INDIVIDUAL ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTION

ROADLESS AREA NAME: Rhine (313)

ACRES (NFS): 16,675

BIOGEOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Northern Coast Range

ECOLOGICAL SECTION: Boundary Ranges

2002 WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTE RATING: 18

I. Overview and Description

(1) Location and Access: The Rhine Roadless Area is located on the Juneau mainland and is part of a very extensive mainland roadless area that includes portions of western British Columbia. The roadless area occupies the north headland at the mouth of Taku Inlet. Electric transmission line corridors border the area to the north and south, with Taku Inlet forming most of the east boundary. The transmission line corridor that borders the area to the north separates it from the Taku-Snettisham Roadless Area. The city of Juneau, located approximately 10 miles west of the area, is the closest urban area. It has regularly scheduled air flights and is on the Alaska Marine Highway.

The area may be accessed by saltwater from Taku Inlet and also by trail. Trail 554 extends from the Juneau road system into the north portion of the Rhine Roadless Area and follows the shoreline to Sunny Cove at the north end of the area. Access into the interior is by foot or helicopter. There are no flat areas in this roadless area suitable for landing airplanes.

(2) History: The area has a long and varied history of use, dating from Tlingit use in prehistoric and historic times to the present use by a variety of Alaska residents and visitors. The Taku River is a travel corridor that has been used continually since the earliest human occupation of the area. Goldschmidt and Haas (1946) identified the sites of former villages at Bishop Point and on the west side of Sunny Cove, as well as a former smokehouse or cabin north of the village site near Sunny Cove. They also indicated that hunting or trapping and salmon harvest historically occurred in the area.

(3) Geography and Topography: The area is typical of recently glaciated mainlands of Southeast Alaska. The north part of the area is mountainous with elevations reaching 4,210 feet. A number of drainages flow through the north portion of the area to Taku Inlet. These drainages include Grindstone and Rhine Creeks. An unnamed glacier is located north of these drainages. The south portion of the area consists of a strip of land along the shoreline. This part of the area includes a west-facing slope, a narrow mountainous ridge, and Circle Point, which forms the south part of the entrance to Slocum Inlet.

The area includes 8 miles of shoreline on saltwater. A large part of the area is alpine tundra (877 acres), ice and snow (994 acres), and rock (4,366 acres). The area also includes 4 islets totaling an acre.

(4) Ecosystem:

(a) Classification: Biogeographic Province. The area is located within the Northern Coast Range Province, which is characterized by little maritime influence and rugged and glaciated topography.

Ecological Section/Subsection. The Rhine Roadless Area is contained entirely within the Boundary Ranges Ecological Section (M246B). The Boundary Ranges Icefields Ecological Subsection represents the entire Rhine Roadless Area. A northwest-southeast trending batholith of resistant granite and granodiorite underlies this portion of the Coast Mountains. It consists of a discontinuous mix of icefields and glaciers

separated by river valleys and pierced by nunataks and scree fields. Forests comprise a minor part of the vegetation along coasts and rivers (Nowacki et al., 2001).

Ecological Section	Ecological Subsection	Percent of Roadless Area
Boundary Ranges	Boundary Ranges Icefields	100%

(b) Soils: Shallow mineral soils (less than four inches deep) on steep, V-notched, dissected sideslopes are common in the glacially-formed, U-shaped valleys of Southeast Alaska and in this particular analysis area. Small areas of organic soils (muskegs) are found on sideslope benches where subsurface drainage is impaired. Inclusion of fine-textured (clay) soils of glacial origin occur infrequently along lower sideslopes, posing potential hazard. Slides are not uncommon.

(c) Vegetation: Vegetation in this roadless area primarily consists of typical spruce/hemlock forests. Western hemlock and Sitka spruce dominate the overstory while the understory is composed of shrubs such as red huckleberry, rusty menziesia, and devil's club. The forest floor is covered with a mat of mosses, liverworts, and plants such as deerheart, bunchberry dogwood, single delight, and skunk cabbage. Streamside riparian vegetation is characterized by salmonberry, devil's club, alder, grasses, ferns, and currants. Vegetation classified as muskeg is not abundant (no acres are mapped). However, muskeg is interspersed within other types in units too small to map. Therefore, the acreage for muskeg may be substantially understated. These areas, dominated by sphagnum mosses, sedges, and shrubs of the heath family, are interspersed among low-elevation timber stands where drainage is restricted. Trees within the muskegs are sparse and consist mainly of stunted hemlock, lodgepole pine, and Alaska-cedar.

There are 4,985 acres mapped as forest land, of which 2,332 acres or 47 percent are mapped as productive old-growth forest. Of the productive old growth, 123 acres or 5 percent are mapped as high-volume old-growth forest. The productive old growth does not include any high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. There is no second growth in this area.

(d) Fish Resources: The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) rated fish resources in its Forest Habitat Integrity Program (1983). These ratings describe the value of VCUs for sport fish, commercial fish, and estuaries. Two of the VCUs (VCUs 41 and 51) that comprise this area were rated high for commercial fish, with one (VCU 41) also rated high as an estuary. The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) did not identify any of the VCUs that comprise this area as primary salmon or sportfish producers.

The Anadromous Waters Catalogue and Atlas (ADF&G, 1998) does not identify any anadromous fish-bearing streams in this area. Rhine Creek and Grindstone Creek are two minor streams in the north portion of the area.

(e) Wildlife Resources: Generally, the roadless area provides Sitka black-tailed deer, moose and good mountain goat habitat, and these species are present. Other large mammal species include wolves and both black and brown bear. Furbearers such as mink, marten, and beaver are also present. Queen Charlotte goshawks may also occur in the area (USDA- Forest Service, 2001).

(5) Management Direction and Current Uses: This area was allocated to five Land Use Designations (LUDs) in the 1997 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan. These five LUDs are Scenic Viewshed, Transportation and Utility System (TUS), Minerals, Semi-Remote Recreation, and Old-growth Habitat. Both the TUS and Minerals LUDs are secondary LUDs, which overlay the other land uses.

LUD	Acres
Scenic Viewshed	12,973
Minerals*	6,396
Transportation and Utility System	NA
Semi-Remote Recreation	3,011
Old-growth Habitat	691

* Note that acres in the Minerals LUD are included in the Scenic Viewshed and Old-Growth LUD acres.

Approximately 78 percent of this roadless area (not including the LUD overlays) was allocated to one development LUD, Scenic Viewshed. Approximately 38 percent of this roadless area was allocated to the Minerals LUD overlay, located primarily in the north. This roadless area also contains a proposed State Road Corridor (along the shoreline of Taku Inlet), which was designated to the Transportation and Utility System LUD.

Approximately 22 percent of the roadless area was allocated to non-development LUDs (Semi-Remote Recreation, Old-growth Habitat). Approximately 18 percent of this area was allocated to the Semi-Remote Recreation LUD. Old-growth Habitat LUD was assigned to approximately 4 percent of the roadless area.

Forest Trail 554 extends along the shoreline of the north portion of the area. There are no other developed recreation facilities in the area. One outfitter/guide reported using the area in 1999. This outfitter/guide reported taking 41 groups, with a total of 196 clients, fishing at Slocum Inlet. The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) indicated that the Rhine Roadless Area is typically not heavily used for subsistence.

(6) Appearance (Apparent Naturalness): Overall, this roadless area has high scenic quality with a mostly natural appearing landscape. Existing modifications include the trail that follows the shoreline of the north portion of the area and the historic trail that extends from Taku Harbor to Taku Lake.

The Rhine Roadless Area is visible from Stephens Passage, which is a major transportation route, as well as from Taku Inlet and Gastineau Channel. The area is also visible from locations in the adjacent Taku-Snettisham Roadless Area, and the city of Juneau. Portions of the area are also visible from locations within the Admiralty Island National Monument - Kootznoowoo Wilderness. The area itself appears natural from these locations. The area's apparent naturalness is, however, affected by the transmission line corridors that border the area and appear to be part of the roadless area when viewed from some locations, especially from the nearby saltwater transportation corridors.

(7) Surroundings (External Influences): The Rhine Roadless Area is located on the Juneau mainland and is a relatively small part of a very extensive mainland roadless area that includes portions of western British Columbia. Electric transmission line corridors border the area to the north and south, with Taku Inlet forming the east boundary. The transmission line corridor that borders the area to the north separates it from the Taku-Snettisham Roadless Area. This section of the area is bordered by Stephens Passage to the west.
Boat traffic is common along Stephens Passage and the Taku River corridor and is visible from locations within the roadless area. The Taku Harbor State Marine Park, located to the south, is a popular anchorage for transient travel and for local boaters. During the summer months, there is frequent air traffic. The electric transmission line corridors that border the area are readily apparent to visitors accessing the area by saltwater and also to those accessing the north portion of the area via Trail 554. They are also visible from locations within the area.

(8) Attractions and Features of Special Interest: The opportunity for high quality fishing, especially in Slocum Inlet, may be considered an attraction to the area. The area contains no inventoried recreation places. Trail 554 follows the shoreline of the north portion of the area.

(9) Differences between the 1989 and 2003 Roadless Area Boundary: The Rhine Roadless Area did not exist in 1989. At that time it was considered part of the much larger Taku-Snettisham Roadless Area (#302). The Rhine Roadless Area was created when electric transmission line construction separated this area from the majority of the Taku-Snettisham Roadless Area. The area located south of the Taku Inlet was dropped from the area between the Draft and Final SEIS because it was relatively small and isolated by the electric transmission line.

II. Capability for Management as Wilderness

(1) Natural Integrity and Apparent Naturalness: Overall**,** this roadless area has a mostly natural appearing landscape. Existing modifications include the trail that follows the shoreline of the north portion of the area. The area's natural integrity and apparent naturalness is, however, affected by the transmission line corridors that border the area and appear to be part of the roadless area when viewed from some locations, especially from the nearby saltwater transportation corridors.

(2) Opportunity for Solitude and Serenity, Self-reliance, Adventure, Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation: There is a moderate opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation within much of the area but one should expect to see occasional air and boat traffic, especially in the Stephens Passage and Taku Inlet areas. The adjacent electric transmission line corridors are also visible from a number of locations within the area. The character of the landforms allows visitors to feel remote from the sights and sounds of human activity in some locations. One outfitter/guide reported using the area in 1999. This outfitter/guide reported taking 41 groups, with a total of 196 clients, fishing at Slocum Inlet.

Travel within the area can be challenging (particularly in the north portion), requiring a high degree of mountaineering skills and experience. The presence of both black and brown bears also presents a degree of challenge and a need for woods skills and experience.

The area provides primarily semi-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
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM)	14,405	86%
Roaded Natural (RN)	1,549	9%
Roaded Modified (RM)	720	4%

The roadless area contains one inventoried recreation place, which covers less than 1 acre.

ROS Class	# of Rec. Places*	Total Acres
SPNM	0	0
RN	1	<1
RM	0	0

The area contains no developed recreation sites. This area is within approximately 14 miles of two public recreation cabins around Turner Lake, which is northeast of the roadless area.

(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).

The inventoried roadless areas of the Tongass National Forest were rated according to this system in 1989 for the Analysis of the Management Situation developed in support of the Forest Plan Revision. At that time, the Rhine Roadless Area was part of the larger Taku-Snettisham Roadless Area and was, therefore, not given a rating. The Rhine Roadless Area was rated independently for this updated version of the Analysis of the Management Situation. Based on this re-evaluation, the area was given a rating of 18.

(4) Ecologic and Geologic Values: The Rhine Roadless Area is located on the mainland near Juneau and is part of a very extensive mainland roadless area that includes portions of western British Columbia. The Rhine Roadless Area comprises a very small portion of this larger area.

(a) Fish Resources: The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) did not identify any of the VCUs that comprise this area as primary salmon or sportfish producers.

The Anadromous Waters Catalogue and Atlas (ADF&G, 1998) does not identify any anadromous fish-bearing streams in this area. Rhine Creek and Grindstone Creek are two minor streams in the north portion of the roadless area.

(b) Wildlife Resources: Generally, the roadless area provides good Sitka black-tailed deer, moose and mountain goat habitat, and these species are present. Other large mammal species include wolves, and both black and brown bear. Based on data compiled for the 1985 to 1994 time period, two of the VCUs that comprise the south portion of the area (VCUs 51 and 52) were identified in the third 25 percent of black bear harvest areas in the Tongass National Forest. A total of 31 black bears were harvested in these areas over this time period. The Rhine Roadless Area also encompasses a small section of VCU 32, which was allocated to the second 25 percent of black bear harvest areas, with a total harvest of 32 black bears over this period (ADF&G, 1998).

Furbearers such as mink, marten, and beaver are also present. The EIS for Helicopter Landing Tours of the Juneau Icefield indicates that all 13 of the Management Indicator Species identified in the Forest Plan occur within the study area for that project. That project area includes the north portion of the Rhine Roadless Area. Species identified in this larger area include marten, river otter, Sitka black-tailed deer, and Vancouver Canada goose. Queen Charlotte goshawk may also occur in the area (USDA Forest Service, 2001).

(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, including Taku Inlet, which separates the two portions of the Rhine Roadless Area. 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, eight sensitive plant species are known or suspected to occur in the Juneau Ranger District.

(d) Karst, Cave, and Other Geologic Resources: There are no known karst or cave resources in this roadless area. There is an unnamed glacier near Hawthorne Peak in the north portion of the area. There are no other known unique geologic features.

(5) Scientific and Educational Values: There are no known special features in this area and it has not been identified as an area of potential scientific value. The north portion of the area is adjacent to the city of Juneau and accessible via Trail 554, which follows the shoreline of the area. Therefore, the area is readily accessible to school-age children. The south portion of the area is also located in relatively close proximity to Juneau and is accessible via boat. It is also located adjacent to the community of Taku Harbor.

(6) Scenic Values: Overall**,** this roadless area has high scenic quality with a mostly natural appearing landscape. Existing modifications include the trail that follows the shoreline of the north portion.

This roadless area appears natural and unmodified from designated visual priority routes and use areas. The area's apparent naturalness is, however, affected by the transmission line corridors that border the area and appear to be part of the roadless area when viewed from some locations, especially from the nearby saltwater transportation corridors. Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas identified by the Forest Plan, that are within or adjacent to the area, include: Stephens Passage, a part of the Alaska Marine Highway, a saltwater use area, a tour ship route and small

boat route; Taku Inlet, a small boat route; Gastineau Channel, a saltwater use area, a tour ship route and small boat route; Slocum Inlet and Taku Harbor, small boat routes and boat anchorages; Taku Harbor State Marine Park; and the communities of Taku Harbor and Juneau.

All of this area was inventoried in Variety Class A (possessing landscape diversity that is unique for the character type).

The Existing Visual Condition (EVC) of almost all of this roadless area, approximately 99 percent, is EVC I. These areas appear to be untouched by human activity.

(7) Social, Cultural, and Historical Values: The area has a long and varied history of use, dating from Tlingit use in prehistoric and historic times to the present use by a variety of Alaska residents and visitors. The Taku River is a travel corridor that has been used continually since the earliest human occupation of the area. Goldschmidt and Haas (1946) identified the sites of former villages at Bishop Point and on the west side of Sunny Cove, as well as a former smokehouse or cabin north of the village site near Sunny Cove. They also indicated that hunting or trapping and salmon harvest historically occurred in the Slocum Inlet area.

The north portion of the area is adjacent to the city of Juneau. The community of Taku Harbor is located adjacent to the south portion of the area.

Trail 554 extends along the shoreline of the north portion of the area. There are no other developed recreation facilities in the area. One outfitter/guide reported using the area in 1999. This outfitter/guide reported taking 41 groups, with a total of 196 clients, fishing at Slocum Inlet. Based on data compiled for the 1985 to 1994 time period, two of the VCUs that comprise the south portion of the area (VCUs 51 and 52) were identified in the third 25 percent of black bear harvest areas in the Tongass National Forest. A total of 31 black bears were harvested in these areas over this period. The Rhine Roadless Area also encompasses a small section of VCU 32, which was allocated to the second 25 percent of black bear harvest areas, with a total harvest of 32 black bears over this period (ADF&G, 1998).

The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment indicated that the Rhine Roadless Area is typically not used for subsistence. None of the VCUs in this area were included among the VCUs with highest sensitivity to disturbance of subsistence areas or in the highest, second or third most important groups for community use values (ADF&G, 1998).

(8) Manageability as Wilderness and Boundary Conditions/Changes: The area is bounded in places by saltwater shoreline. However, much of the area's borders are formed by electric transmission line corridors that separate it from the adjacent Taku-Snettisham Roadless Area. Adjacent areas are primarily allocated to the Semi-Remote Recreation, Scenic Viewshed, Timber Production, and Modified Landscape LUDs. The Transportation and Utility System LUD follows the shoreline along the east side of the northern portion of the roadless area. Viewed on its own, the Rhine Roadless Area appears relatively small and irregularly shaped, with evidence of development apparent on its boundaries when viewed from nearby travel routes and use areas, as well as from within the area itself. It is not readily suited for wilderness.

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

(1) Recreation, Including Tourism Potential: There is a possibility of developing public recreation cabins within the area. Outfitter and guide services could potentially increase in the future.

(2) Subsistence Uses: The existing patterns of subsistence activities in the area would not be affected by wilderness designation.

(3) Fish Resources: No fish habitat enhancement projects are proposed in the roadless area.

(4) Wildlife Resources: No wildlife habitat enhancement projects are proposed in the roadless area.

(5) Timber Resources: There are 2,332 acres mapped as productive old growth and no acres mapped as second growth due to harvest in the roadless area. Of these acres, 1,436 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), 335 acres or 2 percent of this roadless area are estimated to be suitable for timber production. Approximately 10 of the suitable acres are mapped as high-volume old growth and none of the suitable acres are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

(6) Fire, Insects, and Disease: The area has no significant fire history. Endemic tree diseases common to Southeast Alaska are present. There are no known epidemic disease occurrences in the area.

(7) Minerals: The area has been identified as having mineral development potential. According to the Tongass Land Management Plan Revision EIS (USDA Forest Service, 1997) portions of this area (in the northern part) lie within the Juneau Gold Belt, indicating mineral development potential for gold, silver, lead, zinc, and copper.

This area contains 6,429 acres of land identified as a mineral activity tract having a high potential for expanding mineral exploration or development of locatable minerals (Coldwell, 1990; USDA Forest Service, 1991). A total of 6,396 of these acres are allocated to the Minerals LUD. The Minerals LUD is intended to encourage the prospecting, exploration, development, mining, and processing of locatable minerals in areas with the highest potential for minerals development. It is also intended to ensure that minerals are developed in an environmentally sensitive manner, and that other high-valued resources are considered when mineral development occurs. In addition, this area contains 16,131 acres of undiscovered locatable mineral resources (Brew et al., 1990; USDA Forest Service, 1991); however, they are considered to have low potential for development.

(8) Transportation and Utilities: A proposed state road corridor is located along the shoreline of the north portion of the area. This road corridor would extend from Juneau along Taku Inlet and River to Canada. Designating the Rhine Roadless Area Wilderness could affect this potential road because it would not be able to pass through the area. This potential road was not included in the March 1999 Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan (Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, 1999).

(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.

(10) Areas of Scientific Interest: This roadless area does not contain any designated or inventoried potential Research Natural Areas. There are no inventoried areas of scientific interest in the area.

(11) Land Use Authorizations: There is a Special Use Permit for a Federal Aviation Authority wind monitoring station at or adjacent to the northwest corner of the north portion of the roadless area. The Tongass Land Management Plan Revision EIS (USDA Forest Service, 1997) approved a communication site on Salisbury Ridge in the north portion of the roadless area. To date, this site has not been developed.

(12) Land Status: All land within the roadless area is part of the National Forest System. Encumbered lands within the roadless area are located just south of Sunny Cove.

IV. Wilderness Evaluation (Need for Wilderness)

(1) Public and Congressional Interest:

(a) Interest Expressed by Local Users and Residents: Most use of the area is associated with recreational boating, hunting, viewing scenery and wildlife, and fishing. Some mining activities are also occurring. The majority of use occurs within one-quarter mile from the shoreline.

(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 Rhine Roadless Area. In 2001, HR 2908 identified part of the south portion of the area as a proposed wilderness

addition. The remainder of the area was identified as a proposed LUD II addition. The bill also proposed that Taku Inlet receive Wild and Scenic River designation.

(c) Public Input During Forest Plan Revisions and Appeals: Parts of the Rhine Roadless Area were specifically addressed in public input received during the Forest Plan revision and appeal. A number of people commenting addressed Taku Inlet and River. The majority of comments requested that the scenic and recreation values of the Taku Inlet area take precedence over logging and other development activities, including the proposed transportation corridor. Another comment asked that road development or access not be restricted in this area.

One commenter requested that Slocum Inlet be managed under the Scenic Viewshed LUD because the area is visible from downtown Juneau. Another commenter asked that Taku Harbor be managed for its scenic and boating values and at a minimum allocated to the Scenic Viewshed LUD.

One commenter stated that Management Area (MA) C10, which encompasses part of the south portion of the area, should be managed as either Wilderness, Primitive Recreation, or Old Growth due to its high wildlife value. Timber industry comments, on the other hand, identified the western half of MA C10 as ideal for timber production and noted that managing the area under Scenic Viewshed or Modified Landscape LUDs would make it harder to develop. Another commenter requested that the coastline from Juneau to Snettisham be assigned to the Transportation and Utility Systems LUD.

(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: Comments on the July 2001 Helicopter Landing Tours on the Juneau Icefield 2002-2006 DEIS are presently being reviewed. The study area for the Juneau Icefield EIS includes the north portion of the Rhine Roadless Area.

(f) Public Input Expressed During Supplemental EIS Process: SEACC recommended that Roadless Areas 301, 302, 305, and 313, which are largely contiguous, should be treated as one roadless area and should be recommended for wilderness and LUD II protection, as described in Alternative 6. They indicated that the area surrounding the population center should be protected by LUD II; these are important for recreation, subsistence, and tourism.

The Alaska Rainforest Campaign (a coalition of national and Alaska conservation groups) identified Roadless Areas 301, 302, 305, and 313 as a contiguous complex of roadless areas that should be considered one roadless area and recommended it for permanent protection in a combination of wilderness and LUD II, as described in Alternative 6.

Some individuals requested long-term protection for Taku Harbor.

(2) Nearby Roadless and Wilderness Areas and Uses: The Rhine Roadless Area, formerly part of the Taku-Snettisham Roadless Area, is separated from other roadless areas by several electric transmission line corridors. The Admiralty Island National Monument - Kootznoowoo Wilderness is located directly west across Stephens Passage from the area. The Rhine Roadless Area comprises a small part of a large mainland roadless area that includes the Juneau-Skagway Icefields Roadless Area (#301) to the north and Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness 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)	10	15
Sitka (Pop. 8,835)	85	175
Hoonah (Pop. 860)	40	75
Angoon (Pop. 572)	45	105

The nearest stop on the Alaska Marine Highway is Juneau.

(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System: The Rhine Roadless Area is located on the Juneau mainland and is part of a very extensive mainland roadless area that includes portions of western British Columbia. The area occupies the north headland at the mouth of Taku Inlet. Electric transmission line corridors border this portion of the area to the north and south, with Taku Inlet forming the east boundary. The transmission line corridor that borders the area to the north separates it from the Taku-Snettisham Roadless Area. The area is mountainous with elevations reaching 4,210 feet. A number of drainages flow through the area to Taku Inlet. These drainages include Grindstone and Rhine Creeks. An unnamed glacier is located north of these drainages.
The relatively small Rhine Roadless Area is mostly unmodified, but influenced by the powerline corridors that shape its size and boundaries. The area has high natural integrity and moderate apparent naturalness. The opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation is moderate.

None of the landscape in this area is considered distinctive from a scenery standpoint. There are no known features of ecologic, geologic, scientific, or cultural significance in this area.

The roadless area includes about 123 acres of high-volume, old-growth forest. None of these acres are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The Rhine Roadless Area is classified as being in the Northern Coast Range Biogeographic Province and makes up about 2 percent of the province. It is one of six inventoried roadless areas found within the province; roadless areas make up about 73 percent of the province. Part of the Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness lies within this province and makes up about 23 percent of the province.

The Rhine Roadless Area lies completely within the Boundary Ranges Ecological Section; it represents 0.4 percent of the entire ecological section. Approximately 33 percent of this ecological section is represented by existing wilderness with an additional 62 percent in non-development LUDs (including 1 percent in LUD II).

The entire Rhine Roadless Area is within the Boundary Ranges Icefields Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents about 0.4 percent of the entire ecological subsection. Approximately 32 percent of this ecological subsection is in existing wilderness, an additional 1 percent is in existing LUD II, and an additional 61 percent is protected by other existing non-development LUDs.

The Rhine Roadless Area was rated 18 out of a possible 28 points under the Wilderness Attribute Rating System (WARS). As such, its WARS rating is ranked 84th from the highest (along with 8 other roadless areas) among the 109 Tongass inventoried roadless areas.

There is both local and national support for managing the roadless area in an unroaded condition, and some support for designating the area as a wilderness. Designation would create a relatively small wilderness with no significant ecologic, geologic, scientific, or cultural features. Overall, the factors identified here indicate that the relative contribution of this area to the National Wilderness Preservation System would be low.

V. Environmental Consequences

The Rhine Roadless Area would be managed under the existing Forest Plan if Alternative 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7 is implemented. Approximately 22 percent of the roadless area would be managed under non-development LUDs. Timber harvest and road development could occur within the remaining 78 percent of the roadless area. The land in the development LUDs includes an estimated 335 acres that are suitable for timber production (2 percent of the suitable acres on the Juneau Ranger District). None of the suitable acres are classified as high-volume, coarse-canopy acres. This area contains 6,429 acres of land identified as a mineral activity tract having a high potential for expanding mineral exploration or development of locatable minerals. A total of 6,396 of these acres are allocated to the Minerals LUD. This area also contains an estimated 16,131 acres of undiscovered locatable mineral resources that are considered to have low potential for development. Evaluations for expansion of the State road system would continue. Electronic and Coast Guard special use permits would continue. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area could be affected by the timber management activities allowed by the Forest Plan.

Under Alternative 6, the entire area would be converted to Recommended LUD II. In the Recommended LUD II areas, recreation, special uses, and minerals programs would continue similar to current conditions with little restriction. No timber harvest would be allowed. Evaluations for expansion of the State road system would continue. Electronic and Coast Guard special use permits would continue. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area would be provided long-term protection if designated LUD II.

Under Alternative 8, the entire roadless area would be converted to Recommended Wilderness LUD. The electronic and Coast Guard special use permits would likely continue. No timber harvest would be allowed. Other activities would be restricted. Mineral prospecting would be allowed in the Recommended Wilderness LUD 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 would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness.

Land Use Designation Allocations and Suitable Timber Lands by Alternative for Roadless Area 313 (in acres)

Land Use Designation	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7	Alt 8
Recommended Wilderness								16,675
Wilderness								
Recommended Wilderness Nat. Mon.								
Wilderness National Monument								
Non-wilderness National Monument								
Research Natural Area								
Special Interest Area								
Remote Recreation								
Enacted Municipal Watershed								
Old-growth Habitat	691	691	691	691	691		691	
Semi-remote Recreation	3,011	3,011	3,011	3,011	3,011		3,011	
Recommended LUD II						16,675		
LUD II								
Wild, Scenic, Recreational River								
Experimental Forest								
Scenic Viewshed	12,973	12,973	12,973	12,973	12,973		12,973	
Modified Landscape								
Timber production								
TOTAL	**16,675**	**16,675**	**16,675**	**16,675**	**16,675**	**16,675**	**16,675**	**16,675**
Suitable Timber Lands	335	335	335	335	335	**0**	335	**0**