

Appendix C

INDIVIDUAL ROADLESS AREA DESCRIPTION

ROADLESS AREA NAME: Outer Islands (503)

ACRES (NFS): 99,891

BIOGEOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Southern Outer Islands

ECOLOGICAL SECTION: Outer Islands Fjordlands, Kuiu-Prince of Wales Fjordlands

2003 WILDERNESS ATTRIBUTE RATING: 23 (25)

I. Overview and Description

(1) **Location and Access:** The Outer Island Roadless Area consists of six major islands and numerous smaller islands off the west coast of Prince of Wales Island. The major islands are: Lulu, Noyes, Baker, San Fernando, St. Ignace, and San Juan Bautista. San Alberto Bay separates the easternmost islands from Prince of Wales Island. Bucareli Bay separates the southernmost islands from Suemez Island. The open Pacific Ocean lies to the west. The Gulf of Esquibel lies to the north. The roadless area is approximately 70 air miles west of Ketchikan, 5 air miles west of Craig, and approximately 25 air miles west of Hollis, the closest stop on the Alaska Marine Highway. There are no places suitable for landing wheeled aircraft in the roadless area. Access is by boat and floatplane. Access to upland areas is by foot or by helicopter.

(2) **History:** These islands contain important traditional-use sites for the ancient and historic Alaska Native cultures. Traditional-use sites located on the northern and southern ends of Noyes Island and on San Juan Bautista Island have been conveyed to Native Corporations. The area derives its Spanish place names from Spanish explorations that reached this area in the late 18th century (1779 and 1791), although no permanent settlements were established. The area was important in the early-day commercial fishing industry. These islands are located next to the major offshore salmon fishing grounds in Southeast Alaska. Noyes Island was a site for fish canneries and salteries. Private inholdings still exist in Steamboat Bay on northeast Noyes, the site of the Steamboat Bay Cannery. This is a large facility that has been kept in reasonable repair, although not operated as a cannery for some time. All islands served as shelters and anchorages for the offshore fishing fleet. Currently, these bays and anchorages are used by the floating fish-buying barges and the fishing fleet. The outside waters of Baker and Noyes Islands are one of the sport fish guiding areas that makes Southeast Alaska famous. The waters around these islands are the heaviest used commercial sport fish guiding areas for some distance. They are used by all sport fishing lodges from Elcap to Waterfall. Daily travel by charter boats to and from the outside coastal fishing grounds of Baker and Noyes is via Port Real Marina, Bucarelli Bay, Portillo Channel, and Arriaga Passage.

(3) **Geography and Topography:** The six major islands range in size from 5,800 to 33,000 acres. Noyes, Baker, and San Juan Bautista Islands are very rugged with elevations over 2,000 feet. San Fernando and Lulu Islands are characterized by moderate to flat terrain. The coastline of these islands ranges from highly irregular for Baker and Noyes Islands to smooth for San Juan Bautista and Lulu Islands. The west coasts of Noyes and Baker Islands are noted for their high-energy coastlines and their towering cliffs and headlands. Of particular note on Noyes Island is Cape Addington, where it is common to see sea lions hauled out on the rocks. The area includes approximately 576 islands and islets (32 of these are greater than 10 acres) totaling 99,891 acres. There are approximately 285 miles of shoreline on saltwater, 246 acres of lakes, 838 acres of alpine, and 316 acres of rock.

(4) Ecosystem:

(a) Classification: Biogeographic Province. The islands are part of the Southern Outer Island Biogeographic Province. The islands in this province are isolated and are subject to strong oceanic influences. Temperatures are moderate year round. The major islands have gentle rolling topography with localized areas of rugged terrain.

Ecological Section/Subsection. The Outer Islands Roadless Area is contained within the Outer Islands Fjordlands Ecological Section (M247H) and the Kuiu- Prince of Wales Fjordlands Ecological Section (M247F). This area is represented by three ecological subsections (see table below). The Dall-Outside Complex Ecological Subsection (56% of roadless area) consists of a steeply narrow and rugged mountain range. The elevation is generally less than 1,000 feet, though some peaks reach 2,500 feet. The bedrock is mostly volcanics with smaller portions of carbonates. Well-drained soils support moderate to highly productive hemlock, hemlock-spruce, and mixed conifer forests. The U-shaped valleys are steep, small, and contain glacial till deposits that support forested wetlands. The Gulf of Esquibel Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection (40% of roadless area) contains sedimentary and volcanic bedrock covered by mostly glacial till soils. This landscape is mostly flat and rolling, dominated by mixed conifer wetlands on organic soils and productive forests on better-drained hummocks and hillslopes (Nowacki et al., 2001).

Ecological Section	Ecological Subsection	Percent of Roadless Area
Outer Islands Fjordlands	Dall-Outside Complex	56%
Kuiu-Prince of Wales Fjordlands	Gulf of Esquibel Till Lowlands	40%
	Soda Bay Till Lowlands	4%

(b) Soils: Soils are highly organic with a low clay content and are generally formed over bedrock. They are typically about 40 inches deep.

(c) Vegetation: This area is typical Southeast Alaska coastal temperate rain forest. The forest is primarily western hemlock and Sitka spruce with a large cedar component. Approximately 708 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 97,211 acres mapped as forest land of which 52,919 acres or 54 percent are mapped as productive old-growth forest. Of the productive old growth, 21,127 acres or 40 percent are mapped as high-volume old-growth forest. The productive old growth includes about 4,253 acres of high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. There is no second growth in this area.

(d) Fish Resources: The streams in this area provide habitat for anadromous fish including coho, pink, and chum salmon. The Anadromous Waters Catalogue (ADF&G, 2000) shows fish-bearing streams on all of the islands except St. Ignace and Cone Islands. The streams and lakes on the islands also support fresh water fish including trout.

(e) Wildlife Resources: All of the islands have populations of Sitka black-tailed deer, black bear, river otter, beaver and other small land mammals. These islands are relatively rich in endemic vertebrate species and coastal seabird colonies. Sea mammals are prevalent on the outside coast, islands and rocks. Puffins frequent the west coast and offshore rocks of Noyes Island. MacDonald and Cook (1999) indicate that brown bears, moose, and mountain goats are not found on these islands. Other species travel back and forth between these islands frequently.

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

Appendix C

LUD	Acres
Scenic Viewshed	3,338
LUD II	74,112
Semi-remote Recreation	21,991
Old-growth Habitat	450

The roadless area contains one development LUD, Scenic Viewshed, which comprises approximately three percent of the roadless area. This LUD is located mostly on San Juan Bautista Island.

Approximately 97 percent of the roadless area was allocated to non-development LUDs. Most of this roadless area was designated to LUD II and account for approximately 74 percent of the roadless area. Areas with LUD II designations include Noyes, Lulu, Baker Cone, and St. Ignace Islands and the small adjacent islands near the shores of these islands. Approximately 22 percent of the roadless area was allocated to the Semi-remote Recreation LUD, which is located on San Fernando Island and the nearby small islands. The northwest corner of Bautista Island was allocated to Old-growth Habitat LUD and accounts for less than one percent of the acres in the roadless area.

The commercial fishing fleet is the largest user of the island group. Boats and the floating fish-buying stations anchor in the major bays and anchorages. The inside waters around this island group are excellent for sport salmon and halibut fishing. This attracts both tourists and local residents to the area. These people occasionally go ashore on the islands for shore-based recreation such as beachcombing and dispersed camping. One photography and hiking tour guide operates in the roadless area (3 service days in 2001). Some deer and bear hunting also takes place on the islands. There is one public recreation cabin and mooring buoy on San Fernando Island at Point Amagura. Currently there are planning efforts for the construction of a cross-island trail, public recreation cabin and public boat dock on Baker Island in south Port San Antonio to Little Veta Bay. There is also a non-National Forest System maintained trail leading from Ulitka Bay to Roller Bay on Noyes Island, which is popular with local residents. Planning was initiated for timber sales on Noyes Island but these plans have never been completed. There is some subsistence use, mostly by local residents.

(6) Appearance (Apparent Naturalness): This roadless area possesses outstanding natural integrity. Developments on non-National Forest System lands on Noyes Island, Lulu Island, and San Juan Bautista Island may affect on the apparent naturalness of nearby areas in the roadless area but the remainder the roadless area appears unmodified. There are no developments on National Forest System lands on these islands other than the one cabin at San Fernando. All other development is on native corporation or private inholdings. The Forest Service has never implemented any timber harvest activities in this area.

(7) Surroundings (External Influences): Surrounding lands have only minor affects on the roadless area. There is non-National Forest System land on Noyes Island, Lulu Island, and San Juan Bautista Island, which are primarily owned by Native Village Corporations or the State of Alaska. Developments on these lands may affect nearby portions of the roadless area. Waterfall, a word class fishing resort, is approximately 7 miles to the southeast on Prince of Wales Island. The town of Craig is 6 miles to the east. The Maurelle Islands Wilderness is approximately 2 miles north of Noyes Island.

(8) Attractions and Features of Special Interest: The natural features of the area, the scenery, the saltwater bays and inlets, and the opportunity to see wildlife and to study the processes, which formed this area may all be attractions. The spectacular cliffs with sea caves and the beaches on the outer coast are of special interest. An historic Native townsite on Baker Island may be developed as an interpretive site. The area contains 18 inventoried recreation places, which cover 32,669 acres, or 33 percent of the roadless area.

(9) Differences between the 1980 and 2003 Roadless Area Boundary: Saint Joseph Island, the northernmost island in the pre-1989 roadless area, is now part of the Maurelle Islands Wilderness. Also, portions of Noyes Island, Lulu Island, and San Juan Bautista Island have been conveyed to Native Corporations and the State and are no longer part of the roadless area.

II. Capability for Management as Wilderness

(1) Natural Integrity and Apparent Naturalness: This island group possesses high natural integrity and apparent naturalness. The small blocks of non-National Forest System land located on Noyes and Lulu Islands do not have a major affect the apparent naturalness or natural integrity of this or the other islands in the group. However, nearly half the shoreline of San Juan Bautista Island is Native Corporation-owned and development that has occurred or may occur on this, or other private areas, may affect the natural integrity and apparent naturalness in time. This roadless area, with the possible exception of San Juan Bautista Island, is highly suitable for wilderness classification.

(2) Opportunity for Solitude and Serenity, Self-reliance, Adventure, Challenging Experiences, and Primitive Recreation: With the possible exception of the area adjacent to non-National Forest System lands, there is high to very high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation within this roadless area. A visitor is unlikely to encounter another person in most of the roadless area. Except via waterways where the heavy boat traffic is constant during fishing season. The outer coasts of Noyes and Baker Islands provide the opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation in an ocean beach environment. The inside protected waters surrounding the islands provide excellent opportunities for sea kayaking recreation. These opportunities extend to the upland areas as well where visitors can participate in hiking, fishing, beach combing, and dispersed camping.

The roadless area contains steep, rugged terrain, rising to over 2,000 feet in elevation. The steep nature of portions of the area, its size, the lack of developed trails or roads, and the presence of black bears presents a high degree of challenge and the need for woods skills and experience. Other portions of the roadless area have relatively gentle topography and are less challenging to cross.

Due to the remoteness of the roadless area, there are outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation experiences, particularly on Noyes and Baker Islands with their various distinct and isolated bays, and the recreation and scenic attractions of the outer coastal areas. 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)	82,307	82%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM)	9,812	10%
Semi-Primitive Motorized (SPM)	7,515	8%
Roaded Modified (RM)	108	0%

The area contains 18 inventoried recreation places, which cover 32,669 acres, or 33 percent of the roadless area.

ROS Class	# of Rec. Places*	Total Acres
P	12	26,184
SPNM	1	2,276
SPM	6	4,209
RM	0	0

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

There is a public recreation cabin and mooring buoy near Point Amargura on San Fernando Island. There are no other developed recreation facilities in the roadless area. Currently there are planning efforts for the construction of a cross-island trail, public recreation cabin, and public boat dock on Baker Island in south Port San Antonio to Little Veta Bay. A non-National Forest System maintained trail leading from Ulitka Bay to Roller Bay on Noyes Island is adjacent to 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

Appendix C

items 1 and 2 of this section (natural integrity, apparent naturalness, outstanding opportunity for solitude, and primitive recreation opportunities).

In 1979, during the RARE II process, the Tongass National Forest applied WARS for the first time and rated each unroaded VCU on the Tongass. In 1989, the inventoried roadless areas (which generally include more than one VCU) were rated according to this system for the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS) developed in support of the Forest Plan Revision. This original version of the AMS included both the individual VCU ratings done in 1979 and the composite rating that was done for each roadless area in 1989. The 1989 rating for the Outer Islands Roadless Area Roadless Area was 24 out of 28 possible points. The 1989 rating was re-evaluated for this updated version of the AMS. Based on this re-evaluation, the area was given a rating of 23. It was also rated without San Juan Batista Island and received a rating of 25 points.

(4) Ecologic and Geologic Values: The high-energy outer coastlines of Noyes and Baker Islands, which includes cliffs and caves and the karst on Noyes and Baker Islands, are important geologic features. These islands are relatively rich in endemic vertebrate species and coastal seabird colonies.

(a) Fish Resources: The Tongass Fish and Wildlife Resource Assessment (ADF&G, 1998) listed VCUs 568, 569, and 593 (Luhu, Baker, and a few smaller islands) as primary salmon producers but listed no VCUs as primary sport fish producers.

The streams in this area provide habitat for coho, pink, and chum salmon. The Anadromous Waters Catalogue (ADF&G, 2000) shows fish-bearing streams on all of the islands except St. Ignace and Cone Islands. Fish-bearing streams on Noyes Island drain into Roller Bay and Steamboat Bay. On Lulu Island, major streams drain into St. Nicholas Channel and Port Real Marina. West Portillo channel, between Lulu and San Fernando Islands, has an estimated annual peak escapement of 37,400 pink salmon (ADF&G, 1998). There is fishing for chinook salmon on San Fernando Island at Point Amargura (Tongass National Forest Recreation Cabin website, 2001). South Port Real Marina, between Baker and Lulu Islands, receives an estimated peak escapement of 55,000 pink salmon. This area also has good coho production (ADF&G, 1998). Baker Island streams drain into Port Asumcion and Port San Antonio. Lake Fortaleza, on Baker Island, has runs of coho salmon.

(b) Wildlife Resources: All of the islands have populations of Sitka black-tailed deer, black bear, river otter, beaver and other small land mammals. Sea birds and mammals are prevalent on the outside coast, islands and rocks. Puffins frequent the west coast and offshore rocks of Noyes Island. MacDonald and Cook (1999) indicate that brown bears, moose, and mountain goats are not found on these islands. There is an active sea lion study at Cape Addington by ADF&G.

(c) Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species: Two federally listed threatened and endangered species, the humpback whale and Steller sea lion occur in the waters around the area. Steller sea lions use rock haul-outs at Cape Addington on Noyes and Cape Bartolome on Baker Island. Two Forest Service Sensitive Species, Peale's peregrine falcon and the Queen Charlotte goshawk, may be found in the area. Peale's peregrine falcons have been observed in 1981 and again in 1990 along rocky cliffs on the western shores of Noyes as well as the western and eastern shores of Baker Islands. Recent wildlife surveys indicate that the Queen Charlotte goshawk may also occur on Baker Island. Queen Charlotte butterweed, a sensitive species, was found at Lake Fortaleza on Baker Island. In addition, eight other sensitive plant species are known or suspected to occur in the Craig Ranger District.

(d) Karst, Cave, and Other Geologic Resources: Limestones underlay Cape Addington and the northwestern portion of Noyes Island southwest of Steamboat Bay. There are outcrops of limestone that are exposed from Outer Point Baker Island to the top of Mt. Esmeralda at 1,970 feet in elevation. Karst has developed in the limestones found on the uplands of these areas. These areas remain uninventoried and little is known about the karst and cave development there. Extensive sea caves have been carved into the sea cliffs of these Islands, both within the limestone and with in the other rock types found there. Paleontological and cultural deposits in these caves have yielded important scientific discoveries. One extremely large sea cave has even been carved into the granite of Baker Island. Extensive areas of uplifted beach and forelands exist on these islands giving clues into the glacial and/or tectonic past of the outer

coast of Southeast Alaska. This area is thought to have been ice-free during the last glacial episode and is the subject of research on determining the ecology of the outer coast during the last glacial period and the extent and timing of glaciation. The mapped karst resources encompass 5,071 acres or 5 percent of the roadless area. About one-fifth of the karst is mapped as high vulnerability. There are no glaciers or unique geologic features known on these islands.

(5) Scientific and Educational Values: The high-energy outer coastlines of Noyes and Baker Islands and the karst on Noyes and Baker Islands are special features. There are also opportunities to study forests, wildlife, fish, and geologic processes in a pristine setting. An extensive landslide is evident on Noyes in Little Steamboat Bay, (the small bay just northwest of Steamboat on the map). This slide originated at the top of the mountain and appeared to have come down with such speed and force that the debris path actually extends back up the opposite hill slope. There is potential to interpret cultural resources on Baker Island. There is an active sea lion study at Cape Addington by ADF&G.

(6) Scenic Values: The Noyes and Baker Islands portion of this roadless area is part of the Coastal Hills character type which is characterized by moderately steep landforms, predominantly rounded summits (some over 3,000 feet high), and flat-floored U-shaped valleys. These two islands are representative of this character type with their steep slopes (some over 2,000 feet high) and many short U-shaped valleys. The other islands are part of the Kupreanof Lowlands character type, which is characterized by lower and more rolling relief with elevations seldom greater than 1,500 feet. Lulu and San Fernando Islands possess terrain that is generally flatter than the character type's norm. Outer coast has spectacular wave cut cliffs.

The natural characteristics are easily seen from the major and minor water travel routes and from inside the roadless area. Visual Priority Routes and Use Areas identified by the Forest Plan, that are within or adjacent to the roadless area, include: the small boat route from San Cristoval Channel to Ulloa Channel; Port Real Marina and Buccareli Bay and other saltwater use areas; the Craig and Klawock communities; and Steamboat Bay and Pt. Garcia, boat anchorages.

About 55 percent of this area is rated as Variety Class B, possessing landscape characteristics common for the character type. Twelve percent of this area is inventoried as Variety Class A, possessing landscape diversity that is unique for the character type. These landscapes are primarily the outer coastal areas of Noyes and Baker Islands, which include rugged, rocky shorelines with many dramatic steep-walled headlands. Approximately 32 percent of the area was rated as Variety Class C, possessing a very low degree of landscape diversity relative to the character type. These areas include the very flat terrain and relatively featureless shorelines of Lulu and San Fernando Islands.

The vast majority of roadless area, approximately 99 percent, was inventoried as Type I Existing Visual Condition. The natural landscape has remained unaltered by human activity; although some Alaska Native land on the east side of San Juan Bautista has been logged and this may affect the visual condition of nearby portions of the roadless area.

(7) Social, Cultural, and Historical Values: These islands were important traditional-use sites for the ancient and historic Alaska Native cultures. Traditional-use sites on the northern and southern ends of Noyes Island and on San Juan Bautista Island have been conveyed to Native Corporations. The area derives its Spanish place names from Spanish explorers that reached this area in the late 18th century, although no permanent settlements were established. The area has abundant sea caves that are significant culturally. The area was important in the early day commercial fishing industry. These islands are located next to the major offshore salmon fishing grounds in Southeast Alaska. Noyes Island was a site for fish canneries and salteries. All islands served as shelters and anchorages for the offshore fishing fleet. Currently, the commercial fishing fleet is the largest user of the island group. Boats and the floating fish-buying stations anchor in the major bays and anchorages. The inside waters around this island group are excellent for sport salmon and halibut fishing. This attracts both tourists and local residents to the area. These people occasionally go ashore on the islands for shore-based recreation such as beach combing and dispersed camping. One photography and hiking tour guide operates in the roadless area (3 service days in 2000). Some deer and bear hunting also takes place on the islands. There is one public recreation cabin and mooring buoy located on Point Amagura on San Fernando Island. Planning was initiated for timber sales on Noyes Island but these plans have never been completed. All National Forest System land on the island is now designated as LUD II and is not available for timber harvest. The same is true for Lulu, Baker, St. Ignace, Cook, and San Juan Bautista Islands. This roadless area supports subsistence use, mostly by local residents. All

Appendix C

eight VCUs in this roadless area (567, 568, 569, 593, 626, 627, 628, and 629) are listed among those VCUs with the highest sensitivity to disturbance of subsistence use areas. Only VCU 593 (a few very small islands in San Cristoval Channel) is rated among the VCUs with the highest community fish and wildlife values and no VCUs were listed in the second and third most important groups of VCUs (ADF&G, 1998).

(8) Manageability as Wilderness and Boundary Conditions/Changes: The Pacific Ocean and other saltwater bodies provide well-defined boundaries for most of the roadless area. The small pockets of non-National Forest System lands on Noyes and Lulu Islands do not have well-defined boundaries but these areas are small and would not have a large effect on manageability. Non-National Forest System lands on San Juan Bautista Island extend along half of the shoreline (the shore facing the town of Craig). The boundary between the roadless area and private lands are not defined by topographic features. The roadless area might be better managed as a wilderness if this island were not included.

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

(1) Recreation, including Tourism Potential: Tourism has been increasing in Southeast Alaska and is expected to continue to increase. The roadless area is close to Waterfall, a world-class resort that draws tourists interested in fishing. There is the potential for some of these tourists and other visitors to Southeast Alaska to be drawn to fish, hunt, and camp in the roadless area. There is a potential for outfitter/guide permits to increase. There are excellent opportunities to develop canoe/kayak routes through the protected inside waters, interpretation of cultural resources, additional public recreation cabins, and hiking trails from the inner bays to the outer coast beaches. All of the islands are accessible (weather dependant) by boat through protected inside waters from Craig and Klawock, thus providing the opportunity to develop recreation facilities in a unique offshore marine environment.

In 1996, the Alaska Visitors Association proposed the following recreation developments for this roadless area: a small cruise ship shorewalk for 25 persons a day on Steamboat Bay (Noyes Island); day use recreation for 150 persons per day and a day use boat dock for 50 people on Baker Island; and public recreation cabins on San Fernando Island.

(2) Subsistence Uses: Management as a wilderness would not conflict with current subsistence uses.

(3) Fish Resources: The recently completed fish habitat inventory of these islands indicates some potential to improve the quality and availability of salmon spawning habitat on a number of streams. Most of this potential relates to constructing fish passes around natural barriers thus providing fish access to high quality spawning habitat. No fish habitat enhancement projects are currently planned for the roadless area.

(4) Wildlife Resources: There are no plans for wildlife habitat improvement projects within the roadless area.

(5) Timber Resources: There are 52,919 acres inventoried as productive old-growth forest in the roadless area. None of the area is mapped as second growth. Of this, approximately 6,305 acres are categorized as tentatively suitable for timber harvest. Based on the Forest Plan LUDs assigned to this area (and estimated falldown and scheduling reduction factors), 1,170 acres or 1 percent of this roadless area are estimated to be suitable for timber production. Approximately 388 of the suitable acres are mapped as high-volume old growth; of these acres, 50 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

All of the roadless area, except San Fernando and San Juan Bautista Islands and the small islands near these islands, was designated as LUD II and is not available for timber harvest. San Fernando Island is allocated to Semi-remote Recreation and is not available for timber harvest. Private landowners have developed a road system and LTF site on San Juan Bautista. Access to National Forest System lands that allow timber management will require expansion of the road system on this Island, most likely from the private facilities.

(6) Fire, Insects, and Disease: The area has no significant fire history. Endemic tree diseases common to Southeast Alaska are present.

- (7) **Minerals:** The mineral potential is low, however, several prospects have been explored on these islands. According to the USGS Mineral Resources Data website (2001), there are copper and nickel prospects on Noyes Island, gold prospects on San Fernando Island, two copper prospects on San Juan Bautista Island, and three prospects on Baker Island for gold, lead, zinc, or copper. This area contains 92,838 acres of undiscovered locatable mineral resources (Brew et al., 1990; USDA Forest Service, 1991); 22,077 of these acres are considered to have high potential for development.
- (8) **Transportation and Utilities:** There are no current or proposed transportation or utility corridors in the roadless area.
- (9) **Water Availability and Use:** The only water demand in this area comes from the public recreation cabin on San Fernando Island. With the exception of Steamboat Bay, there are no existing or planned hydroelectric or domestic water projects within the roadless area.
- (10) **Areas of Scientific Interest:** The caves on the outer islands may be important areas for cultural resource research. The mapped karst resources encompass approximately 5,071 acres or five percent of the roadless area.
- (11) **Land Use Authorizations:** None.
- (12) **Land Status:** There are two small parcels of State land on Noyes Island that are surrounded by the National Forest System land. Most of the roadless area on San Juan Bautista Island is encumbered. Developments related to Native Corporations are ongoing in this area. The remainder of the roadless area is National Forest System land. The private land bordering this roadless area is generally owned by the State or by Native Corporations.

IV. Wilderness Evaluation (Need for Wilderness)

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

- (a) **Interest Expressed by Local Users and Residents:** There is considerable public concern over future management of the Outer Islands. Many people believe that these islands should be managed for their recreation potential and that logging should be excluded. The Forest Service has received written and verbal comment that the Outer Islands should be designated as a National Recreation Area. There is also public interest in maintaining subsistence resources in the roadless area.
- (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. Noyes, Lulu, Baker Cone, and St. Ignace Islands and the small islands near the shores of these islands were designated as LUD II by the Tongass Timber Reform Act of 1990. In 2001, HR 2908 proposed managing the entire roadless area as LUD II in an unroaded condition.
- (c) **Public Input During Forest Plan Revision and Appeals:** The Southeast Alaska Conservation Council and others recommended against road building and logging on San Fernando Island. They stated that the island merited special protection for its outstanding wildlife, fisheries, hunting, subsistence, recreation, and tourism values. The Alaska Forest Association, the Alaska Miners Association, and the Alaska Visitors Association recommended that no new wilderness be designated on the Tongass National Forest. Others stated that all unroaded areas should be designated wilderness. Timber industry representatives recommended managing all areas not designated as wilderness for timber. In 1996, the Alaska Visitors Association proposed the following recreation developments for this roadless area: a small cruise ship shorewalk for 25 persons a day on Steamboat Bay (Noyes Island); day use recreation for 150 persons a day and a day use boat dock for 50 people on Baker Island; and public recreation cabins on San Fernando Island.
- (d) **Public Input During Roadless Area Conservation Rule and Road Management Policy Review:** This area was not specifically identified in the public comments received during the Roadless

Appendix C

Area Conservation Rule or Road Management Policy Review. However, some commenters wanted all unroaded lands on the Tongass to be protected from development.

(e) Public Input Expressed for Project-level EISs and Other Input: No project-level comments on this roadless are available. We will be conducting public scoping on the Baker Island Trail EA during January/February. There may be comments to be added in this section at a later point.

(f) Public Input Expressed During Supplemental EIS Process: The city of Pelican passed a resolution stating that the important watersheds identified as areas of special interest in the 1999 ROD and HR 987 should given long-term protection.

Some members of the Southeast Alaska Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Council identified the need for further protection of this area because of its importance for subsistence.

At the Craig Hearing, the President of the Craig Community Association stated “they really can’t support any of the alternatives”.

An individual commented that it did not make any sense to convert this area from LUD II to wilderness; it should be left as LUD II. One individual wanted San Fernando Island added to permanent protection status.

(2) Nearby Roadless and Wilderness Areas and Uses: This roadless area is separated from other nearby roadless areas and wildernesses by saltwater. The Maurelle Islands Wilderness lies approximately 2 miles north of Noyes Island. Two other small wildernesses, Coronation Island and Warren Island, lie 18 to 25 miles to the northwest. Suez Roadless Area (502) lies 3 miles to the southeast of Baker Island. The Kogish Roadless Area (509) lies 2 to 3 miles to the northeast of San Fernando Island on Prince of Wales Island. These areas are mainly used for recreation and subsistence.

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

Community	Air Miles	Water Miles
Juneau (Pop. 30,711)	195	150
Ketchikan (Pop. 14,070)	70	140
Wrangell (Pop. 2,308)	75	110
Petersburg (Pop. 3,324)	90	115

Hollis, located on Prince of Wales Island, is the closest stop on the Alaska Marine Highway. It is approximately 25 air miles from the easternmost part of the roadless area.

(4) Relative Contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System: The Outer Island Roadless Area consists of six major islands and numerous smaller islands off the west coast of Prince of Wales Island. The major islands are: Lulu, Noyes, Baker, San Fernando, St. Ignace, and San Juan Bautista. San Alberto Bay separates the easternmost islands from Prince of Wales Island. Bucareli Bay separates the southernmost islands from Suez Island. The open Pacific Ocean lies to the west. The Gulf of Esquibel lies to the north. The six major islands range in size from 5,800 to 33,000 acres. Noyes, Baker, and San Juan Bautista Islands are very rugged with elevations over 2,000 feet. San Fernando and Lulu Islands are characterized by moderate to flat terrain. The coastline of these islands varies, and ranges from highly irregular for Baker and Noyes Islands to smooth for San Juan Bautista and Lulu Islands. The west coast of Noyes Island is noted for its high-energy coastline and its towering cliffs and headlands.

The islands are mostly unmodified and natural appearing, except for a few small pockets of logging activity near the boundaries. San Juan Batista Island has larger areas of private land, which influences the natural integrity of the area. The overall area has very high natural integrity and high apparent naturalness. When rated with San Juan Batista separated from the other islands the ratings are increased to outstanding for natural integrity and very high for apparent naturalness. The opportunity for solitude is high and the opportunity for primitive recreation is very high.

The roadless area has high scenic qualities; approximately 12 percent of the landscape is considered distinctive from a scenery standpoint. The high-energy outer coastlines of Noyes and Baker Islands, which includes cliffs and caves and the karst on Noyes and Baker Islands are important geologic features. These islands are relatively rich in endemic vertebrate species and coastal seabird colonies. The area is rich in cultural and historic values.

The roadless area includes about 21,127 acres of high-volume, old-growth forest. Of these acres, approximately 4,253 are mapped as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth.

The Outer Islands Roadless Area is classified as being in the Southern Outer Islands Biogeographic Province and makes up about 45 percent of the province. It is one of four main inventoried roadless areas found within the province which make up about 59 percent of the province. The province also includes the Maurelle Islands Wilderness, Coronation Island Wilderness, and Warren Island Wilderness which make up about 16 percent of the province, and the Outside Islands LUD II area which makes up an additional 33 percent of the province.

The Outer Islands Roadless Area lies within two ecological sections; it represents 17 percent of the Outer Islands Fjordlands Ecological Section and 4 percent of the Kuiu-Prince of Wales Fjordlands Ecological Section. Both of these ecological sections include moderately sized areas in existing wilderness (10 and 13 percent, respectively) and existing LUD II (17 and 8 percent, respectively), and are well represented by other existing non-development LUDs (36 and 33 percent, respectively).

Just over half (56 percent) of the roadless area is in the Dall-Outside Complex Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 19 percent of the entire ecological subsection, 19 percent of which is protected in existing LUD II and 40 percent in other existing non-development LUDs. Forty percent of the roadless area is in the Gulf of Esquibel Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 87 percent of the ecological subsection, 12 percent of which is protected in existing wilderness, 40 percent in existing LUD II, and 48 percent by existing non-development LUDs. The remaining 4 percent of the roadless area is in the Soda Bay Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection; this portion of the roadless area represents 3 percent of the entire ecological subsection, none of which is in existing wilderness or LUD II, but 44 percent is protected by other existing non-development LUDs.

The Outer Islands Roadless Area was rated 23 out of a possible 28 points under the Wilderness Attribute Rating System (WARS). As such, its WARS rating is ranked 30th from the highest (along with 7 other roadless areas) among the 109 Tongass inventoried roadless areas. Another rating was done for the area without San Juan Batista Island, which resulted in a score of 25.

There is both local and national support for managing the roadless area in an unroaded condition and there is limited support for designating portions of the area as a wilderness. Designation would create a wilderness made up of relatively small islands with good cultural/historic values, geologic features, and ongoing research activities. Designation would also provide long-term protection for an area within the Soda Bay Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection; a subsection which does not have any areas within wilderness or LUD II. Most of the area (except San Juan Batista Island) was designated as LUD II by Congress in 1990. Overall, the factors identified here indicate that the relative contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System for this area would be high.

Appendix C

V. Environmental Consequences

The Outer Islands Roadless Area would be managed under the existing Forest Plan if Alternative 1, 3, or 4 is implemented. Approximately 97 percent of the roadless area would be managed under non-development LUDs. Timber harvest and road development could occur within the remaining 3 percent of the roadless area. The land in the development LUDs includes an estimated 1,170 acres that are suitable for timber production (2 percent of the suitable acres on the Craig Ranger District). Approximately 50 of the suitable acres are classified as high-volume, coarse-canopy old growth. This area contains an estimated 92,838 acres of undiscovered locatable mineral resources; 22,077 of these acres are considered to have high potential for development. The research, recreation, minerals, and special use programs would continue. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area are protected by the Forest Plan. The exception is the San Juan Batista Island where timber management activities are allowed under the Forest Plan.

Under Alternative 2, all of the existing LUD II area would be converted to Recommended Wilderness LUD. This would not affect timber management because this area is currently allocated to a non-development LUD. The area suitable for timber production would not change from Alternative 1. Ongoing research, recreation, special use, and minerals programs could be restricted in the Recommended Wilderness LUD area. Mineral prospecting would be allowed in the Recommended Wilderness LUD up to the time that the area is actually designated as wilderness by Congress. The values associated with the natural settings of the existing LUD II areas of the roadless area, including the scenic, geologic, and ecologic values, would be continue to be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness.

Under Alternatives 5 or 7, a 95,953-acre portion of area would be converted to Recommended Wilderness LUD from existing LUD II and Semi-remote Recreation LUDs. This would not affect timber management because this area is currently allocated to a non-development LUD. The area suitable for timber production would not change from Alternative 1. Ongoing research, recreation, special use, and minerals programs could be restricted in the Recommended Wilderness LUD area. Mineral prospecting would be allowed in the Recommended Wilderness LUD 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 without San Juan Batista Island, including the scenic, geologic, and ecologic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated wilderness.

Under Alternative 6, all lands not already in existing LUD II would be converted to Recommended LUD II. Ongoing research, recreation, special use, and minerals programs would continue similar to current conditions with little restriction. No timber harvest would be allowed. Designation would provide long-term protection for an area within the Soda Bay Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection; a subsection which does not have any areas within wilderness or LUD II. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including the scenic, geologic, and ecologic values, would be provided long-term protection if designated LUD II.

Under Alternative 8, the entire roadless area would be converted to Recommended Wilderness LUD. Timber harvest would not be allowed. Ongoing research, recreation, special use, timber sales, and minerals programs could be restricted. Mineral prospecting would be allowed in the Recommended Wilderness LUD up to the time that the area is actually designated as wilderness by Congress. Designation would provide long-term protection for an area within the Soda Bay Till Lowlands Ecological Subsection; a subsection which does not have any areas within wilderness or LUD II. The values associated with the natural settings of the roadless area, including the scenic, geologic, and ecologic 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 503 (in acres)								
Land Use Designation	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7	Alt 8
Recommended Wilderness		74,112			95,953		95,953	99,891
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	450	450	450	450	450		450	
Semi-remote Recreation	21,991	21,991	21,991	21,991	150		150	
Recommended LUD II						25,779		
LUD II	74,112		74,112	74,112		74,112		
Wild, Scenic, Recreational River								
Experimental Forest								
Scenic Viewshed	3,338	3,338	3,338	3,338	3,338		3,338	
Modified Landscape								
Timber production								
TOTAL	99,891	99,891	99,891	99,891	99,891	99,891	99,891	99,891
Suitable Timber Lands	1,170	1,170	1,170	1,170	1,170	0	1,170	0