

**Determination of Need for Commercial Services within the
Maurelle Islands 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 (if any) of outfitter/guide use that could take place in the Maurelle Islands Wilderness (MIW) 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, kayaking, hiking (Active Touring) camping, hunting, freshwater fishing and remote setting nature tours (Passive Touring) is as follows:

Determination of need for commercial use for guided camping:

It is recommended that commercially guided camping **be** authorized in the MIW area through this needs assessment, excluding the Hole-in-the-wall area.

Determination of need for commercial use for guided hunting:

It is recommended that commercially guided hunting **not be** authorized in the MIW through this needs assessment.

Determination of need for commercial use for guided freshwater fishing:

It is recommended that guided sport fishing **not be** authorized in the MIW through this needs assessment.

Determination of need for commercial use for guided passive touring:

It is recommended that commercially guided Passive Touring **be** authorized in the MIW through this needs assessment, excluding the Hole-in-the-wall area.

Determination of need for commercial use for guided active touring:

It is recommended that commercially guided Active Touring **be** authorized in the MIW through this needs assessment, excluding the Hole-in-the-wall area.

/s/ Jason Anderson

Jason Anderson
Thorne Bay District Ranger

11/15/2010

Date

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Date: October 2010

I. Introduction

The Thorne Bay Ranger District (TBRD), Tongass National Forest, developed this needs assessment (NA) to determine the type (if any) of outfitter/guide use that could take place in the Maurelle Islands Wilderness (MIW) 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 4,937 acre Wilderness consists of a group of islands that lie 20 miles northwest of Craig and Klawock across the Gulf of Esquibel. This collection of small, alluring islands provides an excellent setting for kayaking, and the opportunities for sightseeing and wildlife viewing, specifically for sea mammals.

Assumptions

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

- We expect overall visitor use to 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.).
 - 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.
 - There will be a continued and increased demand for special use permits to conduct outfitter/guide operations in the MIW area. Access points and use
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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.

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.

III. Visitor Use and Commercial Use in the MIW

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. Permitted use by use type in MIW for the years 2004-2009.

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Total	8	7	10	17	6	2	50
HUNTING	0	7	10	5	6	2	30
TOURING	0	0	0	12	0	0	12
HIKING	8	0	0	0	0	0	8

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. Little wildlife variety is found on the small islands, but there is a great deal of marine wildlife to view from just off shore. Marine birds are also plentiful.
- ❖ 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. But there is an historical cabin maintained by citizens from Klawock. In addition, a fish camp with minor developments like an a-frame for hanging deer and fish, and fire rings is located in Hole-in-the-Wall. There is also a dock with permitted shore ties located in this area, where a fish processor works with much of the seasonal fishing fleet. No developed or maintained trails exist in the MIW.
- ❖ Opportunities for solitude and primitive/unconfined recreation - The visitor is likely to see or hear boats on the saltwater. This is an extremely popular fishing area both for the commercial fleet and the sport fishing fleet. Due to its small size, it is difficult to avoid human sights and sounds from fishing activities in the Maurelle Islands. Hence, solitude is low in this area in the summer months, but is high in the winter months, when the MIW is nearly free of any kind of use.

Current Management Direction in the MIW 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 MIW 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.Int.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 are Hole-in-the-wall and northwest San Lorenzo Island where the trapper cabin is located.

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) and Visitor Capacity in the MIW 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 MIW 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, we estimate the capacity of the area to accommodate the activity by evaluating social, resource and managerial factors. See the 2009, Outfitter Guide Carrying Capacity Analysis for Craig and Thorne Bay Ranger Districts

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

Potential categories of public need¹ 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 MIW 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.

¹ 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?

MIW Niche and Description

The MIW area is located on the TBRD of the Tongass National Forest. The niche statement for this wilderness area describes it as:

This small peppering of islands in the Pacific, where the surf can be heard from every corner, affords a dynamic connection between sea and land. The Maurelles were an important part of the seasonal round for the Tlingit people of Klawock. They spent summer months harvesting and processing salmon and outer coast resources. With the arrival of Europeans and Americans, the Maurelle Islands continued their role as a safe harbor. Even today, the fishing fleet rests in the guarded waters between the islands, where they are met by marine mammals and migratory birds who also seek the calm waters beside the land.

V. Need for and Extent of Commercial Use in the MIW area.

In order to determine Need for Commercial Use in MIW, the information from the section “process for determining need” was put into a table and used to evaluate the five types of permits available on the Tongass—Big Game Hunting, Fishing, Camping, Passive Touring and Active Touring. Each criterion is evaluated and rated to help determine whether a need for commercial use exists.

Table 2. Rating Summary for commercial use types: Camping, Big Game Hunting, Freshwater Fishing, Passive and Active 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 prize animals
Knowledge	Moderate to High—guides can help clients find animals
Safety Risk	Moderate to high for extended length trips (Leave No Trace Skills)
Special Objectives	High-clients seek high quality hunts.
Demand/utilization	Moderate—MIW has been utilized for hunting consistently for the past 5 years. Use and requests have declined over this time. Big game hunting is not appropriate in this area because there is so little ground and so few animals that it is likely that the guides simply include this area in their permits because it is close to other more suitable locations like Noyes island (GMU 2 WAA data).
Level of use and conflict	High—MIW receives a large amount of use during the commercial salmon season. Use is concentrated in Hole-in-the-wall. Amount of conflict is unknown—no complaints have been received.
Land Capability	Low – relatively small area and big game tend to have a larger territory.
Wilderness Dependency	Moderate—hunting could happen in other places, but few places are similar to a small group of outer islands.
Wilderness Character	Moderate—likely to have low social impacts because hunting tends to take place with only 1-2 people at a time, but it could have more substantial effects on the wildlife.
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)
Fishing	
N/A	No fishing streams
Camping	
Skills and equipment	Moderate to High. Moderate cost for equipment
Knowledge	Moderate to high—guides help clients find durable surfaces
Safety risk	High for extended length trips
Special objectives	Moderate—guides help ensure that clients practice LNT principles while camping
Demand/utilization	Low—no requests or permits
Level of use and conflict	High—MIW receives a large amount of use during the commercial salmon season. Use is concentrated in Hole-in-the-wall. Amount of conflict is unknown—no complaints have been received.
Land capability	Moderate—there are durable locations to camp on MIW
Wilderness dependency	High – although camping can occur in any FS area, the object of Wilderness camping and practicing leave no trace is Wilderness Dependent. Honing Wilderness skills.
Wilderness character	Moderate impact: outer coastal island is somewhat uncommon
Forestwide availability	Low: camping in wilderness outer islands not offered very many places
Public purpose	Moderate: only a select group will participate (recreation and scenic purposes)
Passive Touring	
Skills and equipment	Low skill for PASSIVE TOURING. High cost for flying
Knowledge	Moderate—guides in knowledge of area and wildlife to help clients understand/enjoy MIW
Safety risk	Moderate very weather dependant
Special objectives	High—passive touring looks for specific scenery and wildlife
Demand/utilization	Low—requests for permits only occurred in 2007.
Level of use and conflict	High—MIW receives a large amount of use during the commercial salmon season. Use is concentrated in Hole-in-the-wall. Amount of conflict is unknown—no complaints have been received.
Land capability	High – passive touring tends to remain on a boat with just short shore visits. Moderate: most activities could be performed outside of wilderness but not in this type of

Wilderness dependency	location
Wilderness character	Moderate: Passive touring tends to occur with greater group sizes from boats. Groups landing on shore could affect ability to find solitude in MIW.
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 MIW
Active Touring	
Skills and Equipment	High skill required – high cost/equipment (kayaks, boats, airplane)
Knowledge	High—visitors and guides need to know the waters and conditions around MIW in order to remain safe while participating in Active touring activities
Safety Risk	High-potential dangerous weather
Special Objectives	High—seeking wilderness challenge and solitude, often seeking marine mammals/birds to observe
Demand/utilization	Low—last request and permit from 2004.
Level of use and conflict	High—MIW receives a large amount of use during the commercial salmon season. Use is concentrated in Hole-in-the-wall. Amount of conflict is unknown—no complaints have been received.
Land Capability	Moderate – offshore activities have little effect. Hiking/backpacking in soft soil could cause impacts.
Wilderness Dependency	High-- special challenge associated with remoteness of MIW
Wilderness Character	Moderate—may affect solitude because the sights and sounds of activities may be observed like kayaks on shore are highly visible. Backpacking trails may be visible.
Forest-wide Availability	Low - Outer island shoreline and shore birds are not found in too many other areas
Public Purpose	Moderate – only select group can afford and has the knowledge to participate

Information in table 2, which evaluates the criteria for determining need for commercial use in MIW, shows that there is no need for commercial freshwater fishing because there are no suitable fish streams in the MIW. Similarly, big game hunting, although currently permitted, does not make a lot sense in MIW because there is no black bear population and the hunting area for deer is very small and spread out. The chances of finding a suitable deer in this environment are minimal. Clients pay substantial amounts of money to come to Alaska and hunt Sitka black-tailed deer; they want the probability of shooting a large deer with big antlers to be pretty good, which is not the case in the MIW. Therefore, the Forest Service does not find a need for commercial big game hunting use in the MIW.

Commercial use of camping, passive touring and active touring seem to fit the social and environmental conditions of the MIW better. Yet even these uses should be restricted from the Hole-in-the-wall area so that commercial fishing and cultural uses that occur heavily in this area would not be affected by permitted commercial uses. At this time, there is little demand for commercial camping, active touring or passive touring, however, since the Forest Service has restricted these uses in Warren Island Wilderness just to the west of MIW, these uses remain available to address potential future demand. Maurelle Islands Wilderness is a better place to allow commercial camping, passive touring and active touring than Warren Island Wilderness, because there are several durable locations to camp in this scattering of islands and these sites are spread out so that groups would not impact each other if they were in MIW at the same time, whereas in Warren Island Wilderness, there are only two small coves that are suitable to land boats and to walk the shoreline. The rest of Warren Island is steep and rugged, much less suitable for pitching a tent.

VI. Summary

Statement defining the Wilderness Character of the MIW area

This 4,937 acre Wilderness consists of a group of islands that lie 20 miles northwest of Craig and Klawock across the Gulf of Esquibel. This collection of small, alluring islands provides an excellent setting for kayaking, and the opportunities for sightseeing and wildlife viewing, specifically for sea mammals.

Specific information regarding the wilderness values which require monitoring or protection

Natural: no leaving litter or human waste in Wilderness.

Undeveloped: no construction of structures (outhouses, shelters, cabins) to facilitate more comfortable camping.

Solitude: assure small group size. Assure that groups disperse.

Finding or determination of need for commercial use

Determination of need for commercial use for guided camping: It is recommended that commercially guided camping **be** authorized in the MIW area through this needs assessment, excluding the Hole-in-the-wall area.

Determination of need for commercial use for guided hunting: It is recommended that commercially guided hunting **not be** authorized in the MIW through this needs assessment.

Determination of need for commercial use for guided freshwater fishing: It is recommended that guided sport fishing **not be** authorized in the MIW through this needs assessment.

Determination of need for commercial use for guided passive touring: It is recommended that commercially guided Passive Touring **be** authorized in the MIW through this needs assessment, excluding the Hole-in-the-wall area.

Determination of need for commercial use for guided active touring: It is recommended that commercially guided Active Touring **be** authorized in the MIW through this needs assessment, excluding the Hole-in-the-wall area.

Jason Anderson
District Ranger

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. ROS classes CTBRDs Wilderness Areas.

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

Location	ROS	# of encounters	Group size	Mode of Transport	Perception of impacts	Perception of crowding	Visitor satisfaction	Visitor complaints	Solitude	Conflicts	noise
Spring Season											
Coronation Island	P	L	L	L	M	L	H	N	H		Fishing fleet
Summer											
Coronation Island	P	L	L	L	M	L	H	N	H		Fishing fleet
Coronation Island – egg harbor	P	L	L	L	M	M	H	N	M		Fishing fleet
Fall											
Coronation Island	P	L	L	L	L	L	H	N	H		
Winter											
Coronation Island	P	L	L	L	L	L	H	N	H		