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**September 28, 2018**

Contact: Corey Himrod

Tel: 202-266-0426 or Email: [corey@alaskawild.org](mailto:corey@alaskawild.org)

### **U.S. Forest Service holds Roadless Rule hearing in Anchorage**

Anchorage, Alaska – Yesterday evening the U.S. Forest Service held a public meeting in Anchorage regarding an environmental impact statement (EIS) and public rulemaking process to develop an Alaska state-specific roadless rule. This rule would identify portions of Alaska national forests to remove from 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule protections, which protects more than 58 million acres of roadless national forests and is the result of one of the most extensive public processes in U.S. history – more than 1.6 million people submitted comments on the rule, 95% of which supported protections.

#### **Statement by Andy Moderow, Alaska Director, Alaska Wilderness League:**

“Southeast Alaska’s economy is transitioning towards a sustainable path, and this Roadless Rule review threatens the foundation of that transition. A healthy, vibrant forest can provide for people today and in the future if we don’t trade it for short term gains. The Walker administration is wasting our time with its petition to review the Roadless Rule, and it’s also wasting the time of the Forest Service, which should instead be focused on how to better support sustainable economic development in the region.

Initiating this process in the name of ‘meaningfully addressing local economic and development concerns’ is just pretext for continuing to prop up an old-growth timber industry with taxpayer money. The roadless rule protects old-growth forest, yes, and it also has a track record of providing for community access, hydropower projects, utility connectors, and other economic development projects one hundred percent of the time when they serve a legitimate public interest.”

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122 C St NW, Ste 240, Washington, DC 20001 \* Tel: 202-544-5205 \* Fax: 202-544-5197