

Business and Industry

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 industry local to the area an opportunity to contribute considerations and recommendations regarding the management of forest resources within the Haines State Forest Resource Management Area. To include this perspective 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 local business and industry users. This discussion is intended to capture the perspective of business and industry entities in the area regarding the management of land and resources, and values and uses that are important to this group and your constituents.

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?

Rules of Engagement

- 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're hoping to accomplish in this discussion today?
 - a. Haynes Tormey: local business owner, contracting business. Direct connection to the state include retail services and contracting. Desire to communicate vision for forest use for multi-sector activities and uses
 - b. Douglas Olerud: local business owner, selling gear for outdoor recreation. Curious to learn more about project, some ideas for melding timber harvest with rec opportunities
 - c. Chad Bieberich: running a sawmill in town last 8-10 years. Desire to learn more about project plans and share ideas about opportunities for timber harvest that leads to other uses.

- d. Scott Rossman: Stump Company. Working in state forest about 30 years as a logger. Interested in mor information, any opportunity to expand possible work areas is a positive
 - e. David Hertel: Local logging contractor and mill owner. Many contracts with the state forest. Received an email, and curious to follow up.
2. **Identify Concerns:** How are businesses and industry in the area impacted by forest management activities?
- a. Lack of forestry activities currently is apparent. Besides the few mill operators currently active and scott as firewood business, local infrastructure is falling to disrepair. Upkeep of those facilities could provide opportunities to other contractors and other business opportunities
 - b. I rely on forest management heavily, or my business wouldn't exist. Access to timber allows business to produce lumber, firewood, and products for the industry. When supply is low, I have to travel more. When the market is low, I still have bills, loans, repairs to pay off. Need to look to other landowners or projects when the market is low. It would be nice if I could stay home, have a crew and produce, but currently that's not the reality.
 - c. The lack of forest industry right now also affects rec and subsistence. Loggers are maintaining the roads and brushing. Lots of rec and subsistence opportunities in logged areas, those uses suffer when there aren't timber harvests planned.
 - d. I'm directly affected in every way. Without forest management I would not be in business and I would not have been in my way of life for the last 30 years. When there was talk about closing the forestry office in the past I was very concerned. For anybody to do anything in the forest, there needs to be management of the forest. By the time I'm finished with a timber harvest, there's a lot more recreation, fishing, trapping use, than there was before. Timber harvest facilitates other uses, not blocking it. Wildlife are seen on roads and in timber sales too, these are movement corridors.
 - e. Agree with being directly affected in every way. The State forest is the place where we get materials to do our jobs, making firewood or lumber or whatever we're making. Support for industry on the scale that's practiced locally is strong in the community. Conflict tends to rise with conversations about larger scale operations. Local perception that small business is a potential solution.
 - f. Some people are more emotional about some areas in the state forest than others. Motive depends on the person.
3. **Considerations:** What resources, uses, or areas would you like the Division to consider as updates to the management policy are developed?
- a. Anywhere out there that can be included in AAC that's not currently is valuable. The more ground there is to choose from due to the management approach, the less impacts there will be when a given amount is harvested
 - b. How do we meld timber harvest with creating rec areas. It would help to present planned timber harvest with a vision for how areas could become

mtn bike/atv/sledding/skiing opportunities could follow. Every time we go blueberry picking we're thanking the loggers because old sales are where the berries grow. Is there a way to work with other DNR divisions to get revenue from other uses like rec to maintain infrastructure that comes with harvest activity? Kelsall area-overgrown for now but could old log landings be turned into reservation-based use areas (fire pits, picnic areas, etc.) Might offset some costs, might help shift perceptions of timber harvest as clear-cut only.

- c. Specific area in mind: re-established corridor to the back side of Chilkoot Lake. Past infrastructure provided maintenance access to salmon spawning channels. Beaver dams and glacial silt have degraded those areas (for example, the Glory Hole). Access might provide opportunities for enhancement of that spawning habitat. Timber in that area is near second growth harvest level and would provide close source of firewood.
 - d. Hydroelectric project proposed near Connelly Lake. Private property in that area can support related infrastructure for that project, limiting factor is access. Undersea cable between Haines and Skagway is under tension. If damaged, Haines would shift to diesel generator power. Access to Connelly Lake could play a role in creating a more secure renewable energy source for the community.
 - e. Hydro plant is permitted at Walker Lake, great recreation site. There are overgrown historic logging roads that almost reach Walker Lake. The best way to justify getting there for recreation development is to plan some management activities in that area. A potential tradeoff: select timber in that area and create access for more recreation and possibly for another hydroelectric project.
 - f. Timber and rock are important if we want to have logging and roads. Logging is a big part of use in the forest, but in terms of recreation, it's really nice to be able to roll down an old logging road to look for grouse. One big challenge is looking for places to harvest in winter months. Too many miles of plowing snow makes things difficult. Skeptical over concept of the "viewshed." Operators benefit from closer sources of timber in winter months. Historic land designations may not have considered access. Keeping consideration of access and rights-of-way as we plan. Observation that it seems like public has overwhelming negative perception of "clearcut." Not the responsibility of the operators to educate the public, but DFFP needs to do some PR work to educate people about multiple silvicultural options
4. **Recommendations:** What does it look like for forest management activities to be conducted in HSR RMA in a way that includes meeting the needs of business and industry users in the area?
- a. Observation that often, one industry is artificially pitted against another. Logging activity vs tourism or logging activities vs fishing. In Ketchikan, one of the most popular tourism activities is the logging show. Old mill in Ward cove is converted to an information center. Tourists are interested to see the

production and the movement of resources in AK. Could be opportunities for something like that in Haines

- b. Road access allows tour groups to find interesting sites, wildlife viewing areas
- c. Artificial fear without data to support that logging is responsible for salmon population declines
- d. Perception that in southern southeast there are a lot of loggers and a lot of fishermen and there doesn't seem to be the same levels of conflict. Experienced positive interactions with community members in Petersburg or Wrangell when operating in those areas. Haines seems unique in the amount of conflict around logging operations. Maybe specific to operating on state land in Haines area, rather than on federal lands. State lands don't have national lens on our activities as much. Commenter shares perception that there are plenty of people in the community that disapprove of logging but will take advantage of products like firewood or services like falling trees to enhance the view from their yards. Sense that Haines has more opposition per capita to logging industry than other areas.
- e. There should be public use cabins throughout the state forest. If public use cabins are precluded on lands that are identified for timber harvest, consider allowing those facilities. There might be a nice spot outside a recreation designated area for a cabin. Might be nice to have access like atv-road for cabins
- f. Support for designing timber harvest to identify future uses: a group in town has recently gained momentum for developing trails and recreation opportunities, that group would probably be excited to participate in planning process of timber sale design. Those projects could be connected to production of local forest products
- g. There are operators in the area that could log, haul, mill and construct cabin sites that would produce long-term assets for the state forest that could be used to generate revenue
- h. Seeing camp sites in the forest would also be beneficial, different levels of development throughout the forest.
- i. Desire to see logging used to clear land for a potential ski hill. Winter tourism in Haines in more consistent numbers would be great to see.

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:

Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection
ATTN: Forest Planning

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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