

INDIVIDUAL ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTION

ROADLESS AREA NAME: South Zarembo (237)

ACRES (NFS): 41,999

BIOGEOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Etolin Island and Vicinity

ECOLOGICAL SECTION: Kupreanof Lowlands and Inside Passage Fjordlands

2003 WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTE RATING: 20

I. Overview and Description

(1) **Location and Access:** The South Zarembo Roadless Area is located on the south side of Zarembo Island. It is less than 5 miles west of Etolin Island and approximately 15 miles west of the town of Wrangell, which is served by the Alaska Marine Highway and jet service. Stikine Strait borders the area on the east and south and Clarence Strait lies to the southwest. Access is by boat or floatplane to Zarembo Island, then by traveling cross-country on foot or by using the road system to access the roadless area. The interior is also accessible by helicopter. A portion of the roadless area is also accessible from saltwater. There are no sites suitable for landing wheeled aircraft. The road system on Zarembo Island accesses the northern and western edges of the roadless area and portions of the interior. Some hunters are using ATVs to access portions of the roadless area by driving off the roads through muskeg or alpine areas.

(2) **History:** Zarembo Island was used by all of the Stikine Tlingit clans for hunting and gathering of subsistence items. Their use of southern Zarembo Island is indicated by the reported remains of a village site, as well as recorded burial sites, fish weirs, petroglyphs, and pictographs. Historic use is evidenced by the remains of several cabins and by earlier timber harvests along the beach.

(3) **Geography and Topography:** The area has moderately rolling terrain. Several streams drain the area. Elevation ranges from sea level to 2,500 feet. The area contains approximately 29 miles of shoreline on saltwater and 10 acres of small islands. The area also contains 251 acres of alpine tundra. There are no ice, snow 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 characterized by rolling, subdued topography and extensive muskeg areas, but may have localized, rugged terrain. There are no known areas of unique or uncommon plant/soils associations or geologic formations in the area.

Ecological Section/Subsection. The South Zarembo Roadless Area is contained mostly within the Kupreanof Lowlands Ecological Section (M247G) and also contains portions within the Inside Passage Fjordlands Ecological Section (M247E). These areas are represented by three ecological subsections (see table below). The Sumner Strait Volcanics Ecological Subsection represents the majority of the South Zarembo Roadless Area. Water-resistant volcanic flows of relatively recent origin arise from lowland glacial deposits. The interplay of volcanic and glacial forces have left a landscape of shallow organic soils on long, gentle slopes and mineral soils on short, steep slopes. Productive hemlock, Alaska yellow cedar, and spruce forests are found on the steep slopes. Most of the balance of the roadless area, 39 percent, lies within the Stikine Strait Complex Ecological Subsection, 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 (Nowacki et al., 2001).

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Ecological Section	Ecological Subsection	Percent of Roadless Area
Kupreanof Lowlands	Sumner Strait Volcanics	58%
Inside Passage Fjordlands	Duncan Canal Till Lowlands	3%
	Stikine Strait Complex	39%

(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. 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: Vegetation of this roadless area primarily consists of typical spruce and hemlock forests. Low-lying, poorly-drained portions of the area are muskeg. Hillsides with steeper slopes have more productive forests. Approximately 319 acres of muskeg are mapped for the area; however, due to their small size and association with forested sites, accurate acreage estimates are difficult.

There are approximately 41,124 acres mapped as forest land of which 17,277 acres (42 percent) are mapped as productive old-growth forest. Of the productive old growth, approximately 3,542 acres (21 percent) are mapped as high-volume, old-growth forest. The productive old growth includes about 590 acres of high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. There are approximately 636 acres of second-growth forest where beach timber harvest has occurred.

(d) Fish Resources: Fish resources have been rated as part of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in its Forest Habitat Integrity Program (1983). These ratings describe the-value of VCUs for sport fish, commercial fish, and estuaries. VCUs with highly valued estuaries include 457 and 459. VCUs 458 and 459 have been listed as secondary producers of salmon by the Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998).

(e) Wildlife Resources:: The area supports a sizeable population of Sitka black-tailed deer. Wolves and black bear range over the roadless area. Other wildlife species that occur here include moose, elk, beaver, river otters, Canada goose, sandhill cranes, marbled murrelets, goshawks, and bald eagles.

(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	21,696
Scenic Viewshed	1,323
Old-growth Habitat	18,970
Semi-remote Recreation	10

Approximately 55 percent of the roadless area was allocated to a development LUD (Timber Production and Scenic Viewshed). The Timber Production LUD was assigned to approximately 52 percent of the roadless area. The Timber Production LUD primarily includes the Nesbitt and Vial Creek drainages and a portion of the upper Middle Meter Bight drainage. Approximately 3 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Scenic Viewshed LUD, located mostly in the southern portion of the area.

Approximately 45 percent of the roadless area was allocated to a non-development LUD (Old-growth Habitat and Semi-remote Recreation). The Old-growth Habitat LUD was assigned to approximately 45 percent of the roadless area. Most of this LUD is located in the Round Point Old-Growth Reserve in the southeast portion of the area. The remainder of this LUD is in the Snow Pass Old-Growth Reserve in the northwest portion of the area. Less than 1

percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Semi-remote Recreation LUD, located on the small island off the coast of Zarembo Island.

There are no developed recreation sites, nor is there frequent use of the area by local guides or outfitters. A fish improvement exists in the Meter Bight area. There is some subsistence use, especially in the more accessible portions of the roadless area. Subsistence use is mostly for hunting deer and berry picking. There is also some recreational hunting for bucks with large antlers, at the higher elevations in the northwest portion of the roadless area. Some people are using ATVs to access alpine areas within the roadless area for hunting. Approximately 906 acres are approved for harvest as part of the Skipping Cow Timber Sale. The Coast Guard has a permitted mountain top radio repeater communication site located in the northwestern portion of the area.

(6) Appearance (Apparent Naturalness): The area appears mostly unmodified. The Coast Guard communication site, located on the highest point on Zarembo Island, includes an equipment shelter, communication tower, solar array, wind turbine, helicopter pad and a bank of propane cylinders. Adjacent management activities have affected the apparent naturalness of this roadless area. The Skipping Cow Timber Sale, which has an approved EIS, would result in roads and timber harvest within the roadless area. This would further affect the size, shape, and overall appearance.

(7) Surroundings (External Influences): The roadless area is on Zarembo Island. The island has a history of timber management activities and includes a road network. Timber harvest areas and reforested plantations generally surround the roadless area on the north and west. A saltwater shoreline occurs along the eastern, southern, and southwestern borders. When harvesting activities occur adjacent to or near the roadless area, their sights and sounds may create an impact. Boats plying the nearby saltwater may be visible from within parts of the roadless area, but usually are not intrusive. Low-flying aircraft may temporarily distract visitors in the area.

(8) Attractions and Features of Special Interest: There is some subsistence hunting and recreational hunting, especially for bucks with large antlers, at the higher elevations in the northwest portion of the roadless area. The area contains 5 inventoried recreation places, which cover 4,360 acres (10 percent) of the roadless area.

(9) Differences between the 1989 and 2003 Roadless Area Boundary: The roadless area boundary has been changed to include older, beach-logged timber harvest units along the southern boundary. There are no roads along the beach and trees have reestablished themselves in these older harvest units. The roadless area boundary has also been expanded to the west to include the area east of Road 6585, which is part of the Snow Pass Old-Growth Reserve. Significant portions of the roads in the Snow Pass Creek Old-Growth Reserve were decommissioned in 2002. Several small areas were excluded from the area between the Draft and Final SEIS to improve manageability in those areas.

II. Capability for Management as Wilderness

(1) Natural Integrity and Apparent Naturalness: The area is mostly unmodified. The Coast Guard has a permitted mountain top radio repeater communication site located in the northwestern portion of the area. Timber management activities outside of the roadless area, but within higher reaches of the drainages, may have altered some of the natural processes. This impact, however, is considered low. The Skipping Cow Timber Sale, which has an approved EIS, would result in additional roads and timber harvest within the Roadless Area. This would affect approximately 2,000 acres of the roadless area directly and may alter some of the natural processes and appearance. This timber sale would reduce the suitability for this area to be classified as wilderness.

(2) Opportunity for Solitude and Serenity, Self-reliance, Adventure, Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation: There is a high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation within the area. Low-flying airplanes and recreational boaters may at times pass nearby and be observed by people in this roadless area. Present recreation use levels are low. 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 boat from the community of Petersburg in about 3 hours and from Wrangell in approximately 2 hours. Generally, a person camped or traveling inland is unlikely to see others. Periodic timber harvest activities in the adjacent areas would have a significant impact on the opportunity for solitude when they are occurring.

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Travel within the area is moderately challenging, requiring moderate woods skills and experience. As with all backcountry areas on the Tongass, the opportunity for challenge and risk in this area is high. The climate, the rugged terrain, the isolation and distance from population centers with medical facilities, the barriers to communication, and the presence of large wild animals all contribute to the need for good preparation and knowledge of backcountry survival skills for anyone using this area. Hypothermia and bear encounters are just two examples of the many risks that must be considered before traveling in the backcountry of Southeast Alaska.

The area provides primarily semi-primitive recreation opportunities. The table below lists the acreage and percent of the various Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes that have been inventoried in the roadless area.

ROS Class	Acres	Percent of Total ROS
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM)	30,820	73%
Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM)	4,255	10%
Roaded Modified (RM)	6,924	17%

The area contains five inventoried recreation places, which cover 4,360 acres (10 percent) of the roadless area.

ROS Class	# of Rec. Places*	Total Acres
SPNM	0	0
SPM	2	1,518
RM	4	2,841

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

There are no developed recreation opportunities in the area. There is also some recreational hunting for bucks with large antlers, at the higher elevations in the northwest portion of the roadless 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 Zarembo Roadless Area was given a rating of 21 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 20. This rating reflects the effects of adjacent developments on the attributes of the area.

(4) Ecologic and Geologic Values: There are no known special features in this roadless area.

(a) Fish Resources: None of the VCUs were listed as primary salmon or sport fish producers by the Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998).

Streams in the roadless area provide spawning and rearing habitats for coho, chum, and pink salmon, steelhead, cutthroat trout, and Dolly Varden char. The area contains portions of the Nesbitt Creek, Vial Creek, and Middle Meter Bight watersheds. Meter Bight Creek has been identified as having some of the highest quality fish habitat in the Wrangell Ranger District.

(b) Wildlife Resources: The area supports a large population of Sitka black-tailed deer. Wolves, black bear, moose, beaver and river otters also occur here. Elk have recently colonized the island. The heaviest populations appear to be in the Vial Creek and Middle Meter Bight Creek drainages. Bald eagles, osprey, and other raptors nest in the area. Vancouver Canada geese and sandhill cranes are found in ponds in the area. Eleven bald eagle nest sites have been identified in this roadless area. An osprey nest was

found in the Meter Bight drainage. Surveys completed for the Skipping Cow Timber Sale EIS (USDA Forest Service, 2000) indicate that marbled murrelets may also nest in this area, and Queen Charlotte goshawks may use the island as winter habitat. Brown bear and mountain goats are not known to occur here.

(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. An osprey nest was found in the Meter Bight drainage. 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 may use the island as winter habitat. 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 or cave resources in this roadless area. There are no glaciers or unique geologic features in this area.

(5) Scientific and Educational Values: There are opportunities to study wildlife, ecology, and the forces and processes that form the topography of the area.

(6) Scenic Values: The visual character type of this area is Kupreanof Lowland, characterized by islands of rolling terrain exhibiting gradual relief separated by an intricate network of waterways. Numerous small rocky islands, shorelines and rock reefs are evident. The area appears essentially unmodified from adjacent marine travel routes; however, adjacent management activities are visible. The Skipping Cow Timber Sale, which has an approved EIS, would result in additional roads and timber harvest within the roadless area. This may further affect scenic values.

Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas identified by the Forest Plan that are within or adjacent to the area include: Stikine Strait, which is a part of the Alaska Marine Highway and a tour ship route, and Snow Passage, a saltwater use area and travel route.

Most of the area, 86 percent, is inventoried as Variety Class B (possessing landscape diversity that is common for the character type). Approximately 13 percent is inventoried in Variety Class C (possessing a low degree of landscape diversity).

Much of the roadless area, 55 percent, is in Existing Visual Condition (EVC) I, where the landscape appears to be untouched by human activity. Twenty-two percent of the area is in EVC IV, in which changes to the landscape are easily noticed by the average person and may attract some attention, but still resembles natural patterns. EVC V accounts for approximately 23 percent of the area, where changes to the landscape are obvious to the average person and appear to be major disturbances.

(7) Social, Cultural, and Historical Values: Zarembo Island was used by all of the Stikine Tlingit clans for hunting and gathering of subsistence items. Their use of southern Zarembo Island is indicated by the reported remains of a village site, as well as recorded burial sites, fish weirs, petroglyphs, and pictographs. Historic use is evidenced by the remains of several cabins. The area is used for subsistence hunting and gathering by the people of Wrangell and, to a lesser extent, Petersburg, especially in the more accessible portions of the roadless area. VCUs 457 and 458, which occupy the western half of the area, were identified in the second tier of the highest value community use areas. They were also listed among the VCUs with the highest sensitivity to disturbance of subsistence areas (ADF&G, 1998).

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(8) Manageability as Wilderness and Boundary Conditions/Changes: The area is bounded on the north by land managed for timber and on the west by an old-growth reserve, which is currently roaded. Significant portions of the roads in the Snow Pass Creek old-growth reserve were decommissioned in 2001. It is bounded on the southwest, south, and east by saltwater. Portions of the north and west boundaries could be pulled back to follow ridgelines. The area between this roadless area and Roadless Area 235 is allocated to old-growth reserve. Managing this roadless area in a roadless condition would be consistent with the goals of this old-growth reserve and the one in the eastern third of the roadless area and would facilitate the movement of wildlife between the two reserves.

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

(1) Recreation, Including Tourism Potential: There is potential for outfitter and guide permits and for developed trails, cabins, or shelters. No outfitter/guide permits were issued for this roadless area in 2000.

(2) Subsistence Uses: There is considerable subsistence deer hunting on Zarembo Island, some of which occurs within the outer reaches of the roadless area. Limited motorized use of the road system occurs by Wrangell residents; however, the road system is outside the current roadless area boundary. Some people are using ATVs to access alpine areas within the roadless area for hunting. Subsistence users commenting on the proposed Skipping Cow Timber Sale were divided on whether maintaining the area in a roadless condition or building roads and harvesting timber would improve or harm subsistence use.

(3) Fish Resources: A pool-and-weir fish ladder for pink salmon was constructed in 1990 on Meter Bight Creek. No other fish habitat improvement projects are planned for the area at this time.

(4) Wildlife Resources: Wildlife habitat improvement projects planned for the area include thinning of past harvest stands in the beach fringe.

(5) Timber Resources: There are approximately 17,277 acres mapped as productive old growth. There are also 636 acres of second-growth forest. Of this area, 13,348 acres are defined as tentatively suitable for timber production. Based on the Forest Plan LUDs assigned to this area (and estimated falldown and scheduling reduction factors), 3,634 acres (9 percent) of this roadless area are estimated to be suitable for timber production. Approximately 457 of the suitable acres are mapped as high-volume old growth; of these acres, 40 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

Approximately 906 acres are approved for harvest as part of the Skipping Cow Timber Sale. The potential for managing timber in this roadless area is dependent on higher market values. A road system is already present nearby and could be extended into this area. Two sites for transferring logs to saltwater are already present on Zarembo Island.

(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 roadless area contains 13,299 acres of land identified as a mineral activity tract having a high potential for experiencing mineral exploration and development of locatable minerals (Coldwell, 1990; USDA Forest Service, 1991). The roadless area also contains an estimated 41,967 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.

Information from the U.S. Bureau of Mines indicates the Duncan Canal/Zarembo Island mineral tract has a moderate to high mineral development potential for barite, zinc, lead, and silver.

(8) Transportation and Utilities: No transportation or utility corridors are proposed in the roadless area except for timber management related roads in the LUDs which allow this use.

- (9) **Water Availability and Use:** No developed recreation or other facilities exist to create a water demand. There are no existing or planned hydroelectric 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. There are opportunities to study forests, wildlife and geologic processes.
- (11) **Land Use Authorizations:** There is one special use permit in the area for a Coast Guard mountain top electronics communication site.
- (12) **Land Status:** All land in this roadless area is part of the National Forest System.

IV. Wilderness Evaluation (Need for Wilderness)

(1) Public and Congressional Interest:

(a) **Interest Expressed by Local Users and Residents:** Some Wrangell residents generally favor road building and timber harvest, but there is also some interest in maintaining the area as unroaded. Most use of the area is for subsistence and recreation and occurs along the beach fringe and existing roads to the north.

(b) **Congressional Interest:** In 1989, U.S. House of Representatives Bill HR 987 proposed designating 23 areas as wilderness. The bill did not include this area. In 2001, HR 2908 did not propose this area for wilderness but it did propose that most of the area be classified as a Congressionally Designated LUD II area and managed in an unroaded condition.

(c) **Public Input During Forest Plan Revision and Appeals:** The Wrangell Resource Council recommended that the area be managed for primitive recreation (in a Primitive Recreation LUD). Comments received from the timber industry favored managing all of Zarembo Island in Timber Production to allow for a sustainable, economic timber sale program.

(d) **Public Input During Roadless Area Conservation Rule and Road Management Policy Review:** The area was not specifically mentioned in 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:** A number of comments on the Skipping Cow DEIS were received that were relevant to the roadless area. Many favored maintaining the area in a roadless condition and a few supported additional road building and logging.

(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 237 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:** Two other roadless areas exist on Zarembo Island, South Zarembo and East Zarembo. None of these roadless areas are adjacent to each other. The East Zarembo Roadless area is separated from this roadless area, a distance of approximately 5 miles, by areas managed for timber. The West Zarembo Roadless Area is separated from this roadless area by an old-growth reserve, which has had road building and timber harvest. Significant portions of the roads in the Snow Pass Creek area were decommissioned in 2001. Subsistence and light recreational use occurs in all of them.

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

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Community	Air Miles	Water Miles
Ketchikan (Pop. 14,070)	70	80
Wrangell (Pop. 2,308)	15	20
Petersburg (Pop. 3,224)	30	40
Juneau (Pop. 30,711)	145	160

Petersburg and Wrangell are the nearest stops on the Alaska Marine Highway.

(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System: The South Zarembo Roadless Area is located on the south side of Zarembo Island. Stikine Strait borders the area on the east and south and Clarence Strait lies to the southwest. The area has moderately-rolling terrain. Several streams drain the area, and has some small ponds and lakes. Elevation ranges from sea level to 2,500 feet.

The area is mostly natural appearing and unmodified; however, it is influenced by developed areas that make up parts of its border. The natural integrity and apparent naturalness are rated high for the area. The opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation is high.

None of the roadless area is rated as distinctive for the character type from a visual perspective.

The area has been colonized by elk, which were introduced on nearby islands; however, this is not a valuable attribute for wilderness. The area has no other features of ecologic, geologic, scientific, or cultural significance.

The roadless area includes about 3,542 acres of high-volume, old-growth forest. Of these acres, 590 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The South Zarembo Roadless Area is classified as being in the Etolin Island and Vicinity Biogeographic Province and makes 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 South Zarembo Roadless Area lies within two ecological sections; it represents 2 percent of the Kupreanof Lowlands Ecological Section and 1 percent of the Inside Passage Fjordlands Ecological Section. Minor portions of the Kupreanof Lowlands Ecological Section is in existing wilderness or LUD II (1 percent in each) and an additional 33 percent is protected by other existing non-development LUDs. However, 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.

Most (58 percent) of the roadless area is in the Sumner Strait Volcanics Ecological Subsection. This portion of the roadless area represents 7 percent of the entire ecological subsection, minor portions of which are protected by existing wilderness and LUD II (0.1 percent and 1 percent, respectively) and an additional 32 percent is protected by other existing non-development LUDs. Thirty-nine percent of the roadless area is in the Stikine Strait Complex Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 25 percent of the entire ecological subsection, 42 percent of which is protected by existing non-development LUDs. The remaining 3 percent of the roadless area is in the Duncan Canal Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 1 percent of the entire ecological subsection, of which, 5 percent is protected in existing wilderness and 35 percent is in other non-development LUDs.

The South Zarembo 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 considerable support for managing the area in an unroaded condition, but very little support for designating the area as wilderness. Designation would create a wilderness with few significant or unique attributes. However, designation of the area would add Congressional protection to approximately 25 percent of the Stikine Strait Complex Ecological Subsection that is not currently represented in wilderness or LUD II. Designation would also

add Congressional protection to approximately 7 percent of the Sumner Strait Volcanics Ecological Subsection that has approximately 1 percent protected in wilderness or LUD II. The area includes the timber sales authorized by the Skipping Cow Timber Sale Final EIS. 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 Zarembo Roadless Area would be managed under the existing Forest Plan if Alternative 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7 is implemented. Approximately 45 percent of the roadless area would be managed under non-development LUDs. Timber harvest and road development could occur in the remaining 55 percent. The land in the development LUDs provides an estimated 3,634 acres that are suitable for timber production (4 percent of the suitable acres on the Wrangell Ranger District). Approximately 40 of the suitable acres are classified as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. The Skipping Cow timber sales would continue. The roadless area contains 13,299 acres of land identified as a mineral activity tract having a high potential for experiencing mineral exploration and development of locatable minerals. The roadless area also contains an estimated 41,967 acres of undiscovered locatable mineral resources; all of the 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 could be affected by ongoing developments allowed by 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 25 percent of the Stikine Strait Complex Ecological Subsection that is not currently represented in wilderness or LUD II. It would also add Congressional protection to approximately 7 percent of the Sumner Strait Volcanics Ecological Subsection that has approximately 1 percent protected in wilderness or LUD II. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area would be provided long-term protection if designated as 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 25 percent of the Stikine Strait Complex Ecological Subsection that is not currently represented in wilderness or LUD II. It would also add Congressional protection to approximately 7 percent of the Sumner Strait Volcanics Ecological Subsection that has approximately 1 percent protected in wilderness or LUD II. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness.

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Land Use Designation Allocations and Suitable Timber Lands by Alternative for Roadless Area 237 (in acres)								
Land Use Designation	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7	Alt 8
Recommended Wilderness								41,999
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	18,970	18,970	18,970	18,970	18,970		18,970	
Semi-remote Recreation	10	10	10	10	10		10	
Recommended LUD II						41,999		
LUD II								
Wild, Scenic, Recreational River								
Experimental Forest								
Scenic Viewshed	1,323	1,323	1,323	1,323	1,323		1,323	
Modified Landscape								
Timber Production	21,696	21,696	21,696	21,696	21,696		21,696	
TOTAL	41,999	41,999	41,999	41,999	41,999	41,999	41,999	41,999
Suitable Timber Lands	3,634	3,634	3,634	3,634	3,634	0	3,634	0