

## INDIVIDUAL ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTION

**ROADLESS AREA NAME:** Dall Island (501)

**ACRES (NFS):** 111,245

**BIOGEOGRAPHIC PROVINCE:** Dall Island and Vicinity

**ECOLOGICAL SECTION:** Outer Islands Fjordlands

**2003 WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTE RATING:** 23 (21, 23, 24)

### **I. Overview and Description**

(1) **Location and Access:** The Dall Roadless Area includes most of the western and southern portion of Dall Island, the southeastern part of Long Island, and many smaller islands. Dall Island is the largest island off the west coast of Prince of Wales Island. The southern half of Dall Island is about 1 to 2 miles west of Long Island. The western border and the northern and southern tips of the roadless area are bounded by saltwater; much of the eastern portion of Dall Island and the majority of Long Island are owned by Alaska Native Corporations. These private lands nearly divide the Dall Island portion of the roadless area into three portions. The northern tip of Dall Island is about 15 miles south of Craig and 60 miles west of Ketchikan. Craig has daily air service to and from surrounding communities and charters to remote forest locations. Hollis, about 25 miles northeast of Dall Island, is the closest town served by the Alaska Marine Highway. Dall Island is about 50 miles long from northern to southern tip. Access to Roadless Area 501 is by boat and/or floatplane. There are several lakes large enough for floatplanes to use but there are no areas suitable for landing wheeled airplanes. Access to upland areas away from water is by foot or helicopter.

(2) **History:** Dall Island has a long history of use by Alaska Native people. Alaska Native cultures are known to have occupied sites on Dall Island for two to three thousand years prior to European settlement. There are several sea caves along the coast with evidence of ancient human occupancy or use. Because of this history, several traditional use sites have been selected and conveyed to Alaska Native Corporations. In recent history, the bays and harbors on the sheltered east side of the island have served the commercial fishing industry as fish buying stations, canneries, salteries, and anchorages.

(3) **Geography and Topography:** The area is characterized by rugged mountains, an irregular coast with many bays and inlets, numerous short drainages, and several freshwater lakes. The maximum elevation is 3,200 feet with a significant amount of alpine vegetation above 2,000 feet. The southern part of Long Island is less rugged; the highest point is approximately 1,400 feet. About 2,681 acres are alpine, and 3,539 acres are classified as rock. Freshwater lakes cover approximately 2,639 acres. The Dall Island Roadless Area contains 755 islands and islets (26 of these are greater than 10 acres) located off its coast and within its bays and inlets (totaling 15,592 acres). There are 356 miles of shoreline on saltwater.

(4) **Ecosystem:**

(a) **Classification:** Biogeographic Province. The roadless area is classified as being in the Dall Island and Vicinity Biogeographic Province. These islands are subject to strong oceanic influences. Temperatures are moderate year round. The topography is rugged and dissected, with abundant limestone outcrops. Dall Island appears to be a glacial refugia but inventories of plants and animals are limited. There are large colonies of seabirds on Dall Island.

Ecological Section/Subsection. The Dall Island Roadless Area is contained entirely within the Outer Islands Fjordlands Ecological Section (M247H). This area is represented by one ecological subsection (see table below). This ecological subsection consists of a steeply narrow and rugged mountain range. The

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elevation is generally less than 1,000 feet, though some peaks reach 2,500 feet. The coastal area has large coves, bays, and harbors that are shaped by storm waves on the western side and glacial scouring on the eastern side. The bedrock is mostly volcanics with smaller portions of carbonates. Well-drained soils support moderate to highly productive hemlock, hemlock-spruce, and mixed conifer forests. The U-shaped valleys are steep, small, and contain glacial till deposits that support forested wetlands (Nowacki et al., 2001).

Ecological Section	Ecological Subsection	Percent of Roadless Area
Outer Islands Fjordlands	Dall-Outside Complex	100%

**(b) Soils:** The highly organic, low clay content soils often found in this area are generally formed over bedrock. Soil depths are up to 40 inches.

**(c) Vegetation:** Vegetation is typical Southeast Alaska coastal temperate rain forest. The forest is primarily western hemlock and Sitka spruce with a large cedar component. Approximately 1,536 acres of muskeg are mapped for the area; however, due to their small size and association with forested sites, accurate acreage estimates are difficult. Approximately 2,715 acres of alpine vegetation are mapped for the area.

There are approximately 97,227 acres mapped as forest land of which 64,784 acres or 67 percent are mapped as productive old-growth forest. Of the productive old growth, 33,872 acres or 52 percent are mapped as high-volume old-growth forest. The productive old growth includes about 7,606 acres of high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. There are also 356 acres of second growth resulting from beach logging in 1960. The extreme exposure to southeast storm winds along Dall Island's west coast has also resulted in numerous patches of windthrow and natural second-growth forest.

**(d) Fish Resources:** The lakes and streams in this area provide habitat for pink, coho, chum, and sockeye salmon, steelhead trout and Dolly Varden char. The Anadromous Waters Catalogue (ADF&G, 2000) identified several fish-bearing streams in this area, including Manhattan Lake and Creek, Devil Lake and Creek, Little Devil Lake, Welcome Lake, and the Essowah Lakes.

**(e) Wildlife Resources:** Dall Island has large populations of Sitka black-tailed deer, wolves, black bear, river otter, mink, beaver, and other small land mammals. Sea birds and mammals are prevalent on the outside coast, islands, and rocks. Trumpeter swans, loons, and an occasional puffin can be seen. Brown bears, moose, and mountain goats do not inhabit Dall Island (MacDonald and Cook, 1999).

**(5) Management Direction and Current Uses:** This roadless area was allocated to five different Land Use Designations (LUDs) under the 1997 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan. These five LUDs are Modified Landscape, Semi-remote Recreation, Special Interest Area, Wild River, and Old-growth Habitat.

LUD	Acres
Modified Landscape	12,528
Semi-remote Recreation	85,591
Special Interest Area	5,994
Wild River	5,496
Old-growth Habitat	1,636

Modified Landscape is the only development LUD that occurs in the roadless area. The Modified Landscape LUD is located on the northern end of Dall Island and accounts for approximately 11 percent of the roadless area.

The remaining 89 percent of the roadless area is allocated to non-development LUDs (Semi-remote Recreation, Special Interest Area, Wild River, Old-growth Habitat). Approximately 77 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Semi-remote Recreation LUD. Approximately 5,994 acres in the mountainous regions of the roadless area (eight sites) are allocated to the Special Interest Area LUD to recognize the extensive karst systems

found there. These Special Interest Areas cover approximately 5 percent of the roadless area. The Essowah Lakes and Streams Area was allocated to the Wild River LUD, which accounts for approximately 5 percent of the roadless area. In the northern end of the roadless area, approximately 1 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Old-growth Habitat LUD.

There has been little active management of the land area. One public recreation cabin is located on the southern part of Dall Island, on the north shore of Essowah Lakes. A few local residents travel to the east side of the island and hike overland to the beaches on the outer coast. No outfitter/guide permits were issued in 2000 for the roadless area. There is some subsistence use but the remote location limits the amount.

There is a proposal being considered to helicopter salvage portions of the beetle killed spruce throughout the roadless area.

**(6) Appearance (Apparent Naturalness):** The area displays natural characteristics when viewed from key viewpoints and travel routes. This area is essentially unmodified, but private land holdings fragment the roadless area. Intensive timber harvest on private lands on the east side of Dall Island and the northern two-thirds of Long Island affects the apparent naturalness of portions of the adjacent roadless area.

**(7) Surroundings (External Influences):** The open Pacific Ocean lies to the west and south. Some portions of the roadless area provide views of intensively managed timber stands on private land on the east side of Dall Island and northern two-thirds of Long Island.

**(8) Attractions and Features of Special Interest:** The natural features of the area, the scenery, the saltwater bays and inlets and the opportunity to see wildlife, and study the processes which formed this country may all be attractions. The spectacular cliffs with sea caves and the benches on the outer coast are of special interest. There are 17 recreation places in the roadless area, which cover 52,724 acres, or 48 percent of the roadless area. Point Cornwallis along the southern outer coast is one of the most significant view areas on Dall's west coast. The highly developed karst systems in the Special Interest Area LUD are of particular interest since the area is virtually unexplored and shows promise for discovery of significant caves.

**(9) Differences between the 1989 and 2003 Roadless Area Boundary:** Beach logged areas near Port Brown that are unroaded have been added to the roadless area. Otherwise, the boundaries of the roadless area have not changed since 1989.

## **II. Capability for Management as Wilderness**

**(1) Natural Integrity and Apparent Naturalness:** The natural integrity is high, except for portions of the roadless area near the blocks of private lands that have been developed. Overall, this area is unmodified, has high natural integrity and apparent naturalness, and is suitable for wilderness classification.

**(2) Opportunity for Solitude and Serenity, Self-reliance, Adventure, Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation:** There is high opportunity for solitude and outstanding opportunity for primitive recreation within this roadless area, with the possible exception of those areas adjacent to the private lands being managed for timber production. In much of the roadless area, people are unlikely to encounter others during their visit. The outer coast provides the opportunity for exceptional solitude in an ocean beach environment. There are outstanding primitive recreation opportunities due to its difficult access, extensive karst development, remoteness from human activities, and minimal social encounters. Primitive recreation opportunities are typically situated around protected saltwater bays and coves for beachcombing and boating, inland lakes for sport fishing, and cross-country hiking through areas of relatively open higher elevation country for viewing scenery and hunting.

The roadless area contains steep, rugged terrain, rising to over 3,000 feet in elevation. The steep nature of portions of the area, its size, and the unpredictable and often extreme weather present a high degree of challenge and the need for woods skills and experience.

There is a public recreation cabin on the north shore of Essowah Lakes. There is a non-system trail that runs from View Cove on the east side of the island (on non-National Forest System land) to Manhattan

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Lake near Sea Otter Harbor on the west side of the island. Local residents hike across the island to fish the lake and to visit the open ocean. There are no other developed recreation facilities in the roadless area.

The area provides primarily primitive recreation opportunities. The table below lists the acreage and percent of the various Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes that have been inventoried in the roadless area.

ROS Class	Acres	Percent of Total ROS
Primitive (P)	104,572	94%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM)	5,811	5%
Roaded Modified (RM)	633	1%

There are 17 recreation places in the roadless area, which cover 52,724 acres, or 48 percent of the roadless area.

ROS Class	# of Rec. Places*	Total Acres
P	15	50,001
SPNM	1	2,368
RM	2	355

\* Rec. Places may occur in more than one ROS Class; the sum of this column may exceed the total number of Rec. Places.

**(3) Wilderness Attribute Rating System:** In 1977, the Forest Service, along with public interest groups, developed the Wilderness Attribute Rating System (WARS), which was used to inventory the wilderness characteristics of roadless areas during the second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation process (referred to as RARE II). The purpose of WARS was to provide a measure of the area's wilderness quality, based on the key attributes of wilderness as defined in the Wilderness Act. It is largely based on the attributes described above in items 1 and 2 of this section (natural integrity, apparent naturalness, outstanding opportunity for solitude, and primitive recreation opportunities).

In 1979, during the RARE II process, the Tongass National Forest applied WARS for the first time and rated each unroaded VCU on the Tongass. In 1989, the inventoried roadless areas (which generally include more than one VCU) were rated according to this system for the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) developed in support of the Forest Plan Revision. This original version of the AMS (dated 1990) included both the individual VCU ratings done in 1979 and the composite rating that was done for each roadless area in 1989. The 1989 rating for the Dall Roadless Area was 22 out of 28 possible points. The 1989 rating was re-evaluated for this updated version of the AMS. Based on this reevaluation, the area was given a rating of 23. In addition, each of the three relatively separate portions of the roadless area were rated separately. The southern portion of Dall Island scored at 24. The northwest portion of Dall Island rated 23, and the central portion of the island rated 21.

**(4) Ecologic and Geologic Values:** The roadless area is rich in fish, wildlife, and karst resources. Karst and cave formations in the limestone and marbles underlying this roadless area are considered to have high geological value and were therefore designated as a geologic Special Interest Area. The formations may be of national significance because of their development, complexity, the resources they contain, and limited expanse. The high-energy outer coastline characterized by rock cliffs and occasional beaches is a special geologic feature.

**(a) Fish Resources:** The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) listed VCU 639, the northern tip of Dall Island, as a primary salmon producer and all but a small portion of the southern tip of the roadless area on Dall Island as a secondary salmon producer. This roadless area includes no VCUs that were rated among the primary sport fish producers.

The lakes and streams in this area provide habitat for pink, coho, chum, and sockeye salmon, steelhead trout, and Dolly Varden char. The Anadromous Waters Catalogue (ADF&G, 2000) identified several fish-bearing streams in this area, including Manhattan Lake and Creek, Devil Lake and Creek, Little Devil Lake, Welcome Lake, and the Essowah Lakes. Essowah Lakes and Streams are located in the southern part of Dall Island. The system includes five major lakes, several small lakes, and five streams within VCU 659. Fishing opportunities are excellent for cutthroat trout, Dolly Varden, and sockeye, coho, pink, and chum salmon. Essowah was identified by ADF&G as one of the 65 "important" watersheds in Southeast

Alaska for fisheries values. This system contains 13 miles of anadromous fish streams. Bobs Bay, in northern Dall Island, is a primary salmon producer. This system has an estimated annual peak escapement of 39,575 pink salmon (ADF&G, 1998).

Manhattan Lake and Creek provide habitat for sockeye, coho, pink, and chum salmon as well as steelhead. Devil Lake and Creek are inhabited by these four species of salmon plus Dolly Varden char. Coho salmon and Dolly Varden char inhabit Little Devil Lake and Welcome Lake. Streams in the Long Island portion of this roadless area provide habitat for coho and pink salmon.

**(b) Wildlife Resources:** Dall Island has large populations of Sitka black-tailed deer, wolves, black bear, river otter, mink, beaver, and other small land mammals. Sea birds and mammals are prevalent on the outside coast, islands, and rocks. Harbor seals frequent Essowah Lakes. The Essowah Lakes system is also considered a high-value waterfowl wintering area, particularly for trumpeter swans, and serves as a stopover for migratory birds. Loons are commonly heard, and an occasional puffin can be seen. Brown bears, moose, and mountain goats do not inhabit Dall Island (MacDonald and Cook, 1999).

**(c) Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species:** The only federally listed threatened or endangered species likely to occur within or adjacent to the roadless area are the humpback whale (endangered) and the Steller sea lion (threatened). Both of these species are found in adjacent marine waters. Three Forest Service Region 10 Sensitive Species are suspected or known to occur within the area: the trumpeter swan, Peale's peregrine falcon, and the Queen Charlotte goshawk. Trumpeter swans nest in the lowlands on small lakes and along large rivers and winter in ice-free areas throughout the Tongass. As noted above, the Essowah Lakes system is considered a high-value trumpeter swan wintering area. Peale's peregrine falcons nest on cliff faces and islands and feed primarily on seabirds. Inhabitants of late seral forests, Queen Charlotte goshawks are closely associated with productive old growth. In addition, nine sensitive plant species are known or suspected to occur in the Craig Ranger District.

**(d) Karst, Cave, and Other Geologic Resources:** Many of the highest ridges and associated peaks and ridges, i.e., Cone, Bear, Thunder, Twin, Grace, and White, within and adjacent to this roadless area are mainly underlain by limestone and marble. Karst systems have developed into the limestone and marble and were designated as a Special Interest Area. Though a few caves have been inventoried in this area, exploration has been limited. Significant paleontological finds have come from several caves. Additional paleontological discoveries are likely as well as archaeological finds. Extensive karst systems are known for the intensity and numbers of features found here. Because of the thickness of the limestone and marble in this area, vertical pits and cave systems of record depth are possible. Areas of limestone and marble are exposed from sea level to the ridge tops in these glaciated valleys. Subalpine fir can be found on the ridge crests in protected alcoves. The karst systems found here extend from the alpine to the sea providing increased productivity for the plant, animal, and aquatic communities found on the karst lands. These formations are potentially of national significance and represent 15,814 acres, or 14 percent of the roadless area. About one-third of the karst is mapped as high vulnerability. There are no glaciers in this area. The high-energy outer coastline, characterized by rock cliffs and occasional beaches, is a special geologic feature.

**(5) Scientific and Educational Values:** The high-energy outer coastline, characterized by rock cliffs and occasional beaches, is a special feature. Along this coast, there are several sea caves with evidence of ancient human occupancy or use. Also of interest are the rugged headlands and cliffs that face the ocean, particularly along the southern coast of Dall Island. Karst and cave formations in the limestone underlying this roadless area are of national and international significance because of their development, complexity, the resources they contain, and their level of development. This area is thought to have been ice free during the last glacial episode and is the subject of research on determining the ecology of the outer coast during the last glacial period and the extent and timing of glaciation.

**(6) Scenic Values:** The Dall Island Roadless Area is part of the Coastal Hills Character Type, which is characterized by rolling to moderately steep terrain, with predominantly rounded summits, and elevations up to 4,000 feet. Dall Island is very representative of this character type, except for the extremely rugged coastline and terrain along portions of the outer coast.

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The area displays natural characteristics when viewed from major and minor water travel routes and key viewpoints. Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas identified by the Forest Plan, that are within or adjacent to the area, include the Bobs Bay, Security Cove, Hole-in-the-Wall, Waterfall Bay, Gold Harbor, Port Bazan, Kaigaini Harbor, and Datzkoo Harbor saltwater use areas, and the Essowah Lakes public recreation cabin.

About 59 percent of this area was inventoried as Variety Class B, which possesses landscape characteristics common for the character type. Thirty-four percent of the area was inventoried as Variety Class A, which has a high degree of landscape diversity relative to its character type. The Variety Class A landscapes are generally on the outer coast and include primarily the rugged headlands and rockforms found all along this coast. Approximately 5 percent of the land was listed as Variety Class C, which possesses a low degree of landscape diversity. Approximately two percent of the area was not inventoried for Variety Class type.

Approximately 98 percent of the land in this area was inventoried as Type I Existing Visual Condition (EVC) where the landscape has remained unaltered by human activity. Approximately 1 percent of the area was inventoried as EVC III, in which the average person notices changes in the landscape, but they do not attract significant attention. The private lands adjacent to this roadless area, generally on the eastern half of Dall Island, have been intensively developed, which affects EVC ratings on portions of the roadless area. Approximately two percent of the area was not inventoried for EVC.

**(7) Social, Cultural, and Historical Values:** Dall Island has a long history of Alaska Native use. Humans are known to have occupied sites on Dall Island for two to three thousand years. There are several sea caves along the coast with evidence of ancient human occupancy or use. Because of this history, several traditional use sites have been selected and conveyed to Alaska Native Corporations. In recent history, the bays and harbors on the sheltered east side of the island have served the commercial fishing industry as fish buying stations, canneries, salteries, and anchorages. No outfitter/guide permits were issued in 2000 in the roadless area. This roadless area supports subsistence use, especially by residents of the Hydaburg area. Only VCU's 637 and 645, a small part of the northern tip and of the eastern shore, were listed among the VCU's with the highest sensitivity to disturbance of subsistence use areas. None of the VCUs in the roadless area are listed among the VCUs with the highest, second, or third most important community fish and wildlife values (ADF&G, 1998).

**(8) Manageability as Wilderness and Boundary Conditions/Changes:** Where the roadless area is bounded by saltwater, the boundaries are well defined. However, the long boundaries with private lands on Dall Island are not defined by topographic features. Given the extent of these boundaries, there does not appear to be any way to create better-defined boundaries. This detracts from the manageability of the area for wilderness.

### **III. Availability for Management as Wilderness (including effects of wilderness designation on adjacent areas)**

**(1) Recreation, including Tourism Potential:** Tourism has been increasing in Southeast Alaska and is expected to continue to increase. There is the potential for some of these tourists to be drawn to fish, hunt, and camp in the roadless area. There is a potential for outfitter/guide permits to increase. There is an opportunity to manage this area for primitive and semi-primitive recreation. There is some opportunity to increase developed recreation facilities with additional cabins and trails. The majority of the high-energy coast is not suitable for boat or floatplane access. Almost all land surrounding good anchorages along the east coast is privately owned. Ownership patterns and very rough topography complicate potential access for recreation facility construction and other activities. The only reasonable way for most visitors to access the outer coast beaches is to hike cross-country from east-side bays and anchorages. The roadless area has excellent potential for development of interesting cross-island trails. There are excellent sites for public recreation cabins in the major bays on the west coast. With careful planning, there may be opportunities to interpret cultural resources on Dall Island. Additional opportunities include beachcombing, hunting, sportfishing, sea kayaking, dispersed camping, viewing scenery, and canoeing/kayaking on Essowah Lakes Wild River. Karst and cave development in the roadless area may provide a unique opportunity to develop destination recreation facilities in association with interpretation and viewing of these features and topography.

In 1996, the Alaska Visitors Association (AVA) proposed the following recreation developments for Dall Island: hut-to-hut hiking for 25 persons/day, ten flight seeing landings, a 3,000-square-foot equipment storage facility, boardwalks, paths, and trails.

- (2) **Subsistence Uses:** Management as a wilderness would not conflict with current subsistence uses.
- (3) **Fish Resources:** No fish habitat enhancement projects are planned at this time.
- (4) **Wildlife Resources:** No wildlife habitat improvement or population enhancement projects are planned.
- (5) **Timber Resources:** There are 64,784 acres mapped as productive old-growth forest in the roadless area. In addition, 356 acres of second growth have resulted from beach logging activities. Of this, approximately 41,934 acres are categorized as tentatively suitable for timber harvest. Based on the Forest Plan LUDs assigned to this area (and estimated falldown and scheduling reduction factors), 2,547 acres or 2 percent of this roadless area are estimated to be suitable for timber production. Approximately 905 of the suitable acres are mapped as high-volume old growth; of these acres, less than 10 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The potential for managing timber in this roadless is dependent on the development of a road system and LTFs. The rugged terrain over much of the area limits the opportunity for management of its resources, particularly timber. Dall Island's west coast is exposed to the open ocean. This high-energy coast is not suitable for boat or floatplane access. Alaska Native Corporations have acquired almost all land surrounding good anchorages along the east coast. Ownership patterns and very rough topography complicate potential access for timber cutting and other management activities. The extreme exposure to southeast storm winds along Dall Island's west coast has resulted in numerous patches of windthrow and second-growth timber. These areas can be very thick, and when combined with steep slopes, can be nearly impossible to traverse on foot.

(6) **Fire, Insects, and Disease:** The area has no significant fire history. Endemic tree diseases common to Southeast Alaska are present. Spruce bark beetle outbreaks can be common following large windthrow events. An insect and disease survey conducted in 1996 indicated high intensity spruce mortality, resulting from spruce bark beetle activity, near Port Bazan, Gold Harbor, Waterfall Bay, and Little Devils Lake. The cool, damp maritime, climate, however, tends to restrict the spread and buildup of spruce beetle populations.

(7) **Minerals:** There is some potential for mineral activity. There are several mining claims located on the south and south central part of Dall Island. None of these claims are currently in a development or production mode. The USGS Mineral Resources Data website (2001) shows prospects for gold, silver, copper, and lead in this area.

This area contains 2,283 acres of land identified as a mineral activity tract having a high potential for experiencing mineral exploration and development of locatable minerals (Coldwell, 1990; USDA Forest Service, 1991). This area is located around McLeod Bay in the southern tip of this roadless area, as an area likely to be developed. In addition, this area contains an estimated 107,617 acres of undiscovered locatable mineral resources (Brew et al., 1990; USDA Forest Service, 1991); 7,294 of these acres are considered to have low potential for development.

(8) **Transportation and Utilities:** There are no current or planned transportation or utility corridors in the roadless area. There is a short powerline on the northeast corner of Dall Island.

(9) **Water Availability and Use:** The public recreation cabin on Essowah Lakes is the only facility creating public potable water demand in this area. There are no existing or planned hydroelectric or domestic water projects within the roadless area.

(10) **Areas of Scientific Interest:** There are several sea caves along the coast with evidence of ancient human occupancy or use. There are also extensive karst deposits. The mapped karst resources encompass approximately 15,814 acres or 14 percent of the roadless area. There are unmodified unique ecosystems that could be studied as part of the Special Interest Area designation.

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(11) **Land Use Authorizations:** There is a special use permit for a short powerline on the northeast corner of Dall Island.

(12) **Land Status:** Encumbered land accounts for approximately 4 percent of this roadless area. The encumbered land includes a segment in northeast Dall Island and an area just north of the Essowah Lakes Wild and Scenic LUD. Most of the land adjacent to the Dall Island Roadless Area is owned by the Sealaska Regional Corporation or the Klukwan Village Corporation.

### IV. Wilderness Evaluation (Need for Wilderness)

#### (1) **Public and Congressional Interest:**

(a) **Interest Expressed by Local Users and Residents:** The area receives local use for subsistence activities. Local residents travel to Dall Island and hike overland to the west coast beaches for recreation purposes including beachcombing, sport fishing and hunting, and sea kayaking.

(b) **Congressional Interest:** In 1989, U.S. House of Representatives Bill HR 987 proposed to designate 23 areas as wilderness on the Tongass National Forest. This bill did not include the Dall Roadless Area. In 2001, HR 2908 proposed managing the roadless area as LUD II in an unroaded condition.

(c) **Public Input During Forest Plan Revision and Appeals:** The Southeast Alaska Conservation Council and others recommended against road building and logging. They stated that the area merited special protection for its outstanding wildlife, fisheries, hunting, subsistence, recreation, and tourism values. The National Audubon Society, the Petersburg Fish and Game Advisory Board, and others recommended against logging and road building on the west side of Dall Island because it is an outstanding wilderness resource: very remote with craggy headlands, sandy beaches, caves, archaeological sites, and good recreation potential. One commenter suggested that West Dall should be part of an “outer coast wildlife refuge system.” The Alaska Forest Association, the Alaska Miners Association, and the AVA recommended that no new wilderness be designated. Others stated that all unroaded areas should be designated wilderness. Timber industry representatives recommended managing all areas not designated as wilderness for timber. In 1996, the AVA proposed the following recreation developments for Dall Island: hut-to-hut hiking for 25 persons/day, ten flight seeing landings, a 3,000-square-foot equipment storage facility, boardwalks, paths, and trails.

(d) **Public Input During Roadless Area Conservation Rule and Road Management Policy Review:** This area was not specifically identified in the public comments received during the Roadless Area Conservation Rule or Road Management Policy Review. However, some commenters wanted all unroaded lands on the Tongass to be protected from development.

(e) **Public Input Expressed for Project-level EISs and Other Input:** No project-level comments on this roadless area are available.

(f) **Public Input Expressed During Supplemental EIS Process:** The President of the Hydaburg Cooperative Association spoke “against the wilderness plans for the south end of Prince of Wales Island” during the Craig Hearing and in a letter stressed the importance of Cordova Bay.

The Alaska Rainforest Campaign (a coalition of national and Alaska conservation groups) recommended Roadless Area 501 for permanent protection as LUD II. SEACC recommended that western Dall Island be designated as LUD II.

The city of Pelican passed a resolution stating that the important watersheds identified as areas of special interest in the 1999 ROD and HR 987 should given long-term protection.

A number of cave/karst experts and other individuals stated that the Dall Island Biogeographic Province contains numerous blocks of highly developed karst, but that relatively little work has been done by cavers

and cave scientists in the Dall Island Roadless Area. Nevertheless, caves discovered within these blocks include nationally significant depths, as well as important cultural, geological, and paleontological components. The commenters indicated that because there has been no timber harvest or road building on Forest Service lands on Dall Island, this area is especially important for protection; combining protection of Forest Service land with a plan to protect karstlands on private land, would make this a more significant karst reserve.

A Hydaburg resident recommended Dall Island for LUD II, but not wilderness. Some recommended the entire area for LUD II, especially the fiords on the outside. A number of individuals identified Northwest Dall Island as an area in need of protection.

**(2) Nearby Roadless and Wilderness Areas and Uses:** This roadless area is separated from nearby roadless areas by saltwater. South Prince of Wales Wilderness and Roadless Areas 531 and 504 are several miles to the east, across Cordova Bay. Roadless Area 502 is about 1 mile northeast of Dall Island on Suemez Island and Roadless Area 505 is about 1 mile to the north on Prince of Wales Island. These areas are used for subsistence and recreation.

**(3) Distance From Population Centers (Accessibility):** Approximate distances from population centers are as follows:

Community	Air Miles	Water Miles
Juneau (Pop. 30,711)	220	235
Ketchikan (Pop. 14,070)	60	80
Wrangell (Pop. 2,308)	90	135
Petersburg (Pop. 3,324)	110	140

Hollis, approximately 25 air miles to the northeast on Prince of Wales Island, is the nearest stop on the Alaska Marine Highway.

**(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System:** The Dall Roadless Area includes most of the western and southern portion of Dall Island, the southeastern part of Long Island, and many smaller islands. The western border and the northern and southern tips of the roadless area are bounded by saltwater; however, much of the eastern portion of Dall Island and the majority of Long Island are owned by Alaska Native Corporations. The area is characterized by rugged mountains, an irregular coast with many bays and inlets, numerous short drainages, and several freshwater lakes. The maximum elevation is 3,200 feet with large alpine areas (above 2,000 feet). The southern part of Long Island is less rugged; the highest point is approximately 1,400 feet.

Overall this area is unmodified and has high natural integrity and very high apparent naturalness; exceptions are the few small areas of beach logging and larger areas of recent development on private lands adjacent to the eastern border on Dall Island and the northern two-thirds of Long Island. The southern portion of Dall Island has very high natural integrity and apparent naturalness. The northwest portion of Dall Island has high natural integrity and very high apparent naturalness. The central part of the island has high natural integrity and moderate apparent naturalness. There is high opportunity for solitude and outstanding opportunity for primitive recreation within this roadless area, with the possible exception of those areas adjacent to the private lands being managed for timber production.

The roadless area has high scenic quality; approximately 34 percent is rated as distinctive for the character type from a visual perspective. Approximately 5,992 acres in the mountainous regions of the roadless area (eight sites) are allocated to the Special Interest Area LUD to recognize the extensive karst systems found there. These Special Interest Areas cover approximately 5 percent of the roadless area. The Essowah Lakes and Streams Area was allocated to the Wild River LUD, which accounts for approximately 5 percent of the roadless area. The high-energy outer coastline, characterized by rock cliffs and occasional beaches, is also a special feature. Along this coast, there are several sea caves with evidence of ancient human occupancy or use.

The roadless area includes about 33,872 acres of high-volume, old-growth forest. Of these acres, approximately 7,606 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

## Appendix C

The roadless area is classified as being in the Dall Island and Vicinity Biogeographic Province. It is one of two inventoried roadless areas found in the province that collectively make up 58 percent of the province. The province, which is the smallest biogeographic province in Southeast Alaska, does not contain any existing wilderness or LUD II, but all National Forest System lands are unroaded.

The Dall Island Roadless Area lies completely within the Outer Islands Fjordlands Ecological Section and it represents 35 percent of the ecological section. Approximately 10 percent of the Outer Islands Fjordlands Ecological Section is in existing wilderness, 17 percent is in existing LUD II, and 36 percent is protected by other existing non-development LUDs.

All (100 percent) of the roadless area is in the Dall-Outside Complex Ecological Subsection and it represents 38 percent of the entire ecological subsection, 19 percent of which is protected in existing LUD II and 40 percent in other existing non-development LUDs.

The Dall Island Roadless Area is rated at 23 out of a possible 28 points under WARS. As such, its WARS rating is ranked 30<sup>th</sup> from the highest (along with seven other roadless areas) among the 109 Tongass inventoried roadless areas. When portions of the roadless area are rated separately, the southern area of Dall Island rates 24, the northwestern portion rates 23, and the central portion of the island rates 21.

There is both local and national support for managing the roadless area in an unroaded condition, but there is limited support for designating the area as a wilderness. The WARS score of the area is not exceptionally high, relative to other areas of Southeast Alaska, but there are no other wildernesses in the small Dall Island and Vicinity Biogeographic Province. However, Dall Island Roadless Area is part of the Dall-Outside Complex Ecological Subsection, 19 percent of which is represented in LUD II. Designation as a wilderness would create a wilderness on the Pacific Ocean; however, this aspect would not be unique for the National Wilderness Preservation System. There are several wildernesses and Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve that face the open ocean. They are all larger and less fragmented by developments on private land. The area has high scenic quality and contains unique geologic features, especially the well developed karst systems. Overall, the factors identified here indicate that the relative contribution of this area to the National Wilderness Preservation System would be high.

### **V. Environmental Consequences**

The Dall Roadless Area would be managed under the existing Forest Plan if Alternative 1, 2, 3, or 4 is implemented. Approximately 89 percent of the roadless area would be managed under non-development LUDs. Timber harvest and road development could occur in the remaining 11 percent; however, the potential for developing timber is limited. The land in the development LUDs provides an estimated 2,547 acres that are suitable for timber production (4 percent of the suitable acres on the Craig Ranger District). Less than 10 of the suitable acres are classified as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. An identified mineral activity tract of 2,283 acres, located around McLeod Bay in the southern part of this roadless area, is an area with a high potential for development. There are also more than 107,617 additional acres with low undiscovered mineral potential identified, where prospecting and development could occur. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area are mostly protected by the Forest Plan. The exception is the northernmost portion of Dall Island where timber management is allowed by the Forest Plan. The karst, ecologic, and most scenic values are protected by the Forest Plan.

Alternatives 5 or 7 would convert the vast majority of the area to Recommended Wilderness; only the southern part of Long Island would remain as non-wilderness. However, none of the area would be in development LUDs. Timber harvest would not be allowed, and the potential for other development, including recreation, mineral, and hydroelectric, could be restricted. Mineral prospecting and development could continue until areas are designated as wilderness by Congress. Designation would add long-term Congressional protection to the majority of the Dall Island and Vicinity Biogeographic Province, which is not currently represented in wilderness or LUD II. The values associated with the natural settings of the majority of the roadless area, including the scenic, karst and ecologic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness.

Under Alternative 6, the entire roadless area would be converted to Recommended LUD II. Mineral prospecting and development and recreation developments could continue, but no timber harvest would be allowed. Designation

## Appendix C

would add long-term Congressional protection to the majority of the Dall Island and Vicinity Biogeographic Province, which is not currently represented in wilderness or LUD II. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including the scenic, karst and ecologic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated LUD II.

With Alternative 8, the entire roadless area would be converted to Recommended Wilderness. Timber harvest would not be allowed, and the potential for other development, including recreation, mineral, and hydroelectric, would be significantly restricted. Mineral prospecting and development would be allowed up to the time that the area is actually designated as wilderness by Congress. Designation would add long-term Congressional protection to the majority of the Dall Island and Vicinity Biogeographic Province, which is not currently represented in wilderness or LUD II. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including the scenic, karst and ecologic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness.

<b>Land Use Designation Allocations and Suitable Timber Lands by Alternative for Roadless Area 501 (in acres)</b>								
Land Use Designation	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7	Alt 8
Recommended Wilderness					103,939		103,939	111,245
Wilderness								
Recommended Wilderness Nat. Mon.								
Wilderness National Monument								
Non-wilderness National Monument								
Research Natural Area								
Special Interest Area	5,994	5,994	5,994	5,994				
Remote Recreation								
Enacted Municipal Watershed								
Old-growth Habitat	1,636	1,636	1,636	1,636				
Semi-remote Recreation	85,591	85,591	85,591	85,591	7,305		7,305	
Recommended LUD II						111,245		
LUD II								
Wild, Scenic, Recreational River	5,496	5,496	5,496	5,496				
Experimental Forest								
Scenic Viewshed								
Modified Landscape	12,528	12,528	12,528	12,528				
Timber production								
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>111,245</b>	<b>111,245</b>	<b>111,245</b>	<b>111,245</b>	<b>111,245</b>	<b>111,245</b>	<b>111,245</b>	<b>111,245</b>
Suitable Timber Lands	2,547	2,547	2,547	2,547	0	0	0	0