TAC members for analysis remains at 46MMBF – 70MMBF. We want to be clear that the TAC did *not* agree to a specific annual target.

Forest-wide Multiple-use Goals and Objectives, O-TIM-02, page 5-16**Current language:**

“Seek to provide an economic timber supply sufficient to meet the annual market demand for Tongass National Forest timber, and the market demand for the planning cycle. The projected timber sale quantity (PTSQ) is 460 MMBF in the first decade, of which approximately 92 MMBF would be from young-growth. The PTSQ in years 11-15 would be about 230 MMBF, of which about 125 MMBF would be young growth. “

Comment:

Clarify the difference between “annual market demand” and “projected timber sale quantity (PTSQ)”. Based on the given current definition of PTSQ, the PTSQ timber volume is *not* a function of demand. Make two separate objectives to clarify this distinction.