



# *News Release*

## TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Proposed Tonka timber sale key stewardship project for Forest Service Draft Environmental Impact Statement now available for review**

PETERSBURG, Alaska— The Supervisor for the Tongass National Forest has signed and released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for a timber sale project on the Petersburg Ranger District.

The Tonka Timber Sale DEIS proposes to harvest up to 53.4 million board feet (MMFB) of timber in the Tonka Timber Sale project area (62,150 acres) located on the Lindenberg Peninsula of Kupreanof Island. Timber volume would be offered through the Tongass timber sale program, and is designed to implement direction contained in the 2008 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) and the Tongass Timber Reform Act (TTRA).

The DEIS describes four alternatives that would make between 25.2 and 53.4 MMBF of timber available for harvest. The significant issues addressed by the alternatives include Timber Supply/Timber Economics, Inventoried Roadless Areas, and Wildlife Habitat. Also analyzed in this document is a proposal to include the development of a 3- to 5-acre sort yard at the existing Tonka marine access facility.

The proposed action (Alternative 2) proposes to harvest approximately 53 MMBF from about 3,294 acres in one or more offerings. Conventional, as well as helicopter, logging systems are proposed. This logging would require 1.7 miles of new National Forest System (NFS) road construction and 7.6 miles of temporary road construction. No road construction, for any alternative, would occur within Inventoried Roadless Areas.

The preferred alternative for this project is Alternative 4. It proposes harvest of approximately 39.6 MMBF of timber on about 2,136 acres using conventional and helicopter yarding systems and also would include 1.7 miles of NFS road construction and 7.6 miles of temporary road construction.

A critical piece of the Transition Framework, a multi-agency USDA effort, is to enhance and diversify local economies. The Tonka Timber Sale, as identified in the Tongass Five-Year Timber Sale Plan, is a key project in this effort. The project will help to provide long-term economic stability to the economies of Southeast Alaska. It is intended to offer relief to those communities affected by a

declining timber industry and to provide a supply of timber to the remaining local and regional operators.

“We’re looking at potentially between 116 and 247 annual jobs supported by this timber sale,” said Forest Supervisor Forrest Cole. “Tonka stands to keep local mills and timber operators in business for years to come.”

Implementation of this project is feasible through stewardship contracting and will be evaluated between now and the release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

The DEIS is available for viewing at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/projects/projects.shtml>. The 45-calendar-day comment period for this document will be initiated the day after the publication of the Notice of Availability (NOA) in the Federal Register. If the 45-calendar-day comment period expires on a Saturday, Sunday, or federal holiday, the time is extended to the end of the next federal working day (11:59 pm).