

Appendix C

INDIVIDUAL ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTION

ROADLESS AREA NAME: South Wrangell (229)

ACRES (NFS): 14,959

BIOGEOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Etolin Island and Vicinity

ECOLOGICAL SECTION: Inside Passage Fjordlands

2003 WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTE RATING: 20

I. Overview and Description

(1) **Location and Access:** The area is located on the south end of Wrangell Island, approximately 20 air miles south of the city of Wrangell. Ernest Sound borders the south and part of the east side of the area. Fools Inlet also forms part of the east boundary. The area is bordered to the north, northeast, and northwest by forest roads and harvested areas. Zimovia Strait and lands selected by the state (Thoms Place State Marine Park) border the area to the west. The area is accessed from the surrounding saltwater via boat or floatplane and nearby forest roads, as well as via Thoms Place State Marine Park. There are no sites suitable for landing wheeled aircraft. Access into the interior is by foot or helicopter.

(2) **History:** The area was inhabited by the Tlingit in prehistoric and historic times. A former camp and a fort are believed to have been located on the east side of Southeast Cove (Goldschmidt and Haas, 1998). While the area has likely been prospected for minerals, there is only one known mining claim. No timber harvest has taken place within the area.

(3) **Geography and Topography:** The area is generally characterized by moderately-diverse, rounded to occasionally-blocky terrain, with mountains reaching elevations of over 2,000 feet. The tallest is approximately 2,155 feet in elevation. Southeast Cove divides the south portion of the area. Fools Inlet forms part of the area's east boundary. The area includes approximately 18 miles of saltwater shoreline. This area includes about 81 acres of islands and islets. There are no ice and snow, alpine or rock features mapped in the area.

(4) **Ecosystem:**

(a) **Classification:** Biogeographic Province. The area is in the Etolin Island and Vicinity Biogeographic Province. This province is generally subject to continental influence from the mainland and the Stikine River. All forest plant associations except those occurring only on outer coast areas are present.

Ecological Section/Subsection. The South Wrangell Roadless Area is contained entirely within the Inside Passage Fjordlands Ecological Section (M247E), Zimovia Strait Complex Ecological Subsection (see table below). Stratified sedimentary rock and volcanic intrusions lie beneath broad glacial valleys and rounded hills. Roughly half of the Zimovia Strait Complex Ecological Subsection includes mineral soils supporting productive hemlock forests with occasional stands of cedar or Sitka spruce (Nowacki et al., 2001).

Ecological Section	Ecological Subsection	Percent of Roadless Area
Inside Passage Fjordlands	Zimovia Strait Complex	100%

(b) **Soils:** Soils in this area are formed in a wide variety of parent materials, including bedrock and glacial drift. In general, well- or moderately-well-drained soils are on moderate to steep mountain slopes with permeable parent materials. These soils are acidic, have cold soil temperatures, and are very high in organic matter. Rooting is largely limited to the surface organic layers and the top few inches of mineral soil. These soils are usually moist, sometimes wet, but are never dry.

More-poorly-drained soils developed on less-sloping areas and/or areas with impermeable soil materials. These soils have deep accumulations of organic matter and range from scrubby forested wetlands to open muskeg.

Alpine soils, generally above 2,000 feet elevation, are mostly shallow, very wet organic soils or are extremely shallow and rocky.

(c) Vegetation: Alpine vegetation generally dominates areas on Wrangell Island above 2,500 feet elevation. The valley floors and poorly-drained areas between hills are usually covered with muskeg and scrub lodgepole pine. Steeper, more-well-drained hillsides support heavy stands of Sitka spruce, western hemlock, redcedar, and Alaska-cedar.

There are approximately 14,692 acres mapped as forest land, of which 6,489 acres or 44 percent are mapped as productive old-growth forest. Of the productive old growth, approximately 1,566 acres or 24 percent are mapped as high-volume, old-growth forest. The productive old growth does not include any high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. There is no mapped second-growth forest where timber harvest has occurred in the past.

(d) Fish Resources: Southeast Cove is located in the south portion of this area. Several Class 1 and 2 streams run through the roadless area. Fish species on the island include steelhead, rainbow, and native cutthroat trout, Dolly Varden char, chum, pink, coho, and sockeye salmon (USDA Forest Service, 1998).

(e) Wildlife Resources: Important species include Sitka black-tailed deer, wolves, black bear, pine marten, and small populations of brown bear and moose.

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

LUD	Acres
Timber Production	13,299
Scenic Viewshed	1,231
Old-growth Habitat	348
Semi-remote Recreation	81

Approximately 97 percent of the roadless area was allocated to development LUDs (Timber Production, Scenic Viewshed). The majority of this roadless area, approximately 89 percent, was allocated to the Timber Production LUD. A small area located along Zimovia Strait on the west side of the area was allocated to the Scenic Viewshed LUD, which accounts for approximately 8 percent of the roadless area.

Approximately 3 percent of the roadless area was allocated to non-development LUDs (Old-growth Habitat, Semi-remote Recreation). Approximately 2 percent of the roadless area was allocated to Old-growth Habitat located primarily in the western part of the roadless area. Less than 1 percent was allocated to Semi-remote Recreation LUD.

Present recreation use levels are low except around Thoms Place, Fools Inlet, at streams and lakes near the roads, and occasionally at the mouths of some streams. The Wildlife Analysis Area that includes this roadless area accounted for 5 to 10 percent of annual average Wrangell deer harvest during 1987 to 1994.

This roadless area includes two timber sale project areas proposed in the 1998 Wrangell Island Analysis (USDA Forest Service, 1998). The Southeast Cove and Scattered Valley timber sale areas are located in the south and north portions of this roadless area, respectively. The current Tongass National Forest 10-year action plan schedules the Fools/Southeast Cove timber sale for 2011.

Appendix C

(6) **Appearance (Apparent Naturalness):** Overall, the area has high scenic quality with a natural appearing landscape and provides spectacular scenery from surrounding land and saltwater areas, including Zimovia Strait and Ernest Sound.

(7) **Surroundings (External Influence):** The area is located on the south end of Wrangell Island. Ernest Sound borders the south and part of the east side of the area. Fools Inlet also forms part of the east boundary. The area is bounded to the north, northeast, and northwest by forest roads and harvested areas. These developed areas separate the South Wrangell Roadless Area from adjacent roadless areas. Timber sales are planned for portions of the roadless areas north and east of the South Wrangell Roadless Area (USDA Forest Service, 2001). The State of Alaska has proposed upgrading and extending the Fools Inlet Road and constructing a new ferry terminal at Fools Inlet as part of the Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan. Zimovia Strait and lands owned by the state (Thoms Place State Marine Park) border the area to the west. Boats traveling the waters of Zimovia Strait and Ernest Sound may be visible from within parts of the area but usually are not intrusive. It is possible to see harvested areas from some locations within this roadless area.

(8) **Attractions and Features of Special Interest:** Southeast Cove offers a poorly protected anchorage and access to undeveloped recreation areas. Fools Inlet, which forms part of the area's east boundary, provides access to the Fools Inlet estuary, which is a popular waterfowl hunting spot. The area contains four inventoried recreation places, which cover 2,181 acres, or 15 percent of the roadless area. There are no improved trails in the area.

(9) **Differences between the 1989 and 2003 Roadless Area Boundary:** The boundaries of this area have changed dramatically since 1989. Timber management activities between 1989 and 1996 divided the 1989 South Wrangell Roadless Area into five separate roadless areas.

II. Capability of Management as Wilderness

(1) **Natural Integrity and Apparent Naturalness:** The area is essentially unmodified. Approximately 88 percent of the area is natural appearing, where only ecological and geological change has occurred.

(2) **Opportunity for Solitude, Serenity, Self-reliance, Adventure, Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation:** There is a moderate opportunity for solitude within the area, especially after one has gone a short distance from the roads. Present recreation use levels are low except around Thoms Place, Fools Inlet, at streams and lakes near the roads, and occasionally at the mouths of some streams. Generally, a person camped or traveling inland is likely to see others only occasionally.

Travel within the area is not especially challenging, requiring only moderate woods skills and experience. The presence of both black and brown bears, especially around salmon streams in the fall, does present a degree of challenge and a need for caution.

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)	10,239	68%
Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM)	3,780	25%
Roaded Modified (RM)	940	6%

The area contains four inventoried recreation places, which cover 2,181 acres, or 15 percent of the roadless area.

ROS Class	# of Rec. Places*	Total Acres
SPNM	0	0
SPM	3	1,594
RM	3	588

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

The character of the landforms generally allows the visitor to feel remote from the sights and sounds of human activity. The area is accessible by road from the community of Wrangell in approximately 1 hour. It is accessible by boat from Wrangell in about 1-2 hours and from Ketchikan in approximately 7 hours. Thoms Place State Marine Park and Fools Inlet are adjacent to the area.

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

The inventoried roadless areas of the Tongass National Forest were rated according to this system in 1989 for the Analysis of the Management Situation developed in support of the Forest Plan Revision. At that time, the South Wrangell Roadless Area, which was much larger at the time, was given a rating of 20 out of 28 possible points. The rating was re-evaluated for this updated version of the Analysis of the Management Situation. Based on this re-evaluation, the area was also given a rating of 20.

(4) Ecologic and Geologic Values: The majority of the roadless area is forested with areas of higher volume old-growth forest concentrated along the lower elevation areas. There are no known unique features in the area.

(a) Fish Resources: VCU 479 on the west coast was listed as a primary producer of sport fish and no VCUs were listed as primary producers of salmon (ADF&G, 1998).

Southeast Cove is located in the south portion of this area. Several Class 1 and 2 streams run through the roadless area. Fish species on the island include steelhead, rainbow, and native cutthroat trout, Dolly Varden char, chum, pink, coho, and sockeye salmon (USDA Forest Service, 1998).

(b) Wildlife Resources: Earlier analyses rated the Fools Landscape Unit, which includes part of the Southeast Wrangell Roadless Area, as moderate value for wildlife (USDA Forest Service, 1998). The area contains low value deer winter range. Important marten habitat occurs along the beach. Eagles, goshawks, and red-tailed hawks have been observed in the general area. The area is also used by black bear, wolves, and small populations of brown bear and moose.

(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. Goshawks have been observed in the general area. In addition, eight sensitive plant species are known or suspected to occur in the Wrangell Ranger District.

(d) Karst, Cave, and Other Geologic Resources: There are no known karst and cave resources in the area.

(5) Scientific and Educational Values: There are opportunities to observe and study fish and wildlife and the various forces that formed the landscape. There are opportunities to observe and study historic and prehistoric cultural features along Zimovia Strait. A former camp and a fort are believed to have been located on the east side of Southeast Cove (Goldschmidt and Haas, 1998). The area is located approximately 1 hour by automobile from the city of Wrangell and is, therefore, relatively accessible to school-age children.

Appendix C

(6) Scenic Values: The majority of the area appears unmodified. The area is bordered to the north, northeast, and northwest by forest roads and harvested areas. These areas are visible from some parts of the roadless area. Overall, the area has high scenic quality with a natural appearing landscape and provides spectacular scenery from surrounding land and saltwater areas, including Zimovia Strait and Ernest Sound.

Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas identified by the Forest Plan, that are within or adjacent to the area include Zimovia Strait and Ernest Sound, which are used by tour ships. The roads that border the area to the north, Fools Inlet (#6270) and Thoms Creek Crossing (#6299), are identified as Visual Priority Public Use Roads. Thoms Place, which forms part of the west boundary of the area, is identified as a State Marine Park, a Saltwater Use Area, and Boat Anchorage. Fools Inlet, which forms part of the area's east boundary, is also identified as a Saltwater Use Area and Boat Anchorage.

About 1 percent of the roadless area is inventoried as Variety Class A (possessing landscape diversity that is unique for the character type). Most of the area, 99 percent, is inventoried as Variety Class C (possessing a low degree of landscape diversity).

The majority of this roadless area, 95 percent, has an Existing Visual Condition (EVC) Type I, where only ecological change has occurred on the landscape. One percent of this roadless area is EVC Type III, where changes in the landscape are noticed by the average forest visitor. The natural appearance of the landscape remains dominant. About 2 percent of the area is in EVC Type IV, where changes in the landscape are easily noticed by the average person and may attract some attention. Two percent of the area is in EVC Type V, where changes in the landscape are obvious to the average person, and appear to be major disturbances.

(7) Social, Cultural, and Historical Values: The area was inhabited by the Tlingit in prehistoric and historic times. A former camp and a fort are believed to have been located on the east side of Southeast Cove (Goldschmidt and Haas, 1998). While the area has likely been prospected for minerals, there is only one known mining claim. The area is accessible by boat and automobile from the community of Wrangell. Present recreation use levels are low within the roadless area, with more use in adjacent areas around Thoms Place, Fools Inlet, at streams and lakes near roads, and occasionally at the mouths of some streams.

The Wildlife Analysis Area that includes this roadless area accounted for 5 to 10 percent of annual average Wrangell deer harvest during 1987 to 1994. The VCUs in this area were not included among the VCUs with highest community use value but were listed among the VCUs with the highest sensitivity to disturbance of subsistence areas (ADF&G, 1998).

(8) Manageability as Wilderness and Boundary Conditions/Changes: The southern portion of the area is generally well defined by saltwater on the east, west, and south. Unroaded lands owned by the state (Thoms Place State Marine Park) partially border the area to the west. The area is bordered to the north, northeast, and northwest by forest roads and harvested areas. It is possible to see harvested areas from some locations within this roadless area. However, the boundaries along these developed areas are well placed and manageability of this area as wilderness would be higher than any other Wrangell Island roadless area. The roads that border the north portion of the area provide road access to the edge of the area. Access would also be possible from saltwater, as well as via Thoms Place State Marine Park.

South Wrangell Island, which includes the South Wrangell Roadless Area, as well as four other roadless areas, was mainly allocated to the Timber Production and Old-growth Habitat LUDs, with relatively small areas allocated to the Scenic Viewshed LUD. The areas located across Zimovia Strait and Ernest Sound from the South Wrangell Roadless Area were primarily allocated to the Scenic Viewshed and Old-growth Habitat LUDs in the 1997 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan. These allocations suggest that these areas would appear natural when viewed from the South Wrangell Roadless Area.

The manageability of the area as wilderness could be affected if the State of Alaska goes ahead with its plan to build a new ferry terminal and 3 new miles of road on the west side of Fools Inlet near the roadless area.

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

- (1) **Recreation, Including Tourism Potential:** There is potential for outfitter and guide permits and for developed trails and cabins or shelters in this area.
- (2) **Subsistence Uses:** The existing patterns of subsistence activities in the area would not be affected by wilderness designation or management in an unroaded condition.
- (3) **Fish Resources:** No fish habitat enhancement projects have been identified for this area. There is an existing natural fish barrier located north of Southeast Cove.
- (4) **Wildlife Resources:** As identified in the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan, amended 1985-1986, moose and winter range habitat improvement projects are planned in the area. These projects typically consist of browse enhancement involving seeding, planting, and releasing.
- (5) **Timber Resources:** There are approximately 6,489 acres mapped as productive old growth in the roadless area. There is no mapped second growth due to timber harvest. Of these acres, 4,171 acres are categorized as tentatively suitable for timber production. Based on the Forest Plan LUDs assigned to this area (and estimated falldown and scheduling reduction factors), 1,935 acres or 13 percent of this roadless area are estimated to be suitable for timber production. Approximately 333 of the suitable acres are mapped as high-volume old growth; none of the acres are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.
- Some areas are highly prone to strong winds which blow down standing timber left exposed by cutting adjacent stands. The potential for managing timber in this roadless area is high, as roads could be extended from the existing system and the area could be logged without constructing a camp or additional log transfer facilities.
- This roadless area includes two timber sale project areas proposed in the 1998 Wrangell Island Analysis (USDA Forest Service, 1998). The Southeast Cove and Scattered Valley timber sale areas are located in the south and north portions of this roadless area, respectively.
- The Tongass National Forest's 10-Year Action Plan identified a proposed Fools/Southeast Cove timber sale EIS in 2009 for 15 MMBF with harvest projected for 2011. Most of this proposed sale would be in a roadless 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 area generally has a low minerals rating and there is only one known current claim along the beach of Southeast Cove.
- (8) **Transportation and Utilities:** The March 1999 Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan proposed implementation of a new shuttle-ferry and road system, referred to as the *Inside Passage Highway*, connecting Petersburg, Wrangell, and Ketchikan. This plan would be accomplished by using a combination of new ferry terminals and upgraded road segments and a fast-ferry route between South Wrangell Island and Ketchikan. Proposed road improvements on Wrangell Island include upgrading Forest Road 6265 and Fools Inlet Road, as well as constructing 3 miles of new roadway to a new ferry terminal at Fools Inlet. A final terminal location was not identified in the plan. However, the maps accompanying the plan show the potential location of the terminal and the 3 miles of new road on the west side of the inlet, near or just within the boundaries of the South Wrangell Roadless Area (State of Alaska, Department of Transportation and Public Utilities, 1999).
- (9) **Water Availability and Use:** There are no existing or planned hydropower or domestic water projects in the area.
- (10) **Areas of Scientific Interest:** The area contains no Research Natural Areas, and has not been identified for any other scientific value.

Appendix C

- (11) **Land Use Authorizations:** No special uses are authorized in this area.
- (12) **Land Status:** The entire area is National Forest System land. Encumbered land within the area is located in the west, adjacent to State land.

IV. Wilderness Evaluation (Need for Wilderness)

(1) Public and Congressional Interest

(a) **Interest Expressed by Local Users and Residents:** There have been no local initiatives or public sentiment expressed to have the area remain roadless. There has been interest by some residents of Wrangell in developing additional roads in the unroaded portions of Wrangell Island to facilitate additional logging and roaded recreation opportunities (USDA Forest Service, 1990).

(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 South Wrangell Roadless 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. The roaded area between the Central Wrangell and South Wrangell Roadless Areas was also proposed as a Restoration Area.

(c) **Public Input During Forest Plan Revision and Appeals:** No specific recommendations for wilderness were made. One party did, however, propose that Southeast Cove be designated LUD II to protect the anchorage and undeveloped recreation areas. The Southeast Alaska Conservation Council included South Wrangell Island in their 1991 list of areas that merited special management protection because of their outstanding wildlife, fisheries, hunting, fishing, subsistence, recreation and tourism values.

The Wrangell Resource Council recommended that Wrangell Island be allocated to the Primitive Recreation LUD. Timber industry comments recommended that Management Area S25, which includes the South Wrangell Roadless Area, be allocated to the Timber Production LUD. Other timber industry comments recommended that, with the exception of some Scenic Viewshed or Modified Landscape areas along the ferry route, all of Management Area S25 should be allocated to the Timber Production LUD to keep timber harvest economic in these already-developed areas.

(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:** The summary of public comments presented in the Wrangell Island Analysis (USDA Forest Service, 1998) did not include a desire by the public to have the area remain roadless or be designated wilderness. Many of the issues raised concerned recreation, with local residents citing the need for more hiking trails, winter recreation opportunities (snowmobiling and skiing), cabins and shelters on the island and recreational driving/camping opportunities. Some people would like to have primitive campsites designated near beaches around the island. This summary suggested that local residents generally consider timber and recreation to be compatible on Wrangell Island, with people generally wanting to keep logging roads open for public use. The summary also noted an increasing concern about the cumulative effects of timber harvest, road building, and recreation development on wildlife habitat (USDA Forest Service, 1998). The summary noted that the Fools Inlet area is routinely cited for its high wildlife values.

(f) **Public Input Expressed During Supplemental SEIS Process:** SEACC recommended the remaining roadless areas on Wrangell Island be designated LUD II. The Alaska Rainforest Campaign (a coalition of national and Alaska conservation groups) recommended Roadless Area 229 for permanent protection as LUD II

(2) Nearby Roadless and Wilderness Areas and Uses: There are four other roadless areas on south Wrangell Island, separated from the South Wrangell Roadless Area by roads. Present recreation use levels are low except around Fools Inlet, at streams and lakes near the roads, and occasionally at the mouths of some streams. Subsistence use in the Wildlife Analysis Area that includes South Wrangell Island accounted for 5 to 10 percent of average annual deer harvest from 1987 to 1994. The nearest Wilderness is the South Etolin Island Wilderness located about 6 miles to the southwest. The Stikine-LeConte wilderness is located approximately 12 miles north of the South Wrangell Roadless Area.

Road improvements, proposed for Wrangell Island in the March 1999 Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan, include construction of 3 miles of new roadway to a new ferry terminal at Fools Inlet. These new developments are potentially within the boundaries of the South Wrangell Roadless Area

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

Community	Air Miles	Water Miles
Ketchikan (Pop. 14,070)	50	70
Wrangell (Pop. 2,308)	20	25
Petersburg (Pop. 3,224)	55	60
Juneau (Pop. 30,711)	170	175

Wrangell is the nearest stop on the Alaska Marine Highway.

(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System: The South Wrangell Roadless Area is located on the south end of Wrangell Island, approximately 20 air miles south of the city of Wrangell. Ernest Sound borders the south and part of the east side of the area. Fools Inlet also forms part of the east boundary. The area is bordered to the north, northeast, and northwest by forest roads and harvested areas. Zimovia Strait and State lands (Thoms Place State Marine Park) border the area to the west. The roadless area is generally characterized by moderately-diverse, rounded to occasionally-blocky terrain, with mountains reaching elevations of over 2,000 feet. The tallest is approximately 2,155 feet in elevation. Southeast Cove divides the south portion of the area. Fools Inlet forms part of the area’s east boundary.

The area is mostly unmodified except for the influence of developed areas on the north side of the roadless area. The natural integrity and apparent naturalness is very high for the area. The opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation is moderate.

Approximately 1 percent of the landscape is considered distinctive for the character type from a scenery standpoint. The area has no other ecologic, geologic, scientific or cultural features of particular significance.

The roadless area includes about 1,566 acres of high-volume, old-growth forest. None of these acres are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The South Wrangell Roadless Area is classified as being in the Etolin Island and Vicinity Biogeographic Province and makes up about 3 percent of the province. It is one of 14 inventoried roadless areas found within the province that collectively make up about 54 percent of the province. The South Etolin Wilderness is located in this province and makes up about 16 percent of the province.

The South Wrangell Roadless Area lies completely within the Inside Passage Fjordlands Ecological Section and represents 1 percent of the ecological section. Approximately 20 percent of the Inside Passage Fjordlands Ecological Section is in existing wilderness, 2 percent is in existing LUD II, and 30 percent is protected by other existing non-development LUDs.

The South Wrangell Roadless Area lies completely within the Zimovia Strait Complex Ecological Subsection and represents 7 percent of the ecological subsection. Approximately 5 percent of the Zimovia Strait Complex Ecological Subsection is in existing wilderness and 26 percent is protected in other existing non-development LUDs.

Appendix C

The South Wrangell 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.

There is both local and national support for management of the area in an unroaded condition, and little support for designation of the area as wilderness. Designation would create a wilderness that has few features that are considered unique or significant from a wilderness perspective. A potential location of a new ferry terminal and 3 miles of new road on the west side of the inlet, near or just within the boundaries of the South Wrangell Roadless Area, are being considered by the State as part of improving transportation linkages with other communities of Southeast Alaska. 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 South Wrangell Roadless Area would be managed under the existing Forest Plan if Alternative 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7 is implemented. Approximately 3 percent of the roadless area would be managed under non-development LUDs. Timber harvest and road development could occur in the remaining 97 percent. The land in the development LUDs provides an estimated 1,935 acres that are suitable for timber production (2 percent of the suitable acres on the Wrangell Ranger District). No acres are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. The timber sales, recreation, minerals, and special use programs would continue. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area could be affected by ongoing developments in the area.

Under Alternative 6, the entire area would be converted to Recommended LUD II. The ongoing recreation, minerals, and special use programs would continue similar to current conditions. No timber harvest would be allowed. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area would receive long-term protection if designated LUD II.

Under Alternative 8, the entire roadless area would be converted to Recommended Wilderness. No timber harvest would be allowed and the ongoing recreation, minerals, and special uses programs could be restricted. Mineral prospecting would be allowed up to the time that the area is actually designated as wilderness by Congress. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area would receive long-term protection if designated wilderness.

Land Use Designation Allocations and Suitable Timber Lands by Alternative for Roadless Area 229 (in acres)								
Land Use Designation	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7	Alt 8
Recommended Wilderness								14,959
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	348	348	348	348	348		348	
Semi-remote Recreation	81	81	81	81	81		81	
Recommended LUD II						14,959		
LUD II								
Wild, Scenic, Recreational River								
Experimental Forest								
Scenic Viewshed	1,231	1,231	1,231	1,231	1,231		1,231	
Modified Landscape								
Timber Production	13,299	13,299	13,299	13,299	13,299		13,299	
TOTAL	14,959	14,959	14,959	14,959	14,959	14,959	14,959	14,959
Suitable Timber Lands	1,935	1,935	1,935	1,935	1,935	0	1,935	0