

The Sealaska Land Exchange, Bad for Communities, Bad for Hunters and Anglers, Bad for Southeast Alaska

Sealaska Inc., the regional, for-profit native corporation for Southeast Alaska, is pushing for legislation that would privatize more than 70,000 acres of public lands within the Tongass National Forest. Please oppose Senate Bill 881 and House Bill 2099.

Sealaska's selections include many of the best remaining hunting, fishing, subsistence, and outfitter/guide use areas remaining on the Tongass. Sealaska seeks title for, and intends to intensively log roughly 65,000 acres within proposed Enterprise Sites, conduct tourism operations on 5,000 acres at 47 Native Futures Sites, and set aside another 2,400 acres for 206 Cultural and Traditional Sites.



Sealaska timber management: Prince of Whales Island

Sealaska does have legitimate claim to acreage on the Tongass, however the locations for selection were clearly defined in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANSCA) of 1971. Now, almost 40 years later, Sealaska is trying to change the rules by picking high value public lands outside these defined selection areas.

The Sealaska land exchange bill would:

- **Put Fish and Wildlife are at Risk:** The proposed selections focus largely on areas that are prime producers of fish and wildlife. The proposed Enterprise (logging) Sites concentrate on some of the last remaining productive habitat on Prince of Wales Island, an area already seriously impaired by past timber harvest.
- **Limit Public Access:** The legislation would not guarantee public access to or through selected lands. Current Forest Service Outfitter and Guide permits would be honored only through their termination date. Permit renewal would be through Sealaska, if they chose to renew at all.
- **Increase Commercial Development:** The defining language for Native Future and Cultural Sites contains no limits on the scope or scale of infrastructure or site visitation allowed. The corporation says these areas will be managed for small tourism opportunities, but in reality the sky is the limit for development should they obtain title to the areas.
- **Threatens Stakeholder Collaborative Process:** After decades of disagreement on the Tongass, a diverse group including Southeast Alaskan communities, native



Sealaska often limits public access on its lands

groups, the timber industry, conservationists, the State and the Forest Service are developing collaborative solutions to Tongass land management issues. This *Tongass Futures Roundtable*, has made substantial progress and it is close to offering a proposal that could satisfy conservation interests, Sealaska, and the timber industry. Sealaska's proposal threatens this process.

Local and National Opposition:

Southeast Alaskans including individual Sealaska share holders are very concerned about the Sealaska land exchange bill. Conservation interests from Alaska to Maine are concerned that public National Forest lands that are now open to uses including subsistence hunting, sport fishing, hiking, and kayaking will be closed if they are privatized and turned over to Sealaska corporation.

What you can do:

- Contact your member of Congress today and ask them to oppose Senate Bill 881 and House Bill 2099.
- Submit a letter to the editor of your local paper and let your community know that our public lands in AK are threatened by the Sealaska land exchange.
- Contact us to find out more.

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