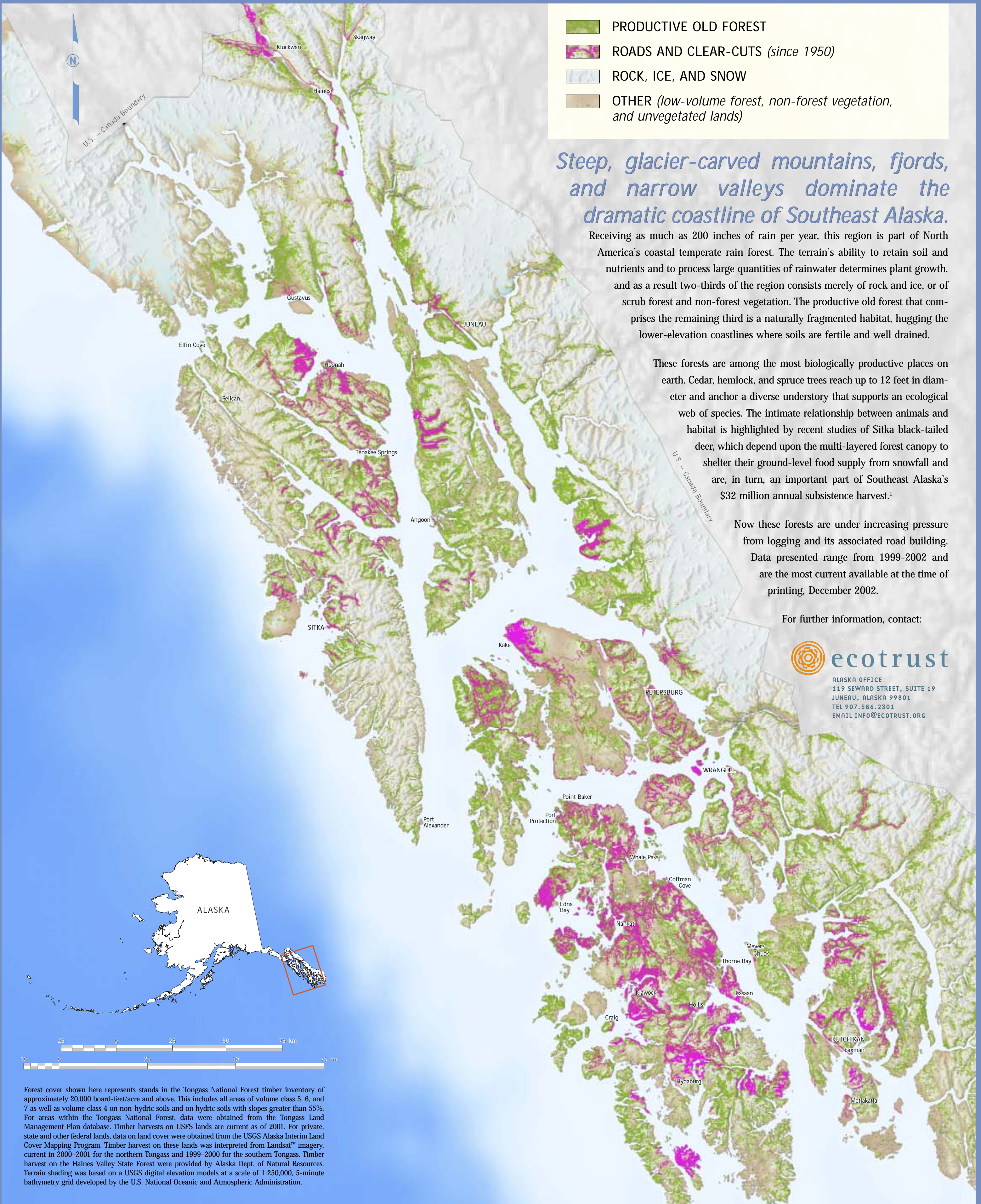


Forest Condition in Southeast Alaska



- PRODUCTIVE OLD FOREST
- ROADS AND CLEAR-CUTS (since 1950)
- ROCK, ICE, AND SNOW
- OTHER (low-volume forest, non-forest vegetation, and unvegetated lands)

Steep, glacier-carved mountains, fjords, and narrow valleys dominate the dramatic coastline of Southeast Alaska.

Receiving as much as 200 inches of rain per year, this region is part of North America's coastal temperate rain forest. The terrain's ability to retain soil and nutrients and to process large quantities of rainwater determines plant growth, and as a result two-thirds of the region consists merely of rock and ice, or of scrub forest and non-forest vegetation. The productive old forest that comprises the remaining third is a naturally fragmented habitat, hugging the lower-elevation coastlines where soils are fertile and well drained.

These forests are among the most biologically productive places on earth. Cedar, hemlock, and spruce trees reach up to 12 feet in diameter and anchor a diverse understory that supports an ecological web of species. The intimate relationship between animals and habitat is highlighted by recent studies of Sitka black-tailed deer, which depend upon the multi-layered forest canopy to shelter their ground-level food supply from snowfall and are, in turn, an important part of Southeast Alaska's \$32 million annual subsistence harvest.¹

Now these forests are under increasing pressure from logging and its associated road building. Data presented range from 1999-2002 and are the most current available at the time of printing, December 2002.

For further information, contact:


ecotrust
 ALASKA OFFICE
 119 SEWARD STREET, SUITE 19
 JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801
 TEL 907.586.2301
 EMAIL INFO@ECOTRUST.ORG

Forest cover shown here represents stands in the Tongass National Forest timber inventory of approximately 20,000 board-feet/acre and above. This includes all areas of volume class 5, 6, and 7 as well as volume class 4 on non-hydric soils and on hydric soils with slopes greater than 55%. For areas within the Tongass National Forest, data were obtained from the Tongass Land Management Plan database. Timber harvests on USFS lands are current as of 2001. For private, state and other federal lands, data on land cover were obtained from the USGS Alaska Interim Land Cover Mapping Program. Timber harvest on these lands was interpreted from Landsat™ imagery, current in 2000-2001 for the northern Tongass and 1999-2000 for the southern Tongass. Timber harvest on the Haines Valley State Forest were provided by Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources. Terrain shading was based on a USGS digital elevation models at a scale of 1:250,000, 5-minute bathymetry grid developed by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

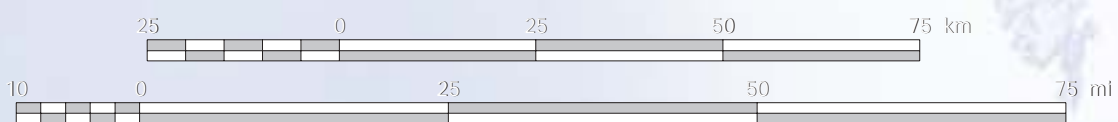
At the heart of Southeast Alaska is the Tongass National Forest

The 17 million-acre Tongass, managed for the benefit of all Americans by the US Forest Service, is the largest National Forest in the country. Timber sales on the Tongass have resulted in the logging of more than 450,000 acres since the 1950s.² But each time we sell some of our trees, we pay to build roads so that timber companies can access them.

All that road building is expensive. In fact Tongass timber sales are losing up to tens of millions of dollars each year.³ And this figure reflects only net dollar losses. It does not include other economic costs that we suffer: losses in salmon habitat crucial to Alaska's commercial and sport fishing industries, and losses in what are termed "ecosystem services," benefits such as climate regulation and waste treatment that have been valued for Alaska's forests at \$117 million annually.⁴

What's more, areas that are already roaded still contain vast stores of commercially viable timber, up to 13 billion board-feet according to Forest Service data.⁵ By restricting logging to these already roaded areas, we will preserve remaining wildlands for other uses. And maybe actually turn a dollar profit on our timber sales.

We can have it all—
A sustainable timber industry,
Valuable wildlands,
And jobs for our communities
—without building more roads



These basemaps are composites of Landsat Enhanced Thematic Mapper scenes acquired between 1999 and 2000. Ecotrust acquired these data to update a comprehensive assessment of forest condition in Southeast Alaska originally completed in 1995 (shown on reverse). Areas of timber harvest (shown here in yellow) are based on this imagery as well as the Tongass National Forest timber inventory. Roads (shown here in red) are state highways or USFS logging roads. Logging roads on private lands are not shown.

Credits

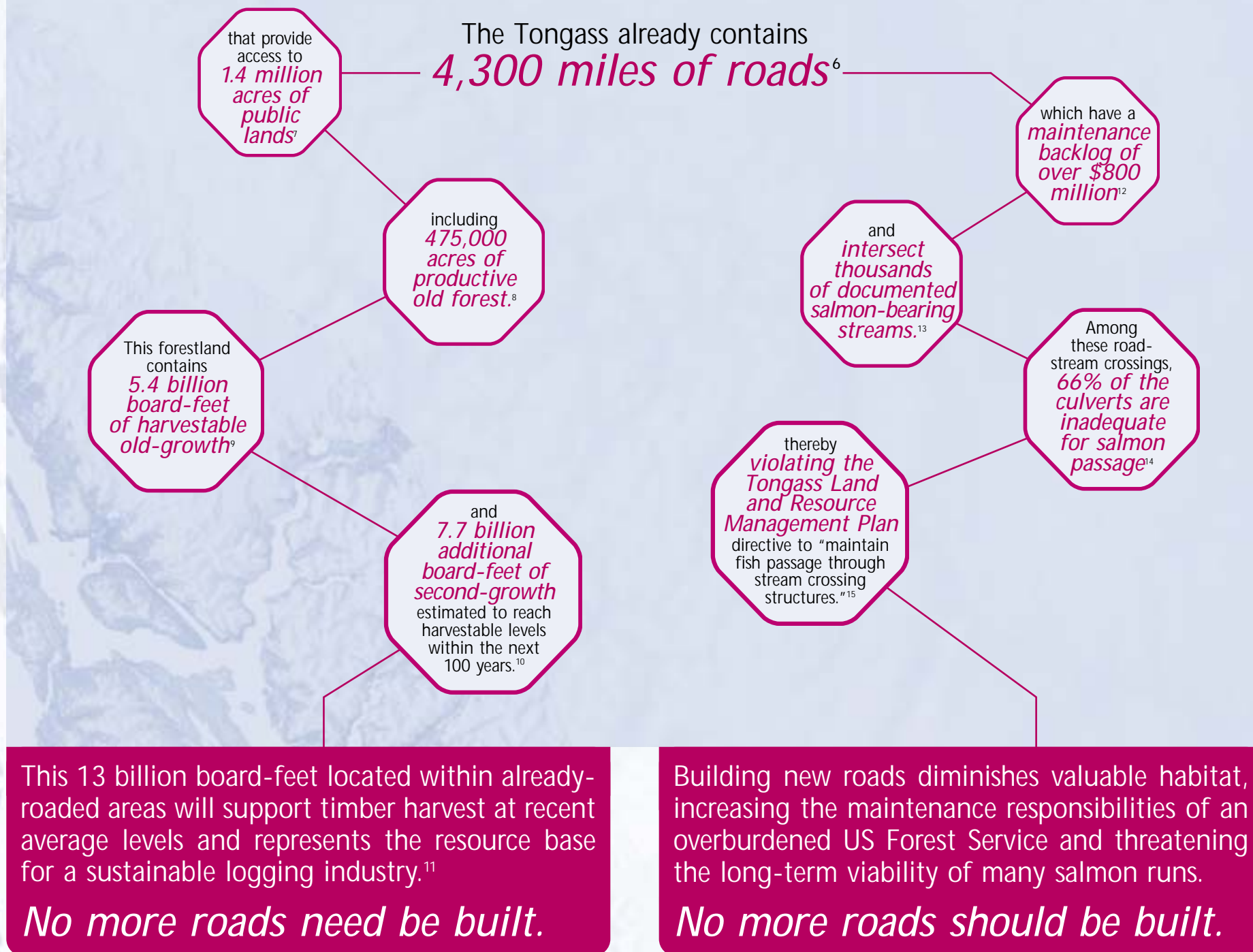
Maps by David Albert • Text by Howard Silverman, David Albert, and Derek Reiber • Design by Melissa Tatge
These maps, and supporting information, are available online at: www.inforain.org/tongass

Notes

- Wolfe, Robert (2000). *Subsistence in Alaska: A Year 2000 Update*. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Subsistence: Juneau, Alaska.
- Albert, David (2002). *Roadless Areas and the 1997 Tongass Land Management Plan: An Assessment of Timber Supply Alternatives*. Ecotrust: Juneau, Alaska.
- Knoder, Erik (2002). *Benefits and Costs of Timber Harvests from the Tongass National Forest*. Ecotrust: Portland, Oregon.
- Colt, Steve (2001). *The Economic Importance of Healthy Alaska Ecosystems*. Institute of Social and Economic Research: Anchorage, Alaska. p. 42-45.
- Albert, David (2002). *Roadless Areas and the 1997 Tongass Land Management Plan: An Assessment of Timber Supply Alternatives*. Ecotrust: Juneau, Alaska.
- Ibid.
- Ibid.
- Ibid.
- Ibid.
- Ibid.
- United States Forest Service (2002). *Tongass Land Management Plan Revision: Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement*. p. 2-36. (Alternative 6 of the 2002 Forest Service Draft SEIS estimates these already roaded areas to provide 86 million board-feet per year. Our estimate is closer to 100 million board-feet per year. Although these estimates are substantially lower than harvest rates during the peak years of the 1980's, we believe that they are more sustainable over the long-term.)
- Taxpayers for Common Sense (2002). *Lost in the Forest: How the Forest Service's Misdirection, Mismanagement, and Mischief Squanders Your Tax Dollars*. (Taxpayers for Common Sense confirmed via email that Tongass roads constitute \$804 million of the total \$807 million Alaska backlog.)
- Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Habitat and Restoration Division (2001). *Catalog of Waters Important to the Spawning, Rearing or Migration of Anadromous Fishes*.
- Flanders, Linda Shea and Jim Cariello (2000). *Tongass Road Condition Survey Report*. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Habitat and Restoration Division: Douglas, Alaska.
- United States Forest Service (1997). *Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan: Standards and Guidelines; Fish Habitat Planning 112*.

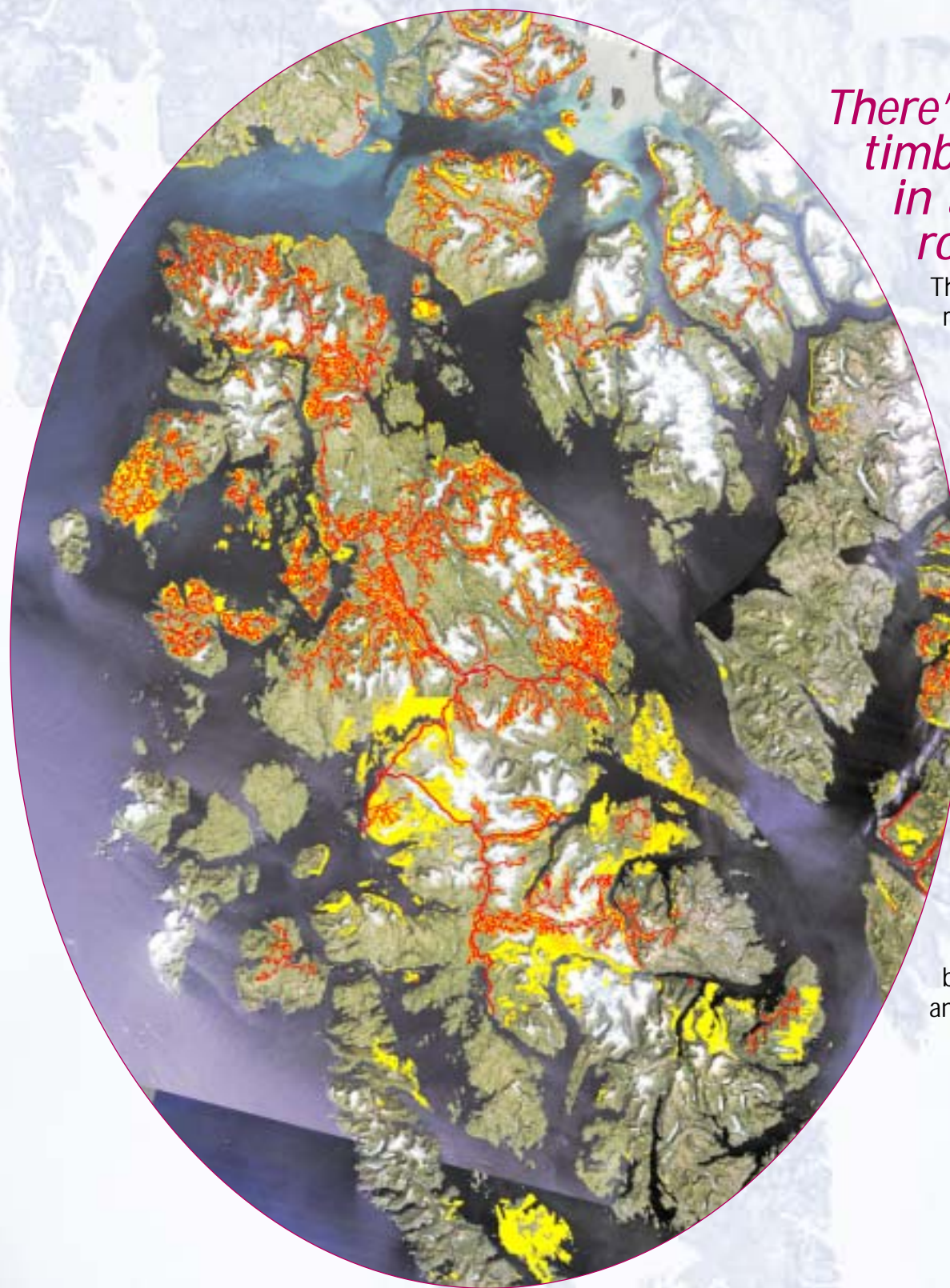
This work was funded through a cooperative agreement with Alaska Department of Fish & Game and The Nature Conservancy of Alaska, and benefitted from cooperation and data sharing by Alaska Department of Natural Resources and the USFS Tongass National Forest. Funding for this poster was provided by The David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

Roads through the Tongass provide access, but at what cost?



We have an opportunity to preserve some crucial wildlands

Port Houghton and Farragut Bay contain the largest contiguous area of productive old forest habitat that is currently unprotected in the Tongass. Limiting development to existing roaded areas would preserve places like this, maintaining habitat for salmon, deer and other species and supporting jobs in the tourism, commercial fishing and sport fishing sectors.



There's lots of timber available in already roaded areas

The Prince of Wales Island region, 84% of which is part of the National Forest, is one area that has both roads (shown in red) and a large amount of accessible timber. Roaded areas like this contain billions of board-feet of productive old forest, enough to support a sustainable logging industry. Estimates of available timber account for all provisions of the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan, including protected buffers on eagle trees, riparian and beach-fringe forests, and so on.