

**TTC Advisory Team Meeting 12/5/2025
Meeting Summary**

Meeting Participants: Bob Christensen, Mike Cooney, Brian Kleinhenz, Priscilla Morris, Andrew Thoms, Robert Venables, Jill Weitz. Staff: Connie Lewis, Kaitlyn Jared.

1) CITIZENS ALTERNATIVE - BOB CHRISTENSEN

Online Survey

Bob Christensen has been working on an on-line survey to collect feedback on the draft citizens alternative. The idea of a survey to gather feedback on the alternative arose out of his work with Spruce Root and the Forest Service to develop a feedback instrument for the Forest Service's public engagement effort for the Tongass Forest Plan revision.

Bob will be refining the survey through December and sending it out in early January – asking respondents to indicate full, partial, or no support for the alternative. Realizing that some respondents might be overwhelmed by the sheer amount of detail in the draft alternative, Bob is structuring the survey in a way that will allow respondents to “start simple” and then dig in if they wish.

Other Ways to gather feedback on the Draft Alternative

Bob's work on the draft alternative and the survey have already influenced the Forest to start thinking about how to integrate a community focus into its planning process. The Forest has also expressed interest in allowing feedback on the citizen's alternative at Forest Service meetings that are being organized as part of the Forest's planning process. There will be a virtual community meeting in Skagway in January led by Spruce Root to get feedback on the draft alternative. It was suggested that additional community meetings as well as a longer “deep dive” convening with TTC members could also be beneficial. The Alliance of Southeast Sovereign Tribes was suggested as another important venue for sharing and getting feedback on the draft alternative, and the SEC Summit (February 10-12) could provide an additional venue for feedback and endorsement.

Purpose and Title of the draft alternative

Bob has started calling it the “community alternative” because it is intended to centralize the role of communities in planning in a way that has not been tried before (by using road access as a proxy for defining the scope of community management areas). There was another suggestion to call it the “Tongass Forest Alternative for Maximum Community Benefit.”

2) TIMBER VOLUME ESTIMATES AND MANAGEMENT SCENARIOS

Several people are working on interrelated efforts to generate timber volume estimates and to correlate the estimates with future management scenarios.

Mike Cooney produced a rough calculation based on suitable and available acres as defined in the 2016 plan amendment and based on an 80-year rotation for young growth and a 250-year rotation for old growth.

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Having already produced an all lands assessment of young growth availability, Brian Kleinhenz is working with the Forest Service and the State on a tabletop mapping exercise based on the 2016 Forest plan amendment that incorporates timber harvest restrictions in the plan for karst, fish protection, other sources of fall down, etc. to get to an understanding of where there are concentrations of both old growth and young growth timber that actually merit effort for collaborative State/Forest Service active forest management. One of the challenges is the reality that the landscape is “thoroughly fractured” by riparian habitat, old growth reserves and other harvest restrictions and prohibitions, that limit the amount of economically viable and “suitable” timber. Brian hopes to have this analysis completed by late winter or early spring 2026.

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Bob is working on another piece of the puzzle – a draft potential “business plan” for the Forest Service that “gives color” to Mike’s and Brian’s work and that deals with the reality of what has happened through several iterations of Forest Service planning. There are still questions about how to factor in logging costs, potential Alaskan markets, roads etc. but Bob is ready to share and discuss his current draft.

3) REGIONAL ECONOMIC ANALYSIS AND “FOUNDATIONS”

Robert Venables is investigating a couple of potential sources of funding for a “timber by the numbers” initiative that would look at the regional economy (beyond just timber) – what investments are needed for a more vibrant economy in the future. He is working on a grant application due in March and would welcome ideas about specific projects that need more resources.

Andrew Thoms and a small group are working on a “foundations” piece that utilizes Brian’s work, draws from the Tongass Advisory Committee’s (TAC’s) implementation recommendations, etc. to build a vision of the future. He is looking at gaps and opportunities (e.g., wood innovations and lumber grading programs and realizing timber harvest potential) that can address the gaps and build towards the vision.

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4) ADVISORY TEAM MEMBERSHIP

We ran out of time during the meeting to revisit and update the Advisory Team membership list, but it is a high priority item for the next meeting.

5) NEXT ADVISORY TEAM MEETING

The January Advisory Team meeting which would otherwise be on the first Friday of the month will be rescheduled to January 9th because of the New Years holiday.