

Appendix C

INDIVIDUAL ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTION

ROADLESS AREA NAME: East Wrangell (247) – formerly part of 229

ACRES (NFS): 7,634

BIOGEOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Etolin Island and Vicinity and Central Coast Range

ECOLOGICAL SECTION: Inside Passage Fjordlands

2003 WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTE RATING: 17

I. Overview and Description

(1) **Location and Access:** The area is located on the east side of Wrangell Island, approximately 15 miles southeast of the city of Wrangell, which is served by the Alaska Marine Highway and jet service. This area is separated from the mainland by The Narrows to the north and Blake Channel to the east. The 138 kV Tyee powerline forms the south boundary of the area. Forest roads and associated harvest areas form the remainder of the west boundary. The area is accessible from the surrounding saltwater and adjacent forest roads. 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. While the area has likely been prospected for minerals, there are no known mining claims. The 138 kV Tyee powerline that forms the south and part of the west boundary of the area was constructed in 1984.

(3) **Geography and Topography:** The northern portion of the area is generally characterized by a mountain ridge that reaches elevations of over 2,000 feet with a high point of 2,800 feet. The majority of the area is above 1,000 feet. Blake Creek flows through the valley south of the elevated northern portion of the area. Saltwater borders the area to the north and east. Freshwater lakes cover about 67 acres, alpine covers 45 acres, and rock occupies another 35 acres. The area includes approximately 13 miles of saltwater shoreline and 40 acres of small islands.

(4) **Ecosystem:**

(a) **Classification:** Biogeographic Province. The area is in the Etolin Island and Vicinity and Central Coast Range Biogeographic Provinces. The Etolin Island 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. The Central Coast Range has relatively gentle topography and the Stikine River system has a major continental influence and provides a migration corridor for plants and animals. Plant associations along the salt water are similar to those occurring elsewhere in Southeast Alaska.

Ecological Section/Subsection. The East Wrangell Roadless Area is contained entirely within the Inside Passage Fjordlands Ecological Section (M247E), represented by three ecological subsections (see table below). The majority of the East Wrangell Roadless Area, 87 percent, lies within the Eastern Passage Complex Ecological Subsection, which lies to the west of the Coast Range megalignment. The underlying geology is rugged sedimentary and volcanic formations, dissected by numerous streams, extending from Bradfield Canal to Thomas Bay. Mineral soils of sedimentary and plutonic origin dominate the subsection and organic soils are relatively common on poorly drained sites. The Bell Island Granitics Ecological Subsection, 9 percent of the roadless area, is characterized by rounded hills and narrow, glacially scoured valleys. Mountain slope soils are usually well-drained, mineral soil, while lowlands, lake margins, and wetlands are typically poorly drained soils. The Zimovia Strait Complex Ecological Subsection, 4 percent

of the roadless area, is composed of stratified sedimentary rock and volcanic intrusions lying beneath broad glacial valleys and rounded hills (Nowacki et al., 2001).

Ecological Section	Ecological Subsection	Percent of Roadless Area
Inside Passage Fjordlands	Eastern Passage Complex	87%
	Bell Island Granitics	9%
	Zimovia Strait Complex	4%

(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 extremely shallow and rocky soils.

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

There are approximately 7,286 acres mapped as forestland, of which 4,999 acres or 69 percent are mapped as productive old-growth forest. Of the productive old growth, 2,634 acres or 53 percent are mapped as high-volume old-growth forest. The productive old growth includes about 304 acres of high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. There are 34 acres mapped as second growth resulting from beach logging in prior years.

(d) Fish Resources: Blake Creek is a third-order watershed that contains fish habitat (primarily resident fish) and is considered moderately sensitive (USDA Forest Service, 1998). Blake Creek is classified as a Class I stream.

(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: This area was allocated to three land use designations (LUDs) in the 1997 Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan. These three LUDs are Scenic Viewshed, Timber Production, and Old-growth Habitat.

LUD	Acres
Scenic Viewshed	3,981
Timber Production	2,314
Old-growth Habitat	1,339

Approximately 82 percent of the roadless area was allocated to development LUDs (Scenic Viewshed, Timber Production). The higher elevation area located in the northern part of the area was allocated to the Scenic Viewshed LUD, which account for approximately 52 percent of the roadless area. The Timber Production LUD was assigned to approximately 30 percent of the roadless area. This LUD is located in the lower elevation areas on the west side of the main mountain ridge in this area.

Approximately 18 percent of the area was allocated to one non-development LUD, Old-growth Habitat. This LUD is a part of the Blake Old-Growth Reserve located on the east side of the mountain ridge.

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Present recreation use levels are low except at streams and lakes near the roads and occasionally at the mouths of some streams. The shoreline along Blake Channel is mostly rocky and receives little recreation use. 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 138 kV Tyee powerline was constructed in 1984 and borders the southern edge of the roadless area.

This area includes portions of two timber sales proposed in the 1998 Wrangell Island Analysis (USDA Forest Service, 1998). The Highbush Timber Sale project area extends from the west border of the area to the boundary of the Blake Old-Growth Reserve. The Blake Timber Sale area is located in the southern portion of the area, south of the Blake Old-Growth Reserve. The Tongass National Forest 10-year action plan schedules the small Shady/Highbush Timber Sale, which includes the area, for 2004.

(6) Appearance (Apparent Naturalness): Overall, the area has high scenic quality with a natural appearing landscape and provides scenery from surrounding land and saltwater areas, including Blake Channel.

(7) Surroundings (External Influences): The area is separated from the mainland by The Narrows to the north and Blake Channel to the east. The Tyee powerline forms the south and part of the west boundary of the area. Forest roads and associated harvest areas form the remainder of the west boundary. Timber sales are planned for portions of the roadless areas west of the East Wrangell Roadless Area (USDA Forest Service, 2001). The proposed Madan Timber Sale project area is located on the mainland immediately north across The Narrows from the East Wrangell Roadless Area. Boats traveling the waters of Blake Channel and The Narrows may be visible from within parts of the area, but usually are not intrusive. It is possible to see harvested areas, as well as the Tyee powerline, from some locations within this roadless area.

(8) Attractions and Features of Special Interest: There are no identified unique or special features in this area. There is an improved trail located just outside the roadless area that leads to Highbush Lake, which is within the roadless area. The area contains five inventoried recreation places, which cover 343 acres, or 4 percent of the roadless area.

(9) Differences between the 1989 and 2003 Roadless Area Boundary: The East Wrangell Roadless Area did not exist in 1989. At that time it was part of the South Wrangell Roadless Area. Development activities between 1989 and 1996 separated 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. The Tyee powerline forms the southern boundary of the area.

(2) Opportunity for Solitude, Serenity, Self-reliance, Adventure, Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation: There is a low opportunity for solitude within the area. Present recreation use is low due to a lack of road access and poor boat anchorages. 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)	4,513	59%
Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM)	1,280	17%
Roaded Natural (RN)	1,226	16%
Roaded Modified (RM)	616	8%

The area contains five inventoried recreation places, which cover 343 acres, or 4 percent of the roadless area.

ROS Class	# of Rec. Places	Total Acres
SPNM	0	0
SPM	1	171
RN	1	40
RM	4	132

* Rec. Places may 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 boat from the community of Wrangell in about 1 hour, and from Ketchikan in approximately 7 hours. Access on land is by road (28 miles) from the city of Wrangell.

(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 was given a rating of 20 out of 28 possible points; the East Wrangell Roadless Area represented only a portion of that area. The rating was re-evaluated for this updated version of the Analysis of the Management Situation. Based on this re-evaluation, the East Wrangell Roadless Area was given a rating of 17. This rating reflects the effects of developments in adjacent areas on wilderness attributes of this relatively small roadless area.

(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: None of the VCUs are listed as primary salmon or sport fish producers (ADF&G, 1998).

Blake Creek, which flows through the valley south of the elevated northern portion of the area, is classified as a Class I stream.

Highbush Lake, located on the west edge of the roadless area, is easily accessible from the road system and has a fishable trout population.

According to the Wrangell Island Analysis Report (USDA Forest Service, 1998), this roadless area includes one third order watershed (Blake Creek) and portions of another (Earl Creek). Blake Creek is one of four unroaded third order watersheds on the island. The most important riparian zones on the island are associated with very low gradient floodplain stream channels found in watersheds, such as the Earl Creek watershed. 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: Important species include Sitka black-tailed deer, wolves, black bear, pine marten, and small populations of brown bear and moose. Most high value old-growth habitat is along the

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north end of the area and along the beach. Wrangell Island is also known to support brown bears, unlike many of the outer coast islands. Mountain lions and wolverine have also been reported on the island. High value marten habitat generally occurs along the beach (USDA Forest Service, 1998). Wrangell Island also supports an endemic species, the Wrangell red-backed vole. Old-growth spruce-hemlock forests provide the vegetative structure preferred by nesting goshawks.

(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, including 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. 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. The area is located approximately 12 air and 25 water miles from the city of Wrangell and is, therefore, relatively accessible to school-age children.

(6) Scenic Values: The majority of the area appears unmodified. The Tye powerline forms the south boundary of the area. Forest roads and associated harvested areas form the remainder of the west boundary. The powerline is well located to minimize its visibility from the water but is visible from locations within this roadless area. Harvested areas are also visible from some parts of the roadless area. Blake Channel is the most popular route to the Anan Wildlife Observatory and also a secondary ferry and small cruise ship route. As a result, the hillslopes seen from the channel have high scenic values.

Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas identified by the Forest Plan that are within or adjacent to the area include Blake Channel, which is used by tour ships.

About 8 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, approximately 92 percent, is inventoried as Variety Class B (possessing landscape diversity that is common for the character type).

The majority of this roadless area, approximately 75 percent, has an Existing Visual Condition (EVC) Type I, where only ecological change occurs on the landscape. Two percent of this roadless area is EVC Type III, where changes in the landscape are seen by the average forest visitor, but the natural appearance remains dominant. Twenty-two percent 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: This area is located approximately 1 hour by boat and 1 hour (28 miles) by automobile from Wrangell, which is the closest community. Wrangell is also the closest stop on the Alaska Marine Highway. There is an improved trail located just outside the roadless area that leads to Highbush Lake, which is within the roadless area. The lake has a public-use rowboat that people can use for fishing or boating around the lake. Present recreation use within the area is low due to a lack of road access and poor boat anchorages along the shoreline.

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. Higher average numbers of deer are harvested from nearby Etolin and Zarembo Islands (USDA Forest Service, 1998). The VCUs in this area were not included among the VCUs with

highest community use value. Only VCU 505, along Blake Channel, 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 east, north, and part of its west boundaries. The area is, however, irregularly shaped because the Tye powerline forms the south boundary of the area. The remainder of the west boundary is formed by forest roads and associated harvest units. As a result, the current boundaries of the East Wrangell Roadless Area do not conform to natural landscape features. Defining a wilderness unit based on the Blake landscape unit might enhance the wilderness characteristics of the area. However, the Blake landscape unit is divided by the Tye powerline with the west portion of the unit contained within the Southeast Wrangell Roadless Area.

Much of the south central portion of Wrangell Island, located west of the East Wrangell Roadless Area was allocated to the Timber Production LUD. Other parts of the island were allocated to the Old-growth Reserve, Modified Landscape, and Scenic Viewshed LUDs. The proposed Madan Timber Sale project area is located on the mainland immediately north across The Narrows from the East Wrangell Roadless Area. The land in and around the proposed Madan Timber Sale project area was allocated primarily to the Scenic Viewshed and Old-growth Reserve LUDs, with some land allocated to the Timber Production and Modified Landscape LUDs further inland. The area located on the mainland immediately east across Blake Channel from the East Wrangell Roadless Area was allocated to the Semi-remote Recreation LUD, with a small area to the south allocated to the Scenic Viewshed LUD.

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

(1) Recreation, Including Tourism Potential: The recreation potential in this area is currently limited by a lack of road access and poor boat anchorages (USDA Forest Service, 1998). Forest roads do, however, extend to the west boundary of the 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, however, there may be potential to enhance the trout fishery in Highbush Lake.

(4) Wildlife Resources: There are opportunities for moose habitat improvement projects in the area. These projects typically consist of browse enhancement involving seeding, planting, and releasing.

(5) Timber Resources: There are approximately 4,999 acres mapped as productive old growth and 34 acres mapped as second growth in the roadless area. Of these acres, 3,152 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), 1,241 acres (16 percent) of this roadless area are estimated to be suitable for timber production. Approximately 694 of the suitable acres are mapped as high-volume old growth; of these acres, 62 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. Some areas are highly prone to strong winds that 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.

The area includes portions of two timber sales proposed in the 1998 Wrangell Island Analysis (USDA Forest Service, 1998). The Highbush Timber Sale project area extends from the west border of the area to the boundary of the Blake Old-Growth Reserve. The Blake Timber Sale area is located in the southern portion of the area, south of the Blake Old-Growth Reserve. The Tongass National Forest 10-year action plan schedules the small Shady/Highbush Timber Sale, which includes the area, for 2004.

(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.

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- (7) **Minerals:** There are no known current claims in this area. This area contains an estimated 45 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.
- (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. 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. These proposed improvements would be located several miles west of the East Wrangell Roadless Area. There are no proposed transportation or new utility corridors within the roadless area. New local roads are likely to be proposed in LUDs that allow timber management activities.
- (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:** The Tyee powerline that forms the south boundary of the area is under special use permit. This permit is not within the roadless area.
- (12) **Land Status:** The roadless area is entirely National Forest System land, though the state has selected land around Earl West Cove, including a portion of the west end of this roadless area.

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 timber harvest and roaded recreation opportunities (USDA Forest Service, 1990).
- (b) **Congressional Interest:** Two bills from the U.S. House of Representatives included wilderness proposals for Southeast Alaska. In 1989, HR 987 did not include this area. In 2001, HR 2908 did not propose the area for wilderness, but did propose it to be classified as a Congressionally Designated LUD II area and managed in an unroaded condition.
- (c) **Public Input During Forest Plan Revision and Appeals:** No specific recommendations for wilderness were made. The Southeast Alaska Conservation Council included the Wrangell Narrows and Blake Channel in their 1991 list of areas that merited special management protection because of their outstanding wildlife, fisheries, hunting, fishing, subsistence, recreation, and tourism values. Another party noted that the scenic quality of the Wrangell Narrows should be preserved.

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 most of the East 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 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. The summary of comments presented in the Wrangell Island Analysis 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 increasing public concern about the cumulative effects of timber harvest, road building, and recreation development on wildlife habitat (USDA Forest Service, 1998).

(f) Public Input Expressed During Supplemental EIS 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 247 for permanent protection as LUD II.

(2) Nearby Roadless and Wilderness Areas and Uses: The Southeast Wrangell Roadless Area is located south and west of this area. These two areas are separated by the Tye powerline and associated right-of-way. The Central, South, and West Wrangell Roadless Areas are located to the west, separated from one another by existing roads and harvest units. Present recreation use levels are low in these areas 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 Madan Roadless Area is located directly north across The Narrows. The proposed Madan Timber Sale extends to the shoreline of that area. The Aaron and Harding Roadless Areas are located east across Blake Channel from the East Wrangell Roadless Area.

The nearest wilderness is the Stikine-LeConte, approximately 10 miles to the north. The South Etoin Wilderness is located about 12 miles southwest of the East Wrangell Roadless Area. The area currently receives light to moderate use inland, away from saltwater or road access.

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

Community	Air Miles	Water Miles
Ketchikan (Pop. 14,070)	60	85
Wrangell (Pop. 2,308)	15	20
Petersburg (Pop. 3,224)	45	45
Juneau (Pop. 30,711)	160	165

Wrangell is the nearest stop on the Alaska Marine Highway.

(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System: The East Wrangell Roadless Area is located on the east side of Wrangell Island. This area is separated from the mainland by The Narrows to the north and Blake Channel to the east. The 138 kV Tye powerline forms the south boundary of the area. Forest roads and associated harvest areas form the remainder of the west boundary. The northern portion of the roadless area is generally characterized by a mountain ridge that reaches elevations of over 2,000 feet with a high point of 2,798 feet. The majority of the area is above 1,000 feet. Blake Creek flows through the valley south of the elevated northern portion of the area. Saltwater borders the area to the north and east.

The area is heavily influenced by developments and activities on adjacent lands. The natural integrity of the area is high and the apparent naturalness is moderate. The opportunity for solitude is low and the opportunity for primitive recreation is relatively high.

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Approximately 8 percent of the landscape is considered distinctive for the character type from a scenery standpoint. There are no other significant or unique features in this area.

The roadless area includes about 2,634 acres of high-volume, old-growth forest. Of these acres, 304 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The East Wrangell Roadless Area is classified as being in the Etohin Island and Vicinity and in the Central Coast Range Biogeographic Provinces. Approximately 58 percent of the roadless area is in Etohin Island and Vicinity province and makes up about 1 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 Etohin Wilderness is located in this province and makes up about 16 percent of the province. Approximately 42 percent of the roadless area is in the Central Coast Range province and makes less than one percent of that province. It is one of nine inventoried roadless areas found in the province that collectively make up about 59 percent of the province. Portions of the Stikine-LeConte Wilderness lie within the Central Coast Range province and make up about 38 percent of the province.

The East Wrangell Roadless Area lies completely within the Inside Passage Fjordlands Ecological Section and represents 0.4 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 majority (87 percent) of the roadless area is in the Eastern Passage Complex Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 3 percent of the entire ecological subsection. Approximately 23 percent of this ecological subsection is in existing wilderness, 3 percent is in existing LUD II, and an additional 29 percent is protected by other existing non-development LUDs. Nine percent of the roadless area is in the Bell Island Granitics Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 0.3 percent of the entire ecological subsection, of which 14 percent is in existing wilderness, 9 percent in LUD II, and is well represented by other existing non-development LUDs (57 percent). The balance (4 percent) of the roadless area is in the Zimovia Strait Complex Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 0.2 percent of the entire ecological subsection, 5 percent of which is protected in existing wilderness, and 26 percent in other existing non-development LUDs.

The East Wrangell Roadless Area was rated 17 out of a possible 28 points under the WARS. As such, its WARS rating is ranked 93rd from the highest (along with 4 other roadless areas) among the 109 Tongass inventoried roadless areas.

There is some local and national support for management of the area in an unroaded condition, and little support for designating the area as wilderness. Designation would create a wilderness that has few features that are considered unique or significant from a wilderness perspective. 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 East Wrangell Roadless Area would be managed under the existing Forest Plan if Alternative 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 7 is implemented. Approximately 18 percent of the roadless area would be managed under non-development LUDs. Timber harvest and road development could occur in the remaining 82 percent. The land in the development LUDs provides an estimated 1,241 acres that are suitable for timber production (1 percent of the suitable acres on the Wrangell Ranger District). Approximately 62 of the suitable acres are classified as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. This area contains 45 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. The scenic values would be mostly protected 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. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including scenic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated LUD II.

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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, including scenic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness.

Land Use Designation Allocations and Suitable Timber Lands by Alternative for Roadless Area 247 (in acres)								
Land Use Designation	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7	Alt 8
Recommended Wilderness								7,634
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	1,339	1,339	1,339	1,339	1,339		1,339	
Semi-remote Recreation								
Recommended LUD II						7,634		
LUD II								
Wild, Scenic, Recreational River								
Experimental Forest								
Scenic Viewshed	3,981	3,981	3,981	3,981	3,981		3,981	
Modified Landscape								
Timber Production	2,314	2,314	2,314	2,314	2,314		2,314	
TOTAL	7,634	7,634	7,634	7,634	7,634	7,634	7,634	7,634
Suitable Timber Lands	1,241	1,241	1,241	1,241	1,241	0	1,241	0