



# Tongass National Forest Watershed Restoration Program, 2015

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## Fish are a mainstay of living and working in Alaska.

- ◆ Salmon habitat protection and restoration are stakeholder priorities.
- ◆ Salmon support 1 in 10 jobs in Southeast Alaska.
- ◆ Subsistence harvest of salmon by Alaskans exceeds 1.2 million pounds annually.
- ◆ The Tongass produces 70% of all the wild salmon produced from all National Forest lands.
- ◆ 80% of the annual Southeast Alaska commercial salmon catch (50 million salmon) comes from streams and lakes of the Tongass, valued at \$61 million annually.



## Integrated, strategic investments in relatively few degraded watersheds can successfully restore function critical to salmon life stages and enhance ecological sustainability.

- ◆ The 2011 Watershed Condition Framework assessment found that most of the 900 watersheds within the Tongass are in near natural condition (Condition Class I). Sixty-eight watersheds were rated “at risk” for maintaining ecological functions and aquatic resources due to past management practices.



1960s: extracting gravel from Twelvemile Creek to use for road construction

- ◆ Degraded watershed condition in the Tongass primarily results from historical timber harvest and road building between 1950 and 1979, prior to full understanding of watershed functions and processes. More restrictive Forest Plan measures have since been adopted to protect and maintain watershed condition and salmon habitat.

- ◆ Following a review by Tongass staff and stakeholders, the Forest Supervisor established seven Priority Watersheds (see map, other side) to focus restoration plans and activities.



2014: placing large wood in Saginaw Creek to restore stream function and habitat features.

- ◆ Integrated restoration projects include road storage and decommissioning, removal and remediation of fish barriers at culverts, wildlife habitat improvements in young-growth stands, riparian young-growth treatments, and wood placement to restore floodplain functions and stabilize stream banks, spawning gravels, pools and other important habitat features.

## Partnerships are fundamental to improving watershed condition in the Tongass.

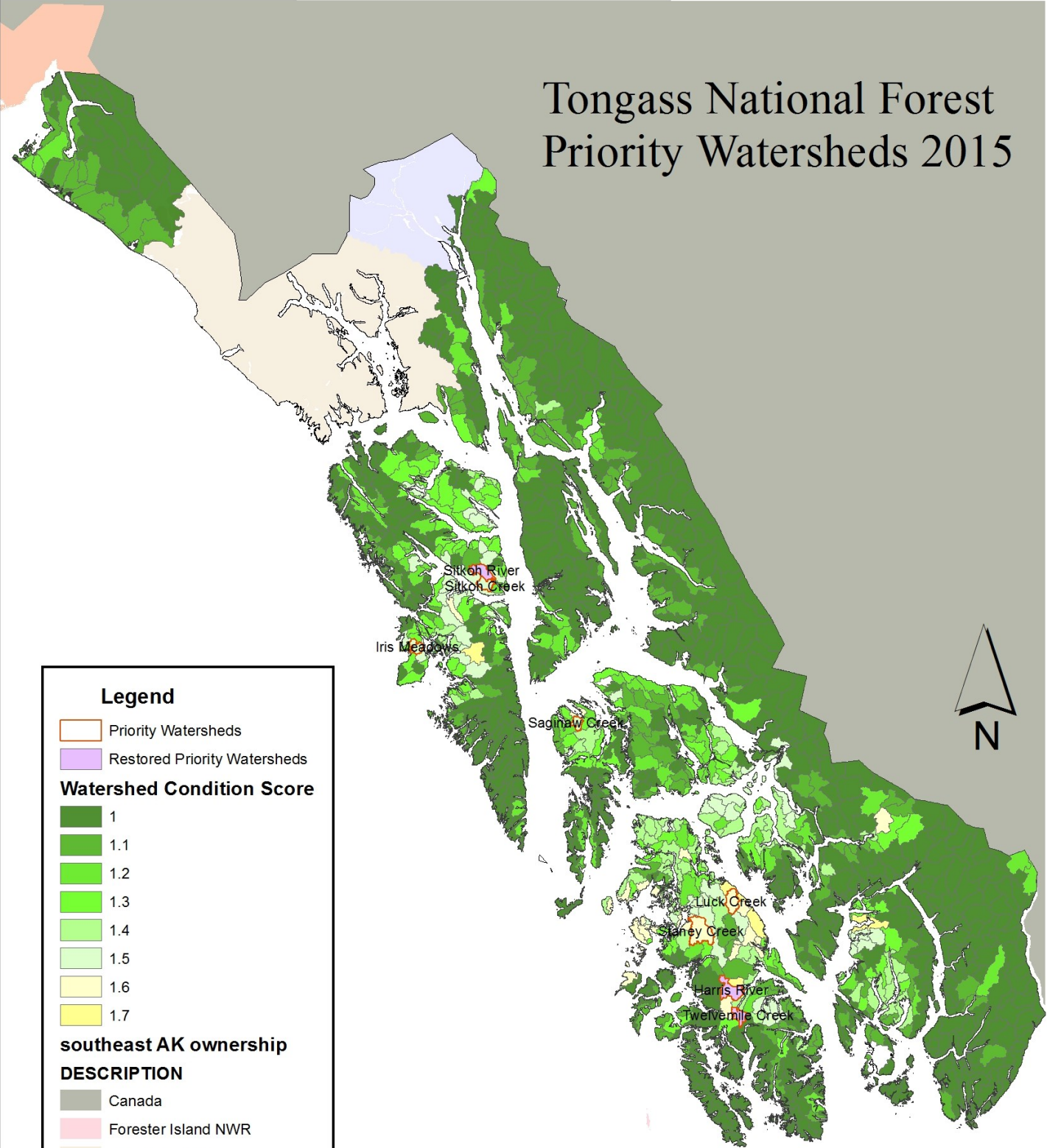
- ◆ Thanks to partners (The Nature Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, Gordon & Betty Moore, NOAA, State of Alaska, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, Sitka Conservation Association and National Forest Foundation) watershed condition has been restored in Harris River (2011), Twelvemile Creek (2013), Sitkoh River (2014), and Sitkoh Creek (2015). The National Fish Habitat Partnership recognized Twelvemile Creek as one of ten “Waters to Watch” in 2014.



2010: wood structures placed in Harris River to restore stream function and habitat features.

- ◆ Restoration continues with partner support in Saginaw and Staney Creek. Luck Creek restoration will begin in 2015, using stewardship authority. Restoration in Iris/Shelikof Creek will begin in 2016 with partner support.
- ◆ The Tongass participates in the Hoonah Native Forest Partnership, a Natural Resource Conservation Service funded collaboration of private landowners, Tribes, state and federal agencies, and NGOs that seeks to improve watershed condition in an all-lands approach to benefit the community of Hoonah.

# Tongass National Forest Priority Watersheds 2015



**Legend**

- Priority Watersheds
- Restored Priority Watersheds

**Watershed Condition Score**

- 1
- 1.1
- 1.2
- 1.3
- 1.4
- 1.5
- 1.6
- 1.7

**southeast AK ownership**

**DESCRIPTION**

- Canada
- Forester Island NWR
- Glacier Bay NP
- State of Alaska
- Wrangell-St. Elias NP

