

## Appendix C

### INDIVIDUAL ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTION

**ROADLESS AREA NAME:** North Etolin (232)

**ACRES (NFS):** 41,740

**BIOGEOGRAPHIC PROVINCE:** Etolin Island and Vicinity

**ECOLOGICAL SECTION:** Inside Passage Fjordlands

**2003 WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTE RATING:** 18 (20)

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

(1) **Location and Access:** The area is located on the north end of Etolin Island and is bounded by Chichagof Pass to the north, Stikine Strait on the northwest, and Zimovia Strait on the east. Anita Bay and a roaded area and associated harvest units form the boundary to the south. The City of Wrangell lies almost 10 miles to the northeast and is served by the Alaska Marine Highway and jet service. There are no sites suitable for landing wheeled aircraft, but floatplanes may be able to access the uplands using Kunk Lake and another small lake. Three separate road systems and log transfer facilities exist on the island, two of which are adjacent to this roadless area. The Anita Bay road system is immediately south of the roadless area, while the King George road system bisects the northern portion of the roadless area isolating a relatively small portion on the north end of the roadless area. The island is accessible from saltwater by boat or floatplane and good moorage sites exist. A recreation trail leads to Kunk Lake, which is fairly centrally located on the east side of the area. The forest roads located south of the area provide road access to the edge of the area. There are no places suitable for landing wheeled airplanes.

(2) **History:** North Etolin Island was claimed by the Tansaqwedi and Xokedi clans of the Stikine Tlingit. Their use is evidenced by the remains of villages, fish camps, fort sites, petroglyphs, and fish weirs. Historic uses included hunting, trapping, and commercial fishing. Goldschmidt and Haas (1998) identified a smokehouse, fort, and camp on the east side of the area in 1946. They also identified two commercial fishtraps on the west side of the area. Timber harvest has occurred extensively in the Anita Bay area and to the west; the King George timber sale on the northern end of the area is currently being implemented, and is approximately 65 percent complete.

(3) **Geography and Topography:** The area is generally characterized by steeply-rising mountains reaching elevations of over 3,000 feet. The tallest in this area, Red Mountain, is over 3,900 feet. Alpine covers 2,328 acres and rock covers another 854 acres. There are no ice or snow features mapped in this area. There is much landform variety. Mountains less than 3,500 feet in elevation were overridden by glaciers in the past and have rounded, hummocky summits, knobs, and ridges. Higher mountains are sometimes sharp crested. Two drainages flow to the north, and a major drainage flows to the south through the roadless area. Kunk Lake and several small lakes exist between the mountain peaks, and account for 374 acres. The area includes 44 miles of saltwater shoreline and 24 acres of islands.

(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. Glacial flour is present in the marine environment in the northern part of this province nearly year round. All forest plant associations except those occurring only on outer coast areas are present.

Ecological Section/Subsection. The North Etolin Roadless Area is contained entirely within the Inside Passage Fjordlands Ecological Section (M247E), represented by three ecological subsections (see table below). The three subsections each cover approximately a third of the roadless area. The Etolin Granitics Ecological Subsection has a large area covered by jagged granite spires with a thin layer of soil and

extensive alpine vegetation. Productive forests are limited to colluvium at the base of slopes. The Stikine Strait Complex Ecological Subsection is a combination of glacially carved volcanic or sedimentary rock and glacial deposition in the valleys. Wetlands and low productivity forests cover much of the Stikine Strait Complex Ecological Subsection. The Zimovia Strait Complex Ecological Subsection has a landscape of stratified sedimentary rock and volcanic intrusions lying 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	Etolin Granitics	36%
	Stikine Strait Complex	34%
	Zimovia Strait Complex	30%

**(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 very 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 (mapped as 2,328 acres) dominates above 2,500 feet elevation. The valley floors and poorly-drained areas between hills are generally covered with muskeg and scrub lodgepole pine. Less than 100 acres of muskeg are mapped for the area; however, due to their small size and association with forested sites, accurate acreage estimates are difficult. Steeper, more-well-drained hillsides support heavy stands of Sitka spruce, western hemlock, redcedar, and Alaska-cedar.

There are approximately 36,678 acres mapped as forest land of which 19,519 acres or 53 percent are mapped as productive old-growth forest. Of the productive old growth, approximately 10,279 acres or 53 percent are mapped as high-volume, old-growth forest. The productive old growth includes about 1,657 acres of high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. In addition, approximately 1,062 acres of second growth have resulted from timber harvest activities.

**(d) Fish Resources:** Kunk Lake and Creek support all five species of salmon, as well as steelhead, rainbow, and cutthroat trout, and Dolly Varden char. King George Creek supports pink, chum, coho, and sockeye salmon, cutthroat trout, and Dolly Varden char. Kunk Lake and Creek have high value for fish due to the diversity of species that use the available habitat.

**(e) Wildlife Resources:** Important species include Sitka black-tailed deer, black bear, wolves, moose, and elk. Elk were introduced to the island in 1986 as a cooperative effort to establish elk in Southeast Alaska. Subsequent elk transplants have occurred and are planned. The elk herd has increased to a huntable population and spread to other islands.

**(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 Scenic Viewshed, Timber Production, Modified Landscape, and Old-growth Habitat.

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<u>LUD</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Scenic Viewshed	11,365
Timber Production	7,713
Modified Landscape	4,446
Old-growth Habitat	18,215

Approximately 56 percent of the roadless area was allocated to development LUDs (Scenic Viewshed, Timber Production, Modified Landscape). The majority of the roadless area located adjacent to saltwater, on the north and west sides of this roadless area, was allocated to the Scenic Viewshed LUD and accounts for approximately 27 percent of the roadless area. The Timber Production LUD was assigned to approximately 18 percent of the roadless area. Approximately 11 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Modified Landscape LUD.

Approximately 44 percent of the roadless area was allocated to one non-development LUD, Old-growth Habitat. A large portion of the southeast part of this area was allocated to the Old-growth Habitat LUD, as were smaller areas located in the northern portion of the area.

The saltwater bodies surrounding the island receive moderately heavy use by commercial and pleasure boats. Due to the area's proximity to Wrangell, many people use the beaches for picnicking and other day use activities, especially near the mouth of Honeymoon Creek and the King George Bay estuary. The interior part of the area is rarely used (USDA Forest Service, 1996). The trail that leads to Kunk Lake does, however, receive light recreation use. There is a 3-sided shelter at the lake. There is subsistence use in the area.

Road and harvest units associated with the King George Timber Sale (USDA Forest Service, 1996) extend east/west along the two major drainages in the north portion of the area.

**(6) Appearance (Apparent Naturalness):** Overall, the area has high scenic quality with a natural appearing landscape. Stikine Strait, Chichagof Pass, and Zimovia Strait border the area to the north, east, and west, respectively. Portions of this roadless area are visible from boats traveling these waters. Cruise ships and the Alaska Marine Highway use Stikine Strait to access Wrangell and Ketchikan. Chichagof Pass is occasionally used as an alternative passage for the Alaska Marine Highway. The east side of the roadless area is visible from Zimovia Strait, which provides access to points south, as well as from some parts of the City of Wrangell (USDA Forest Service, 1996). Logging has occurred on the southeast and northeast shores of the area.

**(7) Surroundings (External Influences):** The area is located on the north end of Etolin Island. Boats traveling the adjacent saltwater may be visible from within parts of the area, but usually are not intrusive. It is possible to see harvested areas and roads from some locations within this roadless area. Sights and sounds from the town of Wrangell may be apparent from some locations, especially with development of private land across from Zimovia Strait. The Alaska Marine Highway passes within one-half mile along the west side of the roadless area.

**(8) Attractions and Features of Special Interest:** The landform variety, including subalpine peaks, stream drainages, and lakes, is an attraction as is the presence of elk. The area contains nine inventoried recreation places, which cover 3,035 acres, or 7 percent of the roadless area. Kunk Lake is a popular recreation destination accessible by trail, with a 3-sided shelter at the lake.

**(9) Differences between the 1989 and 2003 Roadless Area Boundary:** The boundaries of this area have changed in three main ways since 1989. First, logging and road building has occurred in the south portion of the area most notably along and to the west of Fishtap Creek. These activities have altered the south boundary of the area. Second, beach logged areas that were excluded from the 1989 roadless area, are included within the boundaries of the 2003 area. Third, the King George timber sale in the north has resulted in further reductions in the size of the roadless area.

## II. Capability of Management as Wilderness

**(1) Natural Integrity and Apparent Naturalness:** The roadless area is largely unmodified. However, ongoing developments have affected the natural integrity and apparent naturalness in the north and along much of the south. Road construction and harvest in the northern portion of the area is visible from adjacent portions of the

roadless area, and nearly divides the area in two. A small beach-logged area on the northeast portion has regrown. Beach logged areas also exist on the southeast shore.

**(2) Opportunity for Solitude, Serenity, Self-reliance, Adventure, Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation:** There is a moderate opportunity for solitude within the area. Present recreation use levels are low except at the mouths of some streams and along the Kunk Lake Trail. The character of the area generally allows the visitor to feel remote from the sights and sounds of human activity. Generally, a person camped or traveling inland is unlikely to see others. Low-flying aircraft may, at times, pass over the roadless area, and the State ferry and boaters may pass next to the roadless area, but all are generally non-intrusive.

Travel within the area is challenging, requiring a high degree of woods skills and experience. The presence of black bears, especially around salmon streams in the fall, presents 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
Primitive (P)	10,940	26%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM)	10,918	26%
Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM)	13,396	32%
Roaded Modified (RM)	6,487	16%

The area contains nine inventoried recreation places, which cover 3,035 acres, or 7 percent of the roadless area.

ROS Class	# of Rec. Places*	Total Acres
P	0	0
SPNM	0	0
SPM	8	2,771
RM	4	264

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

The area is accessible by boat from the community of Wrangell in less than 1 hour, and from Ketchikan in approximately 7 hours. The saltwater bodies surrounding the island receive moderately heavy use by commercial and pleasure boats. Due to the area's proximity to Wrangell, many people use the beaches for picnicking and other day use activities, especially near the mouth of Honeymoon Creek and the King George Bay estuary. The interior part of the area is rarely used (USDA Forest Service, 1996). The trail that leads to Kunk Lake does, however, receive light recreation use. The Kunk Lake Trail provides access to a portion of the interior of this roadless area, and to a remote lake basin with a 3-sided shelter.

**(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 North Etolin Roadless Area was given a rating of 25 out of 28 possible points. The rating was re-evaluated for this updated version of the Analysis of the Management Situation. Based on this re-evaluation, the area was given a rating of 18. This rating reflects the effects of the ongoing development in the area allowed by the Forest Plan. A large portion of the roadless area, excluding the relatively small area isolated by the King George road system, was rated separately and given a rating of 20.

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**(4) Ecologic and Geologic Values:** The majority of the area is forested. Areas of high-volume, old growth are located on the lower elevation areas along the shorelines and waterways. The area contains one of nine large blocks of old growth on Etolin Island (USDA Forest Service, 1996).

**(a) Fish Resources:** The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) identified VCU 463 on the east coast of the island as a primary sportfish producer. No VCUs were identified as primary salmon producers.

Information from the Starfish Timber Sale, Etolin Island EIS (USDA Forest Service, 1991) indicates that fish species in this area are pink, chum, coho, and sockeye salmon, steelhead and cutthroat trout, and Dolly Varden char. Fishtrap and Duckbill Creeks have high potential for some good to excellent sport fishing, and have been identified as high quality fish habitat within the Wrangell Ranger District.

Information from the King George Timber Sale (USDA Forest Service, 1996) indicates that pink, chum, coho, and sockeye salmon, cutthroat trout, and Dolly Varden inhabit King George Creek and its tributaries. State escapement surveys indicate peak escapement of about 3,250 pink salmon. A small steelhead population is likely, but has not been verified.

Kunk Lake and Creek have high value for fish due to the diversity of species that use the available habitat. Although the creek has no exceptional runs of any one fish, it does support all five species of Pacific salmon, as well as steelhead, rainbow, cutthroat, and Dolly Varden char. ADF&G lists Kunk Lake and Creek as one of 65 “important” watersheds in Southeast Alaska.

**(b) Wildlife Resources:** This roadless area supports a diverse array of wildlife including Sitka black-tailed deer, black bear, wolves, moose, and elk (USDA Forest Service, 1991; 1996). Elk were introduced to the island in 1986 as a cooperative effort to establish elk in Southeast Alaska. Subsequent elk transplants have occurred and are planned. The elk herd has increased to a huntable population and spread to other islands. Other identified species include river otter, marten, beaver, bald eagle, marbled murrelets, Canada goose, and red squirrel. One known sea lion winter haul out site has been identified north of the King George estuary.

**(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. One sea lion winter haul-out site has been identified north of the King George estuary. 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. A goshawk was observed in the area in 1994, but no known nests have been recorded. 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 significant karst and cave resources in the area. There is, however, a band of carbonate rock that extends into the southwest corner of the roadless area near Kindergarten Bay.

**(5) Scientific and Educational Values:** There are opportunities to observe a variety of ecological and landform settings. The area is located approximately 10 miles south of the City of Wrangell and is, therefore, relatively accessible to school-age children.

**(6) Scenic Values:** Overall, the area has high scenic quality with a mostly natural appearing landscape. Stikine Strait, Chichagof Pass, and Zimovia Strait border the area to the north, east, and west, respectively. Portions

of this roadless area are visible from boats traveling these waters. Cruise ships and the Alaska Marine Highway use Stikine Strait to access Wrangell and Ketchikan. Chichagof Pass is occasionally used as an alternative passage for the Alaska Marine Highway. The east side of the roadless area is visible from Zimovia Strait, which provides access to points south, as well as from some parts of the City of Wrangell (USDA Forest Service, 1996). Logging has occurred on the southeast and northeast shores of the area.

Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas identified by the Forest Plan that are adjacent to the area include Stikine Strait, Chichagof Pass, and Zimovia Strait. Stikine Strait is part of the Alaska Marine Highway and used by tour ships. Chichagof Pass and Zimovia Strait are used by tour ships. Anita Bay and King George were identified as Saltwater Use Areas and Kunk Lake was identified as a Dispersed Recreation Area. A person in a boat approaching the roadless area would see natural scenery.

About 49 percent of this roadless area is inventoried as Variety Class A (possessing landscape diversity that is unique for the character type). Forty-three percent of the roadless area is inventoried as Variety Class B (possessing landscape diversity that is common for the character type), and 7 percent is inventoried as Variety Class C (possessing a low degree of landscape diversity).

The majority of this roadless area, 81 percent, has an Existing Visual Condition (EVC) Type I, where only ecological change has occurred to the landscape. Four percent of the area has an EVC Type III, where changes in the landscape may be seen by the average person, but it does not dominate the landscape. Three percent of the area has an EVC Type IV, where changes in the landscape are easily seen by the average person, but it resembles natural patterns. About 11 percent has an 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:** North Etolin Island was claimed by the Tansaqwedi and Xokedi clans of the Stikine Tlingit. Their use is evidenced by the remains of villages, fish camps, fort sites, petroglyphs, and fish weirs. Historic uses included hunting, trapping, and commercial fishing. The area is located approximately 10 miles south of the City of Wrangell.

The saltwater bodies surrounding the island receive moderately heavy use by commercial and pleasure boats. Due to the area's proximity to Wrangell, many people use the beaches for picnicking and other day use activities, especially near the mouth of Honeymoon Creek and the King George Bay estuary. The interior part of the area is rarely used (USDA Forest Service, 1996). The trail that leads to Kunk Lake does, however, receive light recreation use. Review of outfitter/guide use data for the Wrangell Ranger District during calendar year 2000 did not identify any outfitter/guide use in this area.

There is subsistence use in the area. The Wildlife Analysis Area that includes this roadless area accounted for 1 to 3 percent of annual average Wrangell deer harvest during 1987 to 1994. The VCUs in this area were not included among the highest value community use areas but one VCU, 467 at the head of Mosman Inlet, was included in the third most important group. VCU 462 on the north coast at Chichagof Pass was 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 area is well defined by saltwater on the west, east, and north. The southern boundary formed by roads and harvest units generally follows the landscape. A road and associated harvest units extend into the area along Fishtrap Creek, a major drainage in the south portion of the area. A road associated with the King George Timber Sale (USDA Forest Service, 1996) extends east/west along the two major drainages in the north portion of the area. The road almost connects the east and west shorelines, isolating a relatively small portion of the roadless area. As a result of these existing developments, the roadless area is irregularly shaped and poorly suited for wilderness management.

With the exception of the South Etolin Wilderness located about 10 miles to the south, surrounding lands were allocated to the same LUDs as the North Etolin Roadless Area (Scenic Viewshed, Old-growth Habitat, Modified Landscape, and Timber Production). The areas located directly across Stikine Strait, Chichagof Pass, and Zimovia Strait from the area were allocated to either the Scenic Viewshed or Old-growth Habitat LUDs to minimize the visual effects of any future management activities upon people traveling by boat. There is also an area of private land located on the west side of Wrangell Island directly across Zimovia Strait from the North Etolin Roadless Area.

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

(1) **Recreation, Including Tourism Potential:** There is potential for additional outfitter and guide permits, developed trails, and cabins or shelters. The elk population has grown to a huntable size and a limited number of hunting permits have been issued annually since 1997.

In 1991, the Wrangell Ranger District initiated a broad public scoping effort to identify possible recreation developments. The results of this scoping indicated that there was wide support for development of a high country hiking trail with associated shelters or cabins on North Etolin Island (USDA Forest Service, 1996). Public scoping for the King George Timber Sale, located in the north portion of the North Etolin Roadless Area also identified concerns for the recreation potential of the area (USDA Forest Service, 1996).

(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:** A potential fish habitat enhancement project has been identified for the King George Creek area, which would involve channel modification to improve access to the upper reaches of the stream system. Fish barriers exist in a number of streams that flow through this roadless area.

(4) **Wildlife Resources:** 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 19,519 acres mapped as productive old growth in the roadless area. In addition, there are approximately 1,062 acres of second growth. Of these acres, 15,173 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), 3,973 acres or 10 percent of this roadless area, are estimated to be suitable for timber production. Approximately 1,619 of the suitable acres are mapped as high-volume old growth; of these acres, 189 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. Some areas are highly prone to strong winds which blow down standing timber left exposed when adjacent stands are cut.

The King George Timber Sale is located on the northern portion of this area. This timber sale and associated road extends east/west along the two major drainages in the north portion of the area. The timber harvest is approximately 65 percent complete and the road has been completed as of the end of the 2002 operating season.

The potential for managing timber in this roadless area is high, as roads could be extended from the existing system and much of the area could be logged without constructing a camp or additional log transfer facilities.

(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:** There are no known current claims in this area. The roadless area contains an estimated 37,030 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. There is an abandoned limestone claim near Quiet Harbor, in the southwest portion of the area.

(8) **Transportation and Utilities:** There are no known public transportation plans for this area. Proposed road improvements identified in the March 1999 Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan include upgrading Forest Highway 16, which runs along the west side of Wrangell Island and is visible from some locations in the North Etolin Roadless Area.

(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.
- (11) **Land Use Authorizations:** No special uses are authorized in this area.
- (12) **Land Status:** All National Forest System lands are within the roadless area.

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

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

(a) **Interest Expressed by with Local Users and Residents:** The area is primarily used for recreational purposes by the citizens of Wrangell. There has been no formal support for or opposition to maintaining this area in a roadless condition. There has been general support for the elk transplant program on the island.

(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 North Etolin Roadless Area. In 2001, HR 2908 did not propose the area for wilderness, but did propose that the majority of the area should be classified as a Congressionally Designated LUD II area and managed in an unroaded condition. It also proposed that King George Creek be classified as a Wild and Scenic River.

(c) **Public Input During Forest Plan Revision and Appeals:** No specific recommendations for wilderness were made. The Wrangell Resource Council recommended that the area be allocated to the Primitive Recreation LUD to protect the unfragmented old growth for wildlife, subsistence, and sport hunting. They also recommended that logging not be permitted in the Kunk Lake or King George drainages, which they identified as important recreation areas. The Juneau Convention and Visitors Bureau included Kunk Lake in a short list of areas that they believe should be managed to provide a high quality sport fishing experience.

Representatives of the timber industry, recommended that Management Area S23, which includes the North Etolin Roadless Area, be allocated to the Timber Production LUD. Other timber industry representatives recommended that, with the exception of some Scenic Viewshed or Modified Landscape along the ferry route, all of Management Area S23 should be allocated to the Timber Production LUD to keep timber harvest economic in these already-developed areas.

Kunk Lake and Creek were identified in the September 25, 1997, appeal filed by the Narrows Conservation Coalition as an area left unprotected by the 1997 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan that is of particular concern to the people in the Stikine area.

(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.

(e) **Public Input Expressed for Project-level EISs and Other Input:** Public comments received on the Starfish Timber Sale EIS specifically addressed the proposed sale that has since taken place. This area, which parallels Fishtrap Creek, is no longer part of the North Etolin Roadless Area. General concerns were expressed with respect to the potential effects of the proposed sale upon wildlife habitat (USDA Forest Service, 1991). In 1991, the Wrangell Ranger District initiated a broad public scoping effort to identify possible recreation developments. The results of this scoping indicated that there was wide support for development of a high country hiking trail with associated shelters or cabins on North Etolin Island (USDA Forest Service, 1996). Public scoping for the King George Timber Sale, located in the north portion of the North Etolin Roadless Area also indicated concerns for the recreation potential of the area (USDA Forest Service, 1996). General concerns were expressed that the King George Timber Sale project area should remain roadless because it is the only part of North Etolin Island that is undeveloped. It was also noted that roads affect wolves, marten, and bear.

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**(f) Public Input Expressed During Supplemental EIS Process:** The city of Petersburg said they were opposed to designation of this area as wilderness because of the potential long-term economic impacts on the city.

The Alaska Rainforest Campaign (a coalition of national and Alaska conservation groups) recommended Roadless Area 232 for permanent protection as LUD II. SEACC recommended the remaining unlogged portions of Woronkofski, Zarembo, and North Etolin Islands be safeguarded through LUD II protection.

**(2) Nearby Roadless and Wilderness Areas and Uses:** There are two roadless areas located on south Etolin Island. These areas are separated from the North Etolin Roadless Area by existing roads and harvest units. Additional roadless areas are located nearby, across narrow saltwater channels, on Woronkofski Island and Wrangell Island. There are also roadless areas located across Stikine Strait on Zarembo Island. The nearest wilderness is South Etolin, located approximately 6 miles south of the North Etolin Roadless Area. The Stikine-LeConte Wilderness is located approximately 20 miles to the north. This area currently receives light use inland, away from saltwater or road access.

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

<b>Community</b>	<b>Air Miles</b>	<b>Water Miles</b>
Ketchikan (Pop. 14,070)	60	80
Wrangell (Pop. 2,308)	10	15
Petersburg (Pop. 3,224)	40	40
Juneau (Pop. 30,711)	155	165

Wrangell is the nearest stop on the Alaska Marine Highway.

**(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System:** The North Etolin Roadless Area is located on the north end of Etolin Island and is bounded by Chichagof Pass to the north, Stikine Strait on the northwest, and Zimovia Strait on the east. Anita Bay and a roaded area and associated harvest units form the boundary to the south. The roadless area is generally characterized by steeply-rising mountains reaching elevations of over 3,000 feet. The tallest in this area, Red Mountain, is over 3,900 feet. There is much landform variety. Mountains less than 3,500 feet in elevation were overridden by glaciers in the past and have rounded, hummocky summits, knobs, and ridges. Higher mountains are sometimes sharp crested. Two drainages flow to the north, and a major drainage flows to the south through the roadless area. Kunk Lake and several small lakes exist between the mountain peaks.

The area is mostly natural appearing. However, it is influenced by developed areas that form its boundaries in the south and to some degree in the north. The natural integrity is considered moderate and the apparent naturalness is high. The natural integrity increases to high and the apparent naturalness increases to very high when the eastern portion is rated separately. The opportunity for solitude is moderate and the opportunity for primitive recreation is high.

Approximately 49 percent of the landscape is considered distinctive for the character type from a scenery standpoint. The area has relatively high cultural values.

The roadless area includes about 10,279 acres of high-volume, old-growth forest. Of these acres, 1,657 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The North Etolin Roadless Area is classified as being in the Etolin Island and Vicinity Biogeographic Province and makes up about 8 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 North Etolin 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.

Approximately one-third (36 percent) of the roadless area is in the Etolin Granities Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 17 percent of the entire ecological subsection, which is partially protected by existing wilderness (37 percent) and other non-development LUDs (19 percent). One-third (34 percent) of the roadless area is in the Stikine Strait Complex Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 22 percent of the entire ecological subsection, 42 percent of which is protected by existing non-development LUDs. The remaining 30 percent of the roadless area is in the Zimovia Strait Complex Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 6 percent of the entire ecological subsection, 5 percent of which is protected in existing wilderness and 26 percent in other non-development LUDs.

The North Etolin Roadless Area was rated 18 out of a possible 28 points under the Wilderness Attribute Rating System (WARS). As such, its WARS rating is ranked 84th from the highest (along with 8 other roadless areas) among the 109 Tongass inventoried roadless areas. The large eastern portion around Kunk Lake and surrounding areas, excluding the relatively small area isolated by the King George road system, was rated separately and received a score of 20.

There is both local and national support for management of the area in an unroaded condition, but very little support for designating the area as wilderness. Designation would create a wilderness with relatively high scenic and cultural values, but one that is heavily influenced by ongoing development activities. Designation of the area would add Congressional protection to approximately 22 percent of the Stikine Strait Complex Ecological Subsection that is not currently represented in wilderness or LUD II. The King George Timber Sale is under contract and operating in the north portion of the area. Overall, the factors identified here indicate that the relative contribution of this area to the National Wilderness Preservation System would be low.

### **V. Environmental Consequences**

The North Etolin Roadless Area would be managed under the existing Forest Plan if Alternative 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7 is implemented. Approximately 44 percent of the roadless area would be managed under non-development LUDs. Timber harvest and road development could occur in the remaining 56 percent. The land in the development LUDs provides an estimated 3,973 acres that are suitable for timber production (5 percent of the suitable acres on the Wrangell Ranger District). Approximately 189 of the suitable acres are classified as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. The King George Timber Sale contract would continue. The roadless area contains an estimated 37,030 acres of undiscovered locatable mineral resources. All of these acres are considered to have low potential for development. The timber sales, recreation, minerals, and special use programs would continue. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including the cultural and most of the scenic values, would be provided under the Forest Plan.

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. Designation of the area as LUD II would add Congressional protection to approximately 22 percent of the Stikine Strait Complex Ecological Subsection that is not currently represented in wilderness or LUD II. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including the cultural 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. 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. Designation of the area as wilderness would add Congressional protection to approximately 22 percent of the Stikine Strait Complex Ecological Subsection that is not currently represented in wilderness or LUD II. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including the cultural 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 232 (in acres)								
Land Use Designation	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7	Alt 8
Recommended Wilderness								41,740
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	18,215	18,215	18,215	18,215	18,215		18,215	
Semi-remote Recreation								
Recommended LUD II						41,740		
LUD II								
Wild, Scenic, Recreational River								
Experimental Forest								
Scenic Viewshed	11,365	11,365	11,365	11,365	11,365		11,365	
Modified Landscape	4,446	4,446	4,446	4,446	4,446		4,446	
Timber Production	7,713	7,713	7,713	7,713	7,713		7,713	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>41,740</b>	<b>41,740</b>	<b>41,740</b>	<b>41,740</b>	<b>41,740</b>	<b>41,740</b>	<b>41,740</b>	<b>41,740</b>
Suitable Timber Lands	3,973	3,973	3,973	3,973	3,973	0	3,973	0