



P.O. Box 240605
Douglas, AK 99824

907.586.1254 phone
907.463.3433 fax
ftffoundation.org

2017 Annual Report

Neil MacKinnon
President

First things First Alaska Foundation has been active during 2017 in Juneau and Southeast Alaska to encourage economic and resource development.

Rosemary Hagevig
Vice President

Juneau Economic Development Plan

FTFAF Reviewed the book *When the Boomers Bail* by Mark Lautman that discusses the need for communities to deal with the worker shortage and the need to create a community inviting to younger workers. The Board Is assisting in organizing a community planning effort using the model proposed by Mr. Lautman made a \$10,000 commitment to begin funding process to be lead by Mr. Lautman in 2018.

Joseph Kahklen
Secretary

Frank Bergstrom
Treasurer

Directors

Corey Baxter
Richard Burns
Wayne Coogan
Naomi Hobbs
Scott Spickler

Juneau Access and Southeast Transportation Plan

FTFAF continues its work to see the Juneau Access Project move forward. While the Governor has chosen the no action option, activities continue to finish the Supplemental EIS and resolve open litigation issues. We continued to educate all parties on the increasing cost of living associated with transportation limitations (monopoly) in the region. Multi-mode access via water, air, and land are critical factors communicated to public and private parties in enhancing the quality of life and job opportunities in the region.

John Sandor
Director Emeritus

Denny DeWitt
Executive Director

With funding assistance from the City and Borough of Juneau, FTFAF will be conducting a survey in Juneau to determine the amount of support for Juneau Access and other transportation modes. The results, available in early 2018, will help inform community leaders on community preferences.

FTFAF worked to maintain funding for Juneau Access and was disappointed when our delegation allowed half the funding to be moved to other projects including a school in the Nome region.

Tongass Forest and Land Management Plan

FTF provided educational testimony to the USFS during modification of the forest plan and continues to help enlighten the agency, government, and the public on the critical importance of land access and use of the forest.

The plan that FTFAF believes is not the best use of the Tongass Forest was adopted in the last 8 days of the Obama Administration. We contacted our federal delegation individually and as part of a group of objectors encouraging them to nullify the regulation under the Congressional Review of Agency Rulemaking Act.

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Senator Murkowski has included the language in the Interior Appropriation Bill that deals with the timber and several unclear and ambiguous sections of the 2016 plan. We continue working to get a simple and straightforward termination of the 2016 plan.

Big Thorne Project Litigation

In 2015 FTFAF joined with other interveners in defense of three cases brought by SEACC against the Forest Service. FTFAF helped educate the court via our insightful analysis into the validity of the FS decision on the timber sale. We debunked false information that might otherwise have resulted in bad policy for workers in SE.

The lawsuit first was filed in 2014 by environmental groups seeking to halt timber harvest in the Big Thorne area. The cases were attempting to prohibit the sale of timber in the Big Thorne Project. The timber sale is critical to the continued viability of the Viking Lumber Company and the conservation activities in the Big Thorne area.

In May, the Ninth Circuit ruled in favor of the U.S. Forest Service and its plans to offer the Big Thorne Timber Sale on Prince of Wales Island. In September the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals denied a petition from conservation groups, asking the court to take another look at its spring ruling in the Big Thorne Timber Sale.

The environmental groups did not file a Petition for Certiorari to the Supreme Court, as it was highly unlikely to be granted a hearing at the Supreme Court. This ends the 9th Circuit case and really seems to end this case.

This is very good news and Viking Lumber can continue operating on this timber sale.

Roadless Rule Litigation

In July of 2011 litigation was filed in the District Court in the District of Columbia. Initially the court found that the Statute of Limitations had expired. This was successfully appealed. Then the Court reviewed the case on its merits and, in September 2017, found against those of us hoping to overturn the Roadless Rule.

A group, including FTFAF, filed a notice of Appeal. FTFAF is supporting this Appeal financially and as a named party in the federal court.

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Waters of the United States Regulations

Understanding the devastating nature of the proposed EPA regulations, in 2015 FTFAF President Neil MacKinnon penned a My Turn column for the Juneau Empire. FTFAF clarified the intent, purpose, and resulting application of the clean water act to the lands of SE Alaska; and pointed out the application of the proposed WOTUS rule would have resulted in management unimagined by congress.

The proposed regulations were enjoined and the Trump Administration is working to revise the regulations to reduce their negative impact.

Mining Activity

The Board contributed funding to the Alaska Miners Association survey on impact of mining on Alaska and communities where mines are located.

FTFAF is part of a group offering changes to Juneau's Mining Ordinance to eliminate the duplication and closed staff decision-making. FTFAF clarified existing policy for the Juneau assembly so that its true impact on jobs, workers, the city budget, and ancillary activities could be clearly understood. This has resulted in the Assembly taking a new look at the ordinance with a possible eye toward reducing counter productive regulation.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Lead public discussions on the need to limit use of Juneau's 1% sales tax for CBJ capital needs focusing on maintenance. The October ballot measure was limited to maintenance and passed by the electorate.

The Board sent a letter to the Governor and Lt. Governor requesting the state appeal the Superior Court decision allowing the "Save our Salmon" on the 2018 ballot. The state appealed the decision.

Gold Rush Days

FTFAF continued its annual participation in Juneau's Gold Rush Days sponsoring a booth, shared with CPR, displaying many position papers supporting economic development.

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