

INDIVIDUAL ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTION

ROADLESS AREA NAME: Freshwater Bay (325)

ACRES (NFS): 47,070

BIOGEOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: East Chichagof Island

ECOLOGICAL SECTION: Northeast Chichagof Fjordlands

2003 WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTE RATING: 17

I. Overview and Description

(1) **Location and Access:** The Freshwater Bay Roadless Area is located on the northeast corner of Chichagof Island, along the north shore of Freshwater Bay. To the northwest are Huna Totem Corporation and Sealaska Corporation lands. The eastern portion of the roadless area is bordered by Chatham Strait. The Hoonah/False Bay road system lies to the northeast. The roadless area is 10 air miles southeast of Hoonah. The town of Hoonah has regular charter plane service and is on the Alaska Marine Highway route. The roadless area can be accessed via roads that nearly encircle the area, extending well into the roadless area in many places. It can also be accessed from saltwater along Freshwater Bay and Iyoukeen Cove by boats and charter flights. Access into the interior is by foot or helicopter. There are no places suitable for landing wheeled airplanes.

(2) **History:** At the time of Euroamerican contact, the Hoonah and Angoon Tlingit were using this area of Chichagof Island. Villages and sites for seasonal hunting, fishing, and collecting activities were located in the area. The forest archaeologists have identified cache pits, a bear shell midden, a smokehouse/cabin, native burial sites, and petroglyphs in the area.

Some of the most recent historical activities taking place in this roadless area include the Gypsum Camel mining operation. In the early 1900's, there was a gypsum mining operation in Gypsum Creek. The stone was moved one mile to Iyoukeen Cove by rail. A trestle was built over the water for 2,000 feet to access the ships for loading.

(3) **Geography and Topography:** This area is quite mountainous with large, deep stream drainages. The terrain ranges from sea level to more than 3,400 feet in the far western corner of the roadless area. Several peaks north of Seal Creek reach 3,000 feet or higher. There are some flat areas at the head of Freshwater Bay. The area contains 18 miles of shoreline on saltwater. There are four islets totaling approximately an acre in the roadless area. A large part of the area is alpine (6,778 acres), and rock (2,950 acres).

(4) **Ecosystem:**

(a) **Classification: Biogeographic Province.** The roadless area is classified in the East Chichagof Island Biogeographic Province. This province has a dryer and colder climate than the outer coast of Chichagof Island and the winter snow pack is generally greater. Chichagof Island is deeply dissected into three peninsulas that may be functioning biologically more like separate islands. Vegetation in this province represents a modal similar to Admiralty Island Province.

Ecological Section/Subsection. The Freshwater Bay Roadless Area is contained entirely within the Northeast Chichagof Fjordlands Ecological Section (M247C). This area is represented by one ecological subsection (see table below). The Freshwater Bay Carbonates Ecological Subsection has a bedrock mixture of carbonate and noncalcareous sedimentary rocks with bits of volcanic and intrusive igneous rocks. Many formations of almost pure carbonate form impressive mountains and ridges with extensive areas of exposed rocks containing pits and sinkholes. Atop the mountains, alpine vegetative communities thrive. The mid to lower elevations of the moderately sloped mountains have well drained soils that support productive

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hemlock spruce forests. In the valleys where glacial tills and glaciomarine sediments exist, non-forested wetlands are present. Where streams flow through calcareous colluvium, rich calcareous fens develop at the stream base creating a diverse and rare plant community (Nowacki et al., 2001).

Ecological Section	Ecological Subsection	Percent of Roadless Area
Northeast Chichagof Fjordlands	Freshwater Bay Carbonates	100%

(b) Soils: In the Freshwater Bay Roadless Area, shallow soils with good drainage develop on steeper slopes due to rapid loss of material by erosion and efficient rainwater runoff. This is apparent on the steep slopes that face Freshwater Bay. Deep, well-drained soils occur on gentler slopes below steeper areas where transported soil materials have collected.

The poorly drained soils in this area are associated with low relief and impermeable subsurface layers. In locations with poor drainage, deep organic soils (muskegs) tend to form. Drainage improves with increased slope gradient; however, as slopes become oversteepened, soil depths become much shallower. Alpine soils are found above 2,000 feet.

(c) Vegetation: Western hemlock-Sitka spruce forests dominate the overstory of the roadless area. The understory is composed of shrub such as red huckleberry, rusty menziesia, and devil's club. Streamside riparian vegetation is characterized by salmonberry, devil's club, alder, grasses, ferns, and currants.

Muskegs, dominated by sphagnum mosses, sedges, and shrubs of the heath family, are interspersed among low elevation timber stands where drainage is restricted. Trees are sparse and consist mainly of stunted hemlock, lodgepole pine, and Alaska-cedar. Approximately 666 acres of muskeg are mapped for the area; however, due to their small size and association with forested sites, accurate acreage estimates are difficult. Plant communities are characterized by low shrubs, grasses, and sedges at elevations above 2,000 feet. Subalpine forests and meadows occur at the interface between the forested communities and the alpine tundra. Approximately 6,778 acres of alpine are mapped in the area.

There are approximately 26,325 acres mapped as forest land of which 18,612 acres or 71 percent are mapped as productive old-growth forest. Of the productive old growth, 6,125 acres or 33 percent are mapped as high-volume old-growth forest. The productive old growth includes about 821 acres of high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. There are also 85 acres of second growth resulting from beach logging in 1960.

(d) Fish Resources: Streams in the area provide spawning and rearing habitat for pink, chum, and coho salmon. Other species that may be present include cutthroat and steelhead trout, Dolly Varden char, stickleback and smelt. Wukuklook and Gypsum Creeks are major anadromous streams. There are many headwater tributaries for the large fish-producing streams located within roaded areas; these include the North Fork of Freshwater Creek, Seal Creek, and Iyoukeen Creek.

(e) Wildlife Resources: Sitka black-tailed deer and brown bear inhabit this roadless area. The roadless area has high quality deer and bear habitat, as well as Vancouver Canada geese use. There are bald eagle nesting and roosting trees in this area. MacDonald and Cook (1999) do not list black bears or mountain goats as inhabiting Chichagof Island.

(5) Management Direction and Current Uses: The roadless area was allocated to two Land Use Designations (LUDs) under the 1997 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan. These two LUDs are Timber Production and Old-growth Habitat.

LUD	Acres
Timber Production	24,406
Old-growth Habitat	22,664

Approximately 52 percent of the roadless area was allocated to a development LUD, Timber Production. Approximately 48 percent of the roadless area was allocated to a non-development LUD, Old-growth Habitat.

There is an identified anchorage in False Bay, providing access to the roadless area. There are eight recreation places. Recreation activities include viewing of wildlife/fish, beachcombing, saltwater shore fishing, stream fishing, hiking, dispersed camping, big game hunting, waterfowl hunting, small game hunting, upland bird hunting, viewing scenery, cross-country skiing, and saltwater kayaking. The Suntaheen River contains a fish ladder improvement.

There is a patented gypsum mine on the edge of the roadless area (approximately 100 acres). A special use permit for a shelter has been issued at Iyoukeen Cove. There were no outfitter/guides issued for the area in 1999; however, 10 were issued for the Freshwater Bay (147 service days) and 3 for False Bay (11 service days) in 2000. The area receives some subsistence use, mostly from residents of Tenakee Springs, Freshwater Bay, and Hoonah. VCU 204 is listed among the VCUs with the highest community fish and wildlife values.

(6) Appearance (Apparent Naturalness): Other than the gypsum mining operations area, the remaining roadless area has not been modified and appears natural. However, there are roads and timber harvest directly adjacent to the boundary on nearly all sides. These roads and harvest units penetrate deeply into the roadless area at several points. This results in a less than natural appearance when viewed from key viewpoints and travel routes (Chatham Strait, Freshwater Bay, and the Hoonah road system).

(7) Surroundings (External Influences): Huna Totem and Sealaska lands lie to the northwest. These lands have been extensively roaded and logged. The Gartina Creek drainage is the municipal watershed for Hoonah; part of the watershed is within the roadless area. The northeast corner of the roadless area borders a roaded area that was logged in the early 1980's. These roads extend southeast to Flints Point on Chatham Strait. The Point Augusta Roadless Area is located northeast of the roaded area. A former log transfer facility (LTF) was located in False Bay, to the east of the Freshwater Bay roadless area. Chatham Strait lies to the east and Freshwater Bay lies to the south. Developed areas extend along much of the shore. Seal Creek, south of the roadless area, also has a former LTF and a road system. Patented gypsum mines are adjacent to the roadless area.

The closed Kennel Creek logging camp and Pavlof/East Point Roadless Area are on the south side of Freshwater Bay. There is a log transfer facility (LTF) at the closed Kennel Creek camp, which is across the bay from the roadless area. The road systems to the northeast and southwest of the roadless area connect the area to Hoonah. The southwestern road system is also connected to the Kennel Creek road system. The ferry route to Hoonah passes the southeast corner of the roadless area.

(8) Attractions and Features of Special Interest: The Iyoukeen Peninsula is of special interest. The peninsula is approximately 4 miles long and 1/8 of a mile wide. There is no undergrowth and walking the length is like being in a park.

The natural features of the area, the scenery, and the opportunity to see wildlife are all attractions. High quality fishing opportunities in the streams and lakes also provide attractions. The area contains nine inventoried recreation places, which cover 409 acres, or 1 percent of the roadless area. There are no public recreation cabins in the roadless area.

(9) Differences between the 1989 and 2003 Roadless Area Boundary: There has been extensive roading and harvesting along the edges and within the 1989 boundaries of the roadless area. The result is a smaller, irregular, partially fragmented roadless area compared to that which existed in 1989. Several smaller areas along the boundaries have been excluded between the Draft and Final SEIS to improve the potential manageability of the roadless area as wilderness.

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II. Capability for Management as Wilderness

(1) Natural Integrity and Apparent Naturalness: The roadless area has had little modification by humans. The overall appearance is natural except for some evidences in the forest and near the water of the gypsum mining operation from the early 1900's. Although the land within the roadless area boundary is unmodified, this area is surrounded by roading and timber harvest activity. Several of the roading and timber activities penetrate deeply into the area, leaving the area with a moderate natural integrity and apparent naturalness, and decreasing the suitability of the land for classification as wilderness.

(2) Opportunity for Solitude and Serenity, Self-reliance, Adventure, Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation: There are moderate to high opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in the roadless area because of its relatively large size; however, most of the area is within a mile of a road and a visitor may be disturbed by traffic or logging noise. There is some chance of meeting other recreation groups in this area because of the proximity to Hoonah and Tenakee Springs, and the use this area is receiving now.

The steep nature of the landforms and the presence of brown bears present a moderate degree of challenge and the need for woods skills and experience.

The area provides primarily Primitive and Semi-primitive Non-motorized recreation opportunities. The table below lists the acreage and percent of the various Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes that have been inventoried in the roadless area.

ROS Class	Acres	Percent of Total ROS
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM)	39,853	85%
Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM)	1,492	3%
Roaded Natural (RN)	5,720	12%

The area contains nine inventoried recreation places, which cover 409 acres, or less than 1 percent of the roadless area.

ROS Class	# of Rec. Places*	Total Acres
SPNM	0	0
SPM	3	271
RM	7	138

* 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 in the roadless area.

(3) Wilderness Attribute Rating System: In 1977, the Forest Service, along with public interest groups, developed the Wilderness Attribute Rating System (WARS), which was used to inventory the wilderness characteristics of roadless areas during the second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation process (referred to as RARE II). The purpose of WARS was to provide a measure of the area's wilderness quality, based on the key attributes of wilderness as defined in the Wilderness Act. It is largely based on the attributes described above in items 1 and 2 of this section (natural integrity, apparent naturalness, outstanding opportunity for solitude, and primitive recreation opportunities).

In 1979, during the RARE II process, the Tongass National Forest applied WARS for the first time and rated each unroaded VCU on the Tongass. In 1989, the inventoried roadless areas (which generally include more than one VCU) were rated according to this system for the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) developed in support of the Forest Plan Revision. This original version of the AMS (dated 1990) included both the individual VCU ratings done in 1979 and the composite rating that was done for each roadless area in 1989. The 1989 rating for the Freshwater Bay Roadless Area Roadless Area was 24 out of 28 possible points. The 1989 rating was re-evaluated for this updated version of the AMS. Based on this re-evaluation, the area was given a rating of 17. The change in rating is reflective of the degree of developments that have occurred on adjacent lands and the effects this has had on wilderness attributes of the area.

(4) Ecologic and Geologic Values: The roadless area is irregular and fragmented by a road and timber harvest areas. It is not connected to any other roadless areas or wilderness. It has no known unique ecologic or geologic values.

(a) Fish Resources: The 1998 ADF&G Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment lists three VCUs as primary sportfish producers. These VCUs, Game Creek (204), Gartina Creek (205), and Spasski Creek (207), are partially in the roadless area and adjacent to the town of Hoonah. No VCUs were listed as primary salmon producers (ADF&G, 1998).

Streams in the area provide spawning and rearing habitat for pink, chum, and coho salmon. Other species that may be present include cutthroat trout, steelhead trout, Dolly Varden char, stickleback, and smelt. Wukuklook and Gypsum Creeks are major anadromous streams. There are many headwater tributaries for the large fish producing streams located within roaded areas; these include the North Fork of Freshwater Creek, Seal Creek, and Iyoukeen Creek. The Anadromous Stream Catalogue (ADF&G, 2000) also identifies Spasski Creek and Gartina Creek as major fish-bearing streams with headwaters in this roadless area. The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) indicates that average annual peak escapement of pink salmon is 13,200 and 7,400 for Gartina Creek and Spasski Creek, respectively.

(b) Wildlife Resources: Sitka black-tailed deer and brown bear inhabit this roadless area. Most of the shorelines and some of the drainages are considered critical deer winter range. Hippoback Ridge is considered good deer habitat. This area has high quality bear habitat, as well as Vancouver Canada geese use. VCU 207 was in the top 25 percent of VCUs for brown bear harvest between 1985 and 1994 and VCU 215 was in the second 25 percent (ADF&G, 1998). Both of these VCUs are in the center of the roadless area. There are bald eagle nesting and roosting trees in this area. MacDonald and Cook (1999) do not list black bears or mountain goats as inhabiting Chichagof Island.

(c) Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species: The only federally listed threatened or endangered species likely to occur within or adjacent to the roadless area are the humpback whale (endangered) and the Steller sea lion (threatened). Both of these species are found in adjacent marine waters. Three Forest Service Region 10 Sensitive Species are suspected or known to occur within the area: the trumpeter swan, Peale's peregrine falcon, and the Queen Charlotte goshawk. Trumpeter swans nest in the lowlands on small lakes and along large rivers and winter in ice-free areas throughout the Tongass. Peale's peregrine falcons nest on cliff faces and islands and feed primarily on seabirds. Inhabitants of late seral forests, Queen Charlotte goshawks are closely associated with productive old growth. In addition, nine sensitive plant species are known or suspected to occur in the Hoonah Ranger District.

(d) Karst, Cave, and Other Geologic Resources: A portion of this area is underlain by limestone or marble, and karst and cave resources are known to have developed there. Only limited inventory has occurred in this area so the extent of karst and cave development is not fully understood. The limestones and marbles found here are commonly the ridge-forming rock types. Extensive karst systems are known from the intensity and numbers of features identified during limited inventory and air photo interpretations. Paleontological discoveries are likely, and so are archaeological finds. Because of the thickness of the limestone and marble in this area, vertical pits and cave systems of record depth are possible. Extensive areas of limestone and marble are exposed from sea level to the ridge tops in these glaciated valleys. The karst systems found here extend from the alpine or higher elevations to the sea, providing increased productivity for the plant, animal, and aquatic communities found on the karst lands. This represents 18,745 acres, or 40 percent of the roadless area. Two-thirds of the karst acres are classified as high vulnerability karst. There are no glaciers in this area. The Sonyakay Ridge, a very prominent ridge system, is a geological form of special interest.

(5) Scientific and Educational Values: Sonyakay Ridge is of special geological interest. Sonyakay Ridge is a very prominent ridge system, between Iyouktug and Wukuklook Creeks. The land form is very steep and very rugged. The peaks vary in height from 2,200 to 2,500 feet along this ridgeline. The abandoned gypsum mine on Gypsum Creek is a special feature of historical interest. These features can be studied relatively easily due to their proximity to the Hoonah roads system.

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(6) Scenic Values: The visual character type of this area is Admiralty-Chichagof. The landforms in this area are generally rounded with mountain elevations that vary from 2,055 to 3,395 feet. The Freshwater Bay Roadless Area has rocky shorelines interspersed, with small gravel beaches. Streams are generally larger and longer in this character type than on other islands of Southeast Alaska. Saltwater bays and estuaries are present and exhibit much variety. Several tidal meadows of varying sizes are found in this unit. Lower slopes are densely forested, but exhibit a combination of muskeg openings, brush, and scattered tree cover up to approximately 2,500 feet elevation. Upper slopes and summits appear barren from a distance, but offer a variety of alpine vegetation as well as numerous rock outcroppings.

The area has a natural appearance when viewed from Chatham Strait, Freshwater Bay, False Bay, and Iyoukeen Cove because the topography and trees lining the coast screen the timber harvest activities and roads adjacent to this area. The north face of Sonyakay Ridge appears unmodified. Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas identified by the Forest Plan within or adjacent to the area include: Freshwater Bay, a small boat route and saltwater use area; Chatham Strait, a part of the Alaska Marine Highway system and a small boat route; Iyoukeen Cove and False Bay, saltwater use areas; Sonyakay Ridge, a dispersed recreation area; the Suntaheen Fish Viewing Area; and the community of Hoonah.

The evaluation area was inventoried as 46 percent of the acreage in a Variety Class A (possessing landscape diversity that is unique for the character type), 37 percent was in Variety Class B (possessing landscape diversity that is common for the character type), and 14 percent of this roadless area was in Variety Class C (possessing a low degree of landscape diversity). Approximately 3 percent of the area was not inventoried for Variety Class Type.

The majority (approximately 62 percent) of this roadless area is in Existing Visual Condition (EVC) I; these areas appear to be untouched by human activity. Approximately 3 percent is in an EVC IV, which are areas in which changes in the landscape are easily noticed by the average person and may attract some attention. There appears to be disturbances but they resemble natural patterns. Approximately 32 percent, is in EVC V where changes in the landscape are obvious to the average person. The changes appear to be major disturbances. Approximately 3 percent of the area was not inventoried for EVC.

(7) Social, Cultural, and Historical Values: At the time of Euroamerican contact, the Hoonah and Angoon Tlingit were using this area of Chichagof Island. Villages and sites for seasonal hunting, fishing, and collecting activities were located in the area. The forest archaeologists have identified cache pits, a bear shell midden, a smokehouse/cabin, Alaska Native burial sites, and petroglyphs in the area. Some of the most recent historical activities taking place in this roadless area include the Gypsum Camel mining operation. In the early 1900's, there was a gypsum mining operation in Gypsum Creek. The stone was moved one mile to Iyoukeen Cove by rail. A trestle was built over the water for 2,000 feet to access the ships for loading.

Extensive timber harvest has occurred near the boundaries of the roadless area. Logging is an important component of the local economy. Recreation activities include viewing of wildlife/fish, beachcombing, saltwater shore fishing, stream fishing, hiking, dispersed camping, big game hunting, waterfowl hunting, small game hunting, upland bird hunting, viewing scenery, cross-country skiing, and saltwater kayaking. There is a block of mining claims in the roadless area. A special use permit for a shelter has been issued at Iyoukeen Cove. There were no outfitter/guides issued for the area in 1999; however, 10 were issued for the Freshwater Bay (147 service days) and 3 for False Bay (11 service days). The area receives some subsistence use, mostly from residents of Tenakee Springs, Freshwater Bay, and Hoonah. The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) identified 8 of the 10 VCUs partially or wholly located within the area as subsistence use areas with the highest sensitivity to disturbance. The remaining two VCUs were identified as subsistence use areas with a moderate to high sensitivity to disturbance. Two of the VCUs, 204 and 215, are listed among the VCUs with the highest community fish and wildlife values (ADF&G, 1998).

(8) Manageability as Wilderness and Boundary Conditions/Changes: The roadless area lies along the north shore of Freshwater Bay. Iyoukeen Cove and Chatham Strait lie to the east. To the northwest are Huna Totem Corporation and Sealaska Corporation lands. Both areas have been extensively harvested. The eastern portion of the roadless area is bordered by The Hoonah/False Bay road system, which lies to the northeast. The Hoonah road system and harvest units continue to the east and combine with the False Bay road system and units in the southeast

corner of the area. On the southwestern corner of this roadless area are the Kennel Creek road system and harvest units. The Admiralty Island National Monument-Kootznoowoo Wilderness lies to the east, across the Chatham Straight.

The boundaries are not well defined, except where the roadless area borders the shore. The lands that lay next to private lands and National Forest System lands managed for timber production would be difficult to manage for wilderness.

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

(1) Recreation, Including Tourism Potential: Tourism has been increasing in Southeast Alaska and is expected to continue to increase. Cruise ships travel through Chatham Straight enroute to Glacier Bay. Many people fly into the area for sport fishing. There is the potential for some of these tourists to be drawn to fish, hunt, and camp in the roadless area. There is a potential for outfitter/guide permits to increase. Public recreation cabins could be built in Freshwater Bay or Iyoukeen Cove. In the original Tongass Land Management Plan (1979), there was a proposal for alpine trails near the head of Freshwater Bay, on to the ridge system of Elephant Mountain and Sonyakay Ridge. There were also alpine shelters planned for the Sonyakay Ridge area.

In 1996, the Alaska Visitors Association proposed hut-to-hut hiking/ kayaking/ canoeing for 25 persons and a leased proprietary camp for 15 persons as recreation development for the Iyoukeen Peninsula.

(2) Subsistence Uses: Management as a wilderness would not conflict with current subsistence uses.

(3) Fish Resources: TLMP identifies fish passage projects for Freshwater and Suntaheen Creeks.

(4) Wildlife Resources: There are no wildlife enhancement projects currently planned in the roadless area.

(5) Timber Resources: There are 18,612 acres inventoried as productive old-growth forest in the roadless area. In addition, 85 acres of second growth have resulted from beach logging activities. Of these acres, 10,237 acres are categorized as tentatively suitable for timber production. Based on the Forest Plan LUDs assigned to this area (and estimated falldown and scheduling reduction factors), 1,928 acres or 4 percent of this roadless area are estimated to be suitable for timber production. Approximately 592 of the suitable acres are mapped as high-volume old growth; of these acres, 88 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. The potential for managing timber within the roadless area is very high. The existing road systems and LTF sites, as well as the proximity to Hoonah, make the management for timber harvest more economical.

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

(7) Minerals: The area was identified as having a moderate potential for mineral development in 1984. There are 22,737 acres identified with undiscovered mineral potential, although they are classified as low relative value. The USGS Mineral Resources Data website (USGS, 2001) indicates that there is an explored prospect claim for gold in the Gypsum Creek area. The private parcel of land along the edge of the roadless area near Gypsum Creek is a patented mineral claim.

(8) Transportation and Utilities: There are no transportation or utility corridors proposed for the roadless area. The Potential Transportation or Utility Corridor LUD overlay is located just north of this roadless area.

(9) Water Availability and Use: Although a special permit has been issued for a shelter in this roadless area, no other shelters or recreation cabins exist to create water demand. There are no hydroelectric or domestic water projects planned in the area.

(10) Areas of Scientific Interest: There are extensive karst resources in this roadless area. The mapped karst resources encompass approximately 18,745 acres or 40 percent of the roadless area. There is high vulnerability karst near the mountains and headwaters around Seal Creek and Sonyakay Ridge. The mountains around Gypsum

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Creek also contain high vulnerability karst, but in the lower elevations and on Iyoukeen Peninsula, the karst is classified as low vulnerability. The Sonyakay Ridge, a very prominent ridge system, is a geological form of special interest.

(11) **Land Use Authorizations:** The current special use permit for the shelter at Iyoukeen Cove will continue. The potential for more outfitters and guides using the area more frequently is probable.

(12) **Land Status:** Most of the northern part of this roadless area is adjacent to land owned by Native Corporations and is encumbered.

IV. Wilderness Evaluation (Need for Wilderness)

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

(a) **Interest Expressed by Local Users and Residents:** Local issues include the continuing harvesting and roading of the timber lands, the effects on fisheries and wildlife habitat caused by logging, maintaining the visual high interest areas, maintaining lifestyles, location of log transfer facilities, the distribution of harvest volume classes and the tradeoffs between environmental protection measures, and the economics of the harvest activities. Subsistence use in the area is considered a priority among the local residents.

(b) **Congressional Interest:** In 1989, U.S. House of Representatives Bill HR 987 proposed to designate 23 areas as wilderness on the Tongass National Forest. This bill did not include the Freshwater Bay Roadless Area. In 2001, HR 2908 proposed that the roadless area be managed in an unroaded condition.

(c) **Public Input During Forest Plan Revisions and Appeals:** The Alaska Forest Association and other industry commenters were opposed to any additional wilderness. Others recommended that remaining roadless areas should be managed for primitive recreation of old-growth habitat and protected from logging and road building. A letter from Angoon with 48 signatures recommended that areas along the Chatham Strait be protected as subsistence areas. There should not be any logging, road building, or mining. In 1996, the Alaska Visitors Association proposed hut-to-hut hiking/ kayaking/ canoeing for 25 persons and a leased proprietary camp for 15 persons as recreation development for the Iyoukeen Peninsula.

(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 Roadless Area Conservation Rule or Road Management Policy Review. However, some commenters wanted all unroaded lands on the Tongass to be protected from development.

(e) **Public Input Expressed for Project-level EISs and Other Input:** To be completed during the Final SEIS.

(f) **Public Input Expressed During Supplemental EIS Process:** ADF&G noted that this roadless area is “ecologically roaded” from a brown bear perspective because virtually all brown bear home ranges in this area intersect roads (based on extensive brown bear radiotelemetry).

The Alaska Rainforest Campaign (a coalition of national and Alaska conservation groups) recommended Roadless Area 325 for permanent protection as LUD II. SEACC recommended Roadless Areas 317, 318, 319, 321, 323, and 325 for LUD II protection. It is more critical now than ever before that these remaining wild areas on Chichagof are protected.

A number of cave/karst experts and other individuals stated that East Chichagof and the North Central Prince of Wales Biogeographic Provinces contain some of the most highly developed karst lands in the Tongass. It was noted that protection of a combination of Freshwater Bay (#325), Game Creek (#323), Tenakee Ridge (#321), and Pavlov/East Point (#319) Roadless Areas would create a truly world class karst

reserve for the East Chichagof Biogeographic Province. These areas include massive limestone from ridge-top to shoreline, including Freshwater Bay’s Sonyakay Ridge and the unique Iyoukeen Peninsula karst, along with significant remnants of representative high-volume old growth. Freshwater Bay and Game Creek are the two most critical components of this province because of their size and amount of remaining forested karst.

The president of the Hoonah Indian Association asked for the protection, conservation, and responsible management of this roadless area because of its special interest to the Huna People.

(2) Nearby Roadless and Wilderness Areas and Uses: To the north and northeast are the Whitestone (#318) and Point Augusta (#317) roadless evaluation areas. Directly to the south, across Freshwater Bay, is the Pavlof/East Point (#323) Roadless Area. The Game Creek (#323) Roadless Area is located to the west, across the Hoonah-Kennel Creek road system. All of these areas are separated from the Freshwater Bay Roadless Area by developed areas. The Admiralty Island National Monument-Kootznoowoo Wilderness is located to the east, across Chatham Strait. These areas receive low to moderate recreation and subsistence use.

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

Community	Air Miles	Water Miles
Juneau (Pop. 30,711)	30	60
Sitka (Pop. 8,835)	55	95
Hoonah (Pop. 860)	10	25
Angoon (Pop. 572)	30	30

The nearest towns to Freshwater Bay Roadless Area that are served by the Alaska Marine Highway system are Tenakee Springs, Hoonah, and Angoon. The closest commercial airline service is at Sitka and Juneau.

(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System: The Freshwater Bay Roadless Area is located on the northeast corner of Chichagof Island, along the north shore of Freshwater Bay. This area is quite mountainous with large, deep stream drainages. The terrain ranges from sea level to more than 3,400 feet in the far western corner of the roadless area. Several peaks north of Seal Creek reach 3,000 feet or higher. The area contains 18 miles of shoreline on saltwater and four islets in Freshwater Bay.

Overall, the Freshwater Bay Roadless Area has moderate natural integrity and apparent naturalness. Exceptions are the developed areas along the boundaries that nearly divide the roadless area into three segments. Development in these areas disrupts the natural appearance of the landscape. There is a moderate opportunity for solitude and a relatively high opportunity for primitive recreation within the roadless area.

The roadless area has a relatively high scenic quality; 46 percent of the area was inventoried as distinctive for the character type from a visual perspective. The Iyoukeen Peninsula is of special interest. The peninsula is approximately 4 miles long and one-eighth of a mile wide. There is no undergrowth and walking the length is like walking through a park.

The roadless area includes about 6,125 acres of high-volume, old-growth forest. Of these acres, approximately 821 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The roadless area is classified as being in the East Chichagof Island Biogeographic Province and makes up about 4 percent of the province. It is one of 12 inventoried roadless areas found in the province that collectively make up about 72 percent of the province. Approximately 79 percent of the province is unroaded. The province contains the Pleasant-Lemesurier-Inian Islands Wilderness and a portion of the West Chichagof-Yakobi Wilderness, which make up 6 percent of the province. The province also includes all or portions of three LUD II areas, which make up approximately 25 percent of the province.

Appendix C

The Freshwater Bay Roadless Area lies completely within the Northeast Chichagof Fjordlands Ecological Section. This portion represents 10 percent of the entire ecological section, which is well represented in non-development LUDs (26 percent) and a small portion (7 percent) is within LUD II.

This roadless area is entirely within the Freshwater Bay Carbonates Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 18 percent of the entire ecological subsection, which is well represented in non-development LUDs (28 percent), but not represented in wilderness or LUD II areas.

The Freshwater Bay Roadless Area was rated at 17 out of a possible 28 points under the Wilderness Attribute Rating System (WARS). As such, it is ranked 93rd from the highest (along with four other roadless areas) out of the 109 Tongass inventoried roadless areas.

There is national and some local support for managing the area in a roadless condition but there is little support for designating the area as a wilderness. The WARS score for the area is low relative to other areas of Southeast Alaska, and the Pleasant-Lemesurier-Inian Islands Wilderness and a portion of the West Chichagof-Yakobi Wilderness are in the biogeographic province. Designation of the area would add Congressional protection to about 18 percent of the Freshwater Bay Carbonates Ecological Subsection, which currently contains no areas under Congressional protection. The roadless area is relatively small and fragmented and it is adjacent to roaded and harvested areas. The degree of timber harvest in adjacent lands adds importance to the old growth within the roadless area. These factors indicate that the relative contribution to the National Wilderness System would be low to moderate.

V. Environmental Consequences

The Freshwater Bay Roadless Area would be managed under the existing Forest Plan if Alternative 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7 is implemented. Approximately 48 percent of the roadless area would be managed under non-development LUDs. Timber harvest and road development could occur in the remaining 52 percent of the roadless area. The land in the development LUDs provides an estimated 1,928 acres that are suitable for timber production (11 percent of the suitable acres on the Hoonah Ranger District). Approximately 88 acres of those suitable lands are classified as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. There are approximately 22,737 acres identified with undiscovered low mineral potential, where prospecting could occur. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area could be affected by the ongoing developments allowed by the Forest Plan. Much of the high scenic value of the area is protected by the Forest Plan.

Under Alternative 6, the entire roadless area would be converted to Recommended LUD II. Mineral prospecting and development and recreation developments could continue, but no timber harvest would be allowed. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including old growth and scenic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated LUD II. Designation of the area would add Congressional protection to about 18 percent of the Freshwater Bay Carbonates Ecological Subsection, which currently contains no areas under Congressional protection.

With Alternative 8, the entire roadless area would be converted to Recommended Wilderness. Timber sale projects would not be allowed, and the potential for other development, including recreation, mineral, and hydroelectric, would be significantly restricted. Mineral prospecting and development would be allowed up to the time that the area is actually designated as wilderness by Congress. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including old growth and scenic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness. Designation of the area would add Congressional protection to about 18 percent of the Freshwater Bay Carbonates Ecological Subsection, which currently contains no areas under Congressional protection.

Appendix C

Land Use Designation Allocations and Suitable Timber Lands by Alternative for Roadless Area 325 (in acres)								
Land Use Designation	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7	Alt 8
Recommended Wilderness								47,070
Wilderness								
Recommended Wilderness Nat. Mon.								
Wilderness National Monument								
Non-wilderness National Monument								
Research Natural Area								
Special Interest Area								
Remote Recreation								
Enacted Municipal Watershed								
Old-growth Habitat	22,664	22,664	22,664	22,664	22,664		22,664	
Semi-remote Recreation								
Recommended LUD II						47,070		
LUD II								
Wild, Scenic, Recreational River								
Experimental Forest								
Scenic Viewshed								
Modified Landscape								
Timber production	24,406	24,406	24,406	24,406	24,406		24,406	
TOTAL	47,070	47,070	47,070	47,070	47,070	47,070	47,070	47,070
Suitable Timber Lands	1,928	1,928	1,928	1,928	1,928	0	1,928	0