

APPENDIX C
ROADLESS AREA EVALUATION

Appendix C

Roadless Area Evaluation

Introduction

This appendix presents the detailed roadless area descriptions that document the individual evaluations of inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass National Forest that were conducted to provide the basis for potential wilderness recommendations. This appendix was developed to support the assessment presented in the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) to the 1997 Tongass Land Management Plan Revision Final EIS (referred to in the document as the 1997 Tongass Forest Plan Revision Final EIS). In addition, it represents an update and expansion of the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) requirements pertinent to roadless areas for Forest Planning. As a result, this appendix provides an update to the AMS that was prepared in 1989 for the 1997 Tongass Forest Plan Revision Final EIS.

The remainder of the introductory sections of this appendix consist of three main parts. The first part presents a summary of the roadless area inventory process. The second part describes general aspects of the roadless area evaluation, with specific reference to the approach and information used in the individual roadless area descriptions presented in this appendix. The third part describes the individual roadless area description sections and provides a detailed overview of the factors discussed in each section, along with relevant supporting information.

Following the introductory sections, the individual roadless area descriptions are presented in numerical order of the inventoried roadless areas. The appendix is presented in two volumes: Volume II, which is Part 1 of Appendix C, includes the individual roadless area descriptions for Roadless Areas 201 through 310 and Volume III, which is Part 2 of Appendix C, includes the descriptions for Roadless Areas 311 through 577.

Roadless Area Inventory

According to the Forest Service Handbook (FSH 1909.12, Chapter 7, Section 7.1), the first step in the evaluation of potential wilderness is to identify and inventory all roadless, undeveloped areas that satisfy the definition of wilderness. The minimum criteria for considering a roadless area in the evaluation of wilderness potential was established by the Wilderness Act of 1964 and in subsequent regulation and policies. In addition to these criteria, the Forest Service Handbook requires that an area contain at least 5,000 acres of undeveloped land that does not contain improved roads maintained for travel by passenger-type vehicles. Areas less than 5,000 acres may, however, qualify if they are a self-contained ecosystem, such as an island; are contiguous to existing wilderness; or are ecologically isolated by topography and manageable in a natural condition.

A total of 106 inventoried roadless areas were identified and examined for potential wilderness recommendations early in the Tongass Forest Plan Revision process that resulted in the 1997 Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (referred to in this document as the 1997 Tongass Forest Plan). The results of this analysis were recorded in Appendix C of the 1989 AMS. An update of this analysis was produced and included as Appendix C to the 1997 Tongass Forest Plan Revision Final EIS. This update addressed 110 roadless areas, the total number having increased primarily due to the splitting of some roadless areas by development.

The first step in this assessment process was to update the Tongass roadless area inventory. This involved identifying all the developed areas on the Tongass through a comprehensive update of the inventory of existing roads, timber harvest units, and land ownership on the Forest. Existing roads and

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harvest units, and all areas within 1,200 feet of an existing road and 600 feet of an existing harvest unit, were considered developed for the purposes of this analysis. These 1,200- and 600-foot buffers were necessary because areas near roads, harvest units, and other developments would be influenced by that development. The buffering process allows for more consistent mapping for analysis purposes, without restricting where the actual boundary could be designated by Congress. Narrow strips of land between developed areas were included as part of the adjacent developed areas. In general accordance with the Forest Service Handbook criteria for including improvements, and in order to be more inclusive, isolated beach-logged and helicopter units were not considered developed. This represented a change from the approach taken in the earlier mapping. The beach-logged areas were mostly harvested several decades ago and have regrown to the extent that they are natural appearing to most visitors. The helicopter-logged units are usually partially harvested and mostly natural appearing after the harvest is completed. The degree of modification and appearance of these harvest inclusions are factored into the evaluation of affected roadless areas.

All National Forest System lands outside of the areas defined as developed, were identified as roadless. These roadless areas were then divided into those areas greater than 5,000 acres and those less than 5,000 acres. The roadless areas evaluated for this SEIS included all roadless areas greater than 5,000 acres. In addition, all other areas less than 5,000 acres in size were examined to determine if they were eligible for wilderness consideration. These included small unroaded areas adjacent to existing wilderness.

As a result of this process, a total of 115 roadless areas were evaluated for this SEIS. This increase in number from the 106 inventoried areas addressed in Appendix C of the 1989 AMS reflects the splitting of some roadless areas due to development since 1989, as well as the inclusion of some small individual roadless areas that were previously considered developed and/or marginally eligible for wilderness recommendation. These areas have been included in the roadless area analysis for this Draft SEIS primarily because of the high public interest in management of roadless areas on the Tongass. All inventoried roadless areas and unroaded areas on the Tongass are shown on each of the alternative maps provided in the map section of this document. Larger scale maps of each inventoried roadless area are included in the Draft SEIS CD-ROM and are presented on the SEIS Web site at www.tongass-seis.net.

The updated, detailed descriptions of each individual roadless area presented in this appendix reflect current conditions and Forest Service Manual and Handbook direction. Each roadless area description documents the results of the evaluation process used in this analysis. Each inventoried roadless area was evaluated with respect to the key characteristics of capability, availability, and need (FSH 1909.12, Chapter 7 – Wilderness Evaluation). These updated roadless area descriptions each consist of five sections: Overview and Description, Wilderness Capability, Availability for Wilderness, Wilderness Evaluation, and Environmental Consequences (FSH 1909.12, Chapter 4 – Forest Planning Documents). All acres identified in these descriptions are estimates developed from the detailed Forest-wide Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database that was revised and updated for this analysis.

Roadless Area Evaluation – General Aspects

The Forest Service Handbook (FSH 1909.12, Chapter 7, Section 7.2) requires that the potential wilderness designation of an inventoried roadless area be carefully evaluated to determine the mix of land and resource uses that best meet public needs. Areas recommended as suitable for wilderness are required to meet the tests of capability, availability, and need. In addition to displaying an inherent wilderness quality, each area must provide opportunities that are dependent upon or enhanced by a wilderness environment. The Forest Service's ability to manage the area as wilderness is also considered as part of the evaluation process.

The following sections provide an overview of the three key elements that a wilderness evaluation should meet—capability, availability, and need—in the context of the evaluation process employed for this SEIS. In addition, it presents general aspects of the evaluation that apply to all the individual roadless area evaluations.

Capability

Wilderness capability addresses the degree to which an area contains the basic characteristics that make it suitable for wilderness designation without considering its availability or whether it meets a need for wilderness (FSH 1909.12, Section 7.21). The Forest Service Handbook notes that there are an infinite number of possible combinations of basic natural characteristics and the significance of these combinations for wilderness designation will vary from region to region. The handbook identifies several principal wilderness characteristics that should be considered in an analysis of the potential wilderness value of an inventoried roadless area. These characteristics include the natural and human environment, challenge, outdoor recreation opportunities, special features, and manageability.

The analysis prepared for this SEIS evaluates the capability of each inventoried roadless area for wilderness in terms of these key wilderness characteristics. Each inventoried roadless area description considers the key wilderness attributes of natural integrity, apparent naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, and primitive recreation opportunities. Each description also identifies and describes any unique scenic, ecological, geological, cultural, or scientific or educational opportunities or resources that could be lost if the area were not designated wilderness. The Forest Service's ability to manage the area as wilderness in accordance with the Wilderness Act is also addressed in each roadless area description.

Wilderness Attribute Rating System: One of the primary measures used in this evaluation to measure the quality of inventoried roadless areas is the Wilderness Attribute Rating System (WARS). WARS was developed by the Forest Service in conjunction with public interest groups in 1977 and was used to inventory the wilderness characteristics of roadless areas during the second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) process. WARS was applied to the Tongass National Forest for the first time in 1979 as part of the RARE II process and was also used to rate the inventoried roadless areas in the 1989 AMS. The analysis of inventoried roadless areas conducted for this SEIS also employed this system and the results of the WARS evaluation were used in the development of some wilderness alternatives.

WARS established a procedure for identifying and rating an area's wilderness quality based on the key attributes of wilderness as defined in the Wilderness Act. This system evaluates the main attributes identified in the Wilderness Act: natural integrity, apparent naturalness, opportunity for solitude, and primitive recreation opportunities. Each of these four attributes is rated on a scale of 1 to 7, ranging from the virtual absence (1 out of 7) to the outstanding presence of the attribute (7 out of 7). A total composite wilderness score is calculated by adding the four scores together to produce a total score out of a maximum possible 28 points. This system was used to rate the wilderness quality of each of the 115 inventoried roadless areas evaluated as part of this SEIS. The areas were rated and ranked in two ways. The areas were first rated and ranked based on the boundary established in the roadless inventory update process. Composite scores ranged from 13 to 28 (out of 28), with a median score of 20. The second approach, in accordance with Forest Service Handbook direction and the WARS process, involved adjusting the boundary of some of the inventoried roadless areas to exclude negative intrusions on the area's potential wilderness quality. The areas with an adjusted boundary were rated again, with the composite scores for these areas generally increasing by one or two points. The range of scores remained the same, but the median increased to 21.

The WARS process also includes two supplementary area ratings: a supplementary wilderness attribute rating, which addresses the ecological, geological, scenic, and cultural attributes of the area; and a

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separate scenic value rating. The WARS evaluation conducted as part of this SEIS analysis also rated each inventoried roadless area for these supplementary attributes. These scores are recorded in the data sheets used for the analysis but are not incorporated in the total score for each area, which is presented as a composite score with a maximum score of 28. This approach is consistent with the analysis conducted for the 1989 AMS.

As noted in the RARE II Final EIS (USDA Forest Service, 1979), WARS is most accurate and appropriately applied within each Forest Service Region and is not meant to compare the wilderness attributes of areas located in different regions of the country. The WARS evaluation conducted as part of this project is specific to Southeast Alaska.

Availability

While all National Forest System lands that meet wilderness capability requirements are generally available for consideration as wilderness, there are three issues that need to be evaluated to formally determine availability. First, the value of and need for the potential wilderness resource is compared to the value and need for other resources. In order to be considered available for wilderness, the tangible and intangible values of the potential wilderness resource should offset the value of the resources that would be forgone if the area were designated wilderness. The values of potentially forgone resource demands and uses are not only or necessarily measured in terms of dollar returns or unit output. Rather, the analysis of value should be based on both quantitative and qualitative information. A second and related issue that is addressed in the evaluation of wilderness availability is the effect that wilderness designation and management is likely to have on adjacent lands.

The third issue addressed in an evaluation of availability is the presence of any constraints or encumbrances on lands within or adjacent to the roadless area that may affect management of the area as wilderness. The Forest Service needs to have sufficient control of the lands that are recommended for wilderness to ensure that incompatible uses that would lessen the wilderness character and potential of the area are not developed in the future. The availability analysis prepared for this SEIS identifies existing and potential land use authorizations, as well as the current ownership and encumbrances within and adjacent to each inventoried roadless area.

The inventoried roadless area analysis prepared for this SEIS discusses the value and potential uses of other resources that could be affected by wilderness designation. This discussion includes recreation and tourism, subsistence, fish, wildlife, timber, minerals, transportation and utilities, water availability and use, and areas of scientific interest. The analysis also addresses the effects that wilderness designation would have on adjacent areas, with respect to these same resources. These resources, which are addressed in the *Availability* section of each roadless area description, are very similar to those discussed in the *Capability* section. The key difference is, however, that the *Capability* section evaluates these resources as potential wilderness characteristics with an emphasis on their value in a wilderness setting and what could be lost if the area were not designated wilderness. The *Availability* analysis, in contrast, evaluates the potential negative effects that wilderness designation could have in terms of opportunities that would be forgone if the area were designated as wilderness.

Need

The wilderness evaluation prepared for the SEIS determines the need for an area to be designated as wilderness based on the degree to which it contributes to the local and national distribution of wilderness (FSH 1909.12, Section 7.23). The Forest Service Handbook requires that this evaluation identify clear evidence of current or future public need for additional designated wilderness in the general area under consideration. This need should be demonstrated through the public involvement process, including public input to the environmental analysis. Need should also be evaluated on a national basis and this

evaluation should include a number of factors, such as the geographic distribution of areas, representations of landforms and ecosystems, and the presence of wildlife expected to be visible in a wilderness environment. The Forest Service Handbook identifies a number of assumptions and factors that should be considered in determining whether there is a need to designate a roadless area as wilderness (FSH 1909.12, Sections 7.23a and 7.23b). These factors are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Relative Local Contribution: These factors include the location, size, and type of other wildernesses in the general vicinity of the area being evaluated. This factor is addressed in each roadless area description prepared for the SEIS; the distance between the roadless area and the closest wildernesses are identified, as well as the distance between the roadless area and the closest populated areas, including the larger communities in the region, as appropriate.

Preservation of Landforms and Ecosystems: A second factor that should be considered is the “area’s ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems” (FSH 1909.12, Section 7.23b.6). This factor is addressed in this analysis by reviewing the biogeographic province that contains each inventoried roadless area. The Tongass National Forest can be subdivided into 21 biogeographic provinces characterized by similar species composition; similar patterns in distribution for many species; similar geologic barriers and historic events, such as glaciation; and similar climatic conditions. These provinces are discussed in the *Biodiversity* section of Chapter 3 of the SEIS. Each roadless area description identifies whether there are other existing wildernesses within the appropriate biogeographic province and evaluates whether the roadless area contains any unique landforms or ecosystems that are not already represented in wildernesses located within this province.

Preservation of Biotic Species: The evaluation of need also considers the “ability of certain biotic species to compete with increasing public use and developmental projects that affect their habitats” and considers whether means other than wilderness designation can meet the needs of these species (FSH 1909.12, Section 7.23b.4). In addition, the evaluation is to consider “the need to provide a sanctuary for those biotic species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surroundings or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific values or phenomena” (FSH 1909.12, Section 7.23b.5).

Productive old-growth forest (conifer stands greater than 250 years in age with a volume of 8,000 board feet per acre or higher) provides essentially all the highly important habitats and the majority of the moderately important habitats for the Tongass management indicator species and other species of concern (see the *Biodiversity; Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species; and Wildlife* sections of Chapter 3 in the SEIS). The current old-growth forest conservation strategy is based on the assumption that if a functional interconnected old-growth ecosystem is maintained then its component parts (composition and structure) and processes (function) are also maintained. There are currently approximately 5 million acres of productive old growth on the Tongass. The current Forest Plan provides for the protection of 90 percent of the productive old growth in wilderness or natural setting LUDs and through the implementation of Forest-wide standards and guidelines. In addition, approximately 78 percent of the Tongass land base is allocated to wilderness or natural setting LUDs, where road construction is not allowed or is severely restricted, and where the area could generally be described as “primitive.” It is believed that the old-growth conservation strategy, together with species-specific standards and guidelines, are sufficient to provide an amount and distribution of habitat adequate to maintain viable populations of vertebrate species, as well as the diversity of plant and animal communities (USDA Forest Service, 1997).

Recreation Use: Other factors that the Forest Service Handbook identifies for evaluation are the present visitor pressure on other wildernesses and projected visitor trends, as well as the extent to which nonwilderness lands are likely to provide opportunities for unconfined recreation experiences (FSH

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1909.12, Sections 7.23b.2 and 3). Precise estimates of current recreation and tourism on the Tongass are not available. The Forest Service is participating in the collection of Forest-wide visitor use data as part of the National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) program. Forest-wide visitor use was last estimated for the Forest as a whole in 1996. This information is summarized in the *Economic and Social Environment* section of Chapter 3 of the SEIS. These data suggest that demand for primitive settings on the Tongass is presently met. Unconfined or primitive recreation experiences are also presently met on nonwilderness lands on the Tongass in Natural Setting LUDs, as well as on the adjacent Glacier Bay National Park. In addition to the 5.8 million acres of existing designated wilderness on the Tongass, another 7.2 million acres are allocated to Natural Setting LUDs (see Table C-1).

Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System: The individual roadless area descriptions that make up the bulk of this appendix, provide an assessment of the relative contribution of each roadless area to the National Wilderness Preservation System. These assessments conclude with a ranking of this relative contribution in relation to the 115 roadless areas being evaluated (each roadless area was assigned one of the following rankings relative to each other: very low, low, moderate, high, or very high). In order to put this evaluation in perspective, it is necessary to consider a framework that identifies the “big picture” aspects associated with the relative contribution. This framework is addressed in the following paragraphs.

There are presently a total of 5.8 million acres in 19 wildernesses on the Tongass National Forest. This represents approximately 35 percent of the Tongass and 28 percent of the land in Southeast Alaska. These 19 areas are identified and discussed in the *Wilderness* section of Chapter 3 of the SEIS. Viewed on a national basis, existing wilderness on the Tongass represents 17 percent of all wilderness on National Forest System lands and 5.5 percent of the entire National Wilderness System (USDA Forest Service, 2001).

DeVelice and Martin (2001) provide a national summary of acreage in National Forest roadless areas versus designated wilderness, National Parks, and other areas primarily managed to maintain natural values (i.e., conservation reserves). In Alaska, all but 1 of 15 ecoregions (as defined by Ricketts et al., 1999) has greater than 12 percent of its area in reserves. No other region in the country surpasses Alaska in ecological representation in reserves.

Two ecoregions cover the Tongass National Forest: the Northern Pacific Coastal Forest and the Pacific Coastal Mountain Tundra and Ice fields (Ricketts et al., 1999). These two ecoregions extend from eastern Kodiak Island to the southern end of the Alaska panhandle. Approximately 19 percent of the Northern Pacific Coastal Forest and 37 percent of the Pacific Coastal Mountain Tundra and Ice Fields ecoregion are in reserves (DeVelice and Martin, 2001). The portions of both of these areas protected in wilderness are well above the 12 percent threshold considered by some authorities (e.g., World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) as the minimum area for representation (see DeVelice and Martin, 2001).

When the acreage of inventoried roadless areas is added to the acreage of conservation reserves in the two ecoregions, the percentage increases to 64 percent for the Northern Pacific Coastal Forest and to 66 percent for the Pacific Coastal Mountain Tundra and Ice Fields ecoregions (DeVelice and Martin, 2001). These values are in the 25 to 75 percent range that Noss and Cooperrider (1994) argue is required to achieve representation, but are substantially higher than the 12 percent threshold.

When one considers only National Forest System lands, the percentage of National Forest System land area in wilderness in these ecoregions is 25 percent for the Northern Pacific Coastal Forest and 21 percent for the Pacific Coastal Mountain Tundra and Ice Fields. It should be noted that there is no designated wilderness on the Chugach National Forest, so all references to designated wilderness on National Forest System lands in Alaska pertain to the Tongass. If all inventoried roadless areas are counted along with

wilderness, then the total area of wilderness plus inventoried roadless areas on National Forest System lands in these ecoregions increases to 69 percent and 79 percent, respectively (DeVelice and Martin, 2001).

Viewed in terms of broad National Forest landcover classes, designated wilderness on National Forest System lands in Alaska exceeds 12 percent of the area in five landcover classes that are prevalent in Southeast Alaska. These five classes are Evergreen Forest (23 percent), Tundra (15 percent), Barren Land (37 percent), Water (23 percent), and Glaciers-Snow (15 percent). Designated Wilderness does not exceed 12 percent of the area for Deciduous Forest (0 percent), Mixed Forest (0 percent), and Shrub-Brush (9 percent) (Martin et al., 2000). These latter three landcover types are, however, not prevalent in Southeast Alaska.

Demonstrating Public Need: Public and Congressional interest is demonstrated in each roadless area description through a compilation of information from public involvement efforts spanning more than a decade, extending back to 1989. These sources of information include a summary of a current Congressional proposal (the Alaska Rainforest Protection Bill) and the House version of what became the Tongass Timber Reform Act of 1990, comments on various drafts and the Final EIS for the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan Revision, appeals filed on the 1997 Tongass Forest Plan Final EIS, and comments on individual timber sale and other management projects proposed for portions of, or adjacent to, inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass. This information in the aggregate provides an overview of public opinion related to all or portions of many of the roadless areas being reviewed. This may be considered the first step in evaluating public need through the public involvement process. This section of each roadless area will be amended after the comment period on the Draft SEIS, to include additional public input relative to each roadless area.

Content of Individual Roadless Area Description Sections

As previously noted, each roadless area description consists of five sections: Overview and Description, Wilderness Capability, Availability for Wilderness, Wilderness Evaluation, and Environmental Consequences (FSH 1909.12, Chapter 4 – Forest Planning Documents). The following sections describe each of the roadless area description sections. The numbering system and titles used in the following sections directly correspond with those used in each inventoried roadless area description.

I. Overview and Description

- (1) **Location and Access:** This section identifies where the area is located, lists the approximate distance to the nearest community, describes what is along the area's boundary, and identifies how the area is accessed.
- (2) **History:** This section describes any known prehistoric and historic uses in the area and identifies past logging activity, prospecting and mining activity, historic cabins and homesteads, and recreation cabins.
- (3) **Geography and Topography:** This section generally describes the geography and topography of the area, including elevation ranges, major streams, lakes, watersheds, and major mountains and glaciers. This section also identifies the acreage of alpine, rock, glaciers, lakes, and islands and the mileage of saltwater shoreline included in the roadless area. These acres were estimated from the Forest-wide GIS database that was updated for the SEIS analysis.
- (4) **Ecosystem:** At the beginning of this section, any Botanical or Zoological Special Interest Area that is included in the roadless area is identified. Special Interest Areas are areas possessing unique or unusual scenic, historic, prehistoric, scientific, natural, or other characteristics. Areas are designated as Special Interest Areas to protect their unique values and, where appropriate, to foster public use and

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enjoyment of these areas. Twenty-three Special Interest Areas have been designated on the Tongass National Forest. Seven of these areas are considered Botanical or Zoological Special Interest Areas. These areas are identified in the main document and Appendix F of the 1997 Tongass Forest Plan Revision Final EIS (USDA Forest Service, 1997).

(a) Classification: This subsection identifies and briefly describes the biogeographic province that encompasses the roadless area. The Tongass National Forest may be subdivided into 21 biogeographic provinces, which are characterized by similar species composition; similar patterns in distribution for many species, similar geologic barriers and historical events, such as glaciation; and generally similar climatic conditions and physiographic characteristics. The characteristics of each biogeographic province are summarized in the *Biodiversity* section of Chapter 3 of the SEIS.

(b) Soils: This subsection provides a general description of the soils in the area and identifies well-drained, poorly drained, and alpine soils, as appropriate.

(c) Vegetation: This subsection provides a general description of the vegetation in the area and identifies the portion of the area that consists of forestland, as well as the acreage that is classified as productive old growth. Total productive old-growth acres are, in turn, divided into high, medium, and low volume productive old growth (see definition below). Acres of second growth (isolated beach logged and helicopter units) and muskeg are also identified. These acres were estimated from the Forest-wide GIS database that was updated for the SEIS analysis.

Productive Old Growth

Old-growth forests are ecosystems distinguished by old and large trees and related structural attributes. Old-growth forests can be generally divided into productive and unproductive components, based on the ability of specific areas to grow trees at a certain rate. Productive old growth may be divided into three categories (high, medium, and low) based primarily on average timber volume. High, medium, and low volume productive old-growth forest areas have average timber volumes of 35 thousand board feet (MBF), 25 MBF, and 16 MBF per acre, respectively. Productive old-growth forest is discussed in more detail in the *Biodiversity* section of Chapter 3 of the SEIS.

(d) Fish Resources: This subsection identifies the major fish-producing streams and lakes and the major species present in the area. This information was updated from the roadless area descriptions prepared for the 1989 AMS using information from the 1998 and 2000 Anadromous Waters Catalogue databases provided by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G).

(e) Wildlife Resources: This subsection identifies the major species that occur in the area, including Sitka black-tailed deer, moose, mountain goats, black bear, brown bear, gray wolf, marten, and other wildlife, as appropriate.

(5) Management Direction and Current Uses: This section briefly describes the land use designations (LUDs) assigned to the area and identifies the acres assigned to each LUD (see descriptions below and Table C-1). These acres were estimated from the Forest-wide GIS database that was updated for the SEIS analysis.

The section also identifies any Research Natural Areas (RNAs), Experimental Forests, Special Interest Areas, and Wild and Scenic Rivers in the area. RNAs and Experimental Forests are briefly described in Section II (6). Special Interest Areas are briefly discussed in Section I (4). These LUDs are also discussed in the *Research Natural Areas*, *Experimental Forests*, and *Wild and Scenic Rivers* sections of Chapter 3 of the SEIS.

This section also provides a description of the current uses of the area, including recreation use and facilities (e.g., cabins and trails), timber sales and other management projects, and subsistence use.

Table C-1
Land Use Designation Groupings

LUD Group	Land Use Designation
Non-Development LUDs	
Wilderness	Wilderness Wilderness National Monument Non-Wilderness National Monument
Natural Setting	Research Natural Area Remote Recreation Special Interest Area Old-Growth Habitat Enacted Municipal Watershed LUD II Semi-Remote Recreation Wild River Scenic River Recreation River
Development LUDs	
Moderate Development	Experimental Forest Scenic Viewshed Modified Landscape
Intensive Development	Timber Production Minerals

Note: The Minerals LUD is an overlay LUD. Areas allocated to this LUD are managed according to the underlying LUD until such time that mineral development is approved. The table does not include the Transportation and Utility Systems LUD, which is an overlay LUD corridor. Areas allocated to this LUD are managed according to the underlying LUD until transportation or utility systems are constructed.

Land Use Designations

The 1997 Forest Plan identified 19 different land use designations (LUDs) designed to represent a wide range of allocation choices for managing specific areas of the Forest. These LUDs may be grouped into development and non-development LUDs as shown in Table C-1. Brief descriptions of each LUD are presented below.

- ◆ **Wilderness:** Manage for the protection and perpetuation of essentially natural biophysical and ecological conditions and provide outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive recreation, and scientific and educational uses, consistent with Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), the Wilderness Act, and Tongass Timber Reform Act (TTRA). Roads are normally not permitted and use of mechanical transport and motorized equipment is limited.
- ◆ **Wilderness National Monument:** Manage the Wilderness portions of Admiralty Island and Misty Fiords National Monuments to provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and to protect objects of ecological, cultural, geological, historical, prehistorical, and scientific interest, consistent with ANILCA and the Wilderness Act. Roads are not normally permitted and use of mechanical transport and motorized equipment is limited.
- ◆ **Non-Wilderness National Monument:** Manage the non-wilderness portions of Admiralty Island and Misty Fiords National Monuments to facilitate development of significant

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mineral resources, and to ensure that mining activities are compatible, to the maximum extent feasible, with the purposes for which the Monument was established.

- ◆ **Research Natural Area:** Manage forest resources for research and education and/or to maintain natural diversity. Current natural conditions are maintained insofar as possible. No timber harvest is allowed.
- ◆ **Remote Recreation:** Provide recreation opportunities and experiences outside Wilderness in unmodified natural environments where interaction with other visitors is infrequent, and the opportunity for independence and self-reliance is high. Timber harvesting is limited to insect and disease control. Roads are generally absent.
- ◆ **Special Interest Area:** Provide for the inventory, maintenance, protection, and interpretation of areas with unique archeological, historical, recreational, scenic, geological, botanical, zoological, or paleontological features. No timber harvest is scheduled. Roads are normally not permitted unless compatible with interpretive objectives.
- ◆ **Old-Growth Habitat:** Maintain a diversity of old-growth conifer habitats in their natural condition to favor old-growth associated fish and wildlife species. No timber harvesting will be scheduled and roads will be located outside the area when possible.
- ◆ **Enacted Municipal Watershed:** Manage enacted municipal watersheds to meet State Water Quality Standards for domestic use. Timber harvest is limited to insect and disease control; however, timber may be removed under conditions which safeguard the quantity and quality of water. Roads are generally limited to those needed to administer the municipal watersheds.
- ◆ **LUD II:** Manage these Congressionally designated areas in a roadless state to retain their wildland character. Wildlife and fish habitat improvement and primitive recreational facility development may be permitted. Timber harvesting is limited to insect and disease control. Roads will not be built except to serve mining and other authorized activities and vital Forest transportation and utility system linkages.
- ◆ **Semi-Remote Recreation:** Provide motorized and non-motorized recreation opportunities in natural and natural-appearing environments where interaction with others is low and the opportunity for independence and self-reliance is moderate to high. Allow occasional concentrated recreation and tourism facilities in a natural-appearing setting. When present, roads are few and used primarily to expand and improve access to recreation opportunities or to permit access to other parts of the Forest and other ownerships. Timber harvest is limited to salvage of catastrophic events or beach log recovery.
- ◆ **Wild River:** Maintain and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values of river segments that qualify the river to be classified a Wild River. Shorelines are primitive and undeveloped. Timber harvesting is limited to insect and disease control. Roads are generally not present. Access is by trail, airplane, or boat.
- ◆ **Scenic River:** Maintain and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values of river segments that qualify the river to be classified a Scenic River. Shorelines are largely undeveloped but may be accessible in places by roads. Timber harvest is limited by the ability of the landscape to visually absorb the activity. Roads are designed to be compatible with the landscape.

- ◆ **Recreational River:** Maintain and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values of river segments that qualify the river to be classified a Recreational River. Shoreline development may occur and the river may be readily accessible by road. Timber harvest is allowed with priority assigned to the maintenance of existing and proposed recreation sites within the corridor. Roads are permitted.
 - ◆ **Experimental Forest:** Manage to provide a variety of long-term opportunities for Forest research and demonstration areas. Timber harvesting will occur only for these purposes. Roads may be developed to facilitate ongoing research.
 - ◆ **Scenic Viewshed:** Management activities are not visually apparent to the casual observer in the near distance from visual priority travel routes and use areas. In the middle to background distance, activities are subordinate to the landscape character of the area. Timber harvest is allowed and roads are permitted.
 - ◆ **Modified Landscape:** Manage for a variety of uses. Management activities are subordinate to scenic quality as seen in the near distance. In the middle to background distance, activities may dominate but are designed to be compatible with features found in the characteristic landscape. Timber harvest is allowed and roads are permitted.
 - ◆ **Timber Production:** Manage the area to maintain and promote industrial wood production. These lands will be managed to advance conditions favorable for the timber resource and for long-term timber production. Roads are permitted.
 - ◆ **Minerals -** Encourage the exploration and development of mineral resources in areas having high potential for mineral commodities including nationally designated strategic and critical minerals. Until mineral activities are initiated, the area will be managed according to the underlying Land Use Designation.
 - ◆ **Transportation and Utility Systems -** Emphasize existing and potential state-identified major public Transportation and Utility Systems. Until transportation or utility systems are constructed, the area will be managed according to the underlying Land Use Designation.
- (6) **Appearance (Apparent Naturalness):** This section summarizes the overall scenic quality and apparent naturalness of the area. These issues are discussed in more detail in Sections II (1) and (6) of each roadless area description.
- (7) **Surroundings (External Influence):** This section describes any major activities in adjacent areas that can be seen or heard from the area, as well as discussing existing management plans for adjacent lands, to the extent that these are known.
- (8) **Attractions and Features of Special Interest:** This section identifies attractions or features of special interest in the area, including recreation cabins, secure anchorages, spectacular scenery, trails, hunting, fishing, and natural features. This section also indicates whether the area is a Special Interest Area and for what reasons. Special Interest Areas are areas possessing unique or unusual scenic, historic, prehistoric, scientific, natural or other characteristics. There are 23 Special Interest Areas designated on the Tongass.
- (9) **Differences between the 1989 and 2002 Roadless Area Boundary:** This section describes any differences between the 1989 and 2002 roadless area boundary. The boundaries of the roadless areas have

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been modified in many cases as a result of the updates to the Forest-wide GIS database made for this analysis. There were also modifications to roadless areas that contain isolated beach logged and helicopter units. Beach-logged and helicopter units are not identified as developed areas in the updated inventory.

II. Capability for Management as Wilderness

This section identifies each area's capability for wilderness by describing the basic characteristics that make the area appropriate and valuable for wilderness, regardless of the area's availability and need (FSH 1909.12, Chapter 4).

(1) Natural Integrity and Appearance (Apparent Naturalness): This section describes the degree to which humans and past or present human activity have affected natural ecological processes and conditions in the area. It also addresses the degree to which the area's appearance is appropriate and valuable for wilderness designation.

(2) Opportunity for Solitude and Serenity, Self-Reliance, Adventure, and Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation: This section describes opportunities for solitude and serenity in the area and considers the degree of isolation from vehicles, boats, floatplanes, and wheeled planes and the amount of recreational use of the area, as well as recreation and tourism in adjacent areas. The section also describes opportunities for self-reliance, adventure, and challenging experiences, as well as opportunities for primitive recreation in general.

This section identifies the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) settings in acres and the number and acres of inventoried recreation places in the area (see definitions below). These acres were estimated from the Forest-wide GIS database that was updated for the SEIS analysis. Recreation Special Interest Areas are also identified in this section, as appropriate. There are 23 designated Special Interest Areas on the Tongass; 7 of these are considered Recreation Special Interest Areas.

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

The ROS system was developed by the Forest Service to help identify, quantify, and describe the wide variety of recreation settings available on the Forest. This system portrays the appropriate combination of activities, settings, and experience expectations along a continuum that ranges from highly modified to primitive environments. Seven classifications are identified along this continuum: Urban (U), Rural (R), Roaded Natural (RN), Roaded Modified (RM), Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM), Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM), and Primitive (P). A general Forest-wide inventory of the ROS classification was made in 1989 and is periodically updated. This inventory was updated to reflect current conditions as part of the roadless area inventory update that was conducted to support the SEIS. The seven ROS classes are summarized in the *Recreation and Tourism* section of Chapter 3 of the SEIS.

Recreation Places

The pattern of use associated with known protected boat anchorages, boat landings, aircraft landing sites, and the limited road systems on the Tongass makes it possible to identify specific "recreation places." Recreation places are areas that are used for recreation activities and are easy to access. Approximately 1,436 recreation places, totaling about 4.3 million acres (approximately 25 percent of the Tongass), have been identified. The setting of a recreation place plays a key role in its attractiveness and use. Many recreation opportunities, such as viewing scenery or pursuing solitude, are dependent on this relationship and require a natural type of setting while others, such as hunting or fishing, are less dependent on the type of setting. This section of the roadless area description identifies the distribution of recreation place acres by ROS class.

(3) Wilderness Attribute Rating System: This section provides a brief overview of WARS. WARS measures an area's wilderness quality, based on the key attributes of wilderness as defined in the Wilderness Act, primarily natural integrity, apparent naturalness, outstanding opportunity for solitude, and primitive recreation opportunities. This section of the roadless area description identifies the WARS rating assigned to the area as part of the 1989 AMS, as well as identifying the rating assigned as part of this updated evaluation. Differences between the 1989 and 2002 ratings are discussed.

(4) Ecologic and Geologic Values: This section describes any unique ecologic and geologic values associated with the area and considers whether the roadless area is relatively isolated or part of a larger unroaded area. This section also notes whether the area is part of a Geological, Zoological, or Botanical Special Interest Area. Fourteen of the 23 designated Special Interest Areas on the Tongass are considered Geological, Zoological, or Botanical Special Interest Areas.

(a) Fish Resources: This subsection describes the major water bodies in the area and their fish production by species, using information from the 1998 and 2000 Anadromous Waters Catalogue databases provided by the ADF&G. The section also includes updated information from recent project level EISs, as appropriate.

The subsection also indicates whether any value comparison units (VCUs) in the area were identified as primary salmon or sport fish producers in the Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998). VCUs and the Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment are briefly described below.

Value Comparison Units

There are 926 VCUs on the Tongass National Forest. VCUs are distinct geographic areas that generally encompass a drainage basin containing one or more large stream systems. Boundaries usually follow easily recognizable watershed divides. These areas were established to provide a common set of areas for resource inventories and resource value interpretations.

Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment

The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) presents the results of the analysis that ADF&G used to identify the highest value community use areas on the Tongass. ADF&G's analysis involved the compilation of harvest, catch, and productivity data for selected fish and wildlife species, which were chosen to serve as indicators of the relative importance of particular areas for the production and human use of fish and wildlife. These data were systematically applied to the VCUs that comprise Southeast Alaska, with each VCU receiving a series of ranks to assess the relative resource value of each area.

ADF&G compiled data on two indicators of fishery value: salmon production and sport fishing use. Salmon production was estimated from indices of pink salmon escapement and coho salmon smolt capability. VCUs were identified as Primary Salmon Producers, Secondary Salmon Producers, or Nonproducers (salmon). The VCUs designated as Primary Salmon Producers were those that received the top scores for pink salmon escapement and coho salmon smolt capability. Sport Fishing Use data were compiled from ADF&G's statewide harvest surveys, which measure recreational fishing effort in freshwater systems and reveal angler preferences for certain fishing locations. Primary Sport Fish Producers were identified based on the top sport fishing use scores received. These classifications are discussed further in the Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998).

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(b) Wildlife Resources: This subsection describes the major wildlife that inhabit the area and considers the area's contribution to the old-growth reserve network. This subsection also indicates whether any value comparison units (VCUs) in the area were identified as important brown or black bear harvest areas in the Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998). The VCUs that provide the largest harvest of bears were identified from bear harvest statistics gathered annually from 1985 to 1994. The findings of the ADF&G analysis are discussed further in the Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998).

The subsection also notes whether the area is part of a Zoological Special Interest Area established for wildlife.

(c) Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species: This subsection identifies whether the area receives use from threatened or endangered species (humpback whales and Steller sea lion) and describes any known exceptional use by sensitive species, such as goshawk, trumpeter swan, osprey, and Peale's peregrine falcon.

(d) Karst, Cave, and Other Geologic Resources: This subsection describes the extent and significance of any karstlands in the area and identifies any other unique or prominent geologic resources in the area. This subsection also notes whether the area is part of a Geological Special Interest Area.

(5) Scientific and Educational Values: This section discusses the opportunities for scientific studies, considers any special features that make the area significant, and identifies Research Natural Areas (RNAs) and Experimental Forests located in the roadless area (see definitions below). The section also considers educational values and whether the area is readily accessible to school-age children. In addition, this section notes whether the area is part of a Geological, Zoological, or Botanical Special Interest Area.

Research Natural Areas

Research Natural Areas (RNAs) are part of a national network of field ecological areas designated for research and education and/or to maintain biological diversity of National Forest System lands. RNAs are used for non-manipulative research, observation, and study. Six RNAs were established on the Tongass prior to 1996. The 1997 Tongass Land Management Plan Record of Decision (ROD) declassified one of these areas and classified seven additional areas. These areas are discussed in the *Research Natural Areas* section of Chapter 3 of the SEIS.

Experimental Forests

Experimental Forests provide areas for conducting manipulative research that serves as a basis for forest management. Natural resources in experimental forests are used or altered under controlled scientific studies. The Tongass currently has two Experimental Forests: Young Bay and Maybeso. These forests are discussed in the *Experimental Forests* section of Chapter 3 of the SEIS.

(6) Scenic Values: This section provides a general description of the scenic quality of the area. The section also identifies if the area is a Scenic Special Interest Area. Three of the 23 designated Special Interest Areas on the Tongass are considered Scenic Special Areas. This section also identifies the Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas located within or adjacent to the roadless area, as well as the percentages of the area allocated to different Existing Visual Condition and Variety Classes (see definitions below).

Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas

Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas were established for each Ranger District in the 1997 Tongass Forest Plan. These routes and areas are viewpoints from which scenery will be

emphasized. They represent the viewpoints used to assess the existing visual condition of a project area and develop project designs that will be consistent with the adopted visual quality objectives for each LUD.

Visual Priority Routes are separated into four categories: Alaska Marine Highway, Tour Ship Routes, Roads, and Hiking Trails. Visual priority use areas are divided into eight categories: State Marine Parks; Recommended Wild, Scenic, and Recreational Rivers; Saltwater Use Areas; Dispersed Recreation Areas; Communities; Forest Service Cabins; Developed Recreation Sites; and Boat Anchorages. The identified Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas on the Tongass are listed by Ranger District in Appendix F of the 1997 Tongass Forest Plan (USDA Forest Service, 1997).

Existing Visual Condition

The landscape of the Tongass ranges from vast tracts unmodified by human activity to large areas with heavily modified landscapes. Existing visual condition (EVC) ratings are established to provide an indication of the current level of visual quality and visual evidence of management activities. The six EVC classes are briefly described below.

Type I. Appears to be untouched by human activities, except for trails needed for access; only ecological changes have occurred.

Type II. Changes in the landscape are not noticed unless pointed out.

Type III. Changes in the landscape are noticed as minor disturbances, but the natural appearance of the landscape remains dominant.

Type IV. Changes in the landscape are easily noticed and perceived as disturbances, but resemble natural patterns.

Type V. Changes stand out as a dominant impression on the landscape, yet are shaped to resemble natural patterns from 3 to 5 miles or more distant.

Type VI. Changes are in glaring contrast to the landscape's natural appearance; excessive visual alteration has occurred.

The existing EVC GIS coverage was updated for this analysis to include a number of managed stands. The discussion presented in this section of the roadless area description identifies the percentage of the area assigned to each applicable EVC type.

Variety Class

Variety Class is a measure of the landscape diversity of an area. There are three Variety Classes:

Type A. Possesses landscape diversity unique or distinctive for the character type.

Type B. Possesses landscape diversity common for the character type.

Type C. Possesses a low level of landscape diversity.

(7) **Social, Cultural, and Historical Values:** This section briefly describes the known prehistoric and historical use and cultural values associated with the area. This section also indicates whether any value comparison units (VCUs) in the area were identified as subsistence areas with a high sensitivity to disturbance in the Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) (see definition below). The discussion presented in this section also indicates whether any VCUs within the area are among the highest value community use areas identified by the ADF&G (1998) (see definition below). VCUs are described in Section II (5) (b) of this Introduction.

Subsistence Sensitivity to Disturbance

ADF&G ranked the subsistence sensitivity to disturbance for VCUs throughout the Tongass.

Areas with a high sensitivity to disturbance are those where resource development would be expected to have the greatest impact on Southeast Alaska residents. VCUs were ranked through a

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community level analysis that was based on information from: ADF&G community studies and subsistence maps; the Tongass Resource Use Cooperative Survey (TRUCS); ADF&G deer and other species harvest data; historic documents, records, and reports; professional research experience of ADF&G staff; and limited community review. This is discussed further in the Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998).

Highest Value Community Use Areas

As noted in Section II (4) (b) of this Introduction, ADF&G compiled and analyzed harvest, catch, and productivity data for selected fish and wildlife species, which were chosen to serve as indicators of the relative importance of particular areas for the production and human use of fish and wildlife. The results of this data analysis were used to identify the highest value community use areas in the state of Alaska's recommendations regarding the 1997 Tongass Forest Plan. These VCUs are identified in ADF&G (1998), as well as in Appendix L of the Tongass Land Management Plan Revision Final EIS (USDA Forest Service, 1997).

(8) Manageability as Wilderness and Boundary Conditions/Changes: This section describes the boundaries, size, and shape of the area with respect to its manageability as Wilderness. External factors that could affect the wilderness attributes of the area are also discussed. This section also considers whether any changes to the boundaries of the area could enhance its Wilderness manageability.

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

This section addresses the availability of the area by describing other resource potential and management considerations and by summarizing pertinent quantitative and qualitative information. The following subsections also identify the effects of wilderness designation on adjacent areas, as appropriate.

(1) Recreation, Including Tourism Potential: This section describes the potential for additional recreation and tourism development and recreation use in the area. It also identifies any specific proposals for development. The Alaska Visitor Association proposed developments for locations throughout the Forest in 1996. These proposals are identified in Appendix L of the 1997 Tongass Land Management Plan Revision and summarized in the roadless area descriptions, as appropriate.

(2) Subsistence Uses: This section describes any subsistence uses that could be precluded or affected by wilderness designation.

(3) Fish Resources: This section identifies whether there are any planned fish enhancement projects. There are presently 158 potential fish enhancement projects identified for implementation on the Tongass.

(4) Wildlife Resources: This section identifies whether there are any potential wildlife habitat improvement projects proposed for the area. The section also identifies the importance of the area in terms of its contribution to the old-growth reserve network, as appropriate.

(5) Timber Resources: This section describes the timber resources in the area and identifies the acres of productive old growth and acres of tentatively suitable and suitable available forestland in the area (see definition below). Productive old growth is defined in Section I (4) (c) of this Introduction. The section also identifies how much of this land has been previously harvested, if any. These acres were estimated from the Forest-wide GIS database that was updated for this SEIS. The discussion in this section also addresses the accessibility of the timber and describes any proposed projects in the area that are under contract, NEPA-cleared, have a Draft EIS published, or are identified in the Forest Service's 10-year plan.

Tentatively Suitable and Suitable Lands

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requires the Secretary of Agriculture to identify lands that are suitable for timber harvest. This involves two steps: 1) the identification of lands that are legally and practicably capable of timber production, called tentatively suitable lands, and 2) from the tentatively suitable lands, the selection of lands that are suitable for timber production based on all the multiple use objectives for the Forest. This is discussed in the *Timber* section of Chapter 3 of the SEIS.

- (6) Fire, Insects, and Disease:** This section identifies any fire history or unusual incidence of tree diseases or insects in the area.
- (7) Minerals:** This section discusses the level of mining claims in the area and the potential for development. The section also quantifies the acreage of mineral potential, to the extent possible, and whether all or part of the area is allocated to the Minerals LUD.
- (8) Transportation and Utilities:** This section identifies whether there are any proposed transportation corridors within or adjacent to the area.
- (9) Water Availability and Use:** This section evaluates the demand for water in this area and indicates whether there are any existing or planned hydroelectric or domestic water projects within the roadless area.
- (10) Areas of Scientific Interest:** This section identifies whether there are any RNAs or Experimental Forests within the area. RNAs and Experimental Forest are briefly described in Section II (6) of this Introduction. This section also addresses whether the area is part of a Geological, Zoological, or Botanical Special Interest Area and the potential effects of wilderness designation on these areas.
- (11) Land Use Authorizations:** This section identifies any existing special use permits or future plans for log transfer or storage facilities, transmission lines, highways, or other land use authorizations in the area.
- (12) Land Status:** This section describes the current ownership and encumbrances within and adjacent to the area. Potential land exchanges and land acquisitions are also identified in this section.

IV. Wilderness Evaluation

This section summarizes the factors considered and the process used in assessing the need for each area. The section includes information from the public involvement process and interest expressed by proponents, including Congress. The section also discusses nearby wildernesses and their uses, nearby roadless areas, distance from population centers, and use trends (FSH 1909.12, Chapter 4).

- (1) Public and Congressional Interest:** This section summarizes public and Congressional interest that has been expressed in the area from a variety of sources.
 - (a) Interest Expressed by Local Users and Residents:** This subsection presents the summary of local interest in the area that was originally presented in the 1989 AMS evaluation. This summary is an assessment developed by Forest Service personnel from the Ranger District managing the area that reflected local opinion in 1989.
 - (b) Congressional Interest:** This subsection summarizes interest that was expressed in the area through the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) of 1980, House

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Resolution (HR) 987 of 1989, the Tongass Timber Reform Act (TTRA) of 1990, and the recent Alaska Rainforest Protection Bill (HR 2908).

(c) Public Input During Forest Plan Revision and Appeals: This subsection describes public input received on the area during the Forest Plan Revision and the subsequent Forest Plan Appeals.

(d) Public Input During Roadless Area Conservation Rule and Road Management Policy Review: This subsection describes interest received during both the Roadless Area Conservation Rule and the Road Management Policy review processes related to the Tongass.

(e) Public Input Expressed for Project-level EISs and Other Input: This subsection describes any other interest expressed during project-level EISs and any other relevant public comment that specifically pertains to the area.

(f) Public Input Expressed During Supplemental EIS Process: This subsection will be prepared based on the public input received following publication of this Draft SEIS.

(2) Nearby Roadless and Wilderness Areas and Uses: This section describes adjacent or nearby Roadless Areas and Wilderness and indicates the level of use of these adjacent areas where that information is available.

(3) Distance From Population Centers (Accessibility): This section identifies the current populations of nearby and major communities and the distances from these communities to the area.

(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System: This section summarizes the need and describes the relative contribution of the area to the National Wilderness Preservation System. The discussion in this section presents a brief description of the area and addresses the key wilderness attributes of natural integrity, apparent naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, and primitive recreation opportunities. This discussion also addresses the supplemental wilderness and scenery attributes of the area and identifies whether there are any unique scenic, ecological, geological, cultural, or scientific or educational opportunities or resources that would be protected if the area were designated wilderness.

This section also addresses the potential relative contribution of the area by identifying the Biogeographic Province that the area is located in and describing how many other areas in this province are currently protected as Wilderness. This section also presents the WARS rating for the area and indicates how it ranks with respect to the other Inventoried Roadless Areas evaluated as part of the analysis prepared for this SEIS.

The final part of this section summarizes the public support that has been expressed to date for designating this area wilderness and presents an overall conclusion regarding the relative contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

V. Environmental Consequences

This section discusses the potential environmental consequences of the alternatives upon this area. As a result, it covers the potential consequences of both a wilderness and a nonwilderness recommendation (and a partial wilderness recommendation in some cases). It also presents a table showing the acres in each LUD under each alternative.