

Marty Rutherford
Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources
550 W. 7th Ave, Suite 1400
Anchorage, Alaska, 99501

January 15, 2007

Re: Appeal of the Forest Land Use Plan Final Finding for the Copper Timber Sale, dated Fall 2006

Dear Commissioner,

I am writing to appeal the decision of Mike Curran, Coastal Regional Forester, to proceed with the sale, as stated in the Forest Land Use Plan Final Finding for the Copper Timber Sale, dated Fall 2006 (FLUP). This fall the Willow Area Community Organization (WACO) unanimously passed a motion to oppose the Copper Timber sale. Our communities position has not changed since then.

WACO's opposition was based on the importance of recreation, tourism, and dog mushing to the economy and lifestyle of it's residents. The impacts of logging would greatly impact these qualities without adding any measurable benefits. Although you have mentioned timber harvesting for this sale would be done in a relatively short time period, there will be other sales such as the Tin sale that will further restrict recreational use for many years.

In addition, with documented warmer summers in Alaska, the research on regeneration of forests is outdated. There has been no research on regeneration that reflects present and forecasted weather trends.

Of course, your finding was based on the State's best interest, to create a "viable commercial timber industry". It is in the best interest when it is done sustainably and in communities that support the industry? Is it the State's best interest to have a sale that costs as much as the revenue it receives or to ignore four local community council's opposition? Is it in the State's best interest to use outdated science while implementing forestry practices or to injure a sustainable economy based on recreation and tourism? Alaska and the Susitna Valley have a resource that is of increasing value as the rest of the world loses it's natural habitat.

The Willow community does support the utilization of natural resources. We recognize that the most valuable resource in the Susitna Valley is the open spaces and natural landscapes that provide "value added" commodities in the form of recreation and tourism. We recognize the importance of preserving the Alaskan beauty and "mystique" and dog mushing as a important part of Alaska's heritage.

The Willow Area Community Organization believes it's in our best interest and the State's best interst to oppose the Copper Timber sale. We recommend that you reconsider and reverse your decision.

Sincerely,
Linda Oxley Chair