

## INDIVIDUAL ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTION

**ROADLESS AREA NAME:** Neka Bay (343)

**ACRES (NFS):** 7,826

**BIOGEOGRAPHIC PROVINCE:** East Chichagof Island

**ECOLOGICAL SECTION:** Northeast Chichagof Fjordlands and Baranof-Chichagof Fjordlands

**2003 WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTE RATING:** 20

### **I. Overview and Description**

(1) **Location and Access:** This area, located on north Chichagof Island, consists of a peninsula bordered to the north and east by Neka Bay and Port Frederick, respectively. Port Frederick and The Narrows border the area to the south. The peninsula is separated from the main portion of the island by an area developed for timber management that extends northwest from Eight Fathom Bight. The city of Hoonah is located about 10 miles to the east and has regularly scheduled small plane and Alaska Marine Highway ferry service. The city of Juneau, the closest larger community, is located approximately 50 air miles east of the area.

The area may be directly accessed via boat or floatplane on the saltwater along its north and south shores. The forest roads that border the area to the west 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:** At the time of Euroamerican contact, the Hoonah and Angoon Tlingit used this area of Chichagof Island. Villages and sites for seasonal hunting, fishing, and collecting activities were located throughout Chichagof Island. Goldschmidt and Haas (1946) indicated that the Neka Bay Roadless Area was located within Hoonah Territory. The general area was surveyed by Captain Vancouver in 1794. Vancouver explored and named Port Frederick, which partially borders the area to the south and east.

(3) **Geography and Topography:** The south portion of the peninsula that comprises the majority of this area is characterized by a mountainous ridge with elevations ranging from sea level to 2,970 feet. The north portion of the area is relatively flat. Elevations of the north portion range from sea level to 400 feet. Two inlets, North and South Bight, divide this portion of the area.

The area includes 31 miles of shoreline on saltwater and 7 small islands totaling 52 acres. The area also includes 438 acres of alpine tundra and 7 acres of rock.

(4) **Ecosystem:**

(a) **Classification:** Biogeographic Province. This area is located within 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 condition similar to Admiralty Island Province.

Ecological Section/Subsection. The Neka Bay Roadless Area is contained mostly within the Northeast Chichagof Fjordlands Ecological Section (M247C) with portions within the Baranof-Chichagof Fjordlands (M247B). These areas are represented by two ecological subsections (see table below). The Point Adolphus Carbonates Ecological Subsection (97% of the roadless area) contains bedrock consisting mostly of sedimentary rocks, particularly marble and limestone, with smaller portions of volcanic rocks. The northern side of this ecological subsection continues to uplift since recent glacial retreat and local tectonics.

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As a result, the coastal area is lined with beachfront forests and extensive estuary tidal meadows – a rare feature in Southeast Alaska. This area has less than 10 percent alpine land cover and is dominated by productive hemlock and hemlock-spruce forests. In addition, wetlands are common and comprise almost one third of the landscape. The North Chichagof Granitics Ecological Subsection (3% of roadless area) is primarily made up of granitics. Severe glacial scouring left a rough surface with steep valleys, fjords, and numerous depression lakes and ponds. Subalpine meadows and bare rock dominate the elevations greater than 1,500 feet and lower elevations are sparsely covered with spruce-hemlock forests where alluvial fans and colluvial cones are present (Nowacki et al., 2001).

<b>Ecological Section</b>	<b>Ecological Subsection</b>	<b>Percent of Roadless Area</b>
Northeast Chichagof Fjordlands	Point Adolphus Carbonates	97%
Baranof-Chichagof Fjordlands	North Chichagof Granitics	3%

**(b) Soils:** Soil development in the Neka Bay Roadless Area is influenced by high levels of rainfall, cool summer temperatures, a short growing season, and moderately-low soil temperatures. Under such conditions, organic matter decomposes slowly and tends to accumulate in areas where it is being produced or deposited. Because of the high rainfall, the available nutrients can be leached rapidly and exposed mineral soils are subject to erosion.

In general, due to the rapid loss of material by erosion and efficient rainwater runoff, shallow soils with good drainage tend to develop on steeper slopes. Deep, well-drained soils commonly occur on gentler slopes where transported soil materials have collected.

Deep organic soils (muskegs) tend to develop where drainage is poor. This situation occurs where the soil material fails to provide sufficient internal drainage or where topography prevents external drainage. These areas are generally not well suited for road construction because the soil materials tend to be wet and have low bearing strengths. Drainage improves with increased slope gradient; however, as slopes become oversteepened, soil depths become much shallower. Riparian area soils tend to contain flood-deposited sands and gravels.

**(c) Vegetation:** Dense western hemlock/Sitka spruce forests dominate the overstory of the Neka Bay Roadless Area. 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 dominated by sphagnum mosses, sedges, and shrubs of the heath family, and 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 184 acres of muskeg are mapped for the area; however, due to their small size and association with forested sites, accurate acreage estimates are difficult.

Common marine plants in the near-shore waters include brown, red, and green algae, and eelgrass. Tideflats are found at the heads of many of the bays in this general vicinity and are usually associated with stream estuaries. The tideflats generally support sea milkwort, glasswort, and algae. Beach meadows like Mud Bay occur between the shore and the forest. Lower beach meadows are composed of beach ryegrass, reed bent grass, hairgrass, fescue grass, beach lovage, goose tongue, and sedges. Upper beach meadow plants include yarrow, bedstraw, starwort, ferns, western columbine, and cow parsnip. Oregon crabapple, alder, devil's club, and blueberry occur along the border of the beach meadow and the forest.

At elevations above 2,000 feet, the plant communities are generally 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 5,615 acres of forested land in the area, of which approximately 4,128 acres, or 74 percent, are mapped as productive old growth. Of the productive old growth, 2,721 acres or 66 percent are

mapped as high-volume old-growth forest. The productive old growth includes about 588 acres of high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. There are 300 acres of second-growth forest where beach harvest has occurred in the past.

**(d) Fish Resources:** Information from the Anadromous Waters Catalogue (ADF&G, 2000) indicates that Portage Creek is the only anadromous fish-bearing stream in this roadless area, providing habitat for pink, coho, and chum salmon.

**(e) Wildlife Resources:** Wildlife species in the area include brown bears, Sitka black-tailed deer, and furbearers such as mink, marten, and river otter. Bird and waterfowl rearing and nesting areas are abundant. Bald eagle and marbled murrelet habitat is found along the shorelines. Moose are reported to inhabit Chichagof Island; however, black bears, wolves, and mountain goats are not (MacDonald and Cook, 1999).

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

LUD	Acres
Old-growth Habitat	7,822
Semi-remote Recreation	4

All land in the roadless area was allocated to one of two non-development LUDs (Old-growth Habitat and Semi-remote Recreation). Almost 100 percent of this area was allocated to the Old-growth Habitat LUD. Less than 1 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Semi-remote Recreation LUD. This area is primarily located on small islands associated with the Neka Bay roadless area.

Recreation use in the area includes hiking, hunting, fishing, camping, picnicking, and viewing scenery and wildlife. There are no developed recreation facilities or trails in the area. Outfitter/guide use was reported in the immediate vicinity of the area at Neka Bay and Port Frederick in 1999. Twenty-three groups and a total of 26 clients visited one of these two locations, with the majority (20 clients) visiting the Port Frederick location. Visitors engaged in brown bear hunting at both locations. Subsistence use occurs in the area. The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) identified both of the VCUs that are partially located within this area as subsistence use areas with a high sensitivity to disturbance.

The 1996 Record of Decision for the Eight Fathom Timber Sale(s) (USDA Forest Service, 1996) included the Neka Bay Roadless Area within the boundaries of its project area but did not propose any new harvest activities in the area.

**(6) Appearance (Apparent Naturalness):** The area appears unmodified and in a natural condition, except in those areas where beach logging has occurred. Logging has occurred along the shoreline in four locations. These locations are adjacent to Frederick Sound, South Bight, and North Bight. They are also visible from boats traveling the adjacent waters or mooring in these areas. North Bight is identified as a visual priority use area (Boat Anchorage) in the 1997 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan.

**(7) Surroundings (External Influences):** The developments that border the area to the west are a major external influence. A log transfer facility (LTF) and logging camp (currently inactive) are located at Eight Fathom Bight, immediately west of the Neka Bay Roadless Area.

The Salt Lake Bay roaded area, located south across The Narrows from the Neka Bay Roadless Area, is visible from parts of the area. There is a LTF on the bay and the surrounding lands have been developed. There is also a public recreation cabin at Salt Lake Bay.

The sights and sounds of motorized boats are evident from some locations within the area. Small aircraft overflights for recreation access and service to the various communities and camps in the general vicinity are also apparent on occasion.

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**(8) Attractions and Features of Special Interest:** The area is considered an important subsistence use area. Both VCUs in this area are considered subsistence use areas with a high sensitivity to disturbance. A large swath of mostly high vulnerability karst resources extends southeast from the Neka Bay tidal flats in the northwest through the center of this roadless area. The karst in the southeast portion of the area is classified as low vulnerability. These karst areas encompass 2,157 acres (28 percent) of the roadless area. The area contains five inventoried recreation places, which cover 3,084 acres (39 percent) of the roadless area.

**(9) Differences between the 1989 and 2003 Roadless Area Boundary:** This area was part of the much larger Chichagof Roadless Area (#311) in 1989. The peninsula that comprises the majority of this roadless area is bordered to the west by developed areas. This developed area separates the Neka Bay Roadless Area from the larger Chichagof Roadless Area that it was formerly a part of and the new Neka Mountain Roadless Area (#342) to the north.

### II. Capability for Management as Wilderness

**(1) Natural Integrity and Apparent Naturalness:** The area appears unmodified and in a natural condition, except in those areas where older beach logging has occurred along the shoreline in four locations. These locations are visible from the surrounding waters and from within the area itself. Timber management and associated developments in adjacent areas are also visible from this area. Overall the area has high natural integrity and apparent naturalness. This is primarily because of its location on a peninsula.

**(2) Opportunity for Solitude and Serenity, Self-reliance, Adventure, Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation:** The opportunity for solitude in the Neka Bay Roadless Area is moderate. This is primarily because of its relatively small size and the capacity to absorb developments and activities from surrounding areas. There are limited human impacts away from the shorelines.

The sights and sounds of motorized boats are evident from some locations within the area. Small aircraft overflights for recreation access and service to the various communities in the general vicinity are also apparent on occasion. These types of activities provide interruption to solitude, but they are transitory and short term in nature.

Recreation use in the area includes hiking, hunting, fishing, camping, picnicking, and viewing scenery and wildlife. There are no developed recreation facilities or trails in the area. Outfitter/guide use was reported in the immediate vicinity of the area at Neka Bay and Port Frederick in 1999. Twenty-three groups and a total of 26 clients visited one of these two locations, with the majority (20 clients) visiting the Port Frederick location. Visitors engaged in brown bear hunting at both locations.

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)	5,124	65%
Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM)	1,874	24%
Roaded Modified (RM)	745	10%

The area contains five inventoried recreation places, which cover 3,084 acres (39 percent) of the roadless area.

ROS Class	Number of Recreation	
	Places*	Total Acres
SPNM	1	1,113
SPM	4	1,874
RM	2	97

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

**(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 Neka Bay Roadless Area was part of a much larger roadless area (#311 – Chichagof) in 1989 and was not rated separately. This area was rated for the first time for this updated version of the AMS. Based on this evaluation, the area was given a rating of 20.

**(4) Ecologic and Geologic Values:** This area, located on north Chichagof Island, is not part of a larger unroaded land area.

**(a) Fish Resources:** The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment listed one of the two VCUs (Neka Bay [201]) that are partially in the roadless area as a primary sportfish producer. Neither VCU was listed as a primary salmon producer but both are listed as secondary salmon producers (ADF&G, 1998).

Information from the Anadromous Waters Catalogue (ADF&G, 2000) indicates that Portage Creek is the only anadromous fish-bearing stream in this roadless area providing habitat for pink, coho, and chum salmon. This creek receives an estimated annual peak escapement of 18,600 pink salmon and has very good coho smolt capability.

**(b) Wildlife Resources:** Wildlife species in the area include brown bears, Sitka black-tailed deer, and furbearers such as mink, marten, and river otter. Bird and waterfowl rearing and nesting areas are abundant. Some of the most noted are in the Neka Bay area. Bald eagle habitat, including nesting and roosting trees, is found along the shorelines.

Based on harvest data compiled from 1985 to 1995, both of the VCUs in this area were ranked in the first 25 percent of brown bear harvest areas on the Tongass (ADF&G, 1998).

**(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 large swath of mostly high vulnerability karst resources extends southeast from the Neka Bay tidal flats in the northwest through the center of this roadless area. The karst in the southeast portion of the area is classified as low vulnerability. These karst areas encompass 2,157 acres (28 percent) of the roadless area. About half of the karst is mapped as high vulnerability karst. There are no known glaciers or unique geologic features in this area.

**(5) Scientific and Educational Values:** There are no Research Natural Areas (RNAs) in this roadless area. The city of Juneau, the closest larger community, is located approximately 40 air miles east of the area. Therefore,

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this area is relatively inaccessible to large numbers of school-age children. The area is more accessible to school-age children residing in the city of Hoonah and other nearby communities.

**(6) Scenic Values:** The area appears unmodified and in a natural condition, except in those areas where beach logging has occurred. Older beach logging has occurred along the shoreline in four locations. These locations are adjacent to Frederick Sound, South Bight, and North Bight. These locations are visible from boats traveling the adjacent waters or mooring in these areas.

Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas identified by the Forest Plan that are within or adjacent to the area include: Port Frederick, Neka Bay, The Narrows, and Salt Lake Bay (Small Boat Routes); Neka Bay (Saltwater Use Area); Neka River (Dispersed Recreation Area); and Neka Bay, North Bight, and Salt Lake Bay (Boat Anchorages).

This roadless area is inventoried as approximately 12 percent Variety Class A (possessing landscape diversity that is unique for the character type), 76 percent Variety Class B (possessing landscape diversity that is common for the character type) and 10 percent Variety Class C (possessing a low degree of landscape diversity). Approximately 2 percent of the area was not inventoried for Variety Class type.

The majority of the area (74 percent) was inventoried as an Existing Visual Condition (EVC) I, which appears untouched by human activity. Approximately 15 percent was inventoried as EVC III, areas in which changes in the landscape are not noticeable to the average visitor unless pointed out. Another 3 percent was inventoried as EVC IV, in which changes in the landscape are easily noticed by the average visitor, but resemble natural patterns. Approximately 7 percent was inventoried as EVC V, where changes to the landscape are obvious to the average visitor. Approximately 2 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 used this area of Chichagof Island. Villages, and sites for seasonal hunting, fishing, and collecting activities, were located throughout Chichagof Island. Goldschmidt and Haas (1946) indicated that the Neka Bay Roadless Area was located within Hoonah Territory. The general area was surveyed by Captain Vancouver in 1794. Vancouver explored and named Port Frederick, which partially borders the area to the south and east. The city of Juneau, the closest larger community, is located approximately 50 air miles east of the area. The city of Hoonah is located about 10 miles to the east.

Recreation use in the area includes hiking, hunting, fishing, camping, picnicking, and viewing scenery and wildlife. There are no developed recreation facilities or trails in the area. Outfitter/guide use was reported in the immediate vicinity of the area at Neka Bay and Port Frederick in 1999. Twenty-three groups and a total of 26 clients visited one of these two locations, with the majority (20 clients) visiting the Port Frederick location. Visitors engaged in brown bear hunting at both locations. Based on harvest data compiled from 1985 to 1995, both of the VCUs in this area were ranked in the first 25 percent of brown bear harvest areas on the Tongass (ADF&G, 1998). It should, however, be noted that only portions of these VCUs are included in the Neka Bay Roadless Area.

This area is an important deer subsistence area for Hoonah residents. The two VCUs that comprise this area accounted for 10 to 15 percent of annual average deer harvest by Hoonah residents from 1987 to 1994. The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment identified both of the VCUs that are partially located within this area as subsistence use areas with a high sensitivity to disturbance. Both of these VCUs were listed among the VCUs with highest community use values (ADF&G, 1998).

The 1996 Record of Decision for the Eight Fathom Timber Sale(s) (USDA Forest Service, 1996) included the Neka Bay Roadless Area within the boundaries of its project area but did not propose any new harvest activities in the area.

**(8) Manageability as Wilderness and Boundary Conditions/Changes:** The area is bordered to the west by a forest road system and logged areas that extends northwest from Eight Fathom Bight. The remaining parts of the area are bordered by saltwater. Older beach logging has occurred along the shoreline in four locations. These locations are adjacent to Frederick Sound, South Bight, and North Bight. These locations are also visible from boats traveling the adjacent waters or mooring in these areas. Developments in surrounding areas are also visible from this area and may affect its suitability for wilderness.

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

- (1) **Recreation, including Tourism Potential:** There is potential for future recreation use in this area. Outfitter and guide use could increase, especially around Neka Bay.
- (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 identified fishery enhancement projects in this area.
- (4) **Wildlife Resources:** There are no identified wildlife enhancement projects in this area.
- (5) **Timber Resources:** There are 4,128 acres mapped as productive old growth and 300 acres mapped as second growth due to harvest in the roadless area. Of these acres, 3,026 acres are categorized as tentatively suitable for timber production. Based on the Forest Plan LUDs assigned to this area, none of this roadless area is classified as suitable for timber production.

The 1996 Record of Decision for the Eight Fathom Timber Sale(s) (USDA Forest Service, 1996) included the Neka Bay Roadless Area within the boundaries of its project area but did not propose any new harvest activities in the area.

- (6) **Fire, Insects, and Disease:** The area has no significant fire history. Endemic tree diseases common to Southeast Alaska are present. There are no known epidemic disease occurrences.
- (7) **Minerals:** The USGS Mineral Resource Data website (2001) shows no mineral prospects in this area.
- (8) **Transportation and Utilities:** There are no transportation or utility projects proposed in this area.
- (9) **Water Availability and Use:** There are no developed recreation cabins or other facilities to create a demand for water in this area. There are no existing or planned hydroelectric or domestic water projects within the roadless area.
- (10) **Areas of Scientific Interest:** A large swath of mostly high vulnerability karst resources extends southeast from the Neka Bay tidal flats in the northwest through the center of this roadless area. The karst in the southwest portion of the area is classified as low vulnerability. These karst areas encompass 2,157 acres (28 percent) of the roadless area.
- (11) **Land Use Authorizations:** There are no land use authorizations within the roadless area except for ongoing outfitter guide permits.
- (12) **Land Status:** The area consists entirely of National Forest System lands. Parts of the roadless area in the east are encumbered.

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

- (1) **Public and Congressional Interest:**
  - (a) **Interest Expressed by Local Users and Residents:** The people using this roadless area include those from nearby towns and logging camps. Use from outfitter/guides occurs in the area. Subsistence uses also take place in the area and include hunting, fishing, and gathering.
  - (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 Neka Bay

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Roadless Area. In 2001, HR 2908 identified the area as a proposed LUD II addition. It also proposed that two of the harvested areas within the area be protected as restoration areas.

**(c) Public Input During Forest Plan Revisions and Appeals:** This area was addressed in public input received during the Forest Plan revision and appeal. The scenic qualities of Chichagof Island in general were mentioned as very important to the tourism, tour boat, and guide service industries. The Sierra Club Juneau Group identified MA C28, which includes the north part of the Neka Bay Roadless Area, as an area that should have “far less logging than planned.” Other commenters stated that the shoreline of MA C29, which includes the south part of the area, should be allocated to the Modified Landscape LUD. One commenter requested that timber harvest not be allowed in VCU 202 (Port Frederick). Another requested that VCU 202 be assigned to the Scenic Viewshed LUD.

Parts of the area were also specifically identified in the Forest Plan appeal filed by the Sitka Conservation Society (SCS). The SCS identified Port Frederick as a salt chuck area, which they define as “intertidal bodies of water typically separated from saltwater by a narrow rocky pass.” They noted that these areas are rare in southeast Alaska and requested that salt chuck areas be assigned special status to protect their biological resources, with no logging allowed. Northeast Chichagof Island was identified in the Forest Plan appeal filed on behalf of the Hoonah Indian Association et al. This appeal identified Northeast Chichagof Island, which may include all or part of the Neka Bay Roadless Area, as an important customary and traditional Hoonah hunting and fishing area. The appeal stated that this area has already suffered substantial deer habitat loss from past logging and deserves protection.

**(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 was included within the study area of the Eight Fathom Timber Sale(s) EIS (USDA Forest Service, 1996).

**(f) Public Input Expressed During Supplemental EIS Process:** The Alaska Rainforest Campaign (a coalition of national and Alaska conservation groups) recommended Roadless Area 343 for permanent protection as LUD II. SEACC recommended the Neka Bay and Neka Mountain areas be designated as LUD II and added to the existing Mud Bay/Point Adolphus LUD II area.

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.

The Hoonah Indian Association emphasized the need for “additional, long-term, protective measures that would prevent any further road building or clear-cut logging above and around Neka Bay including measures that would prevent the proposed Otter Lake Timber Sale.”

A resident of Hoonah noted that Neka Bay is priceless to the Hoonah residents and to charter customers. It is very popular for recreation, fishing, hunting and plant gathering. Some individuals requested protection for Neka Bay and Mountain.

A number of cave/karst experts and other individuals stated that this area contains less developed karstlands that are representative of the biogeographic province. They noted that the area should be combined with Roadless Area 342 and protected.

**(2) Nearby Roadless and Wilderness Areas and Uses:** The West Chichagof-Yakobi Wilderness is located approximately 10 miles west of the area. The Admiralty Island National Monument - Kootznoowoo Wilderness is located approximately 26 miles to the east. The Pleasant-Lemesurier-Inian Islands Wilderness and Glacier Bay National Park are located approximately 19 and 24 miles north of the area, respectively.

The Neka Mountain Roadless Area (#342) is located directly across Neka Bay from the area. The Chichagof Roadless Area (#311) is located directly across the roaded and logged area that borders the Neka Bay Roadless Area to the west. The Game Creek Roadless Area (#323) is located east across Port Frederick from the area.

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

Community	Air Miles	Water Miles
Juneau (Pop. 30,711)	50	70
Sitka (Pop. 8,835)	130	145
Hoonah (Pop. 860)	10	10
Angoon (Pop. 572)	50	70

The nearest stop on the Alaska Marine Highway is Hoonah.

**(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System:** The Neka Bay Roadless Area is located on Chichagof Island at the southern end of Port Frederick. The borders follow the shore, except for a narrow area connecting the peninsula with the main island. The southern portion of the roadless area is characterized by a mountainous ridge with elevations ranging from sea level to nearly 3,000 feet. The northern portion of the area is relatively flat. Elevations of the northern portion range from sea level to 400 feet. There are two inlets (North and South Bight) in this portion of the roadless area. The roadless area includes 31 miles of shoreline on saltwater and 7 small islands totaling 52 acres.

Overall, the Neka Bay Roadless Area is unmodified, except in those areas where beach logging has occurred. The roadless area has very high natural integrity and apparent naturalness; however, timber harvest activities in adjacent areas are visible from within the roadless area. The older beach logged areas have reforested and no longer appear developed. There is a moderate opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation within the roadless area due to the small size of the roadless area.

Approximately 12 percent of the area was inventoried as distinctive for the character type from a visual perspective. A large swath of mostly high vulnerability karst extends southeast from the Neka Bay tidal flats in the northwest through the center of this roadless area.

The roadless area includes about 2,721 acres of high-volume, old-growth forest. Of these acres, approximately 588 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The Neka Bay Roadless Area lies within the East Chichagof Island Biogeographic Province and makes up less than one percent of the province. It is one of 12 inventoried roadless areas that are found in the province and that make up 72 percent of the province. 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.

The Neka Bay Roadless Area lies within two ecological sections; it represents 2 percent of the Northeast Chichagof Fjordlands Ecological Section and less than 0.1 percent of the Baranof-Chichagof Fjordlands Ecological Section. The Northeast Chichagof Fjordlands is well represented in non-development LUDs (33 percent, including 7 percent within LUD II). The Baranof-Chichagof Fjordlands Ecological Section is well represented by existing wilderness and non-development LUDs (28 and 35 percent, respectively) with an additional 13 percent in LUD II.

The majority of this roadless area (97 percent) is within the Point Adolphus Carbonates Ecological Subsection. This portion of the roadless area represents 6 percent of the entire ecological subsection, which is well represented by non-development LUDs (48 percent including 16 percent in LUD II). The remaining 3 percent of this roadless area is within the North Chichagof Granitics Ecological Subsection. This portion of the roadless area represents 0.1 percent of the entire ecological subsection, which is well represented by non-development LUDs (53 percent, including 38 percent in LUD II) with an additional 19 percent in existing wilderness.

## Appendix C

The Neka Bay Roadless Area was rated at 20 out of a possible 28 points under the Wilderness Attribute Rating System (WARS). As such, it is ranked 53rd from the highest (along with 16 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 average 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. The roadless area is relatively small and timber harvest activities have significantly altered the landscape in the adjacent area to the west, which is visible from within the roadless area. These factors indicate that the relative contribution to the National Wilderness System would be low.

### V. Environmental Consequences

The Neka Bay Roadless Area would be managed under the existing Forest Plan if Alternative 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7 is implemented. All of the roadless area would be managed under non-development LUDs. None of the roadless area is suitable for timber production. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area are protected by the Forest Plan.

Under Alternative 6, the entire roadless area would be converted to Recommended LUD II. This would not affect timber management because this area is currently allocated to non-development LUDs. Mineral prospecting and development and recreation developments could continue. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including the scenic and karst values, would be provided long-term protection if designated LUD II.

With Alternative 8, the entire roadless area would be converted to Recommended Wilderness. This would not affect timber management because this area is currently allocated to non-development LUDs. 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 the scenic and karst values, would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness.

Land Use Designation Allocations and Suitable Timber Lands by Alternative for Roadless Area 343 (in acres)								
Land Use Designation	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7	Alt 8
Recommended Wilderness								7,826
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	7,822	7,822	7,822	7,822	7,822		7,822	
Semi-remote Recreation	4	4	4	4	4		4	
Recommended LUD II						7,826		
LUD II								
Wild, Scenic, Recreational River								
Experimental Forest								
Scenic Viewshed								
Modified Landscape								
Timber production								
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,826</b>	<b>7,826</b>	<b>7,826</b>	<b>7,826</b>	<b>7,826</b>	<b>7,826</b>	<b>7,826</b>	<b>7,826</b>
Suitable Timber Lands	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0