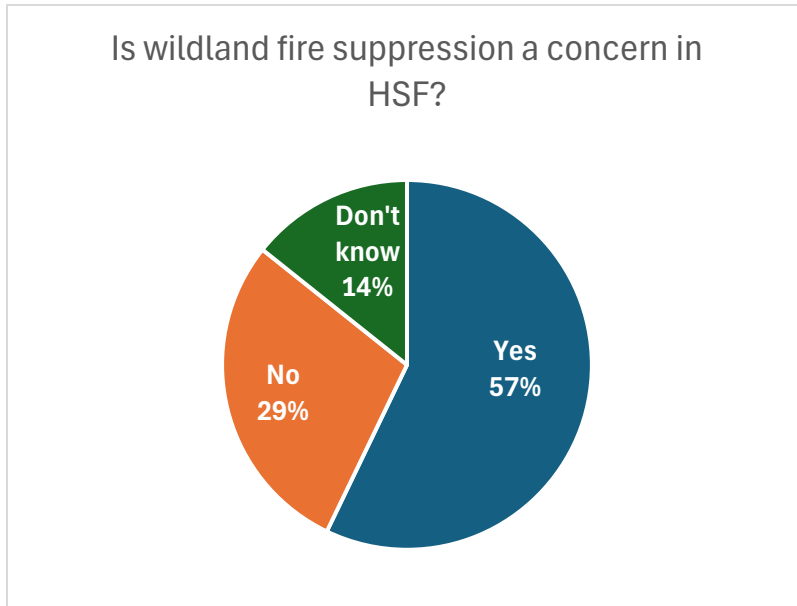


Wildland Fire Suppression

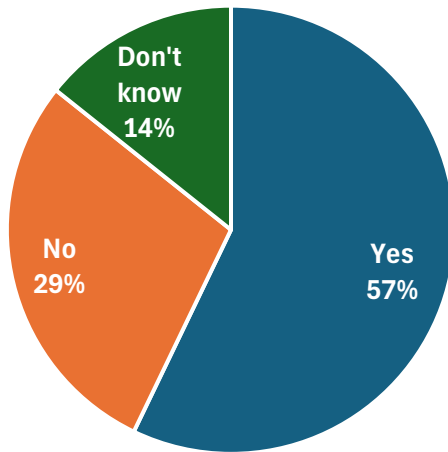
In 2017 the responsibility for management of wildland fire suppression in the Upper Lynn Canal was transferred to the United States Federal Government, Forest Service in Juneau. This change removed active responsibility to manage the suppression of wildland fire from the State on the lands owned both by the State and the Federal Government in the area. This decision was made to address the presence of the federal government as the largest land management agency in the region, the USFS, with the thinking that this would improve response capacity and function thereby creating a more financially capable management structure. The State currently provides a local support role to the USFS assisting in suppression supplies and leadership for initial wildland fire attack operations on an “as needed” basis. Local fire response in the Forest is primarily executed by structural volunteer organizations under a cooperative agreement with the regional wildland fire suppression agency. The capability of the local structural organizations to support wildland fire suppression in the Forest is directly affected by the number of personnel available at any given time and the level of training of the individuals participating. It is the responsibility of the regional wildland fire suppression agency to develop an effective emergency fire fighter crew to provide successful resource protection. The suppression agency typically provides an Emergency Fire Fighter (EFF) resource from existing employees and cultivates a local “on call” EFF resource by training and supporting development of personnel in the communities within the response area.

1. Do you think wildland fire suppression in the Forest is a concern for residents within the HSF? Y/N



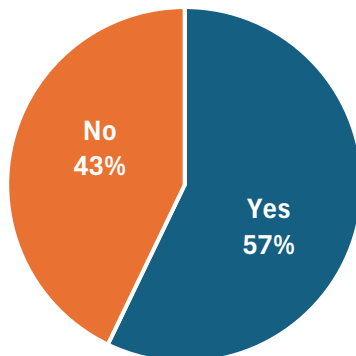
2. Do you think wildland fire suppression responsibilities will increase in the coming years because of changing conditions, environmentally and physically, in and around the Forest? Y/N

Will wildland fire pressures increase the future in HSF?



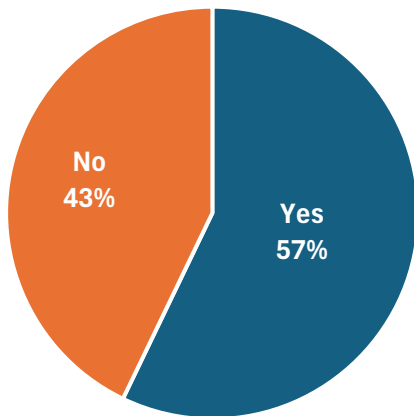
3. Did you know that wildland fire suppression in the upper Lynn canal was initially managed by the State of Alaska from the Haines office of DOF and has been changed to the Federal Forest Service from Juneau? Y/N

Did you know that wildland fire management in Upper Lynn Canal is based in Juneau?



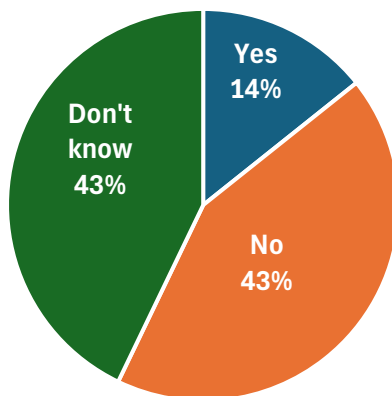
4. Do you think the current agency response is meeting the needs of the communities that reside in the area? Y/N

Is current agencu response meeting the needs of local communities?



5. Do you think the wildland fire suppression response would be improved if management authority was returned to the local office of the DOF? Y/N

Would wildland fire response be improved by returning management to the Haines DOF office?



6. What could the State of Alaska do to improve wildland fire suppression response in the HSF? (300 words)

Write-in Responses

The DOF should work closely with the Forest Service to assess risk in the face of climate change and develop a plan.

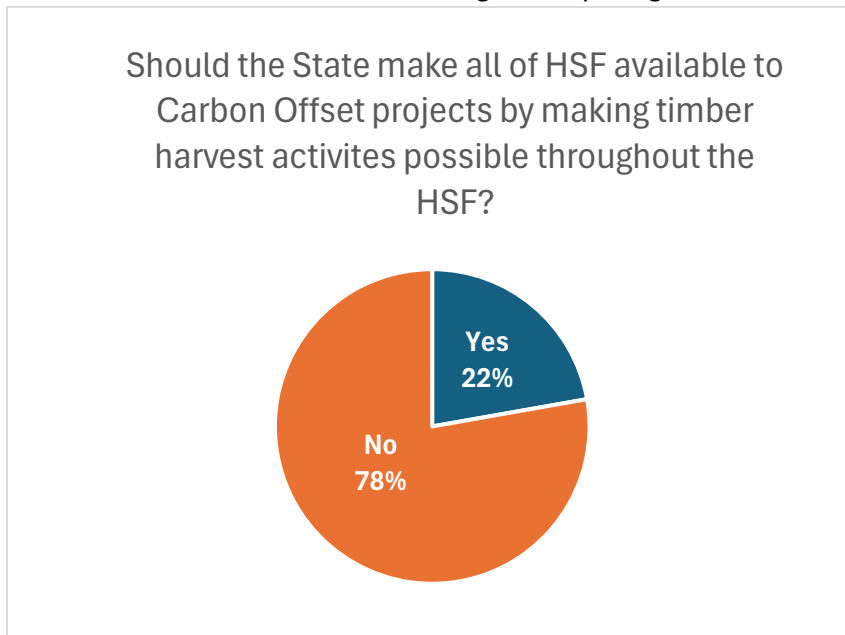
Stop industrial scale clearcutting which increases temperatures and fosters insect infestations while negatively affecting water retention through summer months. Then suppression will be less necessary.

As both a local EFF firefighter and a KVVD member I have found that the cooperative agreements are much more complicated with the USFS and it is prohibitively complicated to participate as an EFF. I also believe that fire response now is slower and more expensive. Fire suppression authority should be returned to the local DOF office in Haines.

Carbon Offset Projects

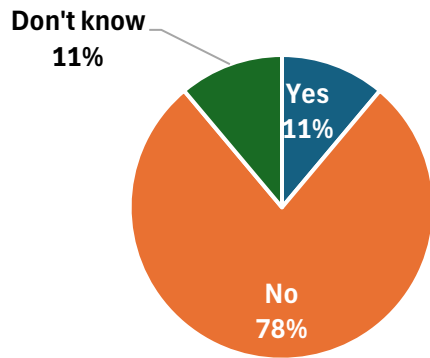
In 2023 the State Legislature changed the statutory requirements for State land management requiring the Department of Natural Resources to provide the opportunity to participate in the available carbon offset markets on State owned lands. The State land managing agencies were directed by the DNR commissioner to amend existing policies to allow for the sale of carbon offsets on the land managed specifically by those agencies. To address the commissioners' directive, the DOF began the amendment process for the Haines State Forest management plan. The carbon offset program policy on the HSF will be included in the adopted plan once amended in this process. Carbon Offset projects can provide the opportunity to generate revenue for the State from forest resources that are not extracted for that purpose. It is a common perception that carbon offsets and timber extraction activities cannot exist simultaneously in a specific area of the Forest creating an "either/or" understanding of Forest resource use. In fact, the opportunities to sell carbon offsets at their highest value will be realized in parts of the Forest that are available for timber harvest. Understanding the potential of the tool at its greatest value can lead to the conclusion that the original intent of the legislation defining the Haines State Forest for resource use would benefit the potential for revenue generation from the application of the carbon offset program across the entire Forest.

1. Should the State consider the entire Forest at its greatest value for the carbon offset program by making timber harvest activities available across the legislatively designated Forest? Y/N



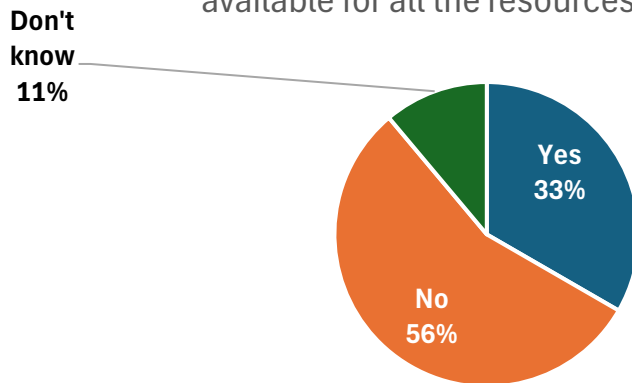
2. A change to Forest management policy to obtain the greatest value of carbon offsets on the existing markets could lead to an increase in Forest access to provide for the development of all the Forest resources present in an area. Would you support the increase in Forest access under this type of management structure? Y/N

Do you support increased forest access to aid development of forest resources, including carbon offsets?



3. The change mentioned above requires a management structure that does not “block” portions of the Forest into a single use, but distributes use value across the Forest. Would the public use of resources and the State management of those resources benefit from a change in management policy to allow all State lands within the legislative boundaries of the Forest to be available for all the diverse resources present? Y/N

Would public use and management of HSF resources benefit from making all State lands within HSF available for all the resources present?



4. If you would like to, please elaborate on your question 3 response? (300words)

Write-in Responses

The Chilkat Ridge and Ferebee should be used as carbon offsets and never be logged because of the important ecosystems they support.

I highly favor the carbon offset program. Is there a way that private landowners and, or, the Haines Borough with timber can join this program in collaboration with the State?

Partitioning the forest into management units that prioritize conservation seems to be the only way to provide for long term resource conservation for future generations. Areas that were not designated as such have been severely degraded in some cases throughout the HSF. Perhaps some updating and addition work is needed on this system in a new draft plan, but I don't believe that we should completely throw it out for the sake of increasing the value of carbon offsets--if that is what is being proposed here. Management of HSF needs to prioritize long term resource conservation first, sustainable resource harvest next, and phase out activities that are not sustainable at all, such as old growth timber harvest and mining. The highest and best value of the HSF for the people of the Chilkat Valley and Alaska is in the conservation of ecosystems, fish production, wildlife, forest regrowth, and recovery--not short term, high impact extraction activities.

In general, I support the concept of carbon offsets in Haines State Forest. However, the process is often abused and manipulated by vested interests and fails to succeed in carbon reduction. The HSF has no experience in this realm and in fact has mentioned carbon sequestration rarely, if ever. This is a complex issue that requires far more than yes/no answers or 300 word responses. I would recommend that HSF seriously consider detailed comments by NGO's with experience in this realm such as Takshanuk Watershed Council and Lynn Canal Conservation. Also, the existing inventory is not even close to adequate for evaluating a program of carbon offsets.

I honestly don't trust DOF to manage state lands in this way, nor to follow what they propose regarding carbon offsets. It could be a mechanism for opening up more land to cutting.