

ALASKA REGION

TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST  
INTERPRETATION &  
CONSERVATION  
EDUCATION  
STRATEGY

2009 FINAL



Tongass National Forest  
USDA Forest Service



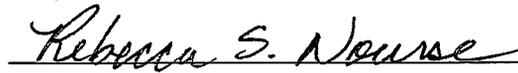
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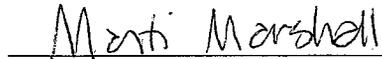
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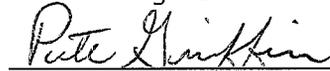
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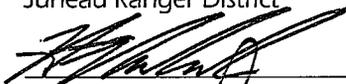
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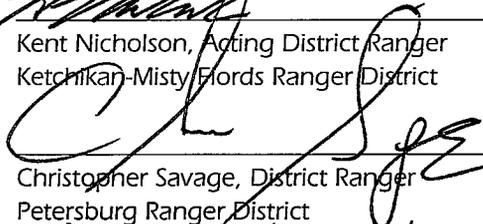
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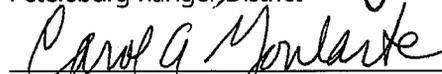
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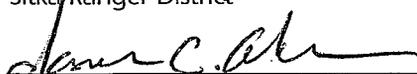
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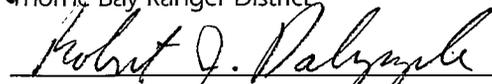
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*This strategic plan provides direction for the interpretive, conservation education and NatureWatch programs on the Tongass National Forest. It is being used to guide program direction, goals, objectives and an implementation strategy at the Forest and District levels over the next five years. The document is meant to be used and considered when embarking on both short-term and long-term actions and is meant to be a practical, usable guide. Many topics that provide background and lay the groundwork for the strategy have been considered in the Appendices section. This shift does not relegate them to lesser importance but re-emphasizes the critical nature of the portions addressed in the main document. The strategy is a living document and it obligates all of us to assess the progress we have made thus far in meeting our objectives and reporting on that progress to interested parties. Congratulations to those practitioners who have contributed thus far for the service they have provided the public and the contributions they have made to managing the varied resources of the Tongass.*

The Tongass National Forest is a public treasure. It is a land of beauty, of mystery and of untold natural riches. Since time immemorial, it has nourished and sustained rich and unique human cultures.

The Tongass National Forest belongs to all Americans and is managed by the USDA Forest Service. One of the goals of the Forest Service is to help people understand, appreciate and use their national forests. The Tongass National Forest's interpretation and conservation education (I&CE) and NatureWatch programs are an important part of our efforts to link people to their lands. National, Regional and Forest Plan direction currently guides our I&CE and NatureWatch efforts.

Each year, more than 750,000 visitors travel the Tongass aboard cruise ships, airlines and ferries. Additionally, approximately 73,000 Alaskans call this area home (McDowell Group 2008). Understanding the needs of our diverse audiences, and responding to them, is an important goal of our I&CE and NatureWatch efforts.

The Tongass supports a diverse and strong interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch program that includes world-class visitor centers and wildlife-viewing areas, award-winning wilderness education efforts and engaging community education activities. The continued growth and improvement of the program and service to the public is fueled by:

- The presence of strong leadership
- Updated and revised strategic focus
- Better attention to the needs and expectations of audiences
- The adoption of national standards in interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch
- The continued retention of qualified staff and maintenance of funding

With the support of the Tongass Leadership Team, a dedicated group of eight Forest employees and two non-agency advisors (see Appendix O) revised the Tongass National Forest interpretation and conservation education strategy between September 2008 and October 2009. This strategy documents the programs' current status and successes while providing experiential, concrete and actionable goals, prioritized objectives and strategies and, where appropriate, short-term tactics for implementing those objectives across the Forest and at District levels.

The strategy emphasizes the following goals to help our programs evolve:

**GOAL 1:** PROMOTE A COORDINATED, SUSTAINABLE I&CE AND NATUREWATCH PROGRAM AT ALL LEVELS OF THE FOREST

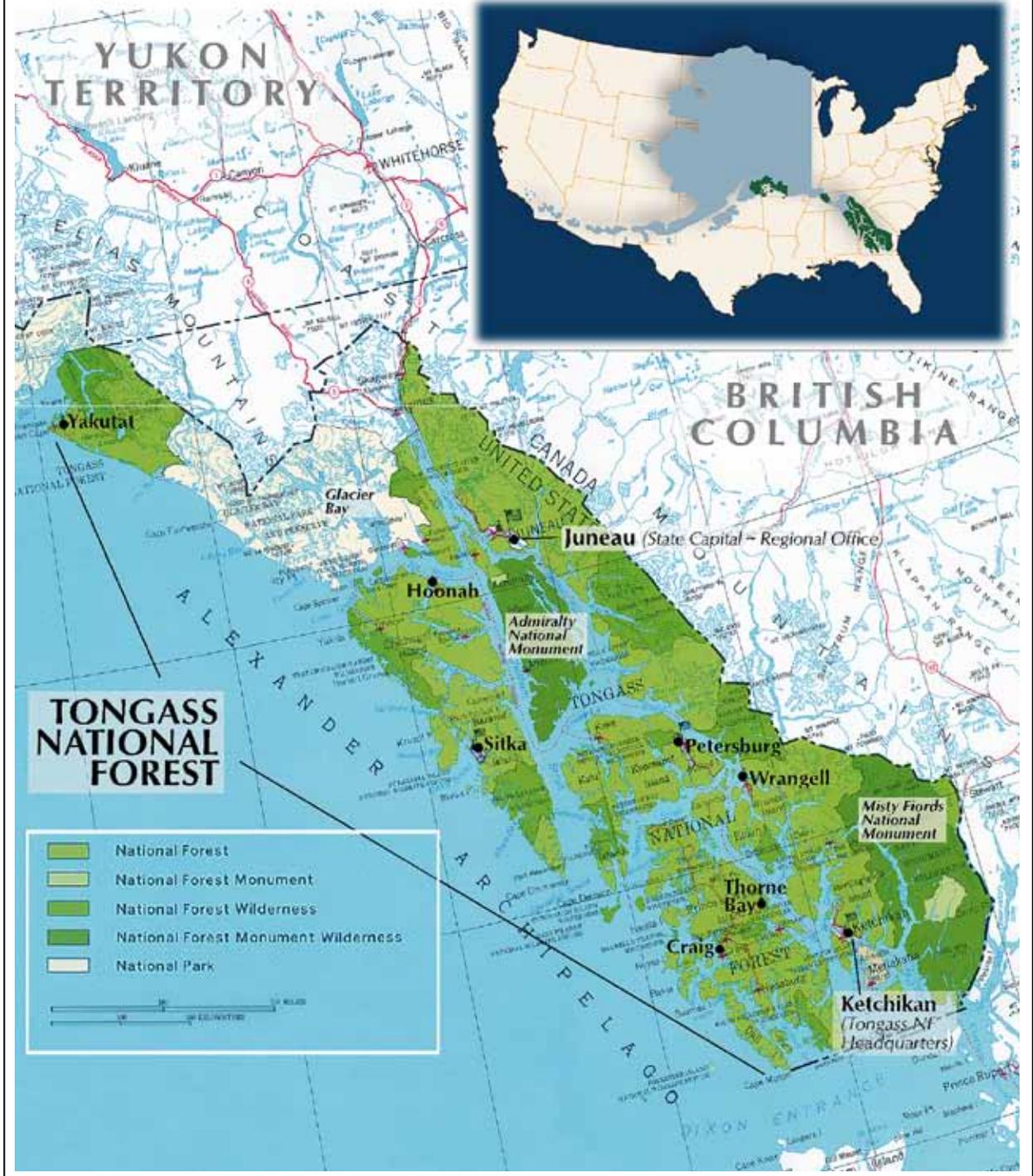
**GOAL 2:** PROVIDE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES THAT ARE HIGH-QUALITY, REFLECT FOREST PRIORITIES AND KEY MESSAGES, AND MEET THE NEEDS AND EXPECTATIONS OF OUR CUSTOMERS

**GOAL 3:** INCREASE AND ENHANCE INTERPRETIVE SERVICES AND CONSERVATION EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS ON THE TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

**GOAL 4:** DEVELOP AND RETAIN A PROFESSIONAL INTERPRETIVE SERVICES AND CONSERVATION EDUCATION STAFF ON THE TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

Implementation of these goals, and their supporting objectives and tactics, will help the Tongass National Forest achieve our vision of “... a future where the Tongass National Forest is nationally recognized in presenting effective, engaging interpretation and education services that meet the needs and expectations of our public and further our land stewardship mission.”

# TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST



## Tongass National Forest Facts

- Size of West Virginia
- Largest national forest in the world
- 100 years old in 2002
- Contains 11,000 miles of shoreline
- Includes 2 National Monuments
- 19 Wilderness Areas
- Home to 5,000 brown bears
- Home to 73,000 people
- 150 cabins & 450 miles of trails

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# INTRODUCTION

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## The Tongass

The Tongass National Forest is a public treasure. It is a land of beauty, of mystery and of untold natural riches. Since time immemorial, it has nourished and sustained rich and unique human cultures.

The Tongass National Forest belongs to all Americans and is managed by the USDA Forest Service. One of the goals of the Forest Service is to help people understand, appreciate and use their national forests. The Tongass National Forest's Interpretive and Conservation Education and NatureWatch programs are an important part of our efforts to link people to their lands.

Nearly 75,000 people live in small, resource-dependent communities and call the Tongass their home. Each year, nearly 1 million people visit the Tongass. Additionally, people from throughout the United States and the world know and care about this great land. The opportunities to reach our public are limitless. The development of this interpretation and conservation education strategy will help to focus our efforts, maximize our resources and connect us with our public.

“A joy shared is  
a joy doubled ...”  
– Goethe

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## Program Vision

Our vision of the Forest interpretive, conservation education and NatureWatch programs is:

*To create a future where the Tongass National Forest is nationally recognized in presenting effective, engaging interpretation, (conservation) education (and NatureWatch) services that meet the needs and expectations of our public and further our land stewardship mission (USFS 2003).*

(Editor's note: Parentheses indicate Tongass National Forest revisions to the vision.)

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## Goals of Interpretation, Conservation Education and NatureWatch Strategy

This strategy contains general guidelines and recommendations for the interpretation and conservation education programs on the Tongass National Forest. It addresses recommendations to all resource groups and to all Ranger Districts (RDs) and Supervisor's Offices (SOs) in the many large and small communities in Southeast Alaska. It is intended to provide a broad, conceptual framework for developing an integrated network of interpretive and conservation education opportunities throughout the Forest.

This strategy will articulate Forest-wide goals and objectives for resource interpretation and conservation education services. It will provide a “game plan” for achieving these goals. It is not the intent of this strategy to develop additional project proposals nor to provide project-level planning and implementation direction. It does prioritize objectives within four Forest-wide goals, suggests strategies for accomplishing these objectives and provides an action plan template for the Districts to tier off these objectives on an annual basis and accomplish discrete targets complemented by work plans.

The Forest is certainly not lacking in ideas for potential projects, facilities and programs. What we are lacking in is a forest-wide strategy for prioritizing, coordinating, and implementing these projects. This strategy is intended to serve as an internal guiding document to help us reach our potential. It will be used by District Rangers and all District and SO staffs involved with providing these services.

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# NEED

The interpretation and conservation education opportunities on the Tongass National Forest are as vast as the land itself! Coordinating our efforts is a challenge, but one that will yield great benefits.

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## Tongass National Forest Organization

Prior to 1999, the Tongass National Forest was organized in three “Management Areas”: the Chatham Area in the north of the archipelago; the Stikine Area in the center; and the Ketchikan Area in the south. Although technically part of one Forest, the areas operated as separate and independent entities. In 1999, the Forest began the difficult job of unifying its organization into one Forest, with one Forest Supervisor, three offices for staff and 10 Ranger Districts. This unification effort was completed in 2002. It was not until 2005 that a unified interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch effort was addressed.

In addition to organizational changes, economic and societal changes impacted our interpretive, conservation education, and NatureWatch efforts. With the downturn in timber markets and the end of the 50-year timber contracts, many small Southeast communities are experiencing economic difficulties. At the same time, the visitor industry has grown dramatically in Southeast Alaska. In many communities, this is a time of economic transition. The Forest’s interpretation and conservation education services can not only complement and augment the visitor industry, they can also help residents learn and understand more about their unique home.

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## Tongass National Forest Challenges

The Tongass National Forest is fortunate to have a group of highly skilled and dedicated professionals providing a variety of high-quality interpretation, conservation education, NatureWatch and information services. However, there are some areas in which our efforts can be improved. Specifically:

- *Although we have an encompassing strategy, we lagged in its implementation. Our messages and efforts are not coordinated among the Districts and across disciplines providing these services (such as recreation, public affairs, heritage, wilderness and wildlife/fisheries).*
- *We are unsure whether we are meeting the needs of our visitors and target audiences, as well as our local communities and region, because we lack focused evaluation instruments and efforts.*
- *Action plans outlining the priorities for the Districts – which would articulate current and out-year funding needs and would tie into the Forest’s integrated work planning process – have yet to be implemented.*
- *Established standards of quality or methods of evaluation to show us whether we are meeting our goals are not applied consistently.*
- *We often lack sufficient resources (funding and staff) to meet our objectives.*
- *We lose many talented employees due to a lack of career opportunities.*

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# PROGRAM DEFINITIONS

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## The “One Program” Concept

On the Tongass National Forest, interpretation and conservation education efforts will be considered discrete but inter-related parts of one program. Recommendations for messages, staffing and implementation will address both interpretation and education. This “one program” concept is a critical factor in our ability to coordinate our far-reaching programs and maximize their effectiveness.

However, we understand that this approach is not widely used within the Forest Service. At the Washington Office level, interpretive services and conservation education are led from different branches of the Forest Service. Interpretive Services is managed within the National Forest System, while Conservation Education is managed within State and Private Forestry. Additionally, other I&CE programs and initiatives are scattered throughout the agency. We fully support the continued integration of these programs at the national level. These organizational changes are not yet implemented. In this strategy, we will continue to refer to interpretive services and conservation education, although our focus is on one, integrated program.

In the fields of interpretation and conservation education, there is often confusion among program providers, managers and the public over what these programs encompass. Additionally, there are many different initiatives in the agency – scattered across all parts of the Forest Service – that address these functions. The following section discusses these definitions and programs.

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## Interpretation

According to the National Association for Interpretation, interpretation is:

*“A mission-based communication process forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource.”*

Additionally, Freeman Tilden (considered by many to be the “father of interpretation”) states that interpretation is:

*“An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate by factual information” (Tilden 1977).*

In general, interpretive services are geared toward a non-captive audience in a recreational setting. Examples of interpretive services include visitor centers, exhibits, publications, facilities, signage and personal services.

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## Conservation Education

Conservation education (“environmental education” in many circles) is a related, yet distinct program. While its educational goals often overlap interpretive services, conservation education delivers these messages to different audiences, using different methods. The Forest Service “Vision-to-Action” strategy states that conservation education is:

*“... A learning process concerned with the interrelationships among components of the natural and human-made world producing growth in the individual and leading to responsible land stewardship.”*

Additionally, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines environmental education as:

*“... A learning process that increases people’s knowledge and awareness about the environment and associated challenges, develops the necessary skills and expertise to address the challenges and fosters attitudes, motivations, and commitments to make informed decisions and take responsible action.” (UNESCO 1978)*

“Any plan to sustain healthy, productive ecosystems must ensure that people remain socially connected to them. We must nurture a new generation out of which conservation leaders can emerge. In history, most conservation leaders made their connection to nature as kids.”

– Gail Kimbell  
Retired Chief of the Forest Service

In general, conservation education efforts are geared to a captive audience in more structured, formal settings. They are often age-specific and provide a structured series of experiences. Examples of conservation education activities include classroom presentations, natural resource camps, teacher training, and curriculum and media development.

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## NatureWatch

The mission of this national program is to provide children and adults with the opportunity to safely view, and participate in, activities and programs that raise their level of awareness and understanding of wildlife, fish and plants, and their connection to ecosystems, landscapes and people.

In general, NatureWatch programs and sites benefit from the combined skills of resource specialists, conservation educators, interpreters, recreational planners and special use permit administrators. Conservation education and interpretation can contribute to the adequate recording and updating of web-based information on the national web site; in the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of facility-based enhancements such as signage and other media; universal accessibility for viewing; opportunities to enhance public wildlife viewing ethics on public lands and in communities; and the development of curriculum that reflects management objectives and wildlife viewing skills. The integration of NatureWatch programming with facilities and media, the application and use of a recognizable symbol that observers can become familiar with, and the importance of shared accomplishment reporting in one database, will contribute to the strengthening of the program overall.

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# FOREST SERVICE PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

Within the Forest Service, there is a wide variety of programs and initiatives that deliver interpretive services and conservation education. Interpretive services are chiefly delivered through the agency's recreation program, while education activities are supported in many different disciplines and programs. This decentralized organization contributes to the challenge of providing a unified and consistent program. It also reflects broad-based support for I&CE efforts throughout the agency. In this situation, a comprehensive interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch strategy is a critical necessity.

The following list identifies major Forest Service initiatives that operate on the Tongass National Forest.

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## State & Private Forestry

**Conservation Education (CE)** – The mission of this program is to connect people to the land by providing them with the tools they need to make informed actions related to sustaining natural and cultural resources. [na.fs.fed.us/spfo/ce](http://na.fs.fed.us/spfo/ce)

**Smokey Bear** – For more than 60 years, Smokey Bear has delivered an effective wildfire prevention message. He is one of the most memorable public service advertising symbols in U.S. history. His message is extremely timely today and forms the basis for numerous educational efforts. [www.smokeybear.com](http://www.smokeybear.com)

**Woodsy Owl** – Woodsy has been America's environmental champion since 1970, recognized for his wise request, "Give a Hoot. Don't Pollute." Today, Woodsy has a new motto, "Lend a Hand – Care for the Land!" This Forest Service symbol befriends another generation of children and motivates them to form healthy, lasting relationships with nature. The Woodsy Owl program is geared toward children 3 to 8 years old. [www.fs.fed.us/spf/](http://www.fs.fed.us/spf/)

**Project Learning Tree** – Project Learning Tree (PLT) is an award-winning, broad-based environmental education program for educators and students in pre-K through grade 12. PLT, a program of the American Forest Foundation, is one of the most widely used environmental education programs in the United States and abroad. In Alaska, Project Learning Tree is coordinated by the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. In a national agreement, the Forest Service provides annual funding to State Foresters to help support PLT. [www.plt.org](http://www.plt.org)

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## Wildlife, Fish & Rare Plants

**NatureWatch** – Nature Watch is a nationally coordinated program to enhance public opportunities for sustainable, low-impact recreation. The program addresses wildlife, fish and plants. The program includes facility construction, interpretation and education, and is supported by National Forest System Wildlife, Fish, and Rare Plants staff. [www.fs.fed.us/outdoors/naturewatch](http://www.fs.fed.us/outdoors/naturewatch)

**Taking Wing** – Taking Wing is a Forest Service program to enhance waterfowl habitat management. One of its specific goals is to "provide information to users on waterfowl habitat, hunting and viewing opportunities in the National Forest System." [www.fs.fed.us/biology/wildlife/takingwing](http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/wildlife/takingwing)

**Fisheries Education** – This multi-pronged approach includes these programs: Rise to the Future, Bring Back the Natives, FishWatch and National Fishing Week. Education is a significant component of each of these programs. These initiatives support the development of fisheries programs on National Forest System lands. [www.fs.fed.us/biology/fish](http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/fish)

**Partners in Flight** – This partnership program focuses on neo-tropical migratory birds. The Forest Service is also an active participant in the celebration of International Migratory Bird Day through the hosting of festivals, education, tours and bird counts. [www.fs.fed.us/biology/wildlife/partnersinflight](http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/wildlife/partnersinflight)

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## Recreation, Wilderness, Heritage, Geology, Paleontology, Karst and Cave Resources

**Interpretive Services (IS)** – The Interpretive Services program is chiefly focused on the delivery of services through visitor facilities and dispersed sites such as contact stations and viewing areas, marine-delivery programs that include contacts via the Alaska Marine Highway, in port on Princess cruise ships, and along waterways in Tracy Arm-Fords Terror and Misty Fiords via kayak and aboard small cruise ships. Located within the Recreation, Heritage, Wilderness Resources program, IS works closely with a number of disciplines and programs.

**National Scenic Byways** – The Forest Service is an important partner in the Federal Highway Administration’s National Scenic Byways program. This program identifies spectacular travel routes, and works to provide necessary infrastructure development. Interpretive plans, signage, and facilities are often Scenic Byways components. In 2002, the Alaska Marine Highway was designated as a National Scenic Byway, and in 2005 it was designated an All American Road, and the Tongass Marine Highway program encompasses 39 years of partnership providing interpretation and conservation education services along main routes. [www.byways.org](http://www.byways.org)

**Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics** – Leave No Trace was originally initiated by the Forest Service and is now managed as a non-profit organization in cooperation with the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). It focuses on developing responsible-use ethics in people recreating in a non-motorized manner. [www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org)

**Tread Lightly, Inc.** – Tread Lightly also focuses on educating people about ways to reduce their impacts on the land. The difference is that Tread Lightly focuses on motorized activities such as the use of all-terrain vehicles and snow machines. [www.treadlightly.org](http://www.treadlightly.org)

**Passport in Time** — Passport in Time (PIT) is a volunteer archaeology and historic-preservation program of the Forest Service. Volunteers work with professional archaeologists and historians on projects including archaeological excavation, rock art restoration, survey, archival research, historic structure restoration, the gathering of oral histories and the writing of interpretive brochures. The Tongass National Forest sponsors more PIT projects than any other national forest. [www.passportintime.com](http://www.passportintime.com)

“But can't you hear the wild? It's calling you.”

– Robert Service

**Project Archaeology** — Project Archaeology uses archaeological inquiry to foster understanding of past and present cultures; improve social studies and science education; and enhance citizenship education to help preserve our archaeological legacy. It is a curriculum based program developed by the Bureau of Land Management and is taught in modules accompanied by local prehistory and history information. [www.projectarchaeology.org](http://www.projectarchaeology.org)

**Geology, Paleontology, Karst and Cave Resource Education Programs** — Education trunks and curricula for K-12 were developed on the Tongass to support outreach and education about minerals, geology, paleoenvironmental reconstruction, conservation and protection of vertebrate, invertebrate and plant fossil resources, karst landscapes and caves. Recent federal legislation related to conserving and protecting such resources has called for educational outreach. Education materials are used in concert with local school programming, culture camps, guided cave tours, research and karst landscape and cave conservation programs. [www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/forest\\_facts/resources/geology/karst\\_caves.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/forest_facts/resources/geology/karst_caves.shtml)

“The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.”

– National Strategic Plan 2003

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## Research & Development

**The Natural Inquirer** – The Forest Service Research & Development arm also conducts a wide range of educational activities. One of the most recent nationwide efforts is The Natural Inquirer. This publication is a research-based “scientific journal” written for children. Activities and teacher guides are included with each edition. [www.naturalinquirer.org](http://www.naturalinquirer.org)

**Hands on the Land** — The Forest Service is a federal partner in Public Resource Education (PRE), which sponsors this web portal through the Keystone Institute in Colorado. The portal provides access to students and teachers at all grade levels who are conducting long-term projects on public lands, reporting and publishing on resource trends, or who are collecting and analyzing data on hot topics or issues on public lands. The Tongass has been active on this site since 2006. [www.handsontheland.org](http://www.handsontheland.org)

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# MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

Various Forest Service documents provide national, Regional and Forest direction for our interpretive services and conservation education efforts. The following section outlines the most current of these documents.

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## Forest Service Manual (FSM) Direction

Chapter 2390 states: “Interpretive services activities and programs are designed to develop a National Forest visitor’s interest, enjoyment and understanding of the natural environment of the National Forest and the mission of the Forest Service in managing those public lands.”

(USDA FOREST SERVICE WO AMENDMENT 2300-90-1:3)

Chapter 1620 states that the objectives of the natural resource issue and conservation education program are:

1. TO PROMOTE PUBLIC AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CALL ATTENTION TO PARTICULAR ISSUES RELATED TO FOREST PRODUCTIVITY, PROTECTION, AND USE.
2. TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP IN CONSERVATION EDUCATION.
3. TO ENLIST THE COOPERATION OF INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN DEVELOPING BROAD PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF AND SUPPORT FOR THE WISE MANAGEMENT AND USE OF FOREST, RANGE AND PRAIRIE RESOURCES.
4. TO ASSIST AGENCY PERSONNEL IN BETTER UNDERSTANDING NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES.
5. TO ASSIST RESOURCE MANAGERS IN MEETING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GOALS.

(USDA FOREST SERVICE WO AMENDMENT 1600-2006-3: 9-10)

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## Forest Service Interpretive Services Strategy

In 2003, the Forest Service completed an agency-wide Interpretive Services (IS) Strategy. It is a guide for better delivery of interpretive experiences through our services and facilities, and for providing exceptional service to the public both on and off the national forests and grasslands. The IS Strategy outlines actions planned to ensure high-quality providers, products and programs; effective facility operations; and strong relationships with partners and communities. The strategy states that the goal of IS in the agency is:

*“... To create intellectual and emotional connections between people and their natural and cultural heritage, thereby instilling respect and appreciation for America’s public lands and fostering their protection and stewardship through time.”*

The strategy also articulated the following vision for their work with neighbors and visitors:

*“The Forest Service contributes to the physical, emotional, and intellectual desires and expectations of people by providing relevant and authentic experiential opportunities both on and off the forests.”*

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## Conservation Education Vision To Action Strategy

In September 1996, under Chief and Staff direction, the staff directors of Cooperative Forestry; Recreation, Heritage and Wilderness Resources; Wildlife, Fish, and Rare Plants; and the Office of Communication commissioned a task force to develop a national corporate vision for all education programs of the Forest Service. The resulting “Vision To Action” strategy has been a useful tool in building and nurturing conservation education programs across the agency.

The strategy states the mission of the Forest Service conservation education program:

*“By 2002, Forest Service conservation education will be an effective, dynamic means for the Forest Service to connect the American people with their environment. The Forest Service will provide the tools Americans need to participate effectively in the critical task of sustaining our Nation’s natural and cultural resources. This undertaking shall be a coordinated, Service-wide effort that will affect all aspects of the agency’s operations.”*

The strategy identifies core themes that direct agency conservation education work:

**Core Themes.** *Forest Service core conservation education programs will support two key themes:*

- 1) Sustainability of natural and cultural resources in forest, grassland and aquatic ecosystems.*
- 2) Awareness and understanding of interrelationships in natural systems and between people and the land.*

## Budget Line Items and Descriptions

The Forest Service budget seeks to provide consistency throughout the formulation process and to ensure that budgets are correlated with budget priorities. In this system, funding groups are defined by various activities within work areas. NatureWatch, interpretive and visitor services and conservation education are identified in a number of activities. The following list identifies these activity areas.

<b>BLI</b>	<b>Activity Name</b>	<b>Sub-Activities</b>
NFRW	Provide Interpretation & Conservation Education	All
NFRW	Manage Wilderness	Educate and inform visitors
NFRW	Manage Heritage Resources	Promote heritage values through interpretation
NFRW	Recreation and Tourism	Promote safe and ethical practices
FDDS	Fee-Based Recreation/Outfitter Guides	Provide interpretive, conservation education and visitor services at sites and as a result of permits
NFWF	Provide Interpretation & Education	Promote wildlife values, NatureWatch
NFVW	Soil and Watershed Conditions	Promote healthy watersheds, education and restoration efforts
NFVW	Ecology and Botany	Promote ecology, species and invasives education
NFVW	Manage Air Quality	Educate public
NFVW	Manage Environmental Compliance & Protection/Abandoned Mine Lands	Involve and inform public
NFMG	Geology and Minerals	Educate about karst landscapes, cave environments, mineral resources and paleoecology
NFTM	Silviculture, Timber Management	Educate about management practices and restoration
NFIM	Monitoring and Planning	Educate about standards and guides, Forest Plan and science-based studies
CMRD	Engineering Roads	Educate about management practices
IDP3	Partnerships & Public Affairs	Provide visitor services, partnerships and visitor information to support other functions

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## Alaska Region Emphasis Areas

In 2000, the Alaska Region articulated a management vision in the document “A View from Here.” The Region identified four strategic emphasis areas that will guide their management in the future. These areas focused on communities, recreation and tourism, Alaska Natives and organizational effectiveness. In 2002, a fifth emphasis item addressing ecological sustainability was added. The Region also developed a range of actions to support these emphasis areas. The following items directly affect the Forest’s interpretation and conservation education programs:

- **COMMUNITIES:** ENHANCE THE HEALTH, STABILITY, QUALITY OF LIFE, ECONOMIC VITALITY AND ADAPTABILITY OF COMMUNITIES IN SOUTHCENTRAL AND SOUTHEAST ALASKA.
- **RECREATION AND TOURISM:** DEFINE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE LEVELS OF HIGH-QUALITY RECREATION AND TOURISM WHILE MAINTAINING OUTSTANDING SETTINGS AND WILDLAND CHARACTER.
- **ALASKA NATIVES:** INCORPORATE THE UNIQUE CULTURAL HERITAGE, LEGAL STATUS AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE OF ALASKA NATIVES INTO THE REGION’S PROGRAMS AND PROCESSES.
- **ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS:** ENHANCE OUR ABILITY TO PERFORM AS AN EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE, PROACTIVE AND MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZATION.

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## Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan Guidance

The Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) was most recently amended in 2008. While the plan offers Forest-specific direction for ecological sustainability, interpretive services and conservation education are addressed in a more general way. Interpretive services and education direction is provided in a number of disciplines’ Standards and Guidelines. Although much of this guidance is timely and helpful, it is, unfortunately, rarely referenced in current Tongass I&CE and NatureWatch efforts. The following list summarizes Forest Plan direction (full text of Standards and Guidelines is in Appendix C) (USDA Forest Service Region 10, 2008).

### **Interpretive Services, Conservation Education and NatureWatch**

- Provide an integrated program that is designed to accurately develop an interest in the environments of Southeast Alaska and the mission of the Forest Service.
- Conduct on-site interpretive and conservation education programs to a level consistent with Land Use Designation objectives.
- Assist visitors and users to understand the role of natural and cultural resources in the development of industry, heritage and culture in Southeast Alaska.
- Promote visitor understanding of the National Forest System.
- Inform visitors of the distribution, differences and roles of Federal, state and private lands in Southeast Alaska and the range of recreation and cultural interest opportunities and facilities available.
- Follow a coordinated program of awareness and training for all employees and partners to ensure a consistent program of public service.

Although the following emphasis areas are not reflected in the Forest Plan and are not treated with Standards and Guidelines, they are listed here based on their legal mandates and program direction as found in the Forest Service Manual.

#### **Recreation and Wilderness Management**

- Use information, interpretation and education as the primary tool for management of wilderness visitors.
- Identify opportunities and priorities for interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch related to minimal impact techniques, leave no trace behaviors, wilderness education and ethics for public education and recreation.

#### **Heritage Management**

- Identify opportunities and priorities for interpretation of heritage resources for public education and recreation.

#### **Karst Landscapes / Cave Management**

- Identify opportunities for interpretation of caves for public education and enjoyment.

#### **Paleontological Resources**

- Develop public education and interpretive programs to foster increased awareness and understanding of paleontological resources and their contexts on the Forest and the reconstruction of past environmental conditions. The Congressional Record (H3900, March 15, 2009) includes direction in Section 6303 that the Department of Agriculture should pursue programs that “increase public awareness about the significance of paleontological resources.”

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### **Tongass Strategic Plan and Action Plan**

In May 2008, the Tongass Leadership Team revised and approved *A Strategy for Management and Priority Setting FY2008 through FY2012* for the Tongass National Forest (USDA Forest Service 2008). This document establishes Forest priorities and articulates the Leadership Team’s vision for 14 program areas on the Tongass. Originally developed in 2005, the Strategy is a living document that may be updated by the Leadership Team as needed. It is accompanied by an Action Plan that describes the highest priority actions that will align Tongass programs of work with the strategic goals. The most current Action Plan (USDA Forest Service 2009) includes several priority action items for NatureWatch, Interpretive and Visitor Services, and Conservation Education.

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# ISSUES MANAGEMENT

Considering strategic issues in this plan is a significant advance toward addressing topics and actions that affect the Tongass National Forest mandate and mission. Interpretation and conservation education do have a role in adapting topics, themes, key messages and audience analysis of issues into their programming.

A primer is provided, using an invasive species issue as an example for interpretive applications (see Appendix H).

Issues fall into three main categories: current issues that probably require immediate action; issues on the horizon in the next five years likely to require action in the near future; and issues where it is unclear whether any action will be required now or in the future, but where monitoring is needed.

Key places on the web where interpreters, conservation educators, and the public can find out about issues:

[www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/index.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/index.shtml)  
[www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/forest\\_facts/faqs/faqs.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/forest_facts/faqs/faqs.shtml)  
[www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/forest\\_facts/faqs/factsheets.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/forest_facts/faqs/factsheets.shtml)

A selection of current issues includes:

- Interpreting climate change in relation to forest management of other resources; yellow cedar decline; glacier contraction
- Young-growth management in relationship to forest industry direction
- Restoration economies in small forest-embedded communities
- Biofuels development in relation to the restoration economy
- Decreasing carbon footprints of forest management
- Providing conservation education products in relation to non-forest areas such as air quality/ cruise ships, water quality /offshore use
- Rare and sensitive fauna and flora in the Forest
- Management indicator species
- Deer model applications and habitat management
- Land exchanges required by ANCSA and ANILCA
- Land Use Designations, wilderness, roadless, timber harvest areas
- Karst landscapes and caves management
- Greens Creek Mine and Admiralty NM wilderness issues
- Kensington Mine and Berners Bay
- Fisheries management and culvert replacements
- Helicopter access to the wilderness for the Forest Inventory Analysis project
- The Invasive Species Strategy for the Forest
- The Biological Conservation Strategy as embedded in the Forest plan
- Ongoing research and contributions to Forest management

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# VISITOR EXPERIENCE GOALS

Whether a visitor or resident, each person's experience with the Tongass National Forest is unique and greatly shaped by factors outside the influence of our management activities. However, we believe that our interpretive and education efforts can be an important part of the "Tongass experience."

"Experience goals" describe the physical, intellectual and emotional experiences that should be available through our I&CE efforts, for visitors and residents of the Tongass National Forest. These experiences will be available to people of all abilities, including those with visual, auditory, mobility or cognitive impairments.

## **In the Tongass National Forest, people will have opportunities:**

### **TO KNOW**

- To know that they are on the Tongass National Forest.
- To gain an understanding of the dynamic forces that shape Tongass National Forest ecosystems.
- To understand the intimate relationship that people in Southeast Alaska have with the land and its resources.
- To understand the complexity surrounding the management of a National Forest: we serve a diversity of public interests while providing for multiple uses of the land.
- To learn about the Tongass National Forest, even if they cannot physically visit it.

### **TO FEEL**

- To feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for this national treasure.
- To experience the thrill of discovery of both the cultural and natural worlds.
- To feel the vastness and wildness of the Tongass National Forest: we are islands of communities surrounded by wilderness, not "islands of wilderness" surrounded by development.
- To feel and understand the influence of water in the Tongass: islands, weather, rivers, glaciers, ocean, and tides.
- To appreciate the depth and diversity of human history in Southeast Alaska and the Tongass National Forest.

### **TO DO**

- To experience the temperate rain forest and gain an understanding of a productive, healthy, functioning forest.
- To view wildlife in their natural, unaltered habitats.
- To learn how to become involved in Tongass management issues.
- To have a safe trip and minimize their impacts on public lands.

“Awaken people's curiosity. It is enough to open minds; do not overload them. Put there just a spark. If there is some good flammable stuff, it will catch fire.”

– Anatole France

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# GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

## **Goals, objectives and strategies outlined below form the backbone of the Tongass Interpretive and Conservation Education Strategy.**

These are meant to guide and to provide direction for specific, project-level objectives and outcomes at the District level through translation into an Annual Action Plan document. (See pages 30-31)

By providing overarching programmatic direction, they identify steps critical to future effectiveness and growth of the program.

Rather than using locations to designate who was responsible for implementing the objectives and strategies, the positions responsible are listed after each strategy. The timelines are provided as a guide for when the work has been or is projected to be accomplished and it is assumed that those objectives will continue to be implemented unless they are dropped from the Strategic Plan. The next comprehensive revision of this plan will be scheduled for completion in 2014 but the document could be edited annually if necessary.

“ You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you are going, because you might not get there.”

– Yogi Berra

Objectives have been set in priority consideration and significance for purposes of providing emphasis to this direction. The top three overall objectives were considered to further refine direction and they are, in order:

*2.c – Programs and services provided by the interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch programs are consistent and are correlated to State Educational Standards, Tongass Key Messages, and Best Management Practices in Interpretation, Conservation Education and NatureWatch.*

*4.a – The Tongass NF will improve professionalism and skills of interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch practitioners and managers.*

*1.a – Funding and reporting for interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch programs are provided by all resource areas and are reliable and consistent.*

These goals, objectives and strategies will be accomplished at various organizational levels of the Tongass National Forest, while some have Regional and National significance. They will form the framework for our programmatic evaluation. This strategy is a living, dynamic document. These goals, objectives and strategies will be regularly reviewed, modified and updated.

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## Goal 1: Program Coordination

### **Promote a coordinated, sustainable I&CE and NatureWatch program at all levels of the Forest.**

Objective 1.a – **Funding and reporting** for I&CE and NatureWatch programs are provided by all resource areas and are reliable and consistent.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE: WE WILL –

- Work with program managers to draft annual budget advice for all resource areas and provide direction to include support for interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch programs by annually crafting green page direction that reflects a minimal level of funding for the interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch programs on each District. (*Program manager; March 2007, 2008-ongoing*)

- Develop out-year programs of work and budget needs that integrate with existing budgeting systems using workplan in concert with green page direction and timelines. *(Application of annual action plan by Districts; March 2010)*
- Actively engage in developing reasonable and measurable outputs and impacts by developing guidelines for baseline funding and relevant and weighted allocation criteria for all project-based proposals. *(Program manager and interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch budget management team; October 2006-ongoing)*
- Emphasize accountability in all program areas through the use of the National Conservation Education Reporting System and other reporting systems by annually reviewing and improving database reports; and crafting training modules to address aspects of accountability such as writing objectives, recording statistics, producing workplans and business plans, establishing monitoring and evaluation programs; and by evaluation and accountability of I&CE programs in District leadership performance reviews. *(Program manager and database entry personnels; October 2005-ongoing)*
- Regularly share program successes among Forest Leadership, Regional Leadership and national audiences. These “marketing” efforts may take many forms, such as program reports, newsletters and employee awards. *(Program Manager and District practitioners; October 2005-ongoing)*

Objective 1.b – National Interpretation and Conservation Education (NICE) positions at the District and Forest level provide a **high level of coordination** and support for program implementation.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE; WE WILL –

- Establish opportunities for training and skills sharing between practitioners in marine-based delivery programs, specifically between the Tongass Marine Highway, Princess cruise line and kayak ranger programs at KMRD, JRD and ANM. *(Program manager and marine program directors and practitioners; October 2010)*
- Develop a staffing plan that addresses I&CE positions and responsibilities to provide greater support and coordination across the Forest, and with the Regional Office. *(Program manager; October 2007 to April 2008 [Workforce Analysis])*
- Investigate the establishment of zoned seasonal and/or permanent I&CE specialist positions. Currently, interpretive, conservation education and NatureWatch contacts exist on Hoonah, Yakutat and Petersburg RDs and programs are accomplished by non-specialists. *(Program manager; October 2007 to April 2008 [Workforce Analysis])*
- Establish regular networking and training opportunities for employees involved in interpretive, conservation education and NatureWatch efforts. Offer annual opportunities in interpretive, conservation education, and NatureWatch development on the Tongass and emphasize skills and programmatic training once every three years at the regional conference. *(Program manager and regional interpretive specialist; ongoing)*
- Actively participate in Regional and National I& CE planning and coordination efforts. *(Program Manager & District practitioners; ongoing)*
- Review and coordinate with the development of Wilderness Education Plans being developed by Wilderness Stewards. Update plans with effectiveness evaluations and invite wilderness educators to record their products on the NICE database annually. *(Program Manager and District Resource Specialists; January 2009, ongoing)*

Objective 1.c – Interpretive Services and Conservation Education are **treated as one program** on the Tongass NF.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE: WE WILL –

- Complete the Tongass NF I&CE and NatureWatch Strategy. We will plan the work, and work the plan. (*Lead interpretive specialist and team; Revision October 2009*)
- Consolidate Interpretive Services, Conservation Education and interpretive and educational portions of NatureWatch responsibilities at the Forest level. Full time position GS-401-11 hired October 2005. (*Program Manager; December 2005*)
- Review existing interpretive plans, and schedule revision to address Tongass I&CE priorities and goals. New plans will address I&CE and NatureWatch programs. (*Program manager and revision team; October 2008 to October 2009*)
- Develop a template for District annual action plans. (*Program Manager and revision team; see Annual Action Plan template; March 2009*)

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## Goal 2: High-Quality Services that Meet Needs

**Provide products and services will create intellectual and emotional connections between people and their natural and cultural heritage, thereby instilling respect and appreciation for America’s public lands and fostering their protection and stewardship through time. These products and services are high-quality, reflect Forest priorities and key messages, and meet the needs and expectations of our customers.**

Objective 2.a – Products and services provided by the Tongass National Forest I&CE and NatureWatch programs **meet the audience’s needs** and expectations.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE: WE WILL –

- Use existing market research from various sources to identify audiences’ expectations, and to shape program development and delivery. (*SO; October 2005*)
- Regularly evaluate I&CE and NatureWatch displays and other media for agency and Forest branding, currency of content, reflection of key messages, meeting customer needs and accessibility; in particular all public areas such as airports, Alaska Marine Highway and Inter-Island Ferry terminals and cruise ship docks need to be reviewed and evaluated once every three to five years. (*Program manager and marine program managers; ongoing*)
- Support and use the Tongass National Forest comment card system as an effective method to gather feedback by providing updated, flexible cards to District program managers. (*Forest program manager and District practitioners; March 2009 and ongoing*)
- Survey teachers to assess educational needs and develop educational programs that address Forest priorities and fill an identified educational need by offering Alaska Geographic Association educator surveys intermittently; by implementing summative or formative evaluation techniques, including a short, documented interview after program implementation that assesses whether needs and expectations were met.

Areas of unmet need summarized from the first set of Alaska Geographic-administered surveys included: a) increased materials to reinforce concepts or focus on community; b) more contact during school year; c) increased interactivity of presentations and programs; d) increased age-appropriateness of activities or materials; and e) more availability of teacher training on inservice days and information about available resources and Forest opportunities. (*Forest Program manager, District CE specialists and education practitioners, educational partners; ongoing*)

- Survey outfitters and guides to assess educational needs and develop educational programs that address Forest priorities and fill an identified educational need. Target outfitter/guide audiences with materials that are purposeful, organized, enjoyable, thematic and relevant. *(Program manager and District special uses and educational practitioners; ongoing)*

Objective 2.b – I&CE efforts communicate **accurate information** and are based on the best scientific information available.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE: WE WILL –

- Use consistent, peer-reviewed primary sourced materials based on the best scientific knowledge for all training and program development. In some cases, these materials will be borrowed from other Tongass NF and Regional sources; in other cases, these materials will be developed to meet specific needs. These materials will be available to all Tongass employees. *(Regional, Forest, District and partner resource specialists, program manager; ongoing)*
- Report on interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch programs in their respective national databases—such as NICE, NatureWatch, Forest databases and WFRP—in order to inventory, record and assess programs and program materials consistently. Beta-test NICE database revisions and suggest changes that benefit accurate and relevant database entry. *(Program manager and database entry personnel; ongoing)*
- Develop a cadre of Tongass content “experts” to provide review of I&CE and NatureWatch products, and support to I&CE and NatureWatch program providers. Update these contacts frequently to reflect personnel changes. *(Program manager and District practitioners; ongoing)*

Objective 2.c – Programs and services provided by the I&CE program are **consistent and are correlated** to State Educational Standards, Tongass Key Messages, and Best Management Practices in I&CE and NatureWatch.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE: WE WILL –

- Integrate the use of Tongass NF interpretive key messages and Best Management Practices (BMPs) in all interpretive and education projects by teaching educators, staff and practitioners about the key messages; by providing examples of how key messages and BMPs are used in different programs; by encouraging cooperation between practitioners and resource specialists in crafting key messages and reflecting BMPs; and assure cooperation of leaders and managers in the presentation and use of key messages and BMPs. *(Program manager and District practitioners; ongoing)*
- Correlate conservation education materials and programs to State Educational Standards and Grade Level Expectancies (GLEs) by making practitioners aware of state standards and locations for updates (see GLEs in Appendix M); by training and demonstrating how to incorporate standards and GLEs into curriculum and program development; and by maintaining communication with the School District and State Department of Education leaders and teacher enrichment managers in Southeast Alaska. *(Program manager, District CE specialists, other educators; ongoing)*
- Develop a series of peer-reviewed, “standard” Tongass NF programs for use across the Forest by program providers and other Forest Service staff by emphasizing program development, critique and dissemination by specialists at triennial conference; and encouraging a diversity of non-standard programs for development and dissemination that are resource- and management-specific to the Tongass. *(Program manager and District practitioners; ongoing)*
- Offer program providers training and support in the use of educational standards,

learner guidelines and thematic interpretation by encouraging more certified interpretive trainers and CE Guidelines for Excellence facilitators be trained on the Forest. Offer annual Certified Interpretive Guide and Host, Alaska Host, and Guidelines for EE Excellence Training to Forest personnel and partners. *(Program manager and other trainers; ongoing)*

- Correlate the NatureWatch symbol and name between media and messages developed in recreational facilities, signs and publications to improve name and purpose recognition for the NatureWatch initiative locally, regionally, and globally by incorporating the NatureWatch name and logo at all Forest NatureWatch sites, facilities and media; and by increasing District awareness about local NatureWatch sites, their conditions, and the opportunities available for interpretive and educational enhancement. *(Program manager; District practitioners; ongoing)*

- Provide on the Tongass web site easy-to-use, accessible and accurate information that meets virtual visitors' informational and educational needs. Coordinate with the Tongass web site content manager to enhance accessibility, improve readability, update and correct errors, and improve links to local, Regional and National sites (Hands on the Land, Leave No Trace, NatureWatch, Wilderness and other relevant, initiative-based sites). Assist District practitioners and staff on how to access, create and use the web to enhance interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch programs. *(Program Manager, District practitioners and web content manager; ongoing)*

Objective 2.d – Tongass NF interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch leadership will **provide guidelines** for development of educational and interpretive products, programs and services.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE: WE WILL –

- Work closely with the Regional Office to identify existing guidelines and quality standards for the development of interpretive media. *(RO specialists in public affairs, interpretation and resource specialists, Forest program manager; ongoing)*

- Incorporating Tongass design elements as part of media branding, work consistently with engineers and landscape architects to place and mount signage consistent with surrounding developments and stylistic themes; and to prepare island or area wide sign plans as part of area master plans. *(Program manager and District practitioners; ongoing)*

- Develop conservation education materials and programs that adhere to the North American Association of Environmental Education (NAAEE) Guidelines for EE Excellence (see Appendix O). Offer facilitated modules to practitioners on an annual basis or during triennial conferences. *(Program manager and District practitioners; ongoing)*

- Actively participate in the updating and improvement of Region-wide intranet and Internet sites focused on providing relevant and substantive interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch program development resources, such as the ICE Toolbox web site. Add planning, grants and agreements, media and other documents as appropriate with the use of the NICE blogspot. *(Regional and Forest Ice Cube Contacts; ongoing but at least annually)*

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## Goal 2: High-Quality Services that Meet Needs

Objective 2.e – Products and services provided by the Tongass I&CE program are **regularly monitored** for conformance to quality and content standards.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE: WE WILL –

- Evaluate seasonal employees' interpretive and educational presentations. These reviews will be conducted with the focus on coaching employees on content and communication techniques. Program evaluation will become Standard Operating Procedure on the Tongass. *(Forest Program manager and District supervisors and practitioners; April 2008 and ongoing)*
- Conduct a formal programmatic review of the Tongass I&CE and NatureWatch program every three years. Review results will be documented and shared through a program report. *(Forest Program manager and District supervisors and practitioners; April 2008 and ongoing)*
- Monitor and evaluate outfitters' and guides' communication efforts to assess how effectively they communicate the Forest's messages. *(Forest program manager, special uses administrators, LNT master teachers, District practitioners; ongoing)*
- Work closely with the Regional Office to develop a standard evaluation method to assess the impact of our interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch efforts by presenting evaluation short courses at meetings and assessing effectiveness within particular programs. *(Regional interpretive specialist, Forest program manager, District supervisors; March 2009 and ongoing)*
- Welcome and participate in regularly scheduled Functional Assistance Trips from the Regional and Washington Offices and address comments and recommendations for improvement by actively pursuing these topics in future strategic planning. *(Regional Interpretive Specialist; Forest Program Manager; District Practitioners 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 Keystone conference and ongoing)*

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## Goal 3: Building Partnerships

**Increase and enhance interpretive services and conservation education partnerships on the Tongass National Forest.**

Objective 3.a – The Tongass NF will **strengthen existing partnerships** with agencies and organizations in Southeast Alaska.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE: WE WILL –

- Focus on our partnership with the Alaska Marine Highway System to maintain and improve I&CE and NatureWatch services and products on existing and new ships, and in terminals. Continue to implement and maintain the actions called for in the Shipboard Interpretive Program Strategy (USDA Forest Service 2006). Implement consistent training for Alaska Marine Highway interpretive staff, as developed in 2008. *(Program Manager and TMH Assistant Director and practitioners; 2008 to present)*
- Through formal agreements, strengthen existing partnerships with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game Wildlife Education program and tribal entities to facilitate culture camp partnerships to document, support and facilitate the sharing of resources. *(Program manager and District practitioners; ongoing and winter 2009)*

- Focus on a renewed strategic partnership with the Alaska Geographic Association to improve operations of our Branches and Outlets, communication about mutual partnerships and goals and support for our shared programs by renewing and updating our regional MOU, our annual operating plans and by improving customer service to our target audiences. *(Regional Interpretive Specialist, Program Manager, District practitioners, Alaska Geographic personnel; 2009 to 2014)*
- Strengthen partnerships with local school districts and the Alaska Department of Education to enhance our effective delivery of age relevant education programs for children and youth. *(Forest program manager, conservation education specialists, District practitioners, Home schooling partners and private educational institutions/ ongoing)*
- Strengthen partnerships with the State of Alaska’s Department of Commerce and Economic development to extend the Alaska Host program to communities and audiences throughout the Tongass by offering cooperative yearly trainings *(Forest Program manager, Host course facilitator and District practitioners; ongoing)*
- Strengthen partnerships with the State of Alaska’s Department of Transportation to work cooperatively on sign plan development, interpretive and directional opportunities, and island-wide marketing of access to recreational and multiple uses of the public lands. *(Forest program manager, District practitioners, Travel Access Management Planners, District staffs and resource specialists; ongoing).*

Objective 3.b – The Tongass NF will work pro-actively with the **visitor industry** on projects that support Forest priorities, and that fulfill visitors’ needs and expectations.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE; WE WILL –

- Support private/public partnerships that deliver interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch services to forest visitors both through experiential and virtual means. Existing examples include the kayak ranger delivery of programs at Misty Fiords and Tracy Arm, and maintaining a FS visitor contact station at Icy Strait Point. *(Program manager, District Practitioners, and marine-delivery program specialists; ongoing)*
- Continue and expand the Princess Cruise Lines Shipboard Interpretive Program. *(Program manager; Ketchikan Misty RD practitioners, marine delivery specialists; May 2005 to present)*
- Develop a training program for visitor service providers on the Tongass NF. This training would cover both content and delivery techniques, and would reach out to all tourism service sectors in Southeast Alaska. The Tongass NF will investigate possible partnership opportunities with University of Alaska Southeast to design and offer such training. *(Program manager; ongoing)*
- Develop training materials for the approximately 600 outfitter and guide permit holders on the Tongass by investigating partnership opportunities with LNT, Inc, UAS campuses and outfitter-guide associations active in Southeast Alaska. *(Program Manager, LNT master teachers, District special uses administrators and I&CE practitioners; ongoing)*

- Actively participate in professional organizations representing the visitor industry, such as Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA), Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association (AWRTA), and Alaska Guides Association, by establishing a protocol for regular communications with Visitor Industry leaders to make people aware of the training resources and other programs available through the agency (*Regional interpretive specialist, Forest program manager, industry partners and District resource specialists; ongoing*)

Objective 3.c – The Tongass NF will **strengthen our internal partnerships** at all levels of the organization.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE; WE WILL –

- Reach out to FS Research to integrate research results into interpretive services and conservation education activities. (*Program manager, Rainforest Institute, Forest Sciences lab personnel; ongoing*)
- Work pro-actively across all disciplines to integrate accurate resource information into interpretive and conservation efforts. Offer “Interpreting Management Issues and Research” for interpreters annually for new personnel. (*Program manager, resource specialists; ongoing*)
- Participate in various program reporting activities required by different disciplines. Integrate WFRP information into annual summaries of accomplishments; do crossover interpretive work for resource specialists. (*Program manager and District practitioners; ongoing*)

Objective 3.d – The Tongass NF will **build new, innovative, and sustainable partnerships** with agencies and organizations at the local, regional and national levels.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE: WE WILL –

- Support the establishment of private, non-profit organizations focused on supporting stewardship of Tongass resources such as the Friend of the Tongass Cabins group and conservation-oriented advocacy groups like Safari Club International and the Mule Deer Foundation. (*Forest Program manager and Forest and District resource specialists; ongoing*)
- Continue to investigate the development of a broader cruise ship interpretive program. This effort may include personal services, publication and media development, and building new partnerships. (*Forest Program Manager and District staff and practitioners/ ongoing*)
- Build a relationship with the University of Alaska Southeast to meet shared goals, particularly in relation to developing a community guides course. (*Forest program manager; ongoing*)

Objective 3.e – The Tongass NF will be a leader in efforts to **build coalitions** of program providers and customers in Southeast Alaska experientially and virtually.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE; WE WILL –

- Support the revival of Southeast Conservation & Outdoor Educators (SECOE)—an informal network of program providers from all agencies and interest groups in Southeast Alaska. (*SO/Districts; May 2005*)

- Actively participate in the creation of a Region-wide intranet and Internet site focused on providing interpretation, conservation education and NatureWatch program development resources, curriculum and program synopsis of educational groups using the forest as a longitudinal outdoor classroom by updating the ICE Toolbox web site at the regional level and adding projects and partners to the Tongass Hands on the Land web portal site. *(Regional interpretive specialist and support staff; Forest program manager and project practitioners and educational classrooms and partners; 2009 to 2014)*
- Strengthen our relationship with the non-profit education organization “Discovery Southeast” to share information and to leverage resources. *(SO; March 2005)*
- Strengthen our relationship with the outfitters and guides (O&G) and community providers to share current information and key messages, provide media and opportunities for education of O&G about outdoor ethics, wilderness awareness, and the values of public lands. Support the expansion of LNT techniques and ethics among those in contact with the O&G community. *(Program manager, District practitioners and special-uses staff; ongoing)*

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#### Goal 4: Professional Development

##### **Develop and retain a professional Interpretive Services and Conservation Education staff on the Tongass NF.**

Objective 4.a – The Tongass NF will **improve professionalism and skills** of I&CE and NatureWatch practitioners and managers.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE; WE WILL –

- Identify, and provide or support, appropriate training opportunities for program providers across the Tongass on a regular consistent basis; maintain and disseminate a list of available trainings and train the trainer opportunities for I&CE practitioners within the agency and across other agencies; emphasize and reflect consistent skills and principles of interpretation and conservation education by developing training materials on various aspects of the I&CE and NatureWatch programs and making them available to all employees. *(Forest Program manager and other certified interpretive trainers on Districts; ongoing)*
- Support participation in professional certification systems in interpretive services, such as the National Association for Interpretation certification program and other programs, such as Leave No Trace, with whom the agency maintains national agreements. Target and apply for scholarship and grant funding for training. *(Program manager and District practitioners; ongoing)*
- Establish a required outdoor ethics curriculum for all employees in public contact positions by minimally providing a 30-60 minute training for field going crews and a two day LNT training for all interpretive and conservation education staff, dedicating time for discussion about how to promote these ethics in public contexts. *(Program manager, LNT Master Teachers and practitioners, District practitioners; March 2010, ongoing)*
- Identify and develop individuals with specialized expertise (e.g. signage, publications, interpretive writing, seasonal training) and make these individuals available across the forest by encouraging individuals to incorporate these trainings into their Individual Development Plans. List these specialists on the ICE Toolbox web site. *(Regional Interpretive Specialist, Forest program manager; ongoing)*

- Develop ongoing internship programs with universities and tribal governments to recruit highly skilled seasonal employees by sharing internship opportunities across the Forest; by maintaining a list of educational institution contacts for seasonal hiring networking; and to work with these learning institutions to develop internship programs that would bring I&CE students to the Forest for employment through offering college credits for internships. *(Program manager and District practitioners; ongoing)*
- Coordinate and co-teach with other training programs and opportunities, such as those offered by some tour companies, University of Alaska Southeast and local museums. *(Forest program manager and resource specialists; to be initiated, 2010)*

Objective 4.b – The Tongass NF will build **strong networks and support systems** for Forest I&CE and NatureWatch program providers.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE; WE WILL –

- Conduct regular conference calls to coordinate efforts and share information, for all I&CE and NatureWatch practitioners as well as visitor services personnel on the Tongass by establishing a spring and fall roundtable call and Forest round-robin sharing opportunities at the triennial Keystone conference. *(Program manager and District practitioners; ongoing since fall 2008)*
- Participate fully in the creation and maintenance of a functional I&CE intranet site, the ICE Toolbox, that provides needed resources for Tongass employees. *(Regional interpretive specialist, Forest program manager, District practitioners; ongoing)*
- Foster opportunities for staff exchanges across Districts and disciplines in order to raise awareness and knowledge about wilderness and outdoor ethics. *(Forest wilderness program manager and other recreation staffs; ongoing)*
- Participate in Tongass-wide and Region-wide program meetings. A meeting (Forest or Region) will occur at least annually. Use functional assistance trips summaries to build further strategic objectives. *(Regional interpretive specialist, Forest program manager; ongoing)*
- Fully share national and regional information with program providers on the Tongass. Apply and use electronic messages to send out targeted information. *(Regional and Forest-level program managers; ongoing)*

Objective 4.c – The Tongass NF will develop consistent and increasingly responsible **career opportunities** for I&CE and NatureWatch program providers.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE; WE WILL –

- Evaluate existing I&CE position descriptions within the Tongass NF to ensure consistency across the Forest, and alignment with national direction by offering information and access to science and math coursework to shift from administrative series to professional series; to maintaining priorities at District levels to retain and create career ladder opportunities within the Districts and Forests and within the agency as a whole in the pertinent job series. *(Regional interpretive specialist, Forest program leader, District rangers and staffs, practitioners; ongoing)*
- Develop appropriate position descriptions for the Forest Interpretive Specialists and Forest Conservation Education Specialists that accurately capture responsibilities, are consistent across the Forest and are consistent across the agency by maintaining records of position descriptions and outreaches and sharing information. *(Program manager and District staffs; ongoing)*

Objective 4.d – The Tongass NF will pro-actively **develop and participate in recognition programs** that reward and encourage professional excellence.

STRATEGIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE; WE WILL –

- Actively participate in the Regional Hakala Award for Interpretive Excellence nomination process by nominating employees and peers for consideration on an annual basis. *(Program manager and District and Forest supervisory staffs; ongoing)*
- Actively participate in the Regional Seasonal Interpreter of the Year Award by considering and nominating individuals who have excelled. *(Program manager and District and Forest supervisory staffs; ongoing)*
- Develop a Tongass-wide awards and recognition program for both Interpretive Conservation Education staff that recognizes personal or team excellence, volunteerism, partnerships, programs and products in interpretive services, conservation education and NatureWatch by implementing the annual nomination and awards process. *(Program manager, District supervisory staffs; August 2007, currently implemented and ongoing)*
- Identify and participate in other opportunities to recognize excellence, such as professional organizations' award programs, including NAI professional and media awards and NAAEE and NSTA awards, Hands on the Land awards, and other nationally recognized and peer-reviewed programs. *(Program Manager, Forest and District level staff and practitioners; ongoing)*

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# ANNUAL ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

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## Implementation Expectations

The template outlined below is offered as an example for completing an annual District action plan to implement the Forest Strategy for NatureWatch, Interpretation and Conservation Education (NICE). A single action plan should be accomplished by a District, therefore requiring that District interpreters and conservation educators meet and communicate in advance of doing the work to formulate the plan. Each program will have their individual priorities; these priorities and how they will be accomplished using workplan to plan are key to the successful tracking and accountability of the District from year to year. Such action plans are not meant to supersede facility, master, business exhibit or other interpretive plans, they are simply short documents that lay out what the expected accomplishments are going to be for the year. The critical components of these action plans are within the implementation and evaluation sections. Green Page Direction will include a goal for initiating this action plan in selected Districts in October 2009. These action plans can be implemented in FY 2011, in order to give Districts ample time to plan for staffing and completion of their target products. The annual action plan will also be included under “products completed to standard” in the Green Pages.

We anticipate small adjustments each year related to prioritized objectives and changing funding streams, with a major re-examination every five years – not necessarily in synchronization with the Forest strategic plan for NICE.

New elements for Districts’ application:

- Planning your District program and using the NatureWatch, Interpretation and Conservation Education Strategic Plan at the Forest level to set priorities.
- Becoming familiar with the way NICE products are recorded in workplan and increased accountability for multi-funded projects and products.
- Implementing the monitoring and evaluation tools related to SMART objectives.

Specific  
Measurable  
Achievable  
Relevant  
Time-bound

*(NAAEE 2004:28)*

- Increasing accountability in accomplishment reporting.

## **Title page and Signatory Sheet (Specialist, staff officer, and Ranger)**

### **Introduction**

#### **I. Planning and Background**

- District Overview; Geography; Niche statements
- Mission Statement (From Forest Strategy)
- Standards for Interpretation and Conservation Education (From Forest Strategy)

- Local Audience and Stakeholder Analysis
- Local Site Inventory and Maps of Project Area
- Identified Themes and Key Messages; Local Management Issues
- Correlations with Tongass National Forest Strategic Goals and Prioritized Objectives and Strategies (matrix) and/or correlations of conservation education program objectives with Alaska State Standards and NAAEE Guidelines for Excellence ([www.naaee.org/programs-and-initiatives/guidelines-for-excellence](http://www.naaee.org/programs-and-initiatives/guidelines-for-excellence))

## **II. Implementation**

- Summary of the existing interpretive services program for previous year
- Monitoring and evaluation summary of past year and proposals for current year
- Audience, strategy, NatureWatch and interpretive and conservation education program summary for current year
- Media plan matrix for current year (pick one high-priority objective and strategies from each goal)
- Annual implementation schedule for current year
- Project Work Plans for current year (correlate with Integrated Program of Work [IPOW]; Resource Allocation Team [RAT] priorities for I&CE; and the conservation performance measures as listed in the Wildlife and Fisheries Resources Program [WFRP] performance plans; and budget analysis). Please include other funding streams for the year, including grants and agreements, direct support from Alaska Geographic and fee-generated dollars.

*Please* attach and correlate these financial documents to prioritized objectives for the fiscal year in question.

## **III. Evaluations and Accomplishments**

- Objectives, performance standards correlated with evaluation tools
- Monitoring and evaluation plans
- Analysis and results of evaluation tools
- Evaluating the effectiveness of meeting objectives
- Accomplishment reporting for past year (copy and attach NICE reports and WFRP database reports)

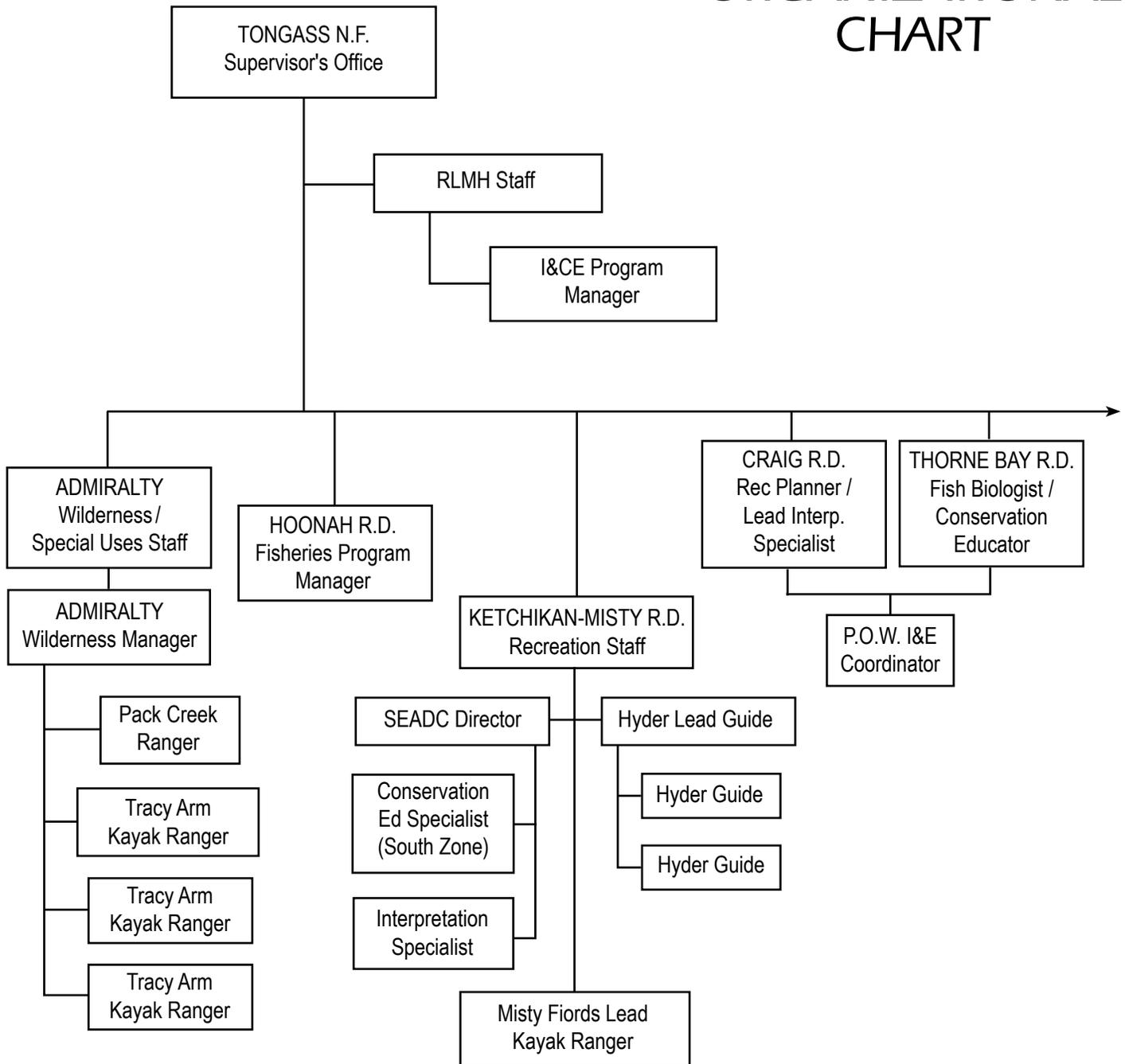
## **Conclusion**

### **Appendices**

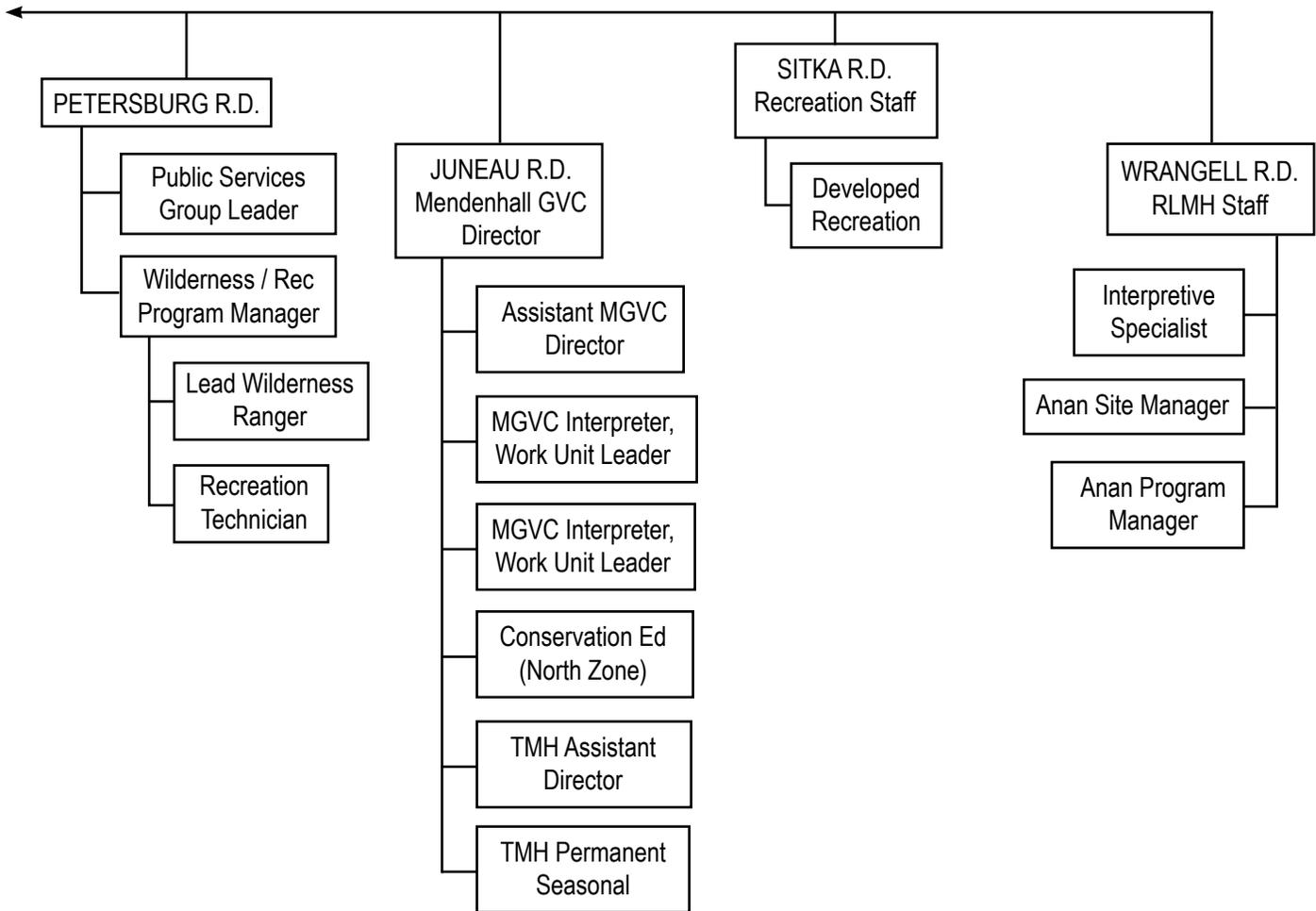
Suggestions:

- References and sources cited
- Examples of marketing and publicity of programs
- Successful grant proposals
- Partnerships and agreements applicable (new and renewed)
- Staffing diagram, seasonal hiring mix

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



# Interpretation & Conservation Education



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# IDEAL ORGANIZATION

## FOR INTERPRETATION AND CONSERVATION EDUCATION ON THE TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

Rather than place a proposed organization chart in the revision, the team worked on brainstorming what an ideal organization might look like on the Tongass. This ideal organization sought to grow and sustain the program by creating career ladders, maintaining opportunities to retain modular opportunities at some sites, eliminate the hiatus caused by some appointments to the continuity of the program, and establish shared coordinator positions where it seemed realistic to do so. The team tried to think strategically, and into the future, and realized that the ideal is just that—the ideal.

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### Positions to be Considered on the Forest

The Tongass Marine Highway program needs a Director position at the GS-7/9 level. The Assistant Director box can be made into the two permanent seasonals as suggested below. If there are opportunities in the future for managers to create career ladder series, we would like to encourage this.

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### Configurations and Positions at the Regional level

One FTE GS-12/13 to coordinate NatureWatch, Interpretation and Conservation Education and to act as a liaison with the WO for the two forests within the Recreation and Public Services group.

There is a need for a print specialist at the Regional level.

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### Configurations at the Forest Level

One FTE GS-11/12 NatureWatch, Interpretation and Conservation Education Program Manager who works dually funded in the Partnerships and Public Affairs shop and multi-funded in the resource specialist shop. The role and program of work that is currently accomplished would be retained, except that the program would have its own multi-funded budget. This individual would still be within the Recreation, Lands, Minerals and Heritage Program work group.

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### Configurations on Districts

Districts would benefit from appointments that allow less of a hiatus during the winter. Continuity provides more opportunities for planning, writing, making community contacts and maintaining existing partnerships. When canvassed, Districts varied in their needs, but two patterns became clear: at least one FTE interpretive and conservation education specialist per District, and if there was already a permanent position as a 13/13 or an 18/8, they preferred the position get upgraded to full-time. One District believed one FTE interpretive specialist and one FTE program development/issues management/Alaska Native Community liaison was the ideal configuration.

Districts are in need of zoned coordinator positions that are full-time, permanent appointments that retain some career ladder opportunities, such as a GS-7/9.

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## Configurations on Districts

Based on Prince of Wales Island: a Coordinator position, one FTE permanent to coordinate NatureWatch, Interpretation and Conservation Education on Craig and Thorne Bay; this position requires funding. A similar position was suggested between Petersburg and Wrangell. This coordinator would support resource specialists, engaging with schools and other stakeholders in the communities to build our capacity to deliver needed programs and services. The coordinator would also work with current program providers to unify and enhance budget and reporting processes, grant writing and partnership development.

Marketing programs and ecotourism development would occur October through May, and visitor services would be the focus June through September.

Each District would have at least 1.5 FTEs whose duties could consist of Interpretation, Conservation Education and NatureWatch.

Large Visitor Centers would require four FTEs, of which one FTE is composed of two permanent seasonals. This would allow for program development and continuity throughout the year.

Admiralty National Monument would require three FTEs to manage the program from the office, including a wilderness education specialist.

The current responsibilities of the GS-1001-6 at the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center require a re-evaluation due to accrual of duties related to the Forest Map Program, the Forest publications and maps central repository, and the supervision of fee collection at the facility.

The Tongass Marine Highway would be supported by two FTEs, one an 18/8 and the other two permanent seasonals.

Juneau Ranger District and Ketchikan Misty Ranger District would retain one FTE Conservation Educator and a 0.75 FTE seasonal to support the busiest seasons (in fall and spring or summer).

Districts are encouraged to initiate new positions or continuing positions as permanent seasonals instead of just seasonals. This decreases the potential exodus from the Forest and decreases the expense of retraining each season.

Districts are also encouraged to use seasonal hires in modular positions that switch venues during the summer season, as has been accomplished on Ketchikan-Misty Ranger District and Juneau Ranger District. This provides excellent experience for student interns, grows a returning workforce, and gives managers the flexibility to expose interpreters to multiple venues, audiences, and NatureWatch, interpretive and conservation education opportunities.

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## Configurations of the programs

- Correlate the presence of conservation education and resource trunks with curriculum topics they support.
- Mobility within conservation education position to attend faculty or beginning of the year meetings and answer questions about availability, curriculum topical support and other resources.
- Conservation education position to meet with new teachers once a year for outdoor inquiry and experiences, science in primary grades, using simple lists of materials and easily assembled activities.
- Conservation educators to take advantage of planning for teacher enrichment days or use weekends as educator enrichment day for Project Wild, Learning Tree, Wet, Aquatic and education trunks.

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## APPENDICES

- 38 A – References Cited
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- 40 C – Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan  
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- 44 D – Strategy for Interpretation & Conservation Education  
in the Alaska Region, 2007-2011
- 48 E – Interpretive Themes
- 50 F – Tongass National Forest, An Overview
- 53 G – Existing Conditions and Programs
- 64 H – Primer: How to Address Issues from an Interpretive  
and Educational Perspective
- 66 I – Current Interpretation, Conservation Education and  
NatureWatch Efforts
- 70 J – Our Audiences
- 75 K – Visitation Statistics
- 76 L – Guidelines for Environmental Education Excellence
- 78 M – State of Alaska Education Content Standards
- 81 N – School Districts in Southeast Alaska and  
Corresponding Ranger Districts
- 82 O – Strategy Revision Team Members

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# APPENDIX A

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# APPENDIX B

## Learning Outreach Continuum

INTERPRETATION		CONSERVATION EDUCATION
Interactive, thematic, often entertaining	<b>Presentation Method</b>	Facilitated, more structured, curriculum- or outline-driven
Provoke, motivate, spark interest in additional learning and discovery	<b>Desired Outcome</b>	Cognitive gains, desired attitude and/or behavioral change
Usually NF sites, sometimes community locations	<b>Location</b>	Classrooms, outdoor sites
NF visitors, sometimes community members	<b>Audience</b>	Students, members of organized groups. Sometimes visitors.
During leisure Usually shorter in durations (15 min – 3 hrs)	<b>Time</b>	During a dedicated time period, i.e. a class, Scout meeting, etc., which a person commits to attend. May be one program, usually 30-60 minutes; or may be longer – for instance, 20 one-hour classes with the same audience.
Intrinsic (usually for enjoyment)	<b>Rewards</b>	Extrinsic (often for a grade or a badge or some other reward).

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**Examples of Interpretive programs are:** visitor programs/materials at fish or wildlife viewing areas, campgrounds, visitor centers, on the ferries of the Alaska Marine Highway, and on cruise ships; kayak ranger programs with visitors; community events such as Family Fishing Day, Kids' Safety Day, bird festivals, etc. We do not classify as interpretive programs those presented to Elderhostel and school groups who may also be Forest visitors or ferry passengers at the time.

**Examples of Conservation Education programs are:** school presentations and materials for all levels, pre-K through college; presentations and materials for youth organizations (Scouts, 4-H, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, etc); youth camps; adult organizations (OHV Clubs, Rotary, outdoor activity clubs); Elderhostel.

*Source: Marcella Wells, 2007. Wells Resources, Inc.*

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# APPENDIX C

## Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan

### As amended 2008; selected sections

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#### Interpretive and Conservation Education Services (pages 4-48 to 4-49)

- A. Provide an Interpretive Services Program that is designed to accurately and adequately develop an interest and understanding of the environments of the Forest and Southeast Alaska, and the mission of the Forest Service in managing the National Forest.
- B. Conduct on-site interpretive activities to a level consistent with LUD objectives.
- C. Assist visitors and users to understand the role of natural and cultural resources in the development of industry, heritage, and culture in Southeast Alaska. Relate these roles to the rest of the state, Canada, and the nation.
- D. Promote visitor understanding of the NFS, forest research, and state and private forestry programs.
  - 1. Emphasize understanding of stewardship of public lands and their productivity through professional forest management with balanced use of natural resources.
  - 2. Develop Interpretive Services programs for all principal resource management programs.
  - 3. Information should emphasize the integration of management activities designed to achieve the goals and objectives developed for specific areas.
- E. Inform visitors of the distribution, differences, and roles of the federal, state and private lands found in Southeast Alaska and the range of recreation and cultural interest opportunities and facilities available.
  - 1. Continue to pursue and implement cooperative interpretive partnerships with other federal and state land management agencies consistent with the principal travel routes and activity centers used by forest visitors.
  - 2. Provide an array of imaginative and dynamic media by which interpretive messages are made available to the visitor. Use a spectrum of media and presentation designs that are appealing, appropriate for the setting, easily understood by the intended audience, and reflect the Forest Service as a professional and caring land management agency.
  - 3. Continue to provide accurate and timely information about Southeast Alaska and the Tongass National Forest. Continue the Forest Service's leadership role for the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center in Ketchikan.
  - 4. Continue to provide or improve interpretive services programs and facilities such as those at Mendenhall Glacier and aboard the Alaska Marine Highway ferries. Support shall include identification of current issues and events of interest to forest visitors, adequate staffing to meet program objectives, assistance in training the seasonal and volunteer staff, and objective evaluation of programs to ensure accurate and positive coverage of the natural and cultural resources on the Tongass National Forest and their management.

5. Expand the use of the Alaska Geographic (AKGEO) as an interpretive partner to provide forest visitors with a broad range of interpretive media. These may include, but are not limited to, publications, video and audio tapes, and other media that feature the natural and cultural resources of the Tongass National Forest and the heritage of Southeast Alaska. Encourage all types of support and donations to AK GEO that can be used to develop additional materials and programs.

6. In partnership with communities, organizations, and individuals, develop additional AK GEO outlets at locations that will best serve Forest customers.

7. Continue to support the Elderhostel Education Program in local communities and aboard the Alaska Marine Highway as budgets will allow.

F. Provide a coordinated program of awareness and training for all employees and partners (including outfitter/guides and other public service permit holders) to ensure a consistent program of public service.

1. Encourage other agency participation in Forest Interpretive Services training programs.

2. Ensure that the Forest Service mission and image remain predominantly visible at all Forest Service facilities through the use of uniformed Forest Service personnel, the Forest Service shield, and other media.

3. To the extent feasible, provide training about National Forest resources, points of interest and management to all interested outfitter/guides, industry representatives, and other partners.

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## Recreation and Wilderness Management

Manual Direction for wilderness management that relates to I&CE is found in FSM 2300, Recreation, Wilderness and Related Resource Management, Chapter 2320 (Wilderness Management) Amendment 2300-2007-1 (Section 2323.12 – Policy, page 18):

“Use information, interpretation, and education as the primary tools for management of wilderness visitors.”

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## Forest Plan, Desired Condition Specific to Wilderness and Non-wilderness National Monuments (pages 3-8 and 3-27)

“Appropriate interpretive and educational efforts allow the public to better understand the resources of these special areas and to appreciate how these areas fit into the local, regional and even global context of geology, ecology and human history.”

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## Forest Plan, Recreation and Tourism Standards and Guidelines (pages 4-43 to 4-49)

“Facilitate authorizing commercial recreation use, services, and developments by:

3. Working with recreation service partners to provide agency identity, customer information and programs, natural resource education, and to instill a land stewardship ethic.”

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Forest Plan, Chapter 3: Management Prescriptions for Multiple LUDs (scattered throughout the chapter)

Cave Management Program:

“Identify opportunities for interpretation of caves for public education and enjoyment.”

Heritage Resource Activities:

“Develop priorities and schedule management activities to implement heritage resource inventory, evaluation, protection, and interpretation.

Identify opportunities for interpretation of heritage resources for public education and enjoyment.”

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Forest Plan, Heritage Resources and Sacred Sites Standards and Guidelines (pages 4-16 to 4-21)

Identify and develop appropriate interpretive messages for heritage resource sites and activities that relate the historical value and contributions of natural and heritage resource management to the Tongass National Forest. Work closely with all interpretive services programs to ensure accurate and effective interpretation of heritage resources.

Develop a heritage resource management assessment that provides a framework for management decisions. ... The assessment/annual report should include:...

2.h “Identification of opportunities for interpretation of heritage resources for public education and recreation values.

Identify opportunities and priorities for interpretation of heritage resources for public education and recreation. Public education efforts should emphasize the importance of heritage site stewardship and leaving in place what they find.

Enhance suitable heritage values through interpretation, restoration, and the publication of reports, brochures, signs, films, videos, slide and other interpretive programs. Interpretive services and facilities should be compatible with the nature, quality, and integrity of the resource selected for enhancement.

Educate Forest Service personnel about the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian people who associate spiritual qualities with the land, wildlife and other natural and cultural resources. Encourage the participation of Indian tribes and Alaska Native individuals in this educational effort.”

Inform visitors of the distribution, differences, and roles of the federal, state, and private lands found in Southeast Alaska and the range of recreation and cultural interest opportunities and facilities available.

Continue to support the Elderhostel Education Program in local communities and aboard the Alaska Marine Highway as budgets will allow.

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## Forest Plan, Karst and Cave Resources Standards and Guidelines (pages 4-23 to 4-26)

### Karst Resources

2.d (p. 4-23) Public education and interpretative programs should be developed to ensure an increased understanding of the components and function of the karst landscape.

### Cave Resources

1.d (p. 4-25) Develop public education and interpretative programs to foster an increased appreciation of the function and biological significance of the cave resources, caving ethics and safety, and safe and responsible uses of these resources for research and recreation purposes.

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## Forest Plan Wildlife Standards and Guidelines (pages 4-89 to 4-100)

Continue to implement strategies, in cooperation with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, ADF&G, cities and boroughs, that prevent habituation of bears to human foods/garbage and reduce chances of human/bear incidents. Strategies that can be used to reduce human/bear incidents include the following:

5. Maintaining an aggressive public education program on bear behavior to reduce the number of human/bear incidents

Cooperate with the state and other federal agencies to develop sites and opportunities for the safe viewing and observation of marine mammals by the public. Maintain a public education program explaining forest management activities related to marine mammals in cooperation with state and other federal agencies.

Provide for the protection and maintenance of seabird (marine bird) rookeries.

Cooperate with state and other federal agencies to develop sites and opportunities for the safe public viewing of these species. Maintain a public education program explaining forest management activities related to these species in cooperation with state and other federal agencies.

Cooperate with state and other federal agencies to develop sites for safe public viewing opportunities that do not adversely disturb wildlife. Maintain a public education program explaining forest management activities related to these species (waterfowl and shorebirds) in cooperation with state and other federal agencies.

Cooperate with state and other federal agencies to develop sites and opportunities for the safe viewing and observation of sea lions by the public. Maintain a public education program explaining forest management activities related to sea lions in cooperation with state and other federal agencies.

Cooperate with state, federal and local agencies, partner organizations and individuals to develop sites and opportunities for the safe viewing of trumpeter swans by the public and maintain a public education program explaining Forest management activities related to trumpeter swans.

*Source: USDA Forest Service, 2008.*

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## APPENDIX D

# Strategy for Interpretation and Conservation Education in the Alaska Region, 2007-2011, and Alaska Region Emphasis Areas

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### Mission

Sparkling imaginations and fostering stewardship of Alaska's National Forests.

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### Vision

Through our efforts, people value National Forests and resources and work together to assure wise management of them.

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### Key Messages

The interpretation and conservation education (ICE) programs of the Alaska Region emphasize these key messages:

#### **Ecosystems**

Alaska's National Forests are dynamic ecosystems, shaped by nature, woven by culture.

#### **World Class Resources**

People can discover a unique combination of resources in the National Forests of Alaska. These world-class resources are important globally, nationally and locally.

#### **Management and Stewardship**

We, and our partners, care for your National Forests in Alaska using the best information to sustain the use and protection of resources for today and tomorrow.

#### **People and the Land**

Alaska's coastal lands and waterways have met people's social, physical and spiritual needs for thousands of years. Alaska's National Forests will continue to nurture the region's natural and cultural diversity for future generations.

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### Target Audiences

#### **Programs are designed to reach these target audiences:**

- Youth, directly and through teachers.
- Visitors to the National Forests.

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

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## Goal 1

**Coordinate the development and delivery of high-quality interpretive and conservation education programs and materials, both personal and non-personal.**

Objective 1.1: Ensure the availability and distribution of high-quality interpretive and conservation education materials and programs about forest ecosystems and their management and conservation.

- Inventory, analyze and make available current interpretive and conservation education materials and programs in the Alaska Region. (In the next four years, develop a Regional inventory of interpretive signs and CE lesson plans).
- Ensure that interpretive and educational materials and programs incorporate the best scientific knowledge, are interdisciplinary, unbiased, support the USFS mission, and are correlated with appropriate national, state, and agency guidelines.
- Identify and support service learning opportunities. (Service learning opportunities are conservation service projects such as the StreamWatch program, community invasive weed pulls and trail building projects by Scout groups.)

Objective 1.2: Improve access to Regional and national Forest Service resources and information.

- Disseminate Forest Service educational materials and information through educational and scientific organizations.
- Increase use of the Internet to reach a diverse virtual audience.
- Investigate the use of new technologies to increase access to FS resources and information for audiences with a variety of learning styles and backgrounds.

Objective 1.3: Ensure that the Alaska Region interpretive and conservation education programs support and enhance the ability of Forest Service employees to achieve excellence in conservation education and interpretation.

- Provide incentives for Alaska Region employees who excel in interpretation and conservation education.
- Support training and professional development in interpretation and conservation education for FS personnel, volunteers, partners, informal educators, teachers and future educators. When appropriate, partner with other agencies, organizations or institutions of higher education.
- Develop, and make accessible to the Region, tools to improve communications and networking among interpretive and CE staff in the region as well as the public.

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## Goal 2

### **Provide strong leadership and management of the Alaska Region interpretive and conservation education programs.**

Objective 2.1: Develop and implement a **coordinated sustainable program**.

- Develop ICE plans clearly stating the mission, vision, goals and objectives of the ICE program at the Regional, Forest, District and/or program levels.
- Encourage leadership involvement in interpretation and conservation education at all levels in the Alaska Region.
- Ensure that staffing levels across the Region are adequate to meet the highest priority goals of the programs as well as the demands from the public.
- Develop a mentoring program to help improve interpretive and conservation education programs and products in the Alaska Region.
- Market the Alaska Region interpretation and conservation education programs both internally and externally.

Objective 2.2: **Ensure adequate resources and operational integrity** to accomplish an effective and efficient mission based interpretive and conservation education program at all levels in the Alaska Region.

- Identify resource needs and potential sources, including grants and partnerships, to deliver a more effective ICE program.
- Advocate the incorporation of interpretation and conservation education into program direction at Regional and Forest level planning efforts.

Objective 2.3: Improve accountability systems and program evaluation for interpretation and conservation education in the Alaska Region.

- Utilize national databases for accomplishment reporting (Nature Watch, Conservation Ed).
- Develop a method for ongoing evaluation of interpretive and educational programs in the Region.
- Partner with the Alaska Natural History Association (ANHA) to survey more teachers/ participants who receive Forest Service interpretation and conservation education.
- Host Washington Office field review/visit
- Regularly schedule Regional Office functional assistance trips.
- Implement a standardized method for counting interpretive and conservation education inputs, outputs, and products, as well as gathering other pertinent program data.

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### Goal 3

**Maximize partnerships to contribute toward agency mission successes using interpretive and conservation education program planning and implementation.**

**Objective 3.1: Pursue new, and improve existing, internal and external partnerships** with State and federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations and the communities of place and interest.

- Develop internal partnerships with S&PF and the Research branches of the Forest Service to further educational efforts.
- Develop a partnership with the Department of Education to make Forest Service interpretation and conservation education resources more widely available.
- Develop new partnerships that target underserved populations. (urban, ethnic, women, children).
- Facilitate delivery of tools and training to develop Memoranda of Understanding or Partnership Agreements for ICE programs.
- Support ICE research (science and social science applications) by internal and external partners.
- Work closely with the Alaska Region Partnership Office.
- Work closely with Alaska agencies and organizations implementing national conservation education and interpretation programs in Alaska.
- Strengthen partnerships with ANHA, the Alaska Marine Highway and the tourism industry.

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# APPENDIX E

## Interpretive Themes

In the interpretive profession, a theme is the central idea of a program. Sometimes a theme is called a “key message.” Whatever you call it, a theme is a one-sentence, declarative statement capturing what you are going to tell your audience. Themes help people connect physical, tangible resources to intangible or universal concepts. A theme defines the purpose of your program and answers the “so what?” question. Without a theme, the organization of a program is random, and the effectiveness will be a matter of chance rather than design.

In March 2003, Forest Service staff from throughout the Region met in Juneau for a three-day Interpretive & Education Gathering. The Region's employees identified a need for Region-wide interpretive themes – statements that would unify and help to coordinate our efforts. Forests and Districts were encouraged to develop sub-themes that are unique to their areas, but still support the “big picture.”

“... Wisdom is not a knowledge of many things, but the perception of the underlying unity of the warring opposites..”

– John Burnet

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### Tongass NF Interpretive Themes

Tongass National Forest will use the broad, overarching Alaska Region key messages as the thematic basis for our interpretation and education programs. The themes do not include everything we may wish to communicate, but rather communicate the ideas that are critical to the visitor’s understanding of the Tongass National Forest. All interpretation and education efforts should relate to one or more of these themes and each theme should be addressed in the overall interpretation and education program of the Forest.

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### Ecosystems

#### **1. The Tongass National Forest is a dynamic ecosystem, shaped by nature, woven by culture.**

Encompassing nearly 17 million acres, Tongass National Forest is a tapestry of forests and water – it is a “forest of islands.” Towering temperate rain forests are woven with streams and muskegs. The high mountain peaks are blanketed by snow and carved by advancing and retreating glaciers. Although seemingly ancient and unchanging, this land is dynamic. From the daily sweep of the tides, to the changing of the seasons, to the slow change of plant communities over time, the face of the Tongass changes constantly. While many of these long-term changes are the result of natural forces, over the ages humans have also shaped the forest, altering ecosystems and introducing their own fingerprints on the landscape.

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## World-Class Resources

### **2. People can discover a unique combination of resources in the Tongass National Forest. These world-class resources are important globally, nationally, and locally.**

Tongass National Forest is a world treasure. It is the largest protected temperate rainforest in the world. It harbors two National Monuments and 19 designated Wilderness Areas that protect more than 5.7 million acres of pristine land. Species of wildlife that are rare in other parts of their range thrive in Tongass National Forest. Bald eagles, brown bears, wolves and Pacific salmon are abundant.

The healthy, functioning, temperate rainforest provides unexcelled opportunities:

- For visitors to experience this rare ecosystem
- For researchers to study the rain forest
- For residents to earn a sustainable living from the waters and forest

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## People and the Land

### **3. Alaska's coastal lands and waterways have met peoples' social, physical and spiritual needs for thousands of years. Tongass National Forest will continue to nurture the region's natural and cultural diversity for future generations.**

People have lived in Southeast Alaska since time immemorial. The Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian peoples developed rich and enduring cultures that revolve around an intimate relationship with the land. Their cultures and relationships to the land and other tribes are as vibrant today as in the past. The region's resources – minerals, timber, and fish – attracted settlers to this region throughout the last century. Resource use remains the economic backbone of the region, while the influence of tourism continues to grow. Just as in the past, many people in Tongass National Forest live a subsistence lifestyle that is intricately tied to the forest and ocean.

The future of Southeast Alaska and Tongass National Forest hinges on our ability to manage resources in a sustainable manner.

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## Management and Stewardship

### **4. We and our partners care for your Tongass NF using the best information to sustain the use and protection of resources for today and tomorrow.**

The Forest Service mission is to “sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.”

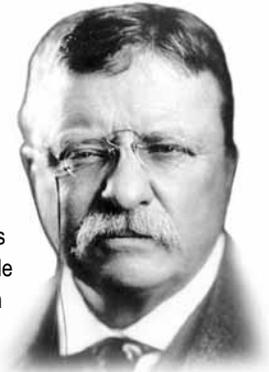
People throughout the world know and care about the Tongass National Forest. Views about the future of the Tongass are deeply held, and are often polarized. Decisions about the management of this public treasure are frequently debated on the national stage. In 2008, the Forest amended and completed a comprehensive Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan. This plan was developed during a decade-long process that focused on collaboration among scientists, state and federal agencies, tribal governments, communities and the Forest Service. It uses the best science available to make sound, sustainable resource management decisions for the Tongass.

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# APPENDIX F

## The Tongass National Forest, An Overview

“ Take the Sierra Reserve and place it directly on the coast, sinking it down until the highest peaks are from three to four thousand feet above sea level. Let the Pacific break through the main divide in three or four big straits making as many islands out of the principal range. To seaward, at distances of from ten to fifty miles, sprinkle in innumerable islands of all sizes and drop a few also to the eastward. In place of rivers, creeks and canyons let the reserve be cut into on all sides by countless deep water ways with soundings of from ten to one hundred fathoms, the shores rising abruptly ... Then strip off the whole surface down to bedrock and boulders. In spots put on a thin layer of muddy soil and cover the whole with moss. Over all except the highest elevations plant a dense forest of spruce, hemlock and cedar, leaving some of the flat places as swamp or “muskeg” dotted with a scrubby growth of pine. Throughout this forest, cover the ground with an exceedingly dense and often almost impenetrable undergrowth of all kinds of brush (chiefly devils club) and let the ground be as rough as possible ... To the climate of the Sierras add perpetual rain in the summer and rain and snow in the winter and the characteristics of the southeastern Alaska forest may be partly understood. To be thoroughly understood, they must be felt.” – F.E. Olmsted / Inspection Report / 1906



**President Teddy Roosevelt** oversaw creation of the Forest Service in 1905.

**F.E. Olmsted** was the Assistant Chief of the Forest Service in charge of general inspections.

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### Dynamic Ecosystems

Water stored in glaciers creeps out to the sea. Water falls as rain and snow and feeds the temperate rain forest. Water carves the rocks and sheer cliffs. Water defines the Tongass National Forest.

At nearly 17 million acres, the Tongass is the largest national forest in the United States. It encompasses nearly 90 percent of the southeastern panhandle of Alaska. It stretches from the southern tip of Prince of Wales Island, 500 miles north to the Hubbard Glacier just north of Yakutat. After crossing Dixon Entrance, a voyager traveling north on the waters of the Inside Passage is surrounded by the Tongass.

The Tongass National Forest is a tapestry of dynamic ecosystems, shaped by nature and woven by culture. Few places in the world can boast of the geologic and climatic variations that characterize the Tongass. At sea level, rain – and lots of it – falls throughout the year. The climate at elevations of just 1,600 feet is too harsh for trees. A lush temperate rain forest thrives at sea level less than a two-mile hike from this frigid, windy alpine zone, where hardy plants cling to a tenuous existence.

The maritime environment dominates the weather and nurtures the temperate rain forest. On the Tongass, western hemlocks push their floppy tops up through the mist, while Sitka spruce brave icy, salt-laden winds along the water’s edge. In areas protected from the wind, trees may live to be more than 500 years old. About 83 percent of these old growth forests remain as they were 100 years ago, before commercial logging began.

Though home to the Northern Hemisphere’s largest temperate rain forest, almost half of the Tongass is covered by ice, water, muskeg and rock. The islands and mainland create 11,000 miles of shoreline, where regal mountains rise from tidewater to overlook a mostly undeveloped and isolated landscape. “Rivers of ice,” or glaciers, grind their way down from the mountaintops. Some glaciers grind through mountain heights; others, called tidewater glaciers, deliver their icy cargo to the ocean.

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## World-Class Resources

People can discover a unique combination of resources in the Tongass. These world-class resources are important globally, nationally and locally.

The Tongass is truly “America's rain forest”: its vast expanses harbor some of the nation's most important public natural legacies. The Tongass is the largest contiguous temperate rain forest in public ownership in the world. At nearly 17 million acres, the Forest contains 14 percent of the world's remaining temperate rain forest and 29 percent of the world's undeveloped temperate rain forest. There are 17 designated Wilderness Areas and two National Monument Wilderness Areas. Together these areas comprise more than 35 percent of the total land area – the highest percentage of designated wilderness of any national forest.

The Forest boasts 25 NatureWatch sites, including four world-class bear viewing sites.

The Tongass National Forest also contains the largest known concentration of caves in Alaska and world-class karst landscapes (calcium carbonate-dominated geology). El Capitan Cave on Prince of Wales Island is the longest cave mapped in Alaska to date. Current cave research is

revolutionizing scientists' understanding of the paleohistory of Southeast Alaska and the peopling of the Americas.



*A black bear feasts on pink salmon at the Anan Creek Wildlife Observatory on the Wrangell Ranger District.*

The Tongass is home to healthy populations of animals that have become uncommon in other areas of the United States. The highest density of coastal brown (grizzly) bears occurs on the Tongass. The Alexander Archipelago wolf is common throughout much of Southeast Alaska. Mountain goats climb along steep, rocky crags above timberline. In fact, there are no threatened or endangered terrestrial species on the Tongass National Forest. Five species of Pacific salmon – chum, coho, king, pink and sockeye – depend on the streams and waters of the Tongass for spawning.

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## People and the Land

Alaska's coastal lands and waterways have met peoples' social, physical and spiritual needs for thousands of years. Since time immemorial, the Tlingit and Haida peoples have pulled salmon and herring out of these waters and gathered berries and other forest bounty. Each generation shares its knowledge of the land with the next. In the late 1800s, a community of Tsimshians moved from their home in British Columbia to Annette Island to form the only Indian Reserve in Alaska.

Gold in this era drew thousands of fortune-seekers up through the Inside Passage to towns such as Douglas, Juneau and Skagway. As gold played out in the 1900s, communities built their economies around fishing, timber and then tourism. Traditional lifestyles still flourish. Today, many rural residents live a subsistence lifestyle, just as Alaska Natives have for centuries.

Water routes continue to be the gateway for visitors to Alaska. Each year, more than 750,000 visitors travel through the Tongass National Forest aboard cruise ships or Alaska Marine Highway ferries. Local residents and tourists enjoy sailing, motor boating, kayaking and getting out on the water to fish.

“ Conservation is the application of common sense to the common problems for the common good.”  
– Gifford Pinchot

The Mendenhall Visitor Center in Juneau is among the top three tourist attractions in the state. Visitors also travel to the Juneau Ice Field by helicopter and take organized boat trips into Misty Fiords and Tracy Arm. Ecotourism is one of the faster-growing portions of the tourism industry.

Traveling through this watery world is a challenge. Roads between communities are rare. Only Hyder, Haines and Skagway are connected to the North American road system. Prince of Wales Island roads connect the island's communities. The State of Alaska Marine Highway ferries serve many communities, such as Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Sitka and Juneau. Some small Southeast communities, such as Pelican, Angoon and Tenakee, are chiefly reached by small boats and float planes.



*Bear Totem in Kasaan, Prince of Wales Island.*

The Forest Service's mission is to manage the nation's forests for multiple uses. People from all over the world are passionate about the wet and enigmatic Tongass National Forest. Some say they want a sense of remaining wild places, where wildlife can roam undisturbed. Others defend their ability to use the woods and waters to make their living. With demands from all sides, the Forest Service tries to balance the needs of people whose way of life is based on extracting resources with people who want large stretches of the ecosystem undisturbed for recreation, solitude and inspiration.

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# APPENDIX G

## Existing Conditions and Programs

This section is an overview of the existing conditions and programs of the Tongass National Forest's NatureWatch, interpretation and conservation education program. It is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather to give a flavor and a snapshot of the program and the visitor experience at the time of this strategy revision.

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### Summary

The Tongass National Forest invests strongly in its NatureWatch, interpretation and conservation education programs. Every District throughout the Forest offers some level of I&CE services to residents and visitors. In 2008, well more than half a million dollars was spent on visitor and interpretive services, NatureWatch and conservation education programs, from well more than a dozen budgetary account codes (see page 16). The Forest operates NatureWatch program enhancement projects and guided nature-based viewing at 25 sites on the forest. The Forest also operates both facilities-based and non-facilities-based interpretation and conservation education programming and visitor services. These include: the single largest marine delivery program of interpretive messages in the Forest Service, a 39-year partnership with the Alaska Marine Highway for delivery of interpretation and conservation education programs; program delivery via kayak on two Districts; and in-port cruise ship programs on one District. The Forest operates two large visitor centers: the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center in Ketchikan and the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center in Juneau.

“National Forests exist today because the people want them. To make them accomplish the most good, the people themselves must make clear how they want them run.”

– Gifford Pinchot, 1907

Additionally, a wide variety of innovative programs and services is offered throughout the Forest. These diverse programs include wilderness kayak ranger programs, staffed wildlife viewing sites, radio shows, interpretive cave tours, guided walks, classroom and field programs and special events. The planning and design and production of interpretive and educational media includes sign, publications, curricular information on web sites, touchscreen programs, audiovisual presentations, games and activity guides.

Each District offers programs and services for local and regional school districts (see Appendix N), and when no interpretive specialist or conservation educator is available, wildlife and fish biologists, soil scientists or hydrologists, heritage and wilderness specialists and other District specialists fill the void, with support from the program manager at the Supervisor's Office level. Since 2005, there has been a marked expansion in these programs and the two conservation education specialists in Juneau and Ketchikan are not able to support efforts across the Forest, concentrating on events and activities within their individual Ranger Districts.

The presence of an interpretation and conservation education program manager at the Supervisor's Office level has improved the coordination and alignment of programs and services across the Forest. The following are tangible improvements since 2006:

- Communication venues have expanded within and between Districts, with key contacts being established. Roundtable conference calls have been initiated in spring and fall. There have been tangible and increased coordination and support for programming and staffing by District Rangers and staffs for program growth and professional development of employees, cross-training, and partnership development.
- Training in customer service, interpretive and environmental education skills has improved with consistent annual training that addresses nationally accepted guidelines and standards for the professions.
- Focused implementation of the strategic plan and correlation with its goals, objectives and strategies in District planning has yielded improved products to standard, as reported in accomplishments databases.
- The significance and use of measurable objectives, monitoring and evaluation tools that fit those objectives for performance attainment in programs and activities.
- Application of key messages, branding and design elements, and thematic consistency in media development.



*Beaver Falls karst interpretive trail on Prince of Wales Island leads visitors through a magical rain forest world.*

The improvement of coordinating efforts in NatureWatch, interpretive and visitor services and conservation education requires establishing trust; acknowledging shared mission, vision, and goals; and reaching out to other Forest employees and programs that may never have realized the skill sets that are available on their Districts.

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### Existing Interpretive Plans

Over the last decade, a number of interpretive plans have been developed for various Tongass programs. These plans provide sound guidance for individual programs or District efforts. However, each of these plans existed as a separate entity and there was no linkage or common thread among them until the annual District action plans (see page 30) were introduced to tier off the Forest interpretive strategy. Many plans are written and never implemented. Current revisions to this strategic plan have emphasized again the importance of a united, single-program approach, overarching goals, prioritized objectives, strategies that are realistic and doable, and the importance of taking stock and evaluating results. The Tongass has the following interpretive plans presently on hand:

- Starrigavan Bay (Sitka RD) – 1992
- Interpretive strategy: Shipboard Interpretive Program on the Alaska Marine Highway (Ketchikan-Misty RD) – 1993, updated 2006
- Southeast Alaska Discovery Center Exhibit Plan (Ketchikan-Misty RD) – 1993
- Southeast Alaska Discovery Center Business Plan (Ketchikan-Misty RD) – 2008
- Petersburg Ranger District – 1994
- Ketchikan Area – 1995
- Craig Ranger District – 1995
- Wrangell Ranger District Interpretive Plan – 1997 and District Action Plan 2008
- Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center Exhibit Plan (Juneau RD) – 1997
- Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center Interpretive Plan (Juneau RD) – 1997
- Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center Business Plan (Juneau RD) – 2008
- Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center Master Plan (Juneau RD) – In progress 2009
- Exhibit Plan for Forest Service Exhibits, Bellingham Ferry Terminal – In progress 2009

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### Existing Interpretive Staffing

Without question, the forest's major asset is the talented and dedicated cadre of professionals who guide and present its programs (see organizational chart). Traditionally, interpretive services are presented by staff wholly dedicated to those services; this model is the exception rather than the rule on most Tongass Districts. Generally, these programs are administered by each District's Recreation program, although they are also conducted by Resources staff with public-contact skills and the desire to work in the public domain. Conservation education programs are conducted by conservation education specialists, interpreters and resource specialists depending on the focus, event, conditions and nature of the public contacts. Most resource specialists are unaware that standards and guidelines exist to support the crafting of educational programs and products. The following list identifies the Tongass 2009 permanent staff who spend more than 25 percent of their time on interpretation and conservation education.

1. Interpretation and Conservation Education Program Manager
2. Marine Highway Program Assistant Director (Juneau RD)
3. Marine Highway Interpreters (1) (Juneau RD)
4. Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center Facilities Director (Juneau RD)
5. Juneau Ranger District Conservation Education Specialist (Juneau RD)
6. Southeast Alaska Discovery Center Director (Ketchikan-Misty RD)
7. Discovery Center Information Assistant (Ketchikan-Misty RD)
8. Discovery Center/District Conservation Education Specialist (Ketchikan-Misty RD)
9. Hyder Forestry Technicians (3)(Ketchikan-Misty RD)
10. Anan Biological Technician (Wrangell RD)
11. Pack Creek Lead Ranger (Admiralty NM)
12. Pack Creek Ranger (Admiralty NM)
13. Tracy Arm Lead Kayak Ranger (Admiralty NM)
14. Tracy Arm Kayak Ranger (Admiralty NM)
15. Misty Fiords Kayak Ranger (Ketchikan-Misty RD)
16. Wrangell Ranger District Interpreter (Wrangell RD) — Presently vacant
17. Prince of Wales Interpretation and Conservation Education Coordinator (Thorne Bay and Craig RDs; not filled)

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## Tongass Web Site

The Tongass National Forest web site ([www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass](http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass)) is well-designed, accessible and functional. It provides solid information about the management and organization of the Tongass, natural and cultural history, recreational opportunities, special events and other public programs by District. An extensive overhaul of the web site in 2008 improved the site's consistency and design. Further improvements with the integration of the new national web site templates are expected by summer 2010. The web site has seen substantial increases in visits since 2004, when it received 48,000 visits. In 2007, there were more than 75,000 page loads and more than 22,000 new visitors to the web site. In 2008 there were more than 960,000 page loads and more than 275,000 first-time visitors to the site (Kuharich, 2009). Research on social media and online audiences attests to the increased use of the web by the baby boomer generation for information-gathering and by Generation Y for communication.

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## Publications & Media

The Forest provides a diverse range of narrative and design media to serve the NatureWatch, interpretation and conservation education needs of visitors and Southeast Alaska residents. The planning and design of narrative media such as publications is facilitated through a regional publications proposal database system that tracks the proposal through to printing via a print media specialist and competitive contracts through the General Printing Office. Maps, interpretive brochures, informational pamphlets and booklets, fold-out wall brochures and posters are printed and stored in a centralized repository for publications at the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center.

Alaska Geographic, a non-profit cooperating agency, also assists with publication development and distribution each year by producing the annual Tongass Recreation Guide; 90,000 copies of the guide are available each April for all Ranger District offices, Alaska Marine Highway ferries, visitor centers and special-event venues. Alaska Geographic has a publications and projects arm that is responsible for design of the Tongass coffee table book, launched in 2007 and expected to be ready for distribution in 2010. The partnership with Alaska Geographic is based on a regional Participating Agreement and a Scope of Sales document. Based in Anchorage, the non-profit currently supports seven venues for the sales of interpretive and educational materials throughout the Tongass.

NatureWatch media include bird checklists, signage at observation sites, an Inside Passage Viewing Guide initially funded through Centennial grants, hand-made puppets and salmon life cycle displays. Interpretive media includes posters for Alaska Marine Highway information stations, a mobile puppet theatre, Hands on the Land web site development and models and equipment to simulate glaciers. Conservation education media includes curriculum and activity guides for Junior Rangers, watershed studies and the study of karst landscapes. Educational trunks are portable kits for examining particular topics; they are available for checkout at the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center. Forest radio programs are available in Petersburg and the popular "Tongass Trails" is available online at the KTOO-FM web site, [www.ktoo.org/audiofile.cfm](http://www.ktoo.org/audiofile.cfm). The list of media is diverse, and the programs in which the media are used are extensive (see the program matrix on pages 66-69). Public Affairs and Partnerships has been actively involved in the production of issues white papers, news media releases, internal and external outreach to the public and a modular set of video films called "Shades of Green" that will provide short, topic-related treatments of the resources and their management around the Tongass.

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## Interpretive Venues: Trails & Exhibits

Nearly every District boasts at least one well-developed interpretive trail or boardwalk. These hikes may lead visitors to fish-viewing platforms, through intertidal wetlands, through karst landscapes, over glaciated terrain, through quiet, dark woods, or along burbling streams. In many cases, the trails are beautifully designed and constructed. In 2008, an interpretive sign inventory was requested in the Regional strategic plan and the Forest is currently in the second year of the inventory, which seeks to address the breadth and condition of interpretive signage on the Forest. Photographs and records of the interpretive signs on each District indicate a hit-or-miss approach to planning, audience analysis, application of key messages and themes, and knowledge of fabrication and mounting options. Consistent design elements and opportunities to use sign plans and thematic nodes are being implemented Forest-wide and the annual action plan template (see page 30) is being used to prioritize interpretive sign projects and to link them to real costs. A short course on sign planning, design and production has been distributed to key District contacts in an effort to improve the process of selecting this type of media for interpretive messages. Recent developments include consistency of design at all Forest NatureWatch sites; collaborating with publications to reduce paper waste and improve message delivery effectiveness through the production of luggage tags and laminated guides.

Forest interpretive exhibits in the larger visitor centers have been evaluated for accuracy, maintenance and upgrading of technology, and plans are in place to improve portions of exhibits as funding allows. Facility exhibits require a two-pronged funding approach that looks at energy efficiency and security concerns, as well as interpretive features such as accessibility to the audience and appropriateness of the message.

The Forest has a small number of interpretive exhibits in venues outside major visitor centers. Again, these items vary widely in quality, content, design, accuracy and appropriateness. The exhibits are placed in visitor portals such as airport terminals and ferry terminals, and aboard ferries.

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## Forest Service-Owned Interpretive Facilities

The Tongass National Forest operates two major interpretive facilities: the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center (the Mendenhall) in Juneau, and the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center (Discovery Center) in Ketchikan. Both facilities chiefly serve cruise ship passengers during the visitor season and local residents throughout the year.

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## Visitor Center Advisory Board

In 2007, the Tongass established the Tongass Visitor Center Advisory Board to strategically address operations of the two centers. The board is made up of several members of the Tongass leadership team, with advisory members representing the two facilities and the Tongass Interpretation and Conservation Education program. To date, the board has developed an action plan to move the centers toward a shared vision, expressed as follows:

The Tongass National Forest's visitor centers provide high-quality interpretive and information services for more than half a million people each year. Facilities are well-maintained, safe and accessible. Our staffs are well-trained, professional and welcoming to visitors from all over the globe.

- *Visitors will have a greater appreciation of our public land legacy and remember the Tongass National Forest.*
- *Greater coordination and sharing of resources will result in improved interpretive and information services.*
- *Revenue flow will improve as a result of greater emphasis, coordination, and improved services.*
- *Staffing levels needed to deliver quality programs will be supported.*
- *Partnership opportunities will grow through our renewed emphasis on our centers.*
- *The Tongass National Forest will continue to be recognized as a conservation education leader.*

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### Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center

The Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center, on the Juneau Ranger District, was the first visitor center the Forest Service constructed, opening its doors in 1962. The facility is within the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area, a classification made in 1947 directing that the area be managed for recreation use. The mission of the Mendenhall is captured on the bronze dedication plaque, which reads: "Dedicated in 1962 to the furtherance of knowledge and enjoyment of glacial phenomena."

The Mendenhall includes not only the center but a complex of improvements and facilities in the immediate area. This includes parking lots, a bus shelter, a pavilion, an information kiosk, restrooms, sidewalks, Steep Creek interpretive trail, Trail of Time, Photo Point, East Glacier trail and Moraine Ecology trail. Another important component of the visitor center operation is the conservation education program. This program provides a variety of educational opportunities for public-school students and home-schoolers throughout the year.

The Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center complex is one of the most-visited sites in Alaska and the most-visited Forest Service area in the Alaska Region, attracting a broad diversity of U.S. and world visitors. In 2007, approximately 400,000 cruise ship passengers visited the complex as well as an estimated 35,000 independent travelers and Juneau residents. The center, located in Alaska's state capital and third largest city, experiences continued use throughout the year from Juneau's 30,000 residents and travelers arriving in winter months.



*Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center features newly refurbished interpretive displays and a spectacular view of Mendenhall Glacier.*

The Mendenhall is open from 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. seven days a week from May through September, and from 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday through Sunday from October through April. Fees have been collected at the Mendenhall since Jan. 1, 1999. In 2007, the total fees collected at the center exceeded \$1 million.

A remodeling project at the Mendenhall in 1997-1998 added a larger entry lobby, a 110-seat theater, a bookstore, an exhibit area and elevators. The center also has staff offices and a break room on the first floor. The bookstore is managed by Alaska Geographic. Several exhibits were updated in 2008, however there remain other opportunities to improve or add to the existing exhibits.

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### Southeast Alaska Discovery Center

The Southeast Alaska Discovery Center is on the downtown waterfront of the gateway city of Ketchikan. Completed in 1995, the center is one of four Alaska Public Lands Information Centers (APLIC), mandated by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act and operated under the direction of nine federal and state agencies. It is the only APLIC managed by the Forest Service. The Discovery Center offers world-class exhibits on the natural and cultural history of Southeast Alaska, with an emphasis on the Tongass National Forest.

Services at the center include: an information desk, a 200-seat theater featuring live interpretive programs, permanent exhibits, a trip planning area, a classroom for school group activities, and an Alaska Geographic sales area. The Center staff presents interpretive programs in the theater and on some cruise ships while they are docked in Ketchikan. The center offers a free weekly public lecture series entitled “Friday Night Insights” between November and March, and sponsors the Alaska Hummingbird Festival, a month-long celebration welcoming migratory birds back to Alaska, in April.

The Center is open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. seven days a week, May through September, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday through Sunday, October through April. A user fee is charged seasonally to view the exhibit galleries and theater presentations. Visitation in 2008 totaled almost 54,045, including those who entered the building for non-fee services, such as community-based programs during the off season, providing general information and orientation to Ketchikan and the Tongass National Forest, and access to the bookstore. Fee revenue in 2008 was \$108,000.



*Southeast Alaska Discovery Center in Ketchikan focuses on information about the peoples of Southeast Alaska.*

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## Partner Facilities for Visitor Information, Interpretation and Education

Through a variety of partnerships, the Forest Service participates in information, interpretation and conservation education programs delivered through non-Forest Service facilities. Two notable partnerships are the Petersburg Visitor Information Center and the James and Elsie Nolan Center in Wrangell. Additionally, the Hoonah District Ranger is exploring partnership opportunities with the privately owned Icy Strait Point development near Hoonah.

### **Petersburg Visitor Information Center**

A joint effort of the Petersburg Chamber of Commerce and the Tongass National Forest, the Petersburg Visitor Information Center (PVIC) was created by agreement in 1989 and opened its doors on May 15, 1992. The PVIC is located on the first floor of a small, two-story historic building owned by the City of Petersburg. The Chamber of Commerce office and a meeting room are upstairs. The PVIC consists of an information counter, exhibits, an Alaska Geographic Association Bookstore and an accessible public rest room.

Between 1992 and 2001, the facility was staffed and operated jointly by the Petersburg Ranger District and the Petersburg Chamber of Commerce. Forest Service budget changes led to a restructuring of the agreement in 2001, resulting in primary responsibility for staffing and operating the PVIC shifting to the Chamber of Commerce. At that time, the Forest Service role in the PVIC was limited to managing the bookstore and providing brochures, advice and financial assistance. Beginning in 2008, the Tongass renewed its commitment to maintaining a meaningful Forest Service presence at the facility and is providing seasonal, part-time staff assistance and technical support for operations as well.

The PVIC consists of 1,150 square feet of public space and was designed to serve 10 to 12 people at one time. The PVIC is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Saturday, and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, early May through early September, and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday to Friday, late September to early May. Each year, approximately 5,000 visitors and residents are served through the facility.

### **James and Elsie Nolan Center**

The James and Elsie Nolan Center in Wrangell opened in July 2004. The 20,000 square-foot facility houses the community visitor center as well as a convention center and museum. Through a partnership with the City of Wrangell, the Forest Service staffs the visitor center 1 to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday during the summer months. A Discovery Tent outside the building is usually staffed by one person. The tent features rotating exhibits – wildlife, wildflowers and wood samples to name a few. Another staff member is inside the visitor center offering brochures and maps and answering questions about Wrangell and the Tongass National Forest. In the theater, the Forest Service presents a short film about Wrangell and slide shows about Wrangell history, Anan Wildlife Observatory and the Stikine River. The Forest Service also maintains a fresh water fish exhibit in the lobby. The Forest Service made approximately 1,500 public contacts through this partnership in 2008.

At the center each Thursday from January to April, Wrangell Ranger District employees present “Chautauqua,” a regular entertainment and educational series featuring guest presenters. The Forest Service is a partner with the City of Wrangell – Wrangell Museum and the Friends of the Museum in organizing this series.

### **Icy Strait Point Forest Service Information Station**

In 2003, Huna Totem Corporation opened Icy Strait Point, a world class interpretive center and port facility built around the renovated Hoonah Packing Company Cannery, which originally opened in 1912. The port is operated by a joint venture in which Huna Totem is the majority owner. The facility primarily serves cruise ship visitors, although independent travelers are welcome when cruise ships are in.

“The Cannery,” as it is known locally, provides visitors an opportunity to learn the history of fishing and canning in Alaska and to participate in living-history demonstrations, including an 8,000-year journey through time and an Alaska seafood cooking course. At the Shaa Goo Nu Woo Hit Native Heritage Center, the Hoonah Tlingit share their history through interpretive song, dance and storytelling. A feature attraction at the site is the ZipRider cable ride, the world’s longest zipline at 5,330 feet, with a 1,300-foot vertical drop. Other guided activities include a bike trek, a two-hour kayak trip, a whale and marine mammals cruise, flightseeing, a forest and nature tram tour, an ATV expedition and nature walks.

The Hoonah District Ranger staffed an information station at the cabin on ISP property in 2009 and has held trainings for interpretive hosts at the District. As this partnership expands opportunities to present collaborative interpretation and conservation education services are enhanced for the community and its visitors.

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### **Non-Facility-Based Interpretive Programs**

Tongass National Forest operates a wide variety of innovative non-facility-based interpretive programs. These programs are designed to meet unique local situations and have evolved into some of the most noteworthy interpretive programs within the Forest Service. While the shipboard interpretive program provides comprehensive training, other Forest programs rarely include this program's training, orientation or monitoring and evaluation runs.



*Anan Creek Wildlife Viewing Area provides tremendous black and brown bear viewing opportunities.*

### **Ferry Shipboard Interpretive Program**

The largest of these programs is the Alaska Marine Highway Shipboard Interpretive Program, which staffs mainline ferries in the visitor season. In 2008, interpreters provided more than 113,000 visitor contacts through interpretive programs, exhibits and one-on-one contacts. The hiring for this program is seasonal and includes a rigorous training and onboard orientation schedule each year in late April. Some runs require the individuals to be on board for four to 10 days at a time; others are simply overnight runs. Seasonal adjustments in the ferry schedule require interpretive staff to be highly flexible and well-versed in adapting to rough sea conditions, limited visibility and lack of privacy. While shipboard interpreters benefit from having the most captive audiences on the Forest, they are required to be “on” for significant amounts of time longer than their colleagues giving a program on-site or at a visitor center.

### **NatureWatch Viewing Sites**

Twenty-five NatureWatch sites on 10 Districts were updated and recorded for the Tongass National Forest web pages in the spring of 2006. These are now accessible at the national web site ([www.fs.fed.us/outdoors/naturewatch/wheretow.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/outdoors/naturewatch/wheretow.htm)), which allows visitors to plan trips and to craft opportunities throughout the National Forests for observing wildlife, fish and plants in their natural contexts. The Tongass National Forest staffs NatureWatch viewing sites at Pack Creek (Admiralty NM), Anan Creek (Wrangell RD), Fish Creek and Margaret Bay (Ketchikan-Misty RD), Steep Creek (Juneau RD), and at other sites, such as Dog Salmon Fish Pass (Craig RD). These sites offer world-class opportunities to view brown and black bears and the salmon that attract them. Uniformed, skilled Forest Service employees provide information about bears, salmon and Forest Service management, while watching out for the safety of both the visitors *and* the bears. These wildlife viewing sites attract about 250,000 visitors each year and are becoming increasingly popular. To balance visitor demand with resource protection, some sites (such as Pack Creek and Anan Creek) restrict use through a permit system. There is demand by partners to establish more wildlife-viewing areas on the Forest.

### **Wilderness Rangers**

Visitors to the wilderness of the Tongass are welcomed by wilderness rangers in Tracy Arm and in Misty Fiords National Monument. Here, rangers paddle kayaks through the mists to board small cruise ships. The rangers travel with the passengers for several hours, then paddle off to their home base or new camp location. They answer questions and give presentations about the Tongass, wilderness resources and values, wilderness management and ethics. These programs are operated as partnerships with the cruise lines, under appropriate agreements, and are administered at the District level.



*Rangers in kayaks provide interpretive programs in Tongass National Forest wilderness.*

### **Cruise Ship-based Interpretive Program**

Ketchikan-Misty Ranger District is in its fifth year of providing interpretive programs onboard Princess Cruises ships while in port in Ketchikan. This program will continue to be evaluated and changes may be made for future efforts. There is interest from other cruise lines to establish similar or expanded programs.

### **Conservation Education Programs**

The Forest conducts a wide range of conservation education activities. Each District offers some level of services, although programs vary widely from one location to the next. These programs are generally offered by District staff as a collateral duty. However, Juneau, Ketchikan-Misty, Wrangell and Sitka RDs have positions dedicated to developing and implementing education programs.

Education programs are developed District by District and are not often coordinated across the Forest. Topics include: watershed education; Leave No Trace wilderness skills; geology and glaciers; cultural history; animal and plant life histories; and many others. In 2003, Juneau RD created a unique Tongass Junior Ranger Program. Some programs are developed from established curricula (and correlated to State Educational Standards) such as Project Learning Tree or Project WILD. However, many programs are created to address specific local needs. In most cases, these local programs are not shared across the Forest, nor correlated to State Educational Standards.

Although most conservation education programs are based in Forest facilities, the Forest also conducts seasonal programs in classrooms and at field-based sites. These field contexts include long-term longitudinal studies conducted each year, such as stream surveys; water-quality sampling; aquatic insect sampling and Coho in the Classroom releases; temperate rainforest biodiversity studies; and Outdoor Education weeks and camps. Many of these programs have used the Hands on the Land web portal ([www.handsontheland.org](http://www.handsontheland.org)) to share information with other students and educators about ecosystems on the Tongass and in Alaska.

The Forest conducts a wide range of activities, with each District offering programs by resource specialists and interpreters. Routine programs are presented in seasonal events such as Tongass Marine Highway programs; summer Day Camps; Junior Ranger programs; Earth Day; SeaWeek; and migratory bird festivals. Five Districts have dedicated conservation education program staff as part of the interpretive program. Juneau Ranger District and Ketchikan-Misty Ranger District have conservation education specialists.

Culture Camps are field experiences that last from a day to a week in traditional outdoor settings and set the stage for opportunities for Alaska Native youth to learn from elders and specialists about lifeways, subsistence and survival in Alaska. Forest Service educators contribute to these camp experiences, which are highly interactive and participatory, complemented by storytelling, demonstrations and the practice of transferable skills.

Some conservation education programs are developed from established curricula correlated to state standards, such as Project Learning Tree or Project WILD. Others require correlation through an examination of the Alaska Department of Education standards and learning expectancies. (See page 79). Still others are adapted for application to Alaskan resources and conditions, such as Project Archaeology or Leave No Trace wilderness ethics training.

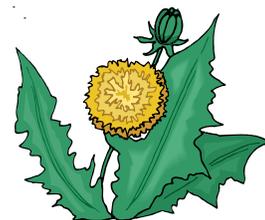
The Forest's conservation education practitioners required a best-practices document in order to apply consistent standards and guidelines in their programs. Guidelines were needed for professional development and formal and non-formal education setting and to assist them with evaluating the materials they were using. To accomplish this goal, the Forest interpretive and conservation education program manager became trained as a facilitator for the National Association for Environmental Education Guidelines for Excellence. (See Appendix L.) In March 2009, these guidelines were adopted Region-wide. Training was proposed to include units on developing and writing objectives and developing appropriate evaluation tools. Efforts to improve existing curricula and conservation education activities through the application of these guidelines has focused on making sure they are correlated with State standards before they are introduced to students. Pre-and post-Forest experiences require needs assessments in order to target students with activities and messages that are relevant to grade level expectations (GLEs).

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# APPENDIX H

## PRIMER: HOW TO ADDRESS ISSUES FROM AN INTERPRETIVE AND EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

TOPIC: INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES MANAGEMENT



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### Focus

**Definition:** Invasive species are non-native (alien) to the ecosystem and their being introduced is likely to cause environmental harm or harm to human health.

**Primary resources:** Ecologists, botanists, scientists, invasive program contacts on Districts and zones, State and Private contacts, Alaska Committee for Noxious and Invasive Plants Management, local invasives groups.

**National Direction:** One of four critical threats to our Nation's ecosystems.

**Forest and Regional Management Summary:** There is a Tongass National Forest Invasive Plant Management Plan and Regional Strategy that includes a public education component. The Forest Coordinators are Patti Krosse and zone District staff. Current implementation of the strategy involves inventory and identification of species, assessing the level of threats and risks through out the Forest, and focusing on Administrative sites that contain orange hawkweed, Japanese knotweed, reed canary grass, non-native thistles, and garlic mustard. These species and others have been the focus of control efforts within the Forest or on adjacent private lands over the last six years.

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### Formulate

**Theme:** Invasive plants are a critical threat to ecosystems on public lands in Alaska.

**Subthemes:**

- The identification and location of invasive plants are two key components to assessing the risk of spread.
- Plant species spread more rapidly in environments that are continuously disturbed.
- As a public lands user, you can decrease the potential of spreading invasive plants by doing several simple things, including cleaning footwear and tires (cars, bicycles, OHVs).

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### Implement

- Define programs to reach stakeholders on public and private lands, adults, landowners.
- Team building with resource specialists on Districts and zones regarding the interpretive "equation."
- Produce personal programs or non-personal interpretive or educational media for specific events, stakeholders, or areas.
- Implement Southeast Alaska Invasive Plant Education Module.

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## Review

- Review implementation plans and effectiveness with your team of management experts and with the disciplines that provide your funding.
- Review “On your doorstep, and into the public lands” focus groups.
- Review your program objectives with local public land users who rent cabins or hunt, local residents or land owners, outfitters and guides, a gardening club or a local commercial plant nursery.

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## Summarize

- Produce a short PowerPoint to present to management.
- Establish long-term partnerships within the community to work toward a common goal.
- Translate the effectiveness of your message into dollars saved.
- Translate the effectiveness of your changed behaviors into ecological consequences.
- Summarize evaluations of your product each year.

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## Treat

- Think strategically to implement your programs with other disciplines such as recreation and silviculture.
- Think small successes that add up into a bigger picture.
- Share your successes (and failures) with your colleagues.

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## Evaluate

- Keep up to date on the latest records on species identification and locations.
- Refine your interpretive messages as the parts of the interpretive equation change.
- Establish a summative evaluation plan that is both qualitative and quantitative.

# APPENDIX I

## Current Interpretation, Conservation Education and NatureWatch Efforts

Managing Unit	Interpretive and Visitor Contact Facilities	Interp.Trails/ Exhibits	Interp. Personal Services	Interpretive Media	Conservation Ed.	NatureWatch
<b>Forest-Wide or SO Level Programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Design/planning/partnership support for all VCs</li> <li>*Visitor services support</li> <li>*Alaska Geographic forest liaison</li> <li>*Visitor Portal enhancements: Bellingham ferry terminal, Juneau airport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Design, planning and partnership support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Comprehensive planning, training, coaching and evaluation program</li> <li>*Heritage, geology and palenontology outreach</li> <li>* Special events/support for Districts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Annual Tongass Guide</li> <li>*Community outreach</li> <li>*Publications and printing (Sculptures in Granite, Pad Maps, Passages, Comment Cards, Petroglyphs brochure)</li> <li>*Support for other Forest-wide media (Lichens/Mosses/Ferns/ Invasive Plants)</li> <li>*Sign design and planning</li> <li>*Resource bundles and trunks (Minerals, Climate Change, Paleontology/ Karst Landscapes</li> <li>*Exhibit/display materials for traveling displays and Forest-wide exhibits</li> <li>*Visitor Center films and audio-visual integration upgrades</li> <li>*Historic photo and slide archives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Culture Camps support</li> <li>*Guidelines for Excellence training</li> <li>*School District outreach support</li> <li>*Special events/support for District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*25 sites, national NatureWatch web site</li> <li>*2 sites, Celebrate Wildflowers!</li> <li>*Design, planning and partnerships support, District sites</li> </ul>
<b>Yakutat Ranger District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Front office displays</li> <li>*Visitor information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*9 Mile Bridge Access Trail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Fairweather Days</li> <li>*River Ranger program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Birds of Yakutat Guidebook</li> <li>*9 Mile Recreation Site development</li> <li>*Tawah Creek Nature-Watch signage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Seaweed</li> <li>*Outdoor education with School District</li> <li>*Watershed/ fisheries outreach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Family Fishing Day</li> <li>*Sites: Summit Lake/ Tawah Creek, 9 Mile Bridge</li> </ul>
<b>Hoonah Ranger District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Front office displays</li> <li>*Visitor information</li> <li>*Mobile station, Icy Strait Point</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*AMH ferry terminal display/touch-screen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Special events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*3rd-4th grades school outreach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Family Fishing Day/ Pathway to Fishing event</li> <li>*Sites: Suntaheen Fish Pass Interpretive Site, Pavlof Marsh bird observation site</li> <li>*Point Adolphus marine mammal viewing</li> </ul>

Managing Unit	Interpretive and Visitor Contact Facilities	Interp.Trails/ Exhibits	Interp. Personal Services	Interpretive Media	Conservation Ed.	NatureWatch
<b>Juneau Ranger District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Mendenhall Glacier VC and Recreation Area facilities</li> <li>*Alaska Geographic branch</li> <li>*Tongass Marine Highway ship information stations</li> <li>*Front desk visitor information</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Trail of Time</li> <li>*Steep Creek Wildlife Observation Trail</li> <li>*AMH ferry terminal display</li> <li>*Mohler Cabin display planned</li> <li>*MGVC exhibits and displays, theater upgrades</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Special events</li> <li>*Fireside Chats (winter)</li> <li>*Kids Day programs</li> <li>*Tongass Marine Highway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*MGVC foreign language brochures</li> <li>*Steep Creek fish brochure</li> <li>*Interactive media for programs</li> <li>*Tour bus flyers</li> <li>*Tongass Trails radio broadcasts (online access)</li> <li>*Education Trunks</li> <li>*Junior Ranger program</li> <li>*Wilderness Education/ LNT/Impact Monster (with ANM)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Crystal Lake Day Camp</li> <li>*SeaWeek</li> <li>*Backyard Glacier (K-8th grades)</li> <li>*ABC Bears</li> <li>*Outreach to local school districts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Family Fishing Day</li> <li>*Steep Creek cams: salmon and beaver</li> <li>*Junior Explorers Program on fisheries</li> <li>*High School Aquaculture Program</li> <li>*Sites: Steep Creek, Inside Passage viewing</li> </ul>
<b>Admiralty National Monument</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Front desk visitor information</li> </ul>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Tracy Arm kayak/ship-board interpretive program</li> <li>*Teacher training partnership with Alaska Geographic/Discovery Southeast: Bears and Wilderness of Admiralty Island; The Wilderness Idea; Whales of Icy Strait</li> <li>*LNT for outfitter guides</li> <li>*Wildlife and viewing ethics programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Bear awareness programs and training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Wilderness education, LNT, Impact Monster, Juneau and Anagoon school districts</li> <li>*Heritage Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Site: Pack Creek Bear Viewing</li> </ul>
<b>Sitka Ranger District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Front office displays</li> <li>*Visitor information</li> <li>*Alaska Geographic branch</li> <li>*Starrigavan Outdoor Campfire Circle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Starrigavan Estuary trail/boardwalk complex</li> <li>*Geodetic Survey house exhibits</li> <li>*Integrated resource management exhibits</li> <li>*Sitka Airport display</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Starrigavan Campground Campfire program</li> <li>*Special events, Alaska Days</li> <li>*Cabin Fever Talks (winter)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Young growth Starrigavan Cabin sign (planned)</li> <li>*Boardwalk trail sign package (planned)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Culture Camp</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Swan Lake Children's Fishing Derby</li> <li>*Sites: Starrigavan bird viewing, Harbor Mountain Recreation Area, Beaver Lake grayling viewing area</li> </ul>

Managing Unit	Interpretive and Visitor Contact Facilities	Interp.Trails/ Exhibits	Interp. Personal Services	Interpretive Media	Conservation Ed.	Nature-Watch
<b>Petersburg Ranger District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Petersburg Visitor Information Center</li> <li>*Alaska Geographic branch</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Ohmer Creek interpretive trail</li> <li>*AMH ferry terminal external kiosk</li> <li>**"Tide Out" display</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Rainforest Festival</li> <li>*Muskeg Guided Walks</li> <li>*Petersburg Marine Mammal Center partnership</li> <li>*Petroglyphs of Sandy Beach Heritage program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Wildflower Slide Show</li> <li>*Tongass Journal Radio program</li> <li>*Interpretive sign, Petersburg Airport</li> <li>*Heritage exhibits</li> <li>*Swan Observatory signage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Kake &amp; Petersburg Culture Camps</li> <li>*Summer Day Care programs</li> <li>*Elderhostel programming</li> <li>*Wilderness Education, LNT, Impact Monster programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Blind Slough Swan Observatory</li> </ul>
<b>Wrangell Ranger District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Nolan Center partnership</li> <li>*Front office displays</li> <li>*Alaska Geographic outlet</li> <li>*Visitor information</li> <li>*Native plants display outside office</li> <li>*Nemo Saltwater Access Trail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Rainbow Falls Self-Guided Trail</li> <li>*Ferry terminal display</li> <li>*Airport display</li> <li>*Anan Creek interpretive signs</li> <li>*Airport mitigation signage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Stikine River Bird Festival</li> <li>*Nemo Campground programs (summer)</li> <li>*Chautauqua Lecture Series (winter)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Recreation and road reports</li> <li>*Volunteer Loop signs</li> <li>*Nolan Center PowerPoint programs</li> <li>*Wrangell Island and Stikine River bird checklists</li> <li>*Anan Wildlife Observatory brochure</li> <li>*Hiking Trails and Recreation Facilities brochure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Mondays for Munchkins</li> <li>*SeaDay</li> <li>*Forest Explorers, 6th grade for School District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Sites: Anan Creek Wildlife Observatory</li> </ul>
<b>Ketchikan-Misty Ranger District</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*SE Alaska Discovery Center (SEADC)/ Alaska Public Lands Center</li> <li>*Alaska Geographic outlet</li> <li>*Visitor Information at District</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Ward Lake Self-Guided Trail and signage</li> <li>*CCC history signs, Ward Lake Trail</li> <li>*Aleut Evacuation signs, Three-Cs Campground</li> <li>*Thinning signs, Salvage Trail</li> <li>*Silviculture/spruce sign, Brown Mountain Road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Misty Fiords Kayak Ranger programs</li> <li>*Wilder education/LNT/Impact Monster</li> <li>*Hummingbird/Migratory Bird Festival</li> <li>*Special events/Haunted Rainforest</li> <li>*Friday Night Insights (winter)</li> <li>*Nature hikes</li> <li>*In-port Princess cruise ship programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Misty Fiords brochure (planned)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Culture Camp</li> <li>*School District outreach</li> <li>*Education Trunks</li> <li>*Ward Lake EE Week</li> <li>*Migratory bird outreach</li> <li>*Family Day</li> <li>*Special events/Scouts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Christmas Bird Count</li> <li>*All American Kids Fishing Derby</li> <li>*Sites: Ward Lake, Salmon Cam, SEADC</li> <li>*Margaret Wildlife Viewing Observatory</li> <li>*Fish Creek Wildlife Viewing Observatory</li> </ul>

Managing Unit	Interpretive and Visitor Contact Facilities	Interp.Trails/ Exhibits	Interp. Personal Services	Interpretive Media	Conservation Ed.	NatureWatch
<b>Thorne Bay Ranger District</b>	*Front office displays *Visitor information *Alaska Geographic outlet *El Capitan Cave contact station	*Beaver Falls Self-Guided Trail and signage *Balls Lake Interpretive Trail	*El Capitan Cave guided hikes *Wilderness education/LNT/ Impact Monster *Passport in Time projects, Coffman Cove	*Front office signs	*EcoVan program *Science Fair *Outdoor Education Week *Algal bloom monitoring program *Career Days *Teaching training project Learning Tree	*Kids Fishing Day *Coho in the Classroom *Sites: Sandy Beach Recreation Area, Big Lake Fish Pass
<b>Craig Ranger District</b>	*Front office displays *Visitor information *Alaska Geographic branch	*Touch-screen, Hollis IFA terminal	*Deer Celebration *Special events *Interpretive programs *Wilderness education/LNT/ Impact Monster *Heritage education programs/ Passport in Time	*Dog Salmon Fish Pass signs	*Craig Summer Education program *Culture Camp Hydaburg *Culture Camp Kasaan *Passport in Time *Bioenergy facility tours	*Kids Fishing Day (Island-wide with Thorne Bay RD) *Sites: Cable Creek Fish Pass, Dog Salmon Fish Pass, Trocadero Trail Viewing Site

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# APPENDIX J

## Our Audiences

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### Our Audiences

Who are the audiences for the Tongass National Forest interpretation and conservation education programs? Clearly, visitors who arrive each summer – by water, air and even the limited road access from outside the state – are part of our audience. Each year visitors from throughout the United States and the world travel to and through the spectacular Tongass National Forest. Spring, fall, and winter audiences include extended-stay visitors and residents, respectively.

Conservation education efforts are generally focused on residents – including K-12 students, parents, families and special-interest groups. Are there segments of the resident population who are underserved? What about web “visitors”? What about the constantly changing internal audience of the employees and their families? To be successful, the Forest’s interpretive and conservation education programs must identify and target these distinct audiences as described below.

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### Alaska Visitor Statistics Program (AVSP)

The Alaska Visitor Statistics Program (AVSP) provides reliable data on Alaska visitation throughout the state. This program was first conducted in 1989 and has gathered extensive data since that time. While the data are not segregated by region, by extrapolating results we can gain valid insights into our Southeast Alaska visitors. The majority of this visitation is funneled through our waterway "portals" in Bellingham and Seattle, Wash.; Vancouver and Prince Rupert, British Columbia; and from the north through Anchorage, Alaska. Cruise ships, air, highway and the Alaska Marine Highway ferries, in descending order, brought visitors to Southeast Alaska in 2008. (McDowell Group, 2008. Pg. 7)

The AVSP estimated that 2,354,300 visitors traveled to Alaska during May through September 2008. In Southeast Alaska, cruise ships (60.5 percent), airlines (35 percent) and ferries (4.5 percent) represent the major modes of entry. Alaska visitors are likely to do the following or to have the following characteristics:

- To be making their first trips to Alaska
- To be in the “61 and older” age group
- To travel on packaged trips
- To be from the U.S., predominantly from western states
- To visit in June, July and August
- To stay in Alaska seven days or fewer

“ We create intellectual and emotional connections between people and their natural and cultural heritage, thereby instilling respect and appreciation for America’s public lands and fostering their protection and stewardship through time.”  
– National Strategic Plan, 2003

The AVSP allows us to track visitation trends to Alaska. Perhaps the most striking trend in the last 15 years is the exponential growth in the cruise ship industry (chiefly based in Southeast Alaska). During that time, visitation on cruise ships has increased 418 percent! In those years 1993 to 2008, visitation on Alaska Marine Highway ferries decreased by more than 50 percent, while visitation on domestic air carriers increased by 62 percent. Recent changes such as the increased cost for gasoline and downturns in the U.S. economy have influenced the number of cruise ship visits and thus the number of visitors spending money at each stop. In general, loss of ships or changes in port schedules have influenced cruise ship ports throughout the Tongass National Forest (Ketchikan, Sitka, Wrangell, Petersburg, Juneau, Haines and Skagway).

The AVSP program reported in 2006 that 82 percent of visitors overall were traveling to Alaska for vacation or pleasure. Of cruise ship travelers, 99 percent were traveling for vacation or pleasure; for ferry-borne visitors, the figure was 82 percent.

Of visitors who were traveling for vacation or pleasure, 53 percent reported that they participated in cultural activities; 51 percent participated in sightseeing. Only shopping and wildlife viewing exceeded those activities in popularity. Less popular were train trips, hiking and nature walks, and fishing. Recent visitor profiles in Ketchikan indicated that nearly half of the non-sportfishing visitors were visiting friends and relatives. (McDowell Group 2008)

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### Foreign Visitors

The AVSP reported that, in 2008, 86 percent of visitors to Alaska were residents of the United States; about 10 percent were Canadians; and about 4 percent were from other nations.

## Audience Profiles – Visitors

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### Cruise Ship Passengers

Cruise ship passengers make up the majority of Tongass National Forest visitors. These visitors choose to sail to Alaska for many reasons, but the region's natural beauty and cultural wealth are the primary attractions. In general, cruise ship visitors rarely set foot on the forest, but rather sail through the Tongass during their voyage. They spend time at several communities along the Inside Passage, with nearly all visitors stopping in Ketchikan and Juneau. In general, cruise ship passengers are older, well-educated, economically successful and well-traveled. However, this visitor profile is slowly changing to younger and more active visitors and families as cruise ship travel becomes more accessible to a larger audience.

Their exposure to the Tongass National Forest is limited to self-exploration and study, on-board cruise ship naturalist programs (which rarely address Tongass NF messages), and visits to the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center or other shore excursions. In 2003, the Ketchikan-Misty Fiords Ranger District piloted a new cruise ship interpretive program that has made inroads into reaching this vast and largely unserved audience.

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### Ferry Travelers

The Alaska Marine Highway provides a primary transportation link in Southeast and Alaskans make up a significant part of ferry ridership. Alaska residents are more numerous during the fall and winter months as they travel within the region for business, school activities and pleasure. During the summer months, this segment is about 5 percent of the ferry traffic, but during the winter months it increases to about 50 percent.

Many people choose the Alaska Marine Highway for travel in Southeast Alaska. These independent travelers often plan their own travel and their itineraries often extend beyond Southeast Alaska to include Anchorage, Fairbanks and the Interior. The 2008 Shipboard Interpretive Program estimates that 40 percent of summer passengers are individuals or couples; family travelers account for 25 percent; retired travelers, 10 percent; package tour groups such as Elderhostel, 10 percent; adventure travelers, 10 percent; and foreign visitors, 5 percent. (Tongass National Forest 2008 Report and Summary of the Interpretive Marine Highway Program.) Shipboard programs include adult- and youth-oriented activities and programs; information about the forest and its management; local towns, history and sights; information for trip planning and offshore activities in the National Forest. Each ship has an updated information station as of 2009.

For more than 35 years, the Alaska Region has operated a successful shipboard interpretive program aboard AMH ferries. Additionally, there are interpretive displays onboard the ships and at ferry terminals throughout the system. The next exhibit slated for refurbishment is at the Bellingham Ferry Terminal in Fairhaven, Wash. An effort to increase the visibility and accessibility of all exhibits is under way.

In 2001, communities on Prince of Wales Island, along with Petersburg and Wrangell, initiated service by the Inter-Island Ferry Authority (IFA) between Hollis, on western Prince of Wales Island, and Ketchikan. In 2006, IFA initiated service by a second ferry from Coffman Cove, on northwestern Prince of Wales Island, to Wrangell and Petersburg. At the present time, nothing has been done to serve this audience. In early 2009, the IFA board suspended service on the so-called northern route out of Coffman Cove. Static displays, free Tongass Guides and an accessible touch screen kiosk emphasizing watershed information are installed at the Hollis terminal for those awaiting the ferry.

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## Air Travel

A growing number of visitors travel solely by air to and from Southeast Alaska. Many of these visitors stay at lodges and resorts and come to the region to fish, hunt or participate in adventure recreation. Wrangell and Petersburg have Forest Service displays in their airports; reconstruction and improvements at the Juneau airport are slated to include areas for seasonally changing Tongass National Forest banners marketing opportunities on the Forest for all airport users.

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## Private Visitor Service Providers

This audience includes outfitter and guide permit holders, private lodge owners, shore excursion operators for cruise ships, and others. They are an important delivery system to provide recreation services to some visitors to the Tongass NF. Interpretation and education are often components of their service. The Forest is currently targeting this audience with training, specialty brochures and guides, and preparation of annual updates regarding Forest recreation opportunities. Certified interpretive Host and Guide courses certifying these skills through the National Association for Interpretation have been offered on the Forest since 2006. In recent years, Leave No Trace Inc. master teachers have offered minimal-impact courses and resource managers have given short courses on invasives and other management topics. The classes are well-attended by outfitter guides, local private companies, commercial venue owners and local high school students.

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## Virtual Visitors

With the advent of the Internet and higher travel costs, more people are “visiting” the Tongass through the web presence provided by the Forest web site. Popular visitor-oriented content includes a virtual tour of the exhibits at the Southeast Alaska Discovery Center and a content-rich web site for the Mendenhall Glacier Visitor Center. An extensive overhaul of the web site in 2008 improved the site’s consistency and design. Further improvements with the integration of the new national web site templates are expected by summer 2010. The web site has had substantial increases in visits since 2004, when it received 48,000 annual visits. In 2007, there were more than 75,000 page loads and more than 22,000 new visitors to the web site. In 2008, there were more than 960,000 page loads and more than 275,000 first-time visitors to the site. (Personal communication, Kuharich 2009). Research on social media and audiences attests to baby boomers’ increasing use of the web to find information and “Generation Y’s” use of the Internet for communication. Among the most popular pages on the web site are the Mendenhall Glacier page and the Mendenhall Glacier cam.

## Audience Profiles – Alaskans

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### Students

In many Southeast Alaska communities, conservation education specialists working with community partners and some Tongass National Forest employees have filled some of the educational needs for students in early-childhood, K-12 and continuing-education programs. Opportunities to correlate these efforts with State of Alaska education standards and grade level expectancies (see Appendix M) are ongoing. College students from UAS campuses in Sitka, Juneau and Ketchikan have been intermittently involved as mentors to younger students in outdoor field activities, such as stream monitoring and studies of water and soil chemistry.

These efforts have largely been the result of personal commitments by conservation educators and employees with strong motivations, teachers with a specific natural resource focus, or programs that have been historically provided to the local school by the Forest Service. Culture camps, for example, are successful in part due to trust and communication that have built up between the elders and camp leaders in Native Alaska communities and specific Forest Service resource specialists, providing continuity and energy for seasonal and longer-term projects. Currently Kake, Hydaburg and, most recently, Angoon have conducted successful camps and received some Forest Service employee involvement.

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### Families, Adults, Seniors

Families, adults and seniors represent a growing segment of our audiences, particularly during winter months, when many Ranger Districts offer lecture series by visiting authors and experts on a variety of natural-resource and cultural-resource topics. Seasonal and special events — such as the Alaska Hummingbird Festival in Ketchikan, the Stikine River Bird Festival in Wrangell, SeaWeek in Juneau, and Autumn festivals such as National Public Lands Day — provide an important link. In many communities, Tongass employees conduct Family Fishing days in the spring. Visitor Centers in Juneau and Ketchikan provide “Friday Night Insight” programs during the winter. Other seasonal special events (e.g., Ketchikan Hummingbird Festival, Halloween Haunted Houses) provide an important link with local audiences. Pre-school programs are also often conducted in response to requests by teachers and parents. Increased involvement of families, adults and seniors continues to be a goal for many interpretive programs across the Forest.

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## Alaska Natives

The Forest Service has a legal and binding government-to-government relationship with Alaska tribal governments. They are an extremely important audience. They presently work primarily with the heritage and archaeological staff of the Forest. Alaska Natives often conduct cultural camps, totem raisings and other cultural activities. They represent a resource to help employees who deliver interpretive and educational programs to learn about sensitive cultural issues. Visitors are keenly interested in Alaska's rich Native history. Visits to totem poles, fish traps and other cultural sites are one of the fastest-growing segments of the tourism industry. Building bridges of communication and providing support and staff for community activities such as the Deer Festival in Craig signify the commitment of the Forest to this large, significant and diverse audience segment.

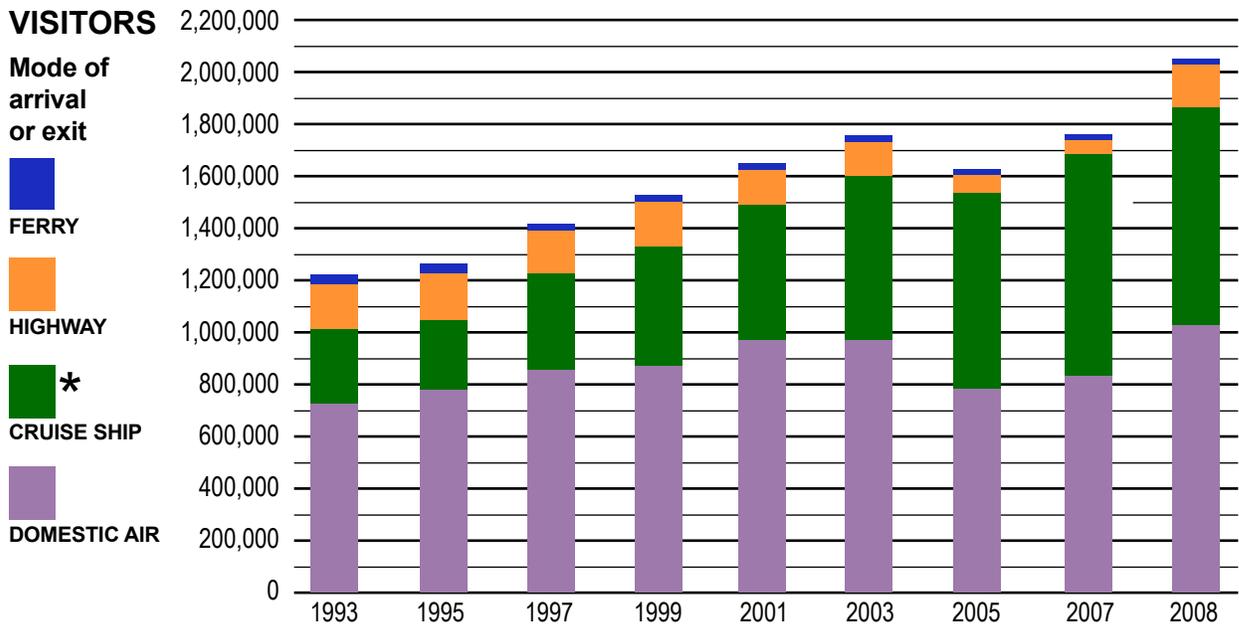
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## Internal Audience

Any organization is only as good as the people in it. Recent organizational changes on the Forest have reduced permanent positions, requiring those left behind to increase their workloads. It has been said that, at any one time, 25 percent of Tongass National Forest employees are either planning to leave or are just arriving. Since the interpretation and education program crosses functional and organizational boundaries, this rate of turnover is a challenge to delivering a consistent, strategic program. Professional training and certification of seasonal employees has been enhanced by two Certified Interpretive Trainers for guides on the Forest; one trainer for Certified Interpretive Hosts; one Alaska Host facilitator; and one NAAEE Guidelines for Excellence facilitator. This has reduced travel costs and consistently allowed partners to participate in Forest Service training, as space allows. Employees are increasingly informed about the programs happening on their Districts and participate in providing them, communicating to the public. Our Tongass workforce is a critical audience that needs better information about the interpretation and conservation education program.

# APPENDIX K

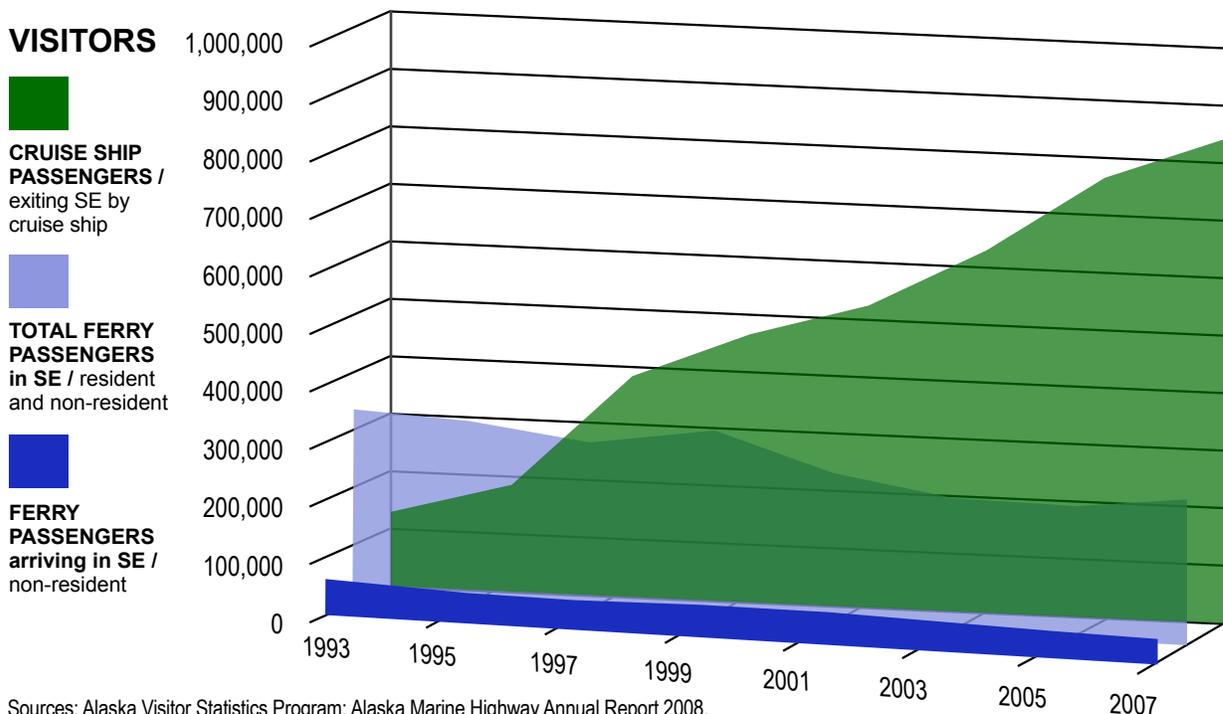
## Alaska Visitation Statistics 1993-2008



\* Some visitors arriving in Alaska on cruise ships leave the state by air or by highway; the graph reflects visitors who exited the state on cruise ships. In 2007, estimated visitors entering Alaska on cruise ships numbered 1,029,800; visitors exiting on cruise ships numbered 827,800.

Source: Alaska Visitor Statistics Program (AVSP): 1999-2000, 2001-2003, 2004-2008

## Marine-Based Visitation in Southeast 1993-2007



Sources: Alaska Visitor Statistics Program; Alaska Marine Highway Annual Report 2008.

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# APPENDIX L

## Guidelines for Environmental Education Excellence

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### Summary of the Environmental Education Materials: Guidelines for Excellence

**1 Fairness and accuracy:** EE materials should be fair and accurate in describing environmental problems, issues and conditions, and in reflecting the diversity of perspectives on them.

- 1.1 Factual accuracy
- 1.2 Balanced presentation of differing viewpoints and theories
- 1.3 Openness to inquiry
- 1.4 Reflection of diversity

**2 Depth:** EE materials should foster an awareness of the natural and built environment, an understanding of environmental concepts, conditions, and issues, and an awareness of the feelings, values, attitudes, and perceptions at the heart of environmental issues, as appropriate for different developmental levels.

- 2.1 Awareness
- 2.2 Focus on concepts
- 2.3 Concepts in context
- 2.4 Attention to different scales

**3 Emphasis on skills building:** EE materials should build lifelong skills that enable learners to address environmental issues.

- 3.1 Critical and creative thinking
- 3.2 Applying skills to issues
- 3.3 Action skills

**4 Action orientation:** EE materials should promote civic responsibility, encouraging learners to use their knowledge, personal skills, and assessments of environmental issues as a basis for environmental problem solving and action.

- 4.1 Sense of personal stake and responsibility
- 4.2 Self-efficacy

**5 Instructional soundness:** EE materials should rely on instructional techniques that create an effective learning environment.

- 5.1 Learner-centered instruction
- 5.2 Different ways of learning
- 5.3 Connection to learners' everyday lives
- 5.4 Expanded learning environment
- 5.5 Interdisciplinary
- 5.6 Goals and objectives
- 5.7 Appropriateness for specific learning settings
- 5.8 Assessment

**6 Usability:** EE materials should be well designed and easy to use.

6.1 Clarity and logic

6.2 Easy to use

6.3 Long lived

6.4 Adaptable

6.5 Accompanied by instruction and support

6.6 Make substantiated claims

6.7 Fit with national, state, or local requirements

*Source: North American Association for Environmental Education, 2004*

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# APPENDIX M

## State of Alaska Education Content Standards

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### Key Messages Embedded within Experience Goals in Strategic Plan and Correlated Alaska State Content Standards

- **Know they are in the Tongass National Forest.**

- English and Language Arts Content Standards A 1-8
- Mathematics Content Standards A 1-6
- Geography Content Standards B 1-8

- **Understand the complexity surrounding the management of the National Forest: that we serve the diversity of public interests while providing for multiple uses of the land.**

- English and Language Arts C 1-5
- Science Content Standards E 1-3, G 1-8
- Geographic Content Standards A 1-6, D 1-5, E 1-6, F 1-6
- Government and Citizenship Content Standards B 1-9, E 1-7
- History Content Standards B 1-5, D 1-6
- Skills for a Healthy Life D 1-6
- Cultural Content Standards A 1-7 C 1-4
- GLE Mathematics Grades 3-6 7.1.1 to 7.2.3 Grades 7-10 7.3.1 to 7.4.3

- **Gain an understanding of the dynamic forces that shape Tongass National Forest ecosystems.**

- Mathematics Content Standards D 1-5, E 1-3
- Science Content Standards A 1-3, B 1-4, C 1-3, D 1-4
- Geography Content Standards A 1-6, B 1-8, C 1-3, D 1-5, F 1-6
- History Content Standards A 1-9
- GLE Mathematics Grades 3-6 3.1.1 to 3.2.6 Grades 7-10 3.3.1 to 3.4.5
- GLE Mathematics Grades 3-6 5.1.1 to 5.2.7 Grades 7-10 5.3.1 to 5.4.6
- GLE Science Grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-11 SA 1-3, SB1-4, SC 1-3, SD 1-4

- **Understand the intimate relationships that Southeast Alaskan people have with the land and its resources.**

- English and Language Arts Content Standards A 1-8, E 1-4
- Science Content Standards F 1-3
- History Content Standards B 1-4
- Arts Content Standards B 1-9
- Cultural Content Standards B 1-4, D 1-6, E 1-7
- GLE Reading, Grades 3-6, 1.11, 2.11, Grades 7-10 3.10, 4.9
- GLE Writing Grades 3-6 1.5, 2.5, Grades 7-10 3.5, 4.5
- GLE Science Grades 3-5, 6-8, and 9-11 SF1-3
- GLE Alaska History SH1 PPE4 through CC7

- **Learn about the Tongass National Forest, even if they cannot physically visit it.**

English and Language Arts Content Standards A 1-8, B 1-3, D 1-4

Mathematics Content Standards B 1-8

History Content Standards C 1-4

Technology Content Standards A 1-5, B 1-3, C 1-3, E 1-8

Information Literacy Content Standards A 1-5, B 1-6, C 1-3, D 1-5

GLE Reading, Grades 3-6, 1.11, 2.11, Grades 7-10 3.10, 4.9

GLE Writing Grades 3-6 1.5, 2.5, Grades 7-10 3.5, 4.5, 2.6

GLE Science Grades 3-5, 6-8, 9-11 SE 1-3

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Key Messages Embedded within Experience Goals and Correlated  
Alaska Performance Standards / Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs)

Alaska Performance Standards / Grade-Level Expectations are aligned with Content Standards but are 1) more specific; 2) apply to grades 3-10 in reading, writing and mathematics; 3) applications in grades 3-11 in science are based on No Child Left Behind legislation; and 4) indicate only core content, not all content.

- **Feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for this natural treasure.**

- **Learn how to become involved in Tongass National Forest.**

- **Have a safe trip and minimize their impacts on public lands.**

GLE Alaska History PPE3

- **Experience the thrill of discovery of both the cultural and natural world.**

- **View wildlife in their natural, unaltered habitats.**

GLE Grades 9-11 SG 1-4

- **Feel the vast nature and wild lands of the Tongass National Forest: islands of communities surrounded by wilderness.**

- **Experience a temperate rainforest and gain an understanding of a productive, healthy, functioning forest.**

GLE Grades 9-11 SC 1-3

- **Feel and understand the influence of water in the Tongass: islands, weather, rivers, glaciers, oceans and tides and the ecosystems that include these features.**

GLE Grade 8 SD2, GF6 / Grade 4 SD2

- **Appreciate the depth and diversity of human history in Southeast Alaska and Tongass National Forest.**

GLE Alaska History PPE2, Grade 4 SF3

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## Relevant Grade-Level Expectations and Abbreviations

### Grades 3-5

G=Geography

GB1 Know that places have distinctive geographic character

GB2 Know how places are formed, identified, named and characterized

GB7 Know that a region is a distinctive area characterized by distinctive cultural and natural features.

GF 1 Understand how regions change over time

GF 6 Understand and support learning and build competent citizens

### Grade 4

SC= Concepts of Life Science

SC1 Science explains changes over time

SD= Concepts of Earth Science

SD2 Forces that shape the structure of the earth and waters of the earth

SE=Science and technology

SE1 technology is used in making decisions about issues

SF=Cultural, social and personal perspectives

SF3 The value of cultural traditions

### Grade 8

SD=Concepts of Earth Science

SD2 Using the water cycle to explain changes in the Earth's surface

### Grade 9

SD1 Rock cycle, plate tectonics and geochemical cycles

AH=Alaska History

PPE1 People, Places and the Environment – Understand the interactions between people and the physical environment

PPE2 Cultural similarities and differences

CPD1 Consumption, Production and Distribution of Natural Resources

*Source: Alaska State Education Content and Cultural Standards*

*Also accessible at the web site [www.eed.state.ak.us/standards/pdf](http://www.eed.state.ak.us/standards/pdf) are: Grade-Level Expectations for K-12; Standards for administrators, schools, and teachers; and the curriculum framework.*

*The curriculum framework was created by stakeholders in Alaska and provides the ground work for school districts to align their materials and resources to the Alaska Grade-Level Expectations (GLE). The framework is downloadable as a MS Word document. Once the school district has agreed upon the content and skills sections, the materials and resources within the district can be identified and listed. It is important to note: when selecting materials and resources, the content's depth of knowledge or rigor must be considered when matching to the GLE.*

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# APPENDIX N

## School Districts in Southeast Alaska

### [And Corresponding Ranger Districts]

Annette Island School District  
P. O. Box 7  
Metlakatla, AK 99926  
907- 886-6009 [KETCHIKAN-MISTY RD]

Chatham School District  
P.O. Box 109  
Angoon, AK 99820  
907-788-3302 [JUNEAU RD]

Craig City School District  
100 School Road  
Craig, AK 99921  
907-826-3274 [CRAIG & THORNE BAY RDS]

Haines Borough School District  
P. O. Box 1289  
Haines, AK 99827  
907-766-6725 [JUNEAU RD]

Hoonah City School District  
366 Garteeni Hwy.  
Hoonah, AK 99829 [HOONAH RD]

Hydaburg City School District  
100 Totem Pole Lane  
Hydaburg, AK 99922  
907-285-3491 [CRAIG & THORNE BAY RDS]

Juneau Borough School District  
10014 Crazy Horse Drive  
Juneau, AK 99801  
907-523-1700 [JUNEAU RD]

Kake City School District  
P. O. Box 450  
Kake, AK 99830  
907-785-3741 [PETERSBURG RD]

Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District  
333 Schoenbar Road  
Ketchikan, AK 99901  
907-225-2118 [KETCHIKAN-MISTY RD]

Klawock City and School District  
715 Bayview Blvd.  
Klawock, AK 99925  
907-755-2220 [CRAIG & THORNE BAY RDS]

Pelican City School District  
P.O. Box 90  
Pelican, Alaska 99832  
907-735-2236 [HOONAH RD]

Petersburg City School District  
P. O. Box 289  
Petersburg, AK 99833  
907-772-4271 [PETERSBURG RD]

Sitka Borough School District  
300 Kostrometinoff Street  
Sitka, AK 99835  
907-966-1251 [SITKA RD]

Skagway City School District  
1563 Main Street  
Skagway, AK 99840  
907-983-2960 [JUNEAU RD]

Southeast Island School District  
1218 A Shoreline Drive  
Thorne Bay, AK 99919  
907-828-8254 [CRAIG & THORNE BAY RDS]

Wrangell Public School District  
P. O. Box 2319  
Wrangell, AK 99929  
907- 874-2347 [WRANGELL RD]

Yakutat School District  
429 Forest Hwy.  
Yakutat, AK 99689  
907-784-3317 [YAKUTAT RD]

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## APPENDIX 0 Strategy Revision Team Members



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Tongass National  
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Wildlife, Subsistence  
and Planning Staff  
Officer



**Mark Hummel**  
Wrangell District  
Ranger

“ I am only one,  
but I am one. I cannot  
do everything, but I  
can do something. And  
I will not let what I  
cannot do interfere with  
what I can do.”  
– Edward Everett Hale



**Faith Duncan**  
Interpretive and  
Conservation  
Education Program  
Manager



**Linda Slaght**  
Public Services  
Group Leader  
Petersburg Ranger  
District



**Leslie Swada**  
Conservation  
Education Specialist  
Southeast Alaska  
Discovery Center



**Tory Houser**  
Recreation Planner  
Craig Ranger District



**Laurie Lamm**  
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