



NEWS

TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE-FOREST SERVICE

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Mid-term Review of Tongass Forest Plan Completed:

Ketchikan, January 10 -- The Tongass National Forest revised its forest plan in 1997, and a recently completed comprehensive review shows that the plan is working well and the Forest is in good shape, Tongass officials report. "Forest Service policy directs forest supervisors to review overall conditions on the ground every five years to see how well our management plans are working," Forest Supervisor Forrest Cole said. "I've completed my mid-term review, and it shows that our plan is pretty much on track,"

Cole and his staff conducted the mid-term review as an assessment, which included an evaluation of existing information such as Tongass National Forest Annual Monitoring Reports, concerns expressed by internal and external sources, and specific items that are to be reviewed every five years. The assessment also identified information needs, strategies to address potential concerns, and cost-related information to help determine when to address a given concern or opportunity.

"After looking at the review carefully, and considering the limited implementation of the plan since 1997, I believe that conditions on the Forest and demands of the public have not changed significantly, and that the forest plan does not need to be revised now," Cole noted.

Two new sections have been added to the Tongass National Forest website (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/index.shtml>, under the "What's New" heading) to provide public access to the review and continuing work. The *5 Year Review* site includes information on how the mid-term review was completed, along with a detailed written determination that documents why a Forest Plan revision is not needed at this time. The *Forest Plan Maintenance Program* is the second new site, which outlines a new program the Forest Service will use to assign and track work on potential concerns identified in the assessment. There is also a page on the new *Forest Plan Maintenance Program* site

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where the public can submit potential concerns they have, to contribute to continuous improvement of the Tongass Forest Plan.

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