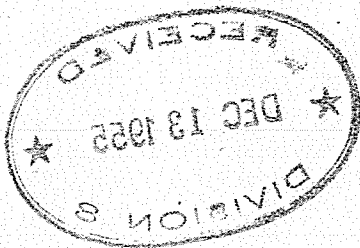


Tabulation showing lengths, cost of Construction
and average daily traffic on Alaska
Forest Highway Routes

Class	Route	Name	Official	Length Actual	Constructed	Costs		Average Daily Traffic		
						To Date	To Complete	1955	1965 (Est)	
3	1	Tongass	40.3	40.3	20.8	6,918,627	5,075,000	850	1200	
3	2	Glacier	59.1	59.1	43.2	4,248,665	6,450,000	1350*	1700	*1955 ADT of Mile 1
3	3	Seward-Anchorage	89.5	89.5	89.5	17,906,885		610	1000	
3	4	Cordova	20.0	20.0	10.4	381,277	2,500,000	50	150	
3	5	Kenai River	18.2	18.2	18.2	1,983,128	845,000	480	800	
3	7	Mitkof	16.6	16.1	14.2	1,014,884	1,247,000	230	250	
3	9	Salmon River	12.1	12.1	12.1	528,837		50	75	
3	11	Sitka	13.2	13.2	7.7	1,651,361	1,752,000	250	500	
3	12	Crow Creek	8.0	8.0	8.0	161,999	565,000	10*	50	*Estimated
3	13	Palmer Creek	11.9	11.9	11.9	61,074		10*	50	*Estimated
3	14	Hope	17.3	17.3	17.3	230,962	3,000,000	50	200	
3	16	Wrangell	12.7	12.7	10.4	668,231	2,314,000	180	500	
3	18	Texas Creek	3.5	3.5	3.5	374,913		10*	20	*Estimated
3	26	Point Agassiz	3.0	3.0	3.0	42,150		5	--	This route to be abandoned
3	30	Afognak Lake	4.5	4.5	4.5	62,000		5*	10	*Estimated
3	31	Douglas	11.6	11.6	7.3	1,581,392	1,352,000	1475	1800	
3	32	Copper River	20.4	21.7	20.4	975,899	2,720,000	150	300	
3	33	Resurrection Bay	2.6	2.6	2.6	22,135	315,000	175	250	
3	34	Seward	1.4	1.4	1.4	25,270	80,000	150	250	
		Surveys				556,150				
TOTALS			365.9	366.7	306.4	39,395,839**	28,215,000			**Includes amounts expended by others.



REVIEW OF ALASKA FOREST HIGHWAY SYSTEM

There are submitted herewith brief narrative report of the Alaska Forest Highway System, together with pertinent route data.

Since Alaska is a Territory and has no Federal aid system of highways, the Forest Highway routes are all designated as class 3 highways. (Section 15.3 of Rules and Regulations for administering Forest Highways)(Revised). The original system, approved July 7, 1924 contained 21 routes with a total of 338.7 miles. The present system as approved on August 14, 1953 covers 19 routes with a total length of 365.9 miles, of which 304.4 miles have been constructed to date.

Improvement of the Alaska Forest Highway System began in the early 1920's. In most cases the existing roads were mere wagon trails of a very low standard. Initial efforts were dedicated to improve these roads with an all weather gravel surface; grades, alignment width, etc. were secondary considerations since traffic was very light and available funds were limited. These roads served a dual purpose. They not only provided means for administering the National Forests, but were the only arteries of transportation in the communities where they are located. As the communities grew and development progressed the importance of the Forest Highways likewise increased. Conversely, obsolescence of the roads manifested itself in proportion to these developments. Following the early improvement of the low standard roads, some reconstruction to higher standards was accomplished in the 1930's particularly adjacent to the larger towns. These included surfacing with crushed gravel or crushed stone. Until 1949 no attempt was made to construct high type bituminous wearing surfaces in Alaska, although in 1940-41 a light bituminous surface treatment was placed on a cement stabilized dirt base on a three mile section of the South Tongass Highway at Ketchikan. This was of an experimental nature and since results were not satisfactory,

further construction of this type was not attempted.

The Territory of Alaska received a marked uplift in its development during and following the World War II years. Most of this is attributable to the defense activities, although in the extreme Southeastern Alaska section the mushrooming pulp industry has contributed a major share of the rise. A 54 million dollar pulp plant was constructed at Ketohikan, with production of pulp actually getting underway in 1953. Construction of mills at other locations in Southeastern Alaska is being seriously considered. Improvement of the Forest Highways has kept pace with developments, but has required special funds in addition to the regular Forest Highway appropriations. In connection with the Ketohikan pulp mill construction and other proposed projects of a similar nature, a special appropriation of 7 million dollars was made available by Congress. All but a small amount of this fund has been expended. Construction of pulp or other timber using industries are imminent at Sitka, Juneau and Wrangell. Supplemental appropriations will be necessary if adequate highways are to be constructed to serve the needs promulgated by these installations within a reasonable period of time.

Expenditures on the Alaska Forest Highway System as of June 30, 1955 are as follows:

<u>By Public Roads</u>	<u>By Others</u>	<u>Total</u>
\$21,063,835	\$18,091,654	\$39,395,839

Of the approved mileage on the Alaska Forest Highway System 172.1 miles are located in the Tongass National Forest in Southeastern Alaska and 193.8 miles are in the Chugach National Forest which is in Southwestern Alaska. In the Tongass National Forest the system is entirely disconnected and the individual routes radiate from the towns, with their extension or improvement dependent on the economies of the community. The Juneau area is connected at Haines with the

interior Alaska system of roads through the medium of a ferry operated by the Territory through the months of June to November. Of the 193.8 miles of Forest highway in the Chugach National Forest 153.4 miles are located on the Kenai Peninsula. The Seward-Anchorage Forest Highway, 89.5 miles in length, extends from Seward to Girdwood near the Forest boundary. All other Forest roads in this area connect with the Seward-Anchorage Highway, which continues on from Girdwood to Anchorage where it provides access to the interior system of roads. The Seward-Anchorage road is of real importance since it provides a flexible form of transportation between the seaport of Seward and the huge army and air bases at Anchorage and Fairbanks. It augments the Alaska Railroad which has terminals at both the Seward seaport and the port of Whittier.

Recent installations at Kenai and other points along Cook Inlet by the Army have greatly increased the importance of the Kenai River Highway route which connects with the Seward-Anchorage Highway at Mile 38. Regrading of this 18 mile route is almost completed and it is planned to pave this highway in the very near future.

Due to the great difference in climate and terrain in the two National Forests, there is a marked contrast in the construction problems and in construction costs of highways in the two regions. The tremendous increase in construction activities throughout the Territory since the end of hostilities of World War II and constant rise in wages, freight costs, etc. have contributed a substantial share to the high construction costs in Alaska. Southeastern Alaska has a very heavy and dense forest growth. The item of clearing and grubbing in this area is in itself a considerable portion of the cost of a project. Also a great deal of the construction in Southeastern Alaska is in solid rock, muskeg or glacial silt with resulting high grading costs. In some areas gravel for fill stabilization and surfacing is very scarce and excessive hauling costs must be

incurred to overcome this deficiency. On occasions it is necessary to crush ledge rock to produce material which normally can be obtained from gravel deposits if such were available, at a much more economical cost.

The cost of maintaining the constructed portion of the Alaska Forest Highway system is borne by the Government, and includes necessary personnel, equipment, shop facilities, etc. This factor plus all other related conditions, stimulates efforts towards the design of higher type roads that can be most economically constructed and tend to keep maintenance costs at a minimum. In 1949 the first plant mix bituminous surface was constructed on the Glacier Highway at Juneau for a distance of nine miles. This was followed by a $5\frac{1}{2}$ mile project in the same area in 1952 and by the construction of approximately 90 miles in the Seward area. Reconstruction of a 16 mile section of the Tongass Highway at Ketchikan, made necessary by the establishment of a huge pulp mill at Ward Cove, was started in 1949 and completed to a high type bituminous surfaced road in 1954.

The estimated total cost to complete the present Alaska Forest Highway System established standards is \$28,215,000. However, the undeveloped status of the Territory does not permit of a hard and fast schedule to accomplish this improvement. The importance of any route can vary greatly, almost from day to day. Often such criteria as present day traffic cannot be used as a measure of justification, since it is future traffic resulting from the economic development that must be considered. The curtailment of passenger service by the Alaska Steamship Company has caused travel to and from Alaska to be done almost entirely by air, except for the relatively small amount of travel over the Alaska Highway. The importance of the roads to the airports from the various towns has accordingly taken on greater significance. At Cordova particularly, an expenditure of several million dollars, for improvement of the $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles of low standard road needs to be undertaken, yet traffic is comparatively light and will undoubtedly remain so for

some time. Drilling for oil is actively underway in this general area and it appears likely that pools will be found. The impact on the highways in this area will be tremendous when such a development occurs.

The factor exercising the greatest influence on the Forest Highway roads at Wrangell, Juneau and Sitka at the present time, is the anticipated construction of additional pulp and other timber processing facilities. The expenditure of approximately \$5,250,000 in the Ketchikan area since 1949 has alleviated the critical demands for roads in that area due to the construction of the huge pulp mill there. Included in this outlay of funds in this area is \$4,160,000 of Special Tongass Funds, a portion of a \$7,000,000 appropriation by Congress to construct roads in areas where pulp development was indicated. This amount was not sufficient to provide all required improvements, but due to the lag between the initial pulp mill construction and future developments, plus the fact the location of the ensuing developments was vague, the construction program was continued on the basis of the regular Forest Highway authorizations without seeking additional funds. Present indications are that further authorization of funds outside the regular authorization will be necessary to finance a program of road construction that will keep pace with the apparent forest products development program. The timber sale for the pulp mill to be established in the Juneau area is past the initial stage and the Georgia Pacific Company has obtained award and posted \$100,000 as a good faith bond. A similar award has been made for the timber rights for the mills at Wrangell. Negotiations for the timber to be harvested for the Sitka development are in an active stage. Although a firm commitment as regards the mill site in the Juneau vicinity, has not been made, information from reliable sources indicate Fish Creek on Douglas Island will be the site. Roads projects will accordingly be based on this assumption. At Wrangell the sawmill and plywood plant, a part of the ultimate development, will

be constructed at Shoemaker Bay, and the initial road program for this area is fixed. Paving of the Sitka Highway was planned to be done under the original allocation of special funds, but was deferred so available funds could be used on more urgent projects. In summation the cost for providing essential improvements to the Forest Highway System in the next 5 years will amount to approximately \$11,691,000, of which about \$6,000,000 will be provided under the regular Forest Highway authorizations (unless increased) and the remainder will necessarily come from special appropriations.

In closing I wish to reiterate the fact that although the Forest Highways in Alaska are designated Class 3, they actually function as the main arteries of transportation since they are the prime roads in the area where they are located.

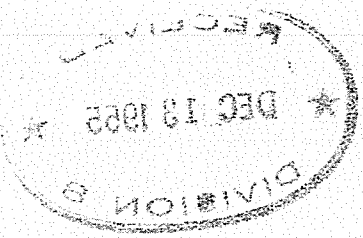
Supplementing the information contained herein is a letter by the Regional Forester of Alaska, dated September 1, 1955, commenting on the embryonic development of the road systems in Alaska and the need and justification for their further extension and development.

Attachments

Tabulation showing lengths, cost of Construction
and average daily traffic on Alaska
Forest Highway Routes

Reproduced from the Unclassified / Declassified Holdings of the National Archives

Class	Route	Name	Official	Length		To Date	Costs		Average Daily Traffic		
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TOTALS			355.9	356.7	306.4	37,395,839*	26,215,000			*includes amounts expended by others.	



C O P Y

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Forest Service

E
ROADS & TRAILS
Forest Highway System

September 1, 1955

AIR MAIL

Mr. F. E. Andrews
Division Engineer
Bureau of Public Roads
Portland, Oregon

Dear Mr. Andrews:

This letter concerns the extensions to the Forest Highway System in Southeast Alaska which we proposed earlier this year. We discussed this matter briefly in Portland a couple of months ago, and I promised you a letter giving my views on the justification for the Forest Highway Program as it has existed, and as our System extensions contemplate that it will exist, in Region 10 of the Forest Service.

Many people consider Alaska to be a frontier region. Parts of Alaska definitely are, as you are fully aware. The question of road construction and system development in the Territory of Alaska is one which I class as one of the frontier-type problems which Alaska faces.

The highways in Southeast Alaska, as distinct from those in the Kenai Division of the Chugach National Forest, do not now link one place with another, as all of us have come to expect that a highway system will do. By and large, however, the highways are so located that if there are to be links in the future between points that can be appropriately linked by highways, the links will have to include roads on most of the present routes.

To appreciate some current Alaskan thinking about roads, a person in the States needs to think back to the days of and before World War I, and also perhaps the early 20's. In those days the promotion of roads was largely a matter for chambers of commerce and other local pressure groups. Some States forged ahead of others, but for a long time plans for road systems were nonexistent or only sketchy at best. Some system links which are now heavy traffic carriers were considered visionary by many people not too long before their construction. In many areas, the system of roads simply grew, following pioneer ways through the country. Of course, all of this is nothing new to you.

So, a major justification for road construction here is the need to get more miles of road built to aid in bringing the Territory on through this period.

of frontier road problems.

In Southeast Alaska there were no pioneer roads around which a system could develop, for the pioneers traveled by salt water. But settlement of the country here comes with roads, and in my opinion it comes in no other way. In Southeast Alaska, the Federal Government through the Forest Service is virtually the only landlord. The Forest Service cannot escape some of the responsibilities of landlordship. One of these responsibilities is positive action to respond to legitimate needs for the use of land. We either have to build roads or else agree to a policy of keeping land from being used. Hence the pattern of a system like that out of Juneau, where some of the projects that would be secondary roads elsewhere have been justified entirely on the grounds of developing national forest areas for use. Down in the States some of the secondary roads would have been built by a county or by the State government. Alaska has no level of county government, and the Territory takes the position that it cannot afford to do all the road building required for the development of land which can be used. Based on my two years of observation here I believe that position by the Territory is justified.

More progress has been made on the Kenai Division of the Chugach than elsewhere, and the System net there is farther along. Nevertheless, the above reasons apply in part to even that portion of Region 10.

The Tongass National Forest area presents an especially thorny problem because construction costs are high and because it is necessary to have good standards of construction in order to keep maintenance costs at a reasonable level.

We in Region 10 realize that our pattern of need does not fit the Forest Highway rules as they are customarily applied elsewhere. That is true of other things besides highways. My personal feeling is that rather than try to correct this lack of fit by objections to system extensions that are within the pattern that has prevailed, that question needs to be thrashed out on its own merits. Keeping in mind the Federal Government responsibility to bring about development, and the Forest Service position as dominant landlord, how can we handle a situation like the road extension west on Douglas Island without depending on Forest Highway funds?

On the basis of this background of thinking, I am under the firm belief that the System revisions which were forwarded in late March represent a very modest proposal for System extension. I am certain that in the future it will be necessary to work out further System extensions.

You will notice in the discussion that follows several references to pulp mill developments contemplated in the near future. Here is the picture on that. Pacific Northern Timber Company at Wrangell has executed a 50-year timber sale contract that calls for building a sawmill by the end of 1957 and as a later step a small pulp mill by mid-1962. The sawmill site has been selected. It is about six miles south of Wrangell on Route 16. The pulp mill site has not yet been selected. Consideration is being given to a site at the mouth of Mill Creek, across Eastern Passage from Wrangell.

Georgia-Pacific Alaska Company received a preliminary award of a 50-year timber sale contract for 7-1/2 billion board feet on August 17. This contract calls for building a pulp mill by mid-1961 in the sale vicinity. The Company prefers the Juneau vicinity and has three sites under consideration. There appears to be a high degree of probability that the Company will select a site on the north end of Douglas Island.

At Sitka we contemplate advertising this fall for a block of timber which would bring about the construction of a pulp mill, with a tentative date of late 1961. The Company that has applied for the timber is actively interested in a location at the mouth of Sawmill Creek for a plant site.

The following are comments on the specific proposals for System revision:

Route No. 2, Glacier Highway-

The 7-1/2-mile extension south of Thane to Point Bishop on Taku Inlet is a logical southern extension of the Juneau Forest Highway System. It will serve the immediate purpose of opening up some land which is suitable for settlement in the vicinity of Juneau. It will serve the eventual purpose of providing a link in a system connection from Juneau toward the upper Taku River area. In the Taku River basin, from Tulsequah on north and east, Canadian interests are now actively studying and surveying for a possible giant hydroelectric development which would produce cheap power and permit a large metallurgical industrial development somewhere near Tulsequah. If that development comes about, it will be necessary for the Canadians to provide some transportation means between Tulsequah and a suitable site for a port on salt water which would have to be on Taku Inlet. The prospect of this development makes it appropriate now to extend the system route as far southeast Point Bishop. It will eventually go further, but by what route is now difficult to forecast.

The other proposed extension of the Glacier Highway System will be of benefit in adding area that is suitable for settlement for which need is contemplated when the new pulp mill is built in Juneau. It is a continuation of the part of the branch pattern which is already in existence.

The Territorial Highway Engineer has expressed particular interest in these extensions and he indicated the Territory may be able to put small amounts of money into the construction or betterment of parts of both of these projects.

Route No. 7, Mitkof Highway-

The proposed extension from the end of the present contract south to Blind Slough is a very logical development of the road system in this area. If the time comes that there are ferry connections to connect between pieces of road to afford access from one town to another, one of the most logical places in Southeast Alaska for such a ferry connection is from the town of Wrangell north to the highway terminus on Blind Slough. Even without a ferry, people using small boats could and would go across from Wrangell to Mitkof Island and drive on into Petersburg now if that road were in existence. With the now programmed sawmill development in Wrangell, the increase of population in the Wrangell area will probably bring about local pressure for the construction of this extension. I have no hesitancy in recommending this extension as a very logical

addition to the existing system.

Route No. 14, Hope Highway-

The proposed extension of this highway is likewise a logical project to facilitate development of land for use. The area is used now for both summertime recreation and for permanent settlement and there will be additional use of both types with the extension of the Forest Highway as contemplated. A Forest Development Road now exists part way towards Dognose Point from the west bank of Resurrection Creek, and this Forest Highway extension would replace that Forest Development Road.

Route No. 16, Wrangell Highway-

The proposed extension of the Wrangell Highway is the next logical extension to be constructed when additional developments are justified on the Wrangell system. This particular extension has been proposed because Pacific Northern Timber Company has indicated a preference for Mill Creek on the east bank of Eastern Passage as a site for its pulp mill. The proposed highway extension would permit connection between the millsite and the town of Wrangell with a minimum of boat passage over open water. If a different site should subsequently be selected for the pulp mill, then this proposed extension would drop into lower priority, but I feel that it still should be kept on the System.

Route No. 31, Douglas Highway-

This proposed extension becomes a great importance because of the prospective pulp mill development in the Juneau area. Final determination about a site on the north end of Douglas Island has not yet been made but there appears to be a high degree of probability that this site will be used. The site under consideration is at the end of the present road contract.

This proposed extension is justified for the opening up of additional land which is suitable for development in homesites and similar types of residences. When the pulp mill comes to the Juneau vicinity, even if not on this site, it is reasonable to expect quite a little settlement on the northwest and west sides of Douglas Island. There is no other point between Fritz Cove and Hilda Creek which makes such a logical system termination point as does Hilda Creek. The eventual extension of the Douglas Highway around on this side of Douglas Island would be desirable anyway, and consequently, in my opinion, the System extension should be made even though there is not yet a firm decision concerning development of a pulp mill on the north side of Douglas Island.

Route No. 35, Russian River-

This project is lower in priority than any of the others in this set of proposed extensions. Nevertheless it is a feasible route and there is justification for it. Rather extensive military installations are being constructed on Cook Inlet on the west side of the Kenai Peninsula. Population in the agricultural (Harmer) area on the west side of Kenai Peninsula is also growing, and the Bureau of Land Management has been engaged for the last two years in additional layout of areas to be homesteaded. The direct supply route for people on the west side of the Kenai Peninsula is from Seward up over Moose Pass and down the Kenai River Highway. This proposed new Russian River route would shorten the distance, with no

significant increase in pass elevation, over which traffic from Seward to the lower Kenai Peninsula would have to go in getting from Seward to the mouth of the Russian River.

A further consideration is that this is the only proposed major extension of the System in the Third Judicial District.

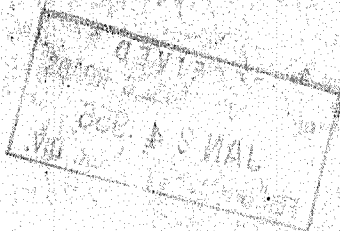
Route No. 13, Palmer Creek-

The Forest Service concurs in the abandonment of this Forest Highway and its designation instead as a Forest Development Road.

*Hensley
MRS. ROSS*

Very truly yours,

/s/ A. W. Greeley
Regional Forester



COPY

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Forest Service

E
ROADS & TRAILS
Forest Highway System

September 1, 1955

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ALASKA HIGHWAY SYSTEM
ROADS & BRIDGES
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IN 2000 THE ONLY 1961 COPY OF THIS DOCUMENT WAS FOUND IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES. THE ORIGINAL COPY WAS DESTROYED IN 1961.

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The 7-1/2-mile extension south of Thane to Point Bishop on Taku Inlet is a logical southern extension of the Juneau Forest Highway System. It will serve the immediate purpose of opening up some land which is suitable for settlement in the vicinity of Juneau. It will serve the eventual purpose of providing a link in a system connection from Juneau toward the upper Taku River area. In the Taku River basin, from Tulsequah on north and east, Canadian interests are now actively studying and surveying for a possible giant hydroelectric development which would produce cheap power and permit a large metallurgical industrial development somewhere near Tulsequah. If that development comes about, it will be necessary for the Canadians to provide some transportation means between Tulsequah and a suitable site for a port on salt water which would have to be on Taku Inlet. The prospect of this development makes it appropriate now to extend the system route as far southeast as Point Bishop. It will eventually go further, but by what route is now difficult to forecast.

The other proposed extension of the Glacier Highway System will be of benefit in adding area that is suitable for settlement for which need is contemplated when the new pulp mill is built in Juneau. It is a continuation of the part of the branch pattern which is already in existence.

The Territorial Highway Engineer has expressed particular interest in these extensions and he indicated the Territory may be able to put small amounts of money into the construction or betterment of parts of both of these projects.

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The proposed extension from the end of the present contract south to Blind Slough is a very logical development of the road system in this area. If the time comes that there are ferry connections to connect between pieces of road to afford access from one town to another, one of the most logical places in Southeast Alaska for such a ferry connection is from the town of Wrangell north to the highway terminus on Blind Slough. Even without a ferry, people using small boats could and would go across from Wrangell to Mitkof Island and drive on into Petersburg now if that road were in existence. With the now programmed sawmill development in Wrangell, the increase of population in the Wrangell area will probably bring about local pressure for the construction of this extension. I have no hesitancy in recommending this extension as a very logical

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The proposed extension of this highway is likewise a logical project to facilitate development of land for use. The area is used now for both summertime recreation and for permanent settlement and there will be additional use of both types with the extension of the Forest Highway as contemplated. A Forest Development Road now exists part way towards Dognose Point from the west bank of Resurrection Creek, and this Forest Highway extension would replace that Forest Development Road.

Route No. 16, Wrangell Highway-

The proposed extension of the Wrangell Highway is the next logical extension to be constructed when additional developments are justified on the Wrangell system. This particular extension has been proposed because Pacific Northern Timber Company has indicated a preference for Mill Creek on the east bank of Eastern Passage as a site for its pulp mill. The proposed highway extension would permit connection between the millsite and the town of Wrangell with a minimum of boat passage over open water. If a different site should subsequently be selected for the pulp mill, then this proposed extension would drop into lower priority, but I feel that it still should be kept on the System.

Route No. 31, Douglas Highway-

This proposed extension becomes a great importance because of the prospective pulp mill development in the Juneau area. Final determination about a site on the north end of Douglas Island has not yet been made but there appears to be a high degree of probability that this site will be used. The site under consideration is at the end of the present road contract.

This proposed extension is justified for the opening up of additional land which is suitable for development in homesites and similar types of residences. When the pulp mill comes to the Juneau vicinity, even if not on this site, it is reasonable to expect quite a little settlement on the northwest and west sides of Douglas Island. There is no other point between Fritz Cove and Hilda Creek which makes such a logical system termination point as does Hilda Creek. The eventual extension of the Douglas Highway around on this side of Douglas Island would be desirable anyway, and consequently, in my opinion, the System extension should be made even though there is not yet a firm decision concerning development of a pulp mill on the north side of Douglas Island.

Route No. 35, Russian River-

This project is lower in priority than any of the others in this set of proposed extensions. Nevertheless it is a feasible route and there is justification for it. Rather extensive military installations are being constructed on Cook Inlet on the west side of the Kenai Peninsula. Population in the agricultural area on the west side of Kenai Peninsula is also growing, and the Bureau of Land Management has been engaged for the last two years in additional layout of areas to be homesteaded. The direct supply route for people on the west side of the Kenai Peninsula is from Seward up over Moose Pass and down the Kenai River Highway. This proposed new Russian River route would shorten the distance, with no

Very truly yours,
A. W. Greeley
Regional Forester
U.S. Forest Service
Seward, Alaska
June 10, 1954

significant increase in pass elevation, over which traffic from Seward to the lower Kenai Peninsula would have to go in getting from Seward to the mouth of the Russian River.

A further consideration is that this is the only proposed major extension of the System in the Third Judicial District.

Route No. 13, Palmer Creek-

The Forest Service concurs in the abandonment of this Forest Highway and its designation instead as a Forest Development Road.

Very truly yours,

/s/ A. W. Greeley
Regional Forester



REVIEW OF ALASKA FOREST HIGHWAY SYSTEM

There are submitted herewith brief narrative report of the Alaska Forest Highway System, together with pertinent route data.

Since Alaska is a Territory and has no Federal aid system of highways, the Forest Highway routes are all designated as class 3 highways. (Section 15.3 of Rules and Regulations for administering Forest Highways) (Revised). The original system, approved July 7, 1924 contained 21 routes with a total of 338.7 miles. The present system as approved on August 14, 1953 covers 19 routes with a total length of 365.9 miles, of which 304.4 miles have been constructed to date.

Improvement of the Alaska Forest Highway System began in the early 1920's. In most cases the existing roads were mere wagon trails of a very low standard. Initial efforts were dedicated to improve these roads with an all weather gravel surface; grades, alignment width, etc. were secondary considerations since traffic was very light and available funds were limited. These roads served a dual purpose. They not only provided means for administering the National Forests, but were the only arteries of transportation in the communities where they are located. As the communities grew and development progressed the importance of the Forest Highways likewise increased. Conversely, obsolescence of the roads manifested itself in proportion to these developments. Following the early improvement of the low standard roads, some reconstruction to higher standards was accomplished in the 1930's particularly adjacent to the larger towns. These included surfacing with crushed gravel or crushed stone. Until 1949 no attempt was made to construct high type bituminous wearing surfaces in Alaska, although in 1940-41 a light bituminous surface treatment was placed on a cement stabilized dirt base on a three mile section of the South Tongass Highway at Ketchikan. This was of an experimental nature and since results were not satisfactory,

further construction of this type was not attempted.

The Territory of Alaska received a marked uplift in its development during and following the World War II years. Most of this is attributable to the defense activities, although in the extreme Southeastern Alaska section the mushrooming pulp industry has contributed a major share of the rise. A 54 million dollar pulp plant was constructed at Ketchikan, with production of pulp actually getting underway in 1953. Construction of mills at other locations in Southeastern Alaska is being seriously considered. Improvement of the Forest Highways has kept pace with developments, but has required special funds in addition to the regular Forest Highway appropriations. In connection with the Ketchikan pulp mill construction and other proposed projects of a similar nature, a special appropriation of 7 million dollars was made available by Congress. All but a small amount of this fund has been expended. Construction of pulp or other timber using industries are imminent at Sitka, Juneau and Wrangell. Supplemental appropriations will be necessary if adequate highways are to be constructed to serve the needs promulgated by these installations within a reasonable period of time.

Expenditures on the Alaska Forest Highway System as of June 30, 1955 are as follows:

<u>By Public Roads</u>	<u>By Others</u>	<u>Total</u>
\$21,063,835	\$18,091,654	\$39,395,839

Of the approved mileage on the Alaska Forest Highway System 172.1 miles are located in the Tongass National Forest in Southeastern Alaska and 193.8 miles are in the Chugach National Forest which is in Southwestern Alaska. In the Tongass National Forest the system is entirely disconnected and the individual routes radiate from the towns, with their extension or improvement dependent on the economies of the community. The Juneau area is connected at Haines with the

interior Alaska system of roads through the medium of a ferry operated by the Territory through the months of June to November. Of the 193.8 miles of Forest highway in the Chugach National Forest 153.4 miles are located on the Kenai Peninsula. The Seward-Anchorage Forest Highway, 89.5 miles in length, extends from Seward to Girdwood near the Forest boundary. All other Forest roads in this area connect with the Seward-Anchorage Highway, which continues on from Girdwood to Anchorage where it provides access to the interior system of roads. The Seward-Anchorage road is of real importance since it provides a flexible form of transportation between the seaport of Seward and the huge army and air bases at Anchorage and Fairbanks. It augments the Alaska Railroad which has terminals at both the Seward seaport and the port of Whittier.

Recent installations at Kenai and other points along Cook Inlet by the Army have greatly increased the importance of the Kenai River Highway route which connects with the Seward-Anchorage Highway at Mile 38. Regrading of this 18 mile route is almost completed and it is planned to pave this highway in the very near future.

Due to the great difference in climate and terrain in the two National Forests, there is a marked contrast in the construction problems and in construction costs of highways in the two regions. The tremendous increase in construction activities throughout the Territory since the end of hostilities of World War II and constant rise in wages, freight costs, etc. have contributed a substantial share to the high construction costs in Alaska. Southeastern Alaska has a very heavy and dense forest growth. The item of clearing and grubbing in this area is in itself a considerable portion of the cost of a project. Also a great deal of the construction in Southeastern Alaska is in solid rock, musksg or glacial silt with resulting high grading costs. In some areas gravel for fill stabilization and surfacing is very scarce and excessive hauling costs must be

THE BUREAU OF
ROADS IN THE
DEPARTMENT OF
THE TERRITORY OF ALASKA

incurred to overcome this deficiency. On occasions it is necessary to crush ledge rock to produce material which normally can be obtained from gravel deposits if such were available, at a much more economical cost.

The cost of maintaining the constructed portion of the Alaska Forest Highway system is borne by the Government, and includes necessary personnel, equipment, shop facilities, etc. This factor plus all other related conditions, stimulates efforts towards the design of higher type roads that can be most economically constructed and tend to keep maintenance costs at a minimum. In 1949 the first plant mix bituminous surface was constructed on the Glacier Highway at Juneau for a distance of nine miles. This was followed by a $5\frac{1}{2}$ mile project in the same area in 1952 and by the construction of approximately 90 miles in the Seward area. Reconstruction of a 16 mile section of the Tongass Highway at Ketchikan, made necessary by the establishment of a huge pulp mill at Ward Cove, was started in 1949 and completed to a high type bituminous surfaced road in 1954.

The estimated total cost to complete the present Alaska Forest Highway System established standards is \$28,215,000. However, the undeveloped status of the Territory does not permit of a hard and fast schedule to accomplish this improvement. The importance of any route can vary greatly, almost from day to day. Often such criteria as present day traffic cannot be used as a measure of justification, since it is future traffic resulting from the economic development that must be considered. The curtailment of passenger service by the Alaska Steamship Company has caused travel to and from Alaska to be done almost entirely by air, except for the relatively small amount of travel over the Alaska Highway. The importance of the roads to the airports from the various towns has accordingly taken on greater significance. At Cordova particularly, an expenditure of several million dollars, for improvement of the $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles of low standard road needs to be undertaken, yet traffic is comparatively light and will undoubtedly remain so for

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA
FAIRBANKS SUBURB OF 1907
1000 P. BLOOMINGDALE
MOUNTAIN VIEW DRIVE
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

some time. Drilling for oil is actively underway in this general area and it appears likely that pools will be found. The impact on the highways in this area will be tremendous when such a development occurs.

The factor exercising the greatest influence on the Forest Highway roads at Wrangell, Juneau and Sitka at the present time, is the anticipated construction of additional pulp and other timber processing facilities. The expenditure of approximately \$5,250,000 in the Ketchikan area since 1949 has alleviated the critical demands for roads in that area due to the construction of the huge pulp mill there. Included in this outlay of funds in this area is \$4,160,000 of Special Tongass Funds, a portion of a \$7,000,000 appropriation by Congress to construct roads in areas where pulp development was indicated. This amount was not sufficient to provide all required improvements, but due to the lag between the initial pulp mill construction and future developments, plus the fact the location of the ensuing developments was vague, the construction program was continued on the basis of the regular Forest Highway authorizations without seeking additional funds. Present indications are that further authorization of funds outside the regular authorization will be necessary to finance a program of road construction that will keep pace with the apparent forest products development program. The timber sale for the pulp mill to be established in the Juneau area is past the initial stage and the Georgia Pacific Company has obtained award and posted \$100,000 as a good faith bond. A similar award has been made for the timber rights for the mills at Wrangell. Negotiations for the timber to be harvested for the Sitka development are in an active stage. Although a firm commitment as regards the mill site in the Juneau vicinity, has not been made, information from reliable sources indicate Fish Creek on Douglas Island will be the site. Roads projects will accordingly be based on this assumption. At Wrangell the sawmill and plywood plant, a part of the ultimate development, will

be constructed at Shoemaker Bay, and the initial road program for this area is fixed. Paving of the Sitka Highway was planned to be done under the original allocation of special funds, but was deferred so available funds could be used on more urgent projects. In summation the cost for providing essential improvements to the Forest Highway System in the next 5 years will amount to approximately \$11,691,000, of which about \$6,000,000 will be provided under the regular Forest Highway authorizations (unless increased) and the remainder will necessarily come from special appropriations.

In closing we wish to reiterate the fact that although the Forest Highways in Alaska are designated Class 3, they actually function as the main arteries of transportation since they are the prime roads in the area where they are located.

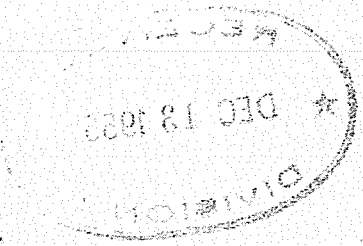
Supplementing the information contained herein is a letter by the Regional Forester of Alaska, dated September 1, 1955, commenting on the embryonic development of the road systems in Alaska and the need and justification for their further extension and development.

Attachments

Tabulation showing lengths, cost of Construction
and average daily traffic on Alaska
Forest Highway Routes

Reproduced from the Unclassified / Declassified Holdings of the National Archives

Class	Route	Name	Official	Length		Constructed	Costs		Average Daily Traffic		
				Actual			To Date	To Complete	1955	1965(Est)	
3	1	Tongass	40.3	40.3	20.8	6,918,627	5,075,000	850	1200		
3	2	Glacier	59.1	59.1	43.2	4,248,665	6,450,000	1350*	1700	*1955 ADT of Mile 1	
3	3	Seward-Anchorage	89.5	89.5	89.5	17,906,885		610	1000		
3	4	Cordova	20.0	20.0	10.4	381,277	2,500,000	50	150		
3	5	Kenai River	18.2	18.2	18.2	1,983,128	845,000	480	800		
3	7	Mitkof	16.6	16.1	14.2	1,014,884	1,247,000	230	250		
3	9	Salmon River	12.1	12.1	12.1	528,837		50	75		
3	11	Sitka	13.2	13.2	7.7	1,651,361	1,752,000	250	500		
3	12	Crow Creek	8.0	8.0	8.0	161,999	565,000	10*	50	*Estimated	
3	13	Palmer Creek	11.9	11.9	11.9	61,074		10*	50	*Estimated	
3	14	Hope	17.3	17.3	17.3	230,962	3,000,000	50	200		
3	16	Wrangell	12.7	12.7	10.4	668,231	2,314,000	180	500		
3	18	Texas Creek	3.5	3.5	3.5	374,913		10*	20	*Estimated	
3	26	Point Agassiz	3.0	3.0	3.0	42,150		5	--	This route to be abandoned	
3	30	Afognak Lake	4.5	4.5	4.5	62,000		5*	10	*Estimated	
3	31	Douglas	11.6	11.6	7.3	1,581,392	1,352,000	1475	1800		
3	32	Copper River	20.4	21.7	20.4	975,899	2,720,000	150	300		
3	33	Resurrection Bay	2.6	2.6	2.6	22,135	315,000	175	250		
3	34	Seward	1.4	1.4	1.4	25,270	80,000	150	250		
		Surveys				556,150					
		TOTALS	365.9	366.7	306.4	39,395,839**	28,215,000			**Includes amounts expended by others.	



COPY

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Forest Service

E
ROADS & TRAILS
Forest Highway System

September 1, 1955

AIR MAIL

Mr. F. E. Andrews
Division Engineer
Bureau of Public Roads
Portland, Oregon

Dear Mr. Andrews:

This letter concerns the extensions to the Forest Highway System in Southeast Alaska which we proposed earlier this year. We discussed this matter briefly in Portland a couple of months ago, and I promised you a letter giving my views on the justification for the Forest Highway Program as it has existed, and as our System extensions contemplate that it will exist, in Region 10 of the Forest Service.

Many people consider Alaska to be a frontier region. Parts of Alaska definitely are, as you are fully aware. The question of road construction and system development in the Territory of Alaska is one which I class as one of the frontier-type problems which Alaska faces.

The highways in Southeast Alaska, as distinct from those in the Kenai Division of the Chugach National Forest, do not now link one place with another, as all of us have come to expect that a highway system will do. By and large, however, the highways are so located that if there are to be links in the future between points that can be appropriately linked by highways, the links will have to include roads on most of the present routes.

To appreciate some current Alaskan thinking about roads, a person in the States needs to think back to the days of and before World War I, and also perhaps the early 20's. In those days the promotion of roads was largely a matter for chambers of commerce and other local pressure groups. Some States forged ahead of others, but for a long time plans for road systems were nonexistent or only sketchy at best. Some system links which are now heavy traffic carriers were considered visionary by many people not too long before their construction. In many areas, the system of roads simply grew, following pioneer ways through the country. Of course, all of this is nothing new to you.

So, a major justification for road construction here is the need to get more miles of road built to aid in bringing the Territory on through this period

of frontier road problems.

In Southeast Alaska there were no pioneer roads around which a system could develop, for the pioneers traveled by salt water. But settlement of the country here comes with roads, and in my opinion it comes in no other way. In Southeast Alaska, the Federal Government through the Forest Service is virtually the only landlord. The Forest Service cannot escape some of the responsibilities of landlordship. One of these responsibilities is positive action to respond to legitimate needs for the use of land. We either have to build roads or else agree to a policy of keeping land from being used. Hence the pattern of a system like that out of Juneau, where some of the projects that would be secondary roads elsewhere have been justified entirely on the grounds of developing national forest areas for use. Down in the States some of the secondary roads would have been built by a county or by the State government. Alaska has no level of county government, and the Territory takes the position that it cannot afford to do all the road building required for the development of land which can be used. Based on my two years of observation here I believe that position by the Territory is justified.

More progress has been made on the Kenai Division of the Chugach than elsewhere, and the System net there is farther along. Nevertheless, the above reasons apply in part to even that portion of Region 10.

The Tongass National Forest area presents an especially thorny problem because construction costs are high and because it is necessary to have good standards of construction in order to keep maintenance costs at a reasonable level.

We in Region 10 realize that our pattern of need does not fit the Forest Highway rules as they are customarily applied elsewhere. That is true of other things besides highways. My personal feeling is that rather than try to correct this lack of fit by objections to system extensions that are within the pattern that has prevailed, that question needs to be thrashed out on its own merits. Keeping in mind the Federal Government responsibility to bring about development, and the Forest Service position as dominant landlord, how can we handle a situation like the road extension west on Douglas Island without depending on Forest Highway funds?

On the basis of this background of thinking, I am under the firm belief that the System revisions which were forwarded in late March represent a very modest proposal for System extension. I am certain that in the future it will be necessary to work out further System extensions.

You will notice in the discussion that follows several references to pulp mill developments contemplated in the near future. Here is the picture on that. Pacific Northern Timber Company at Wrangell has executed a 50-year timber sale contract that calls for building a sawmill by the end of 1957 and as a later step a small pulp mill by mid-1962. The sawmill site has been selected. It is about six miles south of Wrangell on Route 16. The pulp mill site has not yet been selected. Consideration is being given to a site at the mouth of Mill Creek, across Eastern Passage from Wrangell.

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Georgia-Pacific Alaska Company received a preliminary award of a 50-year timber sale contract for 7-1/2 billion board feet on August 17. This contract calls for building a pulp mill by mid-1961 in the sale vicinity. The Company prefers the Juneau vicinity and has three sites under consideration. There appears to be a high degree of probability that the Company will select a site on the north end of Douglas Island.

At Sitka we contemplate advertising this fall for a block of timber which would bring about the construction of a pulp mill, with a tentative date of late 1961. The Company that has applied for the timber is actively interested in a location at the mouth of Sawmill Creek for a plant site.

The following are comments on the specific proposals for System revision:

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