



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Alaska Region
Tongass National Forest

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File Code: 1500

Date: September 28, 2009

Dear Meeting Participant,

On behalf of Jay Jensen and Victor Vasquez, Deputy Under Secretaries for Natural Resources and the Environment and Rural Development, I would like to thank you for your recent participation in the community listening sessions we conducted in Ketchikan and Sitka. They learned a great deal about your communities during those meetings; most notably the strong sense of place held by the members of your community, and your dedication to creating and maintaining strong, sustainable communities. It was our pleasure to share time with you. Enclosed please find meeting notes from these gatherings. As you review them, you will notice that several themes emerged. While a wide variety of interests and concerns were mentioned, we found the bulk of participants in particular addressed the areas of Energy, Forest Restoration, and Mariculture & Fisheries as needs and opportunities to further economic diversification in your communities and throughout the region.

In the months to come, community meetings similar to the one you attended will be held throughout Southeast Alaska. Local USDA agency leadership will attend and orchestrate those meetings on our behalf. We will use the input from these meetings, along with locally developed plans, to collaboratively develop a region-wide action plan for USDA to assist in creating Healthy Communities through Economic Diversification, throughout Southeast Alaska. We thank you again for taking time to share your thoughts with us, and we look forward to a continued working relationship.

Sincerely,

/s/ Forrest Cole
FORREST COLE
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure

