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Central Kupreanof Timber Harvest

Record of Decision

Petersburg Ranger District
Petersburg, Alaska



Abbreviations and Common Acronyms	
ANILCA	Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act
ASQ	Allowable Sale Quantity
BMPs	Best Management Practices
CCF	Hundred Cubic Feet
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
DBH	Diameter at Breast Height
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
EFH	Essential Fish Habitat
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
Forest Plan	Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan 2008
GIS	Geographic Information System
HSI	Habitat Suitability Index
IDT	Interdisciplinary Team
LTF	Log Transfer Facility
LUD	Land Use Designation
MBF	Thousand Board Feet
MIS	Management Indicator Species
MMBF	Million Board Feet

MMI	Mass Movement Index
NEAT_R	NEPA Economic Analysis Tool
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFMA	National Forest Management Act
NFS	National Forest System
POG	Productive Old Growth
RMA	Riparian Management Area
RMO	Road Management Objective
ROS	Recreation Opportunity Spectrum
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
VCU	Value Comparison Unit
WAA	Wildlife Analysis Area



File Code: 1950

Date: February 4, 2011

Dear Reader,

Enclosed is your copy of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) for the Central Kupreanof Timber Harvest. The ROD documents the reasons I selected a modified a version of Alternative 3 from the FEIS as the Selected Alternative and the factors considered in reaching this decision. The effective date of implementation for the decision and the Notice of Right to Appeal is also specified in the ROD.

The Central Kupreanof FEIS was printed and slated for release in October 2009. On October 10, 2009 the Chief of the Forest Service issued a news release specific to Central Kupreanof stating; "We will be reviewing the FEIS and the range of alternatives presented as part of that analysis. Our decision, when it is made, will be the alternative which best accelerates transition from old growth to young growth harvest on the Tongass to achieve restoration objectives, provide jobs and economic activity. Our decision will thoroughly address the environmental aspects of the project, including protection of roadless values."

I have incorporated the USDA goals and objectives associated with the Transition Framework for Economic Diversification in Southeast Alaska into this decision. The Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, has directed USDA agencies in Alaska, led by the Forest Service and Rural Development, to work together as partners to help communities in Southeast Alaska transition to a more diversified economy by identifying and using USDA programs to support local opportunities for job creation and expansion. Components of the transition will include renewable energy, forest restoration and young growth management, fisheries and mariculture, tourism and recreation, and subsistence, while sustaining a viable timber economy. This decision incorporates viable timber harvest opportunities, forest restoration projects, recreation enhancement projects, and the opportunity to pursue implementing these projects through stewardship contracts.

The Final EIS analyzed three action alternatives for harvesting timber, including an alternative that does not propose harvest or road building in Inventoried Roadless Areas, and one no-action alternative. The action alternatives would make available approximately 28.2 to 70.2 million board feet (mmbf) of timber for harvest from the Central Kupreanof project area. The proposed harvest includes even-aged and uneven-aged management using shovel, cable and helicopter yarding systems.

The District worked with the community of Kake to identify projects where existing equipment and infrastructure could be used to accomplish work such as: culvert replacement, road closure, trail maintenance, and invasive plant control. These projects are labeled as "Projects Common to



all Action Alternatives” and the potential of using stewardship contracting is being considered in conjunction with proposed timber harvest activities.

Due to the delayed release of the FEIS, an appendix containing updated information has been included in the ROD (Appendix 3). Updated information includes the current timber sale economics of this project and inventoried roadless area updates, revises cumulative watershed harvest levels, and responds to public and agency driven comments and issues regarding wildlife. The effects are still within the range of what the public commented on in the DEIS.

As the Forest Supervisor, I am responsible for this decision. I want to thank those of you who took the time to review and comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Your interest in the management of the Tongass National Forest is appreciated.

For more information contact the Petersburg Ranger District at (907) 772-3871. These documents may also be accessed online at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/projects/projects.shtml>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Forrest Cole".

FORREST COLE
Forest Supervisor

Enclosures

Record of Decision

Central Kupreanof Timber Harvest

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For Further

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Abstract: The Responsible Official has selected a modified version of Alternative 3 from the Central Kupreanof Timber Harvest FEIS, which will make approximately 26.3 million board feet of timber available for harvest from 1,329 acres of commercial forest land.

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Record of Decision

Central Kupreanof Timber Harvest

Introduction

The Central Kupreanof Timber Harvest project area is located on Kupreanof Island, on the Petersburg Ranger District, about 30 air miles northwest of Petersburg, Alaska, and nine miles southeast of Kake, Alaska (see Figure R-1), and is connected to the community of Kake. The Central Kupreanof project area is about 152,520 acres.

Decision

This Record of Decision (ROD) documents my decision to implement a modified Alternative 3, hereafter referred to as the Selected Alternative, from the Central Kupreanof Timber Harvest Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). This ROD also documents my decision to implement the projects analyzed as common to all action alternatives (stewardship projects) and any project-level mitigation measures (see “Mitigation” section in this ROD) as specified in the invasive plant species analysis of the FEIS.

In making this decision I considered:

- implementing the new USDA objectives associated with the Transition Framework for Economic Diversification in Southeast Alaska and providing economic opportunities to the community of Kake;
- offering economic timber that currently meets local demand, while addressing watershed and deer issues that were identified through issue development;
- following the 2008 Forest Plan and responding to the Tongass Adaptive Management Strategy;

- responding to the public concerns such as harvesting within the headwaters of the Castle River watershed, and
- retaining forest structure and wildlife cover in timber harvest units by reducing the need to harvest smaller, low-value trees.

Description of the Selected Alternative (Figure R-2)

The Selected Alternative

My decision includes a modification of the timber harvest units and associated roads and rock quarries from Alternative 3 as displayed on the Selected Alternative map (Figure R-2) with units listed in Table A1-3 of Appendix 1. The Selected Alternative would harvest about 26.3 million board feet (MMBF) from approximately 1,329 acres.

The following modifications were made to Alternative 3 in creating the Selected Alternative:

Economic efficiency and flexibility were increased by including harvest units that meet the needs of a variety of operators. Included are all harvest units within the project area that are closest to the community of Kake, and adjacent to the existing Kake road system requiring only ground based harvesting systems; eliminating the need for more expensive helicopter logging systems. Portions of units specifically requiring a helicopter were also dropped (Units 5, 203, 208, and 901).

The following units were ranked as the least economical at this time (according to the NEAT_R analysis tool) and dropped to improve the overall economics of the project. Several factors including the high cost of road building to access some units, the need for a helicopter logging system to harvest volume, and long haul distances attributed to the low ranking of the following units: 216, 217, 230, 232, 233, 234, 236, 239, 249, 257, 258, 260, 261, 262, 263, 265, and 286.

In response to public comments all units in the headwaters of the Castle River watershed were dropped, specifically Units 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 279, 280 and 281.

The prescription was changed from clearcut (Even Aged) to a clearcut with reserves (30 percent retention) or a Two Aged prescription on 532 acres to retain stand structure for wildlife and reduce visual impacts. Economic efficiency was also improved by retaining lower value trees; specifically retention of standing trees was increased from 30 percent in unit 314 and changed from clearcut to 30 percent in Units: 2, 205, 207, 305, 306, 310, 313, 320, 501, 502 and 903. Merchantable trees of 9 inches or greater will be harvested in patches or individually.

By increasing retention in Unit 314 to 30 percent, the Selected Alternative includes design features of the proposed action to ensure connectivity.

The Selected Alternative includes construction of 1.8 miles of National Forest System (NFS) road and 2.3 miles of temporary road and the associated rock quarries necessary for construction. About 1.0 mile of NFS road would be reconstructed. All newly constructed and reconstructed NFS roads will be closed following timber sale activities.

Due to the high cost of road building, those units, or portions of units, requiring extensive new NFS road construction for access were dropped. Specifically the extensions of NFS Road 6327 accessing unit 201, and the extension of NFS Road 6334 accessing settings of unit 5. The construction of new NFS Road 45889 accessing unit 202, NFS Road 45890 accessing the upper settings of unit 5, and NFS Road 45891 accessing the upper settings of unit 901 were also dropped from the project area.

Temporary roads will be decommissioned and allowed to revegetate after harvest. The Road Management Objectives (RMOs) for design features and maintenance of the new NFS roads and the existing roads associated with this project are described in detail on the road cards in Appendix 2 of the ROD. Temporary roads are included on the unit cards in Appendix 1. If needed, the existing Little Hamilton LTF will be used to transport the timber from Kupreanof Island to other locations by barging and/or rafting as the permit allows.

Stewardship Projects (Figure R-3)

This decision includes a variety of projects, in association with the proposed timber harvest activities. The District has been and is currently working with the community of Kake and other partners to identify projects where existing equipment and infrastructure from Kake could be used to accomplish the work. These projects could become part of a stewardship project that includes timber harvest.

The projects listed below are only the projects that require a decision to be implemented through stewardship contracting. The FEIS has identified other stewardship opportunities through the implementation of previously completed District NEPA documents, as well as implementing projects categorically excluded from NEPA. Also, as additional projects are identified and considered, the appropriate level of NEPA would be completed prior to implementation, and the projects would be added to the stewardship contract. In addition, projects that already have a decision (for example, road storage considered in the Petersburg Ranger District Access and Travel Management Plan) could be added.

In my consideration of the economic opportunities for Kake and this project as a package, I have decided to implement the following projects:

Fisheries/ Hydrology

Reduce the number of culverts that do not meet fish passage standards (red pipes) along the Kake road system. Currently, an estimated 63 red pipes exist on Forest Service Roads that will remain open following the implementation of the

Petersburg Ranger District Access Travel Management Plan. These culverts will be prioritized for replacement based on site specific habitat assessments.

Recreation

Perform trail maintenance and reconstruction work on the four recreational hiking trails in the area: Cathedral Falls (0.5 mi.), Goose Lake (0.75 mi.), Hamilton Creek (1.0 mi.), and Big John Bay (1.75 mi.). The total length of all trails combined is about four miles. The work would include annual brushing, condition surveys and replacement of gravel as needed. Structure work on a dock, bridges, and culverts associated with the trails would also be included. Gravel for trail maintenance in the past has been obtained locally in Kake. Reconstruction work is needed along the Big John Bay trail and Cathedral Falls trails where trail relocation would be required. Site specific assessments would be done when final trail locations have been determined.

Silviculture/Wildlife

Currently there are 325 acres of precommercial thinning to accomplish in young growth stands that would be done under a stewardship contract on the Kake road system. These stands are approximately 25 years old. Thinning prescriptions would vary between traditional thinning methods that include spacing from 14 x 14 to 18 x 18 feet, to more varied spacing that would benefit wildlife, as it would provide cover and allow side lighting to reach the forest floor.

Microsales

A Microsale is a timber sale consisting of dead or down timber which has been proposed by a prospective purchaser. The District Ranger then agrees to offer the sale for bidding using an informal advertisement and short bid form. The maximum size of a Microsale is 50 MBF. Microsales are generally associated with a small number of trees. Dead or down trees within a distance of approximately 200 feet from one of the listed roads below, and are harvestable under Forest Plan (2008) Standards and Guidelines, may be eligible as a Microsale opportunity within the project area.

On site evaluation will be conducted when trees have been identified for Microsale opportunities. The Selected Alternative includes the following roads in which Microsales may be authorized by the District Ranger; NFS roads 6314, 6326, 6328, 6334, 6336, 6339 and 6040.

Reasons for the Decision

In making my decision, I considered the objectives to meet the purpose and need for this project as well as the issues and concerns that arose during scoping and comments on the Draft EIS, both in support and opposition of this project. I considered Forest Plan direction relevant to this project and the competing interests and values of the public. I considered all viewpoints and incorporated them where feasible and consistent with the purpose and need of the project. I evaluated the trade-off between resource protection and social values. The Selected Alternative provides a beneficial mix of resources for the public, within

a framework of existing laws, regulations, policies, public needs and desires, and the capabilities of the land, while meeting the stated purpose and need for this project. My decision to implement the Selected Alternative conforms to the Forest Plan and National Forest Management Act (NFMA).

I have incorporated the USDA goals and objectives associated with the Transition Framework for Economic Diversification in Southeast Alaska into this decision. The Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, has directed USDA agencies in Alaska, led by the Forest Service and Rural Development, to work together as partners to help communities in Southeast Alaska transition to a more diversified economy by identifying and using USDA programs to support local opportunities for job creation and expansion. Components of the transition will include renewable energy, forest restoration and young growth management, fisheries and mariculture, tourism and recreation, and subsistence, while sustaining a viable timber economy.

I considered the needs of the community of Kake and the opportunity to potentially provide some economic benefits with this project. The “Projects Common to all Action Alternatives” were developed, in part, to use stewardship contracting with timber harvest. The Petersburg Ranger District has been working with the community of Kake and other partners to identify these projects where existing equipment and infrastructure could be used to accomplish the work. A stewardship workshop was conducted in Kake the first week of October 2010 to identify projects as well as get a understanding on Kake’s capacity to implement some of these stewardship projects. I have included these projects within the Selected Alternative to provide this opportunity. While these projects were designed to be part of a stewardship contract, they might also be accomplished independently as funds become available. This decision incorporates timber opportunities, forest restoration projects, recreation enhancement projects and the opportunity to pursue implementing these projects through stewardship contracts. These projects have the purpose of resource restoration and protection, Forest user benefits, and providing job opportunities for the community of Kake.

I considered the need to manage this timber resource on the Tongass in order to produce an even-flow of sawtimber and other wood products. Appendix A of the Central Kupreanof Timber Harvest FEIS, as updated in Appendix 3, describes the process that maintains a steady supply of timber and how each project goes through a series of steps before timber can be offered from the National Forest. I considered the concerns for providing economical timber sale offerings and the need to meet annual demand for timber. This decision provides about 26.3 MMBF of timber volume for the Southeast Alaska timber industry. I considered the effects on wildlife habitat, timber economics and aquatics as presented in the FEIS as well as the additional information provided in Appendix 3 of this ROD. All information contained in Appendix 3 is within the scope of effects presented to the public for comment in the DEIS. Appendix 3 presents updated information and explains how that updated information fits

with the analysis presented in the FEIS, and how it relates to the Selected Alternative.

I realize that the financial efficiency of the Selected Alternative shows this alternative as being negative as a whole. However, the development of economic sales appears to be possible even though there continues to be a current downward trend in the timber markets. At this time, when not all of the timber may be economical to offer, I also needed to consider the fluctuation of timber markets, the length of time that it takes to do field review and analyses on a project of this size, the timber volume available, and the relative effects of each alternative. The Selected Alternative will provide opportunities for a variety of sale sizes appealing to small local operators as well as larger operators in Southeast. In addition, as part of this decision, Microsales could be offered at a purchaser's request as described in the previous section.

All units in the headwaters of the Castle River watershed were dropped in the Selected Alternative in response to public comments. The Castle River was identified as a high-value watershed by The Nature Conservancy and the Audubon Society.

Proposed harvest levels in all watersheds are lower for the Selected Alternative than all other action alternatives. Cumulative watershed effects are minimized in the Selected Alternative, which proposes no harvest in four of the seven watersheds analyzed for the FEIS. The Selected Alternative will increase cumulative harvest levels in the Hamilton Creek and Big John watersheds, which may result in increased water yield and sediment delivery to streams. However, trends in 30-year cumulative harvest levels are declining in all watersheds due to the ongoing re-growth of trees harvested over a period of decades. For example, 30-year cumulative harvest levels in the McNaughton Point watershed have decreased even though 465 acres are proposed for harvest in the Selected Alternative. Total number of stream crossings, as well as those on Class I and Class II streams has also decreased (Table R-1). This reflects fewer miles of new NFS and temporary road building associated with the harvest units chosen in the Selected Alternative.

I have considered the effects on wildlife habitat by looking at the reduction of Productive Old Growth (POG) which provides a way to measure effects to wildlife as well as display the amount of habitat no longer available to a variety of wildlife species. Since the existing habitat condition of Central Kupreanof is primarily associated with deer forage during the winter months, a limiting factor, this habitat component provides an accurate description of effects to wildlife species.

The harvest of the Selected Alternative would result in 2.2 percent reduction of POG within the project area (1,265 acres), 0.5 percent reduction within multiple Wildlife Analysis Areas (WAA) (5012, 5013, 5018, 5130, 5131, 5032, and 5133), and 0.4 percent reduction within the Mitkof-Kupreanof Biogeographic

Province. Many of the larger blocks of old-growth habitat are to the west of the project area within non-development LUDs and will remain indefinitely. Also, by maintaining 30 percent retention in Unit 314 and not including Unit 272 and 273, I have incorporated several features from the proposed action to ensure connectivity.

Table 3-19, Wildlife Species Screen Analysis, in Chapter 3 of the FEIS (page 3-73) includes wildlife species from the Regional Foresters 2002 and 2009 Sensitive Species List. Since the publication of the FEIS, this list has been updated; therefore additional analysis was needed to reflect this change. The updated effects are discussed in Appendix 3, as well as in the Biological Evaluation (BE). I have considered this correction, as well as the BE that evaluates effects to these species, in my decision.

During the DEIS scoping period, comments were received requesting an expanded discussion relating to deer habitat capability, including running the Forest Plan deer model. To accommodate this request, the deer model was run for each alternative. This helps show the relationship between the deer model and the newer alternative analysis as presented in the DEIS and the FEIS. The deer model is necessary for comparative purposes as well as it is what the public is accustomed to seeing.

I have thoroughly reviewed the results of the deer model (see Appendix 3) and have found them to be consistent with the Wildlife Productive Old Growth (POG) analysis. The ranking of alternatives did not change.

I am aware that Kake residents use the project area for subsistence deer hunting. Because the amount of habitat reduction (productive old growth) estimated to occur is relatively low (0.5 percent) in the primary hunting areas on Kake and Kupreanof Islands (WAAs 5012, 5013, 5018, 5130, 5131, 5132, 5133), a large reduction in abundance or a major redistribution of deer populations is not expected. The Subsistence analysis in the FEIS and review for the Selected Alternative shows that even with the access changes in the Petersburg Ranger District Access and Travel Management decision, there will be no substantial interference with harvestable access to active subsistence-use sites. Finally, no major increase or change in competition with non-rural resident hunters is expected. Therefore, I have determined there will not be a significant possibility of a significant restriction of deer, or any other subsistence resource, with implementation of the Selected Alternative.

Finally, I considered the effects of this project on other resources, including soils, wetlands, scenery, climate change, recreation, and heritage. These resources were analyzed in the FEIS and in the review of the Selected Alternative. The comparison table (Table R-1) discloses the effects of many of these resources. A full discussion of effects for each resource can be found in the FEIS and project record.

Effects of the Selected Alternative on Significant Issues

Issue 1: Timber Supply and Economics

Optimizing volume and net return on timber harvest will provide for flexibility, in both the long and short term, for offering economically viable timber sales. This issue relates to the viability of the local economies, both on Kupreanof Island and within Southeast Alaska. It concerns proposed timber sales, the potential employment and revenues generated by the project, and the ability of smaller companies to compete for timber sales in the project area. It also relates to the availability of a timber supply and overall ability to respond to ever-changing future markets. This issue addresses both maximizing timber harvest and trying to achieve the most economical timber sales.

The Selected Alternative responds to this issue by targeting the most-economic units within the project area by removing units requiring expensive helicopter yarding systems, and by dropping units where access requires the construction of lengthy road extensions. Retention of lower-value old growth also improves economics on a stand-by-stand basis where it is safe to do so. Retention of these trees changed the prescription from clearcut on 578 acres to clearcut with reserves (30 percent retention) on shovel and cable logging units.

The project area yields an estimated 22.3 MMBF of sawlog and 4 MMBF utility volumes. The estimated logging and transportation costs are \$387 per thousand board feet (MBF) with road costs estimated to be \$27.00/MBF. The indicated bid is (\$51.17) per MBF. Between 88 and 125 direct annualized jobs would be supported in Alaska, providing an estimated \$3.42 to \$4.7 million in direct income (see Appendix 3).

Though the overall indicated rate per MBF of the selected alternative remains negative, the selected alternative will provide enough flexibility for small sales and Microsales that typically improve economics. Interest to purchase small sales and microsales exist within the community of Kake. Microsales would be allowed to occur along existing NFS roads 6314, 6326, 6328, 6334, 6336, 6339 and 6040 within the project area. Larger offerings may be offered in the future to meet the timber demands of the region as economics improve.

Once cleared by this decision, units from the Selected Alternative may be packaged and sold to a variety of different operators locally and throughout Southeast Alaska, depending on the market and demand at the time of purchase.

Issue 2: Inventoried Roadless Areas

This issue relates to timber harvest and the related construction of new roads to facilitate timber harvest in inventoried roadless areas. Additional roads and harvest would result in reducing acres of roadless area in the project area, and could affect roadless values as identified in the 2003 Forest Plan SEIS.

The Selected Alternative dropped all units in roadless areas due to primarily timber economics and wildlife concerns. The proposed activities do not affect inventoried roadless areas.

The Central Kupreanof FEIS roadless analysis was based on the 2008 roadless inventory. The Selected Alternative and activities associated with this decision do not include any road construction or timber harvest within inventoried roadless areas as identified in the 2001 Roadless Rule or the 2008 Roadless Inventory (see Figure R-2).

A complete comparison of all of the FEIS Action Alternatives using the 2001 Roadless Rule is located in Appendix 3 of this document under the heading Inventoried Roadless Areas. Table R-1 displays the effects of the 2001 Roadless Rule on all Action Alternatives and the Selected Alternative for the roadless issue.

Issue 3: Road Management / Access

Road building, reconstruction and closures associated with the timber sale may change access within the project area. Roads influence wildlife populations, water quality, subsistence use, and the type of recreational opportunities available. Comments ranged from requesting no more new roads and closure of most existing roads, to requests to increase access by building new roads and opening more existing roads. Concerns were also expressed over the ability to maintain open roads due to lack of funding.

The Selected Alternative will construct 1.8 miles of NFS road, reconstruct 1.0 mile of NFS road and build about 2.3 miles of temporary road to access timber. All newly constructed and reconstructed NFS roads will be closed after timber harvest activities. Specific information regarding these roads can be found in Appendix 2 of this ROD. Temporary roads will be decommissioned after timber harvest. See unit cards in Appendix 1 for temporary road site-specific details. Road costs are expected to be about \$696,700. The Selected Alternative will use the Little Hamilton Bay Log Transfer Facility.

Other Environmental Consequences

All resources were evaluated for the effects of the Selected Alternative; none of the effects for any resource were outside the range of the alternatives analyzed in detail for the Central Kupreanof FEIS. Updated analysis for timber economics, wildlife, roadless, and watershed are included as appendices. Analyses of the effects on other resources for the Selected Alternative, including the cumulative effects with other projects, are located in the project record.

Table R-1 displays a comparison of the Selected Alternative with the alternatives analyzed in the Central Kupreanof FEIS.

Stewardship Contracting Opportunities

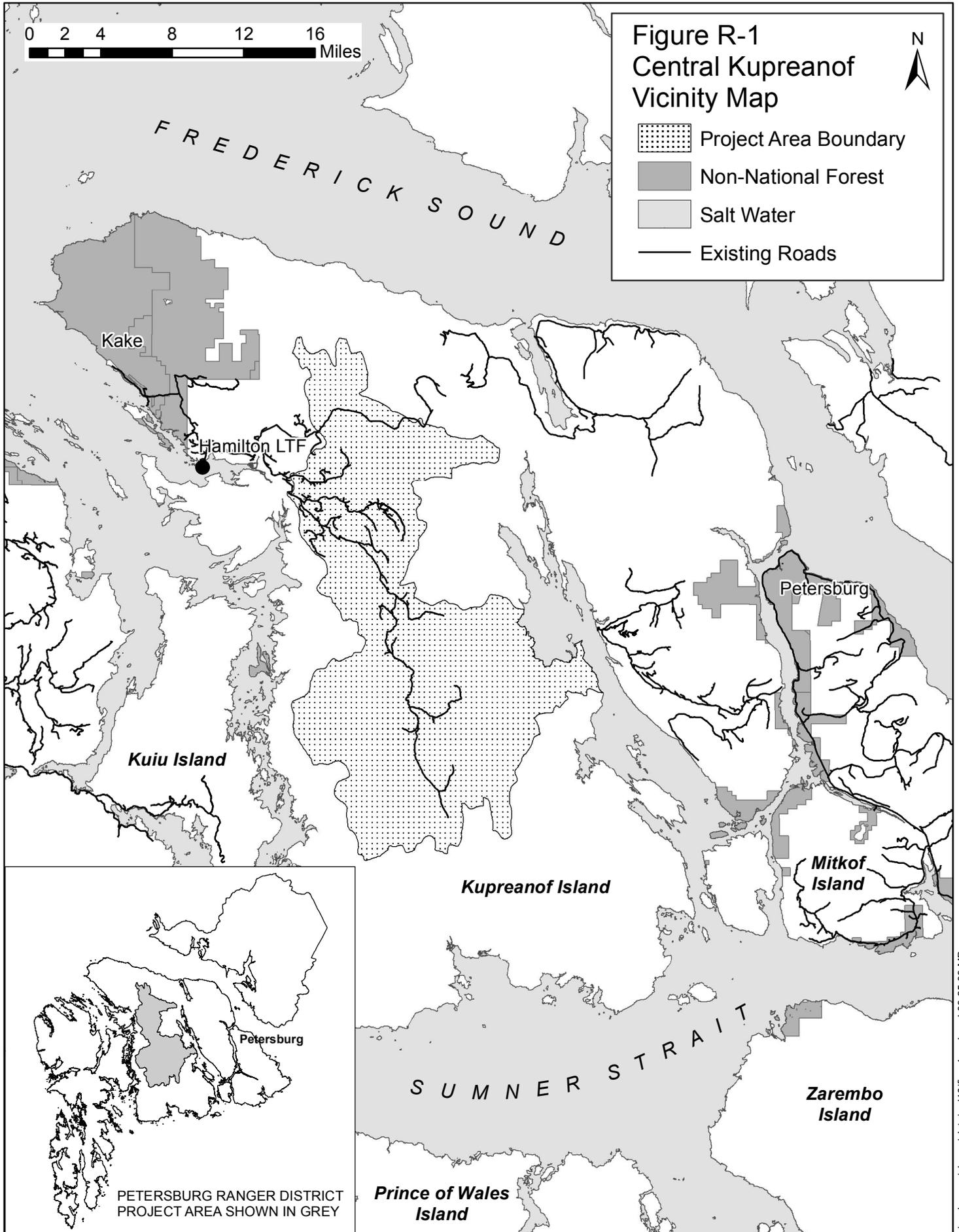
Traditionally the Forest Service has offered two distinct types of contracts: timber sales (designed to sell government property), and service contracts (designed to purchase goods and services from businesses). As the Forest Service has shifted its focus to restoration activities, new stewardship contracting formats have been developed that combine the purchase of goods and services with the sale of timber. In 1998 Congress authorized stewardship

end result contracting, commonly referred to as stewardship contracting, on a limited demonstration basis, to perform services to achieve land management goals for the national forests that meet local and rural community needs. This is a flexible implementation tool suited to accomplish restoration work.

Funding for project contracting may come from a combination of timber receipts and other appropriated dollars. The receipts from the value of the timber could be used to finance the contractual requirements, and a priority listing of the project area activities could be included in the contract. These projects would either be accomplished as part of the contract or independently. There would be a list of mandatory projects to be completed with timber receipts, combined with the possibility of using other appropriated dollars available to maximize the number of projects completed.

Petersburg Ranger District Access and Travel Management

The Decision Notice for the Petersburg Ranger District Access and Travel Management Environmental Assessment was signed September 11, 2009. The road management decisions in this ROD are consistent with the ATM decision. Appendix 2 in this ROD contains the road management objectives for the NFS roads associated with the timber harvest proposed in the Selected Alternative.



Alternatives Considered

Four alternatives were considered in detail in the Draft EIS released for public comment. All alternatives, with the exception of Alternative 1, respond to the purpose and need for this project. All action alternatives respond to the issues identified, in varying degrees, as displayed in Table R-1, the Central Kupreanof Final EIS, and Appendix 3 of this document.

The NEPA Economic Analysis Tool Residual Value (NEAT_R version 2.16) is the Forest Service, Alaska Region, financial efficiency and economic analysis program for use in timber planning. NEAT_R updates have resulted in slight volume differences between alternatives from what was published in the FEIS. These updates to the NEAT_R program were utilized in the analysis of the Selected Alternative and have resulted in a subtle increase of the overall estimated volume across all alternatives (see the Timber Supply/Sale Economics section in Appendix 3 of this document for more information).

The Final EIS analyzed the following alternatives in detail:

Alternative 1 - No Action

This alternative proposed no new timber harvest or road construction in the project area. It does not preclude timber harvest from other areas or from the project area in the future. Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations [40 CFR 1502.14(d)] require that a “No Action” alternative be analyzed in every EIS. This alternative represents the existing condition. It serves as a baseline for comparing the action alternatives for resources like wildlife habitat and soil disturbance. Alternative 1 also responds to the issue of no timber harvest in Inventoried Roadless Areas. This alternative does not meet the purpose and need of supplying timber. If the need for timber production in the project area is not met, then timber would need to be supplied from other areas.

Alternative 2- Proposed Action

This alternative proposed to harvest 2,506 acres, producing 50.0 MMBF of timber. This alternative was designed to address concerns related to timber economics and deer habitat. This alternative was not selected because it did not provide the flexibility in targeting units and adjusting prescriptions to improve economics.

Alternative 3

This was the preferred alternative for the Draft EIS. This alternative includes proposed harvest of 3,647 acres, producing 75.8 MMBF of timber and was designed to maximize timber volume. This alternative was not selected as designed in the Final EIS. Instead it was modified to focus on the units closest to the community of Kake, and to address public comments about harvest within the headwaters of the Castle River. Therefore this was chosen as the Selected Alternative.

Alternative 4

This alternative proposed to harvest 1,327 acres, producing 29.8 MMBF of timber. This alternative was developed in response to public concerns about the effects of increased road access, timber harvest, and the effects to Inventoried

Environmentally Preferred Alternative

Roadless Areas. This alternative was not selected in order to focus on the more economic units closest to the community of Kake.

Alternative 1, the No-action Alternative, would result in no environmental disturbance and is therefore the environmentally preferred alternative. Of the action alternatives, Alternative 4 is the environmentally preferred alternative for the project area. This alternative retains the most productive old growth and retains the most connectivity, has the least increase in total road density, and cause the least amount of soil disturbance.

Alternatives Eliminated from Further Consideration

Several additional alternatives were proposed internally and by the public during scoping and review of the Central Kupreanof Draft EIS. More discussion of these alternatives is located in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS, Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Study, and Appendix D, Responses to Comments.

Alternatives suggested during scoping that were considered during the alternative development stage of the project include: alternatives that address subsistence and deer habitat, alternatives that only produce small sales and Microsales, and a range of alternatives that address the Inventoried Roadless Areas. The Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) considered these alternatives to address all these concerns. Rationale for eliminating from detailed analysis is included in Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS and Final EIS. A comprehensive description and review is in Chapter 2 of the FEIS.

Additionally, Southeast Alaska Conservation Council (SEACC) submitted a proposal called the “Community Alternative” in May 2008 after the close of the comment period for the Draft EIS in February 2008. When the community alternative was compared to the previously analyzed alternatives it was found to be very similar to Alternative 4. It addressed the concerns about Inventoried Roadless Areas proposing no units or roads within Inventoried Roadless Areas.

Other projects on Kupreanof Island (Kake Small Sales CE, for example) specifically address the need for supply to the small mills on the island; this project is designed to provide a larger-volume sale in addition to small sales. Because of this, the construction of roads was needed to access the timber as efficiently, economically, and safely as possible. Therefore, the community alternative was eliminated from detailed analysis, as discussed in Chapter 2 of the Final EIS.

Public Involvement

Public involvement has been instrumental in identifying issues and creating alternatives for this project and assisting me in making a more-informed decision for the Central Kupreanof Timber Harvest project. Public meetings, Federal Register notices, newspaper ads, government-to-government

consultation, group and individual meetings, and the Tongass National Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions were used to seek input for this project. Open houses were held in Petersburg on May 5, 2008, and in Kake July 7, 2008. Meetings were also held with the City of Kake on July 7, 2008 to discuss potential stewardship opportunities and with the Organized Village of Kake (OVK) in May of 2008, and again March 25, 2009. See Chapter 1 of the Central Kupreanof Final EIS for more information, and the timing of public involvement activities. A complete list of all members of the public, groups, and agencies that received a copy of the Draft EIS for review is in Chapter 4 of the Central Kupreanof Draft EIS.

The Notice of Intent for the Central Kupreanof Timber Harvest project was published December 27, 2006. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Notice of Availability was published in the Federal Register on December 19, 2008. The 45-day public comment period ended on February 2, 2009. Subsistence hearings were held in Kake and Petersburg, Alaska in March 2009.

Comments received regard subsistence, roads and access, wildlife species and habitat (especially deer), fish passage at road crossings, cumulative effects, roadless areas, timber supply, demand and economics, soil stability, water quality, wetlands, old-growth habitat and reserves, recreation, harvest methods and prescription, and windthrow. Testimonies from the subsistence hearings are located in the project record. Responses to comments on the Draft EIS are in Appendix D of the Central Kupreanof Final EIS.

Project Record

The project record for this project includes the Draft EIS and Final EIS, Forest Plan, all material incorporated by reference and other critical materials produced during the environmental analysis of this project. The project record is available for review at the Petersburg Ranger District.

Mitigation

The analysis documented in the Final EIS discloses the possible adverse effects of implementing the actions proposed under each alternative. Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines were formulated to mitigate or reduce these effects. This direction was applied in the development of the project alternatives, including the Selected Alternative, and in the design of the harvest units and roads. Appendix 1 (Unit Cards) and Appendix 2 (Road Cards) of this Record of Decision discuss any specific mitigation measures for the Selected Alternative. The only project-level mitigation measures are for invasive plants. These include:

- Require contractors to use Forest Service approved rock sources. The existing rock quarries in the project area were surveyed in 2006 and no high-priority invasive species were found. This will require an inventory

of rock sources prior to implementation and documentation in the Tongass Change Analysis that the rock sources are still approved for use.

- If any rock sources become contaminated with high-priority invasive species and treatment to remove the plants is not an option, consider the use of the contaminated rock for reconstruction of existing roads only.

Monitoring

Monitoring is a tool which involves gathering data and information and observing the results of management activities as a basis for evaluation. Monitoring activities can be divided into project-specific monitoring and Forest Plan monitoring. The National Forest Management Act requires national forests to monitor and evaluate their Forest Plans (36 CFR 219.110). Chapter 6 of the Forest Plan includes the monitoring activities to be conducted as part of the Forest Plan implementation.

Monitoring of the Selected Alternative will be done during implementation and as part of the Forest Plan monitoring program. Specific monitoring items are outlined in Chapter 2 of the FEIS. These monitoring items are part of this decision and will be implemented.

Findings Required By Law

Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) of 1980; Section 810

Subsistence Evaluation and Findings: The decision on the Forest Plan concluded that “implementation of the Forest Plan may result in a significant restriction to subsistence use of deer due to the potential effects of projects on the abundance and distribution of these resources, and on competition for these resources” (2008 Forest Plan Amendment ROD p. 61). However, a subsistence evaluation was conducted for the alternatives in this specific project, in accordance with Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) Section 810. The evaluation concluded that Central Kupreanof Timber Harvest project, including the Selected Alternative, would not have a significant possibility of a significant restriction of subsistence uses for deer, bear, furbearers, marine mammals, waterfowl, salmon, other finfish, shellfish, and other foods such as berries and roots (Chapter 3, Subsistence section, in the Final EIS).

ANILCA 810 subsistence hearings were conducted in Kake, Alaska on March 17, 2009 and Petersburg, Alaska on March 25, 2009. A total of 18 people signed in and 12 people testified. A transcript of this testimony is located in the project record.

The evaluation determined that this project has complied with ANILCA by considering:

Necessary and Consistent with Sound Management of Public Lands: The Selected Alternative has been reviewed to determine whether it is necessary and consistent with sound management of public lands. In this regard, the National Forest Management Act, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the Tongass Timber Reform Act, the Wilderness Act, the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan, the Alaska State Forest Resources and Practices Act, and the Alaska Coastal Zone Management Program have been considered.

ANILCA placed an emphasis on the maintenance of subsistence resources and lifestyles. However, this Act also required the Forest Service to make timber available for harvest from the Tongass National Forest. The Forest Plan determined which uses are suitable for various areas of land within the Tongass National Forest through land use designation and management prescriptions. The Forest Plan allocated many important subsistence use areas to land use designations that do not allow timber harvest. The Forest Plan has determined that the Central Kupreanof project area should be managed mostly for varying levels of timber production (Timber Production LUD and Modified Landscape LUD) but with recognition of the other resource uses (see Forest Plan, Chapter 3). The Selected Alternative will help achieve some of these multiple-use management objectives in the Forest Plan.

Based on the analysis presented in the Central Kupreanof Final EIS, the findings in this ROD and the analysis for the Forest Plan, I have determined that the Selected Alternative strikes a balance between meeting the resource needs of the public and protecting the forest resources.

Amount of Public Land Necessary to Accomplish the Proposed Action: The amount of land necessary to implement the Selected Alternative is, considering sound multiple-use management of public lands, the minimum necessary to accomplish the purpose of this project. The entire forested portion of the Tongass is used by at least one rural community for subsistence purposes for, at a minimum, deer hunting. It is not possible to avoid all of these areas in implementing resource use activities, such as timber harvesting and road construction, and attempting to reduce effects in some areas can mean increasing the use of others. The current Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines and LUD prescriptions provide for management or limit activities in many of the areas that are most important for subsistence uses, such as beaches and estuaries, and areas with high fish and wildlife habitat values.

Reasonable Steps to Minimize Adverse Impacts to Subsistence Uses and Resources: Subsistence use is addressed specifically in a Forest-wide Standard and Guideline, and subsistence resources are covered by the Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines for wildlife, fish, riparian areas, and biological diversity, among others. Fish and wildlife habitat productivity will be maintained at the highest level possible for the Selected Alternative, consistent with the overall multiple-use goals and improved protection of the Forest Plan.

The extent and location of the subsistence use areas in the Central Kupreanof project area make it impossible to completely avoid subsistence areas during timber harvest. However, large areas of deer habitat are protected in old-growth habitat reserves, riparian, beach buffers and other non-development LUDs. Fish habitat is protected in each alternative through the application of Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines. Existing roads and logged areas are currently used for subsistence hunting and food-gathering activities. All temporary roads will be decommissioned following harvest. All NFS roads reopened, and new NFS roads built for harvest activity will be closed after harvest is completed. Please refer to the Road Management Objective for each road, located in Appendix 2 and the project record.

Bald Eagle Protection Act

The Selected Alternative complies with the Bald Eagle Protection Act. No bald eagle nests have been located in the project area. However, there is a bald eagle nest near the Little Hamilton LTF on the west end of the island and appropriate protection measures will be applied as necessary.

Clean Air Act of 1970 (as amended)

Emissions from the implementation of the Selected Alternative will be of short duration and are not expected to exceed State of Alaska ambient air quality standards (18 AAC 50).

Clean Water Act (1977, as amended)

Project activities meet all applicable State of Alaska Water Quality Standards. Congress intended the Clean Water Act of 1972 (Public Law 92-500) as amended in 1977 (Public Law 95-217) and 1987 (Public Law 100-4) to protect and improve the quality of water resources and maintain their beneficial uses. Section 313 of the Clean Water Act and Executive Order 12088 of January 23, 1987 addresses Federal agency compliance and consistency with water pollution control mandates. Agencies must be consistent with requirements that apply to "any governmental entity" or private person. Compliance is to be in line with "all Federal, State, interstate, and local requirements, administrative authority, and process and sanctions respecting the control and abatement of water pollution."

The Clean Water Act (Sections 208 and 319) recognized the need for control strategies for nonpoint source pollution. The National Nonpoint Source Policy (December 12, 1984), the Forest Service Nonpoint Strategy (January 29, 1985), and the USDA Nonpoint Source Water Quality Policy (December 5, 1986) provide a protection and improvement emphasis for soil and water resources and water-related beneficial uses. Soil and water conservation practices (BMPs) are recognized as the primary control mechanisms for nonpoint source pollution on National Forest System lands. The EPA supports this perspective in their guidance, "Nonpoint Source Controls and Water Quality Standards" (August 19, 1987).

The Forest Service must apply BMPs that are consistent with the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (AFRPA) to achieve Alaska Water Quality Standards. The site-specific application of BMPs, with a monitoring and feedback mechanism, is the approved strategy for controlling nonpoint source pollution as defined by Alaska's Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Strategy (2007). In 1997, the State approved the BMPs in the Forest Service Soil and Water Conservation Handbook (FSH 2509.22, July 2006) as consistent with AFRPA. This handbook is incorporated by reference into the Forest Plan and this project.

A discharge of dredge or fill material from normal silvicultural activities such as harvesting for the production of forest products is exempt from Section 404 permitting requirements in waters of the United States, including wetlands (404)(f)(1)(A). Forest roads qualify for this exemption only if they are constructed and maintained in accordance with Baseline Provisions to assure that flow and circulation patterns and chemical and biological characteristics of the waters are not impaired (404)(f)(1)(E). The Baseline Provisions that must be followed are specified in 33 CFR 323.4(a). These specific BMPs are incorporated into the Soil and Water Conservation Handbook under BMP 12.5.

The design of harvest units for the Selected Alternative was guided by standards, guidelines and direction in the Forest Plan and applicable Forest Service Manuals and Handbooks. The unit cards and road cards (Appendices 1 and 2) contain specific details on practices prescribed to prevent or reduce nonpoint sediment sources.

Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972 (as amended)

Under the Coastal Zone Management Act, Federal activities that affect any land or water use or any natural resource of the coastal zone must be conducted in a manner that is consistent to the maximum extent practicable with the enforceable policies of the applicable state coastal management program. On December 4, 2006, the State of Alaska issued a final consistency response concurring with the Forest Service's General Consistency Determination (GCD) for Tongass National Forest Timber Sales (State I.D. No. AK 0608-10J). Under this GCD, all timber harvest and associated activities conducted on the Tongass National Forest, except for those that require State or Federal permits, have been determined to be consistent with the enforceable policies of the Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP). Aside from possible use of the Hamilton Bay LTF, the Selected Alternative for the Central Kupreanof project area does not include any activities that require a State or Federal permit. The Projects Common to all Action Alternatives are considered outside the scope of the GCD. However, in consultation with the State it has been determined that these activities, except the potential removal or fixing of culverts to ensure fish passage, do not affect the coastal zone and do not require any individual ACMP consistency determination or review. All of these activities were assessed in the Petersburg Ranger District Access Transportation Management Decision Notice.

All instream work implemented in the Selected Alternative will undergo review by Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) personnel, according to the 2009 Memorandum of Understanding between the Forest Service and ADF&G.

Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 (as amended)

The Selected Alternative is not anticipated to have any direct, indirect or cumulative effect on any threatened or endangered species in or outside the project area. A Biological Evaluation (BE) was completed to analyze threatened, endangered and candidate species and was published in Appendix E of the FEIS. The BE is also located in the project record.

Federal Cave Resource Protection Act of 1988

There are 279 acres of carbonate rock and associated cave resources in the Central Kupreanof project area. Field reconnaissance identified these areas as low vulnerability karst in Units 309, 310 and 320. Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines will be applied. The activities of the Selected Alternative will not have a direct, indirect, or cumulative effect on any significant caves in the Central Kupreanof project area.

Forest Service Transportation Final Administrative Policy (Roads Rule)

This ROD, and the Final EIS, have been prepared to be consistent with the Forest Service Transportation Final Administrative Policy and the Tongass National Forest Level Road Analysis (January 2003) and the Kake Road Analysis Report (September 2000, updated 2008). I have determined that the proposed road system is "the minimum road system needed for safe and efficient travel and for administration, utilization, and protection of National Forest System lands" (36 CFR 212.5).

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

The potential effects of the project on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) were included in Chapter 3 of the Draft EIS. This discussion includes reference to the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation Act that requires the Forest Service to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service on projects that may affect EFH. It also includes a description of the EFH in the project area, a description of the proposed activities, and a description of the measures that will protect these essential habitats.

The Draft EIS was provided to the National Marine Fisheries Service to formally initiate the consultation process according to the agreement dated June 26, 2007 between the Forest Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service. NMFS concurred with the findings that the Central Kupreanof Timber Harvest may adversely affect EFH because of cumulative effects of past harvest and provided conservation recommendations (February 2009). These recommendations and the responses are located in the project record and summarized in the Final EIS. Information on the mitigation measures and applicable standards and guidelines to minimize effects to EFH are discussed in Chapter 3 of the Final EIS and Appendices 1 and 2 of this ROD. A copy of the Final EIS was sent to NMFS.

This satisfied the EFH consultation requirement based on the 2007 Agreement with NMFS.

Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972

Actions authorized in the Selected Alternative will not have a direct, indirect, or cumulative effect on marine mammals. Marine mammal viewing guidelines administered by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and enforced by the Coast Guard are sufficient for their protection. Contractors, purchasers and employees will be required to follow provisions on marine wildlife guidelines, including special prohibitions on approaching humpback whales in Alaska as defined in 50 CFR 224.103. NMFS administers the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), which prohibits the “take” of all marine mammal species in U.S. waters. “Take” is defined as “to harass, hunt, capture, or kill, or attempt to harass, hunt, capture, or kill any marine mammal.” Harassment is defined in the MMPA as “any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance which has the potential to injure a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild; or has the potential to disturb a marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavior patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.”

National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976 (as amended)

The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requires specific determinations in the Record of Decision: consistency with existing Forest Plans, a determination of clearcutting as the optimal method of harvesting, if used, and specific authorizations to create openings over 100 acres in size. Information and rationale used to develop unit prescriptions is shown on unit cards (Appendix 1 of the ROD), in Chapter 3 of the Final EIS, and in the project record.

2008 Forest Plan Amendment

The 2008 Forest Plan Amendment was completed with the signing of the Record of Decision (ROD) on January 23, 2008. Central Kupreanof is a Category 3 project as listed in the Transition to the Amended Forest Plan, which includes “Timber sale projects for which a Draft Environmental Impact Statement has not been released for public comment before the effective date of this Plan. These projects shall be based on the amended Plan and will be consistent with all applicable management direction” (Forest Plan ROD, p. 70).

The ROD for the 2008 Forest Plan Amendment adopts the Timber Sale Program Adaptive Management Strategy, under which portions of the suitable land base become available for project-level planning in three phases. The Central Kupreanof project area is within the Phase 1 portion of the suitable land base.

I have determined that this decision and the Central Kupreanof Final EIS are consistent with the 2008 Forest Plan.

Clearcutting as the Optimal Method of Harvesting:

The 2008 Forest Plan (pgs.4-71 to 4-72) and 1997 Forest Plan EIS (Appendix G, p. G-7 to G-9) give guidance on when to use even-aged management.

Clearcutting (an even-aged method) is used in this project to preclude or minimize the occurrence of potentially adverse impacts such as to remove or reduce mistletoe infestations, logging damage or other factors affecting forest health. Specific information and rationale for use of this prescription is shown in the silvicultural prescriptions (which are a part of the project record), in the introduction to the unit cards and the individual unit cards (ROD Appendix 1), and in Chapter 3 of the Final EIS. Where used, this prescription has been deemed optimal related to site-specific considerations as described above.

Harvest Openings Over 100 Acres in Size: There will be no even-aged management created openings over 100 acres. Unit 314 is 120 acres but has a two-aged silviculture prescription and will have 30 percent of the area retained.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (as amended)

Heritage resource surveys of various intensities were conducted in the analysis area in accordance with the Regional Inventory Strategy. A finding of “no historic properties affected” was recommended for all alternatives for the Central Kupreanof project. Under the terms of the existing Programmatic Agreement with the Alaska State Historic Preservation Officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (USDA FS 2002, as amended 2007) “the Forest may proceed with the undertaking in lieu of a consensus determination of eligibility pursuant to 36 CFR 800.4.”

Tongass Timber Reform Act (TTRA) of 1990

Forest Plan Riparian Standards and Guidelines apply to the Selected Alternative, and no commercial timber harvest will occur within 100 feet of any Class I stream or any Class II stream flowing directly into a Class I stream, as required in Section 103 of the TTRA. The design and implementation direction for the Selected Alternative incorporates best management practices (BMPs) and Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines for the protection of all stream classes.

Timber harvested under the Selected Alternative will provide part of the timber supply to the Tongass National Forest’s timber program as stated in Section 101 of TTRA “... the Secretary shall, to the extent consistent with providing for the multiple use and sustained yield of all renewable forest resources, seek to provide a supply of timber from the Tongass National Forest which (1) meets the annual market demand for timber from such forest and (2) meets the annual market demand from such forest for each planning cycle.”

Executive Orders**Executive Order 11988 (Floodplains)**

Executive Order 11988 directs Federal agencies to take action to avoid, to the extent possible, the long- and short-term adverse effects associated with the

occupancy and modification of floodplains. The Selected Alternative does not affect floodplain occupancy. The numerous streams in the Central Kupreanof project area make it essentially impossible to avoid all floodplains during timber harvest and road construction. Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines limit riparian harvest to the extent feasible to facilitate road construction and logging operations. The amount of road in floodplains will be minimized whenever possible as stated in the BMPs. Roads may be constructed in or through floodplains subject to BMPs, which minimize floodplain modification.

Executive Order 11990 (Wetlands)

Executive Order 11990 requires Federal agencies to avoid, to the extent possible, the long- and short-term adverse effects associated with the destruction or modification of wetlands. Techniques and practices required by the Forest Service serve to maintain the wetland attributes including values and functions. There will be minimal loss of wetlands with the Selected Alternative, primarily due to road construction. In some areas, soil moisture regime and vegetation composition or structure may be altered; however, these altered acres would still be classified as wetlands and function as wetlands in the ecosystem.

Road construction through wetlands is avoided to the extent practicable. Where wetlands cannot be avoided, road construction will adhere to State-approved BMPs, which include at a minimum the Federal baseline provisions in 33 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 323.

Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice)

Executive Order 12898 directs Federal agencies to address whether a disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impact on minority populations, low-income populations, or Indian tribes is likely to result from the proposed action and any alternatives. Although the community of Kake does include low-income and minority households, no disproportional adverse effects are expected to occur solely to those people. Efforts were made during the public participation process to inform everyone of the project and possible effects through notices in local papers, local meetings, and contacting tribal governments.

The Executive Order directs agencies to consider patterns of subsistence hunting and fishing when an agency action may affect fish or wildlife. Although low-income and minority people are not the sole users of these resources in Alaska, the effects on these resources are addressed in Chapter 3 of the Final EIS.

Executive Order 12962 (Aquatic Systems, Recreational Fisheries)

Executive Order 12962 requires Federal agencies to evaluate the effects of proposed activities on aquatic systems and recreational fisheries. The Selected Alternative minimizes the effects on aquatic systems through project design, application of standards and guidelines, BMPs, and site-specific mitigation measures. In the Selected Alternative, recreational fishing opportunities would

remain essentially the same as the current condition because aquatic habitats are protected through implementation of BMPs and riparian buffers.

Executive Order 13007 (Indian Sacred Sites)

Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites, provides presidential direction to Federal agencies to give consideration to the protection of American Indian sacred sites and allow access where feasible. In a government-to-government relationship, the tribal government is responsible for notifying the agency of the existence of a sacred site. A sacred site is defined as a site that has sacred significance due to established religious beliefs or ceremonial uses, and which has a specific, discrete, and delineated location that has been identified by the tribe. Tribal governments or their authorized representatives have not identified any specific sacred site locations in the project area.

Executive Order 13112 (Invasive Species)

Executive Order 13112 requires Federal agencies (in part) to evaluate whether the proposed activities will affect the status of invasive species; and to not carry out activities that promote the introduction or spread of invasive species unless it has determined that the benefits of such action outweigh the potential harm caused by invasive species; and that all feasible and prudent measure to minimize risk of harm will be taken in conjunction with the actions. The Selected Alternative includes the control of a known population of spotted knapweed and specific mitigation measures to minimize the introduction and spread of invasive species (see Mitigation section).

Executive Order 13175 (Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments)

Executive Order 13175 directs Federal agencies to respect tribal self-government, sovereignty, and tribal rights, and to engage in regular and meaningful government-to-government consultation with tribes on proposed actions with tribal implications.

Throughout the span of the Central Kupreanof Timber Harvest project, the District Ranger and archaeologists communicated with the Organized Village of Kake, Petersburg Indian Association, Wrangell Cooperative Association, Sealaska Corporation, Tlingit/Haida Central Council, and Kake Tribal Corporation as described in Chapter 1 of the Final EIS. Tribal consultation does not imply that the tribes endorse the Selected Action or any of the alternatives.

Executive Order 13186 (Migratory Birds)

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (amended in 1936 and 1972) prohibits the taking of migratory birds, unless authorized by the Secretary of Interior. The law provides the primary mechanism to regulate waterfowl hunting seasons and bag limits, but its scope is not just limited to waterfowl. The migratory species that may stay in the area utilize most, if not all, of the habitats described in the analysis for breeding, nesting, and raising their young. The effects on these habitats were analyzed for this project.

The decision will not have a significant direct, indirect, or cumulative effect on any migratory bird species in the project area. There may be direct moderate effects on individuals or small groups and their nests from the harvest of timber or the disturbance caused by harvest and related activities.

Executive Order 13443 (Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation)

Executive Order 13443 directs Federal agencies to facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting opportunities and the management of game species and their habitat. The analysis considered and disclosed the effects on hunting activities. The Selected Alternative will maintain the current hunting opportunities by adhering to the Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines that maintain habitat for hunted species.

Federal and State Permits

Federal and State permits necessary to implement the authorized activities are listed at the end of Chapter 1 in the Final EIS.

Implementation Process and Process for Considering Changes and New Information

Implementation of this decision may occur no sooner than 50 days following publication of the legal notice of the decision in the *Ketchikan Daily News*, the newspaper of record, published in Ketchikan, Alaska. The timber may be offered in one or more sales.

This project will be implemented in accordance with Forest Service Manual (FSM) and Forest Service Handbook (FSH) direction for Timber Sale Project Implementation in FSM 2430 and FSH 2409.18. This direction provides a bridge between project planning and implementation and will ensure execution of the actions, environmental standards, and mitigations approved by this decision, and compliance with the TTRA and other laws. All applicable best management practices (BMPs) will be applied to the Selected Alternative.

Implementation of activities authorized by this Record of Decision will be monitored to ensure that they are carried out as planned and described in the Final EIS.

Appendices 1 and 2 to this Record of Decision contain the unit and road cards for the Selected Alternative. These cards are an integral part of this decision because they document the specific resource concerns, management objectives, and mitigation measures to govern the layout of the harvest units and construction of roads. These cards will be used during the implementation process to ensure that all aspects of the project are implemented within applicable standards and guidelines and that resource effects will not be greater than those described in the Final EIS.

Proposed changes to the authorized project actions or new information will be subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Forest Management Act of 1976, Section 810 of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, the Tongass Timber Reform Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, and other laws concerning such changes. Unit and road cards will be updated to document any changes or new information to the planned unit and road cards (Appendices 1 and 2) which may occur during implementation. Any proposed changes to the design, location, standards and guidelines, or other mitigation measures for the project will also be documented at the time of implementation.

The Forest Supervisor will determine whether the proposed change is a substantial change to the Selected Alternative as planned and already approved, and whether the change is relevant to environmental concerns. Connected or interrelated changes to particular areas or specific activities will be considered in making this determination. The cumulative impacts of these changes will also be considered. In determining if any NEPA action is required for changes during implementation, the Forest Supervisor will consider the criteria in the Code of Federal Regulations (40 CFR 1502.9(c)), and Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15, sec. 18.

Minor changes are expected during implementation to better meet on-site resource management and protection objectives. Minor adjustments to unit boundaries are also likely during final layout to improve logging system efficiency. This will usually entail adjusting the boundary to coincide with logical logging setting boundaries. Changes made during implementation will be reviewed, documented, and approved by the Responsible Official through the Tongass Change Analysis process (Tongass National Forest Supplement FSH 1909.15-2009-1).

Right to Appeal

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 215. Individuals or organizations who submitted comments during the comment period specified at CFR 215.6 may appeal this decision. The notice of appeal must be in writing, meet the appeal content requirements at CFR 215.14 and be filed with the Appeal Deciding Officer:

Beth Pendleton, Regional Forester
Alaska Region
US Department of Agriculture
709 W. 9th Street
P.O. Box 21628
Juneau, AK 99802-1628

Email address: appeals-alaska-regional-office@fs.fed.us
Fax (907) 586-7840

The Notice of Appeal, including attachments, must be filed (regular mail, fax, e-mail express delivery or messenger service) with the Appeal Deciding Officer at the correct location within 45 calendar days of the date that the legal notification of this decision is published in the *Ketchikan Daily News*, the official newspaper of record. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Hand-delivered appeals will be accepted at the Regional Office during normal business hours (8:00 am through 4:30 pm) Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

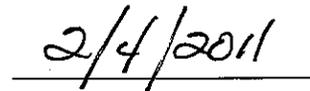
Implementation of decisions subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215, may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period, if no appeals are received.

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Chris Savage, District Ranger, Petersburg Ranger District, P.O. Box 1328, Petersburg, AK 99833, or call (907) 772-3871.



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Forest Supervisor



Date

Table R-1					
Comparison of Alternatives by Issues and Effects including the Selected Alternative					
	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Selected Alternative
Issue 1- Timber Supply/Sale Economics					
Indicated bid value \$/MBF ¹ () indicates negative value	0	(\$75.99) ¹	(\$116.63)	(\$62.44)	(\$51.17)
Logging/transportation cost \$/MBF	0	\$420.00	\$458.00	\$398.00	\$387.00
Road costs \$/MBF	0	\$18.00	\$48.00	\$17.00	\$27.00
Helicopter sawlog volume (MMBF)	0	3.7	4.8	0	0
Ground-based sawlog volume (MMBF)	0	38.7	59.1	25.0	22.3
Total volume (sawlog and utility) (MMBF)	0	50.0	75.8	29.8	26.3
Direct jobs	0	168-238	254-360	99-141	88-125
Economic flexibility ranking	N/A	3	1	4	1
Issue 2- Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) (2001 Roadless Rule)					
Acres of timber harvest within IRAs	0	896	1,933	268	0
Miles of NFS roads	0	2.57	19.37	0	0
Miles of temporary roads within IRAs (decommissioned after harvest)	0	1.7	3.54	0.7	0

Table R-1 Comparison of Alternatives by Issues and Effects including the Selected Alternative (continued)					
Percent of IRA affected (includes Rocky Pass IRA, North Kupreanof IRA, and South Kupreanof IRA acres)	0%	0.2%	0.5%	<0.1%	0%
Issue 3- Road Management/Access					
Miles of open existing NFS road before harvest	64	64	64	64	64
Miles of proposed new NFS road construction	0	7.3	25.1	0	1.83
Miles of proposed new temporary road	0	3.9	6.1	2.2	2.3
Miles of NFS and temporary road to be constructed in Inventoried Roadless Areas	0	1	15	0	0
Total miles of road remaining open after implementation	64	62.3	62.3	62.3	56
Miles of reconstructed existing closed road to remain open after harvest	0	2.9	9.1	2.6	0
Miles of road to be left open after harvest	64	74.2	98.2	66.6	66.8
Total road cost for all new temporary, new NFS, and reconstructed road within project area (includes maintenance costs)	\$0	\$2,039,000	\$6,017,000	\$416,000	\$696,700
Other Environmental Considerations					
Effects on Wildlife					
Acres of POG harvested	0	2,427	3,568	1,261	1,265
Percent change from current condition (2008) within project area (57,628 acres of POG)	0	4.2%	6.2%	2.2%	2.2%
Percent change from current condition (2008) within multiple WAAs (269,593 acres of POG)	0	0.9%	1.3%	0.5%	0.5%
Percent change from current condition (2008) within biogeographic province (307,710 acres of POG)	0	0.8%	1.2%	0.4%	0.4%
Percent cumulative reduction from historic/original condition biogeographic province	-29%	-29.8%	-30.2%	-29.4%	-29.4%
Percent cumulative reduction from historic/original condition WAA	-26%	-26.9%	-27.3%	-26.5%	-26.5%

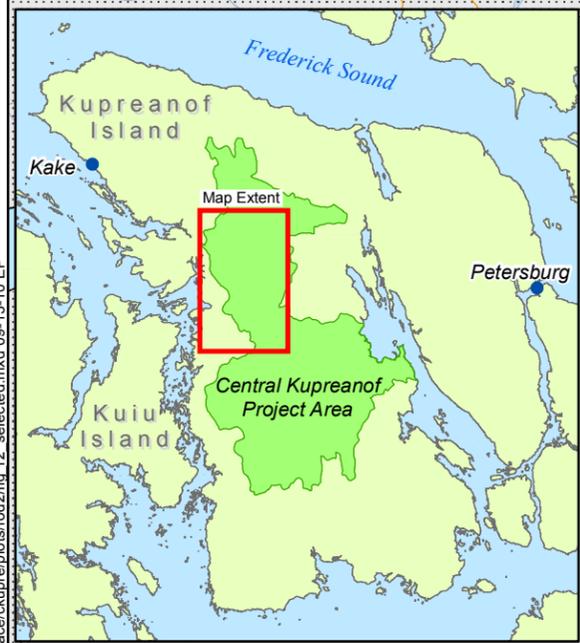
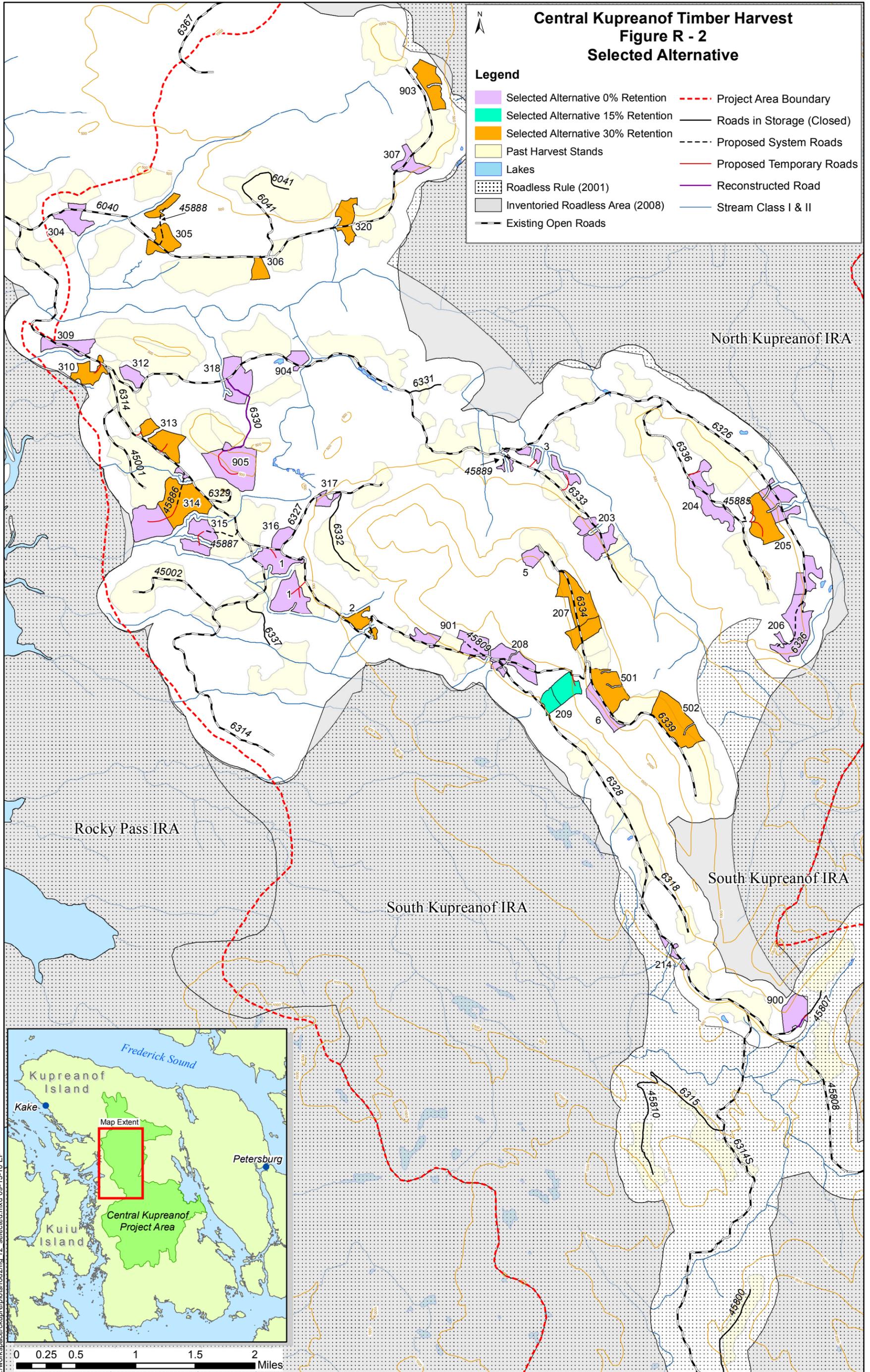
Table R-1 Comparison of Alternatives by Issues and Effects including the Selected Alternative (continued)					
Effects on Timber and Vegetation					
Total acres even-aged management (clearcut)	0	2,031	3,127	1,327	718
Total acres two-aged management (clearcut with reserves)	0	33	0	0	617
Total acres uneven-aged management (single-tree selection)	0	442	520	0	0
Total acres of harvest by all silviculture systems	0	2,506	3,647	1,327	1,329
Effects on Soils					
Total acres soil disturbance	42	167	299	93	107
Acres of very high risk hazard (MMI-4) soils within units	0	10	17	0	0
Effects on Wetlands					
Total miles of road (reconstructed, temporary and NFS) crossing wetlands	0	2.83	7.06	1.17	0.61
Effects on Scenery					
Percent of Past and Proposed Visual Disturbance by Viewshed					
Hamilton	5%	7%	7%	6%	6%
Big John Bay	15%	22%	23%	20%	20%
Rocky Pass	2%	3%	3%	2%	2%
Upper Castle	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%
Upper Duncan	1%	2%	4%	1%	1%

Table R-1 Comparison of Alternatives by Issues and Effects including the Selected Alternative (continued)					
Effects on Hydrology/Fisheries					
30 year Cumulative Harvest Percentage by Alternative (Assuming a 2011 implementation date and that all proposed acres are harvested)					
Hamilton Creek	1.9% ²	4.0%	4.1%	3.2%	3.5%
<small>²Values indicated under Alternative 1 reflect cumulative percentages in 2011 assuming no timber harvest.</small>					
McNaughton Point	2.9%	7.8%	8.6%	5.9%	7.4%
Big John Creek	4.5%	6.8%	7.1%	5.8%	5.2%
West Duncan Canal	0.4%	1.3%	2.5%	0.6%	0.4%
Keku Creek	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%	0.2%
Castle River	1.3%	1.5%	2.7%	1.5%	1.3%
Tunehean Creek	1.2%	1.9%	1.9%	1.5%	1.2%
Total Number of Proposed Stream Crossings by Alternative					
Hamilton Creek	0	22	31	2	5
McNaughton Point	0	14	14	1	7
Big John Creek	0	6	13	1	1
West Duncan Canal	0	5	43	0	0
Keku Creek	0	4	4	0	0
Castle River	0	4	29	4	0
Tunehean Creek	0	4	5	0	0
Total	0	59	139	8	13
Total Number of New Class I Crossings	0	4	4	0	1
Total Number of New Class II Crossings	0	5	12	4	1

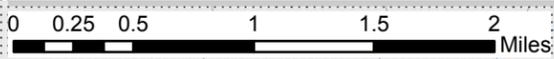
Central Kupreanof Timber Harvest Figure R - 2 Selected Alternative

Legend

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
|  | Selected Alternative 0% Retention |  | Project Area Boundary |
|  | Selected Alternative 15% Retention |  | Roads in Storage (Closed) |
|  | Selected Alternative 30% Retention |  | Proposed System Roads |
|  | Past Harvest Stands |  | Proposed Temporary Roads |
|  | Lakes |  | Reconstructed Road |
|  | Roadless Rule (2001) |  | Stream Class I & II |
|  | Inventoried Roadless Area (2008) | | |
|  | Existing Open Roads | | |



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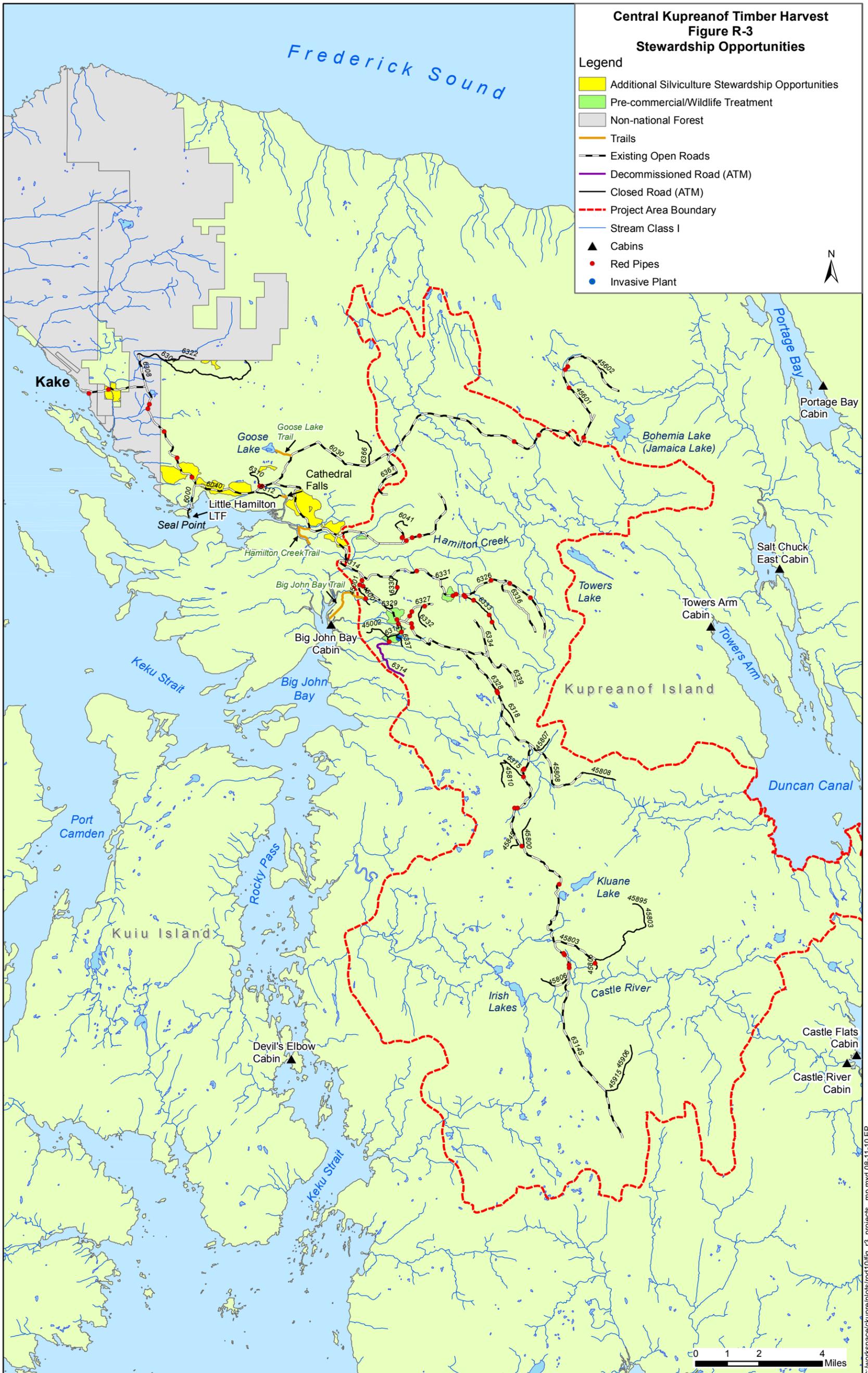


Backside of map

**Central Kupreanof Timber Harvest
Figure R-3
Stewardship Opportunities**

Legend

- Additional Silviculture Stewardship Opportunities
- Pre-commercial/Wildlife Treatment
- Non-national Forest
- Trails
- Existing Open Roads
- Decommissioned Road (ATM)
- Closed Road (ATM)
- Project Area Boundary
- Stream Class I
- Cabins
- Red Pipes
- Invasive Plant



Backside of map