

INDIVIDUAL ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTION

ROADLESS AREA NAME: Middle Kruzof (327)

ACRES (NFS): 15,127

BIOGEOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: West Baranof Island

ECOLOGICAL SECTION: Baranof-Chichagof Fjordlands

2003 WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTE RATING: 15

I. Overview and Description

(1) **Location and Access:** The area is located in the middle of Kruzof Island. The area is bordered on the north by areas developed for timber management that cross the Island from Gilmer Bay to Sukoi Inlet. Similar developed areas that cross the island from Shelikof Bay to Mud Bay border the area to the south. Shelikof Bay, the open Pacific Ocean, and Gilmer Bay border the area to the west. Krestof Sound borders the area to the east. The area also includes the Nedezhda Islands in Krestof Sound and a number of small offshore islands and rocks.

The area is located approximately 15 miles northwest of Sitka and 90 air miles southwest of Juneau. Both Juneau and Sitka are serviced by the Alaska Marine Highway. Access to the area is primarily by boat or floatplane along both the Pacific Ocean and the Krestof Sound coastlines. Access to the area is generally good due to the bays that provide sheltered anchorage for boats. There are no National Forest System Trails within the area. The forest roads that border the area to the north and south and extend north into the area provide access to the edge of the area. Access into the interior is by foot or helicopter. There are no places suitable for landing wheeled airplanes.

(2) **History:** This area has a long and varied history of use dating from Tlingit use in prehistoric and historic times to the present use by a variety of Alaska residents and visitors. Use of the area has been primarily for hunting, fishing, recreation, and temporary occupancy. Remains of structures and other human cultural activity in varying degrees of deterioration can still be found.

(3) **Geography and Topography:** The area is generally characterized by small irregular mountains or ridges 1,000 to 2,000 feet in elevation with steep slopes. Rocky crests and sharp ridges are found scattered throughout the area. The eastern portion of the area is gently sloping. The rocky shoreline is characterized by forested lowlands with a relatively gentle slope and interspersed with small gravel or sandy beaches. The few streams in the area are generally short and flow directly to saltwater.

There are 23 miles of shoreline along saltwater. There are 56 acres of alpine and 201 acres of rock. There are 80 acres of freshwater lakes in the area, although none of the lakes are large. The area also includes 67 acres of small islands.

(4) **Ecosystem:**

(a) **Classification:** Biogeographic Province. The area is classified as being in the West Baranof Island Biogeographic Province. Topographically, Baranof Island is the most rugged of all the islands in Southeast Alaska. The outer coast of this province is dotted with hundreds of small islands. All forest plant associations except those in the Western redcedar series and those found around large mainland rivers occur in this province.

Ecological Section/Subsection. The Middle Kruzof Roadless Area is contained entirely within the Baranof-Chichagof Fjordlands Ecological Section (M247B). This area is represented by two ecological subsections (see table below). The Sitka Sound Ecological Subsection is mostly covered in a blanket of

Appendix C

ancient volcanic ash approximately 2 – 6 feet deep. Where the ash has been washed away, Sitka graywacke, granite, and low-grade metamorphic rocks are exposed. The Sitka Sound Complex Ecological Subsection is relatively low in elevation and there are no glaciers, although there are some permanent snowfields. Mixed conifer and hemlock-spruce forests dominate the lower elevations and shorelines, and forested wetlands of lodgepole pine and mixed conifer are abundant. The Mount Edgecumbe Volcanics Ecological Subsection contains a rare landscape of scoria cones and lava fields that form along a transform fault. The symmetrical scoria cones, found on the southern portion of Kruzof Island, create moderate to high gradient stream channels in a radial pattern. This feature is unique to thin subsection in all of Southeast Alaska. The slopes of the cones produce well-drained soils and support productive hemlock-spruce forests. On the low-relief lava field, wet organic soils support lower productive forests ranging from hemlock-cedar to lodgepole pine-cedar peatlands (Nowacki et al., 2001).

Ecological Section	Ecological Subsection	Percent of Roadless Area
Baranof-Chichagof Fjordlands	Sitka Sound Complex	60%
	Mount Edgecumbe Volcanics	40%

(b) Soils: Shallow mineral soils with good drainage can be found on steeper slopes due to rapid loss of material by erosion and efficient rainwater runoff. Deep, well drained soils commonly occur below the shallow soils on the gentler slopes where transported soil materials have collected. Poorly drained soils are found associated with low relief and impermeable subsurface layers. Soils in the area are also influenced by deposits of volcanic ash. In locations with poor drainage, deep organic soils (muskegs) tend to form. In riparian areas, soil zones tend to contain sand and gravels as a result of flood deposition.

(c) Vegetation: The vegetation of this roadless area consists primarily of typical spruce-hemlock forests. Western hemlock-Sitka spruce dominate the overstory while the understory is composed of shrubs such as red huckleberry, rusty menziesia, and devil's club. The forest floor is covered with a mat of mosses, liverworts, and plants such as deerheart, bunchberry dogwood, single delight, and skunk cabbage. Streamside riparian vegetation is characterized by salmonberry, devil's club, alder, grasses, ferns, and currants.

Muskegs are abundant within this area, however due to their small size and association with forested sites, accurate acreage estimates are difficult and 744 acres have been mapped. These areas, dominated by sphagnum mosses, sedges, and shrubs of the heath family, are interspersed among low elevation timber stands where drainage is restricted. Trees within the muskegs are sparse and consist mainly of stunted hemlock, lodgepole pine, and Alaska cedar.

At elevations generally above 2,000 feet, the plant communities are characterized by low shrubs, grasses, and sedges. Subalpine forests and meadows occur at the interface between the forested communities and the alpine tundra.

There are approximately 13,429 acres mapped as forest land, of which 7,894 acres or 59 percent are mapped as productive old-growth forest. Of the productive old growth, 1,807 acres or 23 percent are mapped as high-volume old-growth forest. The productive old growth includes about 11 acres of high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. There are 56 acres of second growth forest where beach harvest has occurred in the past.

(d) Fish Resources: The Anadromous Waters Catalogue (ADF&G, 1998) shows five unnamed fish-bearing streams in this area. These streams drain into Gilmer Bay and Krestof Sound. These streams provide habitat for coho, pink and chum salmon, and Dolly Varden char.

(e) Wildlife Resources: There are many varied wildlife resources in this roadless area. Brown bear and Sitka black-tailed deer inhabit this area. Birds and waterfowl rearing and nesting areas are abundant. Bald eagle habitat, including nesting and roosting trees, is found along the shorelines of this roadless area.

MacDonald and Cook (1999) do not list black bear, wolves, moose, or mountain goats as inhabiting this area.

(5) Management Direction and Current Uses: This area was allocated to four different Land Use Designations (LUDs) in the 1997 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan. These four LUDs are Timber Production, Modified Landscape, Semi-Remote Recreation, and Old-growth Habitat.

LUD	Acres
Timber Production	7,966
Modified Landscape	4,252
Semi-Remote Recreation	1,984
Old-growth Habitat	926

Approximately 81 percent of the roadless area was allocated to a development LUD (Timber Production and Modified Landscape), which allow timber harvest and associated road construction. The Timber Production LUD was assigned to approximately 53 percent of the roadless area. Located along the south boundary, approximately 28 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Modified Landscape LUD.

Approximately 19 percent of the roadless area was allocated to a non-development LUD (Semi-Remote Recreation and Old-growth Habitat). Along Krestof Sound, approximately 13 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Semi-Remote Recreation LUD. Around Gilmer Bay, approximately 6 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Old-growth Habitat LUD.

Recreational use of the area is primarily for hunting, fishing, and enjoying the scenery. This use is scattered across the area, with the usual concentrations near lakes, streams, and shorelines. The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) identified the four VCUs partially located within the area as subsistence use areas with a high sensitivity to disturbance.

(6) Appearance (Apparent Naturalness): Much of the area is considered unmodified except for those areas primarily located near the boundary with evidence of current or historic use. Older beach logging has occurred in some areas along the Krestof Sound shoreline. The narrow shape of the area and the fact that it wraps around a large area of adjacent developed areas makes it difficult to ignore the adjacent developments to the north and south. These developed areas are visible when viewing the roadless area from Shelikof Bay or from locations within the area itself.

(7) Surroundings (External Influences): The area is bordered by saltwater on two sides. External influences on those sides are limited to the sights and sounds of motorized boats. The north and south boundaries adjoin developed areas. These developments have had local effects on the roadless area. The sights and sounds of motorized activities in these adjacent areas affect much of the roadless area due to its narrow shape and the way it wraps around these developed areas. The sight and sound of airplanes overhead also exerts an external influence on the area.

(8) Attractions and Features of Special Interest: The area contains five inventoried recreation places, which cover 14,568 acres, or 96 percent of the roadless area. The natural features of the area, the scenery, and the opportunity to see wildlife are all considered attractions. These are no National Forest System Trails or public recreation cabins in this roadless area. There are no other attractions or features of special interest.

(9) Differences between the 1989 and 2003 Roadless Area Boundary: The boundaries of this roadless area are basically the same as they were in 1989. They are, however, slight differences as the buffers surrounding the adjacent roaded and harvested areas have been modified slightly.

II. Capability for Management as Wilderness

(1) Natural Integrity and Apparent Naturalness: The area is unmodified except for the evidence of current and historic use of the area. These effects, although locally evident, have a very low overall effect on the natural integrity of the area. Both the relative size of the developments and their location along the shoreline or boundary of

Appendix C

the area contribute to this low impact. The long-term ecological processes are intact and operating with the effect of human influences on natural processes unmeasurable. However, the narrow shape of the area and the fact that it wraps around a larger developed area makes it difficult to ignore the adjacent developments when viewing the roadless area from Shelikof Bay or from within the roadless area itself. These factors combine to reduce this area's overall natural integrity and apparent naturalness and its suitability for wilderness classification. The area is rated as low to very low for natural integrity and apparent naturalness.

(2) Opportunity for Solitude and Serenity, Self-reliance, Adventure, Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation: There is a low opportunity for solitude and moderate opportunity for primitive recreation within the area. Recreational use of the area is relatively limited and dispersed, so that encounters with other visitors are unlikely. The sight or sound of airplanes overhead and boats along the coastlines can occasionally intrude on a visitor's solitude. There is motorized recreation occurring both on the adjacent road systems and in some off-road locations that can also be heard.

The area provides only a moderate opportunity for primitive recreation as a result of its size, lack of topographic screening, and physical challenges. There are few lakes, ponds, or streams that could potentially contribute to these opportunities. One outfitter/guide reported using this area in 1999. This use was limited to one group of eight clients camping on Nedezhda Island. The absence of developed recreational facilities enhances the opportunity for primitive recreation.

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

ROS Class	Acres	Percent of Total ROS
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM)	12,567	83%
Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM)	534	4%
Roaded Natural (RN)	89	1%
Roaded Modified (RM)	1,912	13%

The area contains five inventoried recreation places, which cover 14,568 acres, or 96 percent of the roadless area.

ROS Class	# of Rec. Places*	Total Acres
SPNM	1	12,567
SPM	0	0
RN	1	89
RM	4	1,912

* 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 National Forest System Trails or public recreation cabins located in the area. A Forest Service recreation cabin and trail in Shelikof Bay south of this roadless area are the closest developed recreation opportunities.

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

In 1979, during the RARE II process, the Tongass National Forest applied WARS for the first time and rated each unroaded VCU on the Tongass. In 1989, the inventoried roadless areas (which generally include more than one VCU) were rated according to this system for the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) developed in support of the Forest Plan Revision. This original version of the AMS (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 Middle Kruzof Roadless Area was 22 out of 28 possible points. The rating was re-evaluated for this updated version of the Analysis of the Management Situation. Based on this re-evaluation, the area was given a rating of 15, which reflects the effects of the adjacent developments including those on solitude and primitive recreation opportunities.

(4) Ecologic and Geologic Values: This area, centrally located on Kruzof Island, is bordered to the north and south by road systems and associated timber harvest areas that extend the width of the island. It is not part of a larger unroaded land area.

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

The Anadromous Waters Catalogue (ADF&G, 1998) shows five unnamed fish-bearing streams in this area. These streams, which drain into Gilmer Bay and Krestof Sound, provide habitat for coho, pink, and chum salmon, and Dolly Varden char.

(b) Wildlife Resources: There are many varied wildlife resources in this roadless area. Bird and waterfowl rearing and nesting areas are abundant. Generally, the area provides deer and brown bear habitat. Bald eagle habitat, including nesting and roosting trees, is found along the shorelines of this roadless area. MacDonald and Cook (1999) do not list black bear, wolves, moose, or mountain goats as inhabiting this area.

(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. Peale's peregrine falcons pass through the forests during their spring and fall migration flights. Inhabitants of late seral forests, Queen Charlotte goshawks are closely associated with productive old growth. In addition, twelve sensitive plant species are known or suspected to occur in the Sitka Ranger District. The area contains no known resident, threatened, or endangered species.

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

(5) Scientific and Educational Values: There are no known features of ecologic, geologic, scientific, or cultural significance in this area. There are no Research Natural Areas in the Middle Kruzof Roadless Area. Sitka, located approximately 15 miles southeast of the area, is the closest larger community with school-age children.

(6) Scenic Values: The visual character type of this roadless area is classified as Admiralty-Chichagof. Landforms in this character type are generally rounded. Rocky islands, reefs, and rock bluffs are found frequently on the outer coast. Rocky shorelines interspersed with small gravel beaches are found throughout the character type. Streams are generally short and swift on the west side of the roadless area. Saltwater bays and estuaries are numerous and exhibit much variety, from small sheltered coves to large exposed forms. Often dramatic high-energy seas occur on the outer coast. The Middle Kruzof Roadless Area is a poor example of this visual character class as it has few of the described features, or the features are limited or poorly represented.

Evidence of historic use includes timber harvest sales along the border of the area. Current use includes various short-term occupancies, and other evidence of the use of the area and the surrounding waters. This evidence, although locally significant, has a very low overall effect on the scenic value of the area. The narrow shape of the area and the fact that it wraps around a larger developed area makes it difficult to ignore the adjacent developments to the north and south. These developed areas are visible when viewing the roadless area from Shelikof Bay or from locations within the area itself.

Appendix C

Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas identified by the Forest Plan, that are within or adjacent to the area include: Gilmer Bay (boat anchorage); Gilmer Bay and Shelikof Bay (small boat routes); Kruzof Island Roads (#7590) (public use roads); the west coast of Kruzof Island (tour ship route); Iris Meadows (#521) (hiking trail); and Iris Meadows (dispersed recreation area).

About 6 percent of the roadless area was inventoried as Variety Class A (possessing landscape diversity unique for the character type). Approximately 18 percent of this roadless area was inventoried as Variety Class B (possessing landscape characteristics common for the character type). Most of the area, approximately 75 percent, is inventoried as Variety Class C (possessing a low degree of landscape diversity).

Approximately 72 percent of this roadless area was inventoried as Existing Visual Condition (EVC) I, which appears to be untouched by human activity. About 2 percent of the area was inventoried as EVC IV, where changes in the landscape are easily noticed by the average visitor, and may attract some attention. Twenty-five percent of the area is inventoried in EVC V, where changes in the landscape are obvious to the average person and appear to be major disturbances.

(7) Social, Cultural, and Historical Values: This area has a long and varied history of use dating from Tlingit use in prehistoric and historic times to the present use by a variety of Alaska residents and visitors. Use of the area has been primarily for hunting, fishing, recreation, and temporary occupancy. Remains of structures and other human cultural activity in varying degrees of deterioration can still be found. The area is located approximately 10 miles northwest of Sitka.

The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) identified the four VCUs partially located within the area as subsistence use areas with a high sensitivity to disturbance. Two of these VCUs (303 and 309) were included among the VCUs with highest community use value (ADF&G, 1998).

(8) Manageability as Wilderness and Boundary Conditions/Changes: The Middle Kruzof Roadless Area generally does not have a boundary that is well defined by topographic features. The majority of the boundary for this L-shaped area is defined by developed areas. Both the north and south boundaries of the area follow road systems and associated developments over hills and through valleys. The west and east boundaries defined by Gilmer Bay, the Pacific Ocean, and Shelikof Bay, and Krestof Sound, respectively, are easily described and recognized.

The feasibility of management of this area as wilderness or in an unroaded condition is reduced due to significant motorized access along both the north and south boundaries. The manageability is also affected by the fact that this L-shaped area is only one mile wide along the western leg, and not much over 2 miles wide along the northern leg.

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

(1) Recreation, Including Tourism Potential: Motorized recreation use on the Kruzof Island road system and the attraction of the Shelikof Recreation Cabin and Shelikof Bay will continue to draw visitors to the roaded area south of this roadless area. The topography, shape, and size will restrict the opportunities for managing the Middle Kruzof Roadless Area for recreational opportunities in an unroaded condition.

In 1996, the Alaska Visitors Association (AVA) proposed the following recreation developments for Gilmer Bay: hut-to-hut hiking for 12 persons/day, day boat docks with a 20 person capacity, flight seeing landings for 10 persons/day, day use recreation for 100 persons/day, and a day use wildlife observatory for 30 persons/day. It should be noted that the Middle Kruzof Roadless Area only includes the south shore of Gilmer Bay. The majority of the north shore is located within the North Kruzof Roadless Area.

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

(3) Fish Resources: There are no fish enhancement projects planned for this area.

- (4) **Wildlife Resources:** There are no wildlife enhancement projects planned for this area.
- (5) **Timber Resources:** There are 7,894 acres mapped as productive old growth in the roadless area. There are also 56 acres of second growth where beach harvest has occurred in the past. Of these acres, 5,957 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), 1,815 acres or 12 percent of this roadless area are estimated to be suitable for timber production. Approximately 436 of the suitable acres are mapped as high-volume old growth; of these acres, none are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.
- The potential for managing timber in this roadless area is dependent on higher market values and harvest methods that would allow harvest with roading.
- (6) **Fire, Insects, and Disease:** The area has no significant fire history. Endemic tree diseases common to Southeast Alaska are present in the area. There are no known epidemic disease occurrences.
- (7) **Minerals:** There are no known claims in this area. This area contains 3,542 acres of undiscovered locatable mineral resources (Brew et al., 1990; USDA Forest Service, 1991); all of these acres are considered to have low potential for development.
- (8) **Transportation and Utilities:** There are no proposed transportation or utility corridors within or adjacent to this area. The area is bordered to the north and south by forest roads and associated harvest units which are likely to be extended into the roadless area to access areas that the Forest Plan allows timber harvest.
- (9) **Water Availability and Use:** No developed recreation cabins or other facilities exist to create a water demand. There are no existing or planned hydroelectric or domestic water projects in the area.
- (10) **Areas of Scientific Interest:** There are no known areas of scientific interest in the roadless area.
- (11) **Land Use Authorizations:** No land use authorizations exist within the roadless area except the ongoing outfitter and guide operations that use portions of the area.
- (12) **Land Status:** The area consists entirely of National Forest System lands.

IV. Wilderness Evaluation (Need for Wilderness)

- (1) **Public and Congressional Interest:**
- (a) **Interest Expressed by Local Users and Residents:** Most use of the area is associated with recreational boating, hunting and fishing, and viewing the wildlife and scenery of the area.
- (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 Middle Kruzof Roadless Area. In 2001, HR 2908 identified the area as a proposed LUD II addition. It also proposed that Iris Meadows Creek be protected as a Wild and Scenic River. The developed areas that border the area to the north and south were identified for protection as Restoration Areas.
- (c) **Public Input During Forest Plan Revisions and Appeals:** This area was specifically addressed in public input received during the Forest Plan revision and appeal. Commenters requested that Kruzof Island be managed for Semi-Primitive or Primitive recreation, or Old Growth. Middle Kruzof Island was identified by another commenter as an area that should be managed for a local wood products industry. Comments were also provided for Management Area (MA) C44, which includes the Middle Kruzof Roadless Area. The Sierra Club Juneau Group requested that there be no further logging in MA C44 until its impact on “our resource of the future, tourism” is fully assessed. Timber industry commenters requested that the area be managed for timber production, emphasizing its importance to the Sitka economy. The AVA proposed the following recreation developments for Gilmer Bay: hut-to-hut hiking for 12

Appendix C

persons/day, day boat docks with a 20-person capacity, flight-seeing landings for 10 persons/day, day-use recreation for 100 persons/day, and a day-use wildlife observatory for 30 persons/day.

Iris Meadows Creek was specifically identified in the Forest Plan appeal filed by the Sitka Conservation Society, who requested that it be given wild and scenic river designation. They identified Iris Meadows Creek as a rare resource that will be more valuable over time than logging the same area would be. The Forest Plan appeal filed by the Southeast Alaska Conservation Council (SEACC) identified the four VCUs that are partially located within the area as part of the Sitka Local Use Area, a “SEACC Special Area”, where clearcutting should not be permitted. The appeal filed by the Hoonah Indian Association et al. requested that logging not be permitted along the “stretch of lands and islands on both sides of the various narrows that span from Sitka Sound to Hoonah Sound” because the subsistence harvest of deer in this area “already exceeds the sustainable hunting level by a wide margin” and logging would exacerbate this situation.

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

Review: This area was not specifically identified in the comments received on the Roadless Area Conservation Rule or Road Management Policy Review. However, some commenters wanted all unroaded lands in the Tongass to be protected from development.

(e) Public Input Expressed for Project-level EISs and Other Input: This area is not within the study area of any recently completed project-level EISs.

(f) Public Input Expressed During Supplemental EIS Process: The Alaska Rainforest Campaign (a coalition of national and Alaska conservation groups) recommended Roadless Area 327 for permanent protection as LUD II. SEACC recommended Roadless Areas 326, 327, and 329 on Kruzof Island to be permanently protected through designation as LUD II.

Some members of the Southeast Alaska Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council identified the need for further protection of this area because of its importance for subsistence

Some thought the island contains valuable low elevation forest that should be protected.

(2) Nearby Roadless and Wilderness Areas and Uses: The closest wilderness is the West Chichagof-Yakobi Wilderness, approximately 9 miles north of the Middle Kruzof Roadless Area. Two other nearby wildernesses are the South Baranof Wilderness, about 24 miles south of the area, and the Admiralty National Monument-Kootznoowoo Wilderness, approximately 36 miles to the east.

Nearby inventoried roadless areas include North Kruzof (#326) and South Kruzof (#329), both on Kruzof Island, and Sitka Sound (#332), which includes the islands east of Port Krestof and Whitestone Peninsula in Sitka Sound. The North Kruzof (#326) Roadless Area was allocated to the Timber Production, Old-growth Habitat, and Semi-Remote Recreation LUDs. The South Kruzof (#329) Roadless Area was assigned to the Old-growth Habitat, Semi-Remote Recreation, and Special Interest Area LUDs. The Sitka Sound Roadless Area (#332) was allocated to the Semi-Remote Recreation, Timber Production, Scenic Viewshed, and Old-growth Habitat LUDs.

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

Community	Air Miles	Water Miles
Juneau (Pop. 30,711)	90	145
Sitka (Pop. 8,835)	15	15
Hoonah (Pop. 860)	60	120
Angoon (Pop. 572)	45	65

The nearest stop on the Alaska Marine Highway is Sitka.

(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System: The area is located in the middle of Kruzof Island. The area is bordered on the north by areas developed for timber management that cross the Island from Gilmer Bay to Sukoi Inlet. Similar developed areas that cross the island from Shelikof Bay to Mud Bay border the area to the south. Shelikof Bay, the open Pacific Ocean, and Gilmer Bay border the area to the west. Krestof Sound borders the area to the east. The area also includes the Nedezhda Islands in Krestof Sound and a number of small offshore islands and rocks. The area is generally characterized by small irregular mountains or ridges 1,000 to 2,000 feet in elevation with steep slopes. Numerous rocky crests and sharp ridges are found scattered throughout the area. The coastline is scalloped with bays and coves.

The area is unmodified, but the relatively small size of the area and its proximity to adjacent developed areas make it appear modified from some viewpoints. The area is rated as low to very low for natural integrity and apparent naturalness. There is a low opportunity for solitude and moderate opportunity for primitive recreation within the area.

Approximately 6 percent of the landscape is considered distinctive from a scenery standpoint. There are no known features of ecologic, geologic, scientific, or cultural significance in this area.

The roadless area includes about 1,807 acres of high-volume, old-growth forest. Of these acres, approximately 11 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The Middle Kruzof Roadless Area is classified as being in the West Baranof Island Biogeographic Province and makes up about 2 percent of the province. It is one of eight inventoried roadless areas found within the province that collectively make up about 62 percent of the province. The majority of the South Baranof Wilderness is also within this province and makes up approximately 29 percent of the province.

The Middle Kruzof Roadless Area lies completely within the Baranof-Chichagof Fjordlands Ecological Section. This portion represents 1 percent of the entire ecological section, which is well represented in existing wilderness (28 percent) and other non-development LUDs (35 percent) with an additional 13 percent in LUD II.

The majority of this roadless area (60 percent) is located within the Sitka Sound Complex Ecological Subsection. This portion of the roadless area represents 5 percent of the entire ecological subsection, which is well represented in non-development LUDs (67 percent), but not in wilderness or LUD II. The remaining 40 percent of this roadless area is located within the Mount Edgecumbe Volcanics Ecological Subsection. This portion of the roadless area represents 8 percent of the entire ecological subsection, which is well represented in non-development LUDs (75 percent), but not in wilderness or LUD II.

The Middle Kruzof Roadless Area was rated 15 out of a possible 28 points under the Wilderness Attribute Rating System (WARS). As such, its WARS rating is ranked 103rd from the highest (along with three other roadless areas) among the 109 Tongass inventoried roadless areas.

There is some local and national support for managing the roadless area in an unroaded condition, and there has been little support for designating the area as wilderness. Designation of the area would add Congressional protection to about 5 percent of the Sitka Sound Complex Ecological Subsection and about 8 percent of the Mount Edgecumbe Volcanics Ecological Subsection, which currently contain no areas under Congressional protection. Designation would create a small wilderness that does not have any outstanding or unique values or features, and that is heavily influenced by developments on adjacent lands. Overall, the factors identified here indicate that the relative contribution of this area to the National Wilderness Preservation System would be very low.

V. Environmental Consequences

The Middle Kruzof Roadless Area would be managed under the existing Forest Plan if Alternative 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7 is implemented. Approximately 19 percent of the roadless area would be managed under non-development LUDs. Timber harvest and road development could occur within the remaining 81 percent of the roadless area. The land in the development LUDs includes an estimated 1,815 acres that are suitable for timber production (4 percent of the suitable acres on the Sitka Ranger District). None of the suitable acres are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. The area contains 3,542 acres of undiscovered locatable mineral resources; all of these acres are

Appendix C

considered to have low potential for development. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area could be affected by developments allowed by the Forest Plan.

Under Alternative 6, the entire roadless area would be converted to Recommended LUD II. Mineral prospecting and recreation developments could continue, but no timber harvest would be allowed. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including scenic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated LUD II. Designation of the area would add Congressional protection to about 5 percent of the Sitka Sound Complex Ecological Subsection and about 8 percent of the Mount Edgumbe Volcanics Ecological Subsection, which currently contain no areas under Congressional protection.

With Alternative 8, the entire roadless area would be converted to Recommended Wilderness. Timber harvest would not be allowed and the potential for other development, including recreation and mineral, would be significantly restricted. Mineral prospecting 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 scenic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness. Designation of the area would add Congressional protection to about 5 percent of the Sitka Sound Complex Ecological Subsection and about 8 percent of the Mount Edgumbe Volcanics Ecological Subsection, which currently contain no areas under Congressional protection.

Land Use Designation Allocations and Suitable Timber Lands by Alternative for Roadless Area 327 (in acres)								
Land Use Designation	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7	Alt 8
Recommended Wilderness								15,127
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	926	926	926	926	926		926	
Semi-remote Recreation	1,984	1,984	1,984	1,984	1,984		1,984	
Recommended LUD II						15,127		
LUD II								
Wild, Scenic, Recreational River								
Experimental Forest								
Scenic Viewshed								
Modified Landscape	4,252	4,252	4,252	4,252	4,252		4,252	
Timber production	7,966	7,966	7,966	7,966	7,966		7,966	
TOTAL	15,127	15,127	15,127	15,127	15,127	15,127	15,127	15,127
Suitable Timber Lands	1,815	1,815	1,815	1,815	1,815	0	1,815	0