



File Code: 1560

Date: August 28, 2024

Route To:

Subject: Monthly update to Petersburg Borough

To: Mayor Mark Jensen and Assembly Members

Good afternoon, Mayor Jensen, and Assembly Members. Here are some updates from the Petersburg Ranger District on activities around Petersburg.

1. FOREST PLAN REVISION UPDATE:

- a. The 45-day feedback period is still underway for the Wilderness Suitability Process, and the public has an opportunity to weigh in on lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. Interested individuals have until Sept. 14 to submit their feedback using the plan revision email: TongassPlanRevision@usda.gov.
- b. The forest plan process is ongoing. For more information contact me or our Forest Plan Revision Team (SM.FS.TNFRevision@usda.gov)

2. Timber:

- a. Thomas Bay: We are developing a Stewardship Agreement for this activity. It is developing into a project with an integrated focus and will not be ready for offer until next spring.
- b. Small Sales will continue along the roadsides to provide for our smaller operators. We currently have 6 small sales currently going on Mitkof Island. We have offered two more sales last week on Mitkof Island.
- c. Contact Timber Management Assistant Jorge Enriquez (Jorge.Enriquez@usda.gov) for more information.

3. Cabins and Trails:

A. Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Cabins:

- a. West Point Cabin Repair (2025) is part of this funding. Replace old, rusting fabricated brackets of the cabin's foundation and porch with new components that will improve structural stability. An engineering survey was completed this year with a contract via National Forest Foundation to repair next year.
- b. Woodpecker Cove cabin (2026) site design and cabin design are being finalized. We intend to submit for contracting to have constructed in 2026.

B. GAOA Trails:

- a. Petersburg Lake Trail: Trail work is wrapping up for the year with preparations for next year's work.
- b. Crews have been busy at work cutting out the existing trails on Mitkof and Kupreanof Islands. Crane Lake trail has been upgraded on the first portion of the trail with gravel and concrete steps replacing portions of the step and run board walk areas. Petersburg Lake Trail has been brushed out for the full trail length. More work on the Petersburg Lake Trail next year.



- C. For more information on Cabins and Trails please contact our Recreation Staff Officer Nick Kloos (nicholas.kloos@usda.gov).

5. Office Consolidation

- a. The office will be temporarily moving from the downtown location to the Scow Bay Work Center at 123 Scow Bay in October or November for about 2 years. Many of our folks will be teleworking during the renovation. The Scow Bay Work Center will be our office location for the public to meet with Forest Service staff.
- b. Renovation of the downtown office is estimated to start in January and go for 2 years with a complete renovation of the interior of the building.
- c. Point of contact for more information is Logan Wild (Logan.Wilde@usda.gov)

7. Fire Fighting positions available:

- a. Alaskans interested in a firefighting career with the Forest Service can apply for seventeen open positions.
- b. Forest Service is hiring wildland firefighters into permanent seasonal positions on hand crews, engine crews and in dispatch offices.
- c. There are vacancies in Moose Pass, and Anchorage on the Chugach National Forest, and Juneau on the Tongass National Forest.
- d. Applicants can apply online. Jobs will be posted on USAJobs.gov starting Aug. 23 and open through Sept. 24.

8. 2024 Capitol Christmas Tree:

- a. A beautiful Sitka spruce from the Wrangell Ranger District has been selected to represent Alaska as the 2024 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree.
- b. The tree will symbolize Alaskans' connection to the lands they call home, as well as the special relationships between the forests and tribal communities, partners, and sponsors coming together to send this unique holiday gift to the U.S. Capitol.
- c. The Capitol Christmas Tree project is led by the Forest Service's Alaska Region. This is the first time the Tongass is providing the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree.
- d. The tree will be harvested in late October and packaged on a custom 82' trailer. After a sendoff celebration in Wrangell, the first Whistle Stop will be in Ketchikan, then it will be transported to Seattle by barge. From Seattle, it will begin a coast-to-coast Whistlestop Tour visiting communities across the country to share the story of The People's Tree from Alaska's National Forests.
- e. The U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree initiative is a 54-year tradition in which one of America's 154 national forests provides a tree for the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol for the holiday season. The project is made possible with support from partners including nonprofit Society of American Foresters and Alaska Geographic, cash and in-kind contributions from small businesses and large corporations, as well as volunteers throughout Alaska and across the United States.

- f. We still need thousands of handmade, durable and lightweight ornaments to adorn the Capitol Christmas Tree. All ornaments must be submitted to the Forest Service no later than Sept. 15, 2024. Ornaments can be dropped off at any Alaska National Forest office or mailed to: 2024 Capitol Christmas Tree Ornaments; 161 East 1st Avenue, Door 8; Anchorage, AK 9950. **10,000 handmade ornaments are required to decorate the U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree and the smaller companion trees that will represent Alaska in Washington, D.C.*
- g. We invite everyone to learn more and follow the journey of the 2024 U.S. Capitol Christmas Tree at www.uscapitolchristmastree.com, Facebook: [USCapitolChristmasTree](https://www.facebook.com/USCapitolChristmasTree), Instagram: [@USCapitolChristmasTree](https://www.instagram.com/USCapitolChristmasTree), and X: [@USCapitolTree](https://twitter.com/USCapitolTree).

9. Personnel Changes:

- a. Jorge Enriquez, Timber Management Assistant to District Ranger at Nogales effective about October 6th. Last day of work about September 20th. Rachel Brummet to be acting.
- b. Ray Born, District Ranger retires September 30th, last workday is September 27th. A person will be selected for a 120-day detail to fill in until a new ranger is hired.

Thank you for your ongoing support for Petersburg Ranger District and the Forest Service planning and project implementation.

Vernon Ray Born
Ranger Ray Born

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Enclosures: None

Cc: Jorge Enriquez
Nick Kloos.
Logan Wild