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# DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

#### **Forest Service**

section.

## Environmental Impact Statement for the South Lindenberg Timber Sale(s), Tongass National Forest, Alaska

### AGENCY: USDA, Forest Service.

**ACTION:** Revised Notice of Intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (revises previous NOI, page 38557 in the 7/19/93 **Federal Register**).

**SUMMARY:** The proposed action is to harvest approximately 40 million board feet of timber and build the associated road system. The existing Tonka log transfer facility would be used. The study area is located southwest of Petersburg, Alaska, on Kupreanof Island. It encompasses approximately 65,000 acres at elevations ranging from sea level to 3,000 feet. The area includes VCUs 437 and 439 and portions of 447 and 448. This includes townships 58, 59, 60, and 61 south, and ranges 77, 78, and 79 east, Copper River Meridian.

**DATES:** Additional comments concerning the proposal to harvest timber in the South Lindenberg study area should be received in writing by March 15, 1995. Send requests for further information or written comments to Jim Thompson, Planning Team Leader, USDA Forest Service, P.O. Box 1328, Petersburg, AK, 99833 (907) 772–3871.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

## 1. Purpose and Scope of the Decision

The purpose of the project is to provide approximately 40 million board feet of timber for harvest according to direction described in the Tongass Land Management Plan, to meet the Federal obligation to make timber volume available for harvest by timber operators, and to improve the timber productivity of the project area by harvesting mature stands of timber and replacing them with faster growing stands of second-growth timber.

The decision to be made is whether to make timber available for harvest and improve timber productivity in the South Lindenberg Study Area while also providing a combination of recreation, fish, water, and wildlife for the resource uses of society now and into the future. This decision will be made by Abigail R. Kimbell, Forest Supervisor of the Stikine Area.

If timber is made available for harvest, the Forest Supervisor will also decide (a) the volume of timber to make available, (b) the location and design of the timber harvest units and log transfer facilities, (c) the location and design of associated mainline and local road corridors, and (d) appropriate mitigation measures for all alternatives in the project area.

### 1a. Public Involvement Process

A public scoping letter was sent to all persons who indicated an interest in the project by responding to the Stikine Area Project Schedule, or who otherwise notified the Stikine Area that they were interested in the South Lindenberg Timber Harvest project. Public meetings were held to gather additional information from interested persons.

#### 1b. Alternatives

Alternatives will include the no action alternative, and are likely to include three to five action alternatives, all of which will harvest approximately 40 million board feet of timber. The alternatives will vary according to the location of units, for example one alternative may spread harvest units evenly through the study area while another may concentrate the harvest in a portion of the study area. The road systems will vary with each alternative accordingly.

#### 1c. Significant Issues

1. Timber Management. How will long-term forest health and productivity be affected by harvesting and the specific harvest treatments proposed for the South Lindenberg area?

2. Harvest Economics. Will action alternatives within the study area include timber harvest that is profitable and meet economic criteria on the Tongass National Forest?

3. Soils. To what degree will soil erosion and sedimentation increase as a

result of harvest activities and the construction of roads in the South Lindenberg area?

4. Watersheds. To what degree will timber harvesting affect the hydrologic balance and water quality of streams in the South Lindenberg study area?

5. Fisheries. What effects will timber harvest and road construction have on habitats used by trout and salmon?

6. Wildlife. What effects will timber harvest and related activities have on wildlife habitat?

7. Threatened and Endangered Species. To what extent will harvesting and road construction result in impacts to any populations of threatened or endangered species?

8. Biodiversity. To what extent will timber harvesting associated with the South Lindenberg Sale affect the biodiversity and old growth structure of Kupreanof Island?

9. Subsistence. To what extent will each alternative affect subsistence resources and use within the study area?

10. Recreation. What effect will each alternative have on recreational opportunities?

11. Visual Appearance. To what extent will each alternative influence the landscape character of the study area, and to what extent will harvest designs be mitigated to protect visual guality?

#### 2. Expected Time for Completion

A draft Environmental Impact Statement is projected for issuance approximately March 1995. Issuance of the Final Environmental Impact Statement is projected for August 1995.

## 3. Comments

Interested publics are invited to comment.

The comment period on the draft environmental impact statement will be 45 days from the date of the Environmental Protection Agency's notice of availability appears in the **Federal Register**. The Forest Service believes, at this early stage, it is important to give reviewers notice of several court rulings related to public participation in the environmental review process.

First, reviewers of draft environmental impact statements must structure their participation in the environmental review of the proposal so that it is meaningful and alerts an agency to the reviewer's position and

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