

# Appendix C

## INDIVIDUAL ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTION

**ROADLESS AREA NAME:** Suemez Island (502)

**ACRES (NFS):** 24,478

**BIOGEOGRAPHIC PROVINCE:** Southern Outer Islands and Dall Island and Vicinity Biogeographic Province

**ECOLOGICAL SECTION:** Outer Islands Fjordlands

**2003 WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTE RATING:** 20

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

(1) **Location and Access:** Suemez Island Roadless Area is on the south and west side of Suemez Island. Prince of Wales Island lies to the east across Ulloa Channel, and Dall Island lies to the southeast across Meares Passage. The open Pacific Ocean lies to the south and west. The roadless area is about 15 air miles southwest of Craig and 70 air miles from Ketchikan. Hollis, the closest stop on the Alaska Marine Highway, is approximately 25 air miles east of the roadless area. Access is by boat and/or floatplane. There are no places suitable for landing wheeled aircraft. Roads originating from Port Refugio, a sheltered bay on the east side of the island, provide access to the northern and northeastern boundaries of the roadless area. Access away from this road system and from saltwater is by foot or helicopter.

(2) **History:** Suemez Island has a long history of use by Alaska Native peoples. Commercial fishing began around 1900. Although there has been extensive timber harvest near the boundaries, there has been no harvest within the roadless area. A parcel of land in the Port Delores area has been conveyed to the State. Port Santa Cruz was the site of the first Catholic Mass conducted in Alaska. There is an annual mass held there each year to commemorate the event.

(3) **Geography and Topography:** The island is characterized by rugged mountains near the coast and moderate to flat topography in its center. The highest elevation is over 2,100 feet. The topography is the result of a volcanic eruption that occurred at an undetermined time in the past. The boundaries and structure of the flows and the vents are clearly visible. Alpine acres total 175 and 173 acres are rock. There are 59 miles of saltwater shoreline. The shore is very irregular, rugged, and includes several large bays. There are 164 small islands and islets off the coast of Suemez Island that are part of the roadless area (totaling 135 acres); the largest is Ridge Island.

(4) **Ecosystem:**

(a) **Classification: Biogeographic Province.** Approximately 82 percent of the roadless area is in the Southern Outer Islands Biogeographic Province. The islands in this province are isolated and are subject to strong oceanic influences, including windstorms. Temperatures are moderate year round. The province is characterized by rolling subdued and localized rugged topography. The islands are relatively rich in endemic vertebrate species. The remaining 18 percent of the roadless area is in the Dall Island and Vicinity Biogeographic Province. This province is subject to strong oceanic influences and moderate temperatures. There is rugged topography and limestone outcrops.

**Ecological Section/Subsection.** The Suemez 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 elevation is generally less than 1000 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 and are typically about 40 inches deep.

**(c) Vegetation:** Vegetation is typical Southeast Alaska coastal temperate rain forest. The forest is primarily western hemlock and Sitka spruce with large components of cedar. There are 646 acres of muskeg mapped in the area, particularly in the south-central portion of Suemez Roadless Area. However, due to their small size and association with forested sites, accurate acreage estimates are difficult.

There are approximately 23,272 acres mapped as forest land of which 15,060 acres or 65 percent are mapped as productive old-growth forest. Of the productive old growth, 7,124 acres or 47 percent are mapped as high-volume old-growth forest. The productive old growth includes about 1,250 acres of high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. There are also 23 acres of second growth resulting from beach logging in 1960.

**(d) Fish Resource:** The Anadromous Waters Catalogue (ADF&G, 2000) identifies several small fish-bearing streams in this roadless area, draining into Port Delores, Port Santa Cruz, Indiada Cove, Aquada Cove, Arena Cove, and along the southeast shore of Suemez Island. These streams provide habitat for coho, pink, and chum salmon.

**(e) Wildlife Resources:** This area has populations of Sitka black-tailed deer, wolves, and black bear. There are populations of small mammals, such as ermine and river otter, and land birds. Along the coast there are large numbers of sea birds and a few marine mammals. Migrating birds use the area on their travels. Brown bear, moose, and mountain goats do not inhabit Suemez Island (MacDonald and Cook, 1999). Cataloged goshawk nests are located southeast of Port Refugio.

**(5) Management Direction and Current Uses:** The 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, Timber Production, Special Interest Area, Old-growth Habitat, and Semi-remote Recreation.

LUD	Acres
Timber Production	5,829
Modified Landscape	5,320
Special Interest Area	9,640
Old-growth Habitat	3,627
Semi-remote Recreation	62

The roadless area contains two development LUDs (Modified Landscape and Timber Production) which comprise approximately 46 percent of the area. Approximately 22 percent of the roadless area, primarily around Meares Passage and Port Refugio, was allocated to the Modified Landscape LUD. Approximately 24 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Timber Production LUD.

Approximately 54 percent of this roadless area was allocated to one of three non-development LUDs (Special Interest Area, Old-growth Habitat, and Semi-remote Recreation). Approximately 39 percent of the roadless area were allocated to the Arena Cove/Cape Felix Special Interest Area LUD for its geologic and cultural values. The Special Interest Area LUD was initially designed to encompass the volcanic vents and various lava, rhyolite, and basalt flows of southwest Suemez Island. Three sections of this roadless area, totaling approximately 15 percent of the roadless area, were allocated to the Old-growth Habitat LUD. These Old-growth Habitat pockets (Port Santa

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Cruz, Ulloa Channel area, and east of Lontana Point) are part of the Forest-wide wildlife conservation strategy. Less than 1 percent of the roadless area was allocated to Semi-remote Recreation, which is mostly on associated small islands.

Some dispersed recreation occurs on the island, primarily deer and bear hunting, near the roaded lands in the north. There are no developed recreation facilities on the island. Some subsistence use is occurring in the roadless area, especially in areas that border the roaded and harvested areas. Additional recreation activities on Suemez include beachcombing, dispersed camping, hunting, primarily by residents of Craig, Klawock, and Hydaburg, and off-road-vehicle (ORV) use on the existing road system. Arena Cove is a highly attractive recreation place due to its expansive sandy beach.

**(6) Appearance (Apparent Naturalness):** Most of the roadless area appears unmodified and is in a natural condition; however, the apparent naturalness is adversely affected by the developments to the north.

**(7) Surroundings (External Influences):** The timber harvest in the Port Refugio/Port Santa Cruz area reduces the natural appearance of the northern and eastern portions of the roadless area. A timber sale is planned on the State land located in Port Delores. Waterfall Resort, a world class fishing resort, is located across Ulloa Channel on Prince of Wales 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 volcanic formations on the south and west coast and the long and wide sand beaches rimming Arena Cove were designated as the Arena Cove/Cape Felix Special Interest Area. The lava flows and associated vents inland in the southwest portion of the island still show remnant flow structures. Waterfalls flow from the extensive wetlands atop the flows over the lip of the flow forming grottos behind them. 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. The area contains eight inventoried recreation places, which cover 17,855 acres, or 73 percent of the roadless area.

**(9) Differences between the 1989 and 2003 Roadless Area Boundary:** Much of the area that was within the 1989 boundaries has been roaded and harvested. This development has nearly divided the roadless area into two parts. The northwestern peninsula is connected to the southern portion of the roadless area by a narrow strip along the beach in Port Santa Cruz. Several smaller areas along the developed boundaries have been excluded from the area between the Draft and Final SEIS to improve the potential manageability of the roadless area as wilderness.

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

**(1) Natural Integrity and Apparent Naturalness:** The natural integrity and apparent naturalness of the land within the roadless area is high; however they are affected by the extensive timber harvest activity to the north. The suitability of this area for wilderness classification is lessened because the area's entire northern boundary is delineated by timber harvest activity rather than by well-defined topographic boundaries.

**(2) Opportunity for Solitude and Serenity, Self-reliance, Adventure, Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation:** There is a high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation in the area, especially in the south portion. Noise from boats in the bays may disturb visitors for short periods. Almost all of the hunting on the island occurs in the developed area. Persons camped within the roadless area are unlikely to encounter other individuals during their stay. There is significant boat and plane traffic to and from Waterfall Resort. They operate approximately 30 charter vessels daily in the summer. They also use Port Refugio as a landing zone for float planes when waters in Ulloa are choppy from a west or northwest wind. Commercial fishing vessels also use waters around Suemez.

The coastal areas contain steep, rugged terrain, rising to over 2,000 feet in elevation. The steep nature of portions of the roadless area and the presence of black bears present a degree of challenge and the need for woods skills and experience. Much of the roadless area is rolling in nature and is less challenging to hikers than the rugged coastal areas.

The area provides primarily semi-primitive and primitive recreation opportunities. The coastal recreation attractions and the remoteness of the Island's outer coast create outstanding prospects for primitive recreation. 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)	9,339	38%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM)	10,747	44%
Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM)	665	3%
Roaded Modified (RM)	3,676	15%

The area contains eight inventoried recreation places, which cover 17,855 acres, or 73 percent of the roadless area.

ROS Class	# of Rec. Places*	Total Acres
P1	1	2,874
SPNM	4	10,743
SPM	1	665
RM	5	3,572

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

There are no developed recreation facilities in the roadless area. Waterfall Resort, a world class fishing resort, is located across Ulloa Channel on Prince of Wales Island.

**(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 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 Suemez Island Roadless Area was 18 out of 28 possible points. The 1989 rating was re-evaluated for this updated version of the AMS. Based on this re-evaluation, the area was given a rating of 20.

**(4) Ecologic and Geologic Values:** The roadless area contains minor amounts of karst. There are no glaciers on Suemez Island. The Arena Cove/Cape Felix Special Interest Area on the south and west coast are of special geologic interest because of the sea caves, cliffs, and volcanic formations.

**(a) Fish Resources:** The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) did not list any VCUs in this area as primary salmon or sport fish producers. The Anadromous Waters Catalogue identifies several small fish-bearing streams in this roadless area, draining into Port Delores, Port Santa Cruz, Indiada Cove, Aquada Cove, Arena Cove, and along the southeast shore of Suemez Island. These streams provide habitat for coho, pink, and chum salmon (ADF&G, 2000).

**(b) Wildlife Resources:** This area has populations of Sitka black-tailed deer, wolves and black bear. There are populations of small mammals, such as ermine and river otter, and land birds. Along the coast, there are large numbers of sea birds and a few marine mammals. The high cliffs may provide nest sites for falcons. Brown bear, moose, and mountain goats do not inhabit Suemez Island (MacDonald and Cook, 1999).

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**(c) Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species:** The only federally listed threatened and 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 major rivers and winter in ice-free areas throughout the Tongass. 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:** There is a small area of well developed karst in the middle of Suemez Island and another on the western peninsula of this roadless area. There are 1,865 acres, 8 percent of the area, of mapped karst resources. All of the karst is mapped as medium or low vulnerability. The southwest portion of the roadless area is designated as the Arena Cove/Cape Felix Special Interest Area. It sits atop a complex of volcanic eruptions that has built up over time, the flow features and vents of the last eruption being clearly visible. Basalt flows have filled some valleys, cooling slowly to form large columns; one such feature jets from the sea, forming Cape Felix. Sea caves have formed where the waves batter the coastline. The obsidian flows found here have been important culturally for over 10,000 years. 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. Sea caves and volcanic formations on the south and west coast are of special geologic interest.

**(5) Scientific and Educational Values:** The high coastal cliffs, including unique volcanic rock formations, on the south and west sides are of special interest. These cliffs have a number of sea caves that add to the interest. There are also karst areas, which may be of interest. There are cultural and archeological sites of interest in this roadless area.

**(6) Scenic Values:** This area is part of the Coastal Hills Character Type which is characterized by moderately steep landforms, predominantly rounded summits, and flat-floored, U-shaped valleys. This island, with its elevations over 2,000 feet, is representative of this character type.

The natural characteristics of this area are displayed when viewing from the island's southern coast. Once inside the area, the developed areas may be seen if on the north aspect of a hill. The Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas identified by the Forest Plan that are within or adjacent to the area include Port Refugio and Buccarelli Bay, saltwater use areas; the Waterfall Resort Site and Ulloa Channel north and south of the resort; the Arena Cove/ Cape Felix dispersed recreation site; and the Port Santa Cruz and Port Refugio boat anchorages.

The majority of this area, approximately 72 percent, was inventoried as Variety Class B, which possesses landscape characteristics common for the character type. Approximately 27 percent was rated as Variety Class A, which possesses landscape diversity unique for the character type. The outstanding scenic features are primarily along the southern coast of the island from Arena Cove to the Cape Felix area. This coast exhibits a wide variety of unique scenic features, including long, broad sand beaches, diverse rocky beaches and coves, volcanic rock forms, and unique intertidal rock forms and other beach features.

Approximately 94 percent of the area inventoried as Type I Existing Visual Condition (EVC), where the natural landscape has remained unaltered by human activity. Approximately 5 percent was inventoried as Type V EVC, where changes to the landscape are obvious to the average visitor.

**(7) Social, Cultural, and Historical Values:** Suemez Island has a long history of use by Alaska Native peoples. Three cultural resource sites in the Arena Cove/Cape Felix Special Interest Area are registered with the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey, and it is thought that there is a high probability of locating a primary source inland. Port Santa Cruz was the site of the first Catholic mass conducted in Alaska. There is an annual mass held there each year to commemorate the event. Commercial fishing began around 1900. A parcel of land in the Port Delores area has been conveyed to the State. The area is important for both commercial and sport fishing. Some dispersed recreation occurs on the island, primarily deer and bear hunting near the roaded lands in the north. There

are no developed recreation facilities on the island. Some subsistence use is occurring in the roadless area, especially in areas that border the roaded and harvested areas. No VCU in this roadless area was listed among the VCUs with the highest community fish and wildlife values, and only VCU 634 was listed in the second most important group. VCUs 633, 634, 635, and 637 make up most of the island and are among those VCUs with the highest sensitivity to disturbance of subsistence use areas (ADF&G, 1998). Other uses on Suemez include dispersed camping and subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering.

**(8) Manageability as Wilderness and Boundary Conditions/Changes:** The open Pacific Ocean and large, open saltwater channels make up the southern, western, and southeastern boundaries of the roadless area, making these boundaries easy to manage. The eastern and northern boundary of the roadless area is an irregularly shaped developed area. This boundary would be more difficult to manage because it crosses relatively flat terrain with no identifiable ridgelines or other natural boundary features. There do not appear to be any topographic features that could be used to form a better-defined boundary.

### **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. Most of the present recreation use in the vicinity of this island is confined to offshore salmon fishing and crabbing in the bays. Waterfall Resort, a well-known sport fishing resort, is approximately 1 mile across Ulloa Channel, on Prince of Wales Island. If facilities existed, some of these visitors might be drawn to visit the roadless area. The potential exists for developing trails from the road system in Port Refugio to the Arena Cove beaches and the Cape Felix area. There are also opportunities for a public recreation cabin or shelter sites in the Arena Cove area. Other existing/potential recreation activities on Suemez include beachcombing, sea kayaking, and viewing scenery. The proposed West Coast Kayak and Skiff Trail is very close to Suemez and runs through the Ulloa Channel. Also, since this island is relatively close to population centers (Craig, Klawock and Hydaburg) it is more easily accessible by small boats and kayaks. This fact provides for more recreation/tourism potential than roadless areas that are further away.

**(2) Subsistence Uses:** Management as a wilderness would not conflict with current subsistence uses.

**(3) Fish Resources:** No fish habitat improvement projects are currently planned.

**(4) Wildlife Resources:** No wildlife habitat improvement projects are currently planned.

**(5) Timber Resources:** There are 15,060 acres inventoried as productive old-growth forest in the roadless area and 23 acres of second growth due to beach logging in the past. Of this, approximately 10,542 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), 2,904 acres or 12 percent of this roadless area are estimated to be suitable for timber production. Approximately 1,185 of the suitable acres are mapped as high-volume old growth; of these acres, 413 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. Managing the area for timber would require extending the Port Refugio road system.

**(6) Fire, Insects, and Disease:** The area has no significant fire history. Endemic tree diseases common to Southeast Alaska are present. Currently extensive areas are experiencing defoliation from western hemlock canker. Alaska cedar decline is also prevalent in forested wetland areas. Western hemlock dwarf mistletoe can be found in almost all stands.

**(7) Minerals:** This area contains an estimated 24,298 acres of undiscovered locatable mineral resources (Brew et al., 1990; USDA Forest Service, 1991); 24,259 of these acres are considered to have moderate potential development.

**(8) Transportation and Utilities:** There are no transportation or utility corridors planned in the roadless area.

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(9) **Water Availability and Use:** There are no developed recreation cabins or other facilities to create a water demand. There are no existing or planned hydroelectric or domestic water projects within the roadless area. Private residences on State land near Port Dolores may create a water demand.

(10) **Areas of Scientific Interest:** The Arena Cove/Cape Felix Special Interest Area has opportunities to study volcanic complexes, relatively recent lava flows, glacial refugia, coastal cliffs and caves, seabird colonies, coastal forests, fish, and wildlife. The mapped karst resources encompass approximately 1,865 acres or 8 percent of the roadless area.

(11) **Land Use Authorizations:** There are no major land use authorizations within the roadless area.

(12) **Land Status:** There are no private inholdings in the roadless area. The State of Alaska owns Land just north of the roadless area around Port Deloris. All other land bordering the roadless area is National Forest System land.

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

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

(a) **Interest Expressed by Local Users and Residents:** The area receives some local use for subsistence and recreation activity. There has been some interest in building a trail linking Port Refugio to the Arena Cove area. Other recreation uses include beachcombing, sea kayaking, and hunting. There is also a potential for increased ORV use on the road system to the north by hunters.

(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 Suez 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 Alaska Forest Association, the Alaska Miners Association, and the Alaska Visitors Association 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.

(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 were available for the roadless area.

(f) **Public Input Expressed During Supplemental EIS Process:** The Alaska Rainforest Campaign (a coalition of national and Alaska conservation groups) recommended Roadless Area 502 for permanent protection as LUD II. SEACC recommended the unlogged portion of Suez Island be designated as LUD II.

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. At the same hearing, the president of the Craig Community Association stated “they really can’t support any of the alternatives”.

(2) **Nearby Roadless and Wilderness Areas and Uses:** This roadless area is separated from the Aaron Roadless Area (505) and the Dall Island Roadless Area (501) by Meares Passage. Outer Islands Roadless Area

(503) lies to the north across Bucareli Bay. Kogish Roadless Areas (509), where Pt. Amagura Public Recreation Cabin and a mooring buoy are present, is located approximately 7 miles northwest. Three small wildernesses, the Coronation Island, Warren Island, and Maurelle Islands Wildernesses, lie to the north of the Outer Islands Roadless Area. Maurelle Islands Wilderness, the closest, is approximately 16 miles from this roadless area. The South Prince of Wales Wilderness is approximately 30 miles to the southeast. These areas are primarily used for recreation and subsistence.

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

Community	Air Miles	Water Miles
Juneau (Pop. 30,711)	215	230
Ketchikan (Pop. 14,070)	70	130
Wrangell (Pop. 2,308)	90	130
Petersburg (Pop. 3,324)	110	135

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

**(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System:** Suemez Roadless Area covers the majority of Suemez Island, on its south and west sides. It is mostly bordered by saltwater, except on the north and northeast, which is state land and harvested areas. The roadless area is characterized by rugged mountains near the coast and moderate to flat topography in the center. The highest elevation is slightly over 2,100 feet. The shore is very irregular, rugged, and includes several large bays, as well as cliffs and caves.

Most of the roadless area has a natural appearance. Large areas of recent harvest near the northern and northeastern boundaries have had an adverse effect on the apparent naturalness of portions of the roadless area. There is a high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation in the area, especially in the south portion.

The roadless area has moderately high scenic quality; approximately 27 percent is rated as distinctive for the character type from a visual perspective. The southwest portion of the roadless area is designated as the Arena Cove/Cape Felix Special Interest Area. It sits atop a complex of volcanic eruptions that has built up over time, the flow features and vents of the last eruption being clearly visible. Sea caves have formed where the waves batter the coastline.

The roadless area includes about 7,124 acres of high-volume, old-growth forest. Of these acres, approximately 1,250 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The majority of the Sumez Island Roadless Area is classified as being in the Southern Outer Islands and Dall Island and Vicinity Biogeographic Provinces. Approximately 82 percent of the roadless area is in the Southern Outer Island Province and makes up approximately 9 percent of the province. It is one of four inventoried roadless areas found in the province that collectively make up about 67 percent of the province. The vast majority of the province is unroaded. About 17 percent of the Southern Outer Islands Province is in small wildernesses areas (the Coronation Island, Warren Island, and Maurelle Islands Wildernesses) and about 33 percent is in Outer Islands LUD II. The remaining 18 percent of the Sumez Island Roadless Area is in the Dall Island and Vicinity Biogeographic Province and makes up approximately 2 percent province. It is one of two inventoried roadless areas found in the province that collectively make up about 58 percent of the province. There are no wilderness or LUD II areas in the Dall Island and Vicinity Province.

The Suemez Island Roadless Area lies completely within the Outer Islands Fjordlands Ecological Section and represents 8 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.

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All (100 percent) of the roadless area is in the Dall-Outside Complex Ecological Subsection and it represents 8 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 Suez Roadless Area was rated at 20 out of a possible 28 points under WARS. As such, it is ranked 53rd from the highest (along with 16 other roadless areas) among the 109 Tongass inventoried roadless areas.

There is local and national support for managing the roadless area in an unroaded condition, but there is little support for designating the area as a wilderness. Designation would create a wilderness on the Pacific Ocean; however, this would not be a unique addition to 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 roads and timber harvest. The area has moderately high scenic quality and contains some unique geologic features. Overall, the factors identified here indicate that the relative contribution of this area to the National Wilderness Preservation System would be moderate.

### **V. Environmental Consequences**

The Suez Roadless Area would be managed under the existing Forest Plan if Alternative 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7 is implemented. Approximately 54 percent of the roadless area would be managed under non-development LUDs. Timber harvest and road development could occur in the remaining 46 percent. The land in the development LUDs provides an estimated 2,904 acres that are suitable for timber production (5 percent of the suitable acres on the Craig Ranger District). Approximately 413 of the suitable acres are classified as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. The roadless area also contains an estimated 24,298 acres of undiscovered locatable mineral resources where prospecting and development could occur. Most of the acres, 24,259, are considered to have moderate potential for development. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area could be affected by the ongoing developments allowed by the Forest Plan.

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. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including the scenic 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 sale projects 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. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including the scenic and ecologic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness.

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Land Use Designation Allocations and Suitable Timber Lands by Alternative for Roadless Area 502 (in acres)								
Land Use Designation	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7	Alt 8
Recommended Wilderness								24,478
Wilderness								
Recommended Wilderness Nat. Mon.								
Wilderness National Monument								
Non-wilderness National Monument								
Research Natural Area								
Special Interest Area	9,640	9,640	9,640	9,640	9,640		9,640	
Remote Recreation								
Enacted Municipal Watershed								
Old-growth Habitat	3,627	3,627	3,627	3,627	3,627		3,627	
Semi-remote Recreation	62	62	62	62	62		62	
Recommended LUD II						24,478		
LUD II								
Wild, Scenic, Recreational River								
Experimental Forest								
Scenic Viewshed								
Modified Landscape	5,320	5,320	5,320	5,320	5,320		5,320	
Timber production	5,829	5,829	5,829	5,829	5,829		5,829	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,478</b>	<b>24,478</b>	<b>24,478</b>	<b>24,478</b>	<b>24,478</b>	<b>24,478</b>	<b>24,478</b>	<b>24,478</b>
Suitable Timber Lands	2,904	2,904	2,904	2,904	2,904	0	2,904	0