

INDIVIDUAL ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTION

ROADLESS AREA NAME: Kogish (509)

ACRES (NFS): 71,420

BIOGEOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: North Central Prince of Wales Island

ECOLOGICAL SECTION: Kuiu-Prince of Wales Fjordlands, Prince of Wales Mountains

2003 WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTE RATING: 20 (23)

I. Overview and Description

(1) **Location and Access:** The Kogish Roadless Area is located on the west side of central Prince of Wales Island. On the southwest, west, and northwest, the roadless area is bounded by San Christoval Channel, the Gulf of Esquibel, Salt Lake Bay, Tonowek Bay, Nossuk Bay, and Kaguk Cove. Most of these marine areas are part of the West Coast Waterway along the west side of Prince of Wales Island. The State of Alaska owns land bordering the roadless area along the southern shore of Salt Lake Bay. The northern and much of the eastern borders consist of extensively roaded areas. The southern boundary follows Sealaska Corporation lands that are managed for timber production and a small portion of Shinaku Inlet.

Ketchikan, served by the Alaska Marine Highway and regular flights, is approximately 55 miles southeast of the area. The primary access is by way of the Staney Creek road system, from the north, and by boat or floatplane along the extensive saltwater shorelines. Access into the interior is by foot or helicopter. There are no places suitable for landing wheeled airplanes

(2) **History:** There is evidence of prehistoric and historic use of this roadless area, particularly along the saltwater shorelines. The Tlingit people, who have settled in Klawock and Craig, maintain strong connections with specific locations and general areas along the west coast of Prince of Wales Island (USDA Forest Service, 1998). Many specific areas along the southwest, west, and northwest shorelines of the roadless area were identified by local people as important for resource gathering and hunting, including Elevenmile, Salt Lake Bay, Nossuk Bay, and other nearby vicinities. A large number of prehistoric and historic sites were located in these areas, during cultural resource surveys conducted for the Control Lake Project (USDA Forest Service, 1998).

The roadless area was within the primary sale area for the Ketchikan Pulp Company long-term timber sale contract for many years and the northern edge of the area (especially the Staney Creek watershed) has been under intensive timber management. The Sealaska Corporation land along the southern border has also been developed for timber management. Two timber sales in the roadless area have been NEPA-cleared under the Control Lake Project (USDA Forest Service, 1998), but have not yet been sold.

(3) **Geography and Topography:** This majority of the area is characterized by gently rolling relief with locally rugged areas. Kogish Mountain, with an elevation of almost 3,000 feet, is the highest point in the roadless area. Shinaku Creek, and much of its watershed, exhibits fairly gentle relief, except in its upper reaches where the topography also becomes precipitous. It is the major drainage in the roadless area. There are 144 miles of saltwater shoreline. This area contains about 1,228 acres of alpine tundra, 123 acres of lakes, and 550 acres of rock. Islands and islets make up 4,589 acres of this roadless area, including the land on Heceta Island. Approximately 10 islands in this roadless area are over 50 acres.

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(4) Ecosystem:

(a) **Classification:** Biogeographic Province. The area is classified as being in the North Central Prince of Wales Island Biogeographic Province. This province is characterized by relatively gentle topography; limestone soils are fairly common and precipitation is relatively high. Karst development is limited due to the limited carbonate outcrops in this area.

Ecological Section/Subsection. The Kogish Roadless Area is contained within the Kuiu-Prince of Wales Fjordlands Ecological Section (M247F) and the Prince of Wales Mountains Ecological Section (M247I). These areas are represented by three ecological subsections (see table below). The Elevenmile Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection (50% of roadless area) contains sedimentary and volcanic bedrock that underlies compacted glacial till and peat of various thicknesses. Gently sloped mountains, rolling hills, and lowlands characterize the landscape. The mostly impermeable soils and gentle terrain support an expansive network of forested and non-forested wetlands that cover almost half of the land in this subsection. Hillslopes provide well-drained soils that can support productive hemlock forests. The Central Prince of Wales Volcanics Ecological Subsection (35% of roadless area) is mostly comprised of volcanic bedrock. The shallow, unproductive, and organic soils of the higher elevations support wetlands and forests of mixed-conifers and logdepole pines. The well-drained till soils of the lower elevations support moderate to highly-productive hemlock and hemlock-spruce forests which comprise more than half the landcover in this ecological subsection. The North Prince of Wales-Kuiu Carbonates Ecological Subsection (15% of roadless area) is characterized by low-elevation hills and mountain slopes underlain by limestone and marble karstlands. Hemlock and hemlock-spruce forests are found on karst soils, which can be highly productive (Nowacki et al., 2001).

Ecological Section	Ecological Subsection	Percent of Roadless Area
Kuiu-Prince of Wales Fjordlands	Elevenmile Till Lowlands	50%
	North Prince of Wales-Kuiu Carbonates	15%
Prince of Wales Mountains	Central Prince of Wales Volcanics	35%

(b) **Soils:** Soils are generally formed over bedrock and are typically about 40 inches deep. Some of the soils in the area are derived from limestone and marble.

(c) **Vegetation:** Vegetation is typical Southeast Alaska coastal temperate rain forest. The forest is primarily western hemlock and Sitka spruce with a large cedar component. Approximately 4,879 acres of muskeg are mapped for the area; however, due to their small size and association with forested sites, accurate acreage estimates are difficult.

There are approximately 64,108 acres mapped as forestland, of which 29,497 acres (46 percent) are mapped as productive old-growth forest. Of the productive old growth, 14,024 acres (48 percent) are mapped as high-volume old-growth forest. The productive old growth includes about 4,015 acres of high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. There are also 498 acres of second growth resulting from older beach logging along Nossuk Bay, Tonowek Bay, and Kaguk Cove, and recent helicopter harvest in the eastern portion of the area.

(d) **Fish Resources:** The major fish producing waters are Stanley Creek, Shaheen Creek, the streams of Salt Lake Bay, Elevenmile Creek, Big Salt Lake, and Shinaku Creek. The area also includes portions of the Stanley Creek headwaters; Stanley Creek is a major fish producer. These waters provide habitat for coho, pink, and chum salmon, steelhead trout, and Dolly Varden char (ADF&G, 2000).

(e) **Wildlife Resources:** Sitka black-tailed deer, black bear, wolves, marten, mink, river otter, and bald eagles are the best known species that inhabit the area. Marbled murrelet, Queen Charlotte goshawk, harlequin duck, Peale's peregrine falcon, osprey, and trumpeter swan also potentially occur in the area. Moose inhabit

Prince of Wales Island, but they have not been reported here. Brown bear and mountain goats do not inhabit this area (MacDonald and Cook, 1999).

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

LUD	Acres
Timber Production	37,665
Modified Landscape	3,862
Scenic Viewshed	1,190
Semi-remote Recreation	23,155
Old-growth Habitat	5,548

Approximately 60 percent of this area was allocated to LUDs that allow timber harvest and the associated road construction (Timber Production, Modified Landscape, Scenic Viewshed). Most of this area, approximately 53 percent, was allocated to the Timber Production LUD. Approximately 5 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Modified Landscape LUD located around Kogish Mountain. The Scenic Viewshed LUD was allocated to approximately 2 percent of the roadless area located primarily in the east.

Approximately 40 percent of the roadless area was allocated to a non-development LUD (Semi-remote Recreation, Old-growth Habitat). Approximately 32 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Semi-remote Recreation LUD located mostly in the western part. The Old-growth Habitat LUD was assigned to approximately 8 percent of the roadless area.

The roadless area was within the primary sale area for the Ketchikan Pulp Company long-term timber sale contract for many years and the northern edge of the area (especially the Staney Creek watershed) has been under intensive timber management. The Sealaska Corporation land along the southern border has also been extensively developed. Two timber sales in the roadless area have been NEPA-cleared under the Control Lake Project (USDA Forest Service, 1998), but have not yet been sold. These include the Kogish/Shinaku Sale, in the area around Kogish Mountain and upper Shinaku Creek, and the Pepper Sale, in the eastern lobe of the area near Control Lake. Another NEPA-cleared unit, not currently planned for sale, is in the vicinity of the Pepper Sale.

Recreation use in most of the area is not well documented. Use is perceived to be low due to very difficult access to the interior parts of this roadless area and the lack of major recreation attractions, such as major stream or lake systems. The saltwater shorelines receive recreational and subsistence use by boaters from Klawock and Craig and from people using the West Coast Waterway.

(6) Appearance (Apparent Naturalness): The appearance of most of the interior of the area is natural. However, extensive development has occurred adjacent to the north and much of the south sides of this area, and the northern portion of the area is affected by an irregular pattern of these developments.

(7) Surroundings (External Influences): The major external influences on most sides of this roadless area are ongoing timber management and development. Native corporation lands to the south, and National Forest System lands to the north have been extensively developed. Additional development has been NEPA-cleared inside the roadless area.

(8) Attractions and Features of Special Interest: The natural features of the area, the scenery, the saltwater bays and inlets, and the opportunity to see wildlife may all be attractions. The fishing and solitude along some of the streams in the southwestern portion of the area and in the saltwater bays are attractions. The area contains 11 inventoried recreation places, which cover 12,221 acres (17 percent) of the roadless area. There are no improved trails with the area.

(9) Differences between the 1989 and 2003 Roadless Area Boundary: The 2002 roadless area boundaries along the south and west sides are essentially the same as the 1989 boundaries. However, the 2003 boundaries along the north and east sides have been modified by ongoing timber management related developments, resulting in a

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smaller roadless area relative to the 1989 version. Several smaller areas along the developed boundaries have been excluded between the Draft and Final SEIS to improve the potential manageability of the area as wilderness.

II. Capability for Management as Wilderness

(1) Natural Integrity and Apparent Naturalness: Development has occurred extensively along the northern, eastern, and part of the southern boundary along private lands; however, the natural integrity and apparent naturalness of much of the area, particularly in the western portion and islands associated with the roadless area, is relatively high. The activities surrounding the area that are seen from the roadless area can have a major influence on the apparent naturalness of the area in the eastern half (particularly where developments penetrate the area) and along the Sealaska Corporation boundary. The overall natural integrity is high and the apparent naturalness is moderate. When rated separately, the eastern portion rates out with very high natural integrity and apparent naturalness.

(2) Opportunity for Solitude and Serenity, Self-reliance, Adventure, Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation: Because of difficult access to interior areas, there is high opportunity for solitude and very high opportunity for primitive recreation within the area. However, near the boundaries of the area, one may occasionally hear the sounds of and see ongoing management activities from some vantage points. Along the saltwater shoreline, commercial fishing and recreational boats and floatplanes may be seen or heard at times.

The opportunities for primitive recreation are associated with the many isolated saltwater bays, anchorages, islands, and channels on the west side of this roadless area; however, the experience level is primarily semi-primitive motorized. The topography of the western portion of the area does not make travel particularly challenging, but topography becomes more challenging in the eastern half. Based on harvest data compiled from 1985 to 1994, VCU 588 and 594, which cover most of the eastern portion of the area, were identified within the top 25 percent of black bear harvest areas on the Tongass (ADF&G, 1998). As with all backcountry areas on the Tongass, the opportunity for challenge and risk in this area is high. The climate, the rugged terrain, the isolation and distance from population centers with medical facilities, the barriers to communication, and the presence of large wild animals all contribute to the need for good preparation and knowledge of backcountry survival skills for anyone using this area. Hypothermia and bear encounters are just two examples of the many risks that must be considered before traveling in the backcountry of southeast Alaska.

The area provides primarily 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)	39,687	56%
Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM)	10,643	15%
Roaded Natural (RN)	2,833	4%
Roaded Modified (RM)	18,167	25%

The area contains 11 inventoried recreation places, which cover 12,221 acres (17 percent) of the roadless area.

ROS Class	# of Rec. Places*	Total Acres
SPNM	2	3,744
SPM	8	7,701
RM	5	776

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

Because of fishing and other saltwater recreation opportunities and the proximity of the area to Klawock and Craig, the saltwater inlets and bays receive many visitors.

(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 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 Kogish Roadless Area Roadless Area was 22 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 20. The difference in ratings is due to ongoing developments, especially on the eastern and northern portions of the roadless area. Because the western portion of the area (west of the Kogish Mountain/Shinaku Creek area) could be separated from the remaining, more highly affected area, a separate WARS score was calculated. The WARS rating for the western portion would increase to 23.

(4) Ecologic and Geologic Values:

(a) Fish Resources: The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) listed VCUs 588, 589, 590, 592, 593, 594, and 595, most of the roadless area, as primary salmon producers. VCUs 588, 589, 590 and 595 in the northern and eastern part of the area were also listed as primary sportfish producers.

The major fish producing waters in this area are Staney Creek, Shaheen Creek, the streams of Salt Lake Bay, Elevenmile Creek, Big Salt Lake and Shinaku Creek. These waters provide habitat for coho, pink, and chum salmon, steelhead trout, and Dolly Varden char (ADF&G, 2000). Information from the Control Lake EIS indicates that chinook salmon are found in the inlets and bays, but do not spawn in the streams here (USDA Forest Service, 1998). Upper Staney Creek, Shaheen Creek, and North Big Salt Lake have very good coho salmon capability. Shaheen Creek receives an estimated peak escapement of 62,200 pink salmon annually. Salt Lake Bay receives an estimated 88,900 pink salmon, while North Big Salt Lake receives 76,900 pink salmon. Elevenmile Creek receives an estimated 37,100 pink salmon and has good coho salmon capability (ADF&G, 1998).

(b) Wildlife Resources: Sitka black-tailed deer, black bear, wolves, marten, mink, river otter, and bald eagles are the best known species that inhabit the area. A number of bald eagle nest sites were documented along the coastline and inland along Elevenmile Creek (USDA Forest Service, 1998). There is good alpine habitat for ptarmigan. Marbled murrelet, Queen Charlotte goshawk, and harlequin duck potentially occur in the area. Peale's peregrine falcon, osprey, and trumpeter swan also occur on the island. Major concentrations of wintering trumpeter swans can be found at Big Salt Lake, just south of the area (USDA Forest Service, 1998). Moose inhabit Prince and of Wales Island, but they have not been reported here. Brown bear and mountain goats do not inhabit this area (MacDonald and Cook, 1999). Based on data compiled from 1985 to 1994, VCUs 588 and 594 in the center of the area, are listed among the top 25 percent of VCUs for black bear harvest (ADF&G, 1998).

(c) Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species: The only federally listed threatened and 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. Four Forest Service Region 10 Sensitive Species are suspected or known to occur within the area: the trumpeter swan, osprey, Peale's peregrine falcon, and the Queen Charlotte goshawk. Trumpeter swans nest in the lowlands on small lakes and along major rivers and winter in ice-free areas throughout the Tongass. Present from April through September, ospreys are rare in southeast Alaska where they reach the northern extent of their nesting range. Feeding almost exclusively on fish, ospreys typically nest in large snags near lakes or the coast where fish are abundant. 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. Peale's peregrine falcon, osprey, and trumpeter swan also

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occur on the island. Major concentrations of wintering trumpeter swans can be found at Big Salt Lake, just south of the area (USDA Forest Service, 1998). In addition, nine sensitive plant species are known or suspected to occur in the Thorne Bay Ranger District.

(d) Karst, Cave, and Other Geologic Resources: There are few karst resources in this roadless area. Two areas of limestone with potential karst have been identified at the head of Nossuk Bay and the Peninsula to Point Swift. This represents 2,100 acres (3 percent) of the roadless area. All of the karst is mapped as low vulnerability. There are no glaciers or unique geologic features known within this area.

(5) Scientific and Educational Values: The richness of cultural sites along the saltwater shoreline of the area is of scientific and educational value. There are no other known special scientific or educational values within the area.

(6) Scenic Values: This area is within the Kupreanof Lowlands character type, which is characterized by predominantly low rolling relief, with elevations seldom greater than 1,500 feet. Numerous island groups and intricate waterways are also common in this character type. Much of this area is quite representative of the character type, though a major portion displays landscape features that have even less diversity and distinctiveness than is common in that character type. The natural landscape dominates views from the surrounding waterways (San Christoval, Tonowek Passage, and Karheen Passage), although this roadless area is surrounded by saltwater or developed areas.

Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas identified by the Forest Plan, that are within or adjacent to the area, include: the small boat route from Karheen Passage to New Tokeen; the San Christoval Channel; and Karheen Passage saltwater use areas.

About 13 percent of this area has a high degree of landscape diversity and is inventoried as Variety Class A. About 51 percent of the area was inventoried as Variety Class B, possessing a degree of diversity common to the character type in which it is located. Another 35 percent of the area was rated as Variety Class C, possessing minimal landscape diversity. These more scenic areas are concentrated around the relatively rugged and diverse terrain of Kogish Mountain and Stoney Cone. Other scenic features are the intricate shorelines and island groups in Salt Lake Bay and Nossuk Bay. Approximately 2 percent of the area was not inventoried for Variety Class type.

The Existing Visual Condition (EVC) of approximately 83 percent of the area is Type I, where the landscape has remained unaltered by human activity. The northern and eastern edges have been modified by developments. About 3 percent of this area was inventoried as EVC III, where the average person notices changes in the landscape, but they do not attract attention. Another 4 percent of the area was inventoried as EVC IV, where changes in the landscape are easily seen by visitors. Approximately 8 percent was inventoried as EVC V, where changes in the landscape are obvious to the average person, and appear to be major disturbances. Approximately 2 percent of the area was not inventoried for Variety Class type.

(7) Social, Cultural, and Historical Values: There is evidence of prehistoric and historic use of this roadless area, particularly along the saltwater shorelines. The Tlingit people, who have settled in Klawock and Craig, maintain strong connections with specific locations and general areas along the west coast of Prince of Wales Island (USDA Forest Service, 1998). Many specific areas along the southwest, west, and northwest shorelines of the roadless area were identified by local people as important for resource gathering and hunting, including the Elevenmile, Salt Lake Bay, Nossuk Bay, and other nearby vicinities. A large number of prehistoric and historic sites were located in these areas during cultural resource surveys conducted for the Control Lake Project (USDA Forest Service, 1998).

Available information indicates that substantial subsistence activities occur in the area, especially along the extensive saltwater shorelines of the area. The area is important to residents of Klawock and Craig, as well as other Prince of Wales Island communities. VCUs 588, 589, 592, and 593 were listed among the VCUs with the highest community fish and wildlife values. VCUs 591, 594, and 595 were listed in the second most important group. Only VCUs 590 in the northeastern part of the area and 559, islands off the west coast, were not listed in the top three groups for community use value. All the VCUs covering the area, except for VCU 590, were listed among those VCUs with the highest sensitivity to disturbance of subsistence use areas (ADF&G, 1998).

(8) Manageability as Wilderness and Boundary Conditions/Changes: The western portion of the area generally has natural boundaries, with the exception of the northern boundary and the area bordering State lands on the south shore of Salt Lake Bay. As a result, its manageability as wilderness would be relatively high. However, the eastern half of the area, east of the Elevenmile Creek watershed, is narrow and the boundaries are generally unnatural, following developed areas and straight ownership lines. Therefore, this area would not be easily managed as wilderness.

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

(1) Recreation, including Tourism Potential: Wildlife viewing, camping, hiking, sea kayaking, motor boating, hunting and exploring have the potential to increase as tourism and recreation increase throughout Alaska. Tourism potential is a major part of Alaska’s economy. The industry attracts over 1.1 million visitors annually. There has been a growing recognition that tourism depends on scenic quality, wildlife, and wilderness (Behnke, 1999).

The rugged terrain and very difficult access into the eastern portion of this roadless area severely constrains its recreation potential for most users. Recognizing the small boat and kayak routes that pass through this area, the western and southern boundaries bordering saltwater, have potential for shelter sites and additional boat anchorages.

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

(3) Fish Resources: The recently completed fish habitat inventory indicates that there is some potential for salmon enhancement projects, such as constructing fish passes, on several of the streams. The very difficult access limits capitalizing on this potential. No fisheries enhancement projects are planned in the area (USDA Forest Service, 1998).

(4) Wildlife Resources: No need has been identified for wildlife enhancement projects within this area.

(5) Timber Resources: There are 29,497 acres mapped as productive old growth in the roadless area. In addition, 498 acres are mapped as second-growth forest resulting from beach and helicopter logging. Of these acres, 25,819 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), 8,090 acres or 11 percent of this roadless area are estimated to be suitable for timber production. Approximately 3,750 of the suitable acres are mapped as high-volume old growth; of these acres, 867 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The roadless area was within the primary sale area for the Ketchikan Pulp Company long-term timber sale contract for many years and the northern edge of the area (especially the Staney Creek watershed) has been under intensive timber management. Two timber sales in the roadless area have been NEPA-cleared under the Control Lake Project (USDA Forest Service 1998), but have not yet been sold. These include the Kogish/Shinaku Sale in the area around Kogish Mountain and upper Shinaku Creek, and the Pepper Sale, in the eastern lobe of the area near Control Lake. Another NEPA-cleared unit, not currently planned for sale, is in the vicinity of the Pepper Sale. The western portion of the roadless area contains very limited commercial timber resources, except in the vicinity of Elevenmile Creek.

(6) Fire, Insects, and Disease: Endemic tree diseases common to Southeast Alaska are present.

(7) Minerals: Although no mineral exploration has taken place in this area, the geology of the area indicates some potential for discovery of valuable minerals. This area contains 748 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.

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- (8) **Transportation and Utilities:** There are existing roads adjacent to the area on the north, east, and south (on Sealaska Corporation land), which tie into the island road system. No transportation or utility corridors are planned for this area other than for the harvest of local timber.
- (9) **Water Availability and Use:** There are no developed recreation cabins or other facilities to create a water demand. There are no existing or planned hydroelectric or domestic water projects within the roadless area.
- (10) **Areas of Scientific Interest:** The mapped low vulnerability karst resources encompass approximately 2,100 acres or less than one percent of the roadless area.
- (11) **Land Use Authorizations:** None.
- (12) **Land Status:** This area includes all National Forest System lands. Sealaska Corporation lands border the area on the south and State lands border the area at Salt Lake Bay. A portion of the area, mostly in the Shinaku drainage, has been selected by Native Corporations but not conveyed to private lands.

IV. Wilderness Evaluation (Need for Wilderness)

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

- (a) **Interest Expressed by Local Users and Residents:** The use of the area by local residents is primarily for subsistence and recreation uses along the coastline, and occasional hunting farther inland. Klawock and Craig residents are highly interested in the coastal subsistence resources and how the inland areas could affect them.
- (b) **Congressional Interest:** Two bills from the U.S. House of Representatives included wilderness proposals for Southeast Alaska. In 1989, HR 987 did not include this area. In 2001, HR 2908 did not propose the area for wilderness, but did propose it to be classified as a Congressionally Designated LUD II area and managed in an unroaded condition.
- (c) **Public Input During Forest Plan Revision and Appeals:** A number of comments requested additional protection for the Elevenmile area (the western portion of the roadless area) because of fish, wildlife, recreation, subsistence, and cultural values. Other comments wanted the eastern portion of the area to remain in timber production.
- (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:** Many comments on the Control Lake EIS requested protection for the Elevenmile area (the western portion of the roadless area), especially because of its subsistence value and cultural resources. A citizen's group consisting of environmental organization representatives, independent timber operators, Alaska Natives, educators, business owners, and fishermen, most of which were residents of Prince of Wales Island, recommended no harvest or roads in this area.
- (f) **Public Input Expressed During Supplemental EIS Process:** The Alaska Department of Fish and Game rated the Kogish roadless area (VCUs 589, 591, 592, 593, and 594) as the seventh highest priority for protection on Prince of Wales Island and Adjacent Islands. This rating is based on the VCUs with the highest value fish and wildlife resources needing additional protection. VCUs are prioritized for their very high productivity, essential role in connectivity, and/or very high value as community use areas.

The Alaska Rainforest Campaign (a coalition of national and Alaska conservation groups) recommended Roadless Area 509 for permanent protection as LUD II. SEACC recommended this area for permanent protection through LUD II designation.

At the Craig Hearing, the President of the Craig Community Association stated “they really can’t support any of the alternatives”

Some individuals commented in favor of wilderness protection for Eleven Mile.

(2) Nearby Roadless and Wilderness Areas and Uses: This roadless area is separated from the Thorne River and Karta Roadless Areas by a corridors of developed areas. The Karta Roadless Area surrounds the Karta Wilderness, which is approximately 5 miles southeast of the Kogish Roadless Area. Recreation and subsistence are the major uses for these adjacent areas. The use levels for these areas are generally low.

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

Community	Air Miles	Water Miles
Ketchikan (Pop. 14,070)	55	160
Wrangell (Pop. 2,308)	60	110
Petersburg (Pop. 3,324)	70	115
Juneau (Pop. 30,711)	180	250

Hollis, located on Prince of Wales Island, currently is the nearest stop on the Alaska Marine Highway, and is about 35 road miles from the roadless area.

(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System: The Kogish Roadless Area is located on the west side of central Prince of Wales Island. On the southwest, west, and northwest, the roadless area is bounded by San Christoval Channel, the Gulf of Esquibel, Salt Lake Bay, Tonowek Bay, Nossuk Bay, and Kaguk Cove. The State of Alaska owns land bordering the roadless area along the southern shore of Salt Lake Bay. The northern and much of the eastern borders consist of extensively roaded areas. The southern boundary follows Sealaska Corporation lands that are managed for timber production and a small portion of Shinaku Inlet. This majority of the area is characterized by gently rolling relief with locally rugged areas. Kogish Mountain, with an elevation of almost 3,000 feet, is the highest point in the roadless area. Shinaku Creek, and much of its watershed, exhibits fairly gentle relief, except in its upper reaches where the topography also becomes precipitous. It is the major drainage in the roadless area.

The general area appears natural and unmodified; however, the eastern portion and northern boundary is heavily influenced by nearby developments. The overall natural integrity is high and the apparent naturalness is moderate. When rated separately, the western portion rates out with very high natural integrity and apparent naturalness. The opportunity for solitude is considered high and the opportunity for primitive recreation is very high.

Approximately 13 percent of the landscape is considered distinctive for the character type from a scenery standpoint. The area associated with the western shoreline is rich in cultural history and the roadless area has a few areas of karst development.

The roadless area includes about 14,024 acres of high-volume, old-growth forest. Of these acres, approximately 4,015 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The Kogish Roadless Area is classified as being in the North Central Prince of Wales Island Biogeographic Province and makes up about 5 percent of the province. It is 1 of 15 inventoried roadless areas found within the province which make up about 44 percent of the province. The Karta River Wilderness makes up about 3 percent of the province, and three designated LUD II areas (Mt. Calder-Mt. Holbrook, Pt. Baker-Pt. Protection, and Salmon Bay) make up about 5 percent of the province. A small portion of the roadless area is in the Southern Outer Islands Biogeographic Province; it makes up less than 2 percent of this province.

The Kogish Roadless Area lies within two ecological sections; it represents 5 percent of the Kuiu-Prince of Wales Fjordlands Ecological Section and 3 percent of Prince of Wales Mountains Ecological Section. Both of these ecological sections contain relatively small areas in existing wilderness (13 and 8 percent, respectively) and existing

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LUD II (8 and 3 percent, respectively), but are well represented by other existing non-development LUDs (33 and 22 percent, respectively).

Half (50 percent) of the roadless area is in the Elevenmile Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 75 percent of the entire ecological subsection, 52 percent of which is protected by existing non-development LUDs; none is in wilderness or LUD II. Approximately 35 percent of the roadless area is in the Central Prince of Wales Volcanics Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 5 percent of the entire ecological subsection. Eight percent of this ecological subsection is located in existing wilderness and another 23 percent is protected by existing non-development LUDs. The balance (15 percent) of the roadless area is in the North Prince of Wales-Kuiu Carbonates Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 4 percent of the entire ecological subsection, 2 percent of which is in existing LUD II and 25 percent is protected by other existing non-development LUDs.

The Kogish Roadless Area was rated 20 out of a possible 28 points under the Wilderness Attribute Rating System (WARS). As such, its WARS rating is ranked 53rd from the highest (along with 16 other roadless areas) among the 109 Tongass inventoried roadless areas. A separate rating was done for the western portion of the area, which resulted in a score of 23.

There is both local and national support for managing this area in an unroaded condition, especially the western portion that includes the Elevenmile shore and inland vicinities. There has been little support for designating the Kogish Roadless Area as wilderness. Designation would create a wilderness that would include the localized karst and the Elevenmile area, but it would also include areas heavily influenced by timber management related developments on private, State, and Federal lands. The degree of timber harvest in adjacent lands adds importance to the old growth within the roadless area. Approximately 9 percent of the province is in existing wilderness or LUD II areas. Designation of the area would add long-term Congressional protection to about 75 percent of the Elevenmile Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection, which is not currently represented in wilderness or LUD II. Overall, the factors identified here indicate that the relative contribution of this area to the National Wilderness Preservation System would be moderate. The western portion could make a moderate to high contribution.

V. Environmental Consequences

The Kogish Roadless Area would be managed under the existing Forest Plan if Alternative 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7 is implemented. Approximately 40 percent of the roadless area would be managed under non-development LUDs. Timber harvest and road development could occur within the remaining 60 percent of the roadless area. The land in the development LUDs includes an estimated 8,090 acres that are suitable for timber production (5 percent of the suitable acres on the Thorne Bay Ranger District). Approximately 867 of the suitable acres are classified as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. Timber sales associated with the Control Lake FEIS would continue. This area contains an estimated 748 acres of undiscovered locatable mineral resources; all of these acres are considered to have low potential for development. Recreation and special uses would be ongoing. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area could be affected by ongoing development activities allowed by the Forest Plan. The cultural and most scenic and old growth values are protected by the Forest Plan.

Under Alternative 6, the entire area would be converted to Recommended LUD II. Ongoing recreation and special uses could continue, and timber harvest would not be allowed. Designation of the area would add long-term Congressional protection to about 75 percent of the Elevenmile Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection, which is not currently represented in wilderness or LUD II. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including cultural, old growth, and scenic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated LUD II.

Under Alternative 8, the entire roadless area would be converted to Recommended Wilderness. Ongoing recreation and special uses would continue, but could be restricted. Timber harvest would not be allowed. Designation of the area would add long-term Congressional protection to about 75 percent of the Elevenmile Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection, which is not currently represented in wilderness or LUD II. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including cultural, old growth, and scenic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness.

Appendix C

Land Use Designation Allocations and Suitable Timber Lands by Alternative for Roadless Area 509 (in acres)								
Land Use Designation	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7	Alt 8
Recommended Wilderness								71,420
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	5,548	5,548	5,548	5,548	5,548		5,548	
Semi-remote Recreation	23,155	23,155	23,155	23,155	23,155		23,155	
Recommended LUD II						71,420		
LUD II								
Wild, Scenic, Recreational River								
Experimental Forest								
Scenic Viewshed	1,190	1,190	1,190	1,190	1,190		1,190	
Modified Landscape	3,862	3,862	3,862	3,862	3,862		3,862	
Timber production	37,665	37,665	37,665	37,665	37,665		37,665	
TOTAL	71,420	71,420	71,420	71,420	71,420	71,420	71,420	71,420
Suitable Timber Lands	8,090	8,090	8,090	8,090	8,090	0	8,090	0