

## Determination of Need for Commercial Services within the Warren Island Wilderness Area

### Thorne Bay Ranger District Tongass National Forest

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Thorne Bay Ranger District (TBRD), Tongass National Forest, developed this needs assessment (NA) to determine the type of outfitter/guide use that could take place in the Warren Island Wilderness (WIW) area. An NA is a methodology for determining if, in fact, there is a 'need' for private enterprise to assist the agency in providing access, services and/or other assistance for the recreating public to safely and properly enjoy National Forest wilderness areas. This document is tiered to the Tongass Forest Plan as amended in February 2008 and the *Determination of Need and Extent of Commercial Uses within Wilderness Areas on the Tongass National Forest* (USDA Forest Service 2007).

A determination of need for commercial use for backpacking, hiking and kayaking (active touring) camping, hunting, freshwater fishing and remote setting nature tours (passive touring) is as follows:

#### **Determination of need for active touring:**

It is recommended that commercial active touring **not be** authorized in the WIW area through this needs assessment.

It is recommended that commercial camping **not be** authorized in the WIW area through this needs assessment.

It is recommended that commercial big game hunting **not be** authorized in the WIW area through this needs assessment.

It is recommended that commercial freshwater fishing **not be** authorized in the WIW area through this needs assessment.

It is recommended that commercial passive touring **not be** authorized in the WIW area through this needs assessment.

/s/ Jason Anderson

Jason Anderson  
Thorne Bay District Ranger

11/15/2010

Date

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# Determination of Need for Commercial Services within the Warren Island Wilderness Area

## Thorne Bay Ranger District

## Tongass National Forest

Prepared by: Victoria Houser,

Date: April 2009

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## I. Introduction

The Thorne Bay Ranger District (TBRD), Tongass National Forest, developed this needs assessment (NA) to determine the type of outfitter/guide use that could take place in the Warren Island Wilderness (WIW) area. An NA is a methodology for determining if, in fact, there is a 'need' for private enterprise to assist the agency in providing access, services and/or other assistance for the recreating public to safely and properly enjoy National Forest Wilderness. This document is tiered to the Tongass Forest Plan as amended in February 2008 and the *Determination of Need and Extent of Commercial Uses within Wilderness Areas on the Tongass National Forest* (USDA Forest Service 2007).

This 11,181 acre wilderness consists of one oval shaped island with steep rugged slopes rising to over 2,200 feet. This island features beautiful, sandy beaches in its many coves and harbors abundant with wildlife. This is a small wilderness, but provides a haven of solitude in a rugged setting. In general larger boats are used to access this relatively remote area but small boats are occasionally used to access Warren Island by people from Edna Bay (a small village on nearby Kosciusko Island).

### Assumptions

The following are assumptions made to aid in the assessment of the need for outfitter/guide operations:

- Overall visitor use will remain at current levels or continue to increase (TLRMP Amendment Record of Decision 2008). There may also be shifts in use patterns (timing and location) and user types (hikers, backpackers, day users, etc.).
  - Camping appears to be declining, with more visitors conducting day use activities.
  - Some people would not visit the wilderness without an outfitter or guide because they lack the skills, knowledge, equipment, or ability to do so on their own.
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- There will be a continued and increased demand for special use permits to conduct outfitter/guide operations. While the area is quite large, access points and use locations are limited and the demand and use levels at the popular locations could become an item of concern.
  - Conflicts between outfitter/guide operations and the non-outfitted/guided public have the potential to increase if overall use increases.
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## II. Wilderness Management Direction

See Appendix 1. Wilderness Management Direction.

### Goals and Objectives for Wilderness

Manage designated Wilderness to maintain an enduring wilderness resource while providing for the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use, as provided in the Wilderness Act of 1964 and ANILCA.

- Provide for public use of the Wilderness in accordance with ANILCA provisions for motorized and non-motorized access and travel, including reasonable traditional subsistence use by rural residents.
  - Provide trails and primitive facilities that are in harmony with the natural environment and that promote primitive recreation opportunities. Feature facilities designed primarily to provide resource protection and encourage smaller group size. Facilities and trails tend to allow for challenge and risk instead of convenience.
  - Maintain the wilderness to provide information on natural ecological processes.
  - Preserve and perpetuate biodiversity. Inventory and reduce or eliminate invasive species in Wilderness.
  - Manage Wilderness as a place where self-reliance and primitive skills are needed and honed.
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## III. Visitor Use and Commercial Use on the WIW

### Historical use of the wilderness area by outfitters and guide

Permitted operators are required to submit Actual Use Reports within 30 days of the end of their operating season. These reports identify the use location (with latitude and longitude coordinates), type of use, and number of clients, and the length of stay at each location. From this information, the number of RVDs utilized at each location is calculated. This tracking method provides an effective mechanism to track and monitor commercial use in Wilderness. Currently we have no means to track the number of private users that recreate in the Wilderness and do not rent a Forest Service public recreation cabin.

Table 1. Commercial use on Warren Island between 2004 and 2009.

	2004	2009	Total
Total	8	2	10
HUNTING	0	2	2
HIKING	8	0	8

Table number one shows that outfitter and guides have permitted for a total of ten days between 2004 and 2009. All requested days were permitted. Since 2004 no hiking (active touring) days have been requested. Big Game Hunting was only requested and permitted in 2009. No trend or pattern of use is established on Warren Island by outfitters and guides, because there is no sequential or annual use of any kind.

## Existing Condition

One way existing condition can be looked at is by breaking down wilderness character into the four components of untrammeled, natural, undeveloped, and opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation:

- ❖ Untrammeled, This quality describes the degree to which management actions “hinder” or “control” the land and natural processes. For example, the wilderness area has remained free of management activities that have altered natural systems, such as dams or regulations that govern visitor activities
- ❖ Natural - This quality describes the ecological effects of management actions that manipulate vegetation, soils, air quality, or other physical and biological components of wilderness. Wildlife found within the area includes Sitka black-tailed deer and wolf. The list of smaller fur bearing animals in the area includes mink, land otter, and weasel. In the saltwater it is common to see humpback whales and sea otters, as well as numerous sea birds. Annual surveys for native and non-native plants were begun in 2005. Due to the remoteness from human developments the wilderness area has relatively intact native plant communities. The nearest roads are located to the east on Kosciusko Island.
- ❖ Undeveloped, This quality describes the effects of structures, habitations, or other evidence of human presence or occupation. There are no public recreation cabins within the area. There is one special use residence. Saltwater access by floatplanes, motorboats, or kayaks, can be challenging and expensive due to the long distance that must be traveled from the nearest communities. The remoteness and challenge of accessing this area has minimized human use. In addition, there are few safe anchorages or friendly beaches on WIW. Hiking is challenging on WIW’s steep, brushy terrain.
- ❖ Opportunities for solitude and primitive/unconfined recreation - Visitors to the upland areas of the wilderness areas can expect a moderate to high probability of experiencing isolation from most sights and sounds of humans. The visitor may see or hear boats on the saltwater. Sometimes there are commercial fishery openings that bring several fishing boats to the channel nearby, primarily trollers, seiners, or long liners. There are also occasional overflights of low flying

aircraft. Once away from one of the two safe boat landings, one's likelihood of meeting another person on Warren Island is almost zero.

### Current Management Direction in the WIW area

To control resource impacts from increased use or to address concerns due to competition between outfitter and guide groups and other unguided forest users the Forest Service developed mitigation measures. The Mitigation Measures are included with all Outfitter and Guide Special Use Permits as Special Stipulations and therefore become part of the permit. Failure to adhere to the Special Stipulations would be a violation of the terms in the Special Use Authorization and could eventually lead to the termination of the permit. Forest-wide stipulations are listed first, then Special Stipulations that address areas of concern in the WIW Area:

1. Outfitter/Guides will submit revisions of their Operating Plans in writing.
2. Land ownership is mixed and it is the responsibility of the permit holder to determine ownership and obtain proper authorization for use of private, native, and/or local government-held lands.
3. Outfitter-guides will incorporate "Leave No Trace" skills into all activities on National Forest System lands ([www.lnt.org](http://www.lnt.org)).
4. Outfitter-guide camps are prohibited within one mile of any Forest Service recreation cabin (except Yakutat Ranger District which has a 1/4 mile limit and Stikine River which has a 1/2 mile limit.) unless specifically authorized in this permit.
5. Outfitter-guided use of public use recreation cabins or their amenities (e.g. skiffs, firewood, fire rings) is prohibited. Exceptions may occur as specifically approved for a site by the District Ranger. These exceptions must be identified in the permit or addressed in District Stipulations.
6. Within designated Wilderness, no more than 12 people (including guides) can occupy a site at one time. "Site:" an area on the National Forest occupied by persons not within sight and sound of other Forest users.
7. All campfires will be built below high tide, as mound fires (a LNT technique) or in firepans.
8. Beach Meadows: Outfitter/guides will not establish camps, or allow their clients to camp in these areas. When walking through these areas, people should stay on existing paths and game trails to avoid trampling or damaging vegetation in beach meadows. Located at the margin between marine beaches and the forest fringe, beach meadows, characterized by the presence of tall grasses, beach pea, Indian paintbrush, Pacific silverweed, yarrow, chocolate lily, pretty shooting star, and Nootka lupine. These meadows often have between 20-40 different plant species, some of which are on the sensitive species list.
9. Impacts on Bald Eagle Nest Sites: The Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have a Memorandum of Understanding which establishes a minimum 330-foot radius "habitat management zone" around each bald eagle nest tree. Camping in this zone is prohibited to guided groups.
10. A copy of the permit must be with the operator at all times, when operating on National Forest System lands.
11. Use Reports will reflect specific locations of use on National Forest System lands.
12. 36 CFR Ch.11 261.10 The following are prohibited: "... (d) Discharging a fire arm or any other implement capable of taking human life, causing injury, or damaging property: (1) In or within 150 yards of a residence, building, developed recreation site or occupied area, or (2) across or on a Forest development road or a body of water adjacent thereto, or in any manner or place whereby any person or property is exposed to injury or damage as a result in such discharge."

Mitigation measures/special stipulations will continue to evolve in response to current conditions/trends and they will continue to be used as a management tool to respond to impacts or conflicts that become apparent during the monitoring efforts.

## Desired Condition

The Wilderness Act of 1964 directs “each agency administering any area designated as wilderness shall be responsible for preserving the wilderness character of the area.” Section 2(c) of the Act defines four qualities of wilderness that managers try to preserve.

As described in the 2008 Amended Forest Plan,

All designated Wilderness on the Tongass National Forest is characterized by extensive, unmodified natural environments. Ecological processes and natural conditions are not measurably affected by past or current human uses or activities. Users have the opportunity to experience independence, closeness to nature, solitude, and remoteness, and may pursue activities requiring self-reliance, challenge, and risk. Motorized and mechanized use is limited to the minimum needed for the administration of the Wilderness. Allow for access to state and private lands, subsistence uses, and public access and other uses to the extent provided for by ANILCA.

- **Untrammeled – *The wilderness is essentially unhindered and free from modern human control or manipulation.***

The desired condition is the trend in actions that control or manipulate the wilderness is stable or improving. These actions include ones that manipulate plants, animals, pathogens, soil, water, or fire, whether authorized by the Forest Service or unauthorized actions by agencies, citizen groups, or individuals..

- **Natural - *Wilderness ecological and evolutionary systems are substantially free from the effects of modern civilization.***

The desired condition for “Natural” is for the trend of modern civilization effects on plant, animal, pathogen, physical, and biophysical resources to be stable or decreasing.

- **Undeveloped - *Wilderness retains its primeval character and influence and has minimal evidence of modern human occupation or modification.***

The trends in recreational and non-recreational developments, use of motor equipment and transport, and loss of statutorily protected cultural resources is stable or decreasing.

- **Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation -*Wilderness provides outstanding opportunities for people to experience natural sights and sounds, solitude, freedom, risk, and the physical and emotional challenges of self-discovery and self-reliance.***

The trend is stable or improving for: remoteness from sights and sounds of people inside and outside wilderness; number of facilities that decrease self-reliant recreation; number of trails and level of trail classes; and amount of management restrictions on visitor behavior.

### Areas of Concern

Areas of concern are areas that have exceeded the determined standards or are perceived to exceed visitor use expectations. Warren Cove and False Cove are the only locations for safe access to WIW. Use is concentrated in these small coves.

## Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) and Visitor Capacity in the WIW area

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is a system for inventorying recreation experience opportunities into seven classes. Each class is defined in terms of the degree to which certain recreation opportunities are possible based on the extent to which the natural environment has been modified, types of facilities provided, the number of interactions expected with other groups of people, and the relative density of recreation use. There are seven classes identified within the Tongass Land Management Plan.

The WIW area consists of Primitive (P) ROS class (Appendix 2, description of "P" ROS class).

Capacity is also a consideration. Visitor use capacity is the approximate number of people that can visit a portion of the national forest and each person would have the prescriptive (ROS) experience consistent with the desired conditions. The reason to determine capacity is to ensure both that visitors can enjoy recreational experiences that meet their expectations and that the landscape can sustain that level of use. To determine capacity, the FS analyzes knowledge of existing use, projections of future demand, capability of an area to withstand impact, and useable terrain. For example, an area accessed by foot with multiple valleys to hunt would have a greater ability to accommodate a higher capacity of users than a small alpine lake, accessed seasonally by float plane, with one flat site for camping. There are several aspects in determining capacity, including social, biophysical, managerial, and facility capacity:

- **Social.** This refers to the sights and sounds of other people, which may impact the group's experience:
  - Is this an area heavily used by local people?
  - Can people spread out over the area with little chance of encounters?
  - How long is the useable season?
  - Are there other types of recreation use that are not compatible with the proposed use?
- **Biophysical.** This refers to the biological resources found in the area potentially impacted by visitors. Biophysical attributes influence whether a setting is capable of providing a particular recreation opportunity without degrading an area's ecological processes, structure, composition, resilience, integrity, potential, as well as the setting's ability to restore itself and provide for other resource uses and values:
  - Are there issues with sensitive or rare plants or wildlife concerns?
  - Are campsites durable?
  - Are user-created trails causing erosion?
- **Facility.** This refers to physical attributes of the area that make it useable by visitors:
  - How many campsites are available?
  - Are there adequate locations for camps?
  - Are there adequate anchorages in the adjacent waters?
  - Is access by foot, water, or plane easy or difficult?
- **Managerial.** This refers to policies, management objectives, or rules that can increase or decrease visitor capacity in an area. For example, Alaska Department of Fish and Game

has instituted a “drawing and registration permit system” for GMU 1B, which includes the Wilderness, for bull moose. Once the total is reached for the season, no additional animals may be taken.

Once a need is determined, the Forest Service estimates the capacity of the area to accommodate the activity by evaluating social, resource and managerial factors. See the 2010, Outfitter Guide Carrying Capacity Analysis for Craig and Thorne Bay Ranger Districts for all estimates of outfitter and guide capacities.

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## IV. Special Knowledge and Skills Needed for Activities in the WIW area

### Potential categories of public need<sup>1</sup> for commercial services:

- People with physical limitations.
- People pursuing activities where knowledge and skill needed makes unguided use extremely difficult, if not impossible; or where the opportunity does not exist outside of wilderness.
- People wanting to take trips that focus extensively on wilderness

### Wilderness stewardship activities that could be enhanced by outfitter/guides:

Guides can serve as important partners for the Forest Service. In particular, guides can provide wilderness awareness and ethics education. Resource protection activities, such as reporting of invasive plants and illegal activities have been helpful in the past and could help the wilderness areas achieve a higher level of wilderness stewardship. For those groups of folks who might not otherwise be exposed through typical outreach, guides can help build constituency and support for wilderness (e.g., big game hunters).

### Process for Determination of Public Need

“Public need” is a need determined to be essential for the well being of the entire public, guided and unguided, or to meet the intent of the Forest’s mission to manage and protect resources, provide for public safety, and to provide high quality recreation services. Within Wilderness the intended use should be dependent on the wilderness resource. A guide wanting a permit does not always mean there is a public need.

Evaluation Criteria used for determining the need for outfitter assistance in the management of the WIW wilderness area:

Skills and Equipment— outfitter/guide skills and equipment are needed by a portion of the public because of one or more of the following:

- a. Specific skills required for activities appropriate for the area require substantial time and/or talent to learn, such as a boat operator.

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<sup>1</sup> People should not confuse “need” with a “desire” for commercial services or the fact that the presence of a guide could enhance a visitor’s experience.

- b. Learning necessary skills and participating in the activity requires acquisition and consistent use of expensive, specialized equipment for which the public could not, or normally would not, expend the dollars or time, such as a shallow draft river boat.
- c. The skills required are so unique that the use of a guide is almost a prerequisite if the public is to have any opportunity to participate in and enjoy the activity, such as Stikine River navigation.

Knowledge—guide knowledge of the wilderness resource and the activity area is needed by the public, especially nonresident visitors, in order to safely enjoy recreational opportunities in a manner that reduces resource damage and user conflicts. This includes knowing where and by what method to best access and travel through an area, including knowledge of the river channels and sloughs.

Safety—an outfitter/guide's special skills and equipment are needed for a reasonable level of safety for the participants. Without guide assistance, members of the public could seriously endanger their health or lives, or would not visit the wilderness due to safety concerns. This criterion is not meant to diminish the wilderness values of self-reliance or the opportunity to challenge one's self or experience a degree of risk from rough seas and cold water hazards.

Special Management Objectives and/or Issues—to insure special management objectives are met and/or issues resolved, outfitter assistance is needed. Examples could include recreational opportunities for disabled populations, instilling a wilderness ethic in clients, contribution to rural area development and economy of formerly commodity based areas, and assistance in reducing critical resource impacts and/or conflicts between users.

Extent to Which Existing Outfitter/Guide Permits are Being Utilized—are current outfitted or guided assignments booked or over-booked, indicating a larger interest in the service?

Level of Use and Conflict—conflicts between all types of users, private and commercial in the wilderness. The extent to which already authorized use days or capacity exists for existing permittees to fill the need. What is the compatibility of commercial, institutional, and general public use, and the amount of use and social capacity within a given area of the wilderness? Are trail systems and use patterns (congestion and number of encounters) a potential problem? Is there a temporal congestion pattern—weekend use vs. weekday use, day vs. overnight use? Over time, what is the general trend? Is the projected future condition compatible with desired future condition?

Land Capability & Resource Concerns—can the guide contribute to the protection of the land through his/her educational emphasis? What is the amount of interference an outfitter/guide operation will have with the natural biological and physical processes of the wilderness?

Wilderness Dependency—the extent to which the proposed service can be offered on private or non-wilderness national forest lands. Some examples of these services could be:

- a. Outfitted supported camps more than a days' easy hike from a road.
- b. Trips in which solitude and unconfined, primitive recreation are the central components of the experience.
- c. Visits to ecosystems, geological, or physical resources found in wilderness for recreational, scientific, or educational purposes

Wilderness Character- would outfitter/guide activities degrade wilderness character to an unacceptable level? Alternatively, could outfitter/guide activities improve wilderness character? How does this activity fit in with the wilderness "niche?"

Forest Consideration: does this activity occur elsewhere in other wildernesses on the Tongass? For example, if an activity occurs in abundance in other areas, there may not be a need to accommodate it in these wilderness areas.

Public purpose: The Wilderness Act section 4(b) specifies “wilderness areas shall be devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use.” Guide services must help fulfill these purposes of Wilderness. Does this activity contribute to the public purposes established for this wilderness? When considering the extent necessary, can people reasonably participate in this activity without a guide or is having a guide a prerequisite? Does this activity serve a broad segment of the population or limited to a select few?

## WIW Niche and Description

Warren Island is the epitome of naturalness. An uncommonly high mass of tree-covered stone erupting out of the Pacific Ocean like a determined fist, Warren Island is aggressive and intimidating. Few people challenge its steep inner slopes and rugged shoreline. Without a bountiful fishing stream, Alaska Natives also left little trace on Warren Island. Hence it was left and the Island continues to lie in a relatively primordial state.

## V. Need for Commercial Use in the WIW area.

This section uses the criteria described above to determine if there is a need for commercial use of any kind on WIW. The table below rates the criteria for each type of commercial use: Big Game Hunting, Freshwater Fishing, Camping, Active Touring and Passive Touring.

Big Game Hunting	
Type of Activity	Rating Summary
Skills and Equipment	High – Equipment can be expensive. Hunting requires a certain level of skill and knowledge. Poor habitat means greater need for stalking fewer pray. Habitat not known to produce price animals
Knowledge	Moderate to High
Safety Risk	Moderate to high for extended length trips (Leave No Trace Skills)
Special Objectives	High
Demand/utilization	Low – only two requests in the past 5 years, all in 2009. No bear population on Warren
Level of use and conflict	Low
Land Capability	Low – relatively small area and big game tend to have a larger territory. Deer tend to be small on WIW and Coronation, perhaps due to poor quality habitat.
Wilderness Dependency	Moderate
Wilderness Character	Low
Forest-wide Availability	Moderate: Productive hunting areas are available in non-wilderness areas
Public Purpose	Moderate: Guides support recreation purposes of hunting but generally only a select group will participate (recreation and scenic purposes)
Freshwater Fishing	
Skills and Equipment	High – Equipment can be expensive. Fishing requires a certain level of skill and knowledge.
Knowledge	Moderate to High—Guide needs to know where the fish are and how to catch them
Safety Risk	Moderate—WIW remote and can have bad weather.
Special Objectives	High—fisherman want to catch specific fish
Demand/utilization	Low – no requests
Level of use and conflict	Low – there are a couple of fish bearing streams on WIW, but these do not contain desired species like coho, steelhead, or sockeye
Land Capability	Low – small number of streams with few fish and fish species
Wilderness Dependency	Moderate—better fishing in other locations

Wilderness Character	Moderate – fishermen concentrated on a small stream could affect visitors' ability to find solitude.
Forest-wide Availability	High: Productive fishing areas are available in non-wilderness areas
Public Purpose	Moderate: Guides support recreation purposes of fishing but generally only a select group will participate (recreation and scenic purposes)
<b>Camping</b>	
Skills and Equipment	Moderate to High – equipment can be expensive. Must have some knowledge of area to camp without making a significant impact.
Knowledge	Moderate to High
Safety Risk	Moderate to high for extended length trips (Leave No Trace Skills)
Special Objectives	Moderate
Demand/utilization	Low – No requests
Level of use and conflict	Low—the amount of non-commercial use is unknown.
Land Capability	Low – Only two small coves where camping is likely to take place. Use would be concentrated and solitude would be difficult to achieve.
Wilderness Dependency	Moderate
Wilderness Character	Low
Forest-wide Availability	Moderate: One may camp in all parts of the National Forest. Wilderness camping is available in Coronation Island Wilderness, Maurelle Island Wilderness and South Prince of Wales Wilderness.
Public Purpose	Moderate: Guides support recreation purposes of camping but only a select group will participate (recreation and scenic purposes)
<b>Passive Touring</b>	
Skills and equipment	Moderate to low skill for Passive Touring. High cost for flying
Knowledge	High—Most everything is taken care of by a guide (boat driving, animal identification, interpretation)
Safety risk	Moderate weather dependant
Special objectives	Moderate—generally looking for specific wildlife or scenery.
Demand/utilization	Low—in past 5 yrs no requests for passive touring to Warren Island
Level of use and conflict	Low—observations from Wilderness monitoring show use at this area to be relatively low, but it is concentrated in a small coves.
Land capability	Low—all use concentrated into 2 small coves. Difficult to avoid other groups if present. Decreases solitude.
Wilderness dependency	Moderate: most activities could be performed outside of wilderness but not in this type of location
Wilderness character	High: High naturalness, untrammled, undeveloped and opportunities for solitude
Forestwide availability	Low: Outer island shoreline and shore birds are not found in too many other areas
Public purpose	Moderate – only select group can afford. Some visitors put off by remoteness and challenge of accessing WIW
<b>Active Touring</b>	
Skills and equipment	High—Participants must know how to hike, backpack or kayak.
Knowledge	High—safe active touring requires knowledge of WIW and the surrounding waters.
Safety risk	High—active touring inherently presents greater risks to participants
Special objectives	Moderate—guides may encourage users of different abilities to participate
Demand/utilization	Low—no requests or permits since 2004.
Level of use and conflict	Low—observations from Wilderness monitoring show use at this area to be relatively low, but it is concentrated in a small coves.
Land capability	Low—all use concentrated into 2 small coves. Difficult to avoid other groups if present. Decreases solitude.
Wilderness dependency	Moderate: most activities could be performed outside of wilderness but not in this type of location
Wilderness character	High: High naturalness, untrammled, undeveloped and opportunities for solitude
Forestwide availability	Low: Outer island shoreline and shore birds are not found in too many other areas
Public purpose	Moderate – only select group can afford. Some visitors put off by remoteness and challenge of accessing WIW

The WIW is one of the smallest Wilderness areas in the country and one of the most remote and unvisited. It presents outstanding opportunities for solitude and challenge. Although more people

would be able to visit WIW with the help of an Outfitter and Guide, the data do not show a need for these services in this Wilderness Area. For example, Warren does not support a population of black bear and the deer population is sparse and the animals are relatively small compared to other areas on Prince of Wales Island. Guided Big Game hunting does not make sense and would not be viable on WIW. Likewise, there is no demand for freshwater fishing and the available streams do not offer desired fish species for high quality guided commercial fishing. There have been no requests for any other form of guided use on WIW for over 5 years. The demand for commercial use is not evident. Furthermore, the Forest Service has found a need for commercial use in both Coronation Wilderness to the west and Maurelle Islands Wilderness to the east of WIW. Commercial outfitters and guides may disperse to these locations, allowing WIW to be managed exclusively for non-commercial use. In order to maintain the WIW character of exceptional solitude and challenge, the Forest Service finds no need for commercial use in this area.

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## VI. Summary

### Statement defining the Wilderness Character of the WIW area

Warren Island is the epitome of naturalness. An uncommonly high mass of tree-covered stone erupting out of the Pacific Ocean like a determined fist, Warren Island is aggressive and intimidating. Few people challenge its steep inner slopes and rugged shoreline. Hence the Island continues to lie in a relatively primordial state.

**Description** – This 11,181 acre wilderness consists of one oval shaped island with steep rugged slopes rising to over 2,200 feet. This island jewel features beautiful, sandy beaches in its many coves and harbors abundant with wildlife. This is a small wilderness, but provides a haven of solitude in settings that include fresh water lakes and alpine zones. Small boats are occasionally used to access Warren Island by people from Edna Bay.

### Specific information regarding the wilderness values which require monitoring or protection

Solitude: Monitor the area for use and observe the frequency of group interactions within the Warren and False Coves.

### Finding or determination of need for commercial use

#### Determination of need for commercial use for guided camping:

It is recommended that commercial camping **not be** authorized in the WIW area through this needs assessment.

#### Determination of need for commercial use for guided big game hunting:

It is recommended that commercial big game hunting **not be** authorized in the WIW area through this needs assessment.

#### Determination of need for commercial use for guided freshwater fishing:

It is recommended that commercial freshwater fishing **not be** authorized in the WIW area through this needs assessment.

**Determination of need for commercial use for guided passive touring:**

It is recommended that commercial passive touring **not be** authorized in the WIW area through this needs assessment.

**Determination of need for commercial use for guided active touring:**

It is recommended that commercial active touring **not be** authorized in the WIW area through this needs assessment.

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Jason Anderson  
District Ranger

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Date

## Appendix 1. Wilderness Management Direction

### Wilderness Management Direction for a Needs Assessment

Following is a discussion for when a needs assessment may be employed to address commercial use requests within wilderness based on a regional or local wilderness management concern.

### Direction Provided by the 1964 Wilderness Act

The Wilderness Act of 1964 states the purpose of Wilderness is “to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of Wilderness.” Wilderness being an area “affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticeable;” . . . “has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive unconfined type of recreation; . . . and “may also contain ecological, geological, or other feature of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.”

The Wilderness Act also describes how Wilderness areas are to be used and managed. Management is to focus on preserving the wilderness character of the area; and use of the area “shall be devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, education, conservation, and historical uses.” In realizing these uses Wilderness provides an opportunity for solitude or primitive unconfined types of recreation not attainable in settings more man-made, or influenced by humans.

In accomplishing the purpose of, and uses of Wilderness, the Wilderness Act gives some additional direction. Specifically, with one notable exception commercial enterprises are prohibited by Section 4(c) of the Act. The exception covered in Section 4(d) (6) says; “commercial services may be performed within the Wilderness area . . . to the extent necessary for activities which are proper for realizing the recreation or other Wilderness purposes of the areas.”

### Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA)

Section 707 of ANILCA states; “Except as otherwise expressly provided for in this Act, wilderness designated by this Act shall be administered in accordance with applicable provisions of the Wilderness Act ...”

Items expressly provided for in ANILCA wilderness are many. Some include;

1. Section 811 – Reasonable access for subsistence resource uses
  2. Section 1010 – Mineral assessments with access by air.
  3. Section 1110(a) – Special Access allowing for the use of airplanes, motorboats, and snowmachines (during periods of adequate snow) within conservation system units as defined by Section 102 (4). These rights may be subject to reasonable regulation to protect the natural and other values of the conservation system units.
  4. Section of 1303(b)(1) – Allowance for the construction of new cabins and administrative cabins if necessary for the administration of the area as wilderness
  5. Section 1303(b)(2) – Allowance for the continuation of existing cabins.
  6. Section 1310 – Allowing for the maintenance of existing and future navigation aids and other facilities.
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7. Section 1315(c) – Permitting the continued use and maintenance of public use cabins. 1315(d) allows for the construction of new cabins if they're necessary for the protection of public health and safety.
8. Section 1316(a) – Allows for existing and future establishment of temporary structures necessary for the taking of fish and game subject to reasonable regulation to insure compatibility, the continuance of existing uses, and the future establishment, and use, of temporary campsites, tent platforms, shelters, and other temporary facilities and equipment directly and necessarily related to such activities. Section 1316(b) allows for the denial of the temporary facilities if the use of equipment or facilities is determined to be detrimental to the wilderness character.

ANILCA exceptions may influence the character of some wildernesses more than others. During the evaluation of commercial recreation use for any one wilderness, an effort should be made to consider the long-term effects of accommodating increasing uses or proposals for new use. The economic benefits to a business are not a substantive basis of a decision to allow use presented in either the Wilderness Act or ANILCA.

### **Direction Provided by Regulation**

Federal Regulations 36 CFR 293.2 – Objectives, states in part: “Except as otherwise provided in the regulations..., National Forest Wilderness shall be so administered as to meet the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical uses; and it shall also be administered for such other purposes for which it may have been established in such a manner as to preserve and protect its wilderness character...To that end:

(a) Natural ecological succession will be allowed to operate freely to the extent feasible.

(b) Wilderness will be made available for human use to the optimum extent consistent with the maintenance of the primitive conditions.

(c) In resolving conflicts in resource use, wilderness values will be dominant to the extent not limited by the Wilderness Act, subsequent establishing legislation, or the regulations in this part.”

Federal Regulations 36 CFR 293.8 - Permanent structures and commercial services, states in part that: “The Chief, Forest Service, may permit . . . commercial services within National Forest Wilderness to the extent necessary for realizing the recreational or other Wilderness purposes, which include, but are not limited to, the public services generally offered by packers, outfitters, and guides.”

### **Agency Direction**

#### **USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan for 2004 - 2008**

The mission of the USDA Forest Service is based on the relationship between the American people and their natural resource heritage. The relationship is founded on the principles of sustaining U.S. natural resources for future generations, producing personal and community well-being, and providing economic wealth for the Nation.

The Strategic Plan embodies the Forest Service's many areas of responsibility, as captured in the agency's mission statement:

“The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's forest and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.”

One of the many goals of the Strategic Plan is to provide high-quality outdoor recreational opportunities on forests and grasslands, while sustaining natural resources, to meet the Nation's recreational demands.

## **Forest Service Chief's 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge**

In 2005, the Chief of the Forest Service adopted the 10-year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge (WSC) as recommended by the Chief's Wilderness Advisory Group. This effort is a renewal of the commitment to wilderness by pledging to bring all 406 wildernesses administered by the Forest Service to a minimum level of stewardship within 10 years. Element 7 of the WCS identities that, **"Needs assessments are completed for new operations or for major changes to existing outfitter programs."** As clarified in the definitions for this element; *"needs assessments"*; a methodology for determining if, in fact, there is a "need" for private enterprise to assist the Agency in providing access, services and/or other assistance for the recreating public to safely and properly enjoy National Forest wilderness."

Another part of the WSC related to forest plan management direction is Element 5 – Protecting Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation. Managing to protect "outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation" has been perhaps the most controversial aspect of wilderness management to date. Controversy typically emerges if managers propose any type of restriction on visitor access or behavior, such as use limits, to improve opportunities for solitude. Factors contributing to this controversy include:

1. Lack of clarity over the meaning of solitude thus leading to lack of agreement over what the problem really is (e.g. visitors may view the concept holistically while managers may focus on the number of encounters in particular locations).
2. Perception that solitude is too subjective and individualistic to manage for.
3. Lack of standards or agreement on standards that define when there is a problem requiring corrective action.
4. Managing for solitude without equal consideration of managing for primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities.
5. The importance of access to visitors even when they support wilderness preservation.
6. Tension between providing outstanding opportunities for solitude vs. primitive and unconfined recreation.

### **Forest Service Manual Direction**

Forest Service Manual Chapter 2320 – Wilderness Management, has been reserved by the Washington Office. Management direction regarding the implementation of specific exemptions for wilderness management in the Regional Supplements to the Forest Service Manual, still remain in effect. The Forest Service Manual from the Washington Office is expected to be reissued sometime in 2008.

Other FSM direction includes

Under FSM 2340 – Privately Provided Recreation Opportunities),

#### 2340.2 - Objectives

To provide, under special use authorization, sufficient, suitable facilities and services that supplement or complement those provided by the private sector, State, and local government on private land and the Forest Service on National Forest System land to meet public needs, as determined through land and resource management planning.

To facilitate the use, enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of natural resource settings on the National Forest.

### **Forest Plan Direction for Wilderness**

#### **Goals**

To manage all designated Wilderness to maintain an enduring wilderness resource while providing for public access and uses consistent with the Wilderness Act of 1964 and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA).

Protect and perpetuate natural biophysical and ecological conditions and processes. Ensure wilderness ecological systems are substantially free from the effects of modern civilization.

To provide a high degree of remoteness from the sights and sounds of humans, and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation activities consistent with wilderness preservation.

Keep wilderness untrammled and free from modern human control or manipulation, including actions taken to manage wilderness.

Protect the undeveloped character of wilderness by following legislative guidelines regarding permanent improvements or modern human occupation, including mechanized transport and motorized equipment.

#### **Objectives**

Apply a multi-disciplinary focus to wilderness management. The stewardship of the wilderness is considered in the annual program of work by all resources.

Manage recreation activities so the levels of social encounters, on-site developments, methods of access, and visitor impacts indicated for the Primitive Recreation Opportunity Class are emphasized. Areas managed as semi-primitive within a wilderness are an exception and are not encouraged. .

Provide for public use of the Wilderness in accordance with ANILCA provisions for motorized and non-motorized access and travel, including reasonable traditional subsistence use by rural residents.

Maintain trails and primitive facilities that are in harmony with the natural environment and that promote primitive recreation opportunities. Feature facilities designed primarily to provide resource protection and encourage smaller group size. Facilities tend to allow for challenge and risk instead convenience.

Maintain the wilderness capacity to provide information on natural ecological processes

Preserve and perpetuate biodiversity

Inventory, reduce, and when possible, eliminate non-native species in wilderness

Manage wilderness as a place where self reliance and primitive skills are needed and can be honed.

#### **Desired Condition**

All designated Wilderness on the Tongass National Forest is characterized by extensive, unmodified natural environments. Ecological processes and natural conditions are not measurably affected by past or current human uses or activities. Users have the opportunity to experience independence, closeness to nature, solitude and remoteness, and may pursue activities requiring self-reliance, challenge and risk. Motorized and

mechanized use is limited to the minimum needed for the administration of the wilderness. Allow for access to state and private lands, subsistence uses, and for public access and other uses to the extent provided by ANILCA. If not specifically provided through an ANILCA exception, the resources within a designated wilderness shall be administered in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Wilderness Act.

The Forest Plan notes that; "Special Use Authorizations permitting individuals or organizations to provide visitor services in wilderness may be issued if there is a demonstrated need for the service(s) and they are deemed appropriate for the area proposed."

## Appendix 2. Semi-Primitive motorized ROS classes WIW Wilderness Area.

### Primitive

Setting indicators	Standards and Guidelines
Scenic Quality	Not to exceed the High Scenic Integrity Objective. An Existing Scenic Integrity level of Very High is fully compatible and encouraged
Access	Non-motorized cross-country travel and travel on non-motorized trails and on waterways is typical. Use of airplanes, helicopters, motorboats, off-highway vehicles, and snowmachines for traditional activities, subsistence, emergency search and rescue, and other authorized resource management activities may occur but is rare.
Remoteness	No or infrequent sights and sounds of human activity are present. Setting is located more than 1.5 hours walking or paddling distance, or 3 miles, from any human developments other than infrequently traveled marine travelways. Areas are generally greater than 5,000 acres, but may be smaller if contiguous with a Semi-Primitive class.
Visitor Management	On-site regimentation and controls are very rare. Signing is limited to directional information and safety. There are no on-site interpretive facilities. There is great opportunity for discovery on the part of the users.
On-site Recreation Development	Structures do not exceed Development Scale I, except for public recreation cabins, and are maintained for appropriate levels of use.
Social Encounters	User meets less than three parties per day during trip. No other parties are within sight or sound of dispersed campsites or cabins. Authorize a party size of no more than 12 persons for any one site or activity group for commercial recreation use. Exceptions to the commercial group's size should be rare. A group size of 12 persons or less is recommended for general public use. Refer to REC122 in Chapter 3 for exceptions.
Visitor Impacts	Visitor-caused impacts to resources are slight and usually not noticeable the following year. Site hardening is limited to boardwalk trails and necessary boat moorings or bear-proof food caches and rustic public recreation cabins

### Semi-Primitive motorized

Setting indicators	Standards and Guidelines
Scenic Quality	Not to exceed the Moderate Scenic Integrity Objective. Existing Scenic Integrity levels ranging from Very High through High are fully compatible and encouraged.
Access	Travel on motorized and non-motorized trails and Traffic Service Level D roads, although some Traffic Service Level C roads provide access to and through the area. Use by high-clearance vehicles and motorized water travel is common. Road density is less than 1 mile per square mile. Off-road snowmachine travel on snow may occur.
Remoteness	Nearby sights or sounds of human activity are rare, but distant sights or sounds may occur. Setting is located within 0.5 hour walk or paddle or within 0.5 mile (greater or less depending on terrain and vegetation, but no less than 0.25 mile) of infrequently traveled waterways or small aircraft access points and/or roads that are open and maintained for passage by high-clearance and four-wheel drive vehicles (Maintenance Level 2), and provide access to recreation opportunities and facilities. Areas are generally greater than 2,500 acres, but may be smaller if contiguous with Primitive or Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized classes.
Visitor Management	On-site regimentation and controls are few. Control facilities consist primarily of informational signs and site-specific road closures. Visitor information facilities may be used to interpret cultural and natural resource features, but are not elaborate and harmonize with the setting.
On-site Recreation Development	Facilities and structures generally do not exceed Development Scale II and are maintained to accommodate the types and levels of use anticipated for the site and area. Forest Service recreation cabins are fully compatible.
Social Encounters	User meets less than 10 parties per day (6 parties per day in Wilderness) on trails, roads, and shorelines during 80 percent of the primary use season. During 80 percent of the primary use season, no other parties are visible from campsites. Maximum party size for commercial uses in Wilderness is 12 people. Exceptions should be rare. Refer to REC122 in Chapter 3 for exceptions. A party size of up to 20 people can be considered in Semi-Primitive settings outside of Wilderness. Outside of Wilderness, party sizes larger than 20 people may occur during less than 15 percent of the primary use season in limited locations.
Visitor Impacts	Visitor-caused impacts may be noticeable, but not degrading to basic resource elements. Site hardening is very infrequent, but, when it occurs, is in harmony with, and appropriate for, the natural-appearing backcountry setting.