

**The Logger, the Salmon Fisherman, and the Kayaker:
Assessing Collaborative Natural Resource Management in the Tongass
National Forest**

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Abstract

My capstone explores how collaborative approaches can resolve environmental conflicts on public lands. In the late 20th century, in response to growing frustrations and shortcomings with traditional public land management models and a growing desire to authentically engage and problem solve land management conflicts on public lands began to emerge. Soon multi-party natural resource and public land management collaborations, like the Quincy Library Group and the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, began popping up across the West. This movement would become what we now call collaborative conservation or collaborative natural resource management (CNRM). I examined the Tongass Advisory Committee, (TAC) an assembly of stakeholders invested in the Tongass National Forest, the United States' largest national forest. The TAC was created in response to a federal mandate to expedite the transition away from old-growth to young-growth logging (I refer to this transition as the Transition throughout my thesis). Several stakeholders claimed the Transition was too fast, while others said it was not fast enough. Regardless, the TAC convened for 9 months and ultimately came to a consensus—a feat quite unprecedented on the Tongass. However, even though the TAC came to a consensus, some stakeholders were more content than others. I aimed to unveil what contributed to this uneven reflection about the TAC.

Acknowledgements

Writing this page illustrates just how quickly time flies by when you are having fun! I've learned a tremendous amount while at Lewis & Clark and can only hope my senior thesis demonstrates how I've grown as student, scholar, and environmentalist.

This page is a testament to what I thought was an impossible feat a mere 3 years ago as a first-year in Introduction to Environmental Studies. But I did it, I've written my senior thesis. It has been a long journey and I know I could not have gotten here without the support of some my mentors, fellow ENVS majors, friends, and family. So with that, I extend a thank you. Thank you so much.

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List of Acronyms

CNRM	Collaborative Natural Resource Management
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
MUSYA	Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFMA	National Forest Management Act
ROD	Record of Decision
SOI	Secretary of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
TAC	Tongass Advisory Committee
TTC	Tongass Timber Collaborative
TLMP	Tongass Land Management Plan
TTRA	Tongass Timber Reform Act

1. Introduction

Some of the most contested environmental conflicts remained unresolved not due to lack of biophysical or socioeconomic research but because of stakeholder gridlock. In their pioneering journal article entitled *Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning*, Rittel and Webber posit that the most controversial societal problems remain unresolved because they are *wicked problems*. Unlike tame problems, which are definable and separable and may have findable solutions, wicked problems are “ill-defined” and “rely upon elusive political judgement for resolution” (Stahl 2014; Rittel & Webber 1973, 160). Wicked problems are difficult to address in part because they are value-centered—each stakeholder invested in the issue will approach and define the problem differently based on his or her perspective.

Climate change is a quintessential example of a wicked problem (Rayner 2014; Verweij et al. 2006). For years, scientists, policymakers, activists, politicians and citizens have debated about climate change—about its existence, its causes and the potential solutions to it. Climate change is a wicked problem because it is a mix of science and data problems with varying stakeholder priorities and values (Stahl 2014, 473). The global scale and drastic implications of climate change further demonstrates its wicked characteristics. To that end, research suggests countries in the Global South will bear the hardest consequences of global warming, despite being the smallest contributors to excessive carbon dioxide emissions.

The debate over hydroelectric dam removal in the Klamath Basin is another classic example of a wicked problem. After several years of repeated drought, illegal water allocations, and issues concerning endangered species, the unlikely partnership between conservationists, Native Tribes and PacificCorps—the company who runs the Klamath River Hydroelectric Project—unified as one front in favor of the removal of the hydroelectric dams (Kahn 2015, 19). Considering the important role these dams are in the economy, such task was met with fierce opposition. The opposition include renewable energy advocates, property owners who had investments alongside the river and reservoirs, and ranchers and farmers who oppose the federal presence and involvement in the region and do not want their water rights taken away from them (Kahn 2015, 19). The Klamath’s wide range of stakeholders, opposing

views on the best future for the Klamath, mixed land uses, and issues of conflicting needs to honor legal obligations distinguish the Klamath as a wicked problem.

Wicked problems are often a web of issues that make defining the exact problem difficult, thus when it comes to solving wicked problems, solutions must be highly creative and adaptable. A wicked problem is never solved: rather, it manifests as another issue a short while later. While you might think the problem is fixed, a couple months or even years later and the city planners find themselves back at the drawing board to figure out better traffic management plans or Congress has to reconvene to figure out how to provide health care.

Some argue that to effectively deal with wicked problems, planners must come up with “clumsy solutions,” or solutions which “creatively combine all opposing perspectives on what the problems are and how they should be resolved” (Verweji et al. 2006, 817). Unlike tame problems which have elegant solutions—where there is knowable truth—wicked problems call for stakeholder discussion, deliberation, and agreement (Stahl 2014, 473).

Since the late nineties, new strategies to deal with the wicked nature of public land management have evolved. Collaborative natural resource management (CNRM) has increasingly become a silver bullet for public land management conflicts. These strategies emphasize the need for stakeholder collaboration and compromise. Some argue the settlements and agreements reached on the Klamath Basin are examples of effective clumsy solutions. After years of stakeholder deliberation and over 80 meetings, stakeholders from over 40 parties signed the Klamath Settlement Decision, Klamath Basin Recovery Agreement in 2010 and the Upper Klamath Basin Agreement in 2014 (Kahn 2015).

Land use planning is rife with wicked problems. In this thesis I look at the wicked nature of managing the Tongass National Forest and assess the recent clumsy solution: the Tongass Advisory Committee (TAC). Located in Southeast Alaska, the Tongass is part of the largest contiguous temperate rainforest in the world and “spans more than seventeen million acres of Southeast Alaska, from Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve to the north to Misty Fjords National Monument to the south” (Steinkruger 2008, 15). The Tongass has a long history of environmental conflict. For decades, the conservationists, loggers, and Native Tribes have

battled in the courtroom over the controversies of old-growth logging. At the core of these disputes are fundamental differences in how each party values the forest—to some the Tongass represents recreational leisure and adventure, whereas to others the Tongass represents economic opportunity.

In 2013, Tom Vilsack, the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture issued Memorandum 1044-009 calling for an expedited transition away from old-growth and towards a young-growth timber program. Shortly after the release of the memo, the Secretary of Agriculture chartered the TAC—an assembly of stakeholders invested in the Tongass National Forest—to advise and provide recommendations on to Secretary and United States Forest Service (Forest Service) on how to expedite the transition. In short, the TAC was a clumsy attempt to reconcile the long history of stakeholder gridlock present in the Tongass.

In this thesis, I assess how collaborative efforts such as the TAC can potentially resolve U.S. public land management conflicts. I argue that while collaborative natural resource management catalyzes critical conversation across historically polarized arenas, the TAC's structural limitations ultimately explain both how and why the committee reached consensus and the lingering tensions which remain.

Road Map

Section 2 includes a more detailed overview of on how public land management is a wicked problem, followed by an overview on traditional public land management in contrast to the more recent notion of CNRM. In section 3, I include a condensed history of the Tongass National Forest, with specific attention to the development of the timber industry. Next, I examine the TAC from its formation to its final accomplishments. Section 4 broadens to evaluate the TAC and draw some of the larger implications of this thesis.

2. Background

2.1 The Wicked Nature of Public Land Management

Public land management conflicts often are wicked problems (King 2016, Nie 2006). I draw from Martin Nie, who posed that conflicts on U.S. public land and natural resource management are wicked problems because they go beyond scientific, economic, and technorational analyses and methods of problem solving (Nie 2008, 1). One of the key sources of wickedness in public land management is the fundamental difficulty with negotiating local benefits for the adjacent communities while recognizing these lands belong to the public. In his 1998 article titled *Local Communities and the Management of Public Forests*, McClosky argues, communities that abut public forests have legitimate interests in their management, however, other interests at greater distances also have legitimate concern for how these places should be managed (McClosky 1998, 625). These interests might depend on the ecosystem services these lands provide (i.e. clean water and air) or visit these places for recreational purposes like fishing, hiking and hunting. These distant interests are among a larger population of co-owners who constitute a community of interest (McClosky 1998, 625). Cheryl King adds:

“Most public lands use and management problems fit the definition of wicked problems: they are difficult to solve because of incomplete or contradictory knowledge; many people (and places) are involved, often holding contradictory perspectives; the economic and social burdens of the problems are significant and cross over large regions; and, the problems are interconnected (they are system problems). Finding solutions to contemporary public lands problems requires we approach the work differently than we have in the past and that we deconstruct the taken-for-granted assumptions behind the problems to expose new ways of framing/situating our work” (King 2016, 968).

For the premise of this thesis I focus on how forest management in the United States is a wicked problem. In their essay, Pesklevits et al. discuss how old-growth forest management is a wicked problem; they argue old-growth forest management is a wicked problem because it incorporates the nexus of science, politics, aesthetics, and most importantly value differences (Pesklevits et al. 2011). I will return to this discussion on the wicked nature of forest management in section 4. This next section provides some context and history on traditional models of public land management.

2.2 Traditional Models of Public Land Management

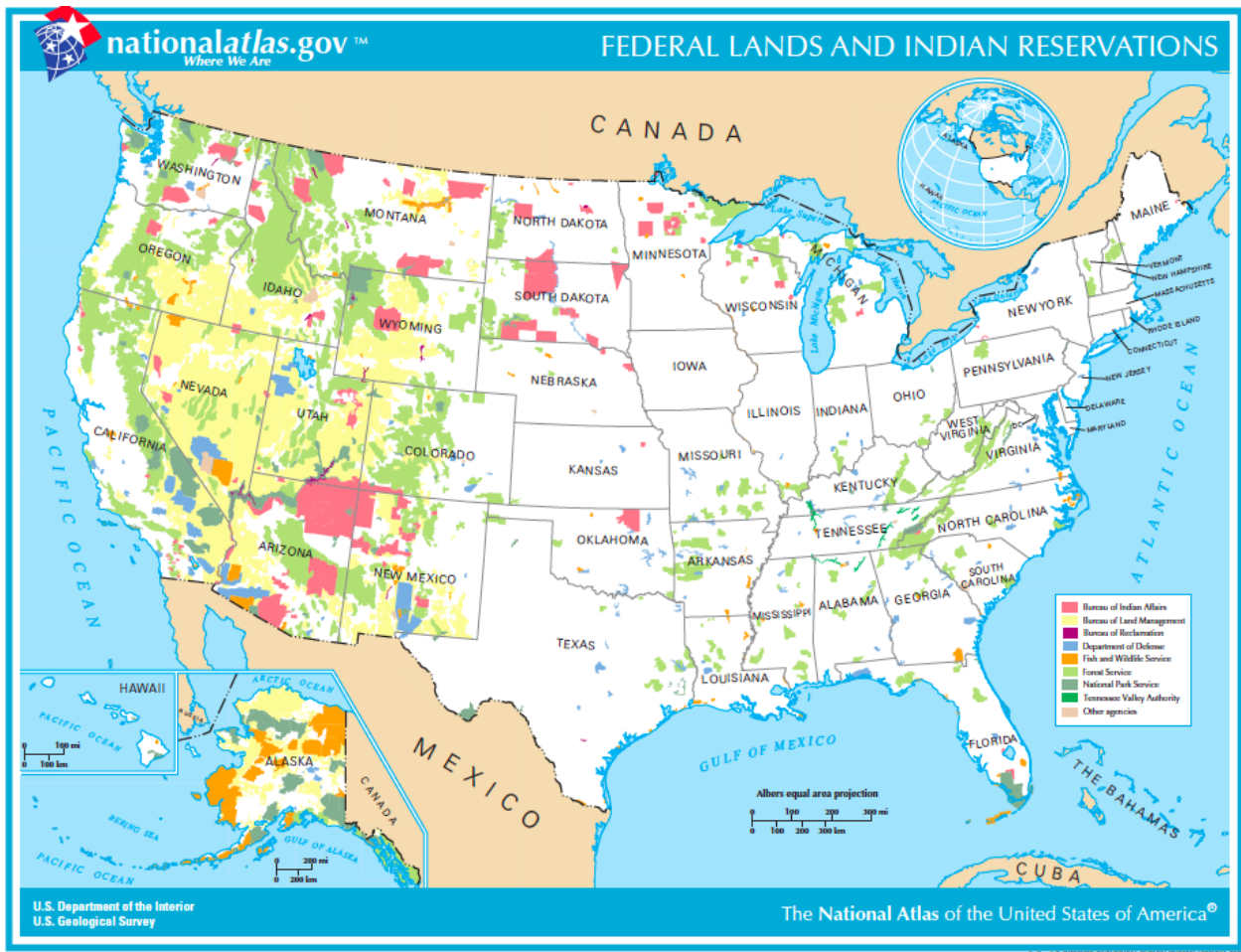


Figure 1: U.S. public lands and Indian Reservations. Image from: United States Geological Survey.

Public lands refer to all the federally-owned areas, such areas include national parks, national forests, and wildlife refuges (Coggins 2014; Prescott 2003). Under the Department of the Interior (DoI) and Department of Agriculture (DoA), four agencies¹ manage roughly one third or about 650 million acres of the United States land (Coggins 2014, Wilson 2014).

Traditionally, the term 'public lands' has solely referred to lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, however, pulling from author Randall K. Wilson, I use public lands to refer

¹ There are four agencies that manage public lands: The National Forest Service in the DoA, the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service, all in the DoI.

to all federally owned and managed lands under the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior (Coggins 2014; Prescott 2003; Wilson 2014).²

Public lands are “managed for a variety of purposes, primarily relating to conservation, preservation, and development of various natural resources” (Prescott 2003, 40). For the purposes of this thesis, I will only be looking at U.S. national forest system. As illustrated in figure one, the majority of public lands lie in the American West. How and why is so much of the West is siphoned off to public lands? Without diving into the lengthy, complex, and fascinating history of public lands, the following section briefly summarizes the creation of public lands and traditional models public land management.

The need for public land—designated lands for specific purposes managed the federal government—emerged and has evolved in response to a variety of economic, political, and social forces in the United States. Wilson argues the history and evolution of public lands can be divided into four distinct time periods: the Progressive Era (1890s to the 1920s); the New Deal Era (late 1930s through the early 1940s); the Environmental Decade (1970s) and what he calls the Pendulum Years (1980s till now) (Wilson 2014, 48). The premise for the Progressive era was the commonly practiced disposal or conversion of publically owned land to privately owned land (Cawley 1993, 16). However, as the population increased and the industrial innovations sped up extraction processes, natural resources began to disappear at an unprecedented rate, thus prompting the Progressive Era (Wilson 2014). Imminent to this era is the conservation movement. Conservationists emphasized efficient use of natural resources based on scientific methods to ensure cultivation could continue for future generations (Hillyer, 2017a). Unlike the national park system, which were explicitly created for recreational purposes and meant to provide a sense of spiritual ease and escape from the confines of modernity, urbanity, and industrialization, legislation like the Organic Act of 1897 clearly outlined the national forest system would be explicitly managed for utilization, not preservation (Wilson 2014, 113). Moreover, the national forest system would be subject to “multiple use” protocol—

² This does not include lands managed by the Department of Defense, Department of Energy, Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Indian Affairs, nor lands state or local managed by state or local governments.

which means Forest Service managers must accommodate for timber production, livestock grazing, mining, recreational activities such as skiing, hiking, snowmobiling, and hunting.

Despite the Forest Service's heavy emphasis of "multiple use" during the Progressive Era, the agency largely abandoned the protocol after World War I and then again after World War II when there was an increased demand for timber. As a result, the 1920s through the 1960s saw the largest amounts on timber production off of public and private lands (Wilson 2014). However, this lack of regulatory enforcement over the use and sale of land and resources would lead to a major shift how public land should be managed. During the "Environmental Decade" a series of federal acts passed that heavily restructured the management of national forests, such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), and the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act (MUSYA) (I will go over these in more detail in section 3.1).

However, such acts rely heavily on the "rational model of bureaucratic planning and decision-making, in which efficiency, not representation is the goal (Moote and McClaran 1997, 474). In this model, decision-making and planning is left to technical experts who often cannot speak for the entire public and instead places more emphasis on adhering to regulations and procedures than the public (Cubbage et al. 1993). For example, the Bureau of Land Management planning model states:

"The objective of resource management planning by the Bureau of Land Management is to maximize resource values for the public through a rational, consistently applied set of regulations of procedures which promote the concept of multiple use management and ensure the participation by the public, state, and local governments, Indian tribes and appropriate federal agencies (43 C.F.R. 160.0-2 (1994)).

Through traditional land management agencies are subject to public participation, since the 1980s many have argued there is not enough public participation nor at proper installments (Moote and McClaran 1997, 474). I elaborate more on these frustrations and what they have turned into in the next section.

2.3 Collaborative Planning

Put simply, the origins of collaborative planning derive from frustrations and “shortcomings of the late 20th century framework of procedural democracy” (Kemmis and McKinney 2011, 46). In their book, *Collaboration and the Ecology of Democracy*, Kemmis and McKinney analyze the emergence of collaboration. They argue, “as the bureaucratic state matured throughout the late 20th century, it produced its own characteristic set of mechanisms for ‘participatory democracy,’ including public notice and hearings, comment periods, and administrative appeals” (Kemmis and McKinney 2011, 1). However, time and time again such mechanisms and structures proved unhelpful, or at the very least provided only temporary resolutions to problems which would come back up a mere couple of years later. Thus emerged a desire to problem-solve through alternative less structured forms deliberate and collaborative democracy that would promote authentic engagement with constructive citizen involvement (Kemmis and McKinney 2011, 46).

Collaborative planning has increasingly employed consensus-building methodologies and models. Consensus building has been praised for its “potential to break logjams created by intransigent position taking, to incorporate many interests, and to find solutions offering mutual gain” (Innes and Booher 1999, 412). Instead of seeking majority, as Fries and Ury (1981) articulate, consensus building seeks “to assure that all are heard and respected and that discussions are based on stakeholder interests and not simply on arguments about predetermined positions” (as cited in Innes and Booher 1999, 412).

2.4 Collaborative Natural Resource Management

The burgeoning field that has become increasingly applied to conflicts on U.S. Public Lands, collaborative natural resource management (CNRM) falls under the umbrella of collaborative planning. In their article, Conley and Moote define CNRM as: “multiparty natural resource management projects, programs or decision-making processes” that incorporate “a participatory approach” (Conley and Moote 2003, 372). Proponents argue that “collaborative approaches are well-suited to resolve the integrated nature of most public land conflicts, by

focusing on the connections between ecological and community health” (Nie 2006, 472).

CNRM originally emerged out of the growing frustrations with traditional public lands methods of problem-solving during the nineties. Alternative problem-solving approaches in natural resource management began to incorporate and advocate for place-based, community-based, and collaborative models of governance (Kenney 2000; McClosky 1998). Proponents argued traditional means of management and problem-solving were not working, often referencing the high rate of litigation that often resulted with traditional approaches (Kenney 2000, vi). Thus, cooperative approaches, supporters contended, had the potential to foster more meaningful land use decisions and better negotiate local and distant interests.

The collaboration movement “runs counter to the ‘normal’ course of environmental politics, counter to the course of most politics of any kind in the United States (Brick et al. 2001, 1). Known as a strategy “for dealing with conflict where other practices have failed,” collaborative planning methodologies have become increasingly common in public land and natural resource management (Booher and Innes 1999, 412). Frustrated with bureaucratic protocol and the existing decision-making systems that must adhere to the prominent environmental statutes,

“collaboration was born largely of failure, the growing recognition that lawsuits, lobbying campaigns, administrative appeals and other straight-line approaches to hard environmental issues are often narrow, usually expensive (in more ways than one), and always divisive in ways that reverberate beyond the immediate issue in dispute” (Brick et al. 2001, 3-4).

Daniel Kemmis, a long time political leader in Montana and prominent scholar of western public land management, is largely credited as one of main instigators for collaboration and its rampant spread across the West (Brick et al. 2001, 4). Published in 1992, Kemmis’ *Community and the Politics of Place*, examined conflict in western public lands and “was bold enough to suggest that breaking the gridlock probably must involve a reawakening of the sense of res publica, the ‘table’ around which we all sit in a democracy, and the further possibility that through reasoned debate and discussion we can identify and learn to obey a higher public good” (Brick et al. 2001, 5).

In 1996 the Quincy Library Group, a multi-stakeholder collaborative group, came up with an alternative five-year management plan for California's Plumas National Forest. As Brick et al. eds. 2001 describe, a group of loggers, environmentalists, citizens, and local government officials that were mutually dissatisfied with the Forest Service's plan, independently organized and created a plan to preserve old-growth, endangered species habitats, and roadless areas for 2.5 million acres of forest surrounding Quincy, and also keep the town sawmills in business (as cited in Kemmis and McKinney 2011). This example of collaboration, was largely seen as the first of its kind, agreed to be a success, and invoked a sense of promise surrounding collaboration on public lands that has become increasingly common throughout the American West.

Regarded as miraculous success stories in high polarized landscapes, the promise and power of collaboration produced from multi-party collaborative groups like the Quincy Library Group spread like wildfire across the new West.

The above section just laid out some context about CNRM; this next section will provide some relevant history about the Tongass National Forest, with specific attention to the timber industry. It will then introduce the TAC as example of an effort to collaboratively reconcile and negotiate long-standing environmental conflict on the Tongass.

3. Case Study: The Tongass National Forest

“But the Tongass is the largest remaining temperate rain forest in the world and has thus become a very special and symbolic landscape at national and international levels”

—Martin Nie

Author of Governing the Tongass

3.1 A Brief History of the Tongass National Forest

Located in Southeast Alaska, the Tongass National Forest is the world’s largest remaining intact temperate rainforest. In 1907, the Tongass was designated as a national forest and remains to be the United States’ largest national forest, encompassing 16.7 million acres—roughly the same size of West Virginia. Much of the Tongass spans the Alexander Archipelago. Roughly ninety-five percent of the Southeast Alaska is comprised of federal lands, the rest is a patchwork of state, native and privately owned land (Nie 2006, 388).

The region has a long history of brutal colonialism and resource exploitation (Nie 2006). Prior to Russian and later American settlement, Southeast Alaska’s temperate rainforest was predominantly populated by Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian Indians. Evidence suggests Alaskan natives have lived in this region for almost nine to ten thousand years (USDA 2017). In the late nineteenth century, the United States began to lead expeditions to Southeast Alaska. The 1899 Harriman expedition included famous conservationists, like John Muir, who visited the region and wrote about the region’s great forests. Then, in 1902 President Theodore Roosevelt established the Alexander Archipelago Forest Reserve, which would eventually become the Tongass National Forest in 1907 (Sisk 2007a, 3).

Southeast Alaska’s timber industry harkens back prior to the establishment of the Tongass National Forest, however, market forces prevented the timber industry from expanding until after the Second World War (Sisk 1999). Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, logging remained a relatively small and selective industry. Large-scale timber operations did begin after World War II, when the effort to rebuild Japan as an American ally required a timber supply Japan did not possess (Sisk 2003, 5).



Figure 2: Map of the Tongass National Forest. Image from: Shogren 2016.

The 1947 Tongass Timber Act (TTA) set the stage for large-scale, industrial logging on the Tongass. The act established a three-way relationship between Congress, the Forest Service and private timber corporations—commonly referred to known as an ‘iron triangle’ (Sisk, 150). The ‘iron triangle,’

“established a partnership between political leaders in the U.S. Congress, private industry, and the Forest Service... Private industry would build and operate pulp factories and build a road system throughout Southeast Alaska. The forest service would design the timber sales to ensure a guaranteed wood supply to industry at affordable rates, and would allow the industry to charge road expenses off as payment for timber. Congress would make sure the legal stage was set, and would appropriate money to fund the Forest Service. The economic problem was overcome by deliberate, generous government support” (Sisk 1999, 150).

TTA established two fifty-year contracts, one with the Ketchikan Pulp Corporation (KPC) beginning in 1951 and other with the Alaska Pulp Company (ALP) in 1953. In short, over the

course of the nearly the rest of the twentieth century, the Tongass National Forest was the site of a systematic, industrial clear-cut of old-growth forests—predominantly harvesting Sitka Spruce (*Picea sitchensis*) and Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*). It was clear the Forest Service saw logging and pulp manufacturing as the highest use of the forest, in fact the “1960s agency management plans called for the systematic clear-cut of 95 percent of the Tongass’ valuable old-growth timber in order to maximize pulpwood production” (Sisk 1999, 151).

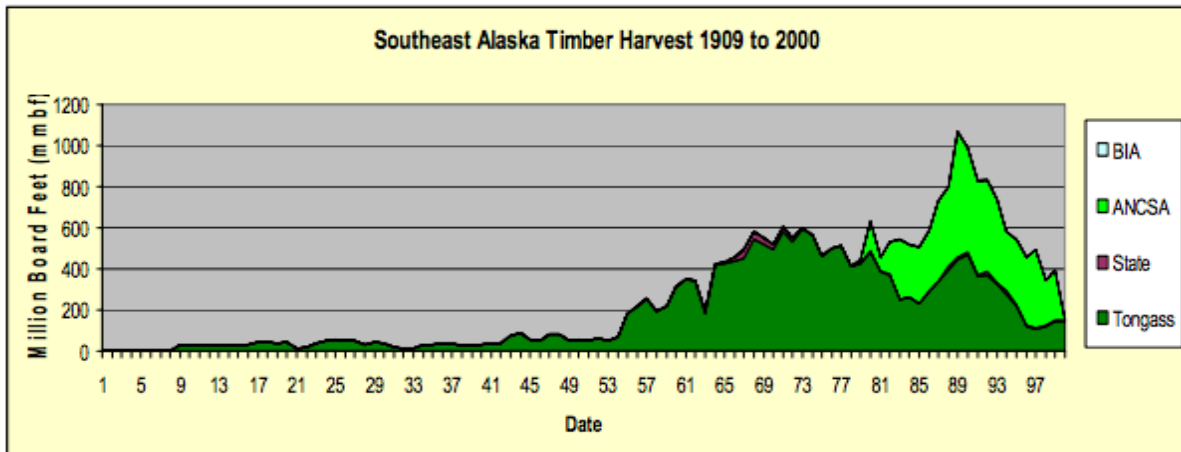


Figure 3: Tongass National Forest old-growth timber harvests by decade, 1910-2014. Image from: Sisk 2007.

According to the Forest Service records, timber harvests on the Tongass increased from about 50 million board feet³ per year to well above 350 million board feet annually by the 1970s (USFS 2003, 2004). Between 1947 to 1970 the timber industry in Southeast Alaska was at its height; sawmill towns were booming and the timber industry’s success was presented by statehood advocates that Alaska “had entered the industrial age and deserved the same status as the other 48 states” (Sisk 2003, 7).

However, throughout the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, a combination of factors dramatically changed the timber industry. First off, scientists began suggesting the Forest Service needed to change its management strategies to more adequately address the region's fisheries and wildlife and encouraged a silvicultural⁴ model. Additionally, organizations like the Sierra Club,

³ Board feet are a standard measurement for timber. One board foot measure twelve inches across, twelve inches wide and one inches thick.

⁴ Silviculture is the branch of forestry that provides the scientific basis for the management and treatment

The Nature Conservancy, and the Natural Resource Defense Council began demanding the Forest Service's shift away from clear cutting and find more responsible logging methods.

Furthermore, a series reforms contributed to heavier restrictions on the timber industry. The first reform was the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Use Act of 1960 (MUSYA), which stated that no specific use could predominate and that a high level of annual output should be maintained without the impairment on the productivity of the land. MUSYA specifically targeted the Forest Service to remind the agency it must equally balance wildlife, fisheries, recreation, mining, watersheds, and grazing. In 1964, the Wilderness Act was passed followed by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in 1969. In 1974, Congress passed the National Forest Management Plan Act (NFMA), which requires each national forest to have a management plan that details present and future use. Each plan must go through the NEPA process and must be revised every 5 to 10 years. The Tongass became the first National Forest to have a forest plan which was established in 1979 and called for 90 percent of the Tongass timberland to be harvested.

Then, in 1990 Congress passed the Tongass Timber Reform Act (TTRA), which restructured the pulp mills' fifty-year contracts, and addressed some habitat conservation efforts. The intent of TTRA was "to place the Tongass on equal footing with other national forests, and to foster a multiple resource approach to management" (Sisk 2007, 11). TTRA reduced the contracted amount of timber the Forest Service had to supply to pulp mills. The Forest Plan was up for revisions in 1992, and resulted in both the KPC and ALP each losing their fifty-year contracts, which would mark the beginning of the end of the old-growth timber industry in the Tongass.

The decline of the timber industry reflects larger global economic trends. Since the post World War II era, the desire for cheap and un-unionized labor force and less environmental and health regulations has resulted in hundreds of thousands of industry and manufacturing jobs to

of forest stands.

go overseas. Gilberston and Robinson (2003) noted:

"Cheaper logs and lumber from Russia displaced North American exports, as did wood from tree plantations in New Zealand and Scandinavia...Within the wood products industry, a series of mergers and consolidations have seen the emergence of several dominant corporations whose business perspective is global in scope. In seeking efficiencies, these companies have closed or consolidated plants in high cost areas and shifted investments to lower cost areas, often to nations in the developing world as well as to the American south" (8).

Since the closure of the pulp mills, the timber industry has been in decline. The remaining timber industry in Southeast Alaska has dwindled down to mostly small mom-and-pop style mills fighting to stay open for business. The December 2003 Alaska Economic Trends reported, "cutting restrictions unilaterally imposed by the U.S. Forest Service in the early 1990s effectively ended the long-term harvest contracts upon which the mills depended" (Gilberston and Robinson 2003, 7). Furthermore, The 2014 *Southeast Alaska by the Numbers* reported, "Southeast Alaska lost 3,500 direct [timber] industry jobs and over \$100 million in annual payroll in the 1990s. Over the last decade, timber employment has shrunk by another 89%, and in 2013, timber accounted for less than one percent of jobs and wages in the region" (Southeast Conference 2014, 10).

Once considered to be the backbone of Southeast Alaska's economy, the timber industry only makes up a small fraction of the region's economy. Nowadays, the seafood food industry, tourism and the government are largest employers. A 2016 report documented the government employed 13,499 people, the seafood industry employed 4,365 people, and the visitor industry⁵ employed 7,401 people, in comparison to the timber industry's 321 jobs in 2015 (Southeast Conference 2016, 4). Combined these industries accounted for 56 percent of the total employment earnings (Southeast Conference 2016, 4).

⁵ The North American Industry Classification System includes leisure & hospitality, and visitor transportation (air, water, scenic) in the Visitor Industry.

“As some residents describe it, the Southeast Alaska’s economy has moved from ‘fish and chips’ (salmon and pulp) to a more diversified one that is still based relatively heavily upon government, tourism, and the fishing, mining and timber industries”

—Martin Nie

The above section has just discussed the role of the timber industry on the Tongass National Forest. To summarize: once the backbone of the economy, today the timber industry only makes up a small sliver of Southeast Alaska’s economy and yet a strong desire to maintain what many consider a dying industry is very much alive. Though the timber industry is a predominant driver of conflict on the Tongass, in *Governing the Tongass*, Nie argues scarcity is central driver of the environmental conflict on the Tongass. He synthesized: “as more of the natural world becomes endangered, conflict over its protections escalates. This is especially so for those ‘last best places’ and symbolic wild landscapes like Alaska, in general, and the Tongass, in particular” (Nie 2006, 389). Moreover, Nie argues that one reason why the Tongass has experienced so much consternation is because “the region has long represented different values and opportunities” (Nie 2006, 389). Thus, there is a tension between regional needs and livelihoods and distant forces projecting certain values onto the Tongass drives a lot of the environmental conflict in the Tongass National Forest.

3.2 The “Capital T” Transition

In May 2010, the SOA announced that the Tongass would “chart a new path forward in the region that enhances the economic opportunities to communities while conserving the Tongass National Forest” (USDA 2010). This new path forward would be governed by what the SOA called the “Transition Framework,” which was an effort to diversify Southeast Alaska’s economy in addition to updating the Forest Service’s young growth management strategy. The new framework marked a monumental shift in the management of the Tongass—transitioning away from old-growth timber production towards young growth timber production—with the recognition other industries, such as tourism, recreation and fishing which rely on intact Tongass National Forest resources (Alexander and Gorte 2014,1).

Over the course of next three years the Forest Service partnered with the Juneau Economic Development Corporation (JEDC) to help identify and refine the direction goals of the "Transition Framework." In short, the framework outlined the Forest Service would begin steer away from old growth timber production and towards a future that would better support job growth and healthy communities (USDA 2014). The rationale behind such a shift is best summarized in the Leader's Intent:

"the Tongass National Forest is one of the world's largest remaining intact coastal rainforests, providing significant ecosystem values including clean water, carbon storage, intact wildlife corridors, and world-class salmon habitat. Timber has played a significant economic and cultural role on the Tongass for generations, and will continue to do so. Yet ecological, social and economic considerations, and longstanding conflict over large scale clearcutting of old growth forests, necessitate a shift to forest management that conserves the forest's rich resources while supporting vibrant economies and local communities. We must also recognize that as societal values have shifted, so have policy directives. Significant changes in timber markets further require a re-evaluation of the role Alaska timber plays on the global stage. Either we embrace these changes while helping the timber industry be more competitive and scaled more appropriately to existing economic and social realities, or risk losing an industry altogether" (USDA 2013, 1).

Then, in July of 2013, the SOA issued Memorandum 1044-009 titled *Addressing Sustainable Forestry in Southeast Alaska*. In it, the SOA outlined his intent to expedite the transition towards a young growth-base timber program in 10 to 15 years, a much faster timeframe than the 2008 Tongass Land Management Plan (TLMP). The SOA additionally recommended the Forest Service amend the 2008 Forest Plan to adequately address the expedited transition. The SOA referred to the Tongass as a "national treasure," cited the forests important carbon sequestration capabilities, and recognized the long economic and social legacy of old-growth timber harvesting in Southeast Alaska.

In September 2013, the Forest Service completed a Five-Year Review of the Tongass Forest Plan. The results of the Five-Year Review and the Secretary's Memorandum led to the Tongass Forest Supervisor to determine amending to the 2008 Forest Plan was the best solution to adequately meet the demands of the Secretary's memorandum. On May 27, 2014, "a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS was published in the Federal Register (79 Federal

Register [FR] 30074) initiating a 30-day scoping period”⁶ (USDA 2016, 4). Table 1 displays the significant dates, events and processes surrounding the EIS, TLMP amendment and the NEPA process.

Table 1: Key events throughout the Transition, NEPA process and the TAC.

The Transition⁷ and TAC Timeline
Date & Event
July 2, 2013
The SOA issues Memorandum 1044-009, Addressing Sustainable Forestry in Southeast Alaska, asking to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. expedite the transition away from old-growth timber harvesting and towards a forest products industry that use predominantly young-growth stands over the next 10-15 years and b. recommended the Forest Service amend the 2008 Forest Plan to adequately address this expedited transition since the 10-15 year timeframe was more rapid than the 2008 Forest Plan had taken into account.
September 2013
“The Forest Service completed a Five-Year Review of the Forest Plan in September 2013. The results of the Five-Year Review and the Secretary’s Memorandum led to the Tongass Forest Supervisor making a determination that “ ...conditions on the land and demands of the public require the Tongass to modify the 2008 Forest Plan ” (USDA Forest Service 2013a)’ (Final EIS).
February of 2014
The TAC, federally chartered to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on developing an ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable forest management strategy for the Tongass National Forest is assembled. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Specifically charged to: develop “recommendations about how to transition within 10 to 15 years from old growth to predominantly young growth timber management in a way that is economically viable for the existing industry, while recognizing and balancing the other unique and equally important resource values of the Tongass” (TAC Final recommendations).
May 24, 2014
Forest Service issues a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement since

⁶ See The Council on Environmental Quality *A Citizen’s Guide to the NEPA*. The overall goal is to define the scope of issues to be addressed in depth in the analyses that will be included in the EIS.

⁷ I will now refer to the the transition away from old-growth and to young-growth logging as the Transition.

<p>the amendment triggers the National Environmental Policy Act.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. "An amendment is necessary for responding to the July 2013 direction from USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack outlined in the Secretary's Memorandum 1044-009" (Final EIS). The 2008 Forest Plan did not adequately account for Vilsack's accelerated transition timeframe. Thus, it is necessary to amend the Forest Plan to meet the demands of Secretary Vilsack's Memorandum. b. "The need to amend the plan is further corroborated by the Five-Year Review of the Forest Plan, completed in 2013, which concluded that conditions on the land and demands of the public necessitate the Tongass National Forest to make changes to the Forest Plan" (Final EIS). c. Initiation of the plan Amendment
<p>July 2014-December 2015 The TAC convenes</p>
<p>May 2015 "During the three-day meeting, the TAC achieved consensus on a comprehensive package of draft recommendations to advise the Secretary of Agriculture"</p>
<p>December 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The TAC publishes its Final Recommendations b. TAC "unanimously supported the preferred alternative in Draft EIS and recommended it be the foundation of the final amended Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan" (December 2015 meeting)
<p>June 2016 The Draft EIS and ROD are published</p>
<p>June-July 2016 Public Comment Period</p>
<p>December 2016 Final EIS, ROD and TLMP released</p>

The EIS was prepared by the Forest Service to identify and analyze the necessary changes to the Forest Plan to accomplish the transition to young growth management as provided in the Secretary's Memorandum (USDA 2016, 4).

Though the origins and motivations for an expedited transition timeframe (10-15 years) change depending on who one talks to [see table 2], in his memo, the SOA cited the need to mitigate human-induced climate change as a primary reason to transition towards a young growth timber base. Scientists have been studying the extent to which old-growth forests can

sequester large amounts of carbon dioxide—a major greenhouse gas that has been linked to global warming—and as such preserving such forests can in fact mitigate climate change (Magill 2015).

An article from High Country News connected the origins of the Transition to climate change mitigation. At the Climate Change Conference in November 2009, “Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack highlighted the ‘vital role’ forests must play in combating climate change, singling out the Tongass, which may hold as much as 8 percent of all the carbon contained in America’s forests” (Shogren 2016). Those in favor of the Transition, argue: “logging in the Tongass is already down to about one-tenth” of what it was in the mid-1990s, thus transitioning towards an economy that is less invested in a “dying” industry makes the most economic sense (Shogren, 2016). These economic incentives and the desire to mitigate climate change “may prove to be the force that ends wide-scale old-growth logging there permanently” (Shogren, 2016). Whereas, the timber industry perceived the Transition as an attack on their way of life. By definition, small old-growth mills need old-growth logs to stay open for business. However, many conservation and environmental groups like to point out the most productive old-growth stands have already been logged and the old-growth stands that still exist should remain intact. Thus, raising the question, to what extent is the push for old-growth logging an antiquated profession that is simply being phased out due to resource reduction? To what extent is the timber industry’s resistance to the Transition an unwillingness to change?

3.3 The Tongass Advisory Committee: Its Origins and Purpose

In February of 2014, under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture chartered the TAC to provide advice on how to best transition in a 10-15 year timeframe. The TAC was tasked to provide advice and recommendations on how to develop “an ecologically, culturally, socially, and economically sustainable forest management strategy on the Tongass National Forest” (USDA, 2014). The TAC was comprised of fifteen members from the timber industry, national and regional environmental or conservation

groups, Federally Recognized Tribes; Alaska Native organizations and/or Alaska Native Corporations, Federal, State and local governments and other commercial users or the public at large. Beginning in August 2014, the committee met nine times before submitting its final recommendations in December 2015.

Meanwhile, as the TAC convened through 2014 and 2015, the Forest Service drafted and carried out an EIS to assess the impact of amending the TLMP in response to the Secretary of Agriculture issuance of the Memorandum 1044-099.

While proponents of the TAC have applauded the TAC, pointing out the committee's historic consensus, my research reveals such reviews are not universal. In the following section I lay out my research scope, methodologies and results. Each methodology and corresponding results section are combined into their own subsection. I seek to evaluate what the TAC can reveal about the process, drawbacks and benefits of collaborative natural resource management.

3.4 Assessing the TAC

In May of 2015, the TAC reached a consensus and submitted a draft of their recommendations advising the Forest Service and the Secretary of Agriculture how to best expedite the transition to young growth. Ultimately, the TAC recommended the Forest Service apply a co-intent mandate in the Forest Plan Amendment. The members of the TAC created the term "co-intent" and essentially calls on the Forest Service to consider the ecological, social, and economic goals in land management and to engage with stakeholders during major decision-making (TAC final recommendations). The TAC prioritized the LUDs and Standards where the opportunity to capture more young growth in the near-term future is greatest.

Over the next six months the Forest Service incorporated the TAC's recommendations into the on-going EIS and Forest Plan Amendment and in December of 2015, the members of the TAC reviewed the Proposed Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The TAC's draft recommendations served as the basis for EIS's Alternative 5. Upon reviewing the new plan and DEIS, the TAC reconvened and

finalized recommendations and "unanimously supported the preferred alternative in the DEIS and recommended it be the foundation of the final amended Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan" (Tongass Advisory Committee Summary, December 2015).

After considering the several objections⁸ from nearly all representative groups, in the December 2016 Stewart signed the ROD that chose the Alternative 5. The Amended Forest Plan ultimately settled on a 16-year transition timeframe to phase out old-growth logging. An *Alaska Public Media* radio broadcast on December 12, 2016 stated:

"The [amended] plan offers an average of 46 million board feet of timber each year, far below the glory days of the industry. Mostly old growth will be offered during the first 10 years, almost three times the young growth. During the last five, young-growth volume will double and old growth will be almost halved. At the end of the 16-year transition, only 5 million feet of old growth will be provided for small sales and specialty products."

The reaction to the ROD was mixed. Forest Service leaders have touted the TAC's collaborative efforts and consensus as an exemplary case of what collaboration can do for the Tongass. Whereas, others expressed major frustrations, some even said the new plan would run the timber industry out of business.

Ultimately, I seek to examine the TAC's accomplishments to evaluate its benefits and limitations to open up a discussion on how well CNRM strategies reconcile and negotiate the wicked nature of public land management.

Interviews

My first methodology was a series of interviews with members of the TAC to directly ask them about the effectiveness of the TAC. Using the contact information listed on the Meridian Institute website I contacted several members of the TAC via email, however, I received limited responses. In total, I completed three phone interviews, asking individuals about TAC and the

⁸ See The Council on Environmental Quality *A Citizen's Guide to the NEPA*. NEPA mandates a 30 day comment period after Draft EIS are published, so plaintiffs can file objections. The agency must hear and consider all objections.

Transition. After each interview I transcribed each and then looked for differences and similarities to identify any major thematic patterns.

Table 2: Analysis of interviews with TAC members.

Interviewee	Main Motivator for the Transition	Assessment of the TAC
<p>Carol Rushmore Local Government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Politically motivated ➤ Push from the “the environmental organizations that have national funding opportunities to lobby and persuade” people with high political status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Overall the TAC was not successful because what the TAC was assigned to address was within a too narrow of focus ➤ <i>“Yes, there was consensus, but in my mind that was the only success of the TAC, not the ongoing larger picture that had been envisioned [for] the TAC [which was] that it would start ongoing cooperative decisions that would help heal, where you had all sides working together”</i> ➤ The benefits and breakthroughs the TAC achieved have been highly limited
<p>Andrew Thoms Regional Conservation Organization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>“There is no more Old-Growth left, they cut down all the economical Old-Growth during pulp mill logging and afterwards and there is none left, so we have to shift to second growth or there is no timber industry”</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>“It was a well facilitated and well run process with great support from the forest service and it brought entities together that hadn’t been able to before and move things forward quite a bit on that front”</i> ➤ The facilitators the Forest Service hired made it a good process/committee
<p>Elizabeth Bryant⁹</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Thought <i>the main motivator for the transition was the Forest Service’s</i> intention to plan ahead in time to be able to provide a more reliable supply of timber ➤ Added that they thought the Transition was the Forest Service recognizing the unique legacy of logging on the Tongass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>“The process of building relationships on the TAC was largely unprecedented on the Tongass”</i> ➤ The Tongass Timber Collaborative (TTC) is a testament to the valuable and effective relationships that were built when the TAC convened ➤ Though the set rules and bounds of the TAC were very helpful during the hard conversations where members would disagree

⁹ Per request of from this TAC Member, I used a pseudonym to conceal their identity.

Table two displays key findings from the interviews conducted with three TAC members. Column one reveals that members disagreed about the main motivator for the Transition. Some saw the Transition as a result of diminished availability and accessibility of old-growth stands and growing concern about what to do with the young-growth stands. Whereas, another saw it as an effort for the Forest Service to plan ahead for the future and ensure ecological, economic, and social stability.

Furthermore, each member's assessment of the TAC differed. Carol Rushmore, the director of economic development for the city of Wrangell, had a more critical reflection of the TAC. Though the TAC was able to reach a consensus, to Rushmore that did not mean the ongoing larger picture that had been envisioned—increased collaboration and cooperative decision making—was achieved. Rushmore said she could not characterize the TAC as a success. Instead, the TAC stimulated some benefits.

On the other hand, Andrew Thoms, the executive director of Sitka Conservation Society, overall had a more positive reflection of TAC. He offered the facilitation group, the Meridian Institute, was an important component in the TAC's workability and helped the TAC reach consensus. Thoms was especially invested in incorporating and implementing a timber industry that would be more regionally focused, meaning that the benefits and products of the forestry remain in the Southeast region. Rushmore and Bryant also cited a desire to design a timber industry focused on providing benefits back to the region.

Bryant noted the TAC's overwhelming civil interactions and discourse amongst historically polarized groups. She stated:

"The process of building relationships on the TAC was really powerful and largely unprecedented on the Tongass, we've had some other efforts at collaborative decision-making around the timber industry and community sustainability on the forest over the past 20 years or so and they have all been pretty challenging and they have all wrapped up with bad feelings on all sides and that was not the case on the TAC. We wrapped up feeling like we agreed to agree on some things or we agreed to disagree on a lot of other things and still respected and appreciated each other and had really good working relationships amongst the whole group. I don't know of any working relationships that were not good working relationships even though people had some pretty fundamental disagreements. I think that is a really good thing and I would

characterize that as a conditional success" (Elizabeth Bryant, telephone conversation with author, December 2, 2016).

Bryant added that the Tongass Transition Collaborative (TTC) is a testimony to the TAC. The TTC demonstrates the TAC's ongoing dedication to fostering and ensuring their recommendations to the Forest Service are implemented.

"The TTC is another exciting step to come out of the TAC and I think that is reflective of the relationships that were built on the TAC and it is a testament to the fact that those of us who still live and work in the region—a number of TAC members have actually moved—are really invested in continuing collaborative conversations and actually investing some of our own resources in those conversations" Bryant said.

Overall each of these three members agreed the group facilitation and sideboards¹⁰ made conversations that have historically been difficult to have on the Tongass easier to navigate (see table four for a list of TAC's sideboards). Bryant expressed said: "The sideboards contributed to the workability of the group and of the solutions that we ultimately came up with or brought forward from other sources." However, Bryant did state she felt the sideboards restricted the TAC at times. Bryant agreed the TAC was missing some key stakeholder groups such as the scientific community, fishing, tourism and recreation industries. "I think that TAC was missing some really key interest groups because of the sideboards," Bryant said. "Because it was focused on the timber transition, there was no one specifically representing recreation industry, there was no one specifically representing the fishing industry, so there were some really key economic drivers from Southeast that were missing from the TAC." These reflections from three of the TAC members highlight some members were more satisfied with the committee's recommendations and the Transition.

¹⁰ The USFS uses the term sideboard to describe the specific parameters and bounds the TAC had to operate under.

News Analysis

This section includes reflections about the TAC and Amended Forest Plan, I collected through a news analysis. I used four academic search engines—Academic Search Premier, Google News, LexisNexis Academic, and Primo—to find online and printed news articles that discussed the TAC and the Amended Forest Plan. I set each search engine to pull up articles between December 2014, the first mention of the TAC, and until present (April 2017). I searched ‘Tongass Advisory Committee,’ and ‘Tongass’ in each search engine and then combed through the articles, saving the ones that were relevant. Once I had compiled a list of relevant articles I read through them, noting which stakeholders were included—either through a direct quote or if the author included a summarized reaction from a certain stakeholder group. Table two compiles some of the stakeholder reflections in response to the TAC’s final recommendations and the Amended Forest Plan. I found through the news analysis. These articles were published between May 2015, when the TAC’s final recommendations were published through December 2016, when final EIS and ROD for amended the Tongass Forest Plan were published.

Table 3: Reflections about the TAC from news analysis.

Who	Representative Group	News Source	Quote
Beth Pendleton USFS Regional Forester	Government	Juneau Empire May 10, 2015	“Forest Service Regional Forester Beth Pendleton, following the TAC’s vote, called the committee’s work ‘absolutely monumental’”
Shelly Wright Executive Director of Southeast Conference	Regional Economic Development Group	Juneau Empire May 10, 2015	“I think that it will be the demise of the timber industry as we know it right now. The opinion of people that believe in resource development is that trees grow back. Trees grow back. There will always be mature timber because trees grow and if you let them grow to a mature size then we’ll have mature timber”

Kristen Miller Conservation Director of Alaska Wilderness League	Conservationist	E & E News November 20, 2015	"The region's economy 'is built on sustainable fisheries and wild places that draw visitors from around the world," she said in press release, adding that it's time for Forest Service to management "to look beyond logging"
Lloyd Gossman Former Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce President	Alaskan Resident	Juneau Empire May 25, 2015	"It's unfathomable that a federal public agency (the USFS) can go to Alaskans and actually have them participate in shutting down the remnants of Alaska's Timber Industry. That is what the TAC is doing...The folks on the advisory committee are being used. Most of them were hand-picked because they support the shutdown of any timber harvesting. Most Alaskans know this committee was established to give the appearances of public input....The Tongass Advisory Committee is coming up with a predetermined finality to our timber industry in Southeast Alaska"
Dominick Dellasala Chief scientist with GEOS Institute	Conservationist	Juneau Empire June 30, 2015	"The 15-year transition from old to new growth forests 'stalls urgent climate change protections.' "On the heels of news last march that global carbon dioxide levels exceeded the 400 parts per million mark, old-growth forests on the Tongass, the nation's most carbon dense forest, are being clearcut. The Tongass absorbs about 8 percent of the nation's carbon dioxide pollution annually—far greater than any other national forest."
Owen Graham Alaska Forest Association	Timber Industry	KTOO Public Media June 30, 2016	"Said the transition needs to slow down. 'We've always agreed that there needs to be a transition but we wanted the trees to reach maturity, which is 30 years in the future,' Graham said. 'If they cut the trees now, over the next 10-15 years, then they'll be too small to be properly sawn in the sawmills, and they'll just end up being exported to China.' Graham said that the old-growth harvest planned during the transition isn't

			<p>adequate to maintain the few remaining sawmills. He added that a full inventory of young growth trees is needed before formalizing the amendment.</p> <p>'To do this transition right now is purely politics and all the rubbish that people are making up that it'll work; it's all rubbish,' Graham said. They know perfectly well that it won't work and they don't care.'</p>
<p>Austin Williams Trout Unlimited</p>	<p>Conservationist</p>	<p>Juneau Empire June 30, 2016</p>	<p>"This plan amendment has the support of thousands of Alaskans that understand it's far past time we move beyond the conflict and controversy of timber management on the Tongass and recognize the great value our largest national forest provides for fishing and tourism. This is a huge step in the right direction for sustainable and economically-sensible management of the Tongass."</p>
<p>Kirk Hardcastle Fisherman</p>	<p>Fisherman</p>	<p>Alaska Dispatch News July 5, 2016</p>	<p>"Given that the debate about where timber harvest should occur in the Tongass has raged back and forth in the courts, halls of Congress and in many community forums across the region for almost 50 years, it was an incredible achievement for timber interests, conservationists, Alaska Natives and community stakeholders to come together on a unified vision for the various uses of our national forest. The debate within the council was contentious at times but good-faith compromise won out in the end and a consensus among these very diverse interests was reached. The Forest Service integrated the council's recommendations into their preferred alternative for the amended forest plan and some 60,000 Americans supported that alternative"</p>
<p>Eric Nichols Partner of Evergreen Timber and Alcan Forest Products</p>	<p>Timber Industry</p>	<p>High Country News October 31, 2016</p>	<p>"Despite the vote, the timber industry, state government and the tribal timber organization attacked the plan, saying it wouldn't allow enough old-growth logging to keep them in business. The market for second-growth trees is uncertain, too. The proposal "will result in the bankruptcy and</p>

			the closing of all major timber operators on the Tongass,” Eric Nichols, a partner of Evergreen Timber and Alcan Forest Products, wrote to the Forest Service”
Lisa Murkowski Alaskan Senator	State Government	US Official News December 9, 2016	“By finalizing a new plan on its way out of office, the Obama administration has blatantly disregarded some of the Tongass Advisory Committee’s most important recommendations and imperiled the economic future of Southeast Alaska... Under this plan, the Tongass will no longer be managed to work for communities, but against them. The Forest Service’s insistence on locking in an accelerated transition to a young growth program without an inventory to show whether that is even possible is both harmful and misguided”
Don Young Alaskan Congressman	State Government	Alaska Dispatch News December 14, 2016	Said the new plan will effectively end timber harvesting in the Tongass. “Under this new management plan, Southeast will not have enough young growth timber to supply even one single sawmill”
Rand Hagenstein & Christine Woll The Nature Conservancy	Conservationist	Juneau Empire December 22, 2016	“We were heartened to see the agency adopt the Tongass Advisory Committee’s hard-won recommendations. It’s a breakthrough for Southeast Alaska because it ended the logjam that has plagued decision-making in the forest for far too long”

As table three displays, conservationists and Forest Service leaders tend to applaud the TAC's recommendations. Several conservationist groups were excited about the shift away from an economy based on old-growth logging towards a culture and economy that places more value on Southeast's fisheries and tourism industry; however, the GEOS Institute, a conservation group based in Ashland, Oregon pushed back against the plan, saying the Transition is not happening fast enough. GEOS Institute’s Dominick Dellasala, specifically cited the Tongass' importance in slowing down climate change and thus felt the Forest Service was not transitioning to young-growth fast enough. Though other conservation groups agree the

Tongass plays a critical role in absorbing carbon dioxide and thereby slowing climate change, they tended to be content with 10-15 year timeframe of the Transition.

Representatives from the timber industry and state governments fiercely accused the new forest plan will drive the timber industry out of business. Similar to Rushmore's opinion, Shelly Wright, the Executive Director of the Southeast Conference, a regional economic development group, talked about how trees are a renewable resource in Southeast Alaska and an old-growth logging industry should be part of the region's economy.

Multiple objections filed against the draft EIS during the public comment period further demonstrate representatives from the timber industry, native interests, state government, and environmental groups were dissatisfied with the Amended Forest Plan. Though groups from all sides objected to the Amended Forest Plan, their reasons for objecting differed. For some the Transition was too fast, while for others it was too slow. Whereas, others objected because they felt the Forest Service did not incorporate the TAC's recommendations enough. Senator Lisa Murkowski shot back against the plan because she felt the Forest Service dismissed the TAC's recommendation to conduct a young-growth inventory before finalizing the amendment to the Forest Plan.

In a press release published in May 2015, when the TAC released its draft recommendations, Co-chair Lynn Jungwirth stood by the TAC's recommendations and said:

"It has been an honor and a privilege to work with such a mature, high-functioning, and honest group. I am excited about seeing what happens in the next fifteen years. This represents an opportunity for a new kind of forest management. This is an honorable plan and the people of the Tongass deserve the opportunity to make it work" (Kauffman 2015).

Jungwirth added in a separate news article, where she spoke about her optimism for the future of collaboration on the Tongass:

"Your willingness to accept each other's value sets is breathtaking, and I am continually impressed by the group's ability to come to solutions that integrate those value sets. You are most advanced collaborative group I have ever worked with. I have seen such youthful energy on the Tongass – I hope to see that energy in future collaborative efforts as the Tongass implements its transition strategy" (Tongass Advisory Committee

Summary, December 2015).

Furthermore, on December 4, 2015 after finalizing its recommendations, the TAC unanimously came consensus and applauded themselves as well as the Forest Service for the hard work put into the recommendations. In a media release, Co-chair Les Cronk stated: “the TAC is a great example of what can be done—success is possible, even with a diverse group” (Tongass Advisory Committee Summary, December 2015).

Analysis of the TAC’s Drafting Materials

Table 4: Guidelines and objectives extracted from documents relating to the Transition and the formation of the TAC.

Document Title	Objectives
Leader’s of Intent Paper January 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “Timber has played a significant economic and cultural role on the Tongass for generations, and will continue to do so. Yet ecological, social and economic considerations, and longstanding conflict over large scale clearcutting of old growth forests, necessitates a shift to forest management that conserves the forest’s rich resources while supporting vibrant economies and local communities” (USFS 2013)
Addressing Sustainable Forestry in Southeast Alaska July 2, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “we must speed the transition away from old-growth timber harvesting and towards a forest industry that utilizes second growth—or young growth—forests” (USDA 2013) ➤ “This Memorandum affirms that this transition to a more ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable forest management is high priority for USDA” (USDA 2013, 1)
The TAC’s Charter February 10, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “The committee will advise the Secretary of Agriculture, through the Chief of the Forest Service, by providing advice and recommendations for developing an ecologically, socially, and economically sustainable forest management strategy on the Tongass National Forest... This forest management strategy will emphasize a shift to young growth management” (USDA 2014, 1)
Guidance for TAC July 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The purpose of the committee is to provide advice and recommendations on a young growth transition strategy in

	<p>order to meet the Secretary's directive.</p> <p>➤ The young growth transition is a given.</p>
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Table four displays the TAC's drafting materials outlined the purpose and scope of the TAC. The Forest Service January 2013 Leader's Intent Paper was written by Forest Service Regional Forester Beth G. Pendleton, Tongass Forest Supervisor Forrest Cole, Deputy Regional Forester Ruth M. Monahan, and Tongass Deputy Forest Supervisor Patricia M. O'Connor. The paper outlined the Forest Service rationale, intent, and goals for the transition to young growth in Southeast Alaska. The SOA's memorandum was an overview of the Secretary's goals and intent for the transition. The TAC's Charter outlines the committee's scope, description of duties, and general operational rules and preliminary sideboards. The TAC's Operating Procedures and Committee Member Interests were each drafted by the committee members during the first meeting in August of 2014 to provide guidelines for the TAC's process and vision.

The TAC's drafting materials demonstrate the purpose and mission of the TAC were non-negotiable. Furthermore, in the document titled Guidance for the Tongass Advisory Committee, the agency explicitly details the committee's sideboards—a Forest Service terms used to describe the operating rules and procedures of a given group and or meeting. The first sideboard the agency listed: "the young growth transition is a given" (USFS, 2013). In other words, members did not get to weigh in on the TAC's mission but instead, Forest Service leaders and the Secretary of Agriculture determined the TAC's mission.

The drafting materials highlight some important themes about the underlying political motivations for the Transition and the formation of the TAC. The Leader's Intent Paper, the Secretary's memorandum, and the TAC's charter each discuss an expedited transition will be more "ecologically, socially, and economically" sustainable for Southeast Communities.

Overall, the TAC's drafting materials demonstrate the TAC's scope was determined not by the committee members but rather the USDA Secretary and Forest Service leaders. Plus, the transition to young growth in the Secretary's 10-15 year timeframe was an operating given and

the TAC had to base its work and recommendations using this expedited timeframe.

Table 5: The TAC’s sideboards as outlined in the *Guidance for the Tongass Advisory Committee*.

The TAC’s Sideboards	
➤	The young growth transition is a given
➤	The Forest Service will continue to manage for a timber program on the Tongass National Forest
➤	The amendment is intended to expand the existing Forest Plan’s provisions regarding young growth timber. One purpose of the committee is to recommend how best to do that
➤	The Forest Service is proposing to modify the Tongass Land Management Plan; the committee’s recommendation(s) are needed in a timely manner (by April 2015)
➤	The committee need not consider legislatively protected lands (e.g., Wilderness, LUD IIs, and TTRA buffers) as part of this amendment process
➤	The application of the Roadless Rule to the Tongass National Forest is being litigated. The committee may consider whether to recommend that the Forest Service adjust the 2001 inventory to remove certain acres that are roaded and have young growth, for the limited purpose of advancing the transition to young growth
➤	The committee’s recommendation(s) must also consider other laws, regulations and policies

Table 5 displays the sideboards the TAC had to operate under. As previously outlined in Tables 2, 3, and 4 many stakeholders felt the transition should have been up for debate. However, table 5, demonstrates the TAC was directly tasked to come up with recommendations on how to transition to a young growth timber base.

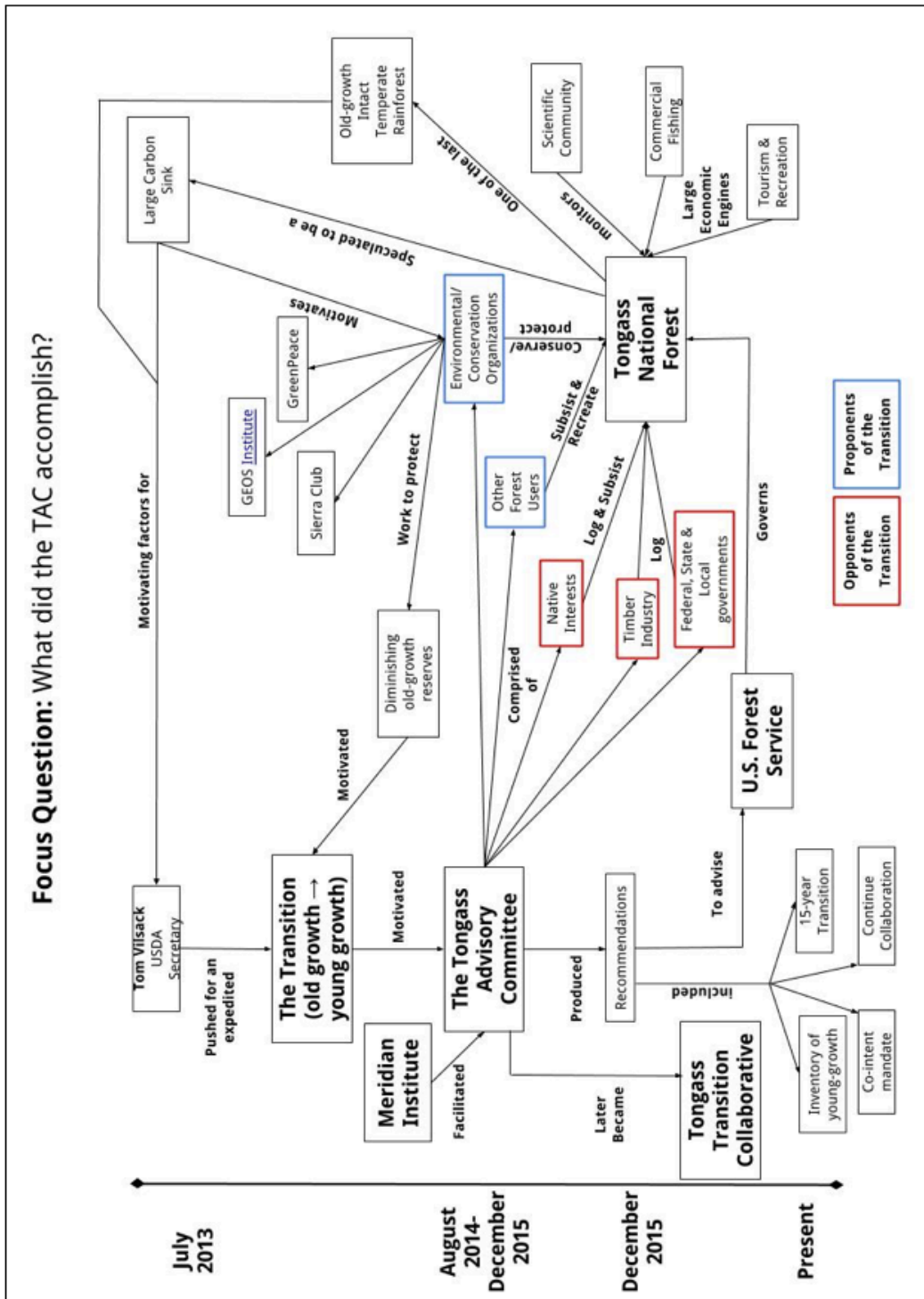


Figure 3: Key actors and processes in Transition and TAC.

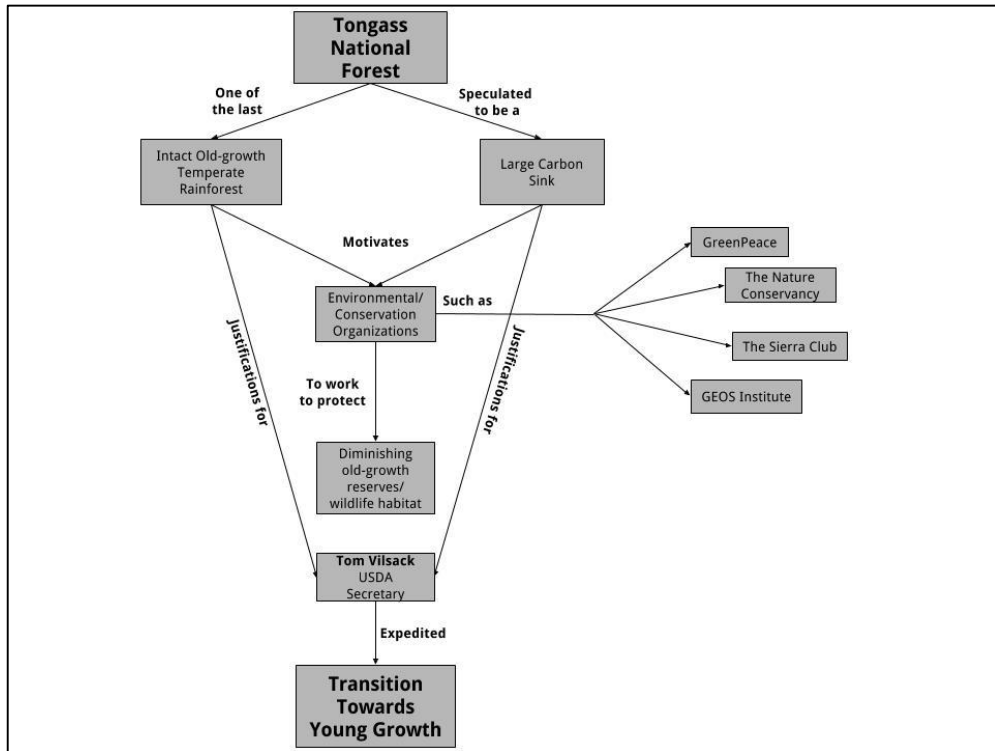


Figure 4: The connections between the origins of the Transition and the TAC.

Figure 3 and 4 work to translate the linked nature of the motivations for the Transition and the missions of national and regional environmental and conservation organizations. Looking at figure 3 it is evident environmental and conservationist groups and the SOA’s justifications for an expedited transition are aligned. As Table 4 displays, the TAC’s drafting materials, and specifically Memo 1044-009 drew on the Tongass’ ability to mitigate climate change and promoted a Forest Plan that would better support the fishing and tourism industries, instead of the historical old-growth logging industries. This alignment helps explain why several conservation organizations were more content with the TAC’s final recommendations and Amended Forest Plan.

3.5 Assessing the TAC

The TAC complicates the idea that CNRM is a panacea to public land management conflict. This discussion will make two main points. First, that the TAC's structure—specifically the drafting materials and sideboards—facilitated difficult conversations amongst stakeholders but simultaneously limited how much genuine negotiation could occur. Thus, the TAC's structural constraints explain why certain stakeholders remain more satisfied with Amended Forest Plan than others, but also how and why the TAC came to a consensus. And secondly TAC's charter and structure made it so that the environmental and conservationists were predisposed to be more satisfied with the TAC's outcomes and amended Forest Plan. As Figures 3 and 4 demonstrate, the motivations for the Transition and how regional and national environmental organizations talk about the Tongass illustrate a certain alignment with the Transition. The following paragraphs will now go into a more detailed discussion on these main points.

As demonstrated in the tables 2 and 3, a clear disagreement about the transition timeframe existed. However, members of TAC were never able to discuss these disagreements, since the TAC's sideboards explicitly stated that the transition to young growth logging was a given, and because the TAC's mission explicitly charted the TAC to provide recommendations on how to best expedite the transition. In other words, the TAC was specifically asked to provide recommendations on how to transition, not if individual members thought the Transition was possible, nor if they agreed with the TAC's charter. As evidenced by interviews and news analysis disagreements and objections to the TAC's designated confines explain differences in reflections on the TAC. On the other hand, the TAC's explicit charter and sideboards precisely explain how and why the TAC was able to come to a consensus. The sideboards allowed stakeholders to put their differences aside and collaborate with one another. Without these set confines, the differences TAC members had with each other would have prevented any decision-making from happening.

Moreover, though mixed reflections about the TAC and the amended Forest Plan exist, the TAC did facilitate conversations on the Tongass that traditionally have been challenging

and largely unsuccessful. In that sense, the fact that members of the TAC explicitly expressed that they felt their time and work was valued demonstrates a semi-success. Like TAC Member Elizabeth Bryant said, "the relationships built on the TAC were largely unprecedented on the Tongass" and I too think these relationships can be characterized as a conditional success. Unlike the historical norm on the Tongass, where stakeholders only came face-to-face in the courts, the TAC created a time and space for stakeholders to sit across from one another to work through tough issues. These conversations, however, were only able to occur because of the TAC's sideboards.

Even though the TAC's charter and sideboards restricted the TAC's scope—which nearly all parties took issue with—in the realm of large-scale decision-making certain parameters must be set to facilitate discussions and make decisions. Thus, the sideboards also explain how and why the TAC was able to reach a consensus. Therefore, CNRM has the capability to overcome hostilities in the short range—within specific committees or projects—however, the way the process is structured highly impacts who feels more satisfied in the end.

The interviews and news analysis also reveal how pre-existing power dynamics and differences in social capital can impact collaboration. Interestingly, none of the articles I came across included a direct quote or interview with a tribal representative. The only direct mention of a Tribal opinion was in an October 31, 2016 High Country News article that said: "tribal timber organization attacked the plan" (Shogren 2016). On the other hand, nearly all of the articles I looked at included a direct comment or included what conservation and environmental groups thought about the TAC and or the plan amendment. Thus, it appears the strength and reach of a stakeholder's platform might have impacted a stakeholder's opinion on the TAC's final recommendations and or the Amended Forest Plan.

Therefore, despite reaching a consensus, the TAC demonstrates CNRM is not quite the silver bullet it is often touted as in literature and praxis. The TAC demonstrates structure of the collaboration process has the capability to overcome longstanding hostilities, yet the structure to a large extent guides and limits the nature of the outcome and thereby resulting in some stakeholders feeling more satisfied than others.

4. Larger Implications

4.1 The Limitations to Collaborative Decision Making

As the use of collaborative planning has become increasingly popular receiving high praise for its ability to solve major social and environmental issues, scholars have identified a need to evaluate such strategies (Conley and Moote 2003). The above section just outlined some of the TAC's benefits and limitations. This section will touch on some of the larger implications of collaborative decision making both inside and outside of land management.

The TAC sheds light on perhaps one of the most dangerous myths of CNRM: the notion that voices are equally heard once an even playing field is established. The TAC in fact reveals the opposite. For example, while conducting my news analysis, I could not find a single news article that included a direct quote from a Native representative. The only instance that mentioned an opinion from a Native interest was from a Eric Nichols (see Table 3) and it was his words. Whereas, nearly each news article included a comment from an environmental and conservationist representative or the timber industry. Thus, even though a stakeholder might get a seat at the table, that does not guarantee their voice will be heard.

National forests are not only place or situation where alternative problem-solving methods have been adopted. Let us return to the Klamath Basin. For nearly a decade, stakeholders on the Klamath negotiated the hydroelectric dam removal and the distribution of water rights. When the meetings began, long standing enemies sat amongst one another, however, through immense dedication and collaboration, enemies eventually became friends and real negotiation and reconciliation occurred (Blankenbuehler 2016, Leslie 2015). By 2014, three scientifically grounded agreements generated and signed by local stakeholders for a more equitable future on the Klamath (Leslie 2015). Stakeholders had come up with a way "to remove four dams in the Lower Klamath Basin to help fish, ensure enough water for irrigators, secure lands and water rights for tribal nations, and restore water quality—if Congress approved it" (Blankenbuehler 2016). By 2014, still waiting for Congressional approval, some stakeholders began to feel less certain and confident their agreements would ever be enacted. Then, in December 2015, Congress failed to approve the central pact, the Klamath Basin

Restoration Agreement (KBRA). At the time of writing this, all four dams remain on the Klamath and in many regards all the hard work and time stakeholders put into building trust and good working relationships has gone awry. One journalist wrote: “the fate of the Klamath Agreements portends difficult for the future collaborative water deals” (Blankenbuehler 2016).

In many respects, the conflicts on the Tongass and Klamath share some common characteristics. Each deal with issues of honoring legal obligations, resource scarcity, land use and transitions. Both the Klamath’s collaborative planning and the TAC aimed to honor the ecological, economic cultural, and social integrity of their respective landscape. Each went through the NEPA process. Plus, State government representatives in the Tongass and the Klamath each raised their objections to federal management on their forests and rivers. Even though these similarities exist, a key difference lies in how each collaborative effort—the TAC and Klamath Agreements—was organized and orchestrated.

The collaboration on the Klamath was predominantly grass-roots driven, whereas collaboration on Tongass was directly derived from a federal mandate. Unlike the TAC, the Klamath Agreements were not federally chartered, instead they were fully coordinated and written by local citizens and parties. Though only time will tell how well the TAC’s collaborative efforts will be integrated on the Tongass, perhaps because the TAC’s scope was so heavily constricted their efforts will be better implemented.

The TAC and the Klamath Agreements raise interesting questions about wicked problems and clumsy solutions in land management. Both the TAC and the Klamath Agreements were clumsy solutions. The TAC demonstrates for collaboration to work there needs to be an emphasis on consensus and certain parameters must be set. Such parameters decide what a committee or group can discuss and in doing so explicitly restricts the scope, goals and assumptions of the subject matter. Thus suggesting that clumsy solutions work best when they are top-down and the topic matter is heavily restricted. Perhaps because the Klamath Agreements, ignoring the EIS were almost entirely grass-root driven, became too clumsy.

On the other hand, as evidenced through the mixed reflections on the TAC, perhaps

the TAC was not clumsy enough. Despite tasked with communicating their respective representative groups about the progress of the TAC, it seems that collaborative vision of the TAC was quite insular. In other words, the TAC aimed to heal and move past difficult issues from the past, however, such healing was only felt by members of the TAC, not the greater Southeast Alaskan community. I return now to my original discussion on wicked problems and their broader implications.

4.2 Symptomatic Solutions: Revisiting Wicked Problems & Market Forces

***“Wicked problems have no definitive solutions. They can only be managed more or less well through settlements that endure for awhile before the problem reasserts itself in a new form that requires renegotiation”
(Rayner 2014, 6)***

At the beginning of this thesis I posited managing the Tongass National Forest as a wicked problem and CNRM as a clumsy solution. To recap, governing the Tongass is a wicked problem since planners must negotiate interests of different scales, navigate conflicting certitudes, and adhere to the multiple use mandate. It is important to remember wicked problems have no clear identifiable solutions, instead they are only resolved. Thus, wicked problems require clumsy solutions—creative, collaborative, and adaptable solutions that invoke transdisciplinary participation (Stahl 2014). The TAC was a clumsy attempt to negotiate pre-existing tensions and conflicts amongst stakeholders on the Tongass. Governing the Tongass illustrates wicked problems are often symptomatic of deeper problems (Rayner 2014; Rittel and Webber 1973).

Deeper Issues

After the ROD was published, stakeholders from all sides expressed frustrations with the Amended Forest Plan and the Forest Service. Many feel the 16-year transition timeframe will put the last remaining sawmills out of business. However, many of these stakeholders failed to see the Transition as a symptom of larger issues.

For example, the Forest Service must follow certain bureaucratic policies and much of

their decision-making is out their hands. The Forest Service's budget has gone through some major changes in the past fifteen to twenty years; about fifty percent of the agency's budget is now allocated for fire suppression and preparedness (Beth Pendleton, July 25, 2016, webinar conversation). This greater focus on fire management and has consequently resulted in a continual shrinking in portions of the budget for the other resource programs, like wildlife programs, watershed restoration projects, fisheries programs, mineral extraction, recreation programs and forest management efforts (Beth Pendleton, July 25, 2016, webinar conversation). These changes have particularly been difficult for the national forests in Alaska, since the region is less prone to fire. Moreover, the agency's budget is roughly less than half of what it was during the height of big timber production (Beth Pendleton, July 25, 2016, webinar conversation). Agency budget cutbacks, therefore, demonstrate how the Transition is a reflection of bureaucratic constraints.

Another issue to consider is climate change. As outlined in the SOA's Memo, climate change is an ever-increasing concern and threat to the world, thus taking precautions to mitigate the impacts is in the best interest of local, national, and global citizens. Similar to how fire suppression and preparedness has been incorporated into forest planning, mitigating climate change is becoming a more important component in forest planning.

Finally, though loggers might not want to admit it, markets and industries change and the timber industry is no exception to Adam Smith's inevitable Invisible Hand. In other words, the Transition not only represents a shift in values (which I will touch on in the section 4.3) but also larger market shifts. In recent years, the worldwide production of timber has exceeded the demand for timber (Gilbertson and Robinson 2003). In 1995, Russia overtook the United States in timber production and became the largest exporter of logs (Gilbertson and Robinson 2003). Moreover, tree farming in Scandinavia, New Zealand and Brazil have become increasingly competitive at the international scale and impacted the Tongass' timber market (Gilbertson and Robinson 2003).

Historical Patterns to Consider

It would be naive to assume that distant actors have only recently become interested in

asserting their values and ideas about how Southeast Alaska should develop. Distant actors have long been interested, involved and influenced the development of the Tongass. Economic, political, and social motivations dictate who and why these distant actors are interested in the Tongass. For example, during the first half of the twentieth century, the high shipping costs of prevented federal financial support of the Southeast timber production. Only after WWII, when the market forces shifted did the federal government's presence increase on the Tongass. Then during the height of environmental backlash during the 1960s and 70s, distant environmental and conservationist organizations began advocating for more regulation on the Tongass. The SOA's memo is simply a new spin on distant interest on the Tongass.

Thus, larger bureaucratic, economic, and even scientific forces better contextualize and explain the Transition and general governance on public lands. Section 4.3 will now discuss tourism, an even larger issue that illustrates another wicked characteristic in governing the Tongass.

4.3 Towards Tourism and its Implications

"Tourism often functioned as response to economic desperation, serving as a replacement economy for declining industries"

**—Hal K. Rothman
Author of *Devil's Bargain***

Embedded in the Transition is a long history and tradition of perceiving tourism as a panacea for economic revitalization in the American West. In his book, *Devil's Bargain: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West*, Hal K. Rothman cross-examines the development of the American West landscape in conjunction with the rise of cultural, recreational and entertainment tourism. Rothman argues tourism is a colonial and neocolonial economic strategy and warns his audience of the dire implications tourism has historically had on the Western landscapes. Put into some historical context, Rothman argues, the West has been consistently seen as a place of refuge, renewal and reinvention for not only the self but also the

nation. The Civil War shattered the American North-South dichotomy, introducing the West into the political American landscape. Rothman wrote,

“Now there were three; the West belonged in the mix, a place both mythic and real, an intellectual and physical locale where Americans could reinvent themselves if they chose... As Indian people were removed from their lands by settlement and the military, former southerners, their sympathizers, so-called ‘galvanized Yankees,’ Free Soilers, and even freedmen and women spread westward, seeking the redemption of reinvention and the prosperity they thought the western ground held” (Rothman 1998, 33-34).

Rothman goes on to advise his reader that greatest danger tourism generates is its image of a panacea (Rothman 1998, 16) and explicitly warns tourism should not be used to solve economic and social problems due its vast limitations (Rothman 1998, 26).

In many ways, the Transition—which at large puts even more of an emphasis on tourism and recreation in Southeast Alaska—does exactly what Rothman argues against. Since the closure of the pulps in the late 1990s, Southeast Alaska has desperately held onto its timber industry, trying to not let their heritage become their history. Old-growth logging is integral Southeast Alaskan identities. Loggers made good money, provided for their families and brought economic and social stability to Southeast Alaskan communities. However, the rise of environmental campaigns who “appeal to a national audience, hoping commitment to ideal preservation of unique or dwindling resources” have gained immense political power and influence (Haycox 2002, 104). As a result, the timber industry is only a fraction of the economy nowadays, halted by federal legislation such as the 1990 Tongass Timber Reform Act, the 2001 Roadless Rule, and ongoing litigation over proposed timber sales. Instead trying to push for the logging industry, many economic developers, state and local government officials have turned towards the Southeast Alaska’s renowned fisheries, recreation and tourism industry for economic rejuvenation. The rapid expansion of the cruise ship industry that guide tourists throughout Southeast Alaska’s waters, periodically pulling into ports in communities such as Ketchikan, Sitka, Wrangell, Petersburg, and Juneau.

Just as the cruise ship industry has dramatically grown, so too have several key visitor activities, such as sport fishing, helicopter touring, river rafting, hiking, biking, sea kayaking and canoeing (Kruger 2005, 237). The shift towards tourism mirrors an environmental pathos that so many conservation groups have advocated for on the Tongass. The adoption of such an ideology—valuing the Tongass for its “wildness” tourists can go explore and recreate in is an historic shift. A landscape that a mere thirty years was valued by how many trees could be cut and sold, has becoming increasingly valued for how much money its forests can bring in from tourists hiking, biking, sea kayaking and fishing in surrounding seas.

However, not all locals are on board with the rise in cruise ship-based tourism industry and many are concerned about the potential notorious consequences that come with tourism. Some locals are doubt a tourism-based economy “can provide authentic, well-paying, year-round jobs for residents who used to have them” (Nie 2008, 153). Furthermore, skeptics worry the tourism industry will negatively change the character of the region and fear a loss of authenticity in the region. Throughout the world tourism routinely fails to be the economic panacea it promises to be, instead it perpetuates colonial economics with tremendous “psychic and social impact on people and their places” (Rothman 1998, 12). Finally, Nie also points out, it is worth considering, “whether Southeast Alaska is simply trading corporate dominance by the timber industry for out-of-state dominance by the corporate cruise ships” (Nie 2008, 153). This shift towards a more service-based economy in replacement of the historically prominent timber industry is not exclusive to Southeast Alaska. In fact, shifts like these have been occurring all through about some historians and scholars like to refer to as the “new West.”

The role of distant interests on public lands has a long controversial history and the state of Alaska is no exception. In fact, the influence of distant forces, whether it be environmental interests advocating for wilderness protection in the Yukon or oil lobbyists seeking to build a pipeline in the tundra, often face local resentment. Author of *Frigid Empire*, Stephen Haycox suggests Alaskans resist and resent distant influences because they block self governance. Haycox adds, “local people are likely to resent outside influences. They will feel

that the decision over resource use, or any other public responsibility, should be theirs” (2002, 105). For example,

“conservation decisions made by Congress in response to national environmental campaigns, endorsed and supported by people who have no direct economic stake in the consequences, and who may not even know the location of the land in question, are painful for local communities affected” (Haycox 2002, 105).

The Transition and the TAC’s charter sought move away from a timber-based economy and towards a more service-based economy. The shift to a larger tourism industry in the Tongass provokes an interesting crossroads for the Tongass. What will be the repercussions, what will be the benefits?

5. Conclusions

In the context of globalization, the desire for authentic engagement has become ever more present. Collaborative planning strategies are just one example of resisting the grips of distant bureaucratic authorities. In this thesis I examined how the rise of collaborative planning marks a new era in U.S. public land management breaking away from traditional methods of land management that relies on rational, scientific models of bureaucratic planning. CNRM not only recognizes but emphasizes the need and importance of citizen participation and sense of place. CNRM has received high praise and promise, often seen as the silver bullet that will dissolve ugly and longstanding tensions on public lands. However, as I have argued, the TAC complicates the notion that CNRM is a panacea.

Though the TAC did promote conversations in a highly polarized arena, significant drawbacks and limitations from its charter explain why some stakeholders were more satisfied than others. These same limitations are simultaneously what brought the TAC to consensus. Moreover, the Transition and the TAC were not free from political ties and motivations. Environmental and conservationist organizations dedicated to protecting the Tongass’ old-growth forests to mitigate climate change and diversify Southeast Alaska’s economy were in clear alignment with the SOA’s intent to transition the Tongass to a young-growth timber base

and thus further explain these lingering tensions.

Despite these limitations, the benefits of the TAC should not go unrecognized, rather the TAC reveals valuable lessons about collaborative conservation on public lands, the wicked nature of public land management and clumsy attempts. In other words, solving public land management conflicts might only be solving the symptoms of larger problems, such as climate change adaptation, natural resource diminishment, and conflicts in sustainable development.

Moreover, the Transition raises important questions about who is served in major land management decisions and to some extent reflects larger economic, social and cultural dynamics in the Global North and South. The Transition embodies a shift towards a service-based economy for Southeast Alaska, a pattern found throughout the American West landscape and in many other parts of the global. Old-growth forests and other places known for their natural wonders are increasingly becoming valued less so their physical extraction, and instead more for the spiritual and recreational purposes. Nevertheless, the TAC grappled and came up with adaptations to accommodate these shifting patterns in global resource use. With that said, the TAC demonstrates how CNRM can honor and reconcile the value shifts and economic realities.

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