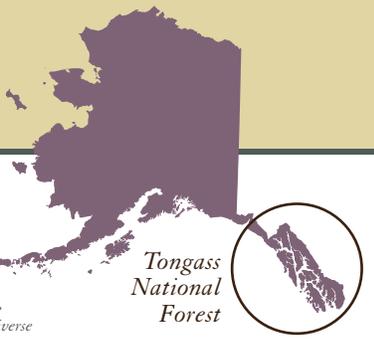


# The Tongass Timber Subsidy



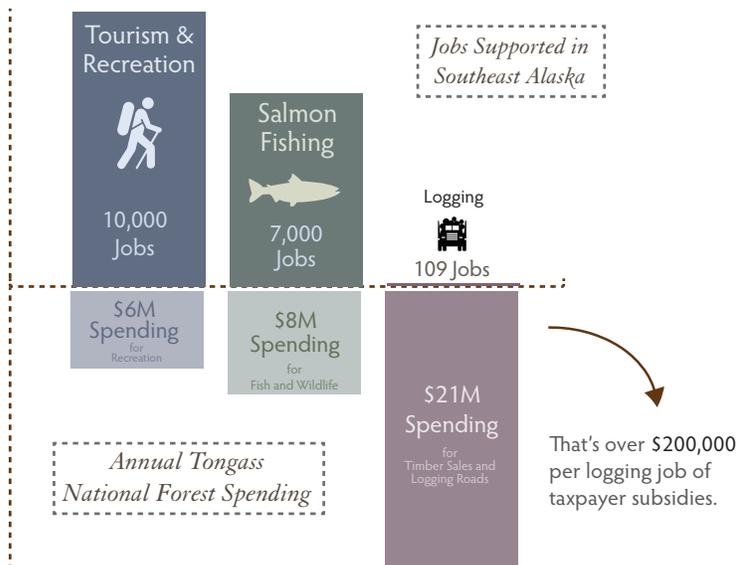
Tongass National Forest

## A Taxpayer Boondoggle in America's Rainforest

The Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska is a national treasure, and the engine of the region's economy. This ancient, temperate rainforest contains a wealth of wildlife and scenic beauty, which provides thousands of jobs in the tourism, recreation, and fishing industries. In the 20th century, it also supported a significant number of timber jobs, but the era of large pulp mills is over. Industrial-scale logging in the Tongass is enormously expensive, costing taxpayers \$1 billion since 1982, making it the largest money-loser in the national forest system.

## Spending in the Tongass is upside down.

Today, the tourism, recreation, and fishing industries are far and away the largest private sector employers in Southeast Alaska.<sup>1</sup> However, these industries are receiving a decreasing proportion of annual U.S. Forest Service spending compared to the small timber industry.



The tourism and fishing industries each contribute \$1 billion to the local economy, and have their foundation in healthy watersheds.<sup>2</sup> While critical stream restoration and recreation projects are neglected and their staff and budget is cut, industrial-scale old growth logging continues, threatening this rich ecosystem and the drivers of Southeast Alaska's economy.

▼ The Tongass supports significant fish and wildlife, including the state's most valuable salmon fishery, diverse birdlife, brown and black bears, and unique wolves and deer.



Credit: Pink Salmon, USFS, Joe Serio.



Credit: Red-Breasted Sapsucker, Dave Shaw.

### By the Numbers

**\$1B**

Net losses from Tongass timber sales since 1982

**\$20M**

Annual taxpayer subsidies for timber sales and logging roads<sup>3</sup>

**\$200K**

Average subsidy per logging and milling job in the Tongass every year

## It's time to begin a new era in the Tongass.

While the Forest Service has taken a positive step in announcing a transition from old-growth logging in the Tongass, it says it may continue this outdated practice until 2030. The region's ecosystem and economy can't afford another 15 years of the status quo.

The Forest Service should reflect the region's market realities by ending large-scale old-growth logging, which will save millions of taxpayer dollars, and prevent long-term damage to an extraordinary ecosystem, while enhancing the vitality of the Tongass for a new era.



Brown bears in Anan Creek, Tongass National Forest. USFS. CC BY 2.0.

1. TCW Economics, *Economic Contributions and Impacts of Salmonid Resources in Southeast Alaska*, prepared for Trout Unlimited Alaska 16 (July 2010).

2. McDowell Group, *Economic Impact of Visitors to Southeast Alaska 2010-11*, prepared for Alaska Wilderness League 1 (Aug 2012).

3. See U.S. Forest Service, *State of the Tongass Forest Finances FY2012*, available at [http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5409916.pdf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5409916.pdf).