The Resource Development Council has urged Congress to delay action on legislation that would radically reform logging operations in the Tongass National Forest until a revised management plan is released this spring.

In a letter to Senator Bennett Johnston (D-LA) and other members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, RDC Executive Director Becky Gay said “we implore you to withhold consideration of this controversial legislation until you and your colleagues have had an opportunity to review new information contained within the Tongass Land Management Plan.”

The information, which will reflect changes in public values, market conditions, knowledge in forest management activities and resource interrelations, will be out about June 1. The Tongass Land Management Plan (TLMP) is being revised to address public issues within the current economic and political climate. When completed, the revised plan will guide future activities on the Tongass.

The plan was developed to provide workable solutions for the many complex management problems on the nation’s largest national forest. TLMP considered all forest resources. Community stability, logging, Wilderness designations and the effects of activities on wildlife and fisheries were major concerns addressed in the plan.

Millions of dollars have been spent to gather and analyze new information on the Tongass.

RDC urges Congress to delay action on bill

(continued on page 6)
Hayes also said the environmental movement “had not asked enough of ourselves and our supporters. Too much finger-pointing and not enough looking within at individual lifestyle changes” were criticisms he cited. Hayes added, “You can’t build a movement with people who just write checks. You must have people who have congruence between articulated principles and their behaviors.”}

Hayes asserted there are 10 million “card-carrying environmentalists” even after accounting for duplicates among the groups and causes. He felt their next thrust should be to increase membership with more minorities, farmers and organized labor. He ad-
dressed the need to diversify and pull constituents together for the opportunity nearing, which, as he saw it is “the inflection point in history, the environmental moment” of the 1990s.

Of course, achieving the environmental movement’s goals is “not easy, cheap or painless,” as Hayes noted. With regard to funding, an oblique reference to a “peace dividend” was offered as a source of funds for this purpose. To the environment, Hayes suspi-
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Overall, Mr. Hayes drew a thought-provoking picture of the environmental movement, its history, its successes and its failures. Other than blaming President Reagan for almost everything bad that happened in the last decade, the speech was insightful. It ended as a recruiting speech, although it was a classic example of “preaching to the choir.”

As responsible developers and producers of resources, RDC members should actively enhance their own outreach program to individuals who, in many cases, think like just consumers. Try to help your environmental friends become more open-minded and to take a conservation interest in their own lifestyle, not just yours. Practice what you preach and set an example. It’s still good advice.

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Tongass timber industry under fire

Major reforms could threaten Southeast Alaska economy

(continued from page 1)


The House bill, HR 987, will meet one of two bills brewing in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Senator Tim Wirth’s (D-CO) S-346 is similar to HR 987, while Senator Frank Murkowski (R-AK) favors S-237, and Natural Resources Committee. Senator Tim Wirth’s (D-CO) S-346 is similar to HR 987, while Senator Frank Murkowski (R-AK) favors S-237, and Natural Resources Committee. Senator Tim Wirth’s (D-CO) S-346 is similar to HR 987, while Senator Frank Murkowski (R-AK) favors S-237, and Natural Resources Committee. Senator Tim Wirth’s (D-CO) S-346 is similar to HR 987, while Senator Frank Murkowski (R-AK) favors S-237, and Natural Resources Committee. Senator Tim Wirth’s (D-CO) S-346 is similar to HR 987, while Senator Frank Murkowski (R-AK) favors S-237, and Natural Resources Committee.

The bills would also increase the designated Wilderness block in the forest, withdrawing 1.8 million acres from multiple use. Currently 5.4 million acres of the forest are designated Wilderness. The new legislation would increase the percentage of Wilderness to nearly 50% of all lands in the region. Hearing on the Tongass are approaching and it is important that members of Congress hear from RDC members on this issue. Key Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee members are J. Bennett Johnston, Howell Heflin (D-AL) and Jay Rockefeller (D-W.VA). Other committee members who need to hear from you are Dale Bumpers (D-AR), Wendell Ford (D-KY), Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Kent Conrad (D-ND), Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Mark Hatfield (R-OR), Pete Domenici (R-NM), Malcolm Wallop (R-WY), Don Nickles (R-OK), Conrad Burns (R-MT) and Jake Garn (R-UT).

State and industry officials hotly contest these claims, noting that timber is a renewable resource and that logging has an annual return of over ten times its tax. The timber program pays for itself through timber receipts and federal income taxes. Long-term timber contracts helped develop and strengthen the Southeast Alaska economy. Thousands of Alaskans are directly employed on a year-round basis by the timber industry and many communities depend directly on the industry for their survival.

As for environmental considerations, logging operations are strictly regulated in the Tongass and only seven percent of the forest is scheduled for timber harvest under the current management plan. Ninety percent of the Tongass will never be logged. Nearly 40 percent of the region is already set aside in Wilderness designations. Of the commercial forest land in the Tongass, one-third is closed in Wilderness, another third is reserved for other values and one-third is harvestable on a 100-year rotation.

Southeast Alaska’s other two major industries, fishing and tourism, have grown and continue to grow along side the timber industry. In 1989, commercial fishermen in Southeast Alaska had their largest catch ever, producing three times as many fish in one year as they did in the 1950s before the timber industry was established.

The House legislation and Wirth’s Senate bill would abolish timber resource contracts in the forest and eliminate the annual harvest goal. The bills would also increase the designated Wilderness block in the forest, withdrawing 1.8 million acres from multiple use. Currently 5.4 million acres of the forest are designated Wilderness. The new legislation would increase the percentage of Wilderness to nearly 50% of all lands in the region. Hearing on the Tongass are approaching and it is important that members of Congress hear from RDC members on this issue. Key Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee members are J. Bennett Johnston, Howell Heflin (D-AL) and Jay Rockefeller (D-W.VA). Other committee members who need to hear from you are Dale Bumpers (D-AR), Wendell Ford (D-KY), Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Kent Conrad (D-ND), Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Mark Hatfield (R-OR), Pete Domenici (R-NM), Malcolm Wallop (R-WY), Don Nickles (R-OK), Conrad Burns (R-MT) and Jake Garn (R-UT).

Alaskans opposed to the application of a federal no net loss wetlands policy in their state swamped Bush administration officials with post cards which call for federal agencies involved in the wetlands policy to account for the unique circumstances and needs of Alaska. The massive campaign was initiated in early December by the Resource Development Council and the Alaska Miners Association. Since then, stacks of pre-printed post cards have arrived each day in the offices of key administration officials involved in the wetlands plan.

The Anchorage Times, which in its editorials argued that the wetlands policy would devastate every sector of Alaska’s society, boldly jumped into the campaign December 31 by including the post cards in its afternoon editions. The response from Times readers and members of the RDC and AIA has been overwhelm- ing. The post cards were so numerous they were measured not by numbers, but by pounds, according an administration official. The avalanche of post cards left its impact on Washington where administration officials recently showed sensitivity to Alaskan concerns in delaying, then making revisions to the objectionable no net loss policy.

RDC kicked off its statewide postcard campaign in early December by distributing thousands of cards to business leaders and dozen of communities. A public education campaign was launched in October and a community outreach program was in full swing by November. The Alaska Wetlands Coalition was formed, an organization chartered with a single purpose and joined by municipalities, native corporations, organized labor, businesses and re- source companies committed to proper implementation of a wet- lands permitting program.

The wetlands battle has become an uplifting and unifying rallying point, bringing Alaskans everywhere together in a common cause.

"No since the fight for statehood have so many Alaskans from all walks of life mobilized under a common cause," said RDC President Pete Nelson.

"This is the one issue that can take us all down the tube simultaneity," said RDC Executive Director Becky Gay. "No net loss cuts across every industry and public and private project in this state. If no net loss were to be rigidly applied to Alaska, a state where almost all remaining developable areas are wetlands, all projects, private or public, would be in jeopardy."

The feedback from communities across Alaska to the no net loss campaign has come from communities across Alaska. An estimated 98 percent of all Alaskan communities are located in or adjacent to wetlands. In many of these communities, few or no non-wetland development alternatives exist.

Others opposing the new interagency goal of no net loss include Governor Steve Cowper, Alaska’s congressional delegation and the entire Alaska Senate and House. In addition, the Municipal- ity of Anchorage, the State of Alaska, two native corporations, and an oil company have filed suit against a Memorandum of Agreement implementing no net loss. Labor unions, utilities, ports, timber companies, and other businesses have also shown strong opposi- tion to no net loss.

Export of forest products sets record

In addition to value increases, the volume of Alaskan logs, pulp and lumber exported rose dramatically in 1989. Total harvest in Alaska exceed one billion board feet ever. Just under 630 million board feet of logs were exported to foreign markets. The volume of timber processed in Alaska before shipment increased 20 percent over the previous year. Most of the lumber and pulp production came from Southeast Alaska and the Tongass National Forest. These numbers reflect a big turn around in recent years of foreign timber markets. This is all good news for Alaska’s recovering timber industry, but it comes when Congress is about to act on legislation that could severely hinder new logging in our nation’s largest national forest.

The House bill, HR 987 and its Senate clone would gut timber operations and lock up more of the Tongass into Wilderness designations. Already two-thirds of the commercial timber is off-limits to logging. Only 10 percent of the Tongass will ever be cut. Yet the preservationists want more.

Your help is necessary to turn the events in favor of balance and wise use. I urge you to stand up for wise use. Together we can make a difference.

Alaskans unify to fight wetlands policy

"No net loss cuts across every industry..."

February 1990 / RESOURCE REVIEW / Page 3
Alaska Wetlands

What does "no net loss" of the nation's wetlands really mean? Basically, it is a zero-tolerance policy applied to a biological situation. Rather than minimizing loss, it means that for every function or value in a wetlands that is lost, there must be an equal replacement of that function or value somewhere else.

Why are Alaskans so upset about a potential no net loss policy? First of all, Alaska does not contribute to the nation's overall wetlands loss. In other words, Alaska is not part of the problem. The no net loss goal stems from the loss of 54% of the wetlands in the contiguous United States. Unlike other states, Alaska has an exemplary wetlands preservation record. Approximately 99.95% of its wetlands have been preserved, only 80,000 of 170 million acres have been lost since 1897. The federal and state governments own 88% of the total land mass of Alaska and both engage in extensive regulatory processes before development can occur.

Moreover, not all wetlands are alike. There are high value and low value wetlands. Everyone agrees that minimizing the loss of high-valued wetlands is important. Utilizing wetlands is also important. An estimated 98% of Alaska's communities are built on or adjacent to wetlands and most expansion is impossible without utilizing some wetlands.

Despite significant losses in the contiguous United States, Alaska wetlands are not endangered from a quality or quantity perspective. It's ironic and unfair that the greatest impact of a national no net loss policy will be in the one state that does not contribute to the problem. And worse, stopping development in Alaska will do nothing toward solving the actual wetlands problem where it exists.

Alaska has special land characteristics that are unique to the state and requires special consideration in a wetlands policy for the nation. Yet the federal government still may apply no net loss to Alaska. What this means is that if you build on an acre of marshy ground, anywhere that requires fill, you could be required to replace that acre, either by paying to restore and rehabilitate damaged wetlands on-site or off-site.

A no net loss policy in Alaska could throttle community expansion and new development projects. The federal agencies could require costly "off-site mitigation," paying to restore or preserve wetlands elsewhere, as a condition of a federal permit. This applies regardless of ownership, including private lands.

Contiguous USA: Wetlands status

| Wetlands present before settlement: | 215 million acres |
| Wetlands remaining in 1975: | 99 million acres |
| Total wetland reduction: | 116 million acres |
| Average rate of loss per year, 1955-1975: | 400,000-500,000 acres |
| Average rate of loss per year, by 1985: | 275,000 acres |
| Wetland losses from agriculture, mid-1955 to mid-1970s: | 11.7 million acres |
| California wetland losses: | 4.55 million acres (91% lost) |

Alaska: Wetlands status

| Wetlands present in 1987: | 170 million acres |
| Alaska wetlands lost from all development: | 80,000 acres (0.05%) |
| Wetlands remaining in original condition: | 162.9 million acres |
| Percent of Alaska wetlands lost since 1987: | 0.05% |
| Area of Alaska: | 375.3 million acres |
| Non-mountainous area which is wetland: | About 74% |
| Percent of entire state which is wetland: | About 45% |
| Alaska wetland reductions from all petroleum-related operations (includes exploration, production, support and transport to markets): | 29,680 acres |

Percentage statewide wetland reduction from all petroleum-related operations: 38%

Estimate of wetlands in Alaska Conservation System Units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conservation Systems</th>
<th>Total Area (acres)</th>
<th>Wetlands Area (acres)</th>
<th>Wetlands as % of total acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Park System</td>
<td>52,841,133</td>
<td>12,372,846</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Wild &amp; Scenic River System</td>
<td>457,000</td>
<td>176,250</td>
<td>39%</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Forest System</td>
<td>22,889,467</td>
<td>5,603,650</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Wildlife Refuges</td>
<td>73,553,172</td>
<td>41,229,620</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Land Management</td>
<td>2,220,000</td>
<td>544,000</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total of federal Conservation System Units: 151,940,772

| State Park System | 3,050,991 | 408,493 | 13% |
| State Forest System | 2,057,000 | 374,700 | 18% |
| State Game Refuge System | 1,065,386 | 932,573 | 88% |
| State Game Sanctuary System | 53,568 | 8,870 | 9% |
| State Critical Habitat System | 841,940 | 685,882 | 81% |

Total of state Conservation System Units: 7,106,887

Wetlands protected in CSUs = 62,335,685 acres

Total wetlands in Alaska = 170,000,000 acres

% currently protected in CSUs = 36.7%

Source: Robert Senner & Company and RA Kreig & Associates

Alaska Conservation Units

This map shows Alaska’s major state and federal conservation units, which account for about half of the land in the state. These units include wildlife refuges, parks, forests, and recreation areas. In fact, Alaska has 62% of all federally designated Wilderness lands. Much of the land outside of these conservation units in Alaska is considered wetlands under the broad federal definition.