

Chilkoot Indian Association
HSF RMA MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT 2026
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY & FIRE PROTECTION



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Agenda

Framing the discussion

Group Expectations

Group discussion

Identify next steps

Project Background

The Haines State Forest (HSF) Resource Management Area (RMA) planning team has received feedback requesting information about the directives and circumstances leading to the changes the Division of Forestry & Fire Protection (DFFP, the Division) has proposed in this management plan amendment. Since 2014, the Division has received consistent direction across administrations to take actions in support of the statewide timber industry. In the Northern Southeast Area, including the HSF RMA, direction has been focused on contributing to the timber industry by managing the Haines State Forest RMA according to its purpose as described in Alaska Statute (AS 41.15.300) and according to the principles of multiple use that apply to all state-owned lands.

While the timing of this management plan amendment is connected to the passage of legislation requiring carbon offsets to be addressed in state forest management plans, the Division received additional direction late in 2024 to include the long-standing directive to support Alaska's timber industry by updating policy that had previously prohibited timber harvest on Habitat and Recreation classified units of the Haines State Forest RMA. The primary classifications for these lands will remain Habitat or Recreation, respectively, and any forest management activities proposed in those areas in the future would be required to reflect those primary classifications.

The scoping period is intended to provide members of the public and interest groups such as this one with an opportunity to weigh in on how the directives received by the Division should be implemented. We acknowledge that this change in management approach is a big departure from the way the HSF RMA has been managed for decades and with that in mind, one goal for this meeting is to provide a discussion opportunity that's focused on questions and topics that the Division is able to reflect in the management policy that will be distributed for public review in the next phase of the planning process. Considering this background on the proposed changes to the management framework, the DFFP would like to invite this group to discuss what it would look like to include timber harvest and other

forest management activities in the balanced management of multiple uses allowed on lands with primary classifications of Habitat and Recreation.

Purpose: To provide the Chilkoot Indian Association an opportunity to contribute considerations and recommendations regarding the management of forest resources within the Haines State Forest Resource Management Area. To include CIA in the development of a management plan draft prior to the public review period.

Expected outcome: A summary of recommendations and considerations related to forest management within the HSF RMA boundary from the perspective of the Chilkoot Indian Association. This discussion is intended to capture the perspective of Alaska Native communities in the area, management of land and resources, and the individuals, groups, or practices that are represented by CIA.

Topic: Haines State Forest Management Plan amendment. What solutions or concepts can facilitate the co-existence of forestry activities and other uses within the Haines State Forest RMA?

Group Expectations

- The moderator will guide the discussion but refrain from participating.
- Everyone is encouraged to participate. Once you have shared, wait for two others to contribute before weighing in again.
- The discussion stays focused on the issue at hand (forest management policy within Haines State Forest RMA).
- Maintain an atmosphere for discussion and analysis of our options. This is a discussion, not a debate.
- Ask questions to gain understanding/clarity.
- Give constructive feedback. We are here to talk about ideas, not people.
- We will work together toward describing balanced resource management within the Haines State Forest Resource Management Area.
- We may not make it through all the discussion questions today. Is the group open to following up virtually?

Discussion Questions

1. **Introductions:** What is your name, and what is one thing you hope to accomplish in this meeting today?
 - a. **Zachary James:** part of environmental committee with CIA, lifetime resident and member of CIA. Cultural Program Manager with CIA. Goal – generations of family subsistence, share perspective on what local resources and importance of local subsistence resources
 - b. **Jake Bell:** Environmental Department with CIA, grant manager. Has not participated in planning process thus far, interested in learning more about planning process, methods, and timber harvest/other use planning. View of

large scale timber harvest as something in the past, but not since I've lived in this area. Commercial salmon fisherman in the summer.

- c. **Liam Cassidy:** Environmental department with CIA for last 2 years. Began working in this area as river guide, ADFG fisheries technician since 2002. 20 years of experience in the area leads to current position with environmental dept. Decades of personal use experience. Project management: first and most important step is meeting with stakeholders. Goal is to ensure CIA is taken seriously as a stakeholder and perspective is weighed equally with any administrative directive and any other stakeholders.
 - d. **Harriet Brouillette:** Tribal Administrator with CIA. Many questions, looking for information before addressing deeper questions. Questions about Carbon Credits and the size of projects required to make that kind of project beneficial. Curious about why it's important to suddenly address topic of logging or expanded timber base in the state forest. Planning efforts seemed disorganized in the past. Curious if the state seeks expansion of timber base to facilitate AK citizens benefiting from Carbon Offset projects—understandable. Logging in habitat or recreation areas is not something I understand.
2. **Identify Concerns:** How has CIA been impacted by past forest management activities in the HSF RMA?
- a. **HB:** Every time a tree is cut down, it affects us. In good ways and in bad ways. In the past, CIA has not had a voice. This is our homeland. It is beyond disheartening to watch activities on our homeland feeling we have no control or input on what's happening, what's being taken, or what's being changed. Good things (effects on the community) are harvesting timber in our valley does give efficient access to difficult to access areas and created jobs for people. Large timber harvest decades ago, effects of that harvest are still visible today. It's hard to imagine what the area looked like before that. Harvests within my lifetime have provided income to my family, but took old-growth timber that could have been used to build sturdier homes or totems.
 - b. **LC:** Mostly familiar with current forest management activities, Moved to the area in 2002. Chose to focus on perspective/experience of current activity.
 - c. **ZJ:** limited knowledge in historic timber harvest practices, mostly through local museum. Multiple sawmills in the area. That infrastructure is not here now. Unsure of how the state envisions moving forward without that kind of infrastructure. How much value will we be able to add to timber products before sending it to market? Past processing was focused on making cants. Sending round logs to market, we are losing economic potential for the state of AK and the local community. Jobs/value not created in that scenario. Looking at larger impacts of logging in general: diminishing salmon returns over time; not easy to directly tie to timber harvest, this is a large, interconnected system. Hard time believing timber harvest is not related.

Salmon do not return to wastelands, the return to lush forests because they are part of a larger ecological system. Hard to believe that anything we could do post timber harvest could return those lands to something as ecologically productive as it was before. Sensitive system. Arrogant to say that we could remediate our way around total ecological destruction. Destruction may not be the aim with timber harvest, but there will always be an impact.

- d. **JB:** Salmon runs-Tribal members who have fished here for their whole lives talk about sizes of salmon runs in the Chilkoot and Chilkat Rivers. We are at levels that have not historically occurred in past decades. There has been timber harvest in that time; making connections between timber harvest, salmon habitat areas, and salmon productivity is important because abundance is not approaching historic levels. “Glory Hole” in Chilkoot Valley is an area that is talked about in terms of history of timber harvest and declining salmon populations. Siltation filling in that feature, perhaps due to road-building and infrastructure development. Good example of long-term effects of development/practices in an area. Perhaps some different management decisions could have contributed to a different outcome with less siltation. Now, the greatest management effect has been King salmon habitat and return numbers, affects commercial fishing opportunities. Chilkoot Lake failed to meet escapement goals, impacts to commercial opportunities. Not to say this is all directly caused by timber harvest, but we need to address/acknowledge the connectedness of the system and possible impacts. Fisherman want to keep catching fish, locals want to keep our freezers full.

3. **Identify Concerns:** How is CIA impacted by current forest management activities in the HSF RMA?

- a. **HB:** Currently, there has been a lot of discussion about large scale logging, but that hasn't happened yet. That creates a “Hold your breath and wait” situation. Small activities recently have been beneficial to us; producing our (the Tribe's) own lumber using wood harvested from the forest, good that it saves us some money, keeps us employed. Harvested locally, not necessarily within the RMA. Underlying fear that there may be a larger scale harvest happening soon, but to this point it hasn't materialized yet. I like the feel of the level of harvest I can see on the forest today. Feels sustainable for our community and the size of the forest. Having two designations (available for harvest and not) gives a sense of security, which has been positive. CIA is a landless tribe. Having access to a forest is vital for the continued identity of the Tribe. We have been able to hunt and fish in a traditional manner. I think large scale logging would change that.
- b. **LC:** Benefits from small scale local logging and milling projects, people get firewood for personal use, being able to get woodchips for gardening projects, slab wood from local mills for home projects. Operators of those

mills contribute to local economy. Frame of reference is mostly Oregon and Maine, both significant logging areas. Moving here in 2002, impressed on Tsirku and Chilkat Rivers with sustained ecological values/intact ecosystem qualities on those rivers. Lots of opportunity for varied recreation uses, defining characteristic of this valley and community. Food gathering and harvesting opportunities are essential to the fabric of this area. If people were not able to gather food from this area, it would not be realistic for them to live here.

- c. **ZJ:** Harriet sums it up well. Current status quo has not resulted in any large scale logging operations. Personally, I'm comfortable with that. Some logging and milling operations consist of one or two people, those people are provided year-round employment. That level of activity does contribute to the local economy.
 - d. **JB:** CIA submitted comments to DNR about log transfer facility plan for Lutak and that site is well within traditional Chilkoot territory between two village sites. CIA was interested in commenting on that. Forest management will potentially lead to the use of the LTF. CIA concerned about the impacts to the access to subsistence and commercial sockeye salmon fishing. Section of shoreline affects gillnet areas. Tribal council commented opposition to storage of logs in that area, urged DNR to relocate storage of logs and noted timing of peak harvest. Emphasized use of uplands as opposed to tidelands regarding bark deposition. Permit was issued with stipulations related to historic sockeye run. DNR appears to acknowledge that use and incorporate in planning. No promises of where infrastructure would be located, not guarantee on timing of ships in that area. Related to management of forest resources in this area. CIA maintains interest in commenting on all aspects of HSF planning, but tribal council is likely to emphasize village sites and overlapping areas of traditional use. Areas that will likely be prioritized consistently by CIA: Village Sites include Tanani Point, Chilkoot Village. Tribal tourism business, Discover Deishú Last summer was first season in operation under Tribal ownership. Some tours operate within State Forest, use wildlife and scenic resources for tourism purposes. Current management framework benefits that business.
4. **Considerations:** What resources, uses, or areas within the boundary of HSF RMA would CIA like the division to be aware of and consider as updates to the management policy are developed?
- a. Glory Hole Area (Upper Chilkoot Lake)
 - b. Area across the river from Klukwan: Chilkat Ridge is important
 - c. Hard to think about large area when perspective is often focused on smaller specific sites.
 - d. Moose hunting along west side of Chilkat River
 - e. Area just above airport, below ridgeline coming to town important to think about stabilizing steep slopes.

- f. Importance of area is maintaining an intact area, hard to focus on specific sites
 - g. Areas upstream impact everything downstream
 - h. Emphasis on steep slopes, especially adjacent to residential areas. Slides can also impact habitat. Some slides in other states have been associated with areas destabilized by logging practices
 - i. Anything near anadromous streams
 - j. Entire Far side of the valley has been uninhabited, importance that people of the valley have allowed the west side of the valley to remain uninhabited and the genetic benefits to that biological community.
 - k. Historically, (Gold, Schmidt, and Hoss studies from 1940s) the entire valley has been used for various subsistence practices. Pyramid harbor, Kicking Horse, Tsirku and Klehini, up Kelsall historically used as a trading route and for subsistence activities. Up the Chilkoot Valley as well, multiple sites of inhabitation, inside Sullivan Island, Taiyasanka Harbour, Historical Village site across from Klukwan, Chilkoot, Fourmile, Nineteen Mile, various forts established up the river, Tanani Point. I don't think you can say there was any place in this valley that wasn't used for something at some point. If we look at what kind of land is accessible, we are compacted(concentrated) in our impact. No matter where you go, you'd be within a short distance of anadromous streams. No matter where you are looking, there will be an impact. Emphasized ecological health across the (Chilkat) river. Probably some of the most animal tracks I've ever seen on the other side of the river. Birds, weasel family, wolves (sign of health in the forest). The fact that wolves are present in that area is a good indicator of the forest health, seems to be able to recover from trapping activity in that area, seems a testament to the health of the environment over there.
 - l. Worth noting that Alexander Wolf, rare subspecies has habitat in this area
 - m. Chilkoot Lake, Chilkoot Culture Camp. Tribe continues to invest in that area. Used for summer culture camp for youth; general area used for nature tours. Anything that's there, connected to, visible to that area is important to consider.
 - n. In the tourism vein, if the update is looking for numerical values of forest resources, CIA encourages DFFP to consider the tourism use as a quantified value as part of analysis.
5. **Recommendations:** What does it look like for forest management activities to be conducted in HSF RMA in a way that includes meeting the needs of CIA and the individuals, groups, and uses that CIA represents?
- a. **JB:** If the change in management strategy is occurring, accountability measures for how those areas are used. Unclear how habitat or recreation areas are ranked or valued. DFFP will probably need to explain why it would be worth planning forest activities in an area described as "habitat." Meet people's needs for transparency by providing information about why timber

- harvest could be beneficial in that specific area. Reflect the trajectory/value of salmon populations and salmon run in planning descriptions
- b. **HB:** If the entire state forest includes timber harvest as a secondary use, people will be on-edge more than they are now. People perceive a protection to some of these areas with the current system. If the designation (policy prohibiting timber harvest) changes, the feeling of protection goes away and activities within the state forest would be “under a microscope”
 - c. **LC:** Thanks for opportunity to make recommendations. What we see now is a forest management plan that seems to be working well for the citizens of CIA: able to participate in traditional activities, look out and see unfettered wilderness, legislature has opened opportunities to create revenue through carbon offsets. Additional economic benefits from tourism and fishing. I appreciate the idea that a timber operation could be designed to enhance habitat or recreation activities. Once those projects begin, activities more at the discretion of field operators (concern that the outcome on the ground may not reach the standards described in the design of a timber sale). Concerns about increased use/access=increased litter, fuel jugs, etc. Concern about level of use increasing to a degree that the landscape can't recover from.
 - d. **ZJ:** AS 41.17.220 lists considered uses in management of Legislatively Designated State Forests. Finding of Incompatibility: As we move forward, considering carbon offset study from 2022, I have a hard time believing that large scale logging will produce revenue anywhere near the values produced by carbon offset management. Natural beauty of the valley is an asset to the tourism industry. Contributes to local economy by supporting the tourism industry. Subsistence harvest is guaranteed to be affected by large-scale timber harvest. Salmon fishing, commercial and subsistence. Tourism, subsistence, fisheries, can easily exist alongside carbon offset projects, these uses are all affected by large scale timber harvest. I cannot see these uses as compatible with large scale logging operations. Long term affects: It takes a long time for old-growth forest to develop. Hundreds of years. Once that's gone, it takes a long time to recover, whereas we have pre-existing industries that are able to sustainably operate right now.
 - e. **JB:** Anyone who hears about the primary use being habitat or recreation and then the addition of timber harvest, there would have to be a real display of why and how those values would be represented throughout the process. With example of salmon habitat: there will need to be specific descriptions explaining what measures would be taken to protect the primary values. Using past examples like Glory Hole sedimentation and bring in new examples of which measures would be taken, perhaps case studies from other areas.

Next Steps

If we could not address all the questions in this outline today, the Division will coordinate a follow-up meeting, provided the group agrees to do so. If members of this group would like to share additional information that was not captured by this discussion opportunity, please feel free to share those comments in writing by email to dnr.dof.haines@alaska.gov or by mail to:

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A date has not yet been established for release of the plan draft for public review. At the time the plan draft is available for public review, the Division will accept comments in response to the draft plan and public meetings will be scheduled in the communities of Haines and Klukwan.

In the meantime, more information is available on the project webpage:
<https://forestry.alaska.gov/HSFamendment/>

Please share your comments or questions with the planning team by sending a message to: dnr.dof.haines@alaska.gov