



Forest Service

Petersburg Ranger District  
Tongass National Forest  
Alaska Region

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**File Code:** 1560

**Date:** June 24, 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. Our next steps are to complete the compilation of the information from the 25 community visits and start our initial assessments.
- b. From the website there are links to all the information webinars and a feedback form. Visit: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/tongass/landmanagement/planning> and click on: Forest Plan Revision.
- c. A letter was sent out on 6/11/2024 about follow up and intro to tribal engagement team working with Spruce Root. The Spruce Root/SSP team will include Anthony Mallott, Alana Peterson, Katie Riley, and Valerie Massie. This team is ready to offer information and strategy regarding planning, policy, environmental concerns, cultural use, and harvest priorities to Tribes within this process. They are available through in person meetings, virtual work sessions, presentations to Tribal Councils and direct working relationships with Tribal administrators or other Tribal designated employees involved in this process. ([www.spruceroot.org/tongassrevision](http://www.spruceroot.org/tongassrevision) )
- d. For more information contact me or our Forest Plan Revision Team ([SM.FS.TNFRevision@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.TNFRevision@usda.gov) )

- 2. Cooperative Emergency Response Agreements:** The Forest Service does not have a current Local Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement with Petersburg Borough. I would like to start a discussion on developing an agreement based on the current conditions of our relationship that will help us define our roles and responsibilities. I have provided an example of an existing agreement to Aaron Hankins and would like support of the Assembly to move forward with this discussion.

**3. Timber:**

- a. Thomas Bay: We are cruising this sale next week with a sale offer planned for later this year. The harvest will be on 542 acres for about 12.6 million board feet.
- 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.
- c. Free Use permits are available also.
- d. Contact Acting Timber Management Assistant Rachael Brummett ([Rachel.Brummett@usda.gov](mailto:Rachel.Brummett@usda.gov)) for more information.



#### 4. Secure Rural Schools Act – Resource Advisory Committee (SRS-RAC)

- a. Need to have 5 more applications to set up the RAC throughout the South Tongass. We are seeking additional people with tribal membership. See attached flyer.
- b. Resource Advisory Committees review projects submitted by agencies, non-profits, landowners, and others and make recommendations for funding. These projects must be on or adjacent to the Tongass National Forest. Types of projects include improving *trails*; soil productivity; ecosystem health; *wildlife and fish habitat*; native species or *noxious weed control*. The annual commitment is attending 2-3 one-hour admin meetings, a few hours to review proposals on your own time, and 1-2 day-long voting meetings.
- c. The South Tongass RAC is comprised of the former Wrangell-Petersburg RAC, Ketchikan RAC, and Prince of Wales RAC.
- d. From more details on SRS: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/working-with-us/secure-rural-schools>.

#### 5. Cabins and Trails:

- A. Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Cabins:
  - a. West Point Cabin Repair (2025) also 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 this year with a contract to repair next year.
  - b. Woodpecker Cove cabin (2025) site design and cabin design are being finalized. We intend to submit for contracting to have constructed in 2025.
  - c. Proposed Cabin Fees:
    - I. The public has until July 3, to comment on proposed recreation fees for six new cabins and one campground in southeast Alaska.
    - II. A complete list of locations and proposed fees is available on the interactive Alaska Region Recreation Fee Proposals site.
    - III. Comment information, including the commenter's name and address, will be considered part of the public record and viewable by the public.
    - IV. If approved, fee changes will take effect in late 2024 or 2025.
    - V. Collected fees fund ongoing operations, maintenance, and improvements to provide high quality recreation sites for locals and visitors alike.
    - VI. The proposed fees will help close the gap between normal appropriations and cost to maintain and operate.
    - VII. Proposed fee prices are based on a market analysis of similar recreation opportunities within the state.
- B. GAOA Trails:
  - a. Petersburg Lake Trail: For this summer we plan to do 6.6 miles of trail maintenance. Petersburg Lake Trail maintenance will consist of removing fallen trees on the trail, brushing up to 3ft on both sides of the trail from overgrown vegetation. Also, will be replacing rotten or broken material of the step and run boardwalk. Materials will be brought in by boat or floatplane. In Wilderness so no power tools will be used. Old Growth trees will not be cut during trail maintenance. Total personnel that will be working on Petersburg Lake Trail project will be 5-7. The lower half can be access by boat at the high tide point. The upper half will use a floatplane.

- b. Ohmer Creek bridge replacement will be contracted out to replace the floating bridge with a more sustainable elevated bridge.
  - c. Crews have been busy at work cutting out the existing trails on Mitkof and Kupreanof Islands.
- C. For more information on Cabins and Trails please contact our Recreation Staff Officer Nick Kloos (nicholas.kloos@usda.gov).

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

*Vernon Ray Born*

Ranger Ray Born

Enclosures:

1. Forest plan Revision Flyer
2. SRS RAC Flyer

Cc: Rachel Brummett  
Nick Kloos.