

INDIVIDUAL ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTION

ROADLESS AREA NAME: Duke (521)

ACRES (NFS): 46,863

BIOGEOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Revilla Island/Cleveland Peninsula

ECOLOGICAL SECTION: Dixon Entrance Lowlands

2003 WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTE RATING: 26

I. Overview and Description

(1) **Location and Access:** The Duke Roadless Area consists of an island group located south and east across Felice Strait from Annette Island. This area includes Duke, Mary, Hotspur, Dog, Cat, and Percy Islands. This island group is generally bordered to the east by Revillagigedo Channel. Felice Strait generally borders the area to the west and northwest. The south portion of the area (Percy, Hotspur, and Duke Islands) is bordered by Clarence Strait to the west. The open Pacific Ocean borders the area to the south. Metlakatla, on the Alaska Marine Highway, is located approximately 8 miles north of the area. Ketchikan, with regularly scheduled air flights and also on the Alaska Marine Highway, is located about 30 miles to the north.

The lack of safe anchorages and freshwater lakes for floatplane landings essentially makes this roadless area less accessible to the general public, however, people do utilize the few good anchorages to recreate there. Access into the interior is by foot or helicopter. There are no places suitable for landing wheeled airplanes.

(2) **History:** This roadless area consists of an island group including Duke, Hotspur, Mary, Dog, Cat, and Percy Islands. These islands were used by Alaska Natives in both ancient and historic times and are considered to have special traditional and cultural values. All through the commercial fishing era, the Judd Bay area on Duke Island has been used as anchorage for the fishing fleet. During the 1940s, fox farming occurred on Duke and Hotspur Islands. This island group is exposed to the frequent severe weather out of Dixon entrance. A number of traditional native sites including village sites, campsites, subsistence sites and graves have been identified on these islands by archeological inventory and through oral traditions. Some of these locations are considered sacred to the native community. Historically, Alaska Natives utilized these islands to gather subsistence resources, including bird eggs, hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering. They also identified trolling for halibut or King Salmon in the vicinity of Cat Island. There are also several mining prospects on Duke and Cat Island along with homesteads and other historic sites. There is a lighthouse and old cabin sites on Mary Island.

(3) **Geography and Topography:** The islands that comprise this area are characterized by low elevation, subdued topography, and low-lying muskeg systems. The maximum elevation is about 1,500 feet. The area includes Dog Island Research Natural Area with botanical interest and Duke Island Special Interest Area with zoological interest. There are 710 islands and islets that make up this area, 34 of these are greater than 10 acres. There is also a 155-acre homestead in Ryus Bay area USS1162. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is investigating whether it was ever patented. The southwest portion of Cat Island and all of Village Island have been conveyed to Seaalaska Corporation by Interim Conveyance. There is a small lighthouse reserve on Mary Island. There are approximately 258 miles of shoreline on saltwater. Rock is mapped on approximately 309 acres and freshwater lakes on 339 acres. There are no mapped alpine or glacier features.

(4) **Ecosystem:**

(a) **Classification:** Biogeographic Province. This roadless area is in Revilla Island/Cleveland Peninsula Biogeographic Province. The climate in this area is variable with warm and wet conditions

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predominating on land nearest the outer coast and much colder conditions near the mainland. Muskeg ponds are common on Duke Island, attracting many wintering and migratory birds.

Ecological Section/Subsection. The Duke Roadless Area is contained entirely within the Dixon Entrance Lowlands Ecological Section (M247J). This area is represented by one ecological subsection (see table below). The Duke Island Till Lowland Ecological Subsection is generally flat with mafic and ultramafic bedrock covered by peat-based mats. The terrain is mostly wet and supports ericaceous shrubs and low-productive lodgepole pine and mixed-conifer forests (Nowacki et al., 2001).

Ecological Section	Ecological Subsection	Percent of Roadless Area
Dixon Entrance Lowlands	Duke Island Till Lowland	100%

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

(c) Vegetation: These islands are forested with poor quality hemlock, spruce, and cedar. Approximately 2,023 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 43,359 acres mapped as forestland, of which 7,359 acres (17 percent) are mapped as productive old-growth forest. Of the productive old growth, 1,209 acres (16 percent) are mapped as high-volume old-growth forest. The productive old growth includes about 113 acres of high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. There are 223 acres of second growth where beach timber harvest has occurred in the past.

(d) Fish Resources: One Class I stream on Mary Island, Beaver Creek, provides habitat for coho and pink salmon. Duke Island has 15 unnamed Class I streams, primarily providing habitat for pink and coho salmon. Chum salmon and Dolly Varden char may also be found on Duke Island in the streams at the heads of Hall Cove and Pond Bay.

(e) Wildlife Resources: Duke Island has a small population of Sitka black-tailed deer, and, along the shoreline, the common marine mammals of Southeast Alaska. The islands that comprise this area are frequented by large numbers of sea birds. Wolves, mink, and river otter can be found on Duke Island. Black bear most likely inhabit these islands also. The area is used extensively by wintering waterfowl, including trumpeter swans.

(5) Management Direction and Current Uses: This roadless area was allocated to three Land Use Designations (LUDs) in the 1997 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan. These three LUDs are Scenic Viewshed, Special Interest Area (SIA) and Research Natural Area (RNA).

LUD	Acres
Scenic Viewshed	191
Special Interest Area	45,959
Research Natural Area	713

Less than 1 percent of this roadless area was allocated to the Scenic Viewshed development LUD. This LUD is located on very small islands off the coast of Duke Island and in the Percy Islands.

Almost 100 percent of the roadless area is allocated to one of two non-development LUDs (Special Interest Area and Research Natural Area). Approximately 98 percent of this roadless area is allocated to the Special Interest Area LUD, named the Duke Island Special Interest Area. This Special Interest Area is a zoologically important area due to its abundant wildlife, especially waterfowl. Dog Island and the small islands around the periphery are allocated to the Research Natural Area LUD, accounting for approximately 2 percent of the roadless area. The Dog Island RNA

was established in 1976 because it represents a small island ecosystem containing the northern limit of Pacific yew (*Taxus brevifolia*).

The lack of access, manageable timber, and freshwater systems has generally precluded active management of these islands, with the exception of the beach logging that has occurred along the shoreline of Mary Island. A few skilled boaters land on the islands to beachcomb on the several sand beaches. Judd Bay on Duke Island has historically been used as an anchorage by commercial fishermen. There was no outfitter/guide use reported in this area in 2000. Subsistence use occurs in the area. The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) indicated that the three VCU's that comprise this area are subsistence use areas with a high sensitivity to disturbance.

The Mary Island Lighthouse (reserve) is located on the northeast end of Mary Island and there is a small Coast Guard navigational aid site on Duke Island.

(6) Appearance (Apparent Naturalness): The area is in a natural condition with no evidence of human modification, with the exception of the beach logged areas and the lighthouse reserve on Mary Island. This overall pristine setting can be seen from major and minor water-ways and from inside the roadless area itself.

(7) Surroundings (External Influences): The Duke Island Roadless Area is isolated from other land areas by saltwater. Annette Island is located north and northwest across Felice Strait from the area. The Alaska Marine Highway runs through Revillagigedo Channel, which borders the area to the east. This side of the roadless area is, as a result, subjected to the external influence of motorized boats, as well as aircraft flying overhead.

(8) Attractions and Features of Special Interest: A number of traditional native sites including village sites, campsites, subsistence sites, and graves have been identified on these islands by archeological inventory and through oral traditions. The isolation and the rugged coastline interspersed with sandy beaches are special features of this roadless area. The opportunity to view sea birds and mammals on or near the shore is of special interest. Duke Island Special Interest Area is a zoologically important area due to its abundant wildlife, especially waterfowl. The islands have numerous potholes and a maritime climate. It is very desirable for wintering waterfowl and is used extensively by trumpeter swans and marine mammals as haul outs. The area contains four inventoried recreation places, which cover 8,619 acres (18 percent) of the roadless area.

(9) Differences between the 1989 and 2003 Roadless Area Boundary: The area's boundaries did not change significantly between 1989 and 2003.

II. Capability for Management as Wilderness

(1) Natural Integrity and Apparent Naturalness: The area is unmodified, with the exception of the beach logged areas along the shoreline of Mary Island and the Mary Island Lighthouse Reserve on the northeast end of Mary Island. This general lack of modification, along with the area's isolation, provides outstanding natural integrity and very high apparent naturalness. Overall, the area's appearance is suitable for wilderness classification.

(2) Opportunity for Solitude and Serenity, Self-reliance, Adventure, Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation: There is very high opportunity for solitude and outstanding opportunity for primitive recreation in this roadless area. People using any of these islands are unlikely to encounter another person during their stay. There was no outfitter/guide use reported in this area in 2000.

The opportunity for primitive recreation is primarily along the coastal areas. There are no recreation attractions inland such as large lakes, streams, or alpine features except for Mt. Lazaro, the tallest point on the islands.

The area primarily provides 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
Primitive (P)	44,633	95%
Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM)	2,004	4%

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The area contains four inventoried recreation places, which cover 8,619 acres (18 percent) of the roadless area. They are primarily associated with anchorages in the area.

ROS Class	# of Rec. Places	Total Acres
P	4	8,619
SPM	0	0

(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 (RARE II) process. 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 Duke Roadless Area was 22 out of 28 possible points. The 1989 rating was re-evaluated for this updated version of the AMS. Based on this re-evaluation, the area was given a rating of 26. This rating better reflects the overall high wilderness attributes associated with these islands.

(4) Ecologic and Geologic Values: The Duke Roadless Area consists of an island group including Duke, Mary, Hotspur, and Percy Islands. Duke Island Special Interest Area is a zoologically important area due to its abundant wildlife, especially waterfowl. The Dog Island Research Natural Area represents a small island ecosystem that includes the northern limit of Pacific yew (*Taxus brevifolia*), associated scrub timber and low volume mixed conifer sites. It is not part of a larger unroaded land area.

(a) Fish Resources: The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment listed the largest VCU, Duke Island (767), as a primary salmon producer. None of the VCUs were listed as primary sport fish producers (ADF&G, 1998).

The Anadromous Waters Catalogue (ADF&G, 2000) indicates that there are no fish bearing streams on Percy Island, Hotspur Island, or Cat Island. One Class I stream on Mary Island, Beaver Creek, provides habitat for coho and pink salmon. Duke Island has 15 unnamed Class I streams primarily providing habitat for pink and coho salmon. Chum salmon and Dolly Varden char may also be found in the streams at the heads of Hall Cove and Pond Bay. West Ryus Bay has an estimated annual peak escapement of 39,600 pink salmon and very good coho salmon smolt production capability (ADF&G, 1998).

(b) Wildlife Resources: Duke Island has a small population of Sitka black-tailed deer, and, along the shoreline, the common marine mammals of Southeast Alaska. The islands that comprise this area are frequented by large numbers of sea birds. Wolves, mink, and river otter can be found on Duke Island. Black bear most likely inhabit these islands also. The area is used extensively by wintering waterfowl, including trumpeter swans.

(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. Four Forest Service Region 10 Sensitive Species are suspected or known to occur within the area: the trumpeter swan, osprey, 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. The Duke Roadless Area is used extensively by wintering trumpeter swans. Present from April through September, ospreys are rare in southeast Alaska where they reach the northern extent of their

nesting range. Feeding almost exclusively on fish, ospreys typically nest in large snags near lakes or the coast where fish are abundant. 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 Ketchikan Ranger District.

(d) Karst, Cave, and Other Geologic Resources: There are no known karst or cave resources in this roadless area. There are no glaciers or unique geologic features in this area.

(5) Scientific and Educational Values: The area has unique topography with many potholes that rarely freeze in the winter. The rugged, rocky coastline facing the open sea is another special feature of this area. The area is used extensively by wintering waterfowl, including trumpeter swans. The Dog Island Research Natural Area (RNA) is part of this roadless area. This RNA, one of six established on the Tongass National Forest prior to 1996, represents a small island ecosystem containing the northern limit of Pacific yew, associated scrub timber, and low volume mixed conifer sites of southern Southeast Alaska.

Metlakatla is located approximately 8 miles north of the area. Ketchikan is located about 30 miles to the north.

(6) Scenic Values: This area is part of the Coastal Hills visual character type, which is characterized by moderately steep terrain, rounded summits, and elevations up to 4,000 feet. The area is in a natural condition with little apparent evidence of human modification. The only exception includes the beach logged areas and the lighthouse reserve along the shoreline of Mary Island. This pristine setting can be seen from major and minor water-ways, from inside the roadless area, and from the lighthouse on Mary Island. The Duke Island Special Interest Area has abundant wildlife, especially waterfowl.

Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas identified by the Forest Plan that are within or adjacent to the area, include Clarence Strait and Revillagigedo Channel, which are both part of the Alaska Marine Highway and tour ship routes. Revillagigedo Channel is also a saltwater use area.

Although this roadless area has very flat landform characteristics, almost the whole area, approximately 97 percent, was inventoried as Variety Class B (possessing landscape characteristics common for the character type) due to the vegetative and waterform diversity, and the diversity of its coastal features, such as the very irregular shoreline and clusters of smaller islands. Approximately 3 percent of the area was not inventoried for Variety Class type.

Approximately 95 percent of this roadless area has been inventoried as Existing Visual Condition Type I, where the landscape has remained unaltered by human activity. Approximately 3 percent is EVC Type III, in which the average person notices changes in the landscape, but they do not attract significant attention. Another 3 percent was not inventoried for EVC.

(7) Social, Cultural, and Historical Values: This roadless area consists of an island group that includes Duke, Hotspur, Mary, Dog, Cat, and Percy Islands. These islands were used by Alaska Natives in both ancient and historic times and are considered to have special traditional and cultural values. A number of traditional native sites including village sites, campsites, subsistence sites, and graves have been identified on these islands by archeological inventory and through oral traditions. Some of these locations are considered sacred to the native community. Historically, Alaska Natives utilized these islands to gather subsistence resources including bird eggs, hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering. They also identified trolling for halibut or King Salmon in the vicinity of Cat Island. There are also several mining prospects on Duke and Cat Island along with homesteads and other historic sites. There is a lighthouse and old cabin sites on Mary Island.

All through the commercial fishing era, the Judd Bay area on Duke Island has been used as anchorage for the fishing fleet. During the 1940s, fox farming occurred on Duke and Hotspur Islands. This island group is exposed to the frequent severe weather out of Dixon entrance. Subsistence use occurs in the area. The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment indicated that the three VCUs that comprise this area are subsistence use areas with a high sensitivity to disturbance. However, none of the VCUs in this area were included among the highest, second, or third most important groups for community use values (ADF&G, 1998).

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(8) Manageability as Wilderness and Boundary Conditions/Changes: This roadless area is not easily accessed. It is approachable from the few good existing anchorages, although not heavily used, making this roadless area easy to manage as wilderness or in an unroaded condition.

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

(1) Recreation, Including Tourism Potential: The lack of access to any of the islands generally precludes recreation facility development. The only real recreation potential identified during the Forest Plan revision planning process was low density dispersed recreation associated with the sand beaches. Several years ago the Coast Guard wanted to turn this reserve over to the Forest Service. The Forest Service declined this transfer due to accessibility issues and the overall condition of the facilities. This does not mean that the facility could not be a potential recreation destination.

In 1996, the Alaska Visitors Association (AVA) proposed the following recreation developments within this roadless area: a backcountry recreation lodge for 480-persons/day in Duke Island (Pond Bay); a day use wildlife observatory with a 50 person capacity at Hall Cove on Duke Island; and a backcountry recreation lodge for 480 persons/day at Customhouse Cove on Mary Island. The State of Alaska's Central Southeast Area Plan designates their over selection land on Duke Island for recreational development.

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

(3) Fish Resources: No fisheries enhancement projects have been identified for this area.

(4) Wildlife Resources: There are no plans for wildlife habitat management on these islands and little potential to do so.

(5) Timber Resources: There are 7,359 acres mapped as productive old growth and 223 acres mapped as second growth due to harvest in the roadless area. Of these acres, 6,310 acres are categorized as tentatively suitable for timber production. Based on the Forest Plan LUDs assigned to this area, none of this roadless area is classified as suitable for timber production.

(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 although some bark beetle activity was observed in 1997.

(7) Minerals: There are no existing mining claims in the area. The USGS Mineral Resources Data website (2001) indicates that mineral resources in the area may include iron, nickel, chromite, platinum, and copper.

(8) Transportation and Utilities: There are no transportation or utility projects proposed for this area.

(9) Water Availability and Use: There are no developed recreation cabins or other facilities to create a demand for water. There are no existing or planned hydroelectric or domestic water projects within this roadless area.

(10) Areas of Scientific Interest: The area has unique topography with many potholes that rarely freeze in the winter. The rugged, rocky coastline facing the open sea is another special feature of this area. The area is used extensively by wintering waterfowl, including trumpeter swans.

The Dog Island Research Natural Area (RNA) is part of this roadless area. This RNA, one of six established on the Tongass National Forest prior to 1996, represents a small island ecosystem containing the northern limit of Pacific yew, associated scrub timber, and low volume mixed conifer sites of southern Southeast Alaska. Management as wilderness may restrict research activities.

(11) **Land Use Authorizations:** The Coast Guard has land use authorizations in this area for navigational aids and associated with the lighthouse on Mary Island.

(12) **Land Status:** All land within the roadless area is part of the National Forest System. Approximately 2,170 acres of land were over-selected by the State at Judd Harbor on Duke Island. The conveyance of this land is still pending as of January 2002.

IV. Wilderness Evaluation (Need for Wilderness)

(1) Public and Congressional Interest:

(a) **Interest Expressed by Local Users and Residents:** The area receives an occasional visit by boaters who have the ability to land. There is significant interest in these islands by the local Native communities because of the rich cultural resources found there.

(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 Duke Roadless Area. In 2001, HR 2908 identified the area as a proposed LUD II addition.

(c) **Public Input During Forest Plan Revision and Appeals:** This area was specifically addressed in public input received during the Forest Plan revision and appeal. The AVA proposed the following recreation developments within this roadless area: a backcountry recreation lodge for 480 persons/day on Duke Island (Pond Bay); a day use wildlife observatory with a 50 person capacity at Hall Cove on Duke Island; and a backcountry recreation lodge for 480 persons/day at Customhouse Cove on Mary Island. Another commenter requested that the safe harbors of Duke Island be open for limited development, such as fishing lodges, moorage buoys, or floats.

(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:** This area is not within the study area of any recently completed project-level EISs. No project-level comments on this roadless area have been identified.

(f) **Public Input Expressed During Supplemental EIS Process:** SEACC recommended that the Duke Island roadless area be designated as LUD II.

At the Ketchikan hearing, the Metlakatla Indian Community expressed general support for logging except on small Islands and used Annette Island as an example of small (Duke is smaller).

Some individuals recommended this area for permanent protection as wilderness.

(2) **Nearby Roadless and Wilderness Areas and Uses:** This roadless area is approximately between 4 and 8 miles west across Revillagigedo Channel from the Misty Fiords National Monument Wilderness. The South Prince of Wales Wilderness is located about 24 miles to the west.

Annette Island, the closest area of land, is not part of the Tongass National Forest. The closest other roadless areas, located north of Annette Island, are Gravina (#522), Revilla (#524), and South Revilla (#523).

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

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Community	Air Miles	Water Miles
Juneau (Pop. 30,711)	250	275
Ketchikan (Pop. 14,070)	30	30
Wrangell (Pop.2,308)	100	125
Petersburg (Pop. 3,324)	135	155

(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System: The Duke Roadless Area consists of an island group located south and east across Felice Strait from Annette Island. This area includes Duke, Mary, Hotspur, Dog, Cat, and Percy Islands. This island group is generally bordered to the east by Revillagigedo Channel. Felice Strait generally borders the area to the west and northwest. The south portion of the area (Percy, Hotspur, and Duke Islands) is bordered by Clarence Strait to the west. The open Pacific Ocean borders the area to the south. The islands that comprise the Duke Roadless Area are characterized by low elevation, subdued topography, and low-lying muskeg systems. The maximum elevation is about 1,500 feet.

The area generally appears natural and unmodified. The natural integrity for the area is outstanding and the apparent naturalness is very high. The opportunity for solitude is very high and the opportunity for primitive recreation is outstanding.

The Duke Roadless Area does not contain landscape that is classified as distinctive for the character type from a scenery standpoint. These islands were used by Alaska Natives in both ancient and historic times and have special traditional and cultural values. The unique topography with many potholes that rarely freeze in the winter make this area available for extensive use by wintering waterfowl, including trumpeter swans. The area also includes the Dog Island Research Natural Area. All of the roadless area except the Research Natural Area is managed as a Special Interest Area under the Forest Plan.

The roadless area includes about 1,209 acres of high-volume, old-growth forest. Of these acres, approximately 113 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The Duke Roadless Area is classified as being in the Revilla Island/Cleveland Peninsula Biogeographic Province and makes up about 3 percent of the province. It is one of 12 inventoried roadless areas found within the province which make up about 60 percent of the province. Part of the Misty Fjords National Monument Wilderness is located in this province and makes up about 18 percent of the province. The province also includes two Congressionally designated LUD II areas (Naha and Anan), which make up about 5 percent of the province.

The Duke Roadless Area lies completely within the Dixon Entrance Lowlands Ecological Section and represents 9 percent of the ecological section. Existing wilderness is well represented (56 percent) in the Dixon Entrance Lowlands Ecological Section and an additional 28 percent is protected by other existing non-development LUDs.

The entire (100 percent) roadless area is in the Duke Island Till Lowland Ecological Subsection; this portion represents 73 percent of the ecological subsection. None of this ecological subsection is in existing wilderness or LUD II, but 72 percent is protected by other existing non-development LUDs.

The Duke Roadless Area was rated 26 out of a possible 28 points under the Wilderness Attribute Rating System (WARS). As such, its WARS rating is ranked 5th from the highest (along with 6 other roadless areas) among the 109 Tongass inventoried roadless areas.

There is considerable local and national support for managing this area in an unroaded condition but very little support for designation as wilderness. Designation would provide long-term Congressional protection for 73 percent of the Duke Island Till Lowland Ecological Subsection; a subsection which does not have any areas within wilderness or LUD II. Wilderness designation for the Duke Roadless Area would create a wilderness with very high cultural and ecological values. Overall, the factors identified here indicate that the relative contribution of this area to the National Wilderness Preservation System would be high to very high.

V. Environmental Consequences

The Duke Roadless Area would be managed under the existing Forest Plan if Alternative 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7 is implemented. All of the roadless area would be managed under non-development LUDs. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area are protected by the Forest Plan.

Under Alternative 6, the entire area would be converted to Recommended LUD II. Because the area is already allocated to non-development LUDs, this conversion would have little effect on existing or future uses. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including the cultural and ecologic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated LUD II. Designation would provide long-term Congressional protection for 73 percent of the Duke Island Till Lowland Ecological Subsection; a subsection which does not have any areas within wilderness or LUD II.

Under Alternative 8, the entire roadless area would be converted to Recommended Wilderness. The potential for development, including recreation, special uses, and mineral, would be restricted. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including the cultural and ecologic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness. Designation would provide long-term Congressional protection for 73 percent of the Duke Island Till Lowland Ecological Subsection; a subsection which does not have any areas within wilderness or LUD II.

Land Use Designation Allocations and Suitable Timber Lands by Alternative for Roadless Area 521 (in acres)								
Land Use Designation	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7	Alt 8
Recommended Wilderness								46,863
Wilderness								
Recommended Wilderness Nat. Mon.								
Wilderness National Monument								
Non-wilderness National Monument								
Research Natural Area	713	713	713	713	713		713	
Special Interest Area	45,959	45,959	45,959	45,959	45,959		45,959	
Remote Recreation								
Enacted Municipal Watershed								
Old-growth Habitat								
Semi-remote Recreation								
Recommended LUD II						46,863		
LUD II								
Wild, Scenic, Recreational River								
Experimental Forest								
Scenic Viewshed	191	191	191	191	191		191	
Modified Landscape								
Timber production								
TOTAL	46,863	46,863	46,863	46,863	46,863	46,863	46,863	46,863
Suitable Timber Lands	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0