



News Release

TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST

Erin Uloth • Public Affairs Officer • 907.228-6201 • euloth@fs.fed.us

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Contact: Jason Anderson, Petersburg District Ranger, telephone 907-772-5900

Forest Service Supports Local Economies **Tonka Timber Sale decision will support jobs around the region**

Petersburg, ALASKA – Announcements on timber sale decisions typically focus on project specifics like location, estimated timber harvest, miles of roads and the number of jobs created. The Tongass National Forest is breaking with tradition to highlight a new trend: the opportunities these sales create to develop different forest management projects in the same area.

The Tonka Timber Sale, or Tonka, is the newest project that may generate numerous economic opportunities for Southeast Alaska communities.

The Tonka decision, which outlines the details and analysis of a possible timber sale on Kupreanof Island, is the first step in beginning a potential stewardship contract in the project area. Under a stewardship contract, the government can use the money generated from the timber sale to support other work in the same area. For example, Tonka proceeds may help fund initiatives to improve fish passage and reduce soil erosion along roads, potentially improving habitat conditions for salmonids.

This decision marks a mid-way point in the process of pursuing a stewardship project and is a critical piece of the effort. The next major step is public engagement through a series of collaborative meetings to determine what the community sees as potential projects—what’s possible on the ground as well as what’s needed.

“We see this decision as a milestone in the broader effort to support local community economies in Southeast Alaska,” said Tongass Supervisor Forrest Cole. “Not only will we be supplying the timber industry with wood they need to support existing jobs, but we will be working with residents to see what opportunities we might develop together.”

The collaborative meetings in Petersburg are scheduled to begin May 3 at the Petersburg District Office. The feedback from the meeting will be used to help create stewardship opportunities, such as aquatic restoration, upland game management or any other access opportunities.

“Creating other opportunities to work with local communities is a powerful outcome of the Tonka sale. I’m looking forward to the dialogue,” said Petersburg District Ranger Jason Anderson.

The Forest Service estimates the Tonka Timber Sale on Kupreanof Island will provide an estimated 38MMBF of timber, along with creating up to 183 jobs. Those jobs will include stevedoring, road construction, barging and transportation, fuel delivery and mill jobs.

The project will not operate in Inventoried Roadless Areas and all 9.3 miles of road built will be extensions of existing roads. These roads will be closed once the project is completed. The economic effect of the sale could be significant. It is estimated that \$7.6 million will be generated in harvesting, processing and selling the wood products.

There is an appeal period on this decision for members of the public who participated in the comment process in November and December 2011. A legal notice will be published in the Ketchikan Daily News April 23, marking the start of the 45 day appeal period.

For more information or copies of the environmental impact statement and record of decision, please contact: District Ranger Jason Anderson, 12 North Nordic Drive, Petersburg, AK 99833. Telephone 907-772-5900, or email at jasonanderson@fs.fed.us.

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