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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Umpqua Celebrates 45 Years in Business by Launching the Umpqua Tongass Initiative to Benefit America’s Salmon Forest in SE Alaska

LOUISVILLE, CO — Forty-five years ago, Umpqua Feather Merchants opened its doors and revolutionized the world of fly-fishing by making superior quality flies available to anglers for the first time on a national and international scale. Instead of celebrating with parties, Umpqua is collaborating with Trout Unlimited and the Sportsman’s Alliance for Alaska to raise \$45,000 to help conserve and restore key salmon and trout habitat in “America’s Salmon Forest”, located Southeast Alaska’s Tongass National Forest. As the planet’s largest remaining temperate rainforest, this vast and diverse ecosystem provides critical spawning and rearing grounds for all five species of North American Pacific Salmon as well as for steelhead, rainbow trout and both resident and sea-run populations of cutthroat trout and Dolly Varden.

“We are proud of our forty-five year history and the many ways in which Umpqua has enhanced the fly-fishing world. It’s a great reason to celebrate! But instead of grandiose celebrations, hype, and self-congratulations about our milestone, we want to acknowledge and pay respect to the resources and environments that make it possible for so many of us to pursue our passion for fly-fishing and nature as a whole. The Tongass Initiative is our way of giving back. It is a professional and personal investment by all of us here at Umpqua to make sure that everyone — and especially anglers — can continue to enjoy and experience these pristine and precious environments that make fly-fishing an incredible world to work and play in.”

— **Jeff Fryhover**, CEO and President, Umpqua Feather Merchants —

Umpqua aims to raise the money through a variety of methods including fund-raising events, donations from the public, the sale of Tongass branded merchandise, and from the sales of its Tongass line of water-proof packs and bags. Umpqua will allocate the raised moneys to two primary efforts. \$10K will go to the Sportsman’s Alliance for Alaska to reach out to the outdoor sporting and recreation community to raise awareness about America’s Salmon Forest. \$35K will be directed to Trout Unlimited and will be used in partnership with the US Forest Service for a restoration project within the Tongass National Forest. As of this time, the project scope has been narrowed down to restoration of salmon, steelhead, and char habitat damaged by historic logging activity in a high-value watershed on Baranof Island. Before the money is applied to the project(s), it will go through a grant and fund matching program with the hopes that the final amount will double or more before funding the projects.

“Although largely intact, roughly 65 watersheds on the Tongass National Forest are in need of work to address issues associated with past logging and road building. Repairing past damage to these watersheds in the remote and challenging terrain of the Tongass is an expensive proposition. Funding from private sources like Umpqua is critical to meeting project budgets because those funds can be used to leverage additional grant monies and programs. Once implemented, these projects pay almost immediate dividends to sport anglers, commercial fishermen and wildlife in the form of increased numbers of salmon, trout and char.”

— **Mark Kaelke**, Southeast Alaska Project Director, Trout Unlimited —

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Umpqua intends to work with several companies and organizations to reach its ambitious goal. In addition to collaborating with Trout Unlimited and the Sportsman's Alliance for Alaska, Umpqua will rely on its vast network of dealers, signature fly designers and pro guides to help further the cause. Umpqua and its partners will work to utilize other industry relationships to promote the initiative through special events and contests, social media and more traditional means of communication.

"This is a fantastic show of support from Umpqua, and will really help raise awareness among the public and our elected officials of the unique and irreplaceable resources found in America's largest national forest - the Tongass. We're extremely grateful and honored to be a part of this exciting initiative and look forward to ensuring that the Tongass remains a haven for wild fish, game, and our outdoor pursuits."

— **Scott Hed**, Director, Sportsman's Alliance for Alaska —

A central component to the campaign will be the recently published Web site www.umpqua4tongass.org, through which Umpqua will communicate news of the initiative and the Tongass to the public. Tax-exempt online donations can be made through the site and will be directed straight to a Trout Unlimited account designated for this cause. An online shop will offer Tongass branded merchandise to the public. 100% of the proceeds from the sales from the site will go directly to the initiative.

Umpqua has also set up a Facebook page, @umpqua4tongass, which will contain news, updates and other information about conservation issues, the Tongass National Forest and America's Salmon Forest. This page will encourage an open social dialogue between Umpqua, its partners and the public and may also be used for contests featuring Tongass themed prizes and giveaways.

For more information on the initiative, please visit www.umpqua4tongass.org or contact Umpqua via email (marketing@umpqua.com) or phone (800-322-3218).





ABOUT UMPQUA FEATHER MERCHANTS—

Since being founded in Glide, Oregon by the late Dennis Black in 1972, Umpqua has been an innovator in the fly-fishing industry. In creating the first-ever Royalty Signature Fly Tyer Program, Umpqua altered the course of the industry by making flies more readily available and affordable to anglers everywhere, while at the same time enabling designers to receive recognition and compensation for their creativity. Today, Umpqua has nearly 200 Signature Fly Designers and has introduced hundreds of revolutionary, game changing fly patterns throughout the years. Umpqua's innovations extend far beyond just flies, and include award-winning fly boxes, packs and vests; industry unique, ultra-effective leader tapers; and a comprehensive assortment of high quality stream-side accessories, hooks, fly-tying materials, tools and more.

Umpqua's headquarters are located in Louisville, Colorado.

For more information, please visit www.umpqua.com, or contact:

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