

INDIVIDUAL ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTION

ROADLESS AREA NAME: McKenzie (519)

ACRES (NFS): 80,650

BIOGEOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: North Central Prince of Wales Island

ECOLOGICAL SECTION: Kupreanof Lowlands, Prince of Wales Mountains

2003 WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTE RATING: 22 (24)

I. Overview and Description

(1) **Location and Access:** The McKenzie Roadless Area is located on the east-central part of Prince of Wales Island, approximately 25 air miles west of Ketchikan. It is mostly bounded on the east by Clarence Strait, on the north by Skowl Arm and Kasaan Bay, on the west by roaded areas, and on the south by Cholmondeley Sound. An area on the southeast side of Cholmondeley Sound, around Chasina Point, is also included. Access is by the Alaska Marine Highway System through Hollis (which lies approximately 8 miles to the northwest), by the extensive road system on the west side of the roadless area, and by boat or floatplane from Kasaan Bay, Skowl Arm, or Cholmondeley Sound. There are no places suitable for landing wheeled aircraft. Access to upland areas is by foot or helicopter.

(2) **History:** The Polk Inlet and Twelvemile Arm areas were important locales of traditional use by the Haida Alaska Native people and before them, by prehistoric cultures. The Kaigani Haida are recognized as having the rights to much of the lower half of Prince of Wales Island at historic contact (USDA Forest Service, 1995). The two remaining Haida villages are located just outside the roadless area at Hydaburg and Kasaan. Paul Bight, at the mouth of McKenzie Inlet on Old Tom Creek, was the location of a reported Haida village (USDA Forest Service, 1995). All of McKenzie Inlet was used for trapping and berry picking. All of Cholmondeley Sound was reported to have been used for fishing, trapping, and hunting (USDA Forest Service, 1995). The Haida Native Corporation made large land entitlement selections along the southwestern boundary of the roadless area along Cholmondeley Sound and Sulzer Portage. The Kavilco Village Corporation owns land along the northern border of the area. The east coastal portion of the McKenzie Roadless Area has a rich chronology of prehistoric and historic use by humans.

The McKenzie area and Kasaan Bay have historically been the entry to Prince of Wales Island. The community of Hollis lies approximately 8 miles northwest of the roadless area. Hollis began as a mining community, but it soon became the boat entry terminal through Kasaan Bay. Currently, Hollis is the only ferry stop on Prince of Wales Island. Mining, trading/supply, boat repair, and, more recently, timber and tourism have been the influences on the McKenzie area. A number of cultural resource sites were identified in the area during literature reviews and surveys for the Polk Inlet, Chasina, and Chomondeley projects (USDA Forest Service, 1995; 1998; 2000).

(3) **Geography and Topography:** The area is characterized by moderate to rugged topography. Most of this roadless area consists of rolling terrain; however, there are a few high ridges with elevations to above 3,000 feet. Streams in the area are generally short; however, Sunny Creek is about 5 miles in length and the Clover Creek and Lake System is about 6 miles in length. Old Tom Creek is about 3 miles long. Alpine acres total 633 and 4,623 acres are rock. Freshwater lakes are abundant in the eastern lobe of the area; they cover approximately 1,434 acres. The area is almost completely surrounded by saltwater and there are 141 miles of saltwater shoreline. The area includes 290 islands and islets (12 of these are greater than 10 acres) totaling 5,622 acres.

(4) **Ecosystem:**

(a) **Classification:** Biogeographic Province. The area is classified as being in the North Central Prince of Wales Island Biogeographic Province. This province is characterized by relatively gentle

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topography; limestone soils are fairly common, and precipitation is relatively low due to interception by lands to the south and southwest. Karst topography and caves are often present.

Ecological Section/Subsection. The McKenzie Roadless Area is contained within the Kupreanof Lowlands Ecological Section (M247G) and the Prince of Wales Mountains Ecological Section (M247I). These areas are represented by three ecological subsections (see table below). The Skowl Arm Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection (68% of roadless area) is characterized by rolling hills with large expanses of exposed granitic bedrock in the southern half and glacial till deposits underlain by sedimentary and volcanic bedrock in the northern half. The poorly drained soils support vast forested and non-forested wetland complexes that comprise more than half the landcover. The well-drained soils of the hillslopes support hemlock and spruce-hemlock forests. Terrain in the Hetta Inlet Metasediments Ecological Subsection (25% of roadless area) rises from deep fjords to sedimentary and volcanic peaks over 3,000 feet in elevation. Soils in the lowlands, lying over poorly drained glacial till, support wetlands. Productive forests are rare in the Hetta Inlet Metasediments Ecological Subsection. The Central Prince of Wales Volcanics Ecological Subsection (7% of roadless area) is mostly comprised of volcanic bedrock. The well drained till soils of the lower elevations support moderate to highly productive hemlock and hemlock-spruce forests which comprise more than half the landcover (Nowacki et al., 2001).

| Ecological Section | Ecological Subsection | Percent of Roadless Area |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Kupreanof Lowlands | Skowl Arm Till Lowlands | 68% |
| Prince of Wales Mountains | Hetta Inlet Metasediments | 25% |
| | Central Prince of Wales Volcanics | 7% |

(b) Soils: These highly organic, low clay content soils are generally formed over bedrock and are typically about 40 inches deep.

(c) Vegetation: This area is typical Southeast Alaska coastal temperate rain forest. The forest is primarily western hemlock and Sitka spruce with large components of cedar. Approximately 143 acres of muskeg are mapped for the area; however, due to their small size and association with forested sites, accurate acreage estimates are difficult.

There are approximately 71,361 acres mapped as forestland, of which 30,391 acres or 43 percent are mapped as productive old-growth forest. Of the productive old growth, 12,674 acres or 42 percent are mapped as high-volume old-growth forest. The productive old growth includes about 6,549 acres of high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. There are also 500 acres of second growth resulting from older beach logging and recent helicopter harvest along McKenzie Inlet.

(d) Fish Resources: The Anadromous Waters Catalogue (ADF&G, 2000) identified numerous fish bearing streams in this area, including upper Dog Salmon Creek, Sunny Creek, Clover Creek, Monie Lake and Streams, Spiral Creek, Omar Creek, and Old Tom Creek. These waters support runs of coho, pink, chum, and sockeye salmon, steelhead and cutthroat trout, and Dolly Varden char. Chinook salmon are present in marine waters adjacent to the area, but do not spawn in the streams (USDA Forest Service, 2000). Lake stocking was likely conducted in the Old Tom drainage and Clover lake area.

(e) Wildlife Resources: This area has high populations of Sitka black-tailed deer, black bear, wolves, otter, marten, mink, and common waterfowl. Brown bear, moose, and mountain goats are not known to inhabit this area. The area north of Monie Lake and south of Trollers Cove is an important wildlife travel corridor (USDA Forest Service, 2000).

(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 LUDs are Timber Production, Modified Landscape, Old-growth Habitat, Research Natural Area, and Semi-remote Recreation.

| LUD | Acres |
|------------------------|--------|
| Timber Production | 36,005 |
| Modified Landscape | 8,679 |
| Old-growth Habitat | 31,008 |
| Research Natural Area | 4,346 |
| Semi-remote Recreation | 611 |

Approximately 55 percent of this area was allocated to development LUDs (Timber Production and Modified Landscape). The Timber Production LUD was assigned to approximately 45 percent of the roadless area. Land allocated to the Modified Landscape LUD are along the West Arm of Cholmondeley Sound and around Sunny Creek, and make up approximately 11 percent of the roadless area.

The McKenzie Roadless Area contains three non-development LUDs (Old-growth Habitat, Research Natural Area, and Semi-remote Recreation), which account for approximately 45 percent of the roadless area. Approximately 38 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Old-Growth-Habitat LUD and is a part of the Forest-wide wildlife conservation strategy. Land around Old Tom Creek was allocated to the Research Natural Area LUD and totals approximately 5 percent of the roadless area. Old Tom Creek Research Natural Area was established in 1951 as an example of cedar-hemlock old-growth forest. The islands in saltwater surrounding the roadless area were allocated to the Semi-remote Recreation LUD and account for approximately 1 percent of the roadless area.

The McKenzie Inlet area is the site of recent active timber sales associated with the Polk Inlet Project (USDA Forest Service, 1995). This project resulted in recent harvest and road construction in the Polk Inlet and McKenzie Inlet portions of the area. Plans are being prepared for new timber sales that could extend into the McKenzie Roadless Area from existing roaded and harvested areas. The Chasina Project (USDA Forest Service, 1998) is located on the southeast side of Cholmondeley Sound near Chasina Point. A Draft EIS has been published for new sales north of Cholmondeley Sound, which is referred to as the Cholmondeley Timber Sales EIS (USDA Forest Service, 2000).

Dispersed recreation is also an important use in this area. Because of fishing opportunities and proximity of the area to Ketchikan, the saltwater inlets and bays receive many visitors. Saltery Cove, along the north edge of the roadless area, includes private lands that have eight year-round residents, seasonal residents, and the Sportsman Cove Lodge. Swan Lake, which is located south and east of the lodge, is used by lodge clients and residents for recreation. One public recreation use cabin operated by the Forest Service is located at Trollers Cove on the northeast side of the area; the cove also has a mooring buoy. A permitted floating fishing lodge is moored seasonally in Clover Bay on the east side of the roadless area. A small tract of private land, containing six homes used by seasonal and year-round residents, is adjacent to the southern boundary of the roadless area on Sunny Cove. Some of the residents operate a mariculture facility in the southwest portion of the cove. Fish habitat improvement is an ongoing activity; however, the only fish ladder currently in this area is on Sunny Creek.

(6) Appearance (Apparent Naturalness): Although land within the roadless area generally appears natural, the overall natural appearance of the western portion of the area is affected by the irregular boundary pattern caused by past and recent developments for timber management. This primarily affects the peninsula between Polk and McKenzie Inlets, the small peninsula on Chasina Point, and the small southwestern lobe of the area which lies just north of Sulzer Portage. The eastern half of the area north of Cholmondeley Sound is largely unaffected by developments.

(7) Surroundings (External Influences): The area is bounded by saltwater along the majority of its east, south, and north sides. The western and southwestern boundaries are defined largely by developed areas. Timber management is active on both National Forest System and Native Corporation lands to the west and southwest of the area. Saltwater shorelines of this area receive higher use by people than most other unroaded places on Prince of Wales Island because of their proximity to Hollis, the Prince of Wales Island road system, and the proximity of the area to Ketchikan. Active fishing and recreation lodges are located in Saltery Cove on the north and Clover Bay on the east. Year-round and seasonal residents live at Saltery Cove and at Sunny Cove, on the south.

(8) Attractions and Features of Special Interest: The natural features of the McKenzie Roadless Area, the scenery, the saltwater bays and inlets, and the opportunity to see wildlife are all attractions. The saltwater salmon

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fishing adjacent to the area is a major attraction to people in the vicinity of this roadless area. The lodges at Saltery Cove and Clover Bay, on the edges of the area, attract many clients during the summer. The area contains 25 inventoried recreation places, which cover 59,628 acres, or 74 percent of the roadless area.

(9) Differences between the 1989 and 2003 Roadless Area Boundary: The McKenzie Roadless Area was part of two areas from the 1989 roadless area map. Most of the area was originally part of the much larger Polk Roadless Area identified in 1989. Because of ongoing developments in the area since then, the Polk Roadless Area was divided into three separate areas: Kasaan Bay, McKenzie, and Twelvemile Roadless Areas. The McKenzie Roadless Area is the largest of the three; however, recent developments (particularly in the Rock Creek, Polk Creek, Omar Creek, and Polk Inlet areas) have reduced the size of this portion of the area relative to its size in the original Polk Roadless Area. Several smaller areas near the developed boundaries have been excluded 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 land within the roadless area remains in a natural condition. However, the overall natural appearance of the western portion of the area is affected by the irregular pattern of intrusion caused by past and recent road construction and harvest activity. This primarily affects the peninsula between Polk and McKenzie Inlets, the small area south of Cholmondeley Sound, and the small southwestern lobe of the area which lies just north of Sulzer Portage. The eastern half of the area north of Cholmondeley Sound is largely unaffected by developments; however, a lodge and small community are located at Saltery Cove on the north, an active fishing lodge is located in Clover Bay on the east, and a small community is located adjacent to the southern border at Sunny Cove. Mining developments originating from the Khayyam Mine extend from saltwater to the ridge top at the head of McKenzie Inlet. The overall area has high natural integrity and apparent naturalness because it is large enough to absorb effects of most nearby developments and activities. The eastern part of the peninsula has very high natural integrity and apparent naturalness.

(2) Opportunity for Solitude and Serenity, Self-reliance, Adventure, Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation: The opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation within this roadless area is very high throughout the area. In the western half, because of the sights and sounds of nearby intermittent management activities, the sounds of boat use in the bays, and the good chance of encountering other people along the streams, the opportunity is somewhat reduced, but the relatively large size of the area allows these effects to be absorbed.

The opportunities for primitive recreation are related to the many saltwater and upland recreation sites and the diverse terrain that breaks up the area into many isolated bays and upland lake basins. The eastern half of this area is especially suitable for primitive recreation opportunities. However, many of the larger bays (i.e., Saltery Cove, Clover Bay, and Sunny Cove) contain developments with seasonal or year-round residents. The topography of the area makes travel challenging, the presence of black bears presents a degree of challenge, and the remoteness of inland portions of the area presents a need for woods skills and experience.

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) | 57,934 | 72% |
| Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM) | 15,546 | 19% |
| Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM) | 127 | 0% |
| Roaded Modified (RM) | 6,493 | 8% |
| Rural (R) | 469 | 1% |

The area contains 25 inventoried recreation places, which cover 59,628 acres, or 74 percent of the roadless area.

| ROS Class | # of Rec. Places* | Total Acres |
|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| P | 12 | 43,839 |
| SPNM | 7 | 10,476 |
| SPM | 1 | 127 |
| RM | 8 | 4,717 |
| R | 2 | 469 |

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

Because of excellent fishing and proximity of the area to Ketchikan, the saltwater inlets and bays receive many visitors. One public recreation use cabin and a saltwater mooring buoy are located at Trollers Cove, a lodge is located on private land at Saltery Cove, and a permitted floating fishing lodge is located in Clover Bay.

The Sportsman Cove Lodge is located on private land along the north edge of the roadless area, near Saltery Cove. Swan Lake, located south and east of the lodge, is used by lodge clients and residents for recreation. Some residents adjacent to the southern boundary of the roadless area on Sunny Cove operate a mariculture facility in the southwest portion of the cove.

(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 Polk 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 McKenzie Roadless Area (which is a subset of the original Polk Roadless Area) was given a rating of 22. The difference in ratings is due to dividing the Polk Roadless Area into three roadless areas, of which McKenzie is one. Because the eastern half of the McKenzie area, north of Cholmondeley Sound, could be separated from the remaining more highly affected area, a separate WARS score was calculated. The WARS rating for the eastern half would increase to 24.

(4) Ecologic and Geologic Values: The McKenzie Roadless Area is not directly connected to any other roadless areas on Prince of Wales Island; it is separated from them by roaded areas or saltwater inlets and sounds. The area contains patchy areas of productive old-growth forest; these areas are fragmented by muskeg, fens, scrub-shrub wetlands, forested wetlands, alpine shrublands, and lakes and ponds. The largest blocks of old growth are in the Goose Bay, Old Tom Creek, Sunny Cove, Monie Lake, and Saltery Cove watersheds and along McKenzie Inlet and the West Arm of Cholmondeley Sound.

(a) Fish Resources: The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) listed VCUs 674, 675, and 679, all along Cholmondeley Sound, as primary salmon producers. The rest of this roadless area is listed as a secondary salmon producer and no VCUs are listed as primary sport fish producers.

The Anadromous Waters Catalogue (ADF&G, 2000) identified numerous fish-bearing streams in this area, including upper Dog Salmon Creek, Sunny Creek, Clover Creek, Monie Lake and Streams, Spiral Creek, Omar Creek, and Old Tom Creek. These waters support runs of coho, pink, chum, and sockeye salmon, steelhead and cutthroat trout, and Dolly Varden char. Chinook salmon are present in marine waters adjacent to the area, but do not spawn in the streams (USDA Forest Service, 2000). Sunny Creek, which provides habitat for coho, pink, and sockeye salmon as well as steelhead trout, has the highest escapement

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of pink and chum salmon within the area, receiving an estimated peak escapement of 49,200 pink salmon annually (USDA Forest Service, 2000). Monie Lake and Old Tom Creek have the highest fish species diversity in this area, with habitat for sockeye, coho, pink, and chum salmon, as well as Dolly Varden char. Monie lake provides habitat for cutthroat trout as well, while Old Tom Creek has a run of steelhead (ADF&G, 2000).

A fishpass was completed on Sunny Creek in 1984 to increase habitat for pink salmon (USDA Forest Service, 2000). Another fishpass adjacent to this area was completed on Dog Salmon Creek in 1989.

(b) Wildlife Resources: This area has high populations of Sitka black-tailed deer, black bear, wolves, otter, marten, mink, and common waterfowl. Based on harvest data compiled from 1985 to 1994, VCU 619, which covers the northwestern portion of the area along Polk Inlet, was identified among the top 25 percent of black bear harvest areas on the Tongass (ADF&G, 1998). The largest patches of marten habitat occur in the largest old-growth blocks (see above under II-4). Sensitive species that potentially occur here include Peale's peregrine falcon, Queen Charlotte goshawk, and trumpeter swans, which have been reported in the Saltery Cove area. Brown bear, moose, and mountain goats are not known to inhabit this area (MacDonald and Cook, 1999).

The area north of Monie Lake and south of Trollers Cove is an important wildlife corridor (USDA Forest Service, 2000). The Rock Creek and Omar Creek Corridors are considered important wildlife corridors connecting the area along Cholmondeley Sound with the areas along Polk Inlet and McKenzie Inlet, respectively, and Old Tom/McKenzie/Goose Bay and Sunny Creek/North Shore Cholmondeley Sound are considered important as old-growth blocks and corridors (USDA Forest Service, 1996).

(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. 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 low to mid- vulnerability karst in the southern portion of this roadless area along the West Arm of Cholmondeley Sound west of Sunny Cove. The mapped karst resources represent 131 acres of medium to low vulnerability karst or less than 1 percent of the roadless area. There are no glaciers or unique geologic features known in this area.

(5) Scientific and Educational Values: The Old Tom Creek Research Natural Area, covering approximately 4,346 acres, was established in 1951 as an example of cedar-hemlock old-growth forest. It also includes some examples of riparian spruce forest, extensive tidal meadows, and dense bald eagle and black bear populations.

(6) Scenic Values: The area is part of the Coastal Hills Character Type and is characterized by moderately steep landforms, predominantly rounded summits, elevations above 3,000 feet, and flat-floored U-shaped valleys. This area exhibits a wide variety of landscape features present in this character type including prominent peaks, rolling terrain diverse lake basins, and rugged shorelines. Most of this area is seen as a natural landscape, especially when viewing from the mouth of Skowl Arm, Kasaan Bay, Clarence Strait, and Cholmondeley Sound. Surrounding timber harvest activities might be seen from Polk Inlet and McKenzie Inlet, and small groups of residences or lodges can be seen in Saltery Cove, Clover Bay, and Sunny Cove. The extensive developments on private lands to the north and south have a significant effect on the scenic values.

Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas identified by the Forest Plan, that are within or adjacent to the area, include saltwater use areas in West Arm Cholmondeley Sound, Sunny Cove, and about 1 mile west of Skowl Arm to the entrance of Cholmondeley; the Sunny Cove and Saltery Cove communities; the Trollers Cove public recreation cabin; and Goose Bay and Clover Bay boat anchorages.

Most of this area, about 70 percent, was rated as Variety Class B and possesses landscape diversity common for the character type. About 29 percent of the area were inventoried as Variety Class A, indicating a landscape diversity unique for the character type. The Variety Class A landscapes include the head of Polk Inlet from the estuary up to the Barren Mountain-Rock Butte Ridge (although much of this area is now outside the roadless area) and the landscapes along the east side of the area between Cholmondeley Sound and Skowl Arm. The Polk Inlet area is unique in that it exhibits low elevations, but very rugged and diverse terrain, including a variety of different lake basins surrounded by steep slopes and rock cliffs. The shoreline of Skowl Arm and Cholmondeley Sound is very irregular and possesses many scenic coves.

Most of this area, approximately 89 percent, was inventoried in the Type I Existing Visual Condition, where the natural landscape has remained unaltered by human activity. The remaining 10 percent of land in this area is in a moderately to heavily altered visual condition, Type III, IV, or V, due to past timber harvest.

(7) Social, Cultural, and Historical Values: The Polk Inlet and Twelvemile Arm areas were important locales of traditional use by the Haida Alaska Native people and before them, by prehistoric cultures. The Kaigani Haida are recognized as having the rights to much of the lower half of Prince of Wales Island at historic contact (USDA Forest Service, 1995). The two remaining Haida villages are located just outside the roadless area at Hydaburg and Kasaan. Paul Bight, at the mouth of McKenzie Inlet on Old Tom Creek, was the location of a reported Haida village (USDA Forest Service, 1995). The east coastal portion of the McKenzie Roadless Area has a rich chronology of prehistoric and historic use by humans.

The McKenzie area has historically been the entry to Prince of Wales Island. The community of Hollis lies approximately 8 miles northwest of the roadless area. Hollis began as a mining community, but it soon became the boat entry terminal through Kasaan Bay. Currently, Hollis is the only Alaska Marine Highway stop on Prince of Wales Island. Mining, trading/supply, boat repair, and, more recently, timber and tourism, have been the influences on the McKenzie area. Saltwater shorelines of this area currently receive higher use by people than most other unroaded places on Prince of Wales Island because of their proximity to Hollis and the Prince of Wales Island road system. Because of excellent fishing and proximity of the area to Ketchikan, the saltwater inlets and bays receive many visitors. Active fishing and recreation lodges are located in Saltery Cove on the north and Clover Bay on the east. Year-round and seasonal residents live at Saltery Cove and at Sunny Cove, on the south.

Available information indicates that substantial subsistence activities occur in the area, especially along the extensive saltwater shorelines of the area. The area is important to residents of Saltery Cove and Sunny Cove, as well as other Prince of Wales Island communities, including Hollis and Kasaan. VCUs 674, 675, and 679, all along Cholmondeley Sound, were listed among the VCUs with the highest community fish and wildlife values by ADF&G (1998). VCUs 618 and 620, along Skowl Arm, were listed in the second and third most important groups of VCUs. VCUs 618, 619, and 620, along Skowl Arm, were listed among those VCUs with the highest sensitivity to disturbance of subsistence use areas (ADF&G, 1998).

(8) Manageability as Wilderness and Boundary Conditions/Changes: The boundaries of the area are mostly natural, consisting of saltwater inlets, bays, and straits. However, the western boundary consists of developed areas, many of which penetrate the roadless area; the southern boundaries of the Chasina Point portion of the area also consist of developed areas. Because of fragmentation, the proximity of active timber management, and the presence of the Old Tom Creek Research Natural Area (which would not be consistent with wilderness designation), the western portion of the area could be difficult to manage as wilderness. The portion of the area east of McKenzie Inlet and east of and including the Sunny Cove watershed (north of Cholmondeley Sound), would be very manageable as wilderness, although the fishing lodge permit at Clover Bay and the lodge and communities at Saltery and Sunny Coves could affect the wilderness qualities of the eastern half of the area.

III. Availability for Management as Wilderness

(1) Recreation, including Tourism Potential: There is great opportunity to manage this area for developed and dispersed recreation in a semi-primitive to primitive setting. There are opportunity and an identified need for trails in the west half of this area. The potential is very good for land or water-based fishing resorts. There is also good potential for trail development from the many protected coves along the east side.

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The proximity of this area to Hollis, the Prince of Wales Island road system, and Ketchikan and the variety of recreation opportunities offered by the area have caused recreation management to be highlighted in the long-term planning for management of this area. There is considerable private sector interest in developing commercial fishing resorts on the saltwater fringe, as has been exhibited by lodges at Saltery Cove and Clover Bay.

- (2) **Subsistence Uses:** The existing patterns of subsistence activities in the area would not be affected by wilderness designation or management in an unroaded condition.
- (3) **Fish Resources:** A fishpass was completed on Sunny Creek in 1984 to increase habitat for pink salmon (USDA Forest Service, 2000). Another fishpass adjacent to this area was completed on Dog Salmon Creek in 1989. A recently completed fish habitat inventory indicates that there is excellent potential for salmon enhancement projects, such as constructing fish passes, on several of the streams within the area.
- (4) **Wildlife Resources:** There are no long-range plans for wildlife habitat improvement projects.
- (5) **Timber Resources:** There are 30,391 acres mapped as productive old growth in the roadless area. In addition, 500 acres mapped as second-growth forest have resulted from beach and helicopter logging. Of these acres, 19,172 acres are categorized as tentatively suitable for timber production. Based on the Forest Plan LUDs assigned to this area (and estimated falldown and scheduling reduction factors), 4,849 acres, or 6 percent, of this roadless area are estimated to be suitable for timber production. Approximately 1,469 of the suitable acres are mapped as high-volume old growth; of these acres, 559 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

Timber harvest has been occurring along much of the perimeter of the roadless area for many years causing it to shrink in size. The Polk Inlet Project (USDA Forest Service, 1995) has recently been implemented in the Polk Inlet and McKenzie Inlet portions of the roadless area. Good potential exists to manage much of the west half of the area for its timber potential. Two timber sale projects are planned for the eastern portion of the area: the Cholmondeley Project (USDA Forest Service, 2000) to the north of Cholmondeley Sound and the Chasina Project (USDA Forest Service, 1998) to the south. The Chasina project is being implemented, and the Cholmondeley EIS is expected to be finalized in 2003. It proposes developments in the vicinity of Sunny Cove, Saltery Cove, and Clover Bay.
- (6) **Fire, Insects, and Disease:** The area has no significant fire history, insects, and disease. Endemic tree diseases common to Southeast Alaska are present.
- (7) **Minerals:** Mineral development potential is very low. There are 11 mining claims registered with the Bureau of Land Management near Cholmondeley Sound; however, there are no patented claims in the area (USDA Forest Service, 2000). McKenzie was the site of considerable mineral development around 1900. The community of Kiam existed at the head of McKenzie Inlet, which serviced a mining operation at the top of the ridge (the mine portal is actually inside the roadless area); there was even a post office. A tramway, complete with rail and telegraph lines, is visible along the east side of Omar creek. Ore cars are still present along the tramway, and a steam donkey resides at the end of the tram. The majority of this development is not in the roadless areas as mapped but does continue up the mountain and into the area somewhat. Old partial-cut timber harvest activities all along the beach on the west side of the inlet, within the roadless area, are very obvious to those on the ground. Many large stumps are present, and some trees were felled and bucked, but were unyarded.

This area contains 19,816 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). In addition, this area contains an estimated 80,650 acres of undiscovered locatable mineral resources (Brew et al., 1990; USDA Forest Service, 1991); 2,655 of these acres are considered to have moderate to high potential for development.

- (8) **Transportation and Utilities:** No transportation or utility corridors are planned for this area other than for the harvest of local timber.
- (9) **Water Availability and Use:** The area's water demand comes from the public recreation cabin at Trollers Cove, in addition to the small communities at Saltery and Sunny Coves and the fishing lodge at Clover Bay. These

areas have relatively small water systems with minimal effect on the roadless area. There are no other existing or planned hydroelectric or domestic water projects within the roadless area.

(10) Areas of Scientific Interest: Old Tom Creek Research Natural Area, covering approximately 4,500 acres, is in this roadless area. Historic uses and timber harvest activities in McKenzie are of interest. Management as wilderness may restrict the research activities. The mapped karst resources encompass approximately 131 acres or less than one percent of the roadless area.

(11) Land Use Authorizations: There is a permitted floating fishing lodge in Clover Bay.

(12) Land Status: Approximately 174 acres, primarily located along the perimeter of the area, are non-National Forest System lands. This roadless area contains three areas of encumbered lands. These encumbered lands are adjacent to private land owned by the Sealaska Corporation and the Kootznoowoo Village Corporation. Private and State land conveyances have influenced the boundary of this roadless area.

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 and recreation activity. Significant concern has been expressed by residents and users of Sunny Cove, Saltery Cove, and Clover Bay regarding the potential effects the timber sales proposed in the Cholmondeley EIS could have on their water systems, scenic related values, and tourism-related income.

(b) Congressional Interest: Two bills from the U.S. House of Representatives included wilderness proposals for Southeast Alaska. In 1989, HR 987 did not include this area. In 2001, HR 2908 did not propose the area for wilderness, but did propose it to be classified as a Congressionally Designated LUD II area and managed in an unroaded condition.

(c) Public Input During Forest Plan Revision and Appeals: No specific recommendations for wilderness were made. Some comments wanted McKenzie Inlet to be left alone since Polk Inlet had been heavily logged. Some comments wanted Cholmondeley Sound to be managed for recreation. Other commenters wanted no timber harvest in VCUs 618-620. Others wanted the roadless area to be in timber production.

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

(e) Public Input Expressed for Project-level EISs and Other Input: Some comments on the Polk Inlet Project desired no new roads in the project area, including the roadless area. Others supported continued timber harvest and road development. Some comments relative to the Cholmondeley Project opposed roads and logging because of the effects they would have on domestic water sources, subsistence, wildlife, tourism, and other resources; most residents of Saltery and Sunny Cove and the floating lodge at Clover Bay opposed roads and timber harvest in this area because of the potential effects on them.

(f) Public Input Expressed During Supplemental EIS Process: The U.S. Department of the Interior identified this roadless area as having important fish and wildlife habitat and populations; although not a top priority for protection, it ranked in their top third among all roadless areas.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game rated the McKenzie roadless area (VCUs 615, 616, 617, 675, and 676) as the fifth highest priority for protection on Prince of Wales Island and Adjacent Islands. This rating is based on the VCUs with the highest value fish and wildlife resources needing additional protection. VCUs are prioritized for their very high productivity, essential role in connectivity, and/or very high value as community use areas.

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SEACC recommended this area be designated as LUD II. The Alaska Rainforest Campaign (a coalition of national and Alaska conservation groups) recommended Roadless Area 519 for permanent protection as LUD II. Audubon Alaska recommended that Cholmondeley should be protected from logging and road building.

The owners of the Clover Bay Lodge recommended that the Cholmondeley area be designated as LUD II. The communities of Saltery Cove, Sunny Cove, West Arm Cannery, and Sportsman's Cove Lodge and Clover Bay Lodge passed a joint resolution calling for LUD II designation of VCU 519 and supporting Alternative 6 in general. A number of other individual commenters identified the Cholmondeley area as an area in need of protection.

(2) Nearby Roadless and Wilderness Areas and Uses: The McKenzie Roadless Area is not directly connected to any other unroaded areas. It is located across Cholmondeley Sound from parts of the Eudora Roadless Area (507). It is separated from the nearby Kasaan Bay (536) and Twelvemile (534) Roadless Areas by developed areas. The Karta Wilderness is 10 miles to the northwest, and the South Prince of Wales Wilderness is 10 miles to the south.

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

| Community | Air Miles | Water Miles |
|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Juneau (Pop. 30,711) | 215 | 235 |
| Ketchikan (Pop.14,070) | 25 | 25 |
| Wrangell (Pop. 2,308) | 75 | 90 |
| Petersberg (Pop. 3,324) | 100 | 115 |

Hollis, located on Prince of Wales Island, is the nearest stop on the Alaska Marine Highway.

(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System: The McKenzie Roadless Area is located on the east-central part of Prince of Wales Island. It is mostly bounded on the east by Clarence Strait, on the north by Skowl Arm and Kasaan Bay, on the west by roaded areas, and on the south by Cholmondeley Sound. An area on the southeast side of Cholmondeley Sound, around Chasina Point, is also included. The McKenzie Roadless Area is characterized by moderate to rugged topography. Most of this roadless area consists of rolling terrain; however, there are a few high ridges with elevations to above 3,000 feet. The area is almost completely surrounded by saltwater including several large bays and inlets.

The majority of the McKenzie Roadless Area is unmodified and in a natural condition. However, the western portion and the Chasina Point portion are heavily influenced by nearby developments. The area has high natural integrity and apparent naturalness. The eastern portion has very high natural integrity and apparent naturalness. The opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation is very high in the area.

The area has moderate to high scenic quality; approximately 29 percent of the landscape was considered distinctive from a scenery standpoint. The Old Tom Creek Research Natural Area is part of the roadless area. There is some karst development in the area. Small communities and/or commercial lodges are located in Saltery Cove near the north boundary, Clover Bay on the east boundary, and Sunny Cove on the south boundary.

The roadless area includes about 12,674 acres of high-volume, old-growth forest. Of these acres, approximately 6,549 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The McKenzie Roadless Area is classified as being primarily in the North Central Prince of Wales Island Biogeographic Province and makes up about 5 percent of the province. It is one of 15 inventoried roadless areas found within the province, which make up about 44 percent of the province. The Karta River Wilderness makes up about 3 percent of the province, and three designated LUD II areas (Mt. Calder-Mt. Holbrook, Pt. Baker-Port Protection, and Salmon Bay) make up about 5 percent of the province.

The McKenzie Roadless Area lies within two ecological sections; it represents 5 percent of the Kupreanof Lowlands Ecological Section and 3 percent of the Prince of Wales Mountains Ecological Section. Both of these ecological sections contain relatively small areas in existing wilderness (1 and 8 percent, respectively) and existing LUD II (1 and 3 percent, respectively), but are well represented by other existing non-development LUDs (33 and 22 percent, respectively).

The majority (68 percent) of the roadless area is in the Skowl Arm Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 62 percent of the entire ecological subsection, none of which is in existing wilderness or LUD II, but 29 percent is protected by other existing non-development LUDs. One-quarter (25 percent) of the roadless area lies in the Hetta Inlet Metasediments Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 9 percent of the entire ecological subsection, 2 percent of which is in existing wilderness, 9 percent in existing LUD II, and 14 percent is protected by other existing non-development LUDs. The remaining 7 percent of the roadless area is in the Central Prince of Wales Volcanics Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 1 percent of the entire ecological subsection. Approximately 8 percent of this ecological subsection is located in existing wilderness and another 23 percent is protected by other existing non-development LUDs.

The McKenzie Roadless Area was rated 22 out of a possible 28 points under WARS. As such, its WARS rating is ranked 38th from the highest (along with 8 other roadless areas) among the 109 Tongass inventoried roadless areas. Another rating was done for the eastern portion of the area, which resulted in a score of 24.

There is both local and national support for managing the roadless area in an unroaded condition and some support for congressional designation as wilderness. Designation would create a wilderness heavily influenced on the western portion and on Chasina Point, and would include the Old Tom Research Natural Area on the western portion, and would provide for non-development in the vicinity of Saltery Cove, Clover Bay, and Sunny Cove. The degree of timber harvest in adjacent lands adds importance to the old growth within the roadless area. Designation of the area also would add Congressional protection to about 62 percent of the Skowl Arm Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection, none of which is in existing wilderness or LUD II. Overall, the factors identified here indicate that the relative contribution of this area to the National Wilderness Preservation System would be moderate for the entire area and relatively high for the eastern portion.

V. Environmental Consequences

The McKenzie Roadless Area would be managed under the existing Forest Plan if Alternative 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7 is implemented. Approximately 45 percent of the roadless area would be managed under non-development LUDs. Timber harvest and road development could occur within the remaining 55 percent of the roadless area. The land in the development LUDs includes an estimated 4,849 acres that are suitable for timber production (8 percent of the suitable acres on the Craig Ranger District). Approximately 559 of the suitable acres are classified as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. This area contains 19,816 acres of land identified as a mineral activity tract having a high potential for experiencing mineral exploration and development of locatable minerals. In addition, this area contains an estimated 80,650 acres of undiscovered locatable mineral resources; 2,655 of these acres are considered to have moderate to high potential for development. The recreation, minerals, research, and special use programs would continue. Timber harvest planning in the area would continue. The adjacent communities and/or lodges could be affected by future timber harvest activities and development. The values associated with the natural settings of the area could be affected by ongoing activities allowed by the Forest Plan.

Under Alternative 6, the entire roadless area would be converted to Recommended LUD II. The ongoing recreational use, special uses, research, and minerals programs could continue similar to current conditions. No timber harvest would be allowed. The adjacent communities and/or lodges would not be affected. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including the scenic, old growth, commercial recreation, and karst values, would be provided long-term protection if designated LUD II. Designation of the area also would add Congressional protection to about 62 percent of the Skowl Arm Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection, none of which is in existing wilderness or LUD II.

Under Alternative 8, the entire roadless area would be converted to Recommended Wilderness LUD. No timber harvest would be allowed. The ongoing recreational use, special uses, and mineral management could be restricted. Current operations by the adjacent communities and/or lodges would not likely be affected unless they desired

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expanded recreation development or uses within the area. Mineral prospecting 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, old growth, commercial recreation, and karst values, would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness. Designation of the area also would add Congressional protection to about 62 percent of the Skowl Arm Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection, none of which is in existing wilderness or LUD II.

| Land Use Designation Allocations and Suitable Timber Lands by Alternative for Roadless Area 519 (in acres) | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Land Use Designation | Alt 1 | Alt 2 | Alt 3 | Alt 4 | Alt 5 | Alt 6 | Alt 7 | Alt 8 |
| Recommended Wilderness | | | | | | | | 80,650 |
| Wilderness | | | | | | | | |
| Recommended Wilderness Nat. Mon. | | | | | | | | |
| Wilderness National Monument | | | | | | | | |
| Non-wilderness National Monument | | | | | | | | |
| Research Natural Area | 4,346 | 4,346 | 4,346 | 4,346 | 4,346 | | 4,346 | |
| Special Interest Area | | | | | | | | |
| Remote Recreation | | | | | | | | |
| Enacted Municipal Watershed | | | | | | | | |
| Old-growth Habitat | 31,008 | 31,008 | 31,008 | 31,008 | 31,008 | | 31,008 | |
| Semi-remote Recreation | 611 | 611 | 611 | 611 | 611 | | 611 | |
| Recommended LUD II | | | | | | 80,650 | | |
| LUD II | | | | | | | | |
| Wild, Scenic, Recreational River | | | | | | | | |
| Experimental Forest | | | | | | | | |
| Scenic Viewshed | | | | | | | | |
| Modified Landscape | 8,679 | 8,679 | 8,679 | 8,679 | 8,679 | | 8,679 | |
| Timber production | 36,005 | 36,005 | 36,005 | 36,005 | 36,005 | | 36,005 | |
| TOTAL | 80,650 | 80,650 | 80,650 | 80,650 | 80,650 | 80,650 | 80,650 | 80,650 |
| Suitable Timber Lands | 4,849 | 4,849 | 4,849 | 4,849 | 4,849 | 0 | 4,849 | 0 |