

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ASSOCIATED WITH GLEN ITH

This document helps summarize the current issues and concerns associated with Mr. Glen Ith. It is broken down into three separate sections: the unresolved issue about the pending Letter of Reprimand; his involvement in the litigation with the Overlook Environmental Assessment; and his involvement during the planning process of the Scott Peak Environmental Impact Statement.

Letter of Reprimand

Prior to Mr. Ith's two appeals and subsequent litigation on the Overlook EA, the Petersburg Ranger District was in the process of issuing a Letter of Reprimand (enclosure) for his failure to follow instructions. The letter extensively documents Mr. Ith's failure to produce acceptable and timely work products associated with the Port Houghton Landscape Assessment. He failed to incorporate edits and Forest Service protocols in the analysis developed for this project, despite repeated direction from his supervisor. This period of concern spans from November 2004 to January 11, 2006.

Overlook Environmental Assessment

The Overlook EA was a contractor provided planning effort. Mr. Ith was not assigned responsibility as part of the District review team for this project, however, he took it upon himself to review the draft document and provide substantial comments to it on official time. Neither his supervisor nor the IDT leader requested this review. The District treated these comments (dated October 26, 2004) as any other internal comments. Responses to his comments were in writing (enclosed), primarily to explain how the wildlife analysis was conducted.

Mr. Ith was directed to not spend any additional work time on this project, as he was assigned to other high priority work and needed to focus on that. As a private citizen, Mr. Ith provided comments during the public draft environmental assessment comment period, which ended July 11, 2005. When comparing these comments to his October 26, 2004 internal comments, a substantial amount of duplication exist. There are also a number of quantifying statements within the July 11, 2005 comments that would have required some level of analysis to generate. Mr. Ith did not request any information under FOIA relating to this project until December 20, 2005. It appears that he used his ability as an employee to access information needed to develop his private citizen comments. Mr. Ith appealed the project on January 30, 2006, and the project was withdrawn by the Forest Supervisor for additional work. Mr. Ith subsequently filed a lawsuit relating to the Overlook project with the Association of Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics (AFSEEE). That suit is pending.

Scott Peak EIS

The Scott Peak EIS was an internally developed project. Mr. Ith began as a wildlife biologist assigned to this effort and later became the IDT leader. Mr. Ith was ultimately assigned to other priority work on the project due to his inability to complete both the wildlife resources report for this project and the overall project document. A more

experienced wildlife biologist (Mr. Ith became a wildlife biologist in mid-2001) was brought in to complete the resource report and the overall document was completed by an alternate team leader.

Mr. Ith appealed the Scott Peak project decision on March 2, 2006, primarily on concerns over how effects to wildlife were measured. These concerns were identical to concerns that Mr. Ith brought forward during his time working on the project. These concerns were addressed numerous times and Mr. Ith was given direction to correct the methods he was using in order to make them supportable, which he failed to do. Mr. Ith's appeal was subsequently substantiated a minor point of how cumulative impacts were measured. The decision was remanded.

Current Situation

Mr. Ith has been temporarily assigned to work on migratory bird issues for the Forest Plan amendment. His physical location has been moved away from the Ranger District and to the Supervisor's Office. This was necessitated due to Mr. Ith's status as a litigant, to avoid exposure to attorney-client privileged information. It was inappropriate to leave Mr. Ith in a position to have easy access to shared computer files, printers, etc., while litigation strategy and responses are being developed in the District office.

Around April 17th, a Forest Service wide email was sent out to all employees through AFSEEE with Glen's picture on the front page. The article below is what was distributed:

HELP SAVE THE TONGASS

Hello, my name is Glen Ith and I am seeking your help. I've worked for the Forest Service for 25 years; the last 5 as a manager of wildlife habitat in America's greatest rainforest—Alaska's Tongass National Forest. As a Forest Service employee, I have a great love for our incredible public land. The Tongass National Forest has the most abundant fish and wildlife in the nation, and I'm proud to be responsible for safeguarding these invaluable natural resources.

I also have great respect for our nation's environmental laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act. NEPA is a simple, but profound law. It requires the government to tell the truth about the environmental harm of its actions before it acts. It's a basic process—first, analyze environmental effects; second, disclose those effects to the public; third, take appropriate and well-informed action.

It is my love for the Tongass National Forest and respect for the law that has compelled me to blow the whistle on my own employer—the U.S. Forest Service.

In August of 2005, I learned that the Forest Service was working on a logging road to access old-growth timber that had not yet been approved for sale. The Forest Service was in the middle of studying the environmental impacts of logging these trees, a process it named the "Overlook Project Area Environmental Assessment." But the public had not been told about the Forest Service's activities, nor had the Forest Service finished the final crucial stage of the NEPA process in which the public would be allowed to comment on the Overlook timber sale.

Yet there in the middle of the rainforest. I saw the evidence with my own eyes. A private contractor hired by the Forest Service was blasting and expanding rock quarry pits, and bulldozing a road through the young forest to get to old-growth trees in the Overlook sale area. The sale had not yet been approved, but the contractor had already cut dozens of old-growth Sitka spruce trees to build new bridges for the road. These ancient trees are truly irreplaceable and increasingly scarce. The environmental damage is incalculable.

To make matters worse, the financial cost to taxpayers from this road is a matter of public record—over \$160,000 of your tax money was spent on this logging road.

So I did what I had never done before. With FSEEE's help, I appealed the Overlook timber sale when it was finally approved almost a year after the logging road was built. And I won—at least a brief victory. The Forest Service withdrew the timber sale to rewrite it and try to justify why the Forest Service built the road before approving the timber sale.

But it turns out the Overlook sale fiasco was not an isolated case. FSEEE and I discovered that the Forest Service was doing the same thing at Traitors Cove, about 110 miles from where I live in Petersburg, Alaska. The Forest Service had proposed three timber sales called Rockfish, SW Neets and Francis Cove, all in the Traitors Cove area. The Forest Service decided it should analyze the cumulative impacts of all three projects together in one document (a good thing), and named it the Traitors Cove environmental impact statement ("EIS").

But a problem arose when the Forest Service realized that it had unused money designated to build logging roads and the EIS was taking a long time to prepare. If the Forest Service didn't spend the money, it would be lost. So last summer, the Forest Service awarded three contracts worth almost \$1 million to build logging roads to access the Rockfish, SW Neets and Francis Cove timber sales.

The EIS was not complete and the timber sales had not been approved but the Forest Service went ahead with its \$1 million logging roads anyway.

The Traitors Cove EIS has still not been released to the public for comment and the Forest Service's decision about whether or not to go forward with the three