

Tongass Land Use Management Plan Implementation

FY2008 Request: \$1,500,000

Reference No: AMD 46343

AP/AL: Appropriation

Project Type: Planning

Category: Natural Resources

Location: Southeast Alaska

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Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2008 - 06/30/2011

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

This funding will provide essential state agency support for a three-year period to the US Forest Service (USFS) to implement the January 2008 update of the Tongass Land Use Management Plan. DNR's Division of Forestry (DOF) will provide critical expertise on timber sale economics to ensure that proposed Tongass timber sales are economically feasible to harvest. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) will provide critical expertise in fish and wildlife monitoring and management. Together, these efforts will help sustain a viable timber industry and healthy fish and wildlife populations in Southeast Alaska.

Funding:	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	Total
Gen Fund	\$1,500,000						\$1,500,000
Total:	\$1,500,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,500,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	2
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	
Totals:	0	2

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:

New Project - No Prior Funding History in the Capital Budget. Previous funding in operating budget - \$100.0 in FY 08 to cover cost of one DOF Forester working with USFS. Already, this position has had a key role in developing an economically positive timber sale of approximately 65 million board feet to be offered the first half of 2009, more than will be offered in all of 2008. This CIP would expand this successful program to provide state participation in all three Tongass timber sale design teams.

Project Description/Justification:

The 2008 Plan Amendment of the Tongass Land Resource Management Plan (TLMP) encourages continued partnership between the State of Alaska and the USFS "to promote effective and coordinated implementation of the Forest Plan". The Record of Decision directs the "Forest Supervisor to develop a comprehensive cost-sharing agreement with the State of Alaska regarding implementation of the 2008 Forest Plan". The agreement will "outline the relationship between the Tongass National Forest and the State of Alaska regarding implementation of the Forest Plan, monitoring and evaluation, and making changes in response to new information from monitoring or other sources within an adaptive management framework. The cost-sharing agreement should also outline the roles and responsibilities of the Forest Service and the State".

DOF personnel have met with the USFS on several occasions to develop the framework of this agreement. The focal point to date has been the need to provide sufficient economic timber to sustain the southeast Alaska timber industry,

particularly local sawmills. Review of the USFS Timber Sales Program and process has led to the conclusion that the State can be most effective as part of the project team that identifies and reviews the initial unit pool for each USFS timber sale project.

The team will consist of two DOF Foresters and at least one ADFG biologist and three USFS employees. State participants would be supported by this CIP request. For projects now in review, the team will review the USFS's proposed unit pools for economic viability and recommend changes or deletions to the projects. For new projects, a joint State/USFS team will develop the unit pools. The Unit Pool Review Team will ensure that all future Tongass timber sale projects entering the NEPA process will provide economically viable timber sales that the timber industry can purchase and operate with a positive return. In recent years the USFS has not provided enough economic timber to sustain the industry. The goal is to ensure that enough timber is offered to keep local mills in operation, and to design additional sales that will support growth in the southeast timber industry.

This Agreement will allow the State and the USFS to share personnel, equipment, and other resources to the benefit of both. The State and USFS will also plan state and federal timber sales in the same locale at the same time, allowing the industry to spread fixed costs over a larger volume. This is especially important for harvest operations in remote locations. The state will continue to maximize state timber sales within the allowable cut. The increase in state timber sales in recent years has provided a critical "bridge" for the timber industry to continue operations until federal timber sales increase.

Effective implementation of the TLMP conservation strategy is also essential to maintain a diverse economic base in Southeast Alaska. This agreement will support State participation in the design and implementation of fish and wildlife monitoring programs. Healthy fish and wildlife populations are part of the foundation for subsistence, commercial fishing, and tourism activities throughout the regions.

Why is this Project Needed Now:

The timber industry in Southeast Alaska is on the verge of collapse. If the new Tongass Plan cannot provide for economic timber immediately, the industry will shut down and the economy of Southeast will suffer. State participation is necessary to help stem the timber industry decline.

Specific Spending Detail:

Line Item Breakdown of the \$500,000 Yearly Expenditures:

Personal Services	\$220,000	Two DOF Foresters for TLMP implementation; personal services for state "bridge timber" sale layout
Travel	\$40,000	Travel to remote locations throughout SE AK (Tongass National Forest)
Services	\$225,000	Two ADFG Biologists (one Fish, one Wildlife), travel for field monitoring and interagency meetings to develop monitoring plans, and supplies for field and office support.
Commodities	\$15,000	Computers, GPS, large map printers, handheld radios, GIS software

Project Support:

Alaska Forest Association, Southeast Conference, local timber industry

Project Opposition:

Organizations opposed to all timber harvesting may oppose this project.