

# Tongass Transition Collaborative

November 14- 15, 2023 in Ketchikan, AK

## Meeting Summary

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### Meeting Materials and Links

- [AGOL Map](#) – Integrated Resources on the Tongass National Forest
  - SASS-fm Assessment Tool and Draft [Criteria](#)
  - SASS-fm [website](#)
  - TTC Mission Statement (attached)
  - Delilah Brigham’s powerpoint about the TLMP revision (attached)
  - Meeting participant list (appended)
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## Day 1

### Five Year Review

The meeting began with a brief overview of the Five-Year Review of progress made towards implementing the 2016 Tongass Forest Plan Amendment (Amendment) which was finalized in 2016. The Amendment was based in large part on consensus recommendations from the Tongass Advisory Committee (TAC)<sup>1</sup>. One of the TAC’s recommendations was to have a “forest collaborative” review the progress towards meeting each of the five goals in the Amendment after five years – hence, the Five-Year Review. (The Review was delayed due to the pandemic). Staff on the Tongass National Forest (FS) conducted their own review, and the Tongass Transition Collaborative (TTC), which was established to provide input and support to the Tongass National Forest (Tongass) as it endeavored to transition to a young growth future, was asked to conduct an independent review from the perspective of effected partners and stakeholders. The TTC’s review, which also included recommendations to accelerate young

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<sup>1</sup> The Tongass Advisory Committee (TAC), precursor to the Tongass Transition Collaborative (TTC), was a federal advisory committee convened in 2016 at the direction of Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. Its goal was to provide consensus recommendations to the FS on how to transition from old growth to young growth logging within 15 years. These recommendations were translated into forest planning language through a Forest Plan Revision Amendment.

growth forest management going forward, was completed in the Spring of 2023. It is summarized in a report that was shared with FS leadership and discussed during a briefing for the Tongass Forest supervisor in August 2023.

The FS acknowledged that the TTC's Five-Year Review report was not favorable but that it contained important and useful insights and recommendations for how to improve future performance towards meeting the goals of the Amendment. The Amendment was the result of a collaborative, creative process, created by a diverse group (the TAC). The Amendment goals were laudable, but the FS has been unable to make as much progress as hoped, due to obstacles including low staffing, leadership changes, changes in national guidance, etc. The FS is hopeful that the TTC can help them move forward through a straightforward, open, expedited process. They want the group's help with solutions, social license, and community buy-in. The FS is also interested in knowing how its partners and stakeholders can provide funding, expertise, and capacity to assist the FS in implementing SASSfm projects identified in its 10-Year Schedule of Projects. There is a desire for the TTC to provide input on how FS decisions will impact future generations.

Current TTC members involved in the Five-Year Review shared the following takeaways from the Five-Year Review process:

- TTC members understand that work towards meeting the goals of the Amendment takes place both through policy and guidance from FS leadership and through on the ground implementation. They emphasized the need to focus on both levels and to ensure that policy and implementation are closely connecting to ensure progress. They also acknowledged that hiring challenges faced by the FS in recent years are a constraint on how much the FS can accomplish. This is an area where the TTC is well positioned to help; by identifying which FS partners and stakeholders can offer additional expertise and workforce capacity.
- TTC members would like to see conversations about Tongass Forest management depoliticized to the extent possible. If management decisions were based in science there might be more support for active young growth management on the Tongass, particularly if the science informing management decisions was better communicated to the public and local communities. As one member noted "politics don't grow trees".
- There is a sense that some other industries, e.g., oil and gas, face a more favorable regulatory and taxation environment than the timber industry (through subsidies that are not currently available to the timber industry). The transition to young growth in SE AK could be accomplished more easily if the timber industry had similar advantages, and if the FS provided funding to the Tongass to accomplish the program of work identified in its SASSfm 10-Year Schedule of Projects.
- TTC members expressed a great deal of frustration about recent federal mandates that reduced the period of time to accomplish the transition from old growth to primarily young growth-based management from 15 to five years – which made the 2016 Amendment largely obsolete. The mandate also increased concern that the rules could change again without warning. Forest management requires predictability and agency commitment to long-term plans based on biological processes and timelines. Policies and plans should account for the timeline of trees, not the whims of politics. Nevertheless, the TTC is trying to provide useful guidance within the limitations of the five-year timeline.

- The group encouraged the FS to try to hire from within Alaska. Many participants would like the State and others to pursue more opportunities to train an Alaskan workforce, for example by creating a State-level training program for certification of forest management professionals, most especially those who would be trained and qualified to fill entry-level resource management positions.

## TTC Mission Statement

During this portion of the meeting the TTC reviewed and discussed the mission statement, developed in consultation with the FS over the summer, to guide the group's work. The mission includes three sets of activities that will be the group's focus in the coming year and beyond:

- 1) Consultation on current NEPA projects and plans
- 2) Current SASSfm efforts and SASS Investments 2.0
- 3) The Tongass Land Management Plan (TLMP) revision process

Regarding participation in the TTC, the members were reminded that they are not being asked to formally speak on behalf of the organizations or agencies with which they are affiliated, but rather to participate as individuals who can represent the interests and needs of the sectors with which they identify. It is understood that they all have a stake in the communities of SE Alaska, and in the long-term health of the forested landscape that produces the resources those communities depend upon. TTC members can help bring the voices forward that are not able to participate in this process and can also help identify additional members to ensure broader representation.

After reviewing the mission statement, TTC members offered the following reflections:

- There are several factors that need to converge for a successful project. Of critical importance are local support, funding, workforce capacity and skill, and NEPA clearance. Right now, there is substantial funding available through the Infrastructure Bill (channeled through the Denali Commission) that represents an opportunity that should be taken full advantage of. The FS noted that they and the State may be able to secure additional funds to support the TTC in the future.
- The FS has a list of 32 project areas, all containing projects that are worthwhile and important. However, due to limited capacity, the FS needs the TTC's help in: a) prioritizing projects that are the most promising based on the factors detailed above, b) identifying local organizations and resources to help with implementation when FS capacity is limited, and c) garnering public buy-in and support for projects that serve community interests, including interests beyond just timber production – e.g., affordable housing, workforce development, wildlife habitat enhancement, access to subsistence resources, etc.
- Several key terms should be more clearly defined, including “sustainability”, “social license”, “restoration”, and “timber industry”. Some of these terms have different meanings for different people and / or have been “diluted” beyond their original usage. As an example, in one member's view, the term “restoration” being applied to one-off thinning projects detracts from the long-term meaning of the term as applied in the context of restoring old growth forest characteristics.

- Defining “timber industry” (or at least clarifying what it can or should be in the future in SE AK) is inherently tied to understanding how much supply (encompassing both old growth and young growth) will be available on an annual basis over the long term. The amount and predictability of supply drives business decisions (e.g., investments in new equipment suitable for young growth), which are the basis for determining how the industry evolves over time and what it will look like in the future. It is estimated that the current industry can be maintained with approximately 55 million board feet annually (equating to about 3000 acres harvested / year)<sup>2</sup>. The industry does not expect or want to return to the pulp mill era. There is an openness within the industry to creative thinking, and novel solutions developed collaboratively with others that result in prosperous businesses, thriving communities and healthy forests for future generations.

## Updates

### MILL AT DRY CREEK

Several TTC members, including Robert Venables, Bob Christensen, Michael Kampnich, Gordon Chew, and Tessa Axelson are part of an initiative to support small mill owners in SE AK. They recently toured a small mill operation located between Delta Junction and Tok, in Interior Alaska, that is highly efficient (the mill at Dry Creek). The mill’s operational and financial efficiency derives from processes that rely on whole tree utilization, including sawmill residuals. Replicating this type of efficiency across the region will require upfront investments in new technology and training, as well as planning and coordination among entities that can process, transport and utilize both the raw timber and the finished products. There may be funding available through Wood Innovation Grants and Technical Assistance through the Alaska Energy Authority to support other mills interested in this type of operation.

### ALL LANDOWNERS GROUP

#### MIKE COONEY

The SE Alaska All-Landowners Group (LOG) is a collective of forest owners and managers across the region (e.g., The Forest Service, State of Alaska, Mental Health Trust Lands, University Trust Lands, Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs), Tribal entities, industry representatives and others). They meet periodically to share updates, coordinate activities, and promote initiatives that support forest owners and communities in the region.

Workforce development is high on the list of the Group’s concerns. There is general agreement that the best people for managing the forests of SE AK are the people who live there and who have ties to the land, culture, and local communities, but that the local workforce is underutilized - even as there is a

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<sup>2</sup> The inventory and analysis of Tongass young growth estimates the suitable base to be about 300,000 acres; on an 80-year rotation, which equates to the ability of the forest to support a sustainable young growth harvest of about 3, 750 acres annually.

critical shortage of qualified workers to meet the needs of forest managers and the forest products industry.

There are several excellent workforce training initiatives already underway (e.g. Shaan Seet's Alaska Youth Stewards, ANILCA/local hires, Sustainable Southeast Partnership), but more is needed. To that end, Mike Cooney, LOG project manager, and others are actively exploring ways to recruit and train additional forestry workers, including establishing new avenues for worker training and certification encompassing a wide array of skills and levels of experience. A questionnaire was recently distributed to forest managers to assess the demand for a training program, interest in hiring certified workers and to obtain suggestions for a training curriculum, etc. In the meantime, the FS is encouraged to amplify its effort to hire more people locally (something it already tries to do). TTC members can help by spreading the word about local hiring opportunities.

The LOG is also highly focused on transportation and forest management infrastructure issues, including communication and coordination about road closures, shared road use agreements among entities etc. Efforts continue to finalize a shared use agreement with the FS, including a request the FS waive its "investment cost recovery fee".

## **GEOSPATIAL MAP OF AVAILABLE YOUNG GROWTH**

**BRIAN KLEINHENZ, TERRA VERDE INC.**

Currently, the Alaska Division of Forestry (DOF) and the FS, along with Terra Verde (the DOF's forestry consultant) are completing a SASSi funded project to map, classify and analyze young growth timber resources on all non-federal lands across the SE Alaska region. This Tongass Young Growth II project is an extension of the previous Tongass Young Growth I project; results from the current project will be combined with results from the previous mapping and analysis completed for federal young growth forest stands to model growth and yield of young growth timber stands across all ownerships in the region. The overall project goal is to estimate the future flow of economic young growth timber volume in the region, across all ownerships, annually and over the next 100 years, and to solicit new industry investment in modern young growth harvesting and local manufacturing facilities in SE Alaska.

Terra Verde has recently completed mapping and classification (timber typing) of all young growth timber stands in the region (all ownerships); field sampling of young growth timber stands 40 years old and younger, including both thinned and un-thinned stands is ongoing, and has included a Work Force Development (WFD) component whereby the Klawock Indigenous Stewards Forest Partnership crew (Shann Seet) was trained and employed to assist in gathering field data from young growth timber stands necessary to refine the timber type mapping and to inform growth and yield modelling efforts. Young growth field sampling is scheduled to continue, on a production basis, during the 2024 field season.

The information derived from this project will help define the geographic extent of the young growth timber base in SE Alaska and inform SASSfm project implementation as well as sustained yield analysis for the TLMP revision.

# Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy – Forest Management (SASSfm) and the 10-Year Program of Work

SHEILA SPORES, TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

## Overview

Sheila Spores provided an overview on what is happening with SASSfm and the 10-year program of work. She started her presentation by displaying a map that overlays restoration needs and economic young growth harvest potential in project areas across geographic basins in SE AK. The project areas are color coded to indicate areas that have the most potential for young growth harvest, those with the greatest needs for restoration work, and those that overlap (i.e., have both high harvest potential and high resource restoration potential). FS staff identified potential projects within each area that they thought were most promising, particularly where the overlap between restoration needs and harvest potential was the greatest. The FS shared the map publicly over the summer and requested suggestions for projects that the members of the public would like to see implemented. The list of projects generated through public input aligned in many respects with the list of projects that internal FS staff had generated, except that some of the suggestions offered by the public were beyond FS jurisdiction or not related to forest management. FS staff created a new map that incorporated both the project list from FS staff and projects from the public. They then ranked and prioritized the projects based on criteria that included the degree of overlap between restoration needs and young growth harvest potential. The TTC is the first external group to see the new map and the prioritized list of projects.

The FS only currently has capacity to take on two or three project areas. With this in mind, they are not looking to add new projects to the list but rather are hoping the TTC can help identify capacity through partnerships to get additional project work accomplished (beyond what the FS is capable of taking on) both for restoration purposes and to generate more timber volume (especially where those objectives can be integrated) as well as potentially for some of the projects that are of high value to members of the public but may not fall within FS's purview. The FS is also hoping that TTC can identify opportunities for coordination among entities, and for leveraging resources that are already being deployed to possibly take on other projects in an area.

Since all of the projects have to go through NEPA clearance, the TTC could also play an important role by building public understanding and support for projects that are undertaken, thereby hopefully avoiding extensive litigation delays that often arise during the NEPA process. There is a sense of urgency as the FS is eager to get important work done (including providing desperately needed "shelf volume" for the industry) while funding is available and while some level of industry still exists in the region.

The focus on integrated resource management indicates something of a paradigm shift – driven both by public opinion and USDA leadership – specifying that project selection and NEPA documentation needs to account for a range of possible projects and benefits beyond just timber output (e.g., jobs creation, resource restoration, and other benefits).

## Discussion

- There was a question about how SASSfm relates to the TLMP revision. SASSfm is an effort to come up with a 10-year plan of work for forest management on the Tongass. A Forest Plan is a much larger effort that encompasses all forest uses and activities – hydropower, recreation, infrastructure, etc. It is important to understand that laws supersede Forest Plans (e.g., a Forest Plan cannot override the Endangered Species Act) and that Forest Plan implementation is also subject to directives from higher levels of authority (e.g., the US Department of Agriculture (USDA)).
- There is an interest in added protections for San Fernando, including a change in land use designation. It was clarified that such a designation change could be accomplished either within the context of the TLMP or through a Forest Plan Amendment. In the meantime, concerns about cultural resource damage will be passed along to Jennifer Hamlin, the FS Tribal Liaison.
- The National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) would be interested in helping to coordinate / provide support for projects that are on FS land adjacent to private land.
- There was a suggestion to consider utilizing Categorical Exclusions (CEs) more often for thinning projects, small old growth, instream restoration, wood placements, etc.
- There is limited NEPA-cleared YG timber volume right now, but there is funding available for restoration work. There are projects for instream restoration, some recreation initiatives, aquatic organism passage culverts (AOPs) that are already NEPA-cleared and able to move forward within the next few years. However, vegetation management, including young growth timber harvest and more complex recreation projects, will require a lengthy NEPA process.
- The FS could invest in community forest partnerships to do some of the needed work, perhaps focusing on projects without a timber component. These groups have capacity to do more if they have funding.
- The group believes there is a need to define what the industry looks like moving forward. Some still think that young growth could be used like old growth was in the pulp mill era, which is unrealistic, but still of significant concern in some quarters. Ultimately, the scale and type of any future forest industry is dependent upon the geographic extent of the young growth timber base and the amount of economic young growth timber the FS can commit to offering, on a regular and predictable basis, over the next several decades. The FS's very limited current capacity to NEPA-clear young growth timber sales is a critical problem, and one the TTC might explore to devise and recommend practical, near-term solutions.
- Over the years, TTC members have increasingly identified overlapping interests. There will always be outliers but given its focus on collaboration and its willingness to try to address everyone's needs and interests, the TTC should develop and communicate a shared vision for the Tongass - a vision that aligns with an integrated resource approach to management. There is room for both restoration and commercial harvest. We know that the current TLMP can accommodate up to about 3500 acres of harvest per year– which represents a sideboard that can inform TTC input.

# Day 2

## Takeaways from Day One:

As an outcome of day one deliberations, the group decided to focus the morning of day two on components of a vision for the future Tongass. The TAC articulated a high level, generic vision, but it would be helpful to have a vision with more specificity to help inform TTC's input to the 10-year plan of work and for the upcoming TLMP revision. Such a vision should encompass the entire forest management sector, including timber harvest, road infrastructure, workforce, cultural and other natural resources, etc. The members decided to organize the conversation around the following potential vision components.

1. **Cultural/community.** This component includes trees, the other plants and animals that occupy the Forest, the places where people harvest and heal. Community is the foundation for everything else. Communities should determine their own priorities, and the FS should listen. SASSfm was a good start but needs to evolve to include more of the insights that local people can offer about cultural interests and how to balance timber harvest with other activities to the benefit of communities.
2. **Road system.** This component includes not only roads but also other infrastructure for moving timber and people, including for, example, docks and bridges. Roads are not just about providing access to timber, they are important for many other uses, such as recreation and subsistence. However, a lot of decisions about the road system currently happen just by inaction, e.g., lack of maintenance which can be problematic because it is very hard to maintain roads that continue to deteriorate. Ideally there should be a thoughtful, comprehensive, systematic approach to planning and managing the road system - with a lot of community input.
3. **Timber.** A vision for the future of the timber industry in SE AK starts with the amount of supply required. The timber industry says it needs about 55 million board feet annually to maintain the industry as it currently exists. If the volume offered drops below that number, the industry will look different in the future. In addition to supply there are other parameters that should help determine the scale and nature of the timber industry in the future. These include impacts on deer population, climate change, carbon storage needs etc. Consideration should also be given to novel models for small mill operations and zero waste goals, and the role of the timber industry in helping to sustain local economies.
4. **Workforce.** There are a variety of ways to make progress towards a vision of a workforce sufficiently large and skilled to meet the needs of forest managers and the industry and that contributes to community vitality. Steps that should be undertaken are:
  - requiring, creating and supporting workforce training;
  - expanding local hiring, including by establishing more community forest partnership crews like those which already exist in Kake, Hoonah and Klawock;
  - looking for ways that thinners, cruisers, harvesters and others involved in timber management can coordinate their activities and work together;



- defining how skillsets can be applied to different jobs (e.g., road work, fish passage improvement, pre-commercial thinning, harvest, milling, housing construction, etc.); and
- using a skilled forest management workforce to help address affordable housing needs (which would help accommodate that workforce).

**5. Wildlife habitat.** Steps that should be taken towards achieving healthy wildlife habitat for deer and other species on the Tongass include:

- further exploring economically feasible ways to create good deer habitat through forest treatments;
- proactively considering how climate change may impact habitats in the future (e.g. through increasing wildfire potential, disease outbreaks, etc.); and
- employing PCT both for wildlife habitat improvement and for second growth quality enhancement for commercial purposes (which will necessitate better communication between thinners and harvesters).

## Tongass Forest Plan Revision

### DELILAH BRIGHAM, TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

While the TTC is not a Federal Advisory Committee (FACA) and there is no expectation of a FACA for the TLMP Revision, the FS wants to involve the TTC in the TLMP revision process. The TTC is well positioned to contribute positive input - because of its broad representation, deep expertise in forest management issues (including its historical connection to Tongass Forest planning) and its orientation towards collaborative solutions. At a minimum, the FS will provide presentations to the group and include members in workshops along with the broader public.

### Requirements Overview

- Forest land management plans are nested within a hierarchy of authorities. At the top is the US constitution, followed, in order, by laws/treaties/case law, executive orders, regulations, USDA policies, forest service policies, Forest Service guidance documents, and then forest plans. A forest plan cannot put policies or practices in place that are precluded by those higher authorities.
- The last full revision of the TLMP was in 1997. The Plan was most recently amended in 2016 pursuant to the 2012 national forest planning rule which established new guidance for forest planning. The Amendment focused mainly on young growth forest resources.
- National forest land management plans are supposed to be revised every 15 years, so the Tongass National Forest is long overdue for its revision.

### Anticipated Timeline for TLMP revision process

- Assessment in 2024 (Draft assessment, wild and scenic rivers inventory, wilderness inventory, potential species of conservation concern)

- Plan development in 2025 (Preliminary identification of needs to change, wilderness evaluation and recommendations, wild and scenic rivers eligibility, land allocations, plan components and monitoring, and potential species of conservation concern)
- NEPA in 2026 (Proposed action, draft plan, and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS))
- Final Plan, final EIS, objection period, and Record of Decision (ROD) in 2027.

### Engagement strategy

- Spruce Root has been retained to help the FS design a public engagement strategy for the TLMP revision. Once the strategy is approved by the FS it will be shared with the TTC and others who will be invited to provide feedback before it is finalized.
- Information about engagement opportunities including webinars, community workshops, and a variety of feedback and comment mechanisms (including an online collaborative mapping tool) will be posted on the FS website.
- Spruce Root has retained another organization, REOS, to conduct “transformative scenario planning” visioning workshops as part of the TLMP revision process to develop plausible, realistic scenarios with groups of 30-40 stakeholders from a diversity of sectors (e.g. mining, recreation, tribal) across SE Alaska. A report on the REOS visioning workshops will be released in December 2024.
- The TTC is considering how it might interface with and complement the REOS process. At a minimum, several TTC members are being invited to participate in REOS workshops and the group expects to utilize the REOS final report to help inform TTC’s own recommendations.

Contact Delilah Brigham with questions at [delilah.brigham@usda.gov](mailto:delilah.brigham@usda.gov), 907-204-0588.

## Input on NEPA Projects

The FS is soliciting input from the TTC about projects that are undergoing NEPA clearance (particularly ones can contribute to more “shelf volume”) with the hope that TTC’s engagement with communities can secure more local/regional buy-in that can help the projects move forward. TTC’s role could include providing information to communities about project details, helping determine where there are issues, problem-solve to address concerns, and highlight project positives.

The FS noted that there is internal questioning within the Agency on whether, or at what scale, there should be a timber harvesting program on the Tongass.

From a Tribal perspective, old growth harvest is generally a non-negotiable. There is support for sustainable second growth harvest, especially where there are associated wildlife habitat benefits. There is little if any support for whole log export, given the need for timber and jobs in communities right here.

### THORNE BAY BASIN EA

The FS has received some positive comments on the Thorne Bay Basin Environmental Assessment (EA) e.g., in favor of the proposed integrated approach. Other commenters have criticized the degree to

which vegetation management is still emphasized; questioned why there needs to be commercial timber production associated with habitat restoration at all; or suggested that the FS should be doing an EIS, not an EA for the project. The FS noted that all the other non-timber harvest activities in the project area are already NEPA cleared.

When asked whether it would be helpful for the TTC to submit a collective comment about the Thorne Bay Basin EA the FS said that a collective TTC comment would be welcome at any time (not necessarily just within the formal comment period) and would represent meaningful input. The group would like a more detailed presentation about the project to help in drafting input. The FS will work with the TTC to schedule a presentation. The draft EA will be released in late spring so it would be helpful to receive TTC comments by February or early March. It was noted that TTC's interaction with this EA could establish precedents and a model for how the TTC could interact with SASSfm project implantation and the TLMP revision process in the future.

## THOMAS BAY EA

The NEPA process for Thomas Bay is nearly complete, and the comment period is closed. AK Rainforest/Defenders and the Alaska Forest Association (AFA) were the objectors. The FS has requested meetings with both parties to try to resolve the objections. If objections are not resolved, the reviewing official will determine whether the FS did due diligence during the NEPA process and in addressing objections.

## Final Reflections

Before adjourning, TTC members were invited to share closing reflections about the meeting:

- The TTC should work on developing an overarching vision for the future of the Tongass, tied to a vision for the entire region, and against which all projects can be evaluated. This vision could be informed by the REOS process.
- We have to talk about the role of the forest products sector in the Tongass - what residents of SE AK want it to be. We are at a critical point where we either choose what it looks like, or the future is determined by default. We need to be active about this decision. Ultimately, the scale and nature of any future industry will necessarily be predicated on the acreage of the suitable young growth timber base, and the FS's ability to provide a reliable and predictable annual supply of commercial timber volume over the next several decades. For at least the next 30-40 years, the FS is the only regional forest manager with the potential ability to offer young growth timber volumes necessary to sustain a viable forest products industry in SE Alaska. Based on current analysis, it is estimated that young growth forest stands (previously harvested areas) managed by other non-federal public, trust and private forest managers are not expected to present significant economic (2-Log) harvest opportunities until about the late 2040s or early 2050s; about the same time that current carbon projects in the voluntary market are projected to be concluded.
- The FS is committed to making volume available ASAP to sustain the industry. However, there is not much political appetite for old growth right now. The FS wants to put forth projects that can

make it through the NEPA process. The FS could potentially help strengthen the viability of project offerings by sharing information early on with the TTC so that the members can help evaluate pros and cons from a diversity of perspectives, and garner support.

- The group learned a lot at this meeting – information and insights that have never been shared before. There is a keen desire to hear more from AFA about what the timber industry needs. Other TTC members would like to work with industry players to seek opportunities that benefit all interests at the table.
- The FS exhibited a deeper and more sincere quality of listening at this meeting than has often previously been the case – noted and appreciated.

## Next Steps

**Outline a path forward for the TTC and opportunities for feedback to the FS.** Meridian will underscore and highlight areas where there are overlapping ideas, not necessarily full consensus, but fruitful paths forward.

**Provide input on NEPA projects.** Meridian will follow up with Delilah to request a presentation on Thorne Bay to the TTC. The group will then decide whether to comment. People would like a presentation sooner rather than later, December ideally; followed by a January discussion on what a joint TTC group comment might look like.

**Share information.** Individual TTC members should take responsibility for sharing information they believe would be helpful to all the members. Meridian will revitalize the TTC website as a place where information can be posted. In the coming weeks Meridian will solicit help with gathering materials for the site.

**Review SASSfm project list in more detail.** Sheila reiterated her desire for the TTC to help tackle the project list. Meridian will schedule a series of calls beginning in January to discuss the project area list in more depth and determine which are of interest, which the FS should take on, and which projects can be moved forward by other entities in local communities. The FS will convey their own ranking of the projects and better describe how they would approach individual projects.

**Define key terms.** Meridian will solicit interest from TTC members to help define key terms.

# Tongass Transition Collaborative

## November 2023 Meeting | Participant List

November 13-14<sup>th</sup>, 2023

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