

# Appendix C

## INDIVIDUAL ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTION

**ROADLESS AREA NAME:** East Kuiu (245)

**ACRES (NFS):** 46,395

**BIOGEOGRAPHIC PROVINCE:** Kuiu Island

**ECOLOGICAL SECTION:** Kuiu-Prince of Wales Fjordlands and Kupreanof Lowlands

**2003 WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTE RATING:** 26

### I. Overview and Description

(1) **Location and Access:** The East Kuiu Roadless Area lies directly east of the Tebenkof Bay Wilderness and the Kuiu Wilderness on Kuiu Island, and borders the Sumner and Keku Straits. It is approximately 20 air miles south of Kake and 40 air miles west of Petersburg. Point Baker, a small community on the northwest shore of Prince of Wales Island, is approximately 10 miles by boat from Reid Bay in the southeast portion of the roadless area. Petersburg and Kake are served by the Alaska Marine Highway and Petersburg has daily jet service. There is no ferry service to Kuiu Island. The roadless area is accessed primarily by saltwater via boat or by floatplane. The northern end can be accessed via Road 6402. Several good anchorages can be found in Reid, Alvin, and No Name Bays, as well as at the head of Seclusion Harbor. There are no sites suitable for landing wheeled aircraft. Access to the interior is by foot or helicopter.

(2) **History:** The area is in the traditional territory of the Kake and Kuiu Tlingit. Numerous cultural resource inventories have identified a variety of cultural sites. Recorded sites include villages, camps, gardens, fish traps, and petroglyphs. In 1793, Captain Vancouver ended his first explorations in Southeast Alaska at Conclusion Island, which is part of the roadless area. Historic period sites in the area include fur farms and cabins. This area was part of the Alaska Pulp Corporation long-term timber sale area. A logging camp was developed at nearby Rowan Bay that is still used for timber sales in the general area. Road development has occurred to the north, along the southern shore of Threemile Arm. Forest Road 6402, constructed in 1986, connects Port Camden and Threemile Arm with the log transfer facility in Rowan Bay. Beach logging has occurred in each of the bays in the East Kuiu Roadless Area.

(3) **Geography and Topography:** This area includes portions of three geophysical areas, including the Kuiu Plutonic Mountains, the Keku Volcanic Plateau, and the Alvin Graywacke Hills. Landforms of this area are similar to those of the Bay of Pillars Roadless Area (244). In the Kuiu Plutonic Mountains, landforms are typically smooth mountain slopes below relatively extensive areas of rounded alpine ecosystems. Mountain slopes are generally steep, frequently dissected, and shallowly incised. Bedrock lithology consists of plutonic rocks of the Kuiu-Etolin plutonic belt of Miocene age (20 to 22 million years ago) and older plutons of the Chilkat-Prince of Wales plutonic province of Cretaceous age (about 100 million years ago). Rock types are primarily massive, non-foliated intrusive igneous rocks; mostly granite, granodiorite, quartz diorite, and quartz monzodiorite. In the Keku Volcanic Plateau area, landforms are typically prominently benched hills and lava plateaus typical of volcanic terrain. The present landscape is largely the result of glacially eroded alternating strata of volcanic flows. Southeast-facing slopes are long and relatively gentle, while northwest facing slopes are typically steep and stair-stepped, with numerous cliffs. Bedrock lithology is dominated by extrusive igneous rocks. Rock types are primarily rhyolite, rhyodiorite, basalt, and other mafic extrusive rocks that have been extremely altered and brecciated in many areas. Volcanic conglomerate and volcanoclastic graywackes are scattered throughout the area. This landscape is much younger than the rest of Kuiu Island, as these rocks are of Pleistocene age (less than 1 million years old). The landscape of the Alvin Graywacke Hills area is characterized as a series of rolling hills, most of which are less than 1,500 feet in elevation. Hill slopes are typical of glaciated terrain. Bedrock lithology consists primarily of sedimentary rocks of the Bay of Pillars formation. Common rock types are graywackes and mudstone turbidites of Silurian age (400 to 440 million years ago). Glacial deposits are scattered throughout this landscape on the more gentle slopes.

Bordered to west by the Tebenkof Bay Wilderness, this area encompasses the slopes facing Keku Strait, and several major bays, including Reid, Alvin, and No Name Bays. A portion of the shoreline adjacent to Threemile Arm is also included. Steeper slopes are forested, intermixed with low productive forest on the more gently sloping hills. Elevations range from sea level to 1,885 feet.

The area contains 135 miles of shoreline along saltwater. Islands make up 3,597 acres. The two largest islands are Conclusion Island (2,030 acres) and Sumner Island (940 acres). Alpine areas cover about 549 acres, ice and snow covers about 66 acres, and rock covers about 587 acres.

**(4) Ecosystem:**

**(a) Classification:** Biogeographic Province. The area is in the Kuiu Island Biogeographic Province. This province is generally characterized by rolling, subdued topography, and localized, rugged terrain. Highly productive forests are often found in this province, especially on calcareous soils derived from ancient coral reefs. There are no unique or uncommon plant/soil associations in the roadless area.

Ecological Section/Subsection. The East Kuiu Roadless Area is contained mostly within the Kuiu-Prince of Wales Fjordlands Ecological Section (M247F) and also contains portions within the Kupreanof Lowlands Ecological Section (M247G). These areas are represented by four ecological subsections (see table below). Covering half of the East Kuiu Roadless Area, the Alvin Bay Sediments Ecological Subsection includes sedimentary coastal lowlands and angular-sided hills with smooth summits, remnants of substantial glaciation. Well-drained, productive soils, found on upland slopes, are cloaked in forests of hemlock and hemlock-Alaska yellow cedar, while poorly drained soils and associated wetlands are found in coastal lowlands. The Kuiu-Prince of Wales Granitics Ecological Subsection covers about 16 percent of the roadless area and is typified by rugged mountaintops of igneous rock that rise above rounded peaks. The higher crests capture incoming precipitation, which remains as snowpack much of the year. Moderately productive hemlock forests are found below the alpine zone. The Affleck Canal Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection, covering a small portion of the east side of the East Kuiu Roadless Area is restricted to the glacially exposed peninsulas and low hills. Poorly drained soils and wetlands cover most of the area. The Sumner Strait Volcanics Ecological Subsection covers less than a third and lies in the southeast portion of the East Kuiu Roadless Area. This subsection is composed of water-resistant volcanic flows of relatively recent origin rising above lowland glacial deposits. Shallow organic soils are found on long gentle slopes and mineral soils on short, steep slopes (Nowacki et al., 2001).

<u>Ecological Section</u>	<u>Ecological Subsection</u>	<u>Percent of Roadless Area</u>
Kuiu-Prince of Wales Fjordlands	Alvin Bay Sediments	51%
	Kuiu-Prince of Wales Granitics	16%
	Affleck Canal Till Lowlands	6%
Kupreanof Lowlands	Sumner Strait Volcanics	27%

**(b) Vegetation:** Muskeg/forested wetland complexes are interspersed with mixed conifer plant communities on better-drained sites. Due to their small size and association with forested sites, accurate acreage estimates are difficult and only approximately 100 acres have been mapped. Timbered hill slopes are dominantly western hemlock, Sitka spruce, and Alaska-cedar plant communities. Mountain hemlock plant communities dominate the upper mountain slopes immediately below the subalpine zone. Brush communities dominated by Sitka alder and salmonberry occur in narrow snow avalanche tracks that run from alpine areas to near sea level.

There are approximately 44,092 acres mapped as forest land of which 29,517 acres (67 percent) are mapped as productive old-growth forest. Of the productive old growth, 19,241 acres (65 percent) are mapped as high-volume old-growth forest. The productive old growth includes about 3,075 acres of high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. There are 955 acres of second-growth forest where timber harvest has occurred in the past.

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**(c) Soils:** Soils in this area are formed in a wide variety of parent materials, including bedrock, colluvium, and glacial drift. In general, well- or moderately well-drained soils are on moderate to steep mountain slopes with permeable parent materials. These soils are acidic, have cold soil temperatures, and are very high in organic matter. Rooting is largely limited to the surface organic layers and the top few inches of mineral soil. These soils are usually moist, sometimes wet, but are never dry.

Poorly drained soils developed on more gently sloping areas and/or areas with impermeable soil materials. These soils have deep accumulations of organic matter and range from forested wetlands to open muskeg. A small portion of the area has alpine soils. These soils are either mostly shallow, very wet organic soils or extremely shallow and rocky.

**(d) Fish Resources:** This area has 16 Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) numbered salmon producing streams. Streams in the roadless area produce coho, pink, sockeye, and chum salmon. The best producers may be the stream at the head of Seclusion Harbor and Alvin Bay Creek. The headwaters to Alecks Creek are found in this area. Generally, the area does not produce large numbers of salmon, and sport fishing pressure is low.

**(e) Wildlife Resources:** Salt Lagoon-Seclusion Harbor has a unique combination of freshwater and saltwater habitats, making it valuable habitat for Sitka black-tailed deer, waterfowl, black bear, moose, wolves, furbearers, marine mammals, and bald eagles. This is also true for estuarine habitat found in Alvin Bay, Reid Bay, and at the head of Threemile Arm.

Other terrestrial mammals include bats, mink, muskrat, ermine, red squirrel, mice, shrews, and voles. There are occasional sightings of fisher and wolverine, but these are considered incidental species at the edge of their range.

Bird species include bald eagles, red-tailed hawks, sharp-shinned hawks, great horned owls, western screech owls, saw-whet owls, pigmy owls, marbled murrelets, osprey, spruce grouse, ptarmigan, sandhill cranes, trumpeter swans, Canada geese, and great blue herons. Red-throated, Pacific, and common loons all occur around Kuiu Island. Several plover, yellowlegs, and sandpiper species occur mainly along the river corridors and in large muskeg systems. Two swift species, one hummingbird species, four woodpecker species, three flycatcher species, and five swallow species are also known on the island. Steller's jay, northwestern crow, and common raven all occur. Chestnut-backed chickadee, red-breasted nuthatch, brown creeper, winter wren, American dipper, golden-crowned kinglet, ruby-crowned kinglet, Swainson's thrush, and hermit thrush occur. American robin, varied thrush, American pipit, cedar waxwing, northern shrike, warbling vireo, and five warbler species occur. Additionally, the northern water thrush, common yellow throat, western tanager, dark-eyed junco, Lapland longspur, snow bunting, red-winged blackbird, rusty blackbird, brown-headed cowbird, eight sparrow species, pine grosbeak, red crossbill, white-winged crossbill, common redpoll, and pine siskin are found.

Sea mammals known to inhabit the waters surrounding Kuiu Island are the Pacific white-sided dolphin, killer whale, harbor porpoise, Dall's porpoise, humpback whale, Steller sea lion, and harbor seal. Sea otters use the marine waters along this roadless area from Port Beauclerc to Threemile Arm.

Amphibians known to occur on Kuiu Island include rough-skinned newt, western toad, and wood frog. The rough-skinned newt is found primarily in lacustrine, palustrine, hemlock/spruce forests, and muskeg bog ecosystems. The western toad is also found primarily in lacustrine, palustrine, hemlock/spruce forests, and in clearcuts. Wood frogs are found in most of the ecosystems found in Southeast Alaska except for marine, estuarine, and riverine.

**(5) Management Direction and Current Uses:** The roadless area was allocated to six Land Use Designations (LUDs) under the 1997 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan. These six LUDs are Modified Landscape, Timber Production, Old-growth Habitat, Semi-remote Recreation, LUD II, and Remote Recreation.

<b>LUD</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Modified Landscape	17,364
Timber Production	12,320
Old-growth Habitat	8,776
Semi-remote Recreation	4,785
LUD II	3,071
Remote Recreation	79

Much of the roadless area, approximately 64 percent, was allocated to development LUDs (Modified Landscape and Timber Production). Approximately 37 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Modified Landscape LUD. This LUD is mostly adjacent to the shoreline. In areas adjacent to the Tebenkof Bay Wilderness, approximately 27 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Timber Production LUD.

Approximately 36 percent of the roadless area was allocated to non-development LUDs (Old-growth Habitat, Semi-remote Recreation, LUD II, and Remote Recreation). Patches of the Old-growth Habitat LUD were assigned to approximately 19 percent the roadless area, located around Seclusion Harbor, No Name Bay, Reid Bay, and in the northernmost part of the area. Approximately 10 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Semi-remote Recreation LUD, located adjacent to the Kuiu Wilderness and in islands less than 1,000 acres east of the Kuiu Island coast. Conclusion and Sumner Islands were assigned to the LUD II, which accounts for approximately 7 percent of the roadless area. Less than 1 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Remote Recreation LUD, located in a small pocket of land about a half-mile west of No Name Bay.

No timber harvest is currently proposed for this roadless area. The area is planned for timber harvest on the 10-year sale schedule.

Recreation uses include black bear, deer, and waterfowl hunting, pink and coho salmon fishing, steelhead fishing, sea kayaking, camping, beachcombing, rockhounding, and viewing of scenery from marine waters. There are no public recreation cabins in the roadless area. The Alecks Creek Portage Trail is 4 miles long and connects the Tebenkof Bay Wilderness to Keku Strait on the other side of the island. This trail is extremely difficult and is not recommended as a portage in its current condition. One outfitter/guide permit was issued in 2000, involving 60 service days of camping. There is evidence of past beach logging in the area. There is limited subsistence use, primarily by residents of Point Baker and Port Protection (with a combined population of approximately 100 people).

**(6) Appearance (Apparent Naturalness):** Most of the area appears unmodified from major travel routes in Keku Strait and Sumner Strait, with the exception of areas beach logged in the 1960s. Trees have regenerated naturally in these harvest units. They do not dominate the landscape, but there is a difference in texture and color from the surrounding old-growth forest.

**(7) Surroundings (External Influences):** The Tebenkof Bay Wilderness and the Kuiu Wilderness lie to the west. To the north, road construction and timber harvesting have been extensive. Forest Road 6402, which connects Rowan Bay through the isthmus to Port Camden and Threemile Arm, was constructed about 1986. It has the potential to be extended into No Name Bay.

**(8) Attractions and Features of Special Interest:** The area includes all of Alvin, Reid, and No Name Bays, and Seclusion Harbor. Attractions in this area include the south-facing sand beaches in Reid and Alvin Bays. The presence of good anchorage sites within each of the bays and in Seclusion Harbor allows visitors to “boat camp” overnight. Seclusion Harbor-Salt Lagoon is a known sport fishing area for pink and chum salmon. The area contains 11 inventoried recreation places, which cover 6,417 acres, or 14 percent of the roadless area.

**(9) Differences between the 1989 and 2003 Roadless Area Boundary:** Areas along the shore with older harvest units but no roads have been included in the roadless area.

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### II. Capability for Management as Wilderness

(1) **Natural Integrity and Apparent Naturalness:** The majority of the area is essentially unmodified. Some evidence of human use is present at the abandoned fur farms on islands in this area, as well as past beach logging, although this is considered a very low impact on the overall natural integrity and apparent naturalness. The northern edge of the roadless area is influenced by roads and timber harvest.

(2) **Opportunity for Solitude and Serenity, Self-reliance, Adventure, Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation:** There is a high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation in the East Kuiu Roadless Area, especially in the interior portion. Floatplanes and powerboats may disrupt visitors for brief periods. Present recreation and subsistence use levels are low compared to other areas on the Petersburg Ranger District. Persons camped along the shore are unlikely to encounter other recreationists, but may see or be seen by the occasional fishing boat offshore. There are two float houses within Seclusion Harbor.

Travel within the roadless area is moderately challenging. While there are some steep, rugged areas, there are also areas with gentle topography. As with all backcountry areas on the Tongass, the opportunity for challenge and risk in this area is high. The climate, the rugged terrain, the isolation and distance from population centers with medical facilities, the barriers to communication, and the presence of large wild animals all contribute to the need for good preparation and knowledge of backcountry survival skills for anyone using this area. Hypothermia and bear encounters are just two examples of the many risks that must be considered before traveling in the backcountry of Southeast Alaska.

The area provides primarily primitive and 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)	16,514	36%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM)	5,578	12%
Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM)	19,303	42%
Roaded Modified (RM)	5,000	11%

The area contains 11 inventoried recreation places, which cover 6,417 acres (14 percent) of the roadless area.

ROS Class	# of Rec. Places*	Total Acres
P	1	5
SPNM	0	0
SPM	7	4,113
RM	4	2,301

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

There are no developed recreation facilities.

(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 East Kuiu Roadless Area was given a rating of 26 out of 28 possible points. The rating was re-evaluated for this updated

version of the Analysis of the Management Situation. Based on this re-evaluation, the area was also given a rating of 26.

**(4) Ecologic and Geologic Values:** Salt Lagoon-Seclusion Harbor has a unique combination of freshwater and saltwater, making it high value wildlife habitat. This is the only unique ecologic or geologic value in the area. The roadless area has well-defined boundaries, except for the northern edge, which is adjacent to a roaded area, and borders the Tebenkof Bay and Kuiu Wildernesses.

**(a) Fish Resources:** VCU 416 and 419, adjacent to Threemile Arm, Alvin Bay, and Reid Bay, are rated as primary salmon producers. No VCUs were rated as primary sport fish producers (ADF&G, 1998).

This area has 16 ADF&G numbered salmon-producing streams. It is known to produce coho, pink, and chum salmon, cutthroat and steelhead trout, and Dolly Varden char. Other fish species, such as stickleback and sculpin, are also present. The best salmon producer may be the stream at the head of Seclusion Harbor, with estimated annual peak escapements of 21,800 pink and 1,425 chum salmon. Alvin Bay Creek has an estimated annual peak escapement of 40,000 pink salmon. Generally, sportfishing pressure in the area is low.

The headwaters of Alecks Creek are found in this area. Alecks Creek has high fish values for steelhead, coho, and sockeye salmon, and cutthroat trout. The pink salmon run averages 27,000 fish per year. The stream also supports chum salmon and Dolly Varden char. ADF&G lists this stream among the 65 important watersheds for salmon in Southeast Alaska. Alecks Creek and Lake meet the guidelines for Wild River classification for 3 miles. However, it was not recommended as Wild River in the 1997 Forest Plan ROD because the majority of the creek and lake watershed lie within the Tebenkof Bay Wilderness.

**(b) Wildlife Resources:** Salt Lagoon-Seclusion Harbor has a unique combination of freshwater and saltwater, making it valuable habitat for Sitka black-tailed deer, waterfowl, black bear, wolves, moose, furbearers, marine mammals, and bald eagles. This is also true for estuarine habitat found in Alvin Bay, Reid Bay, and at the head of Threemile Arm. Information from the Threemile Timber Sale EIS (USDA Forest Service, 2001) indicates that this area also supports habitat for trumpeter swan and Canada goose. Sea otters are expanding their range northward in Southeast Alaska, and use the marine waters along this roadless area from Port Beauclerc to Threemile Arm. Based on harvest data compiled from 1985 to 1995, one of the VCUs partially located in this area, VCU 419 surrounding Threemile Arm, was ranked in the second 25 percent of black bear harvest areas on the Tongass.

**(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, including 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. Peale's peregrine falcon nests have been found on the southwest portion of Kuiu Island. Inhabitants of late seral forests, Queen Charlotte goshawks are closely associated with productive old growth. In addition, twelve sensitive plant species are known or suspected to occur in the Petersburg Ranger District.

**(d) Karst, Cave, and Other Geologic Resources:** There is some karst in this roadless area, as well as calcareous soils derived from ancient coral reef deposits.

**(5) Scientific and Educational Values:** While the area provides opportunities for the study of forests, fish, wildlife, and geological processes, it is not readily accessible to scientists, students, or tourists.

**(6) Scenic Values:** Most of the landscape appears unmodified from major travel routes in Keku Strait and Sumner Strait. Viewing the area from saltwater use bays, the landscape has a natural appearance. Trees and other vegetation in areas beach logged in the 1960s have recovered to the extent that they no longer dominate the view.

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Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas identified by the Forest Plan, that area within or adjacent to the area include: Keku Strait, a small boat route; Sumner Strait, a tour ship route; Three-mile Arm, Seclusion Harbor, No Name Bay, Alvin Bay, and Reid Bay, which are all saltwater use areas.

Ten percent of this roadless area is inventoried Variety Class A (possessing landscape diversity that is unique for the character type), 75 percent is inventoried Variety Class B (possessing landscape diversity that is common for the character type), and the remaining 14 percent is inventoried Variety Class C (possessing a low degree of landscape diversity).

The majority of this roadless area, 75 percent, is in Existing Visual Condition (EVC) Type I, where only ecological change has occurred. One percent of the area appears to be untouched by human activity and is in EVC Type II. About 1 percent of the area is in EVC Type IV, where changes in the landscape are easily noticed by the average person and may attract some attention. They appear to be disturbances but resemble natural patterns. Twenty-two percent is in EVC Type V, where changes in the landscape are obvious to the average person, and appear to be major disturbances.

**(7) Social, Cultural, and Historical Values:** The area is in the traditional territory of both the Kake and Kuiu Tlingit. Numerous cultural resource inventories in the area have identified a variety of sites, including villages, camps, gardens, fish traps, petroglyphs, and culturally modified trees. In 1793, Captain Vancouver ended his first explorations in Southeast Alaska at Conclusion Island. Historic period sites in the area include fur farms and cabins. This area was part of the Alaska Pulp Corporation long-term timber sale area. The bays provide subsistence resources for residents of Point Baker, Port Protection, and Kake. None of the VCUs included in the roadless area were rated as having the highest community fish and wildlife values. One, VCU 416 surrounding Alvin Bay and Reid Bay, was listed among the VCUs in the second most important group. All VCUs were listed among the VCUs with the highest sensitivity to disturbance of subsistence use areas (ADF&G, 1998). These resources include deer, crab, fish, shellfish, and seaweed. There is also a float residence in Seclusion Harbor.

**(8) Manageability as Wilderness and Boundary Conditions/Changes:** The northern boundary is the roaded portion of Threemile Arm. The roadless area borders the Tebenkof Bay Wilderness and the Kuiu Wilderness on the west and south. The Keku and Sumner Straits are on the eastern boundary. The roadless area could be added to the two existing wildernesses; however, dropping the north-facing slopes along Threemile Arm (in VCU 419) would result in a more well-defined boundary. Dropping this portion of VCU 419 included in the roadless area would create a more manageable boundary separated from roaded and logged areas by a topographic break.

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

**(1) Recreation, Including Tourism Potential:** Recreation potential for East Kuiu is moderate. There is potential for additional outfitter/guide permits. In 1996 the Alaska Visitor Association (AVA) suggested a recreation development in the Salt Lagoon area. The development included a leased proprietary camp for 15 camp units and an overnight wildlife observatory with capacity for 50 people.

**(2) Subsistence Uses:** Designation as a wilderness would not affect current subsistence uses.

**(3) Fish Resources:** No fish habitat enhancement projects are currently planned for this area.

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

**(5) Timber Resources:** There are approximately 29,517 acres mapped as productive old growth in the roadless area. In addition, there are 955 acres of second growth. Of this, approximately 20,711 acres are characterized as tentatively suitable for timber harvest. Based on the Forest Plan LUDs assigned to this area (and estimated falldown and scheduling reduction factors), 7,656 acres or 17 percent of this roadless area are estimated to be suitable for timber production. Approximately 5,601 of the suitable acres are mapped as high-volume old growth; of these acres, 642 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

Second growth is primarily located in small patches that were beach logged in the 1960s along the shores of Reid Bay, No Name Bay, and Alvin Bay. The proposed Threemile Timber Harvest FEIS and ROD are expected to be published early in 2003. No timber harvest or road building is anticipated in this roadless area. This roadless area is adjacent to the northern boundary of the roadless area.

(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.

(7) **Minerals:** There are no inventoried areas with high mineral development potential in the area. There are no valid mining claims.

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

(9) **Water Availability and Use:** No developed recreation cabins or other facilities exist to create a water demand. There are no existing hydroelectric or domestic water projects in the area. There is an application for a domestic waterline permit, but no action has been taken as of spring 2002.

(10) **Areas of Scientific Interest:** The area contains no Research Natural Areas and has not been identified for any other scientific value.

(11) **Land Use Authorizations:** Forest Service records show that one outfitter/guide used this area in 2000 for 60 service days for camping.

(12) **Land Status:** The roadless area is entirely National Forest System land. About 3,300 acres of land surrounding No Name Bay have been selected by the State of Alaska, but have not been conveyed.

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

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

(a) **Interest Expressed by Local Users and Residents:** Residents of Point Baker/Port Protection use the area for subsistence crabbing and shellfish harvesting. There is a fair level of public resistance to developing a road system into No Name Bay.

(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. The bill did not include this roadless area. In 2001, HR 2908 proposed that most of the roadless area be designated as part of the proposed Tebenkof Bay-Kuiu Island Wilderness. It did not include Sumner and Conclusion Islands. These islands would continue to be managed in an unroaded condition as LUD II under the bill.

(c) **Public Input During Forest Plan Revision and Appeals:** The Kake Tribal Council stated that they were against logging in the area because of the impact that it would have on subsistence and fishing. They commented that Seclusion Harbor had a unique inner bay bordered by meadows that was highly important to the people of Kake for subsistence. The Point Baker Community Council wanted East Kuiu allocated to Old-growth Habitat LUD or Primitive Recreation LUD to protect fishing, hunting, the migratory flyway and wintering habitat for waterfowl, and marbled murrelet concentrations. The timber industry wanted the area allocated to the Timber Production LUD. The Narrows Conservation Coalition and the Sitka Conservation Society opposed logging because of the effects on primitive recreation, scenic quality, subsistence uses, fish and wildlife, salmon, and landslide prone areas. Others wanted the area preserved as wilderness or managed to maintain high-quality sport fishing experience. One commenter wanted the area managed as a mineral LUD. The AVA suggested a leased proprietary camp with 15 camp units and an overnight wildlife observatory with capacity for 50 people for Salt Lagoon.

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**(d) Public Input During Roadless Area Conservation Rule and Road Management Policy**

**Review:** This area was not specifically identified in the public comments received during the Forest Plan revision appeals. However, some commenters wanted all unroaded lands on the Tongass to be protected from development, while others wanted the current level of development to continue.

**(e) Public Input Expressed for Project-level EISs and Other Input:** Comments were received on the Threemile EIS. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service felt that no decision should be made until the roadless issue is decided at the national level. The Sitka Conservation Society, the Juneau Group of the Sierra Club, the Cascadia Wildlands Project, and others supported this position. The Sitka Conservation Society also stated that the East Kuiu Roadless Area borders two existing wilderness areas and the Threemile DEIS says that road building would be challenging due to landforms. The Alaska Rainforest Campaign felt that the area should be protected under the national Roadless Area Conservation Policy. The Southeast Alaska Conservation Council wanted roadless areas properly evaluated prior to any road building or harvest. They also stated that the area is important for subsistence uses. Others stated that the area is valuable habitat for waterfowl, black bears, furbearers, marine mammals, and bald eagles. In addition, they stated that subsistence use would be harmed by roads and timber harvest, including the cultural and spiritual value of participating in traditional subsistence harvests in old-growth forests.

**(f) Public Input Expressed During Supplemental EIS Process:** The U.S. Department of the Interior identified this roadless area as one of the 13 roadless areas they considered to have outstanding fish and wildlife values. They indicated that among the remaining, undeveloped areas left on Kuiu Island, three areas offer outstanding fish and wildlife habitat that should be protected. These include Bay of Pillars, Camden, and East Kuiu. Protection of this area, particularly in combination with the Bay of Pillars (#244) and Tebenkof Bay Wilderness Area, would conserve valuable remaining undisturbed, forested habitats on the island. They expressed that the important wildlife values provided by this area warrant management that ensures the long-term integrity of its habitats, ecosystem processes, and ecological functions.

In comments relative to the 1997 Forest Plan, the Governor of Alaska recommended that logging and construction of logging roads be avoided in important public interest areas such as East Kuiu Island (RA# 245). This comment was reiterated by the Governor in scoping comments regarding the SEIS and in comments by the Division of Governmental Coordination on the Draft SEIS.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game recommended permanent roadless status for East Kuiu Island in their comments on the Draft SEIS.

ADF&G rated the East Kuiu roadless area as the sixth highest priority for protection in the Stikine Area. 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.

The city of Petersburg said they were opposed to designation of this area as wilderness because of the potential long-term economic effects on the city.

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

The City of Kupreanof recommended East Kuiu for permanent protection as wilderness.

The Organized Village of Kake passed a resolution requesting that “customary and traditional areas such as ... East Kuiu (VCUs 416-418, 4051)... be recommended for long-term protection.

Audubon Alaska recommended that East Kuiu Island should be protected from logging and road building.

SEACC recommended that the Bay of Pillars, East Kuiu, and South Kuiu roadless areas be designated wilderness and added to the existing Tebenkof Bay and Kuiu Wilderness. This combination would create a contiguous wilderness of approximately 265,000 acres. The Alaska Rainforest Campaign (a coalition of

national and Alaska conservation groups) identified Roadless Areas 244, 245, and 246 as adjacent to the existing Tebenkof Bay Wilderness and Kuiu Wilderness and recommended them for permanent protection as wilderness. They indicated that this combination would create a contiguous wilderness area of approximately 265,000 acres.

One commenter recommended Seclusion Bay should be protected. Many individual commenters recommended protection for all of East Kuiu.

**(2) Nearby Roadless and Wilderness Areas and Uses:** This area adjoins the Tebenkof Bay Wilderness on the west, Kuiu Wilderness to the west and south, and the Bay of Pillars Roadless Area to the northwest.

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

Community	Air Miles	Water Miles
Juneau (Pop. 30,711)	120	130
Petersburg (Pop. 3,224)	40	55
Wrangell (Pop. 2,308)	55	60
Ketchikan (Pop. 14,070)	105	120

Kake and Petersburg are the nearest stops on the Alaska Marine Highway.

**(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System:** The East Kuiu Roadless Area is adjacent to the eastern border of the Tebenkof Bay Wilderness and the Kuiu Wilderness on Kuiu Island, and borders the Sumner and Keku Straits. Landforms in the roadless area are characterized by gently rolling hills that are typically short, extremely broken and benched, making development of a road system challenging. Steeper slopes are forested, intermixed with scrub timber on gently sloping hills and benches. The highest point is 1,885 feet above sea level.

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

Approximately 10 percent of the landscape is considered distinctive for the character type from a scenery standpoint. The area has important cultural and historic values.

The roadless area includes about 19,241 acres of high-volume, old-growth forest. Of these acres, 3,075 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The East Kuiu Roadless Area is classified as being in the Kuiu Island Biogeographic Province and makes about 9 percent of the province. It is one of eight inventoried roadless areas found within the province that collectively make up about 53 percent of the province. The Tebenkof Bay and the Kuiu Wildernesses are located in this province and makes up about 26 percent of the province. The province also includes the Sumner, Conclusion, and associated islands LUD II area, which makes up about 1 percent of the province.

The East Kuiu Roadless Area lies within two ecological sections; it represents 3 percent of the Kuiu-Prince of Wales Fjordlands Ecological Section and 1 percent of the Kupreanof Lowlands Ecological Section. Approximately 13 percent of the Kuiu-Prince of Wales Fjordlands Ecological Section is in existing wilderness, 8 percent is in existing LUD II, and an additional 33 percent is protected by other existing non-development LUDs. Approximately 1 percent of the Kupreanof Lowlands Ecological Section is in existing wilderness, 1 percent is in existing LUD II, and an additional 33 percent is protected by other existing non-development LUDs.

Half (51 percent) of the roadless area is in the Alvin Bay Sediments Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 29 percent of the entire ecological subsection, 53 percent of which is in existing wilderness and 25 percent is protected by existing non-development LUDs. The Kuiu-Prince of Wales Granitics Ecological Subsection accounts for 16 percent of the roadless area, representing 5 percent of the entire ecological subsection. Within the Kuiu-Prince of Wales Granitics Ecological Subsection, 19 percent is protected in existing wilderness, 23

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percent in existing LUD II, and 36 percent in existing non-development LUDs. Six percent of the roadless area is in the Affleck Canal Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 5 percent of the entire ecological subsection. Approximately 38 percent of this ecological subsection is protected by existing wilderness, 2 percent in existing LUD II, and 60 percent is in existing non-development LUDs. The balance (27 percent) of the roadless area is in the Sumner Strait Volcanics Ecological Subsection. This portion of the roadless area represents 4 percent of the entire ecological subsection, minor portions of which are protected by existing wilderness and LUD II (0.1 percent and 1 percent, respectively), and by other existing non-development LUDs (32 percent).

The East Kuiu Roadless Area was rated 26 out of a possible 28 points under the 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 both local and national support for managing the area in an unroaded condition, and support for designating the area as wilderness. Designation would create a wilderness with important cultural, historic, and old growth values. Designation of the area would add Congressional protection to about 4 percent of the Sumner Strait Volcanics Ecological Subsection that currently has only about 1 percent in wilderness or LUD II. It would also expand the Tebenkof Bay and Kuiu Wildernesses to the east. Overall, the factors identified here indicate that the relative contribution of this area to the National Wilderness Preservation System would be very high.

### **V. Environmental Consequences**

The East Kuiu Roadless Area would be managed under the existing Forest Plan if Alternative 1 or 4 is implemented. Approximately 36 percent of the roadless area would be managed under non-development LUDs. Timber harvest and road development could occur in the remaining 64 percent. The land in the development LUDs provides an estimated 7,656 acres that are suitable for timber production (5 percent of the suitable acres on the Petersburg Ranger District). Approximately 642 of the suitable acres are identified as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. The timber sales, recreation, minerals, and special use programs would continue. The values associated with natural settings of the area could be affected by developments allowed under the Forest Plan. The cultural, historic, and most scenic and old growth values are protected under the Forest Plan.

Under Alternative 2, a 3,071-acre portion of the area in LUD II would be converted to Recommended Wilderness. This would not affect timber sale projects because this area is currently protected under LUD II designation. The total area suitable for timber production would not change from Alternative 1. The recreation, mineral, and special use programs could be restricted. Mineral prospecting would be allowed up to the time that the area is actually designated as wilderness by Congress. The values associated with natural settings of the LUD II area would continue to be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness. Effects on natural setting values are basically the same as Alternative 1 and 4.

Under Alternative 5, a 41,598-acre portion of the area in Remote Recreation, Old-growth Habitat, Semi-remote Recreation, LUD II, Wild/Scenic/Recreation River, and Timber Production LUDs would be converted to Recommended Wilderness. No timber sales would be allowed and the recreation, minerals, and special use programs could be restricted in the Recommended Wilderness area. Lands suitable for timber production would be reduced to approximately 480 acres. Mineral prospecting would be allowed up to the time that the area is actually designated as wilderness by Congress. Designation of the area would add Congressional protection to a portion of the Sumner Strait Volcanics Ecological Subsection that currently has only about 1 percent in wilderness or LUD II. The values associated with the natural settings of the majority of the roadless area, including cultural, historic, old growth, and scenic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness.

Under Alternative 6, all of the roadless area outside LUD II would be converted to Recommended Wilderness. The entire roadless area would be managed under either LUD II or Recommended Wilderness. No timber sales would be allowed. The ongoing recreation, minerals, and special uses programs within the Recommended Wilderness area could be restricted. Mineral prospecting would be allowed up to the time that the area is actually designated as wilderness by Congress. Designation of the area would add Congressional protection to about 4 percent of the Sumner Strait Volcanics Ecological Subsection that currently has only about 1 percent in wilderness or LUD II. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including cultural, historic, old growth, and scenic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness.

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Under Alternative 3, 7, or 8, the entire roadless area would be converted to Recommended Wilderness. No timber sales would be allowed and the ongoing recreation, minerals, and special uses programs could be restricted. Mineral prospecting would be allowed up to the time that the area is actually designated as wilderness by Congress. Designation of the area would add Congressional protection to about 4 percent of the Sumner Strait Volcanics Ecological Subsection that currently has only about 1 percent in wilderness or LUD II. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including cultural, historic, old growth, and scenic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness.

<b>Land Use Designation Allocations and Suitable Timber Lands by Alternative for Roadless Area 245 (in acres)</b>								
<b>Land Use Designation</b>	<b>Alt 1</b>	<b>Alt 2</b>	<b>Alt 3</b>	<b>Alt 4</b>	<b>Alt 5</b>	<b>Alt 6</b>	<b>Alt 7</b>	<b>Alt 8</b>
<b>Recommended Wilderness</b>		3,071	46,395		41,598	43,324	46,395	46,395
<b>Wilderness</b>								
<b>Recommended Wilderness Nat. Mon.</b>								
<b>Wilderness National Monument</b>								
<b>Non-wilderness National Monument</b>								
<b>Research Natural Area</b>								
<b>Special Interest Area</b>								
<b>Remote Recreation</b>	79	79		79				
<b>Enacted Municipal Watershed</b>								
<b>Old-growth Habitat</b>	8,776	8,776		8,776	1,215			
<b>Semi-remote Recreation</b>	4,785	4,785		4,785	9			
<b>Recommended LUD II</b>								
<b>LUD II</b>	3,071			3,071		3,071		
<b>Wild, Scenic, Recreational River</b>								
<b>Experimental Forest</b>								
<b>Scenic Viewshed</b>								
<b>Modified Landscape</b>	17,364	17,364		17,364	1,671			
<b>Timber Production</b>	12,320	12,320		12,320	1,902			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46,395</b>	<b>46,395</b>	<b>46,395</b>	<b>46,395</b>	<b>46,395</b>	<b>46,395</b>	<b>46,395</b>	<b>46,395</b>
<b>Suitable Timber Lands</b>	7,656	7,656	0	7,656	480	0	0	0