

**File Code:** 2000**Date:** December 10, 2018**Route To:****Subject:** Alaska Regional Strategic Direction, FY 2019 – 2020**To:** R10 Employees

This letter sets out strategic priorities to guide the Alaska Region over the coming years. In allocating budgets, filling vacancies, and making hard choices, I ask the Regional Leadership Team to prioritize **active management and customer service**, in partnership with the State, Tribes, local communities, and volunteers. In carrying our mission, I ask all of us to renew our core values of **service, interdependence, conservation, diversity, and safety**.

The Forest Service's mission is to "sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations." We care for the land, for communities, for each other, and for the people we serve. From archaeology to subsistence and from botany to trails, the mission is broad; your work touches hundreds of programs and thousands of lives, contributing to the culture and economy of the communities where we live and work. The Regional Strategic Plan expresses our niche in terms of Restoration, Recreation, Infrastructure, and Partnerships. We work alongside Alaska Natives who've managed these lands since time immemorial. I hope you see, in the mission and in the Strategic Plan, yourself and your work.

Within the broad conservation mission, we also face choices every day about where to focus our efforts. This letter should guide the Region in those choices – not to diminish the larger mission or discontinue any programs, but to help in assigning resources and deciding among competing priorities. You deserve realistic expectations around your work, and our partners deserve to know what we'll deliver. We will focus on active management and customer service while also delivering a broad range of programs through partners and shared stewardship.

Strategic Priorities

1. Active Management

We must sustain the remaining sawmills, businesses, and infrastructure of southeast Alaska in order to accomplish a seamless transition to a sustainable young-growth industry. Meeting our immediate timber commitments is vital to the whole suite of integrated natural resource programs that form the core of our budget and work. We simply cannot continue to rely on timber appropriations and fall short of timber targets.

A successful transition to young growth will involve three major components, in partnership with the State, Tribes, Native Corporations and other landowners, and forest industry:

1. Complete planning, and award economically viable and environmentally responsible timber sales sufficient to sustain existing infrastructure;
2. Ensure enough operable timber volume is available to cover the transition period; and
3. Inventory and prepare the next generation of forests to support a young-growth based timber industry.



Regional Strategic Priorities – 2019 and 2020

- Complete the *Prince of Wales Large Landscape Analysis* in time to meet FY 2019 timber sale commitments. **Because everything that follows depends on it, this single project is the Region’s highest priority.**
- Meet our commitment to sell 60 MMBF in each of FY19 and FY20.
- Complete the Alaska roadless rulemaking process.
- Complete environmental analysis and decision making for timber sales covering the rest of the transition period.
- Carry out the legislated land exchange with the Alaska Mental Health Trust, so that additional opportunities are available for local communities consistent with the Trust’s mission, under a shared stewardship approach.
- Complete young-growth inventory and analyses.
- Thin young-growth stands to accelerate their development.

2. Customer Service

We must continue to partner with local governments, Tribes, and the State of Alaska to support the needs of rural communities. Tourism, transportation, renewable energy, mining, fisheries, and subsistence provide jobs and vitality for rural needs, and each of these uses requires our support – much of it centered on special uses. We must be efficient and responsive to permit requests, keep environmental analysis and decision making commensurate with environmental impacts, fulfill our Trust responsibility to Tribal governments, right-size our infrastructure, and prioritize community needs – “getting to yes” – over the bureaucratic process.

Regional Strategic Priorities – 2019 and 2020

- Continue healing efforts with Tribal governments through stewardship programs, culture camps, partnerships, and other uses of the land that sustain traditional uses and acknowledge the Native legacy of these places.
- Authorize heli-skiing on the Chugach and other appropriate outfitter-guide requests on both Forests to meet demand and encourage small business development, within the capacity of the land.
- Complete landscape-scale environmental analysis for outfitter-guide use, and authorize priority use wherever appropriate.
- Respond quickly and appropriately to requests for land uses, including transportation and utilities, in support of access and community development.
- Deliver services in partnership with communities and by sharing leadership with volunteers and other partners.
- Finish the Chugach Forest Plan revision.

How We Do It – Core Values

Shared stewardship expresses how we approach our work and how we live our values, as much as how we prioritize resources and projects. Every day, each of you brings professionalism, dedication, and personal commitment to the Forest Service and the resources we steward. You bring yourselves. You support and care for each other. It's more than a job. Thinking back over my own career, what I value most is the people with whom I've worked.

Service, Interdependence, Conservation, Diversity, and Safety express our shared values, and I ask us all to re-dedicate ourselves to the success of the whole, and to each other. I believe in you.



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