

INDIVIDUAL ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTION

ROADLESS AREA NAME: Fake Pass (532)

ACRES (NFS): 876

BIOGEOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: North Central Prince of Wales Island

ECOLOGICAL SECTION: Kuiu-Prince of Wales Fjordlands

2003 WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTE RATING: 22

I. Overview and Description

(1) **Location and Access:** The Fake Pass Roadless Area consists of a group of small islands, including Whale Head Island and Green Island. These islands lie across Cosmos Pass from the southern coast of Kosciusko Island. The southern portion of Kosciusko Island is privately owned. Davidson Inlet lies to the east, Warren Channel lies to the west, and Iphigenia Bay lies to the southwest. The roadless area is approximately 50 air miles northwest of Craig. These islands are inaccessible by sea to all but highly skilled boat handlers. The roadless area is accessible by helicopter. There are no developed trails in the roadless area. There are no places suitable for landing wheeled airplanes.

(2) **History:** There is no record of any prehistoric or historic use of this group of islands. However, at least some low level of use is certain.

(3) **Geography and Topography:** All 57 of the islands in this roadless area are low-lying, rocky, and windswept. Whale Head Island, a prominent feature on the landscape, is the largest island in the group (381 acres). Elevations on the island range from sea level to about 200 feet. This roadless area contains 26 acres of rock and 22 miles of saltwater shoreline. There is no alpine or icefield features mapped in this area.

(4) **Ecosystem:**

(a) **Classification:** Biogeographic Province. The islands are in the North Central Prince of Wales Island Biogeographic Province. This province is characterized by relatively gentle topography, relatively low precipitation, numerous caves, and karst topography. The major islands in the roadless area have the characteristic gentle rolling topography with localized areas of rugged terrain.

Ecological Section/Subsection. The Fake Pass Roadless Area is contained entirely within the Kuiu-Prince of Wales Fjordlands Ecological Section (M247F), North Prince of Wales-Kuiu Carbonates Ecological Subsection (see table below). Limestone and marble karstlands form the underlying geology. Karstlands contain a variety of unique features including conical pits, shafts, cliffs, caves, and networks of groundwater channels resulting from the weathering of karst. 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	North Prince of Wales- Kuiu Carbonates	100%

(b) **Soils:** These islands are essentially rock with some niches of soil located in crevices.

(c) **Vegetation:** The larger islands of the roadless area are forested but tree growth is poor, and the smaller islands are essentially devoid of trees and other kinds of vegetation.

Appendix C

There are approximately 849 acres mapped as forestland, of which 765 acres or 90 percent are mapped as productive old-growth forest. Of the productive old growth, 679 acres or 89 percent are mapped as high-volume old-growth forest. The productive old growth includes about 173 acres of high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. There is no mapped second-growth forest where timber harvest has occurred in the past.

(d) **Fish Resources:** There is no freshwater fish habitat on any of the islands.

(e) **Wildlife Resources:** The roadless area provides habitat for sea birds and mammals. Bald eagles are common here. Wolves and Sitka black-tailed deer inhabit Whale Head Island (MacDonald and Cook, 1999). Black and brown bear, mountain goats, and moose do not inhabit these islands.

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

LUD	Acres
Scenic Viewshed	156
Semi-remote Recreation	720

The roadless area contains one development LUD, Scenic Viewshed. Approximately 18 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Scenic Viewshed LUD.

Most of the roadless area was allocated to one non-development LUD, Semi-remote Recreation LUD. The Semi-remote Recreation LUD was allocated to approximately 82 percent of the roadless area.

The roadless area receives little use and it does not appear to have been used much in the past, probably due to the difficulty of accessing the islands.

(6) **Appearance (Apparent Naturalness):** This roadless area has excellent natural integrity, due in part to difficulty of access and lack of historic development. The roadless area has a natural appearance.

(7) **Surroundings (External Influences):** These islands are not influenced by any external activity, land designation, or land use.

(8) **Attractions and Features of Special Interest:** The natural features of the area, the scenery, the karst features (unknown), and the opportunity to see wildlife may all be attractions. The area contains two inventoried recreation places, which cover 764 acres (87 percent) of the roadless area.

(9) **Differences between the 1989 and 2003 Roadless Area Boundary:** The roadless area boundary has not changed between 1989 and 2003.

II. Capability for Management as Wilderness

(1) **Natural Integrity and Apparent Naturalness:** The roadless area has excellent natural integrity and apparent naturalness, due in part to difficulty in accessing the islands and lack of historic development. This area is suitable for wilderness classification, but is relatively small.

(2) **Opportunity for Solitude and Serenity, Self-reliance, Adventure, Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation:** There is moderate opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation within the roadless area. There are good opportunities for sea kayaking, camping, and hiking in the area, especially on Whale Head Island. Self-reliance, challenge, and adventure are high in association with boating activities, particularly sea kayaking. The area has potential for primitive recreation use, because of the limited recreation attractions, the difficult rocky access to these islands, and the lack of fresh water.

These islands are accessible by sea, to highly skilled boat handlers, but afford few protected bays and shorelines creating a high degree of challenge for users.

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 Motorized (SPM)	780	89%
Rural (R)	84	10%

The area contains two inventoried recreation places, which cover 764 acres (87 percent) of the roadless area.

ROS Class	# of Rec. Places	Total Acres
SPM	2	764
R	0	0

There are no developed recreation facilities in the roadless areas.

(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 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 Fake Pass Roadless Area was 19 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 22. This rating is reflective of the outstanding natural integrity and apparent naturalness of the islands.

(4) Ecologic and Geologic Values: No significant ecologic or geologic features are known in this area. The roadless area is comprised of islands south of Cosmos Pass and is not a part of a larger unroaded area.

(a) Fish Resources: The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment lists VCU 546, Green Island, as a primary salmon producer. However, there is no freshwater fish habitat on any of the islands in the roadless area. No VCUs were listed as primary sport fish producers (ADF&G, 1998).

(b) Wildlife Resources: The roadless area provides habitat for sea birds and mammals. Bald eagles are often seen here. Wolves and Sitka black-tailed deer inhabit Whale Head Island (MacDonald and Cook, 1999). Black and brown bear, mountain goats, and moose do not inhabit these islands.

(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

Appendix C

closely associated with productive old growth. 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: Karst and cave formations in the limestone underlying this roadless area have not been fully inventoried. Approximately 641 acres (73 percent) of this area has been identified as low vulnerability karst resources. There are no glaciers or unique geologic features in the roadless area.

(5) Scientific and Educational Values: There is an opportunity to study karst and isolated populations of small mammals. There are no nearby educational institutions likely to use the roadless area for educational purposes given the difficulty of accessing these islands.

(6) Scenic Values: The entire roadless area is part of the Kupreanof Lowlands Character Type which is characterized by low, rolling relief, with elevations seldom greater than 1,500 feet. Numerous island groups and intricate waterways are also common in this character type. This area consists of a cluster of many islands of different sizes, and is characteristic of the character type.

The roadless area is dominated by unmodified landscapes when viewed from surrounding waterways. Also, the landscape appears scenic and unmodified from inside the roadless area. Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas identified by the Forest Plan, that are within or adjacent to the area, include the Davidson Inlet saltwater use area, and the communities of Edna Bay and Cape Pole.

Approximately 74 percent of the area was inventoried as Variety Class B; it possesses landscape diversity common in the character type. The remaining 26 percent was not inventoried for Variety Class type.

Approximately 74 percent of the area was inventoried as Type I Existing Visual Condition (EVC), where the natural landscape has remained unaltered by human activity. The remaining 26 percent was not inventoried for Variety Class type.

(7) Social, Cultural, and Historical Values: There is no record of any prehistoric or historic use of this group of islands. The roadless area is difficult to access and has few resources. It receives little use. However, VCU 546, Green Island, was listed among the VCUs with the highest community use values and both VCUs (546 and 545) were listed among the VCUs with the highest sensitivity to disturbance of subsistence use areas.

(8) Manageability as Wilderness and Boundary Conditions/Changes: Because this roadless area is a group of relatively isolated islands with little activity, it would be easy to manage as a 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, 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). However, due to the difficult access and lack of recreation opportunities, this roadless area has little potential to draw tourists or for recreation development or enhancement.

(2) Subsistence Uses: There is little, if any, subsistence use in the roadless area. Designation as a wilderness would not affect use.

(3) Fish Resources: No fish habitat enhancement projects are planned within the roadless area.

(4) Wildlife Resources: No wildlife enhancement projects are planned within the roadless area.

- (5) **Timber Resources:** There are 765 acres of productive old-growth forest and no second growth due to harvest mapped in the roadless area. Of this, approximately 760 acres are categorized as tentatively suitable for timber harvest. None of this area is estimated to be suitable for timber production based on the Forest Plan LUDs assigned to this area.
- (6) **Fire, Insects, and Disease:** The roadless area has no known fire history. Endemic tree diseases common to Southeast Alaska are present.
- (7) **Minerals:** The mineral potential is low.
- (8) **Transportation and Utilities:** There are no proposed transportation or utility corridors within, or adjacent to, this area.
- (9) **Water Availability and Use:** There are no public recreation cabins or other facilities that 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 karst features may be of some scientific interest. The mapped karst resources encompass approximately 641 acres or 73 percent of the roadless area.
- (11) **Land Use Authorizations:** There are no special use permits in the roadless area.
- (12) **Land Status:** The roadless area is entirely National Forest System land.

IV. Wilderness Evaluation (Need for Wilderness)

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

- (a) **Interest Expressed by Local Users and Residents:** Little interest has been expressed in these islands by local residents.
- (b) **Congressional Interest:** In 1989, U.S. House of Representatives Bill 987 proposed to designate 23 areas as wilderness on the Tongass National Forest. The roadless area was not one of these areas. In 2001, HR 2908 proposed managing the roadless area as LUD II in an unroaded condition.
- (c) **Public Input During Forest Plan Revision and Appeals:** There were no specific comments on the Fake Pass Roadless Area.
- (d) **Public Input During Roadless Area Conservation Rule and Road Management Policy Review:** This area was not specifically identified in the public comments received during the Roadless Area Conservation Rule or Road Management Policy Review. However, some commenters wanted all unroaded lands on the Tongass to be protected from development.
- (e) **Public Input Expressed for Project-level EISs and Other Input:** No project-level comments on this roadless area are available.
- (f) **Public Input Expressed During Supplemental EIS Process:** SEACC recommended this area be designated as LUD II.

(2) **Nearby Roadless and Wilderness Areas and Uses:** The Kosciusko Roadless Area (515) is approximately 8 miles to the northeast and the Christoval Roadless Area (508) is approximately 5 miles to the south on Heceta Island. The Warren Island Wilderness is about 6 miles to the west and the Maurelle Islands Wilderness is approximately 11 miles away, south of Heceta Island. These areas are primarily used for recreation and subsistence. Use levels are generally low.

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

Appendix C

Community	Air Miles	Water Miles
Ketchikan (Pop. 14,070)	100	150
Wrangell (Pop. 2,308)	80	120
Petersburg (Pop. 3,324)	110	150
Juneau (Pop. 30,711)	225	270

Hollis, located on Prince of Wales Island, currently is the nearest stop on the Alaska Marine Highway.

(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System: The Fake Pass Roadless Area consists of a group of small islands, including Whale Head Island and Green Island. These islands lie across Cosmos Pass from the southern coast of Kosciusko Island. Davidson Inlet lies to the east, Warren Channel lies to the west, and Iphigenia Bay lies to the southwest. All of the islands in the roadless area are low-lying, rocky, and windswept. Whale Head Island is the largest island in the group and elevations on the island range from sea level to about 200 feet.

The area is unmodified and natural appearing. The area has outstanding natural integrity and apparent naturalness. The opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation is moderate.

The area has moderate to high scenic qualities; none of the landscape is considered distinctive for the character type from a scenery standpoint. There are no known features of ecologic, geologic, scientific, or cultural significance in this small area.

The roadless area includes about 679 acres of high-volume, old-growth forest. Of these acres, approximately 173 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The Fake Pass Roadless Area is classified as being in the North Central Prince of Wales Island Biogeographic Province and makes up less than 1 percent of the province. It is one of 15 inventoried roadless areas that are found within the province and that make up about 44 percent of the province. The Karta River Wilderness represents about 3 percent of the province. This province also contains the Mt. Calder-Mt. Holbrook, Pt. Baker-Port Protection, and the Salmon Bay Congressionally-designated LUD II areas, which make up about 5 percent of the area, and are managed to remain roadless.

The Fake Pass Roadless Area lies completely within the Kuiu-Prince of Wales Fjordlands Ecological Section and represents 0.1 percent of the ecological section. Approximately 13 percent of the Kuiu-Prince of Wales Fjordlands Ecological Section is in existing wilderness, 8 percent is in existing LUD II, and an additional 33 percent is protected by other existing non-development LUDs.

All (100 percent) of the roadless area is in the North Prince of Wales-Kuiu Carbonates Ecological Subsection; it represents 0.3 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 Fake Pass Roadless Area was rated 22 out of a possible 28 points under the Wilderness Attribute Rating System (WARS). As such, its WARS rating is ranked 38th from the highest (along with 8 other roadless areas) among the 109 Tongass inventoried roadless areas.

There is some support for managing the roadless area in an unroaded condition, but there is little identified support for designating the area as a wilderness. Designation would create a very small wilderness made up of a few small islands that have no known features of ecologic, geologic, scientific, or cultural significance in this small area. Overall, the factors identified here indicate that the relative contribution of this area to the National Wilderness Preservation System would be moderate to low.

V. Environmental Consequences

The Fake Pass Roadless Area would be managed under the existing Forest Plan if Alternative 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7 is implemented. Approximately 82 percent of the roadless area would be managed under non-development LUDs. Timber harvest and road development could occur within the remaining 18 percent of the roadless area; however, none of the land in the development LUDs is identified as suitable for timber production. The values associated with the natural settings of most of the roadless area are protected by the Forest Plan. They could be affected by ongoing development activities in those areas allowed by the Forest Plan.

Under Alternative 6, the entire area would be converted to Recommended LUD II and would be managed as a non-development LUD. The potential for development, including recreation and mineral, would be similar to current conditions. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including the high 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. The potential for development, including recreation and mineral, would be restricted. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including the high scenic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness.

Land Use Designation Allocations and Suitable Timber Lands by Alternative for Roadless Area 532 (in acres)								
Land Use Designation	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7	Alt 8
Recommended Wilderness								876
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								
Semi-remote Recreation	720	720	720	720	720		720	
Recommended LUD II						876		
LUD II								
Wild, Scenic, Recreational River								
Experimental Forest								
Scenic Viewshed	156	156	156	156	156		156	
Modified Landscape								
Timber production								
TOTAL	876	876	876	876	876	876	876	876
Suitable Timber Lands	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0